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DEATH & SECURITY VACUUM IN WEST AFRICA: MUAMMAR GADDAFI & IDRIS DÉBY ITNO

Abstract:

This paper has analysed how the deaths of two African leaders have aggravated the security situation in both West Africa and some countries in North Africa. The regime change in Libya has rendered the country virtually without a central government and the implications of such a leadership vacuum is evident in the proliferation of different arms groups in the country and instability in some neighbouring countries. Similarly, the abrupt death of former Chadian President Idris Déby Itno in April 2021 has aggravated the fragile peace in the West African sub-region, particularly in the Niger Republic, Nigeria, and Mali. Secondary data elicited by the researchers revealed that Chad during Déby had contributed immensely to the peace in its neighbouring West African countries. He fought Islamic fundamentalist groups and rebels from Sudan, Libya and within Libya. Therefore, his absence, like the absence of Gadhafi gave the terrorists and other criminal elements the liberty to operate between the countries using Libya as their operational base for training their fighters, and smuggling weapons across the international frontiers of Niger, Nigeria and Mali. The incessant attacks by armed groups in Mali, Niger, and Nigeria against security personnel and civilians have been attributed to the deaths of the two leaders leading to the lack of coordinated and planned security measures in Chad and Libya.

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Introduction

The regime change in Libya after the death of Muammar Gadhafi has exacerbated security challenges for its North African neighbours and some West African countries with historical trade routes and a relationship with Libya that predate the slavery and colonial eras. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, Niger Republic, and Mali are among the West African countries that are suffering from the effects of regime change in Libya. These three countries have been fighting Islamist insurgents before the death of Gaddafi on October 20, 2011, Boko Haram in Niger and Nigeria and Al-Qaeda in Mali. Following Gaddafi's death at the hand of the rebel Tuareg soldiers recruited and enlisted into his army, known as the Islamic Legion, who stole heavy weapons from arms depots in Tripoli and Ajdabiyya, and returned to Mali in the southwest. From 2006 to 2009, the Tuareg faction rebelled against the Malian government led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, and they were ready to do so again if the opportunity presented itself. Similarly, the Tuareg forces started military operations in Mali on January 16, 2012, with sophisticated weapons, under the leadership of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga and Mohammed Ag Najm (a former military commander in Gaddafi's Islamic Legion). Tuareg forces had captured Mali's major northern cities of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, as well as their surrounding areas, by March 2012, demonstrating that they were more than a match for Mali's limited and poorly equipped army³.

This indicates that the stability of Libya and by extension, the presence of Muammar Gaddafi had both security and economic impacts on both North and West African countries because he had relatively succeeded in bringing the majority of the dissenting groups and rebellious elements under control. However, after Gaddafi's regime collapsed, the coastguards and Navy were disbanded in Libya, ushering in a new era of large-scale sea-bound fuel smuggling onboard tankers bound for Europe (mainly Italy, Malta, Spain, Crete and Turkey). The centre of the terrorist activities in Libya is a stretch of coast between Zawiya (45 kilometres west of Tripoli which is home to the region's largest refinery and storage facility, and Zuwara, a major seaport for fuel⁴. This

³ R. Larémont, *After the Fall of Qaddafi: Political, Economic, and Security Consequences for Libya, Mali, Niger, and Algeria*, "Stability: International Journal of Security & Development" 2013, VOL. 2, No. 2:29, pp. 1-8.

⁴ S. Mark, *Africa's Changing Place in the Global Criminal Economy*, "Continental Report" 2017, No. 1, pp. 1-40.

serves as the income for the organised criminals and Islamic fundamentalist organisations operating in West and North Africa.

Before the downfall of Gaddafi's regime, insecurity has not reached the level it reached in 2021, with spillover effects being the security challenges in some West African countries that share a boundary with Libya. The activities of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb have been on the increase in Nigeria, Niger and Mali as well as Algeria because of the dispersion of fighters and weapons from Libya. In the turbulent areas of West and North Africa, during the era of Gaddafi, Libya was a haven of peace. This was particularly true during Gaddafi's rule over the last two decades. Libya's borders were relatively well-controlled, and Gaddafi was sometimes a positive participant in Mali and Niger peace agreements. Perhaps most importantly, Libya provided not only much-needed foreign direct investment to neighbouring Sahel countries but also employment for people from nearby and faraway African countries. However, now that everything is gone, and Libya has become a source of instability, the Sahel region is suffering greatly.

