

*Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger  
accuse Ukraine of supporting  
terrorism in the Sahel*

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United Nations, August 21 (RHC)-- Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger on Tuesday called on the president of the UN Security Council to denounce the “open and alleged support of the Ukrainian government for international terrorism,” especially in the African Sahel region.

The request follows recent comments by Ukrainian officials suggesting that Kiev has played a role in attacks by Tuareg separatist rebels that killed numerous Malian soldiers last month in the northeastern village of Tinzawaten on the border with Algeria.

In a joint letter, the foreign ministers of the three countries said their governments were shocked by comments by Andriy Yusov, spokesman for Ukrainian military intelligence, “admitting Ukraine’s role in the cowardly, barbaric and criminal attacks” between July 24 and 26th. He added that the statements were confirmed by Yurii Pyvovarov, Ukraine’s ambassador to Senegal.

Yusov said the rebels received “the necessary information they needed” to carry out the attacks after the Malian army confirmed “losses” in the clashes. The letter called on the Security Council to “take appropriate measures against these subversive actions that strengthen terrorist groups in Africa.”

The letter noted that the official’s comments go beyond the scope of foreign interference, which is condemnable in itself. “This is an official and unequivocal support by the Ukrainian government for terrorism in Africa, especially in the Sahel. These acts also constitute a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states, a clear aggression and support for international terrorism, in flagrant violation of the UN Charter and relevant international conventions,” the letter says in part.

The three countries have signed a defence pact under their formation called the Confederation of Sahel States. The Tinzawaten area has been a battleground between separatist forces and the Malian military for the past decade.

Mali and Niger earlier this month severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine, citing comments by the Ukrainian military suggesting that Kyiv had played a role in the July attacks.

Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have signed a joint defense agreement that includes a commitment to provide mutual military support against threats of armed insurgency or external aggression. This agreement, called the “Alliance of Sahel States”, was established on 16 September 2023 and officially launched on 6 July 2024.

Under the agreement, an attack against any of the three countries is considered an attack against all of them and an obligation is imposed to provide military assistance in such a case.

“Any attack against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one or more contracting parties shall be considered an attack against the other parties. It constitutes a duty of assistance, including the use of armed forces to restore security.

This alliance was formed after ECOWAS threatened to intervene militarily in Niger following the 2023 Niger crisis. All three countries were previously members of ECOWAS and have been under military rule in recent years, with successful coups: the 2021 coup in Mali, the September 2022 coup in Burkina Faso and the 2023 coup in Niger. The Alliance has an anti-French and anti-ECOWAS perspective.

It is known that the Sahel states, together with their junta regimes, have established close ties with Russian forces in Africa. In this process, Niger has taken steps to have U.S. troops leave the country.

In addition, the activities of the Russian-affiliated African Corps, a replacement for the Wagner organization, are also known in the region.

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