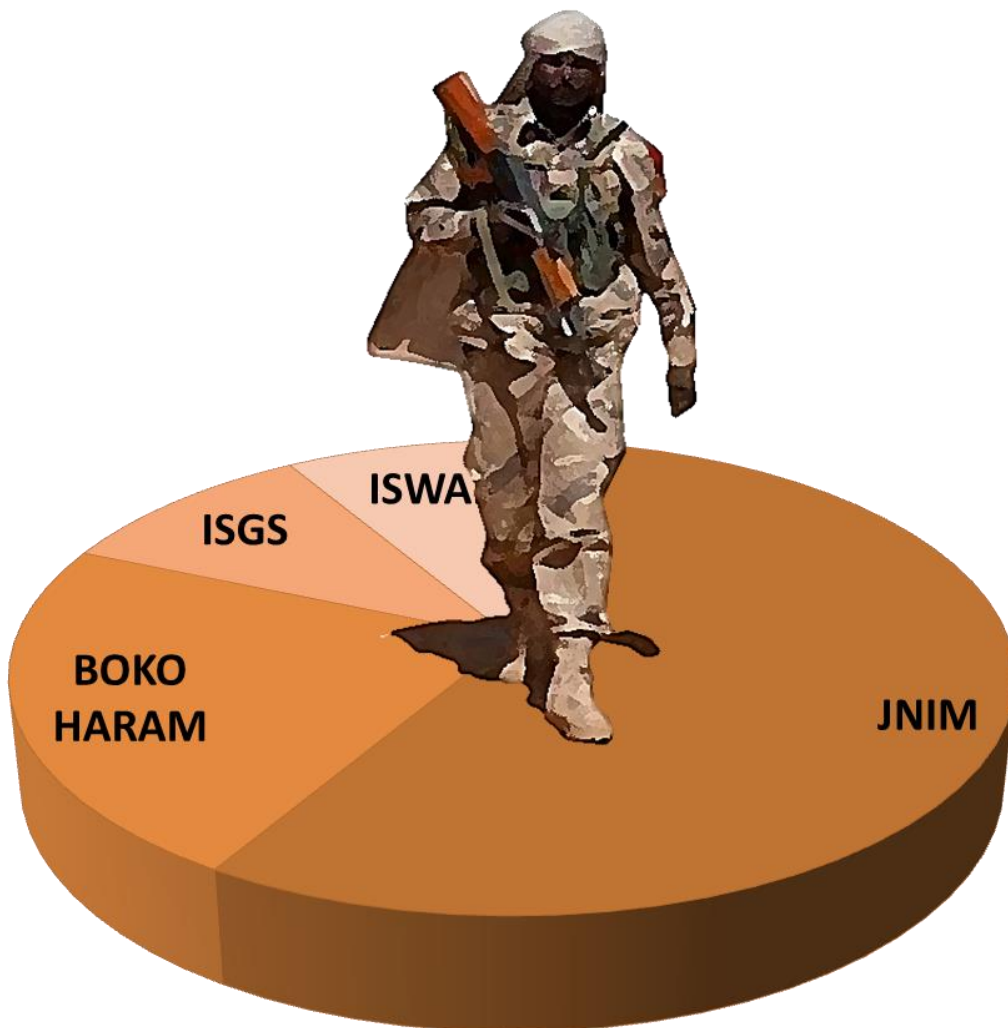




NSD-S HUB



**Joint NSD-S HUB & ACSR
Four-monthly Report
“Terrorism in the Sahel: facts and figures”**



September 2020

The NSD-S HUB was established at Allied Joint Force Command Naples in order to improve NATO awareness and understanding of the opportunities and challenges from the South, while contributing to the overall coordination of NATO activities and efforts.

The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) was established in 2004, as a structure of the African Union, to serve as its center of excellence for the analysis of terrorism related information and the CT Capacity Building of its Member States.

NSD-S HUB-ACSRT's-products are developed with direct engagement of experts of both institutions, as well as regional experts, open-source information from governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, academic institutions, media sources and military organizations.

By design, NSD-S HUB-ACSRT's products or links to open-sourced and independently produced articles do not necessarily represent the opinions, views or official positions of any other organization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Sahel is a highly complex environment where a large variety of terrorism and violent extremist organizations (TVEOs) continue to challenge the state authorities for supremacy. This has led to it becoming one of the most volatile regions on the African continent in recent years. The root causes of this instability are many and complex. Nonetheless a common characteristic which fuels the TVEOs is that many of their activities are cross-border and affect large areas of the Sahel.

This document is intended to be the first of many tri-annual reports whose purpose will be to provide a more comprehensive vision of trends in terrorism across the region by way of progressive analyses, in order to create a broader and more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of terrorism over time. The document is jointly produced by the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT)¹ of the African Union (AU) and the NATO Strategic Direction South - Hub (the Hub)².

The report includes statistical information drawn from terrorist attacks which occurred in the area of analysis during two consecutive tri-annual periods i.e. 1 Sep-31 Dec 2019 (**Period A**) and 1 Jan-30 Apr 2020 (**Period B**). The ACSRT has worked from its own database while the Hub has used the information provided by ACLED's database³, but further filtered and refined with internal criteria.

Purely numerical data gathered from the area of analysis may not adequately detail the effectiveness of any national/regional Fight Against Terrorism (FAT), either regarding the prevention of these incidents or the reduction in the capacity of terrorists to advance their agenda. It is for this reason that both quantitative *and* qualitative analyses have been adopted.

The utility of any research on terrorism is primarily dependent on the definition one chooses to employ of a 'terrorist event'. In order to avoid controversy and to integrate the majority of existing sensitivities, for the purposes of this report the following definition has been used: *'those acts consisting of the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence, instilling fear and terror, which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom, or cause serious injury or death to individuals, group of people or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, or to gain control over a population, to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives'*. The above working definition takes cognizance of the AU definition of what constitutes a terrorist act. All of the statistical data and graphics used in this document correspond with the definitions and concepts in Annex A.⁴ This Report will focus on the G5 Sahel Countries, comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

¹ ACSRT is the main AU actor in the fight against terrorism and conducts research on terrorism with the purpose of preventing and combating terrorism in Africa.

² The Hub collects, collates, analyzes and disseminates open source information to contribute to NATO comprehensive understanding, situational awareness, decision making and information sharing for the South.

