

The Interplay of Military Structures and Coups in French-Speaking West African Countries: A Focus on the Presidential Guard

Ezekiel Allen, Elsie Asamoah

Pan African University, Yaounde, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the interplay between military structures and the prevalence of coups in French-speaking West African countries, with a focus on the destabilizing role of presidential guards. It outlines factors that motivate military interventions against civilian rulers, including perceived corruption, public discontent, military divisions, personal ambitions of top brass, and ideological visions. Comparative analysis explores common drivers and patterns across recent coup attempts in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Niger. In many cases, elite, highly-trained presidential guard units and special forces played a pivotal role in decisively ousting leaders by arresting them or providing vital backing to plotters. Their outsized influence within politicized hierarchies enabled them to shape political transitions consistent with institutional interests. Case studies on the 2022 Burkina Faso coup and 2010 Niger coup highlight how presidential guards can both enable and end democratic rule. The paper assesses consequences of seizures of power, typically suspending civil liberties and empowering military factions over institutional control despite initial stability promises. It also examines the inconsistent leverage of regional bodies like ECOWAS and former colonial powers against coup attempts based on security priorities rather than democratic principles. Finally, it outlines reform efforts to deter interventions through security sector changes, governance improvements, early warning systems and constitutional safeguards. However, deeply embedded incentives and capacity for coups persists. The analysis cautions the need for depoliticizing militaries and avoiding the nurturing of specific elite units for regime protection given the risk this poses.

Key Words: Military structures, Coups, French-speaking West Africa, Presidential Guard, Civil-military relations

INTRODUCTION

The chronicle of coups can be traced back to the 1960s, right after independence. The history of Africa over the last six decades cannot be written without mentioning the prevalence of coups. The continent is said to have recorded 222 coup attempts since the year 1942, with 45 out of the 54 countries tainted with at least or more coup attempts (Dahir, 2021). Though the high rate of coup attempts reduced by the end of the Cold War due to the widespread knowledge of democracy and the fold-in of many authoritarian regimes, this period of coup –dormancy up until the 21st century seemed to have been a nine-day wonder. This is especially so within French speaking countries in West Africa where 11 coups have been attempted between August 2020 and November 2022. Five African countries within this period have suffered seven successful coups: Mali (August 2020 and May 2021), Chad (April 2021), Burkina Faso (January and September, 2022), Sudan (October 2021) and Guinea (September 2022). On the other hand, four African countries have undergone unsuccessful coup attempts. These are Niger (March 2021), Guinea-Bissau (February), Sudan (September 2021) and Sao Tome and Principe (November 2022). (Chin & Kirkpatrick, 2023)

Between 1958 and 1989 when other regions of the world had a greater share of coups, Africa is recorded to have housed 36% of all coup attempts and successful coups. This figure has however significantly and

consistently increased since then as between 1990 and 2001, Africa has chalked 55% of all coup attempts and 53% of all successful coups. From 2002 to 2019, 69% of all attempted coups and 63% of successful coups have taken place in Africa. From 2020 to 2022 however, in the heat of the global epidemic Covid 19, Africa has hosted 92% of all coup attempts and 88% of all successful coups (Chin & Kirkpatrick, 2023).

Since the inception of coups, many scholars have attempted to proffer the causes of coups, attempting to explore why Africa unlike other regions of the world has remained a breeding ground and a home to coup d'états, gaining for itself the title "the global epicenter of coups" (Chigozie & Oyinmiebi, 2022). While some believe that the underlying cause of coups in Africa is more economic rather than political (that is the lack of political control over the uncertain forces of world market trade, incompetence and corruption), O'Kane (1993) and Kemence (2013) believe that causes like political development and weak institutions, ethnic antagonism, plurality and dominance, military centrality, colonial heritage, economic challenges and political challenges are the underlining reasons for coups. (Agyeman-Duah, 1990) suggests that beyond the nature of civil-military relations, military-state relations and the military rule and performance in Africa, there is a relationship between military coup d'états, regime change and interstate conflicts in West Africa, especially when the change is violent and radical.