Statement of the Research Problem

In volatile and conflict-prone sub-regions, the fall of the Gaddafi regime and the collapse of the Libyan state has exacerbated existing security problems and threats. The Sahel region, especially Northern Mali, was one of the first areas in West Africa to be affected by post-Gaddafi instability⁵. Similarly, cross-border transit of criminals and terrorist groups from North Africa affects West Africa. For decades, Libya has played an important role in the security and political growth or instability of the region. The former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, armed with petrodollars, meddled in regional political movements and insurgent uprisings, supporting and endorsing leaders and projects like Charles Taylor's adventures in the Mano River Basin and Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front. Following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, thousands of poor and jobless migrant workers, as well as armed men who had fought for Gaddafi, returned to their homes in the south and helped to foment an uprising against Mali's government⁶.

During the reign of Idriss Déby, Chad's position in the region and globally has witnessed a lot of dramatic changes in the security sector. Under the context of the 'war on terror', Chad has been a central ally of France and the United States. In August 2014, Operation Barkhane replaced the French anti-terrorist

⁵ M. Eljarh, *Security Challenges and Issues in the Sahel-Saharan Region: The Libya Perspective*, Bamako, 2016; A. Marc, N. Verjee, S. Mogaka, *The Challenge of Stability and Security in West Africa*, Washington DC 2013.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

operation Eperview, which was formed in 1986, and moved to a new base in N'Djamena. Chad also acts as a base for US military assistance to Nigeria in the fight against Boko Haram. Additionally, Déby sent 1,200 military personnel to Mali, who formed the first contingent of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in April 2013, following the French military counter-operation. The mission aimed to assist Mali's political processes as well as perform a variety of security-related tasks to restore stability in the country. In the fight against Boko Haram, Déby contributed one-third of its forces to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which fights Boko Haram in the regions of Lake Chad, Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin, and Niger Republic (about 3,000 out of 8,700 soldiers, police and civilians)⁷.

It is against the above discourse that this paper examined the reasons why some of the countries that share common boundaries with Chad expressed fear that the demise of Déby could inflame the security situation in West and parts of North Africa similar to what was expressed when Gadhafi was killed. Therefore, the objective of the paper is to identify the reason why the Niger Republic and Nigeria's leaders raised alarm over the death of Déby. To achieve the objective of the study, the researchers compared the departure of the former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and that of Idriss Déby and its implication for the security of the continent. To write this article, the researchers sourced data from secondary sources such as online journals, textbooks, monographs and other documented texts. Thematic analysis was adopted for the analysis of the secondary data and findings generated from the data.

Security Situation in West Africa in the Post-Gaddafi Era

A review of the effects of the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi has been found that the lack of a central government that controls the whole country gave room for the coming of different rebel groups and the spread of weapons. Therefore, the threat of terrorist groups in Africa's Sahel region, such as Boko Haram, a Nigerian-based Islamic terror organization, and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), who now have access to thousands of arms thought to have originated from Gaddafi's large weapons caches, is exacerbating the security situation in Mali, Niger Republic, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Sudan. This shows that the flow of weapons from Libya has been fuelling armed violence in the aforementioned countries in Africa, particularly in West, Central

⁷ M. Debos, *Behind the Cliché of the Chadian 'Desert Warriors', Militarized Politics and Idriss Déby's Global Political Capital*, "African Politics, African Peace" 2016, Paper No. 22, 1-6.

and North Africa, this is not to assert that the countries were peaceful before the death of Gaddafi but how his death has aggravated the situation⁸.

Before the downfall of Gaddafi's regime, the former President of Chad, Déby had anticipated the negative implications of the removal of Gadhafi when he warned African leaders against supporting the removal of Gadhafi because it would destabilize or aggravate the security situation in the Sahel region. Since 2011 when Gaddafi left power, Chad's government have been reasonably anxious about possible new threats on its northern border which have varied terrorist groups carrying out their activities and launching attacks in Chad and neighbouring countries. These include Islamist groups who have established themselves in Libya; and the Teda (or Tubu) who live astride the frontiers of Chad and Libya and have periodically rebelled against the government in N'Djaména, notably under President Déby. Also, non-Teda Chadian rebels, notably Beri opponents of the Déby regime, could acquire backing in Libya and build rear bases in the Chadian-Libyan border area (and this is likely the threat that N'Djaména deems the most serious). This stance taken by Déby underscores the strategic importance and relevance of Gadhafi in the region despite his accused connivance with rebels or political opponents in other African countries to cause instability.

