Addressing Emerging Security Threats in Post-Gaddafi Sahel and the ECOWAS Response to the Malian Crisis

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There is urgent need for the Malian government to explore avenues for creating economic opportunity for marginalized populations such as internally displaced persons in order to mitigate the influence of criminal groups on the vulnerable and eliminate the threat of nationalist movements.

- The Malian government should improve local governance and strengthen state structures to promote rule of law.

- Governments within the Sahel region should diligently combat illicit drug trafficking, corruption and weapons proliferation and neutralize the threat of terrorist groups through concerted national, regional and international cooperation.

- ECOWAS should assist the Malian authorities to strengthen the capacity of border authorities to detect and deter cross-border criminal activities.

- ECOWAS should assist the Sahelian states to mitigate the impact of the Libyan crisis by improving access to basic services such as food, health and water.

- The UN, AU and ECOWAS should support reform of the security sector in Mali to make it more responsive to civil oversight.

- The UN, AU and ECOWAS should support the Sahelian states to create conducive environments for the effective functioning of state structures.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring that succeeded in removing three North African Heads of State, namely Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Muammar Gaddafi of Libya also led to the loss of many civilian lives and posed severe humanitarian challenges to many African states.[1] These, together with the subsequent killing of Muammar Gaddafi, have raised multiple security concerns within the region. While the international community, particularly the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the African Union (AU) will continue to grapple with post-Gaddafi security

[1]As at 15 December 2011, International Organization for Migration (IOM) registered 209,030 returnees from Libya, including 95,760 in the Niger, 82,433 in Chad, 11,230 in Mali and 780 in Mauritania posing severe humanitarian challenges to the countries. See Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, 7 to 23 December 2011.

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challenges in varying dimensions across Africa, there is deep apprehension by analysts that an unstable Libya could further exacerbate insecurity in the Sahel.[2] This sense of uncertainty is further heightened by growing rebel activities in the three core Sahelian states, namely Mauritania, Mali and Niger. These developments do not only point to growing disorder, but a major challenge for governments within these territories, where nomadic ethnic groups, who previously fought alongside the Libyan dictator are engendering instability across the region.[3]

Compounding this situation is the threat of militant groups in Africa's Sahel region, including Nigerian-based Islamic terror organization, *Boko Haram* and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), who now have access to thousands of arms thought to have originated from Gaddafi's vast weapons caches.[4] With migrant workers returning to their various countries and Tuareg mercenaries joining existing rebel groups, there is potential insecurity for the Sahel. Fuelling and sustaining the emerging threats are the existing complex and unresolved security challenges such as corruption, internal tensions, the risk of violent extremism and radicalization, illicit trafficking and terrorism.[5] In a study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2010, it noted that these fragile security conditions are further aggravated by economic and environmental challenges such as climate change and frequent food crises particularly affecting Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and northern Nigeria.[6]

Arguably, the combined effects of the above-mentioned challenges have reinforced existing pockets of resistance within the Sahel region, with increased rebellion by the Tuaregs in northern Mali. A consequent manifestation is the advent of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA),[7] which now has access to thousands of arms, including anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons.[8] This prompted the Malian army to intensify its operations in the north, but after two months of fighting, the army appeared to have lost control of major territories of Gao and Kidal to the rebels ostensibly due to inadequate resourcing of the national army leading to about 1000 troops either killed, taken captive or deserted.[9] Against this background, we argue that the 22 March 2012 putsch that ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré was not only foreseen but a reflection of the weakened state of the Mali national army fuelled by the Tuareg's persistent rebellion.

This policy paper examines the broader impact of post-Gaddafi security challenges on West African states, with particular emphasis on the Sahelian regions. This will be juxtaposed against the old insecurities serving as long time precursors. As the first major unintended consequence of the Libyan crisis, we discuss the events leading to the Malian coup d'état and its implications on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Finally, the paper analyzes the options for international engagement, focusing on the UN, EU, AU and ECOWAS.