Specifically in the West Africa, Chigozie, & Oyinmiebi (2022) cite that the ongoing Islamist insurgencies within West Africa could be responsible for the surge of recent coups it has recorded.

Between 1960 and 1969, that is the early phase of Africa's postcolonial era, the West African region has accounted for 51.3% of all coups, 49.5% from 1970 to 1989, and a whopping 53.7% from 1990 to 2010. The article examines the frequency of coups in these countries and the significant role played by military structures in their occurrence.

DEFINING COUPS AND MILITARY STRUCTURES

A coup d'état involves a sudden, usually violent overthrow of an incumbent government by a small group of people. It is therefore a change in power from the top that always ends up in a brusque replacement of frontline government personnel, but may or may not alter a state's fundamental social and economic policies or involve a major redistribution of power among political groups. According to McGowan & Johnson (1984), a coup d'état is an event where an existing regime is instantaneously and unlawfully displaced by a relatively small group of people, in members of the military, police or security forces of a state play a key role, either of their own accord or in collaboration with civilian elites like civil servants, politicians and monarchs (McGowan, 2003). According to First (1970), a coup d'état can forestall a revolution or lead to it. It can also inaugurate a military government or an alternative civilian government. It can either maintain or change social policy.

A coup varies in its scope of influence according to First (1970). It could be limited to the removal of a head of state (including a possible assassination) or on a larger scale, an entire displacement of government leaders and officials by the coup instigators, or a total dissolution of the existing constitutional relationships. This could include suspension of the constitution, shutting down legislatures and prohibiting political parties.

A coup could be bloodless or not based on the degree of violence. This notwithstanding, it could also be successful or failed. McGowan (2003) describes a successful coup as the displacements of government personnel which last for at least a week while a failed coup is one that did not last 7 days or an attempted assassinations and apprehension of some members of the incumbent regime, the mobilization of the military, police or security forces overtly aimed at overthrowing a government.

Factors Influencing Military Support for Coups

One of the foremost factors that lead to the occurrence of coup is when leaders of the military perceived their needs are not being met by civilian governments. These drivers may include corruption among civilian authorities, lack of privileges or promotions and insufficient defense budgets (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1990). In West Africa, the militaries often feel downgraded not just in decision-making but also in resource allocation. Considering their role in maintaining the security of the State, leaders of the military feel vindicated in taking action when they perceived the mismanagement by civilian rule threatens the country (Thurston, 2013).

For example, in Burkina Faso, the presidential guard may be particularly sensitive to gaps that could influence their standing as an elite force. One of the factors that helped fueled the coup in 2015 circled around the military's resentment over civilian interference (BTI, 2022). Improved communications as well as transparency could decrease the risk of coups as part of efforts aimed at addressing military grievances.

Military Divisions and Fragmented Authority

Hiroi and Omori (2013) argue that the feasibility of coups become prominent when there are divisions among the military that facilitate conspirators to acquire the support from some sections against others. The intricacies associated with French-Speaking West African Militaries hierarchies coupled with the influence of France's divide-and-rule method, provide a platform for compartmentalized conspiracy (Kim, 2018). In some instances, lower-level officers often carry out coups without the support from higher level officers.

The autonomy of the presidential guard from the regular command structure exacerbate this (Le Cam et al., 2023) Similarly, coups may take advantage of generational divides wherein junior officers are more eager to interfere as a result of frustrations with generals that are aging and corrupt in the military (Thurston, 2017). In order to bridge this divide, reform efforts must focus on promoting unified leadership thus closing off the probability of factional coup plotting.

Public Discontent and Promise of Reform

Another factor that provides a justification for militaries to present themselves as important change-agents is the widespread public frustration with corruption, democratic backsliding and economic conditions (Igiebor, 2019). The likelihood for tacit military support for coups is even prominent when the military feels the opinion of the public favor intervention, even when the military is not directly involved (Sangnier & Zylberberg, 2017). Coups in Guinea (2021) and Mali (2020) were in part facilitated by mass protests over grievances with civilian rulers. The seizure of power by the military is encouraged by their perception that they would be received as heroes fighting corruption and limiting terms.