³ The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

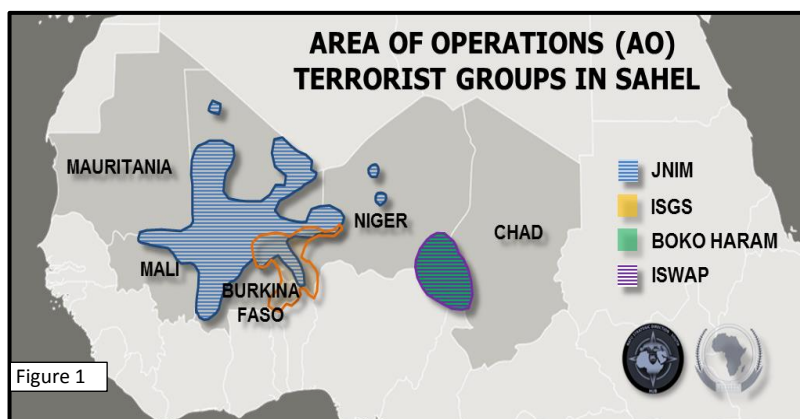
⁴ Although ethnical/tribal conflicts cause many civilian casualties, they have been excluded from the definition of Terrorist Activity for reasons set out in Annex A but their relevance is included in the qualitative analysis section of this paper.

Based on their ideology and allegiances, two categories of TVEO can be identified in the G5 Sahel countries: those affiliated with al-Qaeda (AQ) and its subsidiary al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and those affiliated with the Islamic State (Daesh).

An important event occurred in March 2017, when the major AQ-affiliated groups merged to form Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) which has increased its legitimacy with many of the local communities in the sub-region. The groups constituting the JNIM include AQIM, Ansar Dine, the Macina Liberation Front/MLF and Al Murabitoun. The Burkina Faso-based Ansar-ul Islam (AI), although not a formal part of JNIM, is in close contact with the new alliance which has progressively advanced south towards Burkina Faso and Niger.

Daesh presence in the Sahel is represented by the Mali-based Islamic State in the Great Sahara (ISGS), and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) which is active in the Lake Chad region. In the Central Sahel area, ISGS continues to grow and expand its area of operations from the traditional Menaka (Mali) into Niger and Burkina Faso. In the Lake Chad Basin area, besides ISWAP, the Abubakar Shekau's faction of the original Boko Haram is an unofficial affiliate of the Islamic State.

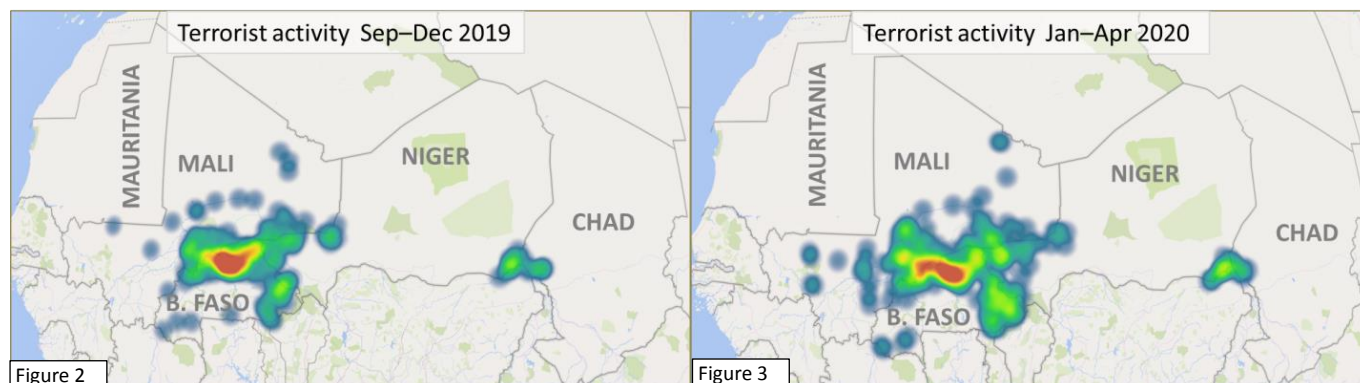
There are two principal clusters in the Sahel: Central Sahel, comprising Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, with the epicenter of violence in the three-border area of Liptako Gourma; and the Lake Chad basin, with the epicenter of extremist activity in Borno State (Nigeria), but with ramifications in neighboring Adamawa and Yobe States (Nigeria), as well as the territories of the riparian States (Niger, Chad and Cameroon).



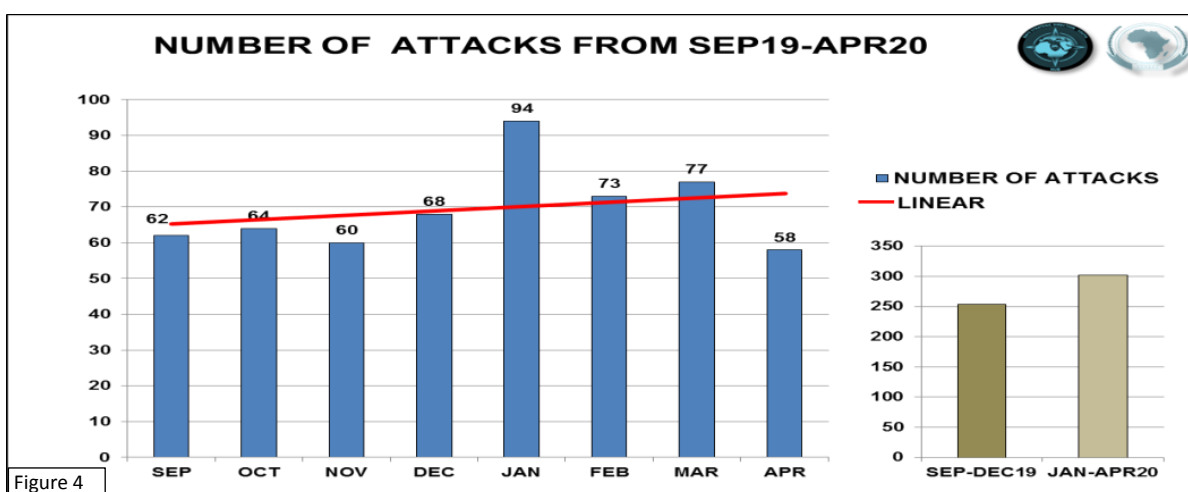
2. NUMERICAL DATA – QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

As stated previously, focusing on purely numerical data can provide misleading conclusions. Nonetheless, the number of attacks, their perpetrators and the Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) must first be identified before then going on to add qualitative analysis in order to achieve precise, actionable results.