POST-GADDAFI SECURITY REPERCUSSIONS IN WEST AFRICA

The West African sub-region is still grappling with the terrorist threats posed by *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, the fragile political and military situation in Guinea-Bissau, as well as post-conflict peace-building issues in Côte d'Ivoire. These already represent enormous conundrums

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[2] Broadly, the Sahel covers most parts of the territory of (from west to east) Senegal, southern Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, southern Algeria, Niger, northern Nigeria, Chad, northern Cameroon, Sudan (including Darfur and the southern part of Sudan), and Eritrea. However, the three core Sahelian states are: Mali, Niger and Mauritania. See 'European Union External Action Service Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel', available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/index_en.htm. (Accessed 24 March, 2012)

[3] See 'Law of Unintended Consequences Strikes Again: Was Gaddafi's removal Good for Mali'. Available at: http://blog.inkerman.com/index.php/2012/02/13/law-of-unintended-consequences-strikes-again-was-gaddafis-removal-goodafrica/ (accessed 25 March, 2012).

[4] Ibid.

[5] See Op cit, 'European Union External Action Service Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel'

[6] See 'Child Malnutrition in the Sahel Region (Africa) – April 2010. Available at:

http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/UNICEF_WCARO_QandA_Nutrition_Sahel_060410_final_k.pdf. (Accessed 26 March, 2012)

[7] The MNLA is a Sahelian Tuareg movement formed by returning fighters from Libya after the fall of Gaddafi's regime in October 2011.

[8] See Op cit, 'Law of Unintended Consequences Strikes Again: Was Gaddafi's removal Good for Mali'

[9] See 'Tuareg Insurgency Exacerbates Food Insecurity in Sahel Region. Available at:http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-03-22-tuareg-insurgency-exacerbates-food-insecurity-in-sahel-region (accessed 24 March, 2012)

to leaders across the sub-region. The fallout from the Libyan crisis thus poses further security dilemmas for the entire sub-region. While Gaddafi's regime has been toppled by the Western-backed National Transitional Council (NTC) liberation forces, recent events demonstrate how the Libyan crisis has amplified the threats confronting countries in the Sahel with consequences reaching far beyond the boundaries of West Africa.

Indeed, the Libyan crisis produced over 600,000[10] returning migrant workers. With governments ill-prepared to accommodate these returnees, many of them will be forced to seek 'alternative sources of livelihood' that are mostly provided by criminal organizations such as AQIM, which has sought a natural refuge in the region, filling the vacuum created by the absence of the state. AQIM has thus developed recruitment and local support networks for information gathering, arms supply and other logistics and illicit commercial activities.[11]

Furthermore, the demise of Gaddafi's regime enabled AQIM to make inroads into other parts of the region where alliances are reportedly being forged between MNLA[12] and *Boko Haram*.[13] These new challenges engendered by the Libyan crisis, are feeding on old unresolved insecurities, developing into new threats against states in the region.

THREATS AGAINST SAHELIAN STATES: NEW CHALLENGES COMPLICATING UNRESOLVED INSECURITIES

Prior to the Libyan crisis, some West African countries had been battling wide-ranging security challenges albeit with weak state structures. For instance, despite the progress made in consolidating democracy, persisting military coups d'état have raised questions about the state of democracy in the region.[14] The sub-region is not new to military takeovers, witnessing five such coups in the last four years, three of which occurred in the Sahel.[15] The overthrow of President Touré's government is indeed worrying and constitutes a reversal of two decades of democratic governance in Mali.[16] The porous borders coupled with social exclusion, limited economic opportunity, and the lack of access to basic services have become manifest. These have given rise to illicit drug and weapons trafficking, corruption, terrorism and organized crime which are further exacerbated by the threats posed by the fall of the Gaddafi regime, making the Sahel a potential hotspot.