Reinforcing Nature of Successful Coups

Collier and Hoeffler (2005) intimate that so far, a coup succeeds in ousting a leader, it sets precedents that necessitate further intervention on the basis of the military's political effectiveness in ousting a leader. The 2020 coup in Mali gained inspiration from the successful ousting of President Keita the previous year. The plotters of these coups harbor the belief that they will continuously have an edge over weakened civilian institutions. Adverting this sequence requires concerted efforts in reasserting civilian rule such as the integration of military leaders into electoral processes and security sector reform (Thyne & Powell, 2014). Structural reforms of the military at the same time should concentrate on promoting an apolitical and unified arm forces tilted towards external missions rather than domestic politics.

Loyalty Factors

Like other factors, the loyalty of officers and soldiers to factions or individual leaders play a key role in

determining support for coup attempts (Rittinger & Cleary, 2013). Coup plotters often rely mostly on family, ethnic or patronage loyalty among security forces in order to mobilize enough backing. The privileged status of the presidential guard breeds predominantly strong loyalty to the president. However, loyalty becomes weak and open to manipulations by rivals as regimes decline (Harkness, 2017). Coup leaders may exploit discontent with aged rulers to appeal backing and depict seizures of power as needed to rejuvenate the state. Managing military loyalties through fair promotion policies and ethnic integration is important to mitigate coup risk.

Military Leaders' Personal Ambitions

According to Albrecht et al., (2021), one of the under-examined drivers of coups is the independent personal ambitions of top brass within the military. Military officers may develop autonomous interest which are economic and political separate from that of the civilian rulers and see coups as a platform to acquire greater privileges and power. In West Africa, the competition for influence has given rise to multifaceted tensions between the special forces, presidential guards and regular military factions. The success of the Malian coup by junior officers also unearthed personal ambitions of lower-ranking personnel as well (McGowan, 2003). Institutions with strong oversight and norms against political intervention is required in checking the unchecked ambition.

IDEOLOGICAL FACTORS

Ideological factors have historically shaped African militaries' political alignments though less prevalent today (Reno, 2021). Many coups that emerged after independence were often deeply rooted in ideological visions of national dignity, anti-imperialism and progress. Some plotters of coup continue to include ideological appeals to popular frustration with high level of corruption and inequality of the masses (Bjørnskov & Pfaff, 2021). Nevertheless, interventions in modern military coup are more driven by greed and opportunism instead of programmatic agendas.

The lines between moral imperatives and political arguments are blurred by the characterization of a combination of humanitarian aid and military action (Kaldor & Selchow, 2015). These involvements often mix the notions of legitimacy and legality, subsequently resulting in a new form of humanitarian government that prioritizes the protection of human lives (Berberoğlu, 2016). Similarly, Berberoğlu (2016) argues that elite rivalries within the military and the civilian government are the motives deeply rooted behind military coups. The susceptibility of postcolonial Africa to military coups is as a result of political competition and ethnic antagonism coupled with the presence of a strong military with factionalized officer corps.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The vast northern deserts of Mali and the aloofness of garrisons like Kidal facilitated division among the officer which then necessitated several coups, especially the Tuareg-tied northern commanders. Even though these coups generated initial widespread support on the basis of the public's dissatisfaction with the underdevelopment of the North and corruption, achieving reform has proven to be difficult (Gaasholt, 2020). Additionally, Gaasholt (2020) avers that the vastness of the northern desert facilitated the rise of an extremely independent Tuareg-led military factions resulting in divisions which fueled frequent coups

On the other hand, the enormous influence of the RSP presidential guard regiment under Compaoré in Burkina Faso resulted in the execution of countercoups by factions of other military against it in 2015 and 2022 during times of political upheaval (Engels, 2015). Engels (2015) also noted that sidelined factions saw

the RSP presidential guard in Burkina Faso as an alternate center of power during the rule of Compaoré that prompted coups after his fall. The fragmentation of relations between the air force and army after independence served as the bedrock for counter coups. Future involvements guided popular frustrations over economic predicament and corruption. But coup leaders replicated abuses, spurring further unrest (Curtice & Arnon, 2020).