2.1. Number of terrorist attacks

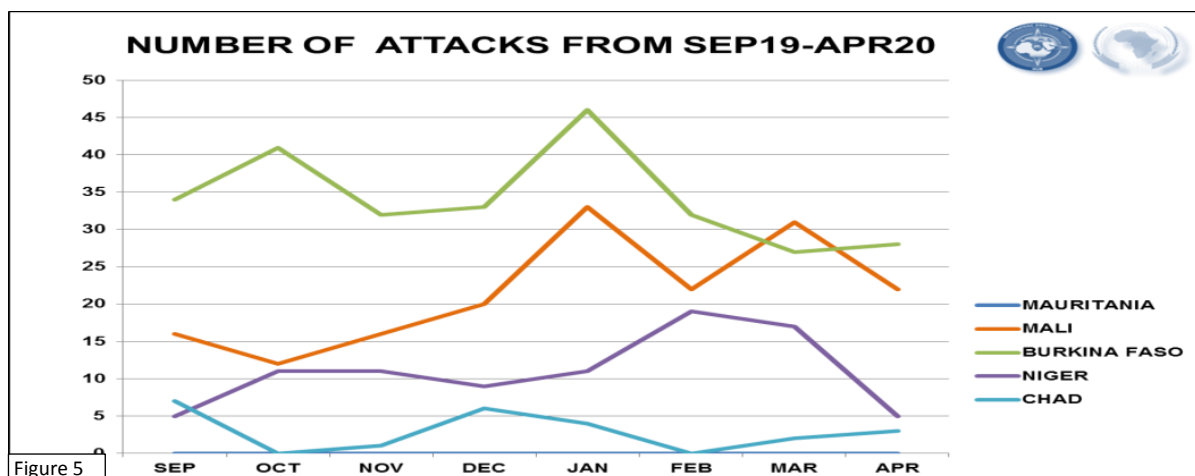


Comparing period A and B, there has been an overall increase of 48 attacks (up 19%), with an average of 69.5 attacks per month, which is shown below by the red line as a slight increase showing the global trend over the entire eight month period. However, this increase is largely due to the high number of attacks in January (24 more attacks than the average). Excluding that month, the number of attacks would have been relatively stable. Furthermore, since January there has been a marked decrease in the number of attacks in the area under review. These three very different results demonstrate the limits of purely numerical data.



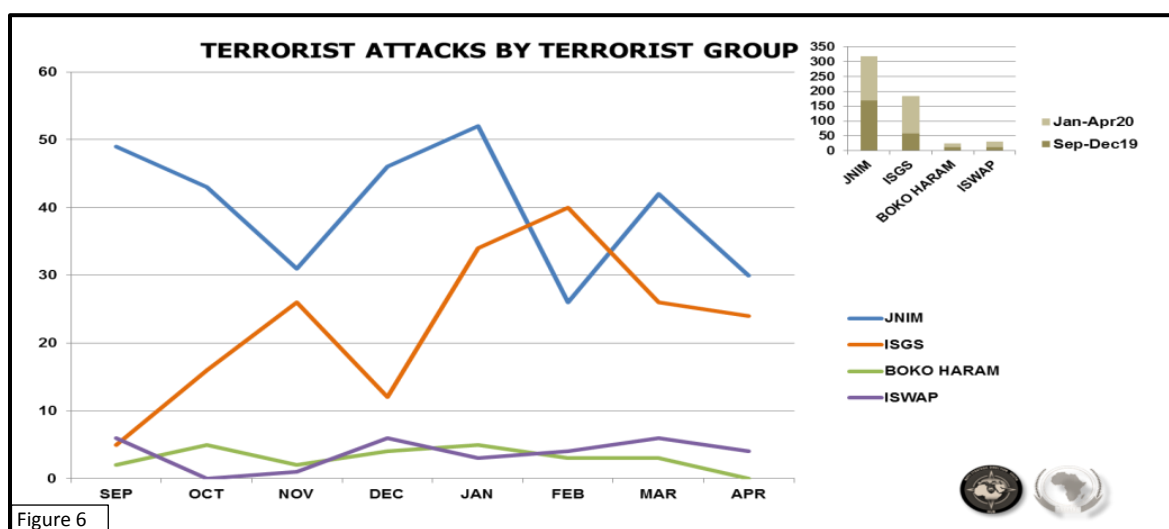
Breaking the number of attacks down on the basis of countries affected by the attacks, Burkina Faso comes first with an average of 34 attacks per month, followed by Mali, Niger and Chad. There have been no attacks in Mauritania. The notable increase in attacks in January occurred in both Burkina Faso and

Mali. All the countries showed a marked decrease of attacks in April. Mali is the only country which has had an overall increase in the number of attacks over the two periods (+ 81 %).



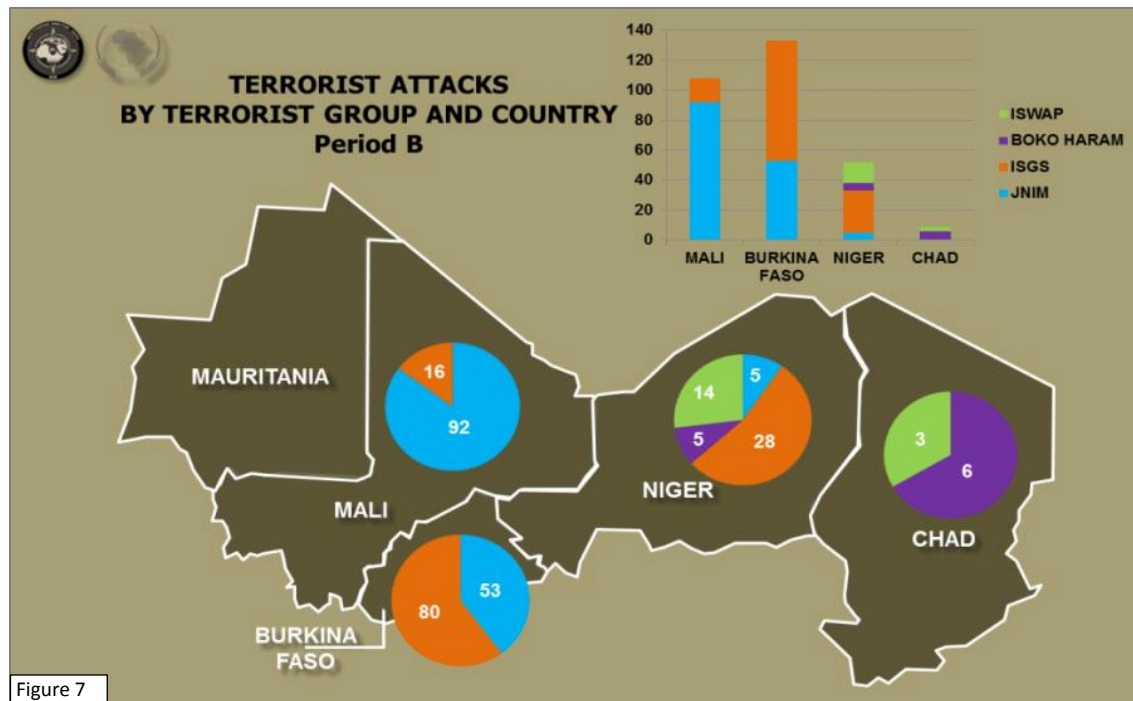
2.2. Terrorist activity by groups

With regards to the distribution of attacks by terrorist group, the same decrease as by country in the month of April is evident. Regarding JNIM, despite being the most active with an average of 40 attacks per month, comparing the two periods, there has been a decrease of 11%.



