

Forum: Political Committee

Issue: Promoting political stability in post-coup Chad

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Introduction

Situated in Central Africa, Chad is one of the largest states in the entire continent of Africa. Similar to its neighbours, Chad has also faced large waves of political instability since the nation gained its independence from colonialist forces. In the latest wave of said instability, power was transferred unconstitutionally to a militant group after the death of President Idriss Deby Itno. This unconstitutional transfer was initiated by the Transitional Military Council (TMC) led by the previous president's son, Mahamat Idriss Itno.

The change of power's illegitimacy opened the way for even more terrorist groups to rise and try to assume power, creating a certain power vacuum where no separate power is able to consolidate power. Thus, the illegitimate government tried to combat said forces, creating an all out civil war-esque environment.

Due to the coup, power had not been consolidated under one order and thus, even the group in power has been sucked into major political instability. Nevertheless, even if they had the power in hand, political instability would resume as the legitimate transition of power would not have gone through.

Now that Itno's government has assumed centralized power, his leadership has the ability to reign over Chad with absolute authoritarian control for an extended period of time. In fact, the current government has also tried to crackdown on other groups and protests by the people as different factions and sections in society begin to try and take advantage of certain political vacuums.

Hence, Itno's government has now consolidated power, and has the complete ability and authority to rule over Chad with an iron fist, militarily dominating political groups who may want to restore the rights of the people.

Definition of Key Terms

Coup d'état: A sudden change of government that is illegal and often violent (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries)

Stability: The quality or state of being steady and not changing or being upset in any way (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries)

Political stability: The collocation is used to describe a stable political (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries)

Transitional Government: Belonging or relating to a change, or the process of change, from one form or type to another (Used in a governmental context here) (Cambridge Dictionary)

Transition: The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries)

Ceasefire: An agreement, usually between two armies, to stop fighting in order to allow discussions about peace (Cambridge Dictionary)

Power-sharing: a system in which different groups/parties "share responsibility for making decisions, taking political action, etc. (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries)

General Overview

The emergence of the ongoing political stability in Chad was triggered by the military offensive launched by the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) against the government in April 2021. The offensive led to the death of the former president, Idriss Déby, after his 30-year-long reign. Following his death, the TMC was established in order to facilitate a coup d'état to bring the current President Itno into power. The unconstitutional seizure of power raised concerns among the public, but TMC's promise of returning to democratic means over a 18 month period relieved the tensions (BBC News, 2021).

Public trust in the Transitional Council gradually faded as the constitution was suspended, and the 18 month period was repeatedly extended. The growing distrust fueled support for both armed and unarmed opposition groups that demanded a rapid transition to civilian rule. The council aimed to justify their actions by arguing that the support for hostile military groups raised significant security threats which mandated strong leadership to prevent internal conflict. Civil protests began after President Itno claimed power over all branches of government and established an authoritarian dictatorship. The events took a turn for the worse when the Itno regime used violence to suppress the protesters, resulting in the death of many civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The aggressive response against protesters further increased the support for radical military groups, catalyzing the instability even more.

As public support increased, rebel groups such as FACT continued to intensify their military opposition against the government. Consequently, Chad's current political situation remains highly fragile as tensions persist between the transitional authorities, opposition groups, and armed movements.

While the government continues to emphasize national security and stability, political actors remain concerned about the prolonged role of the military in governance and the uncertainty surrounding the country's political transition. The tensions have also contributed to political polarization, and continued armed opposition in certain regions of the country.

As a result, Chad faces the complicated challenge of maintaining political stability and national security while also creating the political conditions to carry out the democratic transition the TMC promised. The current situation mandates that international involvement is necessary for a peaceful and stable transition toward long-term governance and national unity.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Chad

Following the unconstitutional transfer of power initiated by the TMC in 2021, Itno's government has taken necessary measures to establish an authoritarian regime. The suspension of the previous constitution also enabled Itno to claim power over all branches of government and successfully establish his own dictatorship. This naturally catalyzed civil unrest, which was followed by wide-scale protests. Itno's regime embodied the Iron Fist approach and brutally suppressed these protests. Currently, this approach has proved ineffective in achieving political stability, and the civil unrest still lumes over the nation.

Qatar

Qatar has taken on the role of mediating between the Itno regime and various armed groups. In 2022, Qatar hosted peace talks with the aim of facilitating dialogue between the TMC and armed groups based both inside Chad and within neighbouring states. Through these efforts, Qatar has become a crucial actor in the issue as the sole bridge between these parties. Diplomatic talks initiated by Qatar could be key in tackling the issue.