There are common trends relative to the occurrence of coups in numerous French-Speaking West African Countries. In the four countries assessed in this paper, uncontrolled security as well as spiraling jihadist insurrections are seen as the key factor spurring military coups against civilian government, for example in Mali and Burkina Faso attacks by extremist increased prior to coups. The failure of security is highlighted as a trigger in such instance. Similarly, widespread anti-government protest emanating from high unemployment, poor public service, corruption among other things demonstrates the public discontentment with civilian rule nurtured military takeovers in all four countries.

In Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso, the facilitation of coups by close presidential guard or special forces was made possible by arresting leaders or providing tacit support which underlined the destabilizing role of elite, politicized military units in the region. Additionally, the post-coup transition governments installed by the Juntas were dominated by the military in these countries thus being in keeping power from civilian hands for longer transitional periods, indicating a pattern of prolonged rule by the military even after the seizures of power. The frequency of the occurrence of coup points to a contagion effect, in which military takeovers become normalize as feasible options for others to follow after each successful coup that occurs.

Consequences of Coups on Governance and Stability

While the long-term consequences of coups on governance and stability is detrimental, the removal of a regime perceived as inept and corrupt often provisionally stabilizes unrest and give the junta popular legitimacy in the immediate aftermath of successful coups (Thyne, 2017). Nevertheless, this stability is fragile considering that the democratic process is undermined as a result of the suspensions and dissolution of institutions and the restrictions on civil liberties by military installed government (Ren et al., 2022). The 2020 coup in Mali originally gained public support but independent media and civil society were sidelined.

Authoritarian enclaves are institutionalized through entrench military influence of puppets civilian governments, reserved domains and new constitutions which have long-term consequences on governance and stability (Soest, 2015). For example, the post-coup regime in Burkina Faso reserved military veto powers over civilian decisions making such legacies difficult to undo. Coups can fragment state legitimacy and make coherent policymaking difficult by empowering factions over institutionalized hierarchies. Tobias and Pilster (2015) intimate that lowering the likelihood of coups and successful outcome will require institutional coup-proofing strategies such as creating artificial balances, dividing the military into rivaling organizations and structural obstacles. Governance capacity was damaged as result of the frequent coups in Guinea-Bissau that produced an erratic turnover.

Omoruyi (2018) argues that the militarization of politics also leads to human rights abuses, closing of political space, and volatility from marginalized factions plotting further interventions. Economically, coups have the propensity to discourage investment, creative enterprise, and development as property rights and regulations become vulnerable (Christian et al., 2020). The recurrent coups in Niger worsened state weakness and local grievances. Even though failed coups may advert these impacts, they can initiate broader conflict between loyalist and rebel units (Bonnecase, 2021). Army vs police clashes spurred as a result of the failed coup in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Role of International Actors

The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) as a regional actor has shown a willingness to

quickly condemn coups as well as levy penalties ranging from closing borders to freezing assets and suspending states from the regional body (Wobig, 2015). After the two recent coups in Mali, ECOWAS swiftly pushed for speedy transition timeline back to elections, even though such attempt was resisted by the junta.

After the recent coup in Burkina Faso, ECOWAS was successful in brokering a charter as part of efforts to guide constitutional reforms. Determined coups leaders that are backed by popular frustrations with incumbent regimes has proven to limit the leverage of ECOWAS. While the imposition of sanctions may disrupt remittances and trade, it has had little effect compelling coup leaders to cede power rapidly (Rarick, 2016). When citizens perceived that democracy has failed to deliver, the appeals to share democratic norms ring hollow.

Additionally, external support from external partners like the European Union (EU) and France towards the enforcement of anti-coup policies by ECOWAS seem to be inconsistent especially in situations where juntas are perceived as valuable counterterrorism allies, as in the case of Mali (Ibrahima, 2017). Regional division has also proven to weaken collective actions. Even though ECOWAS hold vital influence, its anti-coup measures have fought to reestablish constitutional order or prevent seizure attempts. ECOWAS members states commitment to the imposition of sanctions has proven challenging thus making it imperative to improve governance and enhance citizen welfare as part of measures to address motivations for coups.