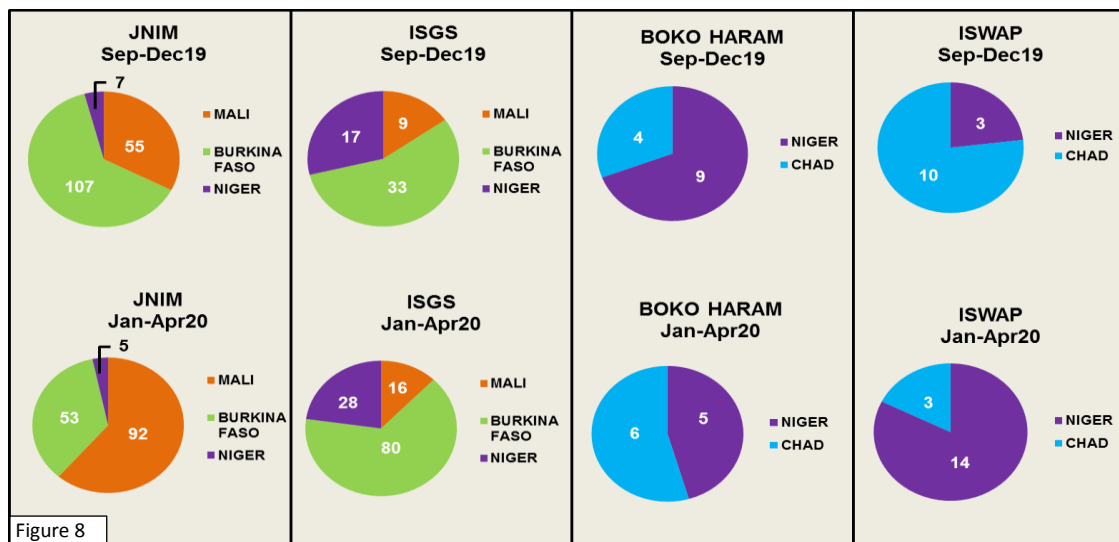
ISGS activity, with an average of 22.8 attacks, has doubled (+108%) in Period B. Finally, the activity of ISWAP and Boko Haram (3.7 and 3 attacks per month respectively) is low in the G5-Sahel countries as they are more active in Nigeria.

The following graphic shows terrorist group activity in each country in Period B. Noteworthy is the fact that no single terrorist group operates across the entire G5-Sahel area, though all of them are active in Niger.



JNIM and ISGS are both active in 3 countries (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger).

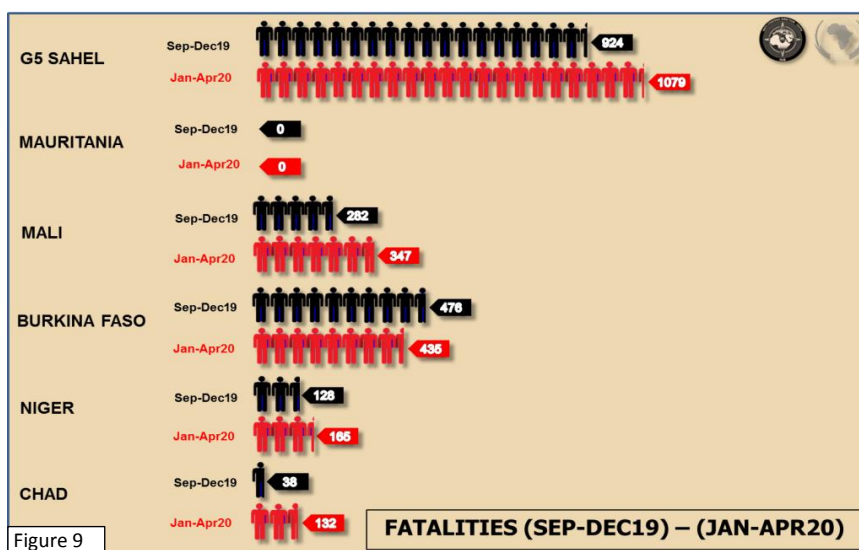
In the final comparison (see next graphic), one can see that JNIM carried out more attacks in Mali than in Burkina Faso and Niger, whereas the ISGS increased its activity across the board, but most notably in Burkina Faso.



In the Lake Chad Basin area among the G-5 Sahel countries, Boko Haram's primary focus has moved from Niger to Chad. The inverse is true for ISWAP.

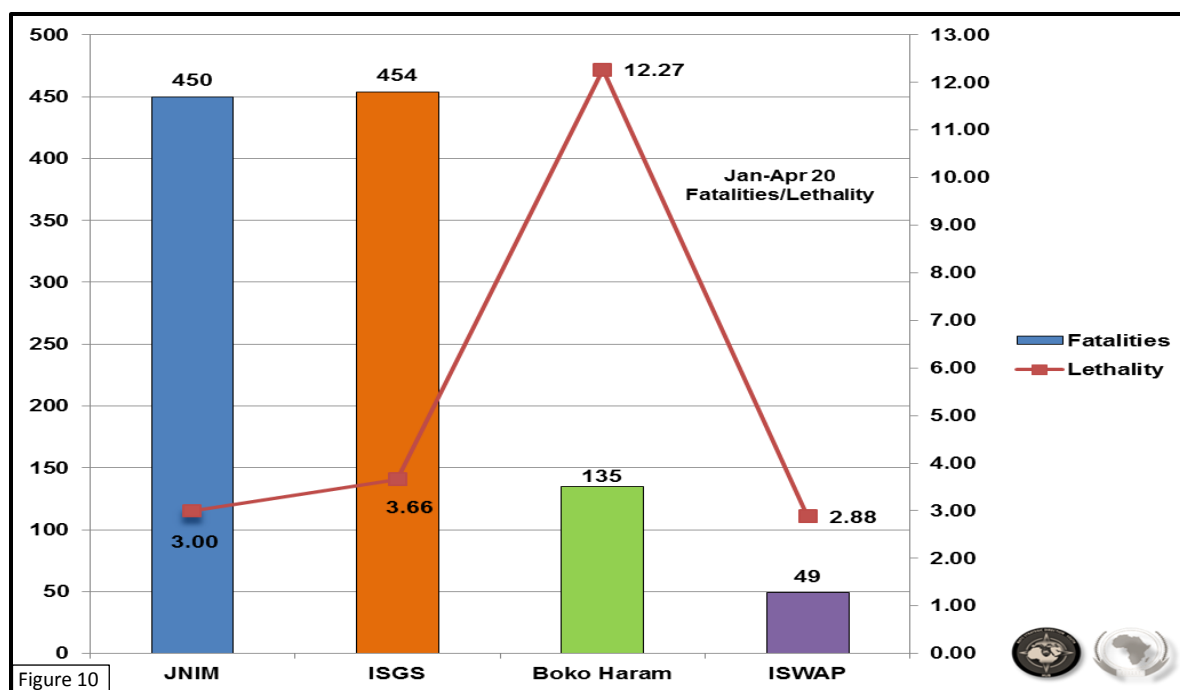
2.3. Fatalities

This analysis begins with a comparison of the two periods and proceeds to focus on Period B. Although the number of attacks increased by 19%, the number of fatalities surged by 16.8% (from 924 to 1,079) which implies a reduction in the **lethality** of the attacks (Number of fatalities/Number of attacks). The surge in fatalities in Mali towards the end of Period B is very relevant. Chad has also seen a



