

The July 2023 Military Takeover in Niger and the Attempted Regional Response by ECOWAS.

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Abstract: *Military takeover in Africa is one of the main issues leading to political instability in the continent. Since independence, the continent of Africa has suffered a series of military coups in the different regions. In recent years, from 2021, West Africa has seen more military coups than any other region in Africa, making it the new hotspot of military takeovers. Despite the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States in the promotion of peace and tranquility through democracy, there has been a renewed increase in military takeovers in West Africa. Recently, the toppling of the democratic government of Niger by the soldiers sent a signal that military takeovers in West Africa are nowhere near ending in the subregion. In that light, ECOWAS has also renewed its firm position of condemning coups and promoting constitutional change of power, good governance, and democracy. However, ECOWAS reaction to the military takeover in Niger is different from its usual reactions to coups, which had mainly been to ensure peaceful transition, and subsequent return to civilian rule in the countries where military takeovers had occurred. Therefore, it is important to look into the issues of the Niger coup and what necessitated the attempt for a regional military response.*

Introduction

This paper aims to discuss the situation of the military takeover in Niger. The author shall explain some of the factors leading to the occurrence of the military takeover in Niger, the reasons for the attempt by the West African regional block to restore peace and constitutional governance, what the possibilities of intervention are, and the likely consequences of any military intervention by ECOWAS in Niger.

On July 28, 2023, Niger experienced yet another political instability due to a military takeover. Niger is one of the 15 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Geographically, it is one of the landlocked countries of West Africa, bordering Libya, Chad, Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Nigeria. One of its geographical significances is its location in the western part of Africa and its belonging to the Regional Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), which shall be pivotal in the discussion that will ensue.

According to the World Bank, Niger has been a hotspot of political, social, economic and security crises since its independence. There have been several successful and failed coups in the country from 1974 to 2023; one presidential assassination (in 1999), rebellion uprisings, unconstitutional governments, coup attempts in 1976, 2015, and 2021; soldier mutiny, and major droughts and hunger in the country, leading to grave security threats within the country. Niger has also experienced a series of civilian rule returns in 1989, 1996, 1999, and 2011 (The World Bank, 2017).

It was not until 2021 when Niger experienced its first peaceful democratic transition of power through democratic elections, when Mohamed Bazoum was elected to office to steer the affairs of the state (Kujur, 2023). This set a new hope for the people and established a revived promise for development, peace, and tranquility for Niger. However, this remarkable record of democratic governance for Niger was short-lived, as it only lasted for less than 3 years (from April 2021 to July 2023), before the old wounds of political instability through military coups would resume what is seemingly a tradition in the country. Even though the situation in Niger has been described by many as relatively stable since 2021, due to its democratic government and absence of major political instabilities, this period was also marked by threats of insurgencies. For instance, the first threat of military takeover was when Bazoum was newly elected as president, and a coup attempt was made on his presidency. This rang a bell to the government on the hunger for power by the soldiers and their unpreparedness to support the democratic government, that has just come into office (Ajala, 2023).

Niger has also been highly characterized by The World Bank as a country that is confronted with a series of severe terrorist attacks and other forms of insurgencies that have for the past years compromised the country's stability. The persistence of Boko Haram in the Diffa region of Niger has led to the displacement of many people in the region, as they seek safety, leading to the creation of a lot of fragmented societies within the country. Additionally, there have been a lot of spillover crises to Niger from its neighboring countries such as Nigeria, Libya, Chad, and Mali, making it even more difficult for Niger to handle (The World Bank, 2017). A country that for a very long time has battled with internal insecurities may lack the adequate tenacity to defend itself against the intrusion of foreign or cross-border insurgencies. Essentially, Niger is left highly vulnerable to both internal and external insurgencies. This has consequently aggregated to the continuous instability of the country.

Eventually, after what must have been a seemingly relative peace and stability in Niger, for the past years, on July 28, 2023, General Abdourahman Tchiani, a long-standing Niger's presidential guard, unconstitutionally declared himself as the head of state of Niger through a military takeover (Ajala, 2023). The coup thus, posed great dissatisfaction in the subregion of West Africa and the international community, who frowned and condemned the coup in its totality and called for immediate reinstatement of the democratic president.