The Role of Chad in Regional Security under Idriss Déby

Following the killings of some military personnel from the Niger Republic military in 2016, the Chadian troops were dispatched to Niger, demonstrating both the degree of military cooperation in response to the popular threat posed by violent extremist groups operating in the Lake Chad region, as well as the critical role played by the Chadian Armed Forces in launching operations against the militants. Similarly, the Chadian forces were instrumental in an operation codenamed 'Gama Aiki' which lasted until September 2016, when it was replaced by Operation Rawan Kada (Crocodile Dance, also known as Gama Aiki II). In the same region, Rawan Kada placed a greater focus on stabilization. The Multinational National Joint Tax Force appears to have been primarily focused on ISIS-WA in the Lake Chad region and along the Niger-Nigeria border, rather than the joint Cameroon-Nigeria operations that have targeted JAS further south⁹. The study shows the contribution of the Chadian forces to the fight against Boko Haram which is strategic in preventing the

⁸ K. Aning, F. Okyere, M. Abdallah, *Addressing Emerging Security Threats in Post-Gaddafi Sahel and the ECOWAS Response to the Malian Crisis*, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre "Policy Brief" 2012, 1, pp. 1-7.

⁹ S. M. Omar, C. A. Ndubuisi, *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*, "ISS Research Report" 2018, pp. 1-32.

terrorists from using Chad as a route from their operation base in Libya to attack communities in Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon.

A study revealed that under the leadership of Déby, the Chadian armed forces had taken part in three major anti-terrorist operations in Africa, earning a reputation as one of the most respected armies in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. It is an important member of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the G5 Sahel Joint Force. With over 1,400 troops, the Chadian army is also the main troop donor to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Similarly, the study found that the emergence of insurgency groups, especially in the Lake Chad region, where Boko Haram continues to pose a security threat, is exacerbating the situation. As a result, the Chadian National Assembly declared a state of emergency in the Lake area in November 2015, effectively putting it under military administration. The government also increased its police presence in N'Djamena and restored the death penalty for terrorism offences. Boko Haram's threat prompted the reconfiguration of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which has its headquarters in N'Djamena. Furthermore, in March 2020, Boko Haram attacked a Chadian military base in Bohoma, killing 98 Chadian soldiers, the country's largest military loss in history. In April 2020, the Chadian armed forces launched a major offensive against Boko Haram in response to this military defeat, killing at least 1000 Boko Haram soldiers. Boko Haram's violent operations in the Lake Chad Basin region, especially Chad, have resulted in persistent insecurity in the nation. Even though the country has become a leader in the fight against terrorism under President Déby's leadership, the resurgence of Boko Haram attacks on Chad's western border with Nigeria remains a major threat to national security¹⁰. The study carried out by Happi has brought to the fore the efforts of former President Déby to address insecurity around the Lake Chad region which invariably, assisted Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Niger Republic in the fight against the insurgents and the collective goal to achieve relative peace and stability.

Additionally, Chad's involvement in the fight against Boko Haram increased in intensity between January and February 2015. At that time, the ANT (Armée Nationale Tchadienne) deployed combat units in Cameroon, Nigeria, and the Niger Republic to support neighbouring armies under pressure from the Salafist fighters. Chadian military assistance to neighbours around Lake Chad continued throughout 2016. President Déby's regional policy has thus enabled him to minimize the secondary fallout from the Ghaddafi regime's collapse by strengthening his position on the international scene. Between 2015 and 2021, Chad was the most stable country in the region, which enabled it to

¹⁰ C. Happi, *Chad Conflict Insights: Peace & Security Report*, Institute for Peace and Security Studies 2021.

benefit from Western political, economic, and military support, despite its inadequacies in terms of economic management and democracy. Before the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency and the regime change in Libya, in early 2000, after the ANT had suffered several defeats, President Déby managed to convince his Libyan neighbour to stop providing support to the rebellion. Déby started to make contact with the Libyan opposition and, during a Benghazi summit, threatened to leave CEN-SAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States) in the end, he managed to have Adoum Togy dismissed from the organization¹¹.