huge increase in fatalities, though the actual numbers still remain the lowest. Burkina Faso, though having the greatest number of fatalities during period B, is the only country where the number decreased, even if slightly.

The following graphic depicts both the total number of fatalities of each group and their lethality during Period B. ISGS has caused the most fatalities and is the most lethal⁵, followed very closely by JNIM.



⁵Even though Boko Haram appears to be the most lethal terrorist group, this is mainly due to just one terrorist attack (101 fatalities).

2.4. Targets

Comparing first the two periods, one can see that the majority of the targets and the greatest increase in the number of attacks are Civilian (CIV) throughout.

Of particular significance is the 250% increase in attacks on International Organizations (IO) (from 6 to 20). Although the actual number still remains relatively low, this might indicate a change in strategy. On the other hand, the statistics relating to the Armed and Security Forces (ASF) and Administration (ADM) remain stable.

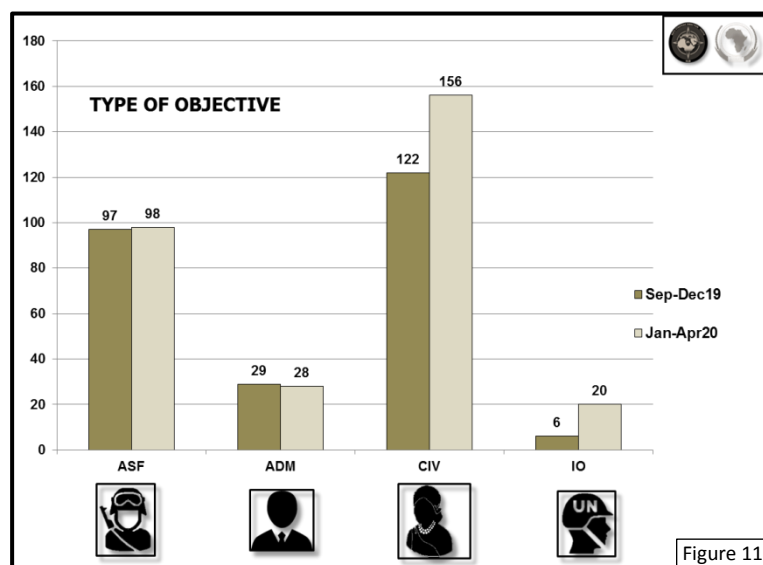


Figure 11

The following graphic incorporates all of the previous sets of data for period B and highlights the most lethal group per type of target. As stated, considering the number of attacks, all of the terrorist groups have prioritized Civilian targets, except JNIM, which targeted both Civilian and State structures alike.

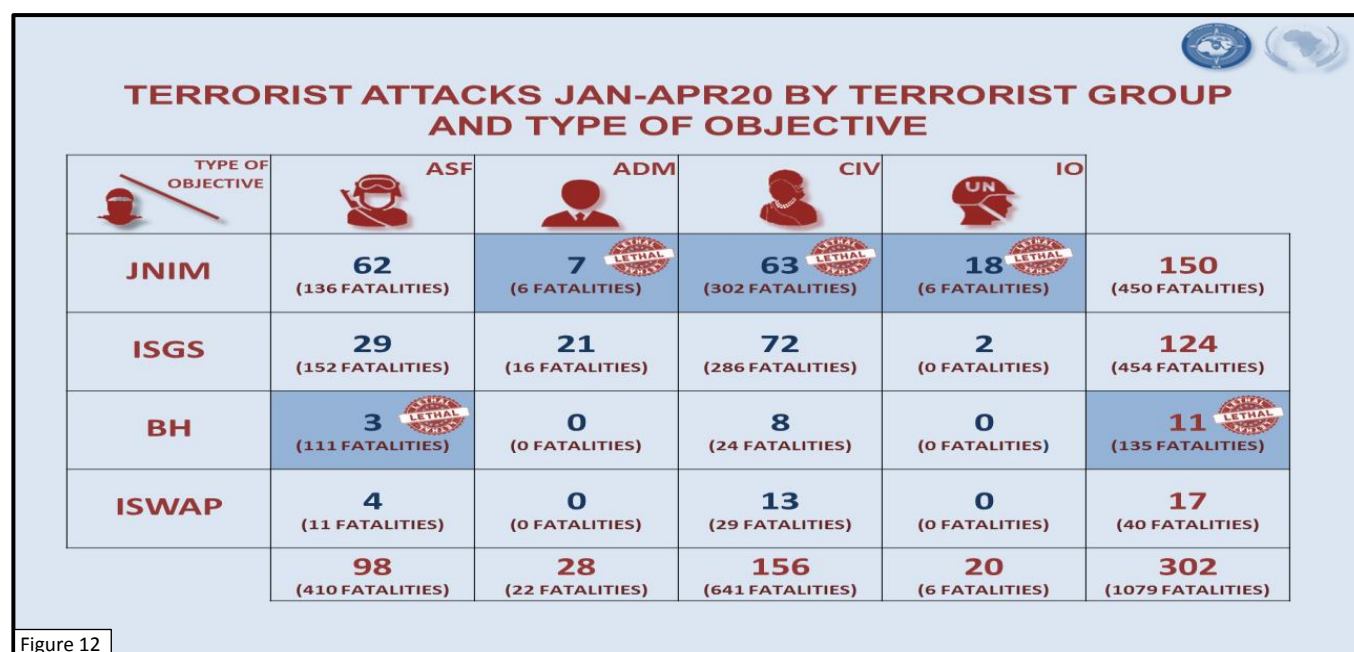


Figure 12

As explained previously in section 2.3, ISGS is the most lethal on average but it should be noted that JNIM is actually the most lethal in three of the four target categories (ADM, CIV and IO). Taking only fatalities into account, it would appear that the focus on BH is to target ASF rather than CIV.

2.5. Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP)

In comparing the two periods, the data reveals no significant difference in TTPs employed by the terrorist groups. SALW is by far the most common TTP used, followed by IEDs.