The proliferation of arms and weapons, including Semtex explosives, rocket-propelled grenades, surface-to-air-missiles, and light anti-aircraft artillery also further aggravates the already unstable security situation as some of these weapons could be sold to criminal organizations and terrorist groups like AQIM and *Boko Haram*.[17] With renewed insurgency in the Sahel, it is not far-fetched to anticipate that foreign businesses, mining operations and communication pipelines will also become potential targets. And as the weak state structures are overpowered, the Sahel-Sahara smuggling routes are likely to be used to ferry Latin-American cocaine to Europe. Thus many states in the Sahel,

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[10] See Revision to the UNHCR Supplementary Budget: The Libya Situation 2011. Available at www.unhcr.org/4e32cf979.pdf

[11] See Aning, Kwesi, 'Potential new hotspots for extremism and opportunities to mitigate the danger: The case of the Sahel', Paper presented at the Pluscarden Programme conference, Oxford University, 8-9 October, 2010. See also S/2012/42, United Nations, Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, 7 to 23 December 2011

[12] Reuters News, Mali says rebels fight with Qaeda, rebels deny, 27 January 2012, available at <af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE80Q0AW20120127>

[13] See Al Shabab – New York Times, 15 September 2011

[14] Aning, Kwesi & Sarjoh Bah, 2010, 'ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention in West Africa: Confronting the Triple Threats'

[15] Mauritania President Mohamed Ould Abdullah was overthrown in 2008, followed by the 2008 military takeover in Guinea Conakry after the death of President Lansana Conte. President Tandja of Niger was also toppled in a military coup in 2010 following his controversial third term bid. In Guinea-Bissau, a military coup on 12th April halted an electoral process called after the death of President Malam Bacai Sanha on January 9, 2012,

[16] Mali made a transition to multi-party democracy after elections were held in 1992. The country has since enjoyed relative stability until the 22 March coup d'état.

[17] See S/2012/42, *op-cit*

particularly Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania will face extreme difficulty in maintaining the security and sanctity of the state without sustained external assistance.

THE MALI COUP D'ÉTAT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE EMERGING SAHELIAN CRISIS

The fall of Gaddafi following the Arab Spring has had enormous consequences across many African states. Particularly, it has stirred up a combination of rebels, weapons, refugees, smugglers and violent Islamic militant activities in the already fragile and turbulent Sahel region. Worthy of mention is the increased activities of multiple rebel groups such as the MNLA and *Ansar Dine*[18] in the northern part of Mali, where major towns such as Gao and Kidal have been captured. While the activities of the rebels continually undermined the security of the Malian state, a section of the national army described the President as weak and incapable of sufficiently providing them with the necessary resources to fight the rebels. A resultant effect of this is the increased frustration among the rank and file of the national army that resulted in the 22 March coup d'état ousting Ahmadou Toure. Although events leading to the coup d'état makes it somewhat predictable, it nevertheless came as a surprise because national elections was less than two months away.

Thus, it attracted widespread condemnation from the international community. Specifically, in separate statements and communiqués, the UN, EU, AU and ECOWAS called for the immediate restoration of constitutional rule and reminded the *National Committee for Rectification of Democracy and Restoration of the State* (CNRDRE) of its responsibility for the life, safety and security of the President and members of his government, the population, as well as the respect for institutions.[19] Particularly, the AU and ECOWAS made references to the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which rejects any unconstitutional change of government, including seizure of power by force.[20]

While this condemnation is always expected and reflective of initial reaction by global, regional and sub-regional organizations, we argue that the Malian coup d'état is the first major backlash of the removal and killing of Gaddafi. The uncertainty of such occurrence has been previously expressed by Mohamed Bazoum, the Nigerien Foreign Minister. He noted that a Committee of Joint Chiefs of the four countries (CEMOC) based in the Algerian town of Tamanrasset has been ineffective in patrolling the desert where most of the security threats such as terrorism, acts of mercenaries and highway robbery are being perpetrated.[21] The Nigerien President, Mahamadou Issoufou reiterated these concerns when he stated that:

> *The Libyan crisis amplifies the threats confronting countries in the region. We are already exposed to the fundamentalist threat, to the menace of criminal organizations, drug traffickers, arms traffickers...Today, all these problems have increased. All the more so because weapon depots have been looted in Libya and such weapons have been disseminated throughout the region. Yes, I am very worried: we fear that there may be a breakdown of the Libyan state, as in the case of Somalia, eventually bringing to power religious extremists.[22]*

To a very large extent, this statement aptly describes the heightening security situation after the demise of Gaddafi and mirrors a genuine expression of foreboding

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[18] *Ansar Dine*, meaning 'Guardians of the Faith' in Arabic, is a splinter pro-Sharia insurgent group based in the northeastern part of Mali. Active since March 2012, its main agenda is to impose Sharia across Mali and the Azawad.