Reasons for the military coup in Niger

It has often been said that there cannot be any smoke without fire. Therefore, in explaining the trending situation of a military takeover in the Republic of Niger, it would be very essential to understand some of the prevailing political, economic, and social issues in Niger, that may in one way or another aid the explanation of why such a backlash would occur. In that regard, it would be ideal to throw a gist on some of the trending situations in Africa, and why they prevail. Thus, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD), most of the conflicts in Africa are the product of high inequality and unequal distribution of resources among the people. This is due to bad governance and counterreactions from some factions of the population in pursuit of the control of resources and restoring equality (UNCTAD, 2021). Taking the above statement as a prelude, I will discuss some important political, social, and economic situations in Niger before the coup, with support from the soldiers' claim.

The Tchiani-led coup plotters in Niger have advanced several reasons for their actions to unconstitutionally oust the government of Bazoum. Primary among the issues they raised is insecurity and a lack of economic growth for the people of Niger. The soldiers made an outcry for the necessity of a military takeover as a means to salvage the country from a sudden collapse, as a result of socio-economic and political insecurity (Ajala, 2023). As opposed to the tendency of military governments replacing and distorting peaceful, stable, and democratic governments, the Niger soldiers purport themselves to be the saviors of Niger from what they describe as a bad state of socio-economic development dragging the state of Niger through episodes of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. It is largely on the above conditions that General Tchiani and his abettors justify their actions for the need to forcefully replace Bazoum and his government.

The coup plotters have also pointed out the need for a robust security apparatus to be in place to fight and end the insecurities and stop all forms of insurgent attacks in the country, which the current government is unable to offer. The persistence and brutality of insurgent groups in Niger has been characterized by the coup plotters as a situation that calls for urgent intervention. These insurgent groups include the Al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates, Boko Haram, and other groups which have over the years led to the continuous instability of Niger. These attacks and insurgencies in Niger have caused a lot of discomfort in the country and led to the displacement of many of its inhabitants either within or to the neighboring countries (Ajala, 2023). However, what is still not very clear is whether the soldiers who championed the coup could live up to the expectations of the people, as after the coup, hundreds were on the streets to celebrate what they considered a victory. However, such support from the people is not new in Africa, as in most cases the removal of a particular government from power cultivates new hope in the people and makes them believe that at last, their problems are over. For the time being, the coup plotters in Niger enjoy the support of many people, but this may not be for the hopes and trust that such people have in the military, it may simply be due to the change from an old suit to a new one without the slightest assurance of there being better days ahead.

Another reason that has been charged forward as speculation for one of the reasons for the military takeover in Niger is the issue of ethnicity. Bazoum is a descendant of the Arab minority ethnic group of Niger, and his origin and legitimacy as a Nigerien had for a long time remained a big question (Ajala, 2023). Some people have also argued that one of the strengths of Niger has for a long time been its cross-cultural cohesion and national identity with unthreatening discrimination among ethnicities (Melly, 2023). However, the topic of ethnic disparity is a major issue in many African conflicts. In cases where the minority rules over the majority ethnic groups, the possibility of the minority downplaying the majority ethnic groups in terms of position allocation, access to opportunities, inclusion, and equal treatment in state matters is indeed high. This can lead to the creation of factions that will revolt against the minority rulers in a quest to restore their majority importance. The majority may do this by disregarding the rulership of the minority and trying to use possible means to create a series of ungovernable environments by waging a lot of insurgents in the area.

Another influencing factor for the military takeover in Niger could be associated with the continuous presence and domination of the nation's uranium mining by the French. According to Ajala, when the French troops were sent out of Mali, following a military takeover, Bazoum invited them to Niger, which angered the leaders of the Nigerien military and many other people in Niger (Ajala, 2023). The dominant presence of the French forces as well as the continuous extraction of uranium from Niger has been seen as great factors responsible for the increased poverty in the region. Ironically, despite the heavy mining of uranium from Niger, the country is engulfed in serious poverty and underdevelopment. The benefits of such a prestigious resource in the country could have served as a very good pedestal on which Niger's economic background could have rested, instead, the country and its people continue to wallow in poor socio-economic development and bad infrastructure.

The experienced soldier (who is General Tchiani?)

The 62-year-old soldier, and leader of the Niger coup in July 2023, General Tchiani has been a soldier in the Nigerien army for almost 40 years and has over the course of that period risen through the ranks to become the presidential guard commander. Tchiani is also a well-trained soldier, who has received training from Senegal, France, Morocco, Mali, and the United States of America. General Tchiani has also been part of various peacekeeping missions, such as; the UN peacekeeping operations in Ivory Coast, Darfur in Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; an Ecowas force in Ivory Coast; and The Multinational Joint Task Force in which troops from Niger, Chad, Nigeria, and Cameroon collaborate in the campaign against militant Islamist group Boko Haram (Melly, 2023).