Of note is the fact that complex attacks (SALW, IED and Mortar) are the least used.

The next graphic, relating to Period B, shows that SALW also

represents the first choice of each terrorist group, causing the most victims. Only JNIM and ISGS have carried out complex attacks, which are the most lethal (26 victims/attack), and require the greatest expertise.

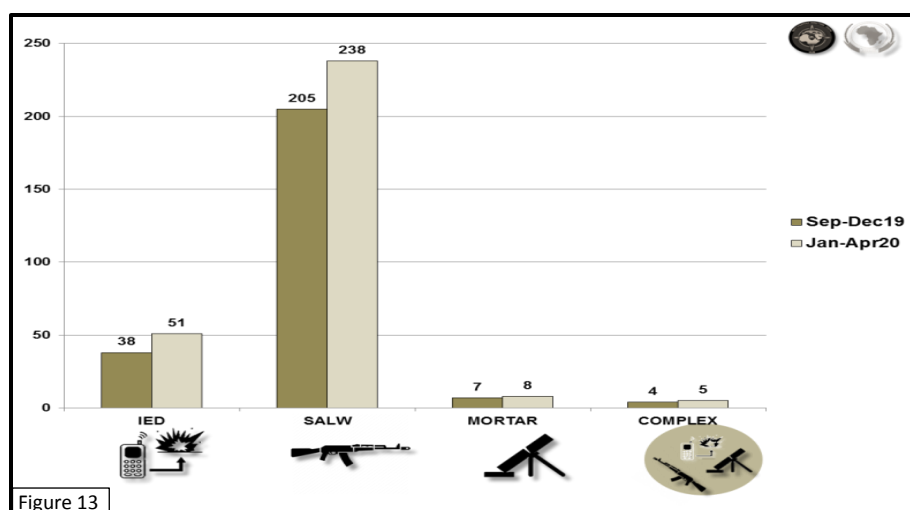


Figure 13

| TERRORIST ATTACKS JAN-APR20 BY TERRORIST GROUP AND TYPE OF ATTACK | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| TYPE OF OBJECTIVE | IED | SALW | MORTAR | COMPLEX | |
| JNIM | 41 (72 FATALITIES) | 99 (338 FATALITIES) | 6 (0 FATALITIES) | 4 (40 FATALITIES) | 150 (450 FATALITIES) |
| ISGS | 5 (25 FATALITIES) | 116 (339 FATALITIES) | 2 (1 FATALITIES) | 1 (89 FATALITIES) | 124 (454 FATALITIES) |
| BH | 1 (9 FATALITIES) | 10 (126 FATALITIES) | 0 (0 FATALITIES) | 0 (0 FATALITIES) | 11 (135 FATALITIES) |
| ISWAP | 4 (10 FATALITIES) | 13 (30 FATALITIES) | 0 (0 FATALITIES) | 0 (0 FATALITIES) | 17 (40 FATALITIES) |
| | 51 (116 FATALITIES) | 238 (833 FATALITIES) | 8 (1 FATALITIES) | 5 (129 FATALITIES) | 302 (1079 FATALITIES) |

Figure 14

According to this statistical data, the significant use of all four TTPs and the use of Complex attacks by JNIM, with particular attention to its increase in the use of IEDs (from 28 in Period A to 41 in Period B), suggests its more advanced skills.

3. EVALUATION OF THE DATA – QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Based on the quantitative analysis above, the following qualitative analysis was carried out in order to come to the most important conclusions, with a view to identifying their most probable causes and explanations.

3.1 Number of terrorist attacks

The previously identified 19% increase in terrorist attacks between the two periods was linked to a surge in activity in the month of January, notwithstanding the significant decrease in April. The increase in the number of attacks during January was due to greater ISGS and JNIM activity in Burkina Faso and Mali respectively. This could be interpreted as a reaction to the Joint Summit of Heads of States of France and the G5 Sahel countries which took place on 13

The increase in terrorist activity in the region in the month of **January** may be interpreted as a reaction to the Joint Summit of Heads of States of France and the G5 Sahel countries.

January in Pau, France. On that occasion, the participants reaffirmed their commitment to the Fight Against Terrorism in the Sahel, introducing a new concept of The Coalition for the Sahel (a joint venture between Op. Barkhane and the G5 Sahel Joint Force). In addition, the lack of State presence in many areas of Burkina Faso and Mali has contributed to the two groups having larger freedom of action.

The trend of decreasing terrorist activity in period B, culminating in the minimum number of attacks in April 2020 (58), could be the result of diminished operational capacity due to:

- Consistent pressure from the security forces starting in February 2020: 476 terrorist fatalities in 21 selected events from February to early April 2020. Among the most relevant counterterrorism operations are:
 - On 6 February, in Mali, JNIM militants attacked the military camp in Dinangourou. Air strikes caused 34 militant fatalities.
 - From 16-17 February, French Operation Barkhane air forces killed around 30 presumed JNIM militants south of Mopti, Mali.
 - On 10 March, a special unit of the Gendarmerie, supported by volunteer fighters, destroyed a militant base in Tassamakot, Burkina Faso killing 70 JNIM militants.
 - On 16 March, in Niger, soldiers repelled an ISWAP attack on an army base in Toumour, Diffa and reportedly killed at least 50 militants.
 - On 2 April, 63 militants were reportedly killed in a counterattack following an ISGS militant attack on an army position in Tillabery, Niger.
- Clashes between JNIM and ISGS in April left 152 terrorists dead, the most relevant being:
 - On 5 April, the JNIM attack on ISGS militants in the area of Mopti killed over 100, the majority of whom were ISGS.
 - On 13 April, ISGS attacked a JNIM gathering in the area of Mopti and Timbuktu resulting in the deaths of 12 JNIM and 10 ISGS fighters.
 - On 18 April, JNIM militants reportedly attacked ISGS positions in the area of Liptako-Gourma. 30 ISWAP and 4 JNIM militants were killed.

3.2 Terrorist activity by groups

As stated, ISGS and JNIM are the most active groups in the region. They carry out the majority of their attacks in Burkina Faso and Mali, where they have the control of vast areas of the territory and can act with relative impunity. From there they cross the border to carry out attacks in Niger. On the other hand, ISWAP and Boko Haram attack Niger and Chad from Nigeria, where they have their safe-haven.

No terrorist group operates across the entire G5 area, but all terrorist groups operate in Niger.

While JNIM activity has decreased during Period B, ISGS's has doubled. This could be attributed to the previous partial dissolution of Ansaroul Islam (AI) at the beginning of 2019 which led to many of its members joining either ISGS or the MLF (which had already become part of JNIM). Subsequently, in December 2019 many members of the MLF (the most deadly part of JNIM, accounting for a significant part of JNIM activity in Central Sahel) defected to ISGS and this may explain the change in dynamics.