[19] See Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, 315th Meeting Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23 March 2012. See also ECOWAS Communiqué N°: 074/2012 'ECOWAS Reaction to the Coup D'état in Mali, 22 March 2012. Available at <www.ecowas.int>

[20] See Art. 1(c) of the Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, Dakar, December 2001. See also Art. 3(10) of African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30th January, 2007.

[21] The Committee of Joint Chiefs of the four countries - Algeria, Niger, Mali and Mauritania was founded in 2010 and responsible for peace and security within the 3 million square miles (8 million square kilometers) of desert shared by the four countries.

[22] Soudan, F. & A. Kappès-Grangé, *Jeune Afrique*, 'Mahamadou Issoufou: "Gaddafi, the Nigerians, the Caliph and me ...', July 28, 2011

by the Nigerien president. At the same time, implicit in his statement is a caution to regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the AU to put in place measures to mitigate possible repercussions of the Libyan crisis in the region. The 22nd March coup d'état in Mali thus lends credence to the premonition of insecurity expressed by the Nigerien president.

ECOWAS RESPONSES TO THE MALIAN CRISIS

The Mali coup d'état elicited condemnations from ECOWAS and the larger international community which were followed with targeted sanctions against members of the junta and their allies by the AU and ECOWAS. The sanctions imposed by ECOWAS on 27 March included the suspension of Mali's membership of ECOWAS, travel ban on members of the CNRDRE and their associates, the recall of ECOWAS Ambassadors from Mali, and the closure of the borders with ECOWAS Member States. Perhaps, sensing the possible harsh effect of the sanction, the military junta agreed to hand over power to a transitional government and on the 6th of April, ECOWAS lifted the sanctions.[23]

While the sanctions were helpful in the quest towards restoring security and constitutional order, subsequent developments in Mali point to disturbing trends. A Framework Agreement signed on 6th April 2012 between the ECOWAS appointed mediator, Blaise Compaore, the president of Burkina Faso and CNRDRE left out local political actors who hitherto have been the bedrock of democracy over the last two decades.[24] Also, the failure to clearly define the role and place of the military junta during the transition has only served to complicate the security situation, giving the CNRDRE the power to undermine the interim political

arrangement. For instance, Capt. Amadou Sanogo, leader of the junta, who has been recognized by ECOWAS as a former Head of State,[25] continuously exploited the media space, posing a threat to the political process. This consequently prompted ECOWAS to threaten reinstatement of targeted sanctions.[26] Despite the threat of sanctions, the junta's interference continues to be felt in the transitional administration led by the speaker of the National Assembly, Dioncounda Traore[27], which contravenes Article 1(e) of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance that bars serving members of the armed forces from engaging in politics.[28] Thus, the junta's interference sought to frustrate ECOWAS' mediation efforts as further argued by Victoria Nuland of US State Department:

> We thought we had a deal brokered by ECOWAS to return Mali to civilian government so that we could get to elections. We have concerns that the deal appears to be breaking down, it is not being honoured; of course, that's just providing space for more mischief in the north of Mali.[29]

Perhaps, the seeming breakdown of ECOWAS' effort to broker a peace deal through mediation prompted it to reconsider military action to curb the insurrections in the north and restore constitutional order. However, it is important to note that the solution to the Malian crisis does not lie in military intervention given the mix of humanitarian and geostrategic complexities. It is in this vein that we commend ECOWAS for releasing $4.5

[23] See Voice of America News ' ECOWAS Lifts Sanctions against Mali' 7 April, 2012, available at: <http://www.voanews.com/articleprintview/181039.html>. (Accessed 28 May, 2012)

[24] The Framework for the implementation of the agreement between the ECOWAS mediator and the CNRDR failed to involve political actors in Mali as well as define the role of the military, giving the junta excessive room to cling to power. See Framework for the formal implementation of agreement of 1st April 2012 between the ECOWAS mediator and the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy, Signed in Bamako on 6th April 2012.