Despite his long continuous service in the Nigerien military, General Tchiani had never been charged with any top-level command of the army that would have exposed him to some functions regarding how to closely work with the government, international partners, or social and diplomatic personnel. Thus, he has been described as the “soldiers’ soldier” for not having known much in many aspects of defense but the ordinary function of the soldier, which is mainly the exertion of force to get things done.

Since 2011, General Tchiani has been the head of the Nigerien presidential guard (Melly, 2023), which gave him the ultimate responsibility and power to protect the president from all forms of threats, including protecting the president from military takeovers (Kujur, 2023). What is ironical in this situation is that the man entrusted with the responsibility to protect the president is the very one to commit the crime he was assigned to defend. It would be practically unexpected for a shepherd to devour the sheep he looks after, but where the shepherd plans to do so, then it becomes smooth and unimaginably easy. It is empirical that a soldier of Tchiani’s caliber, with full experience and sufficient military knowhow, would have studied and calculated all the steps towards overthrowing a government he has been for long assigned to protect, as any miscalculation would mean putting his life entirely at risk. Therefore, the seemingly easy military takeover by Tchiani and his colleagues is supposedly due to his military experience and access to the state’s security apparatus.

On what background is ECOWAS Regional Response in Niger based?

After the successful military takeover in Niger in July 2023, many questions became trending. While some people question whether the Economic Community of West African States will intervene militarily to restore peace and order in Niger, the louder question to be discussed here is on what background would the ECOWAS attempt to intervene militarily in the national affairs of Niger.

Operating on the premises of good governance and democratic rule, and the promotion of constitutional change of power, ECOWAS held an emergency meeting on 30th July 2023 in condemnation of the military takeover in Niger. The ECOWAS commission under its leader Bola Tinubu, condemned the coup and referred to it as illegal, and thus called for an immediate release and restoration of the ousted president, Mr. Bazoum, who had been at the time held captive by the military. To reaffirm its claim and of course to sound more assertive, the regional block of ECOWAS gave the military an ultimatum of one week, to return the state to civilian rule, stressing that it would do everything possible to restore the legal government of Bazoum (Ajala, 2023). This was intended to exert pressure on General Tchiani and his colleagues to relinquish power and peacefully withdraw their declaration of having seized power. However, the three other military-led governments of West Africa; Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso, released a joint statement considering any form of ECOWAS military intervention in Niger an act of attack on the state of Niger. The position of the aforesaid military leaders in support of General Tchiani’s led coup is the least surprising, considering that they also trample on the ECOWAS protocol of good governance and democracy. The threat by these three military-led governments and a couple of other warnings from the Niger coup plotters and other people coaxed the ECOWAS to reconsider and hold its initial position of military intervention, to instead approach the matter diplomatically.

The unconstitutional change of governments is a serious threat and contradiction to the mandate of the Economic Community of West African States, a body that strives to promote democracy and good governance across the region of West Africa. Thus, any unconstitutional act in the region would pose as a great threat to the peace and security of the region (Ajala, 2023). ECOWAS is supposedly poised to intervene as a means of showing its utter dissatisfaction and unsupportive stance to any form of instabilities within the region. Essentially, it is also worth noting that Niger is a signatory to the ECOWAS protocol of good governance and democracy (2001), making Niger a subject to ECOWAS in its responsibility to promote democracy and good governance. The above protocol essentially translates into a zero-tolerance stance against unconstitutional changes of governments and grants the right to impose sanctions against such illegitimate governments, as it seeks to promote accession to power through free, fair, and transparent elections (Bamfo, 2013). Therefore, ECOWAS's attempt to restore peace and order in Niger by reinstating the government of Bazoum may not just be limited to the welfare of Niger alone, but also to fully operationalized its mandate to maintain peace and order in the entire Sahel region, and to show its condemnation against any form of unconstitutional change of power within the region.