For JNIM, which has a diverse ethnic base and expanded its support base due to the merger, violence represents a way to dislodge the State from territories so it can implement its means of informal governance in order to exercise control. For it to succeed, it tends to ingratiate itself with local communities in an attempt to win their hearts and minds. On the other hand, since ISGS lacks the large support enjoyed by its rival JNIM, it focuses on territorial expansion by primarily exploiting and even fueling pre-existing ethnic conflicts and is less concerned with the administration of territories. This distinction between the two divergent strategies is far from clear-cut in practice however, as the groups can change strategy to suit a particular situation.

The increase of JNIM terrorist attacks in Mali may be related to the proposed peace talks announced by the Malian government. In February 2020, Mali's President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita announced that his government was ready to hold peace talks with the terrorist groups and in March 2020, the JNIM leader Iyad Ag Ghali indicated the willingness of his coalition to participate in negotiations on condition that the foreign troops leave Mali and the negotiations be guided by Sharia. Since the initial offer by the government and the response by the terrorist groups, there has not been any report of commencement of any negotiations, but it is reasonable to assume that both sides will try to gain the upper hand before the negotiations start so as to strengthen their bargaining position. It is not inconceivable that JNIM will increase the number of attacks against security forces to increase pressure on the Malian state structures. If this is indeed the case, it could also explain the JNIM emphasis on Mali more recently vis-à-vis Burkina Faso.

3.3 Fatalities and Targets

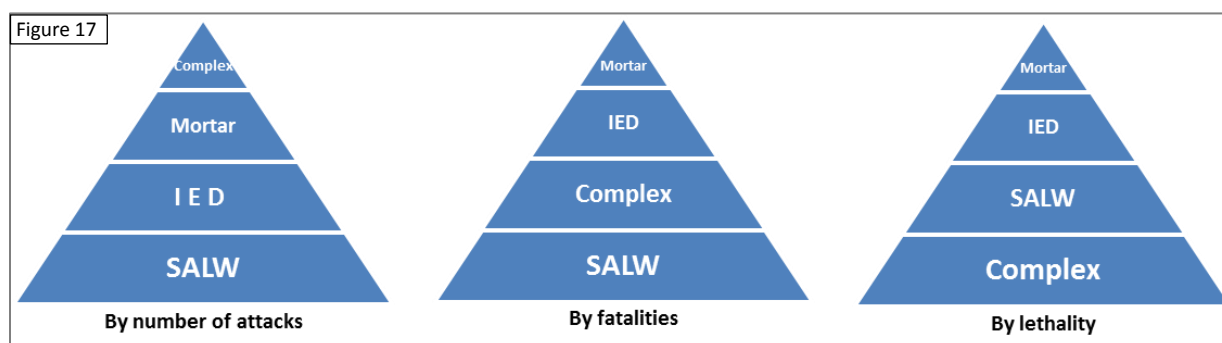
Following on from the previous section, the fact that JNIM has been turning the focus of its attacks towards ASF and ADM, rather than focusing on CIV targets as all the other groups do, appears to be in line with its strategy to dislodge State control and pave the way for its own informal governance. It is able to launch attacks against ASF and ADM by exploiting its support among some of the local communities who it claims to be protecting against purported state abuse.

Additionally, JNIM is the terrorist group which has committed most attacks against IOs (MINUSMA, Op. Barkhane, etc.), and significantly increased such attacks in Period B, primarily in Mali. The attacks against IOs are due to JNIM's opposition to the presence of such forces in Mali at the invitation of the Malian authorities.



3.4 TTPs

As previously shown, JNIM has the most advanced expertise, since it has demonstrated greater ability in carrying out complex attacks and vastly increased its use of IEDs from Period A to Period B. Although JNIM uses mortars more than the other groups, their effectiveness has been very limited.



A significant series of events occurred at the end of 2019 that is noteworthy. Following many deadly terrorist attacks against its forces, the Malian army reorganized their presence in the northern and central areas of the country by abandoning their outposts and massing their troops into larger military facilities. This move is likely to cause an increase in the use of SALW against the forces as those weapons have a larger range (mortars, rockets, medium/heavy machine guns). The terrorists could also resort to using heavier weaponry as it is becoming more difficult to launch direct assaults on such larger military facilities.

3.5 Brief summary of each terrorist group

The graphic below summarizes the most pertinent data relating to each terrorist group.

| JNIM |
|---|
| <p>The most active terrorist group in the region</p> <p>Operates in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger</p> <p>Reduced its activity in Period B (-20%) with an increase in its activity in January and a decrease in April</p> <p>Targeted Burkina Faso the most in Period A, but Mali in Period B</p> <p>JNIM caused the second greatest no. of fatalities in the region</p> <p>Committed the single most lethal attack (Bandiagara, 103 killed)</p> <p>Main objectives are state structures (Armed and Security Forces/Administration)</p> <p>Also attacked International Organizations</p> <p>The group that most uses IEDs</p> |
| ISGS |
| <p>The second most active terrorist group in the region after JNIM</p> <p>Operates in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger</p> <p>Considerably increased its activity in the region (+127%), especially in Burkina Faso</p> <p>Increased its activity in January and decreased it in April</p> <p>The terrorist group who caused the most fatalities in the region (364)</p> <p>Had the highest lethality (3.6) and the third greatest no. of lethal attacks (Chinagodar, 89 killed)</p> <p>Main objective is civilians</p> <p>Also attacked International Organizations</p> |
| BOKO HARAM |
| <p>Operates in Niger and Chad.</p> <p>Its activity remained more or less stable during both periods</p> <p>In Period B, increased their attacks in Chad, reducing them in Niger</p> <p>By number of attacks, the main objective is civilians</p> <p>By number of fatalities, the most numerous are ASF</p> <p>Committed the second most lethal attack (Bohouma, 101 killed)</p> <p>Main TTP is SALW.</p> <p>Used an IED in one attack, with a great number of casualties.</p> |
| ISWAP |
| <p>Operates in Niger and Chad</p> <p>Slightly increased its activity between the two periods</p> <p>In Period B, increased its attacks in Niger, reducing them in Chad.</p> <p>By number of attacks and fatalities, the main objective is civilians</p> <p>Its lethality is the lowest (2.35)</p> <p>Main TTP is SALW.</p> <p>Also uses IEDs</p> |

4. CASE STUDIES – NIGER AND CHAD ATTACKS

NIGER– ATTACK AGAINST MILITARY BASE – 09JAN20 (Storyboard)

EVENT

- Who: Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS);
- What: armed assault against Nigerian military facility (army base)
- When: 09 January 2020
- Where: Chinagodrar, Tillabery region, Niger

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

The attack began at 13:00 when ISGS fighters attempted to raid a military outpost in Chinagodrar. The attack was repelled following air support from Niger and France. Op Barkhane, although it was reported that the militants briefly overrun the base before fleeing.