Chadian combat battalions served as the core of respective regional forces tasked with consolidating stability and security in the Central African Republic while also assisting in the demobilization of militant groups: FOMUC (2002-2008), MICOPAX (2008-2013), and MISCA (2013-2014). Although the Chadian military in CAR interfered several times in 2003 and 2004 to suppress the predation of the 'libérateurs' (Chadian mercenaries who were the real strike force behind François Bozizé), it remained silent in 2013¹². Many Seleka mid-level commanders were mostly Chadians, either rebelling against Déby in the 2000s or in Darfur, where they were recruited by Seleka officials or daughters who had reconciled with Idriss Déby's regime and were demobilized in Chad but left out of the political decision and ready for a new well-paid military adventure.

Idriss Déby attempted to initiate a dialogue between people who are close to Boko Haram leader Abukar Shekau and President Jonathan's representatives in October 2014; a new meeting could have been held in December 2014, if the two sides had adopted pragmatic steps they had agreed on. Nothing occurred (on both sides), and Idriss Déby was correct in his assessment that the days were numbered for a larger confrontation. This has pinpointed the role of Déby in the security circle of the sub-region whose absence creates a vacuum and endangers the beleaguered security situation in Chad, Nigeria, Niger Republic, Mali and Cameroun as well as Sudan.

From 2015 to 2021, Chad proved to be a successful counter-terrorism partner for France and the United States. Although ECOWAS member states debated whether or not to form a military coalition to combat radical Islamist armed groups in northern Mali, Idriss Déby Itno took the unusual step of sending 2,000 troops to Mali through Niger to confront militants in the north. Two years later, Idriss Déby used the same sense of initiative to foresee the danger posed by Boko Haram and initiate an offensive against the Jihadi

¹¹ J. Tubiana, C. Gramizzi, *Tubu Trouble: State and Statelessness in Chad–Sudan–Libya Triangle*, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva 2017.

¹² R. Marchal, *An emerging military power in Central Africa? Chad under Idris Déby*, "Sociétés politiques comparées", vol. 40, 9-10.2016.

movement in collaboration with Cameroonian and Nigerien forces. What structural factors allowed Chad to emerge as a regional military force so quickly? Four factors are taken into account: regional demand and supply, financial capacity, ambiguous ties with the international community, and a well-trained military apparatus as a result of a civil war¹³.

Findings and Discussion

The Government of the Niger Republic had in 2016 requested Chad to send troops to the Niger Republic which was politically sensitive, even though the Chadian contingent was able to dissipate the threat and restore relative peace for the local population.

Chad was willing to invest a substantial sum of money during the Déby period without knowing whether it would be reimbursed, but it did so solely to protect the country and, by extension, its neighbours. It's impossible to know or pretend that N'Djamena was certain of being reimbursed to the last penny. In spring 2015, the Chad contingent in northern Cameroon allegedly cost CFA Franc 6 billion per week. It is also uncertain who will be responsible for paying the bill. Chad's military presence in Mali, Cameroon, and Nigeria has relieved Washington and Paris. As a result, they could generously reimburse its costs or, at least, use Chad's financial constraints, as France did in gaining access to the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (over one billion US dollars in irrevocable debt relief)¹⁴.

Concerns in West Africa after the death of Déby

The death of Chad's President, Idriss Déby, has sparked fears about the country's and West Africa's stability. Déby headed over one of West Africa's most formidable and well-equipped militaries. In the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel, where Islamist extremist groups have wrought havoc in recent years, his forces supplied critical support to international security efforts¹⁵.

Voids have been created and it is these gaps that will most likely lead to a worsening of the current security situation in numerous sections of the Sahel. Chad was a stabilizing force during the late President Déby¹⁶. This underscores

¹³ *Ibidem*, p 6.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

¹⁵ A. Hammerschlag, *Chad President Déby's Death Raises Security Concerns in West Africa*, <https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_chad-president-debys-death-raises-security-concerns-west-africa/6204954.html> (30.11.2021).