Another reason for the intervention of ECOWAS in Niger is in connection to the consequences that may ensue for felling to intervene. No intervention by ECOWAS would constitute a great threat to the young democracy in the region of ECOWAS, which not only contradicts the guiding principles of ECOWAS but also constitutes one of the biggest problems hindering socio-economic growth in the region. In the long run military takeovers may become dominant in the region of ECOWAS, which would threaten the existence of peace in the region. As there are already speculations that the military regimes of Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso are

planning to form a military alliance (Ajala, 2023), this may consequently defeat the purpose of ECOWAS in promoting democracy, through its Conflict and Prevention Framework 2008. Of course, this is evident in the recent joint press release by the military regimes in the above countries, countering the attempt of ECOWAS to militarily intervene in Niger, considering it an act of war against the state of Niger.

The Economic Community of West African States adopted two important protocols that gave the regional block the responsibility to manage and control conflicts in the sub-region. Its Protocol on Non-Aggression of 1978 and the Protocol on Mutual Defense Assistance of 1981 (which entered into force in 1986), are strong foundational pillars based on which the regional body assumes the power of intervening in any conflicted area or state in a quest to restore order. Specifically, the Protocol on Mutual Defense Assistance empowers the regional block to join forces to fight against external aggressions, as well as intervene in inter-state and intra-state conflicts within the region (Elowson & Macdermott, 2010). Nonetheless, over the years, the above protocols have been mainly criticized for being dormant, and not fulfilling its expectations in the wake of a series of conflicts within the region. Perhaps with the emergence of a new chairperson for ECOWAS in 2023, President Bola Tinubu of Nigeria may aim to reinvigorate the functionality of the above two protocols that have been dormant for a long time. Being Mr. Tinubu's first office confrontation as ECOWAS chairman, he would want to prove his worth to the region, by being the new broom that sweeps well. Despite it being a challenging start for Mr. Tinubu, every leader would want to live through and survive such a challenge to make a good name and restore hope in the hearts of the people.

ECOWAS intervention could also be explained based on the dependency effect and long-standing relations between the region France and other Western countries. France, the United Nations, and other Western powers are all against the coup (Guardian staff and agencies, 2023), and they threatened to suspend all forms of financial assistance and support to Niger. Owing to the long-standing relation between France and most countries in ECOWAS, as well as the financial and technical assistance given to ECOWAS countries by the United Nations and the United States of America, the regional block may not want to lose these ties as a result of the military takeover in Niger. Furthermore, according to Melly, the military-led government of Niger has decided to cut ties with its longstanding former colonizer, France, as it seeks to cooperate with Wagner, a Russian mercenary group. This to a great extent does not go down well with ECOWAS, and the Western powers (Melly, 2023), who over the years are not in their best ties with Russia. However, even though the attempt by General Tchiani led the government to replace France with Russia is being supported by many people in the capital city of Niamey, there are several speculations as to whether merely replacing one foreign power with another would bring in solutions to the socio-economic and political problems that Niger is currently battling with. This remains a big question. Notwithstanding, ECOWAS, either compelled by the influence of France and the Western powers or acting on the dictates of its jurisdiction, would attempt to do everything possible to restore democracy in Niger to nourish its international relations for continuous benefits for the subregion.

The domino effect of coups within the ECOWAS region.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the domino effect refers to a situation in which something, usually something bad, happens, causing other similar events to happen. It further explains that the domino theory was used in the 1950s and 1960s, to explain the possibility that when one country joins communism other countries near it would also join (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023).

In the past few years, there have been several successful coups and a lot of coup attempts in West Africa, notable among which are the coups that took place in Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso, all found in the Economic Community of West African States (Ajala, 2023). Leaders of the ECOWAS block and the African Union condemned such unconstitutional acts and called for immediate redress of the situation by either levying sanctions or calling for the immediate restoration of democracy in those states.

According to Akuamoah, a military takeover happened in Guinea on the 5th of September 2021, led by Mamady Doumbouya, bringing to an end the regime of Alpha Conde. Before the coup, Conde had served for two terms and orchestrated the constitution to suit his interest for a third term (Akuamoah, 2021). Similarly, Aljazeera reported that there have been three successful military takeovers in Mali within a space of ten years – 2012, 2020, and 2021. In 2020 the government of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was overthrown, and an interim government was set to replace the ousted government. A few months later in August 2021, barely had the interim government settled down when there was a counter-coup led by Colonel Assimi Goita (ALJAZEERA, 2021). The trending military takeover situation in West Africa was no better in Burkina Faso, where the government of Kabore was overthrown by the military junta led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, on the 24th of January, 2022. However, Damiba did not live to enjoy his stay in power, because he was forcefully removed by Captain Ibrahim Traore and his compatriots.

