

THE ARAB SPRING AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN AFRICA: FROM DECOLONIZATION TO NEOCOLONIALISM

Dirane Merlin Kenfack¹

University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon

Abstract: North Africa and the Sahelian zone have experienced the emergence of terrorism such as Boko Haram since 2011, the presence of Daesh in Libya and insecurity in the Sahel. The emergence of insecurity in the Sahel was facilitated by the weapons delivered to the Libyan rebels by France in 2011 during the battle of Tripoli led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with the aim of overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi. The Arab revolutions were supported by the United States and Europe with the aim of recolonizing the Arab world for the benefit of the Western bloc by seizing oil resources, particularly in Libya. The hopes expected during the popular uprisings have not been realized, the situation is disappointing for people who saw in the Arab Spring a possibility of emancipation of peoples who lived under authoritarian regimes. The United States and Europe share responsibility for the chaos and general insecurity orchestrated by the Arab Spring. It is the result of the imperialist policy of Europe and the United States towards nations possessing enormous natural resources and challenging the Western order. The idea of democratization of the Arab world has become for Europeans an element of colonization.

Keywords: *Arab spring, insecurity, Sahel, Libya, neocolonialism*

INTRODUCTION

The Sahelo-Saharan space has long been experiencing problems affecting the security of individuals, whether it is the crisis of legitimacy of the regimes, the absence of good governance, ethnic tensions, poverty or rebellions against the central authorities due to the marginalization of peripheral regions and the political exclusion of large segments of the population. These crises have worsened with the rise of religious extremism and the appearance of violent terrorist groups claiming jihadist tendencies which seriously threaten the stability of the entire Sahelo-Saharan region. These perils, in particular the terrorist threat linked to drug and arms trafficking networks and illegal migration, transcend the borders of the States of the Sahel and require not an individual response from the States but dialogue and increased and constant coordination. Of all these states. The Arab Spring led to the destruction of stable political regimes to give way to generalized chaos and a migratory situation difficult to control, the goal of the West being to recolonize Africa for the benefit of the Western bloc, the disintegration of formerly stable States namely Libya. Added to this is the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, the fall of states such as Mali and

¹ inflexible.kdm@gmail.com

the rise of insecurity in the Sahelian countries: Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, Burkina-Faso, Niger. The results of the Arab Spring are quite mixed. The situation is disappointing for all those who saw in the Arab Spring of 2011 a possibility of emancipation of peoples who lived under authoritarian regimes (Croix & Dieckhoff, 2016). Europe and the United States have perpetuated the chaos through the prism of the democratization of Arab regimes. The idea of democratization of the Arab world has become for Europeans an element of colonization (Benantar, 2015)². This work on the Arab Spring and security challenges in Africa is a way to assess Western intervention in Libya and its consequences on the rise of insecurity in the Sahel. In view of this, it is important to take stock of the Arab Spring in Africa, particularly in terms of security and its actors, in other words, what are the consequences that the Arab Spring has generated in Africa? Who benefits from the security vacuum in the Sahel? These are all questions that we can legitimately ask ourselves. The rise of jihadists in Mali, the emergence of the Islamic State and warlords in Libya, the rise of Boko Haram in the far north of Cameroon, in Nigeria, in Chad and in Niger, are the consequence of Western interventionist and imperialist policy in Libya. This chaotic situation marked by insecurity began with the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and the absence of the state in Libya. Then, the role of the United States and Europe is clearly defined in the security crisis that followed the Arab Spring: delivery of arms to Libyan terrorists, participation in the destruction of once stable regimes.

APPLIED METHODOLOGY

The research method and methodology we use covers approaches, the use of sources, techniques and tools for collecting data in the field, as well as data processing and analysis techniques. This is about data collection and documentation.

The Approach

In the study of the feasibility of this theme on an evolutionary analysis over time of phenomena related to the Arab Spring, namely the situation of post-revolution states, the revolutionary heritage and the global consequences, we also proceeded by direct observation. And indirect facts on the ground, on the different actors who lived and those who participated in the Arab Spring, then to a systematic analysis. This approach is based on monographs and sampling. Interdisciplinary also has an important place in our methodological approach (sociology, anthropology, geography, economics, political philosophy, political sociology, religion, etc.). We first adopt an approach that has identified a set of resource people, for some having participated in the Arab Spring, for others having experienced the horrors of the Arab Spring. These people provided us with necessary and viable information.