[25] See BBC News, 'Dioncounda Traore: Mali PM 'ashamed' at leader's beating', 27 May 2012, available at <www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18156476> (Accessed 28 May, 2012)

[26] See ECOWAS Press Release N°: 144/2012, 'Mediation and Security Council proposes measures to address threats to the political process in Mali', 20 May 2012

[27] *Op-cit,* Framework for the formal implementation of agreement of 1st April 2012.

[28] See Article 1(e) of Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution Peacekeeping and Security.

[29] Nuland, Victoria 'US says ECOWAS losing grips on Mali Crisis' US State Department, May 17, 2012 available at: http/wadr.org/en/site/news_en/3652/US-says-ECOWAS-losing-grip-on-Mali-crisis.htm (accessed 18 May, 2012)

million to enable Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger to cope with the humanitarian crisis caused by the rebellion in the north of Mali.[30] Nevertheless, we argue that weak state structures, corruption and bad governance will continue to pose several challenges and addressing them will require sustained political and development strategies rather than military intervention.

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE MALI COUP AND OPTIONS FOR ECOWAS AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The emerging security challenges after the fall of Gaddafi, culminating in the March 22 coup in Mali is indeed a worrying development and has multiple implications for the state, its Sahelian neighbours and the broader ECOWAS sub-region. Already, events leading to the removal of Amadou Touré have led to the death of many army officers, some taken captive and others deserted. Many civilians have also been displaced compounding their socio-economic challenges of poverty and unemployment while nearly 200,000 refugees have poured out of Mali in the last two months, seeking food, shelter and refuge in neighboring states.[31] This has negatively impacted Niger and Mauritania as the deteriorating security situation has forced some 15,000 Mali citizens away from conflict-ridden towns such as Ménaka and Anderamboucane into Tillabéri in western Niger, an area already suffering from chronic food and acute water shortages, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).[32]

The coup d'état has also crippled the security agencies into disorder, allowing the MNLA to overran the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, and declaring independence from Mali afterwards.[33] The Islamist group, *Ansar Dine*, said to have links to AQIM, has reportedly been attacking civilians and looting properties under the pretext of imposing Sharia in parts of the region.[34] The abduction of the seven Algerian diplomats[35] condemned by the MNLA and blamed on *Ansar Dine*[36] is an indication of the instability caused by the military takeover. Even though the two groups have different ideologies and oppose each other to an extent likely to result in future violent clashes, the combined effects of their activities hold potential threats for the entire West African sub-region and hinders ECOWAS' effort in promoting democracy and good governance, which are *sine qua non* to peace and security.

As the security threats in the Sahel continue to emerge and manifest in different and multiple forms, there is urgent need for collaborative engagements between and among various organizations, particularly, the UN, EU, AU and ECOWAS. As the guarantor and harbinger of world peace, the UN has the primary responsibility to address emerging threats in the Sahel. Both Article 52(1) of the UN Charter[37] and Article 17(1)[38] of the Protocol Relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union stress on collaboration in the pursuit of global peace and security. On its part, Article 3(d) of the 1999 ECOWAS protocol for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security expressly proclaims the organization's commitment to "strengthen cooperation in the areas of

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[30] See ECOWAS Communiqué N°: 119/2012 'ECOWAS provides US $ 4.5 million Humanitarian Support to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger 26 April, 2012, available at: <http://news.ecowas.int> (accessed 18 May, 2012). Out of the US$4.5 million, Mali received US$ 3 million.