Consequently, the continuous spillover effect of coups in the ECOWAS region is becoming a renewed trend with a reinvigorated speed. Currently, there are four undemocratic or unconstitutional governments out of the 15 member states of the community. This continues to pose a great threat to democracy and good governance in the region. Therefore, ECOWAS might have been compelled to intervene to restore democratic rule in Niger as a measure to end the flow of the domino effect of coups in the region. The fall of democratic governance in one state can influence another state to follow suit, but it is also tactical that the restoration and stabilization of one state in the process of the domino effect of collapse could prevent the sequence or put an end to the entire process of the spillover effect of coups within the ECOWAS region. Therefore, ECOWAS intervention in Niger could be

a way to end the rapid increase of military coups in the subregion. With the renewed trend at which military coups have regained in ECOWAS, it is ideal and necessary for the subregional community to remedy the situation by stabilizing the effects of the recurrence of military takeovers in the region. Condemning the coup and attempting to restore democracy in Niger, could be one giant step that ECOWAS could take in its attempt to promote democracy and eliminate all forms of unconstitutional change of government within the region. It will be very consequential and highly threatening to the ECOWAS if the flow of the domino effect of military takeovers in the region is not halted, as the trend may be undesirably engulfing many countries within the region in the long run.

Could ECOWAS forcefully subdue the Tehiani-led soldiers?

One of the biggest questions of the day is what the fate of an ECOWAS intervention in would be like in Niger? Would the soldiers of Niger easily succumb to the threats of ECOWAS? Even so, would this come without a cost? These remain big and troubling thoughts regarding the situation in Niger. Despite the successful measures and interventions taken by ECOWAS in other countries would an intervention by ECOWAS be a continuity of its successes or a massive failure?

In 2005 ECOWAS responded to the unconstitutional seizure power by Faure Eyadema in Togo, by sanctioning and suspending the country from all ECOWAS activities, a travel ban on the leaders, and an embargo on the country. At last Faure Eyadema resigned as interim president, paving the way for elections to be conducted (Odobo et al., 2017). The Economic Community of West Africa has made very successful strides and interventions in many countries in the subregion where political instabilities occurred. In 2014 when President Compaore was overthrown, ECOWAS intervened and prepared the country back to democratic elections (Odobo et al., 2017). Similarly, ECOWAS together with the African Union had condemned the military takeover in Mali in 2021, and during its summit in Niamey, Niger, ECOWAS declared that the Assimi Goita-led military government must appoint a transitional president and prime minister, and sanctions were placed on Mali by ECOWAS and the African Union. Upon meeting the demands, the sanctions on Mali were lifted (ALJAZEERA, 2021). Furthermore, after the successful military takeover in Guinea, overthrowing Alpha Conde, ECOWAS sanctioned and pressured the military to return the state to civilian rule. When the sanctions became stiff, interim president Mamady Doumbouya proposed a three-year transition schedule, which was not accepted by ECOWAS. More sanctions were put on Guinea until the soldiers agreed to reduce the transition timeline (ALJAZEERA, 2022).

In all the above scenarios where the ECOWAS had intervened to restore democracy and constitutional governance, there is none where it had used force or threatened to use force. It happened once when ECOWAS attempted to restore peace and good governance through military intervention, and that was in The Gambia in 2016 when former president Yahya Jammeh refused to leave office after being voted out. ECOWAS threatened to use its ECOMOG forces to boot Yahya Jammeh out, should he refuse to succumb to the peaceful mediation process. Perhaps there may be a completely different story in the case of any military intervention in Niger. This is due to the verse nature of Niger, which would create a lot of opportunity for the soldiers to hit and hide against any force that threaten to force them out. In addition, Niger has a large military that could be resistant to the ECOWAS forces. Especially since the coup leaders have earned the support of the Nigerien military and many of the youths in the country. Thus, any attempt to fight such a force in Niger could be very destructive. There is also a high tendency for the Niger force to receive reinforcement from Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso. These countries have earlier declared that any form of ECOWAS military intervention or operation in Niger would be considered an act of war against the state of Niger. Therefore, these three military-led governments in West Africa could form a military alliance with Niger to fight against ECOWAS, and consequently, the intervention may be destructive and longer than just a mere intervention to restore the ousted president to power and return the country to democratic governance. Moreover, the president whose restoration the ECOWAS community is seeking, has been held captive by the military since the takeover. As such, any attempt to rescue and restore Mr. Bazoum would require the utmost delicacy, to avoid any miscalculated steps in the entire process, which can result in undesired results for ECOWAS.