¹⁶ T. Obiezu, *Experts Say Death of Chad's Deby Will Impact Regional Security*, <https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_experts-say-death-chads-deby-will-impact-regional-security/6204969.html> (30.11.2021).

the significance of the late Déby in tackling insurgents based in Chad, Sudan, and the Central African Republic from taking Chad paving the way to destabilize other countries in the West African sub-region.

Nigeria, one of the countries affected by activities of Islamist insurgencies, expressed concern over the death of Déby citing fear of security deterioration in the neighbouring countries. Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister stated that Déby has played a significant role in the preservation of peace in the Lake Chad region and brought a modicum of stability to the region and his absence can lead to the setback as the result of his death. Since the death of Déby in April 2021, the security situation in Nigeria has been aggravated, particularly in the North West, where the armed bandits, cattle rustlers and kidnappers have intensified their attacks on villages, ransacking and killing the local population. The Nigerian Government and security experts are attributing the deterioration of the security situation in Nigeria to the importation of illegal weapons and ammunition to Nigeria from the Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroun. This is similar to what happened during the overthrow of Gaddafi in 2011. As a result of the Libyan conflict, the entire sub-region faces new security challenges. While the Western-backed National Transitional Council (NTC) liberation forces toppled Gaddafi's regime, subsequent developments show how the Libyan crisis has increased the challenges facing countries in the Sahel, with ramifications that extend far beyond West Africa's borders¹⁷.

Furthermore, the demise of Gaddafi in the aftermath of the Arab Spring has far-reaching ramifications for numerous African countries. In the already weak and turbulent Sahel area, it has sparked a combination of rebels, weapons, refugees, smugglers, and violent Islamic extremist operations. Multiple rebel factions, such as the MNLA and Ansar Dine, have escalated their activities in northern Mali, where significant towns such as Gao and Kidal have been taken. In expressing fear over the collapse of Gaddafi's regime in Libya, the former President of the Niger Republic averred and expressed worry over the future of West Africa in the post-Gaddafi era. Mahamadou Issoufou stated that the Libyan conflict has heightened the dangers that countries in the area face. Issoufou stated that "We are already threatened by fundamentalists, as well as criminal organizations, drug traffickers, and gun traffickers... All of these issues have gotten worse in recent years". All the more dangerous because Libyan weapon depots have been stolen, and such weaponry have spread across the area. Furthermore, Issoufou narrated that "Yes, I am concerned we fear that, as in Somalia, the Libyan state could collapse, bringing religious extremists to power".

¹⁷ K. Aning, F. Okyere, M. Abdallah, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-7.

Before the change of leadership in Chad, the absence of a unified government in Libya created a security void in North and West Africa, this is because of the strategic location of Libya at the Mediterranean coast which made it easy for the arms smugglers to move illegal weapons from Europe to Libya and distribute it to West Africa countries with security challenges and the control of Libya terrorists of Islamic fundamentalists has further worsened the insecurity in virtually all the countries that surrounded Libya and their neighbours such as the Niger Republic, Nigeria and Cameroun.

Security Situation in Nigeria and Niger Republic

After the deaths of Déby and Gadhafi, the security situation in the Niger Republic and Nigeria as well as Mali is out of proportion and Governments in those countries are struggling to bring the situation under control. The activities of Islamic fundamentalists in Northeast Nigeria have been subdued though there are pockets of attacks on civilians and security personnel in Borno and Yobe States. However, the armed bandits who ransacked villages stole livestock, kidnapped people for ransom or killed villagers have intensified their activities in Northwest Nigeria from 2013 to 2021. This is attributed to the proliferation of weapons and the spread of armed bandits across Nigeria and the Niger Republic's boundaries. In 2021, there were bouts of deadly attacks by armed bandits and cattle rustlers in the Niger Republic. In the Niger Republic, on November 4, 2021, 11 soldiers were killed in Dagne village, at the border with Mali. Similarly, on November 2, 2021, 69 civilians were massacred in the village of Adab-Dab, close to Bani Bangou in the Western region of Tillaberi. Additionally, in July 2021, the town of Tchoma Bangou like Bani Bangou is located in the Western region of Tillaberi. In July 2021, 49 people were killed in the Tillaberi area, 5 were civilians, 4 soldiers, and 40 terrorists. Before July, in January 2021, 70 unarmed civilians were gruesomely killed in Tchoma Bangou and 30 in Zaroumadareye.