TMC

The TMC is the military council that was established with the purpose of facilitating Itno's unconventional rise to power. Initially, the council had proposed an 18-month transition period to democratic means. Yet, they have continuously extended the time period and have not carried out the transition they promised.

African Union (AU)

The African Union has closely monitored the political transition and encouraged the Itno regime to return to the constitutional order. Although AU reports initially condemned the military takeover, the organization has sought to engage in diplomatic dialogue on constitutional reform.

Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT)

The FACT is a rebel military group based in Libya that operates against the current regime in Chad. In 2021, the Front launched the offensive that caused the death of President Idriss Deby. Despite their aggressive measures, the Front has participated in negotiations regarding ceasefires and political dialogue. However, the front expresses concerns over the Itno regime’s commitment to genuine political reform.

United Nations (UN)

The UN advocates for inclusive political participation and institutional reform to be implemented in order to ensure long-term stability and prevent further conflict in Chad. However, it is yet to take concrete action on the matter.

Timeline of Events

20 April 2021	President Itno passes away, opening the way for a possible military takeover by his son's forces
20 April 2021	The TMC initiates the hostile takeover of Chad, the coup happens
22 April 2021	The AU releases an announcement on the political state of Chad, highlighting the possibility of political instability
8 August 2022	Doha Peace Agreement is signed, temporarily solidifying political stability in Chad
20 October 2022	The N'djamena protests are shut down by new president Itno, laying the groundwork for months of constant conflict
17 December 2023	A constitutional referendum is held, significantly damaging the rights of the people as power is consolidated
1 January 2024	Parliamentary elections happen, legitimizing the power of Mahamat Itno

UN Involvement

OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Relevant UN Documents

Situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa – Report of the Secretary-General (11 June 2021, S/2021/517)

The regional office established its part in the issue and aims to not instigate any further instability in the region

Central African region – Statement by the President of the Security Council (3 June 2021, S/PRST/2021/9)

The president of the Security Council also established the organisation's point of view in the issue

Situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa – Report of the Secretary-General (19 September 2022, S/2022/693)

Situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa – Report of the Secretary-General (30 October 2023, S/2023/827)

Chad Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 (January 2024, OCHA 2024 HNRP)

The plan is initiated by the UN to create a state-wide response to the humanitarian result of violent activities in Chad

Human rights concerns in Chad – Press briefing note (OHCHR) (22 October 2022)

Official condemnation of the issue in Chad by the UN as human rights issues become more significant

Treaties and Events

The AU Peace and Security Communique aimed to stall the illegitimate transition of power through methods of dialogue yet, it had minor impact in ending the issue

The Doha Peace Agreement (2022) was an international attempt at curtailing the political instability and impact of the junta in Chad

The revision of the Transitional Charter (2022) was highly significant in extending the junta leadership's continued governance

The Constitutional Referendum (2023) gave significant power to the, at this point, centralised junta government

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The Doha Peace Process was a significant milestone in ending instability as it happened towards the tail end of the transitional period of Chad's governmental structure. The process was started to initiate a ceasefire of the most recent conflicts between the TMC and rival factions. At the end, though most parties signed onto the agreements, a major rival faction did not, and thus, fighting resumed and the peaceful and legitimate transition of power could not be carried out.

Also, the national dialogues took place after the start and initiation of the military junta, separate from those held in Qatar. However, the only outcome from this process was that the transition period was extended for the junta government, allowing them to stage an even larger military takeover of the area. This process only further illegitimized the transition of power as it became obvious that the junta only wanted time to consolidate power in the hands of the new leadership.

Possible Solutions

The UN may become an important actor in the easing of instability in Chad. Most importantly, the UN may be able to ease tensions by intervening and bringing all parties into peace talks through diplomatic means. Further, the UN may utilize peacekeeping forces to bring the sides to a negotiation table. The most important factor here is the laying down of arms in the process towards peace in Chad. On a more aggressive note, the illegitimacy of the current regime could be emphasized, and with enough support in the Security Council, a legitimate regime change may be instigated.

Though dialogue may not suffice, the UN could be active in creating shelter for those who protest the current regime and may begin an organisation to accept refugees as those who try to protest could be given the option to immigrate elsewhere whilst political instability continues.

Nevertheless, an issue that can easily be pulled to concerns of national and state sovereignty cannot be solved through solely one method. Multiple organisations starting from the UN and AU should be in collaboration with neighbouring countries and possible mediators to bring the nation into diplomatic and political tranquility.

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