Types of Sources

The sources of several natures are the subject of our research. Particular emphasis is placed on primary sources (oral sources, archives and iconographic documents) through field visits. Thus, we focused on resource people in our study area, namely North Africa and the Sahel. In the same vein, our methodological approach to data collection also relates to the observation of facts. Several theories are mobi-

² Consulted on September 10, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. URL: <http://journal.openedition.org/cdlm/7710> DOI: <http://doi.org/10.4000/cdlm.7710>

lized to understand the attitude of the West in the destruction of stable regimes and in the expansion of insecurity: realism, imperialism, colonialism.

Data Processing and Analysis Techniques and Tools

At the end of the investigations, observation, documentary research, as well as the exploitation of the other different sources, we proceeded to the confrontation of these, especially with regard to the oral sources, in order to get closer from the veracity of the facts, to the synthesis of the data collected, to their processing and their interpretation. After presenting the methodological markdown, it is wise to make a presentation of the results obtained.

THE ARAB SPRING

When we look back in history, we realize that the Arab Spring did not begin in 2010 with the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia. The Suez Crisis in 1956 and the nationalization of the Suez Canal marked the victory of Arab nationalism over the colonial Suez expedition. Indeed, decolonization had a significant geopolitical impact on the Third World, which won an unprecedented victory. It's the Arab Spring. The speech given in Alexandria by Gamal Abdel Nasser on July 26, 1956 was an opportunity for him to announce his intention to nationalize the Suez Canal. The Suez crisis therefore ended in defeat and a diplomatic fiasco for the former colonial powers, while Colonel Nasser set himself up as a defender of the Arab cause and a champion of decolonization.

THE ORIGINS OF THE 2010 ARAB SPRING

In the Arab world, protest networks have been in place since the end of 2010. Activists specializing in protests have been trained in the United States since 2009. Behind these Arab protest networks, we find the Arab activists trained in Belgrade and the United States by the Otpor network and the Center for Applied of Non Violent Actions Strategies (CANVAS).

From 2010, a wave of protests ignited the Arab world. Begun in Tunisia and Algeria in December of the same year, it continues in almost all Arab countries, with specificities. The term uprising, rather than that of revolt, too linked to the Arab revolt is that driven by Lawrence of Arabia (Mechin, 2007). The events of what is known as the Arab Spring are essentially geoeconomic in nature and not geopolitical, even if, in the long term, they will be led to produce some (Berg, 2013, p. 207-221). OTPOR, directly funded and supported by the CIA and Georges Soros's networks, is directly behind the Arab revolutions (Normand, 2017). From forms of development of the productive force that they were, these relations become obstacles. Then begins an era of social revolution (Marx, 1859).

HOW THE WEST WANTED TO CORRECT HISTORY!

The Arab Spring was six decades ago that of the defeat of the West, it was "the spring of revolutionary Arab nationalism" (Mechin, 1959). The desire to correct history is one of the obsessions of the West. Precisely in the case of the Arab Spring of 2011, it was a question of erasing the Arab victory of 1956 during the colonial

expedition of Suez. And if we speak today of the “Arab Spring” in connection with the revolutions in the Maghreb and the Middle East, it is also because they also echo this vision. The reversal of the term Arab Spring in 2011 illustrated the Western victory over the heirs of this same Arab revolutionary nationalism, Muammar Gaddafi, Bashar-Al Assad, Ali Abdallah Saleh. Western interference in these revolutions is remarkable. It obeys the specific logic of the empire, given that Washington exercises a global, planetary power, although in decline, it would be absurd to think that he and his European allies will remain with folded arms in the face of the countries which today have the largest oil reserves on the planet, greater than those of Saudi Arabia. US Senator John McCain’s analogy “You can’t blame Washington for hiding its imperialist agenda (Meysam, 2010).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARAB SPRING IN AFRICA: SECURITY CHALLENGES AND NEOCOLONIALISM