On the other hand, France as a past colonial power has used ties with local leaders, military bases and defense agreements with local leaders as part of intervening against coups that seem to threaten their interest a classic example of their support for Ouattara against Côte d'Ivoire's recent putsch (Wyss, 2013). They have at the same time also backed authoritarian regimes aligned with Paris by deploying military forces in order to save regimes confronted by popular protests. Critics has argued that the long and repressive regime of Compaoré in Burkina Faso and the 2020 coup in Mali was enabled by France (Gazeley, 2020). The selective coups interventions employed by France based on strategic calculations rather than principles has undermined France's reputation as a democratic partner.

Furthermore, local armies with French training have themselves led involvements leading with inconsistent responses. By seeking the support of the Russians by the leader of Mali lessened France's influence against the coup. The tarnished reputation of France in the region hampers its effectiveness as a deterrent, even though it retains defense sway.

For their part, the response by United States and European Union to recent coups have garnered differentiated responses not on the basis of consistent democratic principles but based on security interest. For example, the recent coup in Mali received mild criticisms from Western Powers with most aids and cooperation being restored rapid as a result of the country's strategic importance for counterterrorism (Shannon et al., 2014). In contrast to the West's mild response to the Mali's coup, Guinea's coup generated firmer criticism and aid freezes due to its less important role in the counterterrorism fight, even though similar democratic backsliding (Jeffrey & Jonathan, 2021).

Western geostrategic interest and securing cooperation from de facto regimes over the democratic aspirations of citizens reflect the level of inconsistencies of Western powers response to coups in the region. The perceptions of the West being a sincere partner for accountable governance is damaged as a result of these inconsistencies to their response. The deterrence and incentives for reform is undermined as a result of the West tolerating some coups while at the same time condemning others. A uniformed opposition to all unconstitutional power seizures is imperative.

Efforts to Prevent Coups and Strengthen Democracy

Several steps such as regional early warnings, security sectors reforms and governance improvements have been implemented as part of efforts aimed at deterring coups and strengthening democracy. Building a unified apolitical force requires security sector reform such as institutionalizing chain of command, decentralizing garrisons and integrating rebel groups into national armies (Porto, Alden & Parsons, 2005).

To address the gaps exploited by coup plotters, good governance efforts inclusive of decentralization, public administration strengthening and anti-corruption drives are required to be implemented (Kedibone, 2013). By instituting good governance initiatives, accountability and transparency will be enhanced, corruption will be controlled, the quality of governance will improve and local government will be empowered to better serve their communities.

Dinh Thanh et al. (2023) indicates that the importance of implementing governance principles as part of reducing corruption and improve the overall functioning of government institutions emphasize the principles of good governance and corruption-inducing factors in public administration bodies. The underlining grievances that can result to coups attempts and political instability can be addressed by promoting good governance practices. Though implementation has been inconsistent, accountability and transparency which are elements of good governance initiatives have been boosted in places like Senegal. Widespread grievance remain coup enablers due to uneven implementation across countries (Kedibone, 2013)

ECOWAS and UNOWAS's early warning systems focus on identifying coup risks before the seizure of power (Leonie, 2022). Yet still, early warnings have not always resulted into prevention of coups in the region. While enforcement remains a challenge when norms crash with popular will, constitutional safeguard against unconstitutional changes of democratically elected government articulate regional norms. The early warning systems have helped in assessment and revealing coup risks but the actualization of the warnings into viable actions remains a challenge with alerts often arriving late or lack preventive follow through (Leonie, 2022).

Short-term stability benefits transitions that incorporate mixed civilian-military bodies. However, such stability is not sustained considering there is a risk of further interventions. Establishing an institutionalized defense administration in which civilian experts are in charge of military affairs, is viewed as a crucial element of democratic civilian control (Cramm et al., 2023). The method ensures the limitation of the military's duties in state policymaking are restricted to external defense.