Conclusion

Military takeover in Africa has seemingly been regaining momentum in recent years, with its hotspot in the West African region. Within a short period, as many as five military coups have happened in West Africa. This is a backward progression to the principles of democracy and good governance in Africa and West Africa in particular.

The coup in Niger is a great wake-up call for not only ECOWAS but the African Union by extension. Like in many West African countries, the military takeover in Niger amounts to great damage to the young democracy being nurtured in the West African sub-region. Since independence, Niger has constantly battled with insecurities and major political, social, and economic instabilities. However, the most recent military takeover in July 2023 has raised certain eyebrows of the regional block, the African Union, and the international community. All the above bodies made their stand in condemning the coup categorically clear. The ECOWAS regional body did not just stop at condemning the coup but also gave the soldiers an ultimatum to restore the ousted president and return the state to democratic rule. ECOWAS went further to threaten the soldiers of a military intervention should they refuse to peacefully hand over power to the democratically elected president. The response from the coup leaders and the support of their sister military governments within the subregion of ECOWAS, who vehemently vow to protect their position and to fight any intruder into the affairs of Niger. On the other hand, ECOWAS under the backing of its Protocol of Good Governance and Democracy, to which Niger is a signatory, vows to promote democracy and constitutional change of power. ECOWAS is also acting based on its

conflict management protocol within the subregion. Anyway, the speculations of public opinions as well as the life of President Bazoum being in danger, who has been held hostage by the soldiers, have led to a tentative reconsideration by the ECOWAS, on its decision to intervene militarily.

Recommendations for Coup Prevention in ECOWAS

Primarily, for the trend of military takeover to seize in West Africa, it will be very necessary for the subregional body to condemn coups in the region and legalize any form of military takeover. This can be done by delimiting the functions of the soldiers to the territorial security of states. When soldiers are given much power regarding the day-to-day functions of the government, by being presidential guards or handling a significant aspect of the state's wellbeing, they become tempted to use force to get their desired results.

The Economic Community of West African States should enforce democracy and good governance within the subregion, through adequate training for the military and governments to respect the Protocol on Mutual Defense Assistance of 1981. This protocol provides cooperation among the security forces of the different states to ensure a better understanding of the principles of democracy and good governance among the men in uniform (Elowson & Macdermott, 2010).

There has also been a great outcry that the alarming rate of coups in the subregion of West Africa, is partially due to a lack of inclusive governance that provides equal opportunities for the people and also distributes the state resources fairly. Mainly this leads to the forming of factions to fight against the persisting abnormalities. Therefore, ECOWAS should promote inclusive governance in all the member states of the region. This would at least reduce some of the potential threats of retaliations influenced by exclusive governance.

As poor socio-economic development constitutes a great factor for military takeover, ECOWAS needs to nurture the spirit of boosting economic growth and development among all the participating countries. Having a pro-democracy tool in the subregion of ECOWAS would go a long way in promoting investment within the region and creating thousands of employment for youths and other people. This will reduce poverty and dependency and will ensure inclusive participation (Sany & Sheehy, 2022).

It is also important for ECOWAS to adopt rapid Post-Coup Transitions in the countries where coups take place. This rapid facilitation of a smooth transition would see such countries transition from military rule to civilian government (Sany & Sheehy, 2022). Even though the democracy of a country that has suffered a military takeover might have been obstructed, the rapid post-coup transition would be ideal and suitable for the recultivation of democracy. ECOWAS can also achieve uniformity in ensuring a smooth post-coup transition by constituting institutions that will look into the affairs of coup-related issues within the subregion.

Furthermore, to limit or eradicate the sporadic occurrence of coups in West Africa, ECOWAS needs to encourage effective governance within the subregion. Protests, riots, and military coups are mostly in reaction to certain ineffectiveness by governments. If only one wants the rats to remain calm, then the dry fish should also limit its smell spillover. When effective governance is put in place, military actions of takeover would be greatly managed by the subregion.

It would also be highly necessary for the ECOWAS regional grouping to condemn the extension of term limits in the region (Kuwali, 2022), as it is one of the sources of coup influence. Some leaders within the subregion in their quest to continue ruling, tamper with their constitutions to prolong their stay in power. Thus, if the issue of term limit is strengthened and abided by throughout the regional block, it may yield the fruits of political stability by limiting military takeovers.

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