Security challenges: The situation in Libya and the Sahel

Before the destruction of Libya by the West and NATO, Libya and the Sahel were stable and economically prosperous. This destruction favored the rise of the Islamic State in Libya, the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Cameroon, the recent crises in Libya and Mali exacerbated the multidimensional insecurity of populations living in the Sahelo-Saharan region and highlighted not only the weakness of States, but also the need for regional cooperation (Daguzan, 2011, pp 78-97). NATO and France delivered arms to Libyan terrorists³ with the aim of supporting Colonel Gaddafi and stealing Libya’s oil resources, weakening the Sahel states in order to deploy troops there to exploit the gold mines and weaken the armies of the Sahel countries and perpetuate the neocolonial military dependence. The crisis in Libya, which has become an immense arsenal of open-air weapons used by militias and other terrorist groups. 800,000 to 1 million small arms are supposed to circulate freely as well as 80,000 Kalashnikovs in addition to the existence of 100 militias made up of 125,000 fighters. Number of these weapons from the military arsenal⁴ is in the hands of terrorist groups operating in the Maghreb and Sahel region and the Algerian press has reported numerous arms seizures by the security forces during the discoveries of caches used by terrorists on the borders of the Sahara. The dissemination of Libyan military arsenals towards the Sahel, via the Libyan Sahara and the arming of insurgent groups, is certainly one of the most crucial geostrategic phenomena with which the sub-region has been confronted since the beginning of the Libyan conflict. The Islamist settlements in northern Libya and their role in the anti-Gaddafi uprising as well as the establishment of large-scale arms trafficking are essential in the analysis and understanding of the strengthening of terrorist groups in the Sahel since 2012. From April 6, 2012 to January 2013, an Islamist coalition took control of towns in northern Mali (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013).

3 The Prime Minister of Mali Choguel Maiga accuses France of having formed and trained a terrorist organization in Kidal, In an interview with the Russian agency RIA Novosti, 10.10.2021 <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/mali-choguel-maiga-accuses-france-of-having-formed-and-entered-a-terrorist-organization-%C3%A0-kidal/2387933>

4 French arms in Libya: this support that Paris can no longer hide? https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/armes-francaises-en-libye-ce-soutien-que-paris-ne-peut-plus-cacher-12-07-2019-2324181_3826.php

Smuggling networks

More and more than traffic arms and human beings in the Sahel are linked to terrorist groups: some have control of the terrain and benefit from local complicity (traffickers), others (terrorist groups) have arms and money from ransoms acquired in exchange for the release of hostages, in particular (Scheele, 2011). These trafficking networks of all kinds threaten public order in the border regions located in the East (Tunisia and Libya), in the West (Morocco) and on the Saharan borders (Mauritania, Mali and Niger), and disrupt the economy. The Arab Spring accentuated this with the porosity of the borders because of the state vacuum linked to the destruction of Libya. The processes of territorial fragmentation currently underway in Libya extend throughout the Sahel region. , it is the scene of interventions by external powers in the context of the fight against terrorism and, finally, it is home to populations who do not always recognize themselves in the regimes resulting from independence (Tisseron, 2011, p. 98-107). This crystallization of the split has its origins in a long recomposition of politics, the absence of a tangible response to Tuareg claims in Niger and Mali, as well as in the role played by the informal economy.

Illegal migration

If previously, small-scale migratory flows from the sub-Saharan region to Europe were less significant, the number of several hundred thousand migrants arriving in this country in recent years has increased due to insecurity in Libya, Mali and Boko Haram in other Sahelian countries. Indeed, illegal migrants are fleeing the horrors of Boko Haram, the Islamic state in Libya. In 2011, in the midst of the NATO bombardment of Libya, Colonel Gaddafi said in a message that he would fill Europe with refugees. This migration is the result of the consequences of the Arab Spring.

The Sahel under the influence of neocolonialism

Mali, like almost all the countries of French-speaking Africa, is still under neocolonial domination and linked to France by the colonial pact (Sylla, et al, 2021). The French army is an army of occupation and the desire of the Malians to appeal to the Russians is an act of resistance against the occupation. Where this army of occupation is present, the state collapses. The Central African Republic is an example. Added to anti-colonial sentiment is the loss of minds and hearts. At the heart of the revolutionary war, Barkhane's failure was total, as revealed by the anti-French demonstrations in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. On militant sites, Barkhane is described as an occupying force. Despite Western disinformation on anti-French demonstrations, particularly in Mali, this hatred is very real and irreversible. The fear of Paris in the face of this anti-French anger among the African masses, especially in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Another element marking the fear of France is the conflagration of all French-speaking countries and the arrival of the Russians. France is trying to discredit the Russian group through an intense media campaign, claiming in particular that it is responsible for abuses, summary executions and torture. The most abject situation that these media do not talk about are the war crimes committed by the French occupation troops in Africa: violation of boys in the Central African Republic by French soldiers from Sangaris homosexual (because this practice is animal, barbaric and infamous in African values). These guilty soldiers were cleared by French justice, unfair justice rendered by unfair judges, economic plun-