OUTCOME:

- 89 Nigerian soldiers KIA; 77 ISGS fighters KIA

FOLLOW UP:

- On 13 January 2020, Niger appointed BGEN Saïfou Modi as the new Army Chief



NSD-S HUB COMMENTS:

- Niger is a member of the G5 Sahel, contributing with staff elements and two battalions to the **G5 Sahel Joint Force**
- Niger contributes with troops to the **Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)** against Boko Haram
- In a separate incident on 10 December 2019, 71 Nigerian soldiers were killed in an ISGS assault on a military camp in Inates, Tillaberi region

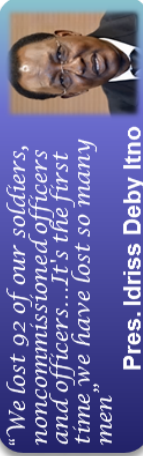
NSD-S HUB ANALYSIS:

- The series of attacks against military targets shows the increased operational capability of the ISGS
- Niger is the unique position amongst the G5 Sahel countries as it has to fight insecurity in the **both VEOs clusters: Central Sahel and Lake Chad**
- Despite its historical efficient approach towards national security, the current security challenges, originating from **outside** the country, reveals the limits of the state in dealing with the ongoing crises
- External support should built on Niger's record of good practices in the fields of governance and security

CHAD – ATTACK AGAINST MILITARY BASE – 23MAR20 (Storyboard)

EVENT

- Who: Boko Haram (Shekau faction/JAS)
- What: armed assault against Chadian military facility (army base)
- When: 23 March 2020
- Where: Boma island, Lac province, Chad



Pres. Idriss Deby Itno



OPERATIONS SUMMARY

The surprise attack was initiated at 0500. The fight lasted for approx. 7 hours before the assailants voluntarily retreated. Chadian army reinforcements were unable to support as they were engaged by the Boko Haram militants while trying to reach the battle location.

OUTCOME:

- 98 Chadian soldiers KIA, 47 WIA; BH casualties unknown
- 24 army vehicles destroyed
- Undisclosed number of weapons looted away

FOLLOW UP:

Chadian Operation "Boma Wrath". Chad planning to stop participating to CT operations outside the borders.

NSD-S HUB COMMENTS:

- Chad is a member of the G5 Sahel, contributing with staff elements and one battalion to the **G5 Sahel Joint Force**
- Chad contributes with troops to the **Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)** against Boko Haram
- Chadian armed forces are arguably **the most proficient** amongst the G5 Sahel countries
- In a separate incident on 23 March 2020, 47 Nigerian soldiers were killed in an ISWAP ambush in Yobe State, Nigeria

NSD-S HUB ANALYSIS:

- The amplitude of the attack revealed an surprisingly **resilient Boko Haram (JAS)** who was thought to be less capable compared to the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)
- The success of the attack revealed the **limits of the Chadian military**, as well as the **MNJTF**, in countering an **increasingly versatile and bold enemy**
- The insecurity in the Lake Chad poses rises additional concerns given the **proximity** to the Chadian capital **N'Djamena**
- The security problems on home territory lead Chad to **reassess its priorities**, which may affect its **participation in the security and peacekeeping frameworks** across the Sahel (G5S JF, MNJTF, MINUSMA)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT

On the basis of the increasing number of terrorist attacks and fatalities in Period B, there would appear to be a trend towards degradation of the security domain in the Sahel region. The validity of this conclusion will be assessed in later reports. Subsequent reports will also deal with the variety of related dynamics referred to in this document which might indicate changes in strategy, primarily:

- An increase in ISGS activity with a corresponding decrease in JNIM activity;
- To what degree each of the groups is active in each of the G5 Sahel countries and how this is constantly evolving;
- The slight decrease in lethality of the attacks in Period B despite a greater number of attacks causing many fatalities;
- The variation in targets selected by the different terrorist groups; and
- The use of more complex attacks;

Any evolution of these dynamics remains subject to many variables, the most important of which are political developments and the ability of the security and peacekeeping forces to respond to these changes. Aspects of these potential “game changers” for the next periods are:

- Rivalry between JNIM and ISGS: Recent months have revealed an increased aggressiveness between the two dominant groups in Central Sahel. If this trend is maintained, it is likely that they will have to divert some of their resources to intra-terrorist conflict. It is also possible that the conflict between JNIM and ISGS will move beyond direct engagement to involve attacks against communities which appear to support or sympathize with the opposing side, thus increasing the spiral of retaliations and the number of civilian casualties.
- Peace talks between the Government of Mali and JNIM: The proposed negotiations led to an increase in JNIM activity against the security forces, future developments of which will need to be monitored.
- Agreements between terrorist groups: Paradoxically, future reports will also focus on the question of whether or not there are any agreements, tacit or otherwise, among some or all of the groups regarding the distribution of territory among them.
- Cooperation between ISWAP and ISGS: Growth in cooperation between these two Daesh factions is a possible development. The worst-case scenario would be a unified Daesh front in the Sahel, even without geographical continuity, which could develop into an extremely serious security challenge to Niger.
- Evolution of the security initiatives: The ongoing reconfiguration of the security architecture in the Sahel: Operation Barkhane (600 additional soldiers); the Coalition for Sahel (the establishment of a joint command); Operation Tacouba; and the deployment of a 3,000-strong AU force.

- MNJTF efficiency in the Lake Chad Basin. In spite of some important achievements, the MNJTF has not managed to eliminate the terrorist threat and its future looks uncertain. In particular, Chad is showing signs of distancing itself from the MNJTF.

ANNEX A: DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Terrorist attack: all those facts consisting of the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence, instilling fear and terror, which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom, or causes serious injury or death to individuals, group of people or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, or to gain control over a population, to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.

Excluded are other violent acts. For example riots, violent demonstrations, security forces raids, etc. Although ethnical/tribal conflicts can cause a great number of victims among the civilian population, these issues are not terrorist attacks. This in no way diminishes the importance of ethnic/tribal conflicts in regional security.

Terrorist group: those terrorist organizations defined by the UN Agreement (UN Sanctions Committee List 1267/1988), as well as those considered as such by ACSRT (in accordance with AU definition of terrorist acts) and the Hub (based on criteria such as claims, motivations, the ends pursued and the means employed, etc.)

Fatalities: the number of deaths caused by the terrorist attacks, excluding terrorist fatalities.

Targets: the types of targets considered are Armed and Security Forces (ASF), Administrative personnel and facilities (ADM), Civilians (CIV) and International Organizations (IO).

Tactics, Techniques And Procedures (TTP): the TTPs included are Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), explosives or IEDs, Mortars and Complex Attacks (combining two or more TTPs).