[31] McGregor, Andrew Hot Issue- Mayhem in Mali: Implications of the Military Coup in Bamako, March 27, 2012. Available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_n ews%5D=39177&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=7fa381da 0d73904d1a38eee1af474d6c (accessed 26 March, 2012)

[32] See Op cit, 'Law of Unintended Consequences Strikes Again: Was Gaddafi's removal Good for Mali'

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[33] See 'Déclaration d'indépendance de l'azawad', available at <www.mnlamov.net/component/content/article/169-declaration-dindependance-de-lazawad.htmlv> (accessed 6 April 2012)

[34] See AFP, 'Islamist fighters call for Sharia law in Mali', 13 March 2012

[35] See Aljazeera, 'Algerian diplomats kidnapped in chaotic Mali', 6 April 2012, available at <www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/201245134944646910.ht ml>

[36] Look, Anne, 'De-facto Division of Mali Likely to Remain in Short-Term', Voice of America, 12 April 2012.

[37] See the Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VIII, Article 52(1) San Francisco, 26 June, 1945

[38] See Article 17(1) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Durban, African Union, 2002.

conflict prevention, early-warning, the control of cross-border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines."[39]

These legal frameworks provide the basis for collaborative engagements between ECOWAS and AU on the one hand, and between the two and UN on the other hand, to address both old and emerging security threats that have the tendency to undermine peace and security in the Sahel. But more important is the ECOWAS collaboration with the AU as these organizations have the spatial control over the broader Sahelian region. Restoring democracy to Mali will be the first of many steps to bring a semblance of stability to the Sahel region. The country will rely extensively on the international community to conduct transparent elections, re-establish state control and ensure human rights and rule of law. The roles played by the international community, especially ECOWAS in getting the military junta to hand over power to an interim government are indeed laudable.[40]

However, to find lasting solutions to the Malian crisis and the Sahel security challenges, the involvement of the EU in the collaborative effort is very critical because of ECOWAS' limited financial and technical capacity. In pursuance of this objective, the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, adopted in December 2007 to address the security challenges in the Sahel needs to be revisited. This will ensure sustainable support to address the socio-economic as well as political challenges facing Mali and the wider Sahel region.

CONCLUSION

As predicted by many analysts, there is no doubt that the post Gaddafi repercussions is beginning to have a marked impact on Africa, especially the Sahel region. With increased proliferation of arms and mercenaries joining rebel groups, Mali has had the first major backlash of coup d'état exacerbating the already fragile

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[39] See Article 3(d) of the 1999 ECOWAS Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

[40] The international community's condemnation of the coup, suspension of Mali by both AU and ECOWAS, and subsequent imposition of sanctions were important steps in their collaborative effort to ensure the restoration of constitutional order in line with their protocols on democracy and good governance.

security and socio-economic as well as environmental conditions with multiple implications for the West African sub-region. As efforts are being made by regional organizations to restore constitutional order in Mali, concrete strategies need to be rolled out by all stakeholders to address the root causes of insecurity as well as the wider security challenges in the Sahel. This can be achieved by tackling the following issues in the immediate and long-term future;

- There is urgent need for the Malian government to explore avenues for creating economic opportunity for marginalized populations such as internally displaced persons in order to mitigate the influence of criminal groups on the vulnerable and eliminate the threat of nationalist movements.

- The Malian government should improve local governance and strengthen state structures to promote rule of law.

- Governments within the Sahel region should diligently combat illicit drug trafficking, corruption and weapons proliferation and neutralize the threat of terrorist groups through concerted national, regional and international cooperation.

- ECOWAS should assist the Malian authorities strengthen the capacity of border authorities to detect and deter cross-border criminal activities.

- ECOWAS should assist to mitigate the impact of the Libyan crisis in the Sahel by improving access to basic services such as food, health and water.

- The UN, AU and ECOWAS should support reform of the security sector in Mali to make it more responsive to civil oversight.

- Finally, the UN, AU and ECOWAS should support the Sahelian states to create conducive environments for the effective functioning of state structures.