In Nigeria, the activities of the armed criminals in the Northwest region which share a land boundary with the Niger Republic have reached a boiling point. The armed criminal elements have been killing and kidnapping defenceless civilians and in some instances armed security personnel in Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Niger, Kaduna, and parts of the Kebbi States. The deteriorating security situation has compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria in September 2021 to cut-off mobile telecommunication services in Local Government Areas, among the other security measures, in Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and the Sokoto States in order to disable communication between the armed criminals with their informants who reside in town and cities. However, the shutdown of telecommunication service has not yielded the

desired results, as the cattle rustlers and bandits continue to unleash horrific attacks in the Northwest unabated.

Discussion of the Major Findings

Deducting on the above findings from Nigeria and the Niger Republic, the absence of two leaders, Gaddafi and Déby has exacerbated the security challenges in countries that already have security challenges such as the Niger Republic, Mali, and Nigeria. This does not directly relate to the beleaguered security situation in two countries (Niger and Nigeria) to the collapse of Gaddafi and Déby but their absence contributed to the proliferation of weapons and fighters who once worked in support of the Gaddafi regime and the rebels that late President kept them at bay throughout his regime, prevented from entering Chad and other neighbouring countries such as Nigeria. This is corroborated by the conclusion of a study conducted by Eljarh in West Africa which concluded that in a volatile and conflict-prone region, the fall of the Gaddafi regime and the breakdown of the Libyan State has exacerbated existing security vulnerabilities and threats. The Sahel and Northern Mali, in particular, were the first to suffer from Libya's post-Gaddafi turbulence¹⁸. This is also one of the reasons why the Tillaberi region in the Niger Republic has been under incessant attacks by terrorists due to its proximity to Mali. Similarly, in Nigeria, Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto States share a common boundary with the Niger Republic which is also suffering from the influx of armed terrorists from Libya and Chad and is besieged by the activities of armed groups, terrorizing motorists, security personnel and defenceless villages.

The findings further portrayed that Libya and Chad are strategic countries in Africa and influence the stability or otherwise of not only their internal security but including other African countries. The debilitating security situation in Nigeria which led to the death of a senior army officer in November 2021 in an ambush by ISWAP in Borno State is among the happenings some security experts anticipated when Deby died in April. This is substantiated by the analysis made by one of the global security analysts Alexandre Marc stated that Chad's army is one of the most effective in Sub-Saharan Africa, having appeared on all fronts in the struggle against jihadist organizations in the Sahel over the previous 20 years. It has also been involved in civil wars in neighbouring countries, most notably in Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR), as well as in Libya indirectly¹⁹.

¹⁸ M. Eljarh, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-17.

¹⁹ A. Marc, *The Death of Chadian President Idris Déby Itno threatens stability in the region*, <<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/04/29/the-death-of-chadian-president-idris-deby-itno-threatens-stability-in-the-region/>> (30.11.2021).

Conclusion

Regardless of the system of government adopted in Libya and Chad as well as the democratic credentials (undemocratic credentials in the case of Gaddafi) and human rights records (dismal human rights records) during their regimes, Libya and Chad under the guidance of Gaddafi and Déby were stabilizing forces of the security situation in some West African countries. Therefore, the current situation in Libya, its neighbours and other adjoining countries in the West and Central African regions is an indication of a strategic blunder by some African leaders who watched hands-akimbo, as foreign forces overthrew Gaddafi. In the same vein, the sudden demise of Déby, unlike Gaddafi has caught most of the neighbouring countries of Chad off-guard and ill-prepared for the security challenges they may face without a strong leader who has been controlling the influx of fighters from Sudan and Libya to infiltrate some West African countries. In this sense, addressing the aggravating security concerns in Mali, the Niger Republic, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria is intertwined with the security atmosphere in their neighbours that armed fighters are using as training grounds and sources of weapons. What is novel in this paper is the comparative analysis of the worsening security situation in some countries in West Africa which is attributed to the collapsing security in Chad and Libya.

The study concluded that the aftermath of Gaddafi's death is having a significant impact on Africa, especially the Sahel region. Mali has experienced the first big reaction to the coup d'état, with increased proliferation of weapons and mercenaries joining rebel groups, exacerbating the already precarious defence, socio-economic, and environmental conditions, with numerous implications for the West African sub-region.

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