The Sahel in Turmoil: conflict drivers and responses

Workshop, Monday 16 May, 14.15 CET
Aula 3, Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa

Over the last decade, the Sahel has become a priority area of engagement for Europe, and for Italy in particular. As policymakers and scholars have highlighted, the multi-faceted crises affecting the Sahel are deeply interwoven into the most important transnational challenges facing the international community, including climate change, population growth and displacement, migration flows, the rise of organized criminal networks and the spread of jihadi-inspired terrorism. As a result, the Sahel has also become a laboratory to devise and test new approaches to tackle security and governance challenges, contributing to shaping the foreign policy strategies and tools of the European Union and its member states.

At the same time, the Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies has devoted a growing attention to the region, through the activities of the research group ERIS (Emerging Research on International Security), the engagement of the interdisciplinary programme AfricaConnect, the trainings delivered to national and international organizations dealing with the Sahel, as well as joint teaching and exchange programmes with Sahel-based research centres. As a result of these activities, today the Sant’Anna School represents a hub of expertise on the region, its dynamics of (in-)security, and their implications for global governance and the promotion of human rights in fragile settings.

Building on this background, the Sant’Anna School intends to provide a space for discussion and dissemination of the results so far achieved, the questions that remain unanswered, and the future goals of its research activities. Leveraging the competences of the ERIS group researchers, the workshop "The Sahel in Turmoil: conflict drivers and responses" aims to address the Sant’Anna School’s students and the overall academic community to discuss the main drivers of and responses to the conflict dynamics currently affecting the Sahel, with particular reference to the issues of violent extremism and its countering measures at international, regional and local level. Through the contributions of researchers from different backgrounds, the workshop’s goal is to provide a chance of mutual learning and sharing of research findings, so as to ignite a discussion with students of all levels. It will also provide the opportunity for the first preview presentation of the freshly published volume Jihad in Africa. Terrorismo e Controterrorismo in Sahel (Mulino, 2022), co-edited by the Sant’Anna School researchers Edoardo Baldaro and Luca Raineri. The workshop is part of the AfricaConnect programme.

Presentations will be held in English and in French, and will be followed by the screening of the movie Zinder (GER, 2021).
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Conference, Wednesday 11 May, 9:00-10:30 CET
Aula 6, Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa

Focus on the Region of Agadez: a discussion with local authorities
Meeting with
Abdourahamane Elhadji Aboubacar Touraoua - Mayor of Agadez
&
Oumarou Ibrahim - Sultan of the Air

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14.15 - Introduction
14.30 - Responding to jihadism in the Sahel: international, regional and local approaches
Chair: Edoardo Baldaro
- Francesco Strazzari, Recipes for failure? Mapping the responses to conflict and violent extremism in the Sahel
- Aichatou Adamou Maiga, L’Union Africaine dans la gestion des conflits au Sahel: entre espoirs et incertitudes
- Delina Goxho, Light footprint-heavily destabilizing impact: why the Western understanding of remote warfare needs to be reconsidered
16.00 - Break
16.15 - Armed conflict and extremism: the drivers of violence in the Sahel
Chair: Luca Raineri
- Laura Berlingozzi, Women mobilisation and jihadi governance in the Sahel
- Amadou Limam Boukari, La région du Liptako-Gourma: aux origines de l’insécurité transfrontalière
- Francesca Lenzi and Adele Moltedo, Climate change and natural resource conflicts: a fertile ground for terrorism?
17.45 - Break
18.00 - Book presentation: Jihad in Africa. Terrorismo e Controterrorismo in Sahel
By Edoardo Baldaro and Luca Raineri
Introduces: Francesco Strazzari
19.00 - Cocktail
20.00 - Movie screening: Zinder - Followed by: debate with the director Aicha Macky.