der, theft of resources. Added to this are the crimes of the French army in Cameroon (Bamiléké genocide), the crimes of the Algerian war. These crimes are denied and the French colonial state plays the card of arrogance in the recognition, the compensation of the victims, the restitution of the stolen colonial loot, the implementation of the policy of reparation. Moreover, the French media do not speak of the war crimes committed by the French occupation troops in Mali during the Bounti massacre⁵ which cost the lives of 19 Malian civilians, or even the distribution of arms carried out by France to the terrorists in Libya in 2011 and the crimes of the French colonial army in Libya. Those responsible including Sarkozy for France's crimes in Libya, Macron, his defense minister and the soldiers who carried out the massacre of civilians for the Bounti bombing in Mali must go to the International Criminal Court (ICC). These scenarios are totally ignored by the French media in their media propaganda. If France trembles in the face of the Russians, it is because it is afraid of losing one of its colonies, namely Mali. This situation in Mali could spread to other French-speaking countries and France will have everything to lose, particularly through its multinationals (total, Bolloré, Lafarge, etc.) specializing in the economic plunder and impoverishment of these countries.

Evaluation of means and capacities to fight against security threats

Military means

The deployment of the security forces of each State, as well as the formation of an African coalition with credible partners is an appropriate solution to eradicate terrorism, trafficking and banditry in the Sahel. The deployments of foreign troops such as the French occupation troops from Barkhane have weakened the States. In 13 years they have not stabilized the states of the Sahel, rather they have maintained chaos. The Russians, on the other hand, have done a remarkable job in less than 2 years. This is why the choice of credible foreign partners for military cooperation is a great asset. The fallout from Russian military cooperation with Mali is bearing fruit and is helping to strengthen the fight against terrorist groups and trafficking and smuggling networks. Allocate more funds to the development and implementation of good national security policy in Mali (Arieff, 2013).

The drying up of sources of support for terrorism

The security forces of the Sahelian countries must, as a matter of priority, fight against networks of support for terrorism within the population, in particular those involved in supplying terrorist groups with foodstuffs and logistical means, as well as foreign support such as payments ransoms, the collusion of foreign troops to deliver arms to terrorists, the adoption of the principle of non-negotiation with these groups in the case of hostage-taking and ransom demands or prisoner exchanges for their release.

The political solution to conflicts and Inclusive dialogue

"We know how wars start, but we don't know how they end". The disastrous consequences of NATO's military intervention in Libya are palpable in the Sahel.

⁵ Bombardment of Bounti: Minusma accuses France of having killed Malian civilians <http://lignesdedefense.blogspot.fr/archive/2021/03/30/bombardement-de-bounti-la-minusma-accuse-la-france-d-avoir-tue-des-civils.html>

To avoid the uncertainties of a military intervention and an all-security solution, the leaders of the Sahel States must find political solutions based on an inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation capable of resolving the conflicts in a fair and lasting manner. At the level of political entities, strengthen the rule of law, respect for collective and individual freedoms, ban electoral fraud and fight effectively against corruption and bureaucracy, reduce social inequalities, fight against unemployment and promote the regions. Fight against injustice in order to restore public confidence in the state. It is also necessary to strengthen justice in all sectors. Strengthen institutions to deal with different challenges such as poor governance and its roots such as corruption, lack of accountability and of transparency. This could help to gain trust of the people to their government.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to identify the consequences of the Arab Spring and the challenges that threaten the security of the Sahel in an unstable and sometimes violent context. The Arab Spring, supported by the United States and Europe, has created the greatest dangers for the Sahel, dangers linked to the delivery of arms to the insurgents by the West and the absence of the State in Libya. Insecurity in the Sahel and the disintegration of the state in Libya are the ultimate proof that, exactly a decade after this uprising linked to democratic aspirations as Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkosys and other architects of chaos in the Sahel said, nothing 'is resolved. The Sahel also faces a problem of fragmentation, due to the interruption of the ambitious African policy led by Colonel Gaddafi, who probably disappeared with him and leaves a great void in the region.

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