In particular, the extent of reform implementation has fallen short of the ambitions. Raising the costs and uncertainties associated with coups as part of sustained efforts could strengthen deterrence. Constitutional protections clearly articulate anti-coup norms but only become effective when being supported by regional leverage and domestic constituencies which are often lacking. The cumulative impact relative to dampening the frequency of coups in West Africa over time has been modest (Iroanya, 2017). It will take generations to reverse deeply embedded incentives and capacities for interventions.

CASE STUDIES

Burkina Faso

The January 2022 military coup in Burkina Faso during which army officers from the influential Presidential Guard detain President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré amidst increasing insecurity across the country decisively highlighted the important and central role that the elite Presidential Guard played in decisively ousting the incumbent democratic elected president and defining the political roadmap of the

country (Ndiaga, 2022). Consisting of approximately 1,300 troops, the Presidential Guard boast the best training and weaponry in the military, was created during the long authoritarian regime of ex-President Blaise Compaoré, who lasted 27 years before being ousted in 2014 (International Crisis Group, 2022).

The Presidential Guard did not only experience preeminent status as well as benefits within the military hierarchies but similarly served as a strong pillar facilitating the lengthy rule of President Compaoré. During the democratically elected government of President Kaboré, the privilege position of the Presidential Guard reduced as part of attempt by President Kaboré to limit its political influence in the country. The loss of power and status as well as economic benefits led to widespread resentment among the Presidential Guard thus precipitating the Guard turning against the president in the 2022 coup. This coup demonstrated the precarious nature of heavily depending on an elite presidential security unit.

Olukayode (2022) intimated that the coup in 2022 failed to stabilize the country as deadly jihadist attacks and insecurity drastically increased across the country even though President Kaboré was ousted from power thus serving as a catalyst for another military coup in 2022 of September led this time by Captain Ibrahim Traoré. Allowing presidential guards and other loyal military unity to acquire unequal power as well as influence within the military structures enabling them to determine political direction consistent with their vested interest underscored immense risk as was demonstrated by the September 2022 coup. These events in Burkina Faso showcased the danger associated with building up the role of Special Forces and presidential guards without adequate professionalization efforts and enough civilian oversight across the wider military.

In 2020, August, military officers led by Colonel Assimi Goita under the National Committee for Salvation of the People orchestrated a coup overthrowing President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita underscored the crucial role played by the elite US-trained Bataillon Autonome des Forces Speciales unit in ousting an elected government they were meant to protect in Mali (Turse, 2022). Building up politicized and elite military units while at the same time undermining the wider military poses an imminent risk to democracy demonstrated by the 2020 coup that was spearheaded by the highly trained and autonomous special forces battalion nurtured under President Keita. The enormous recalcitrant role of the special forces unit in shielding anti-government protesters and then toppling Keita's legitimate command proved how presidents often sow the seeds of their own downfall by seeking to allot privileges certain loyal security forces.

After the coup, Goita installed a military led temporary government further entrenching the army in governance affairs and political power instead of swiftly returning Mali to civilian rule (ICG, 2021). Extensive conflict often ensued when mutinous elements of African militaries exceed their bounds and turn against the very government, they sworn to defend extending the interference by politicizing security forces in transitional government in the aftermath of the coup.

Niger Coup of 2010

In February 2010, the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy led by Salou Djibo staged a coup against Nigerien President Mamadou Tandja, who had amended the constitution to extend his rule (Lecocq et al., 2013). The presidential guard played a central role, protecting anti-Tandja protests and blocking loyal forces from defending the president (ICG, 2010). This underscored the pivotal influence of presidential guards in shaping coup outcomes. Post-coup, the unit supported elections bringing President Mahamadou Issoufou to power in 2011 (Wing, 2013). The case showed presidential guards can restore as well as overturn democracy based on shifting institutional interests.

Overall, these coup stands as an unambiguous caution on the need for African leaders to aggressively depoliticize their militaries, avoid nurturing specific elite units for regime protection or counterbalances to the regular military and strengthen civilian oversight institutions, given the threats to democracy and

stability this facilitates.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has explored the complex interplay between military structures, dynamics and coups within French-speaking West African countries. The analysis revealed a number of common drivers of seizures of power against civilian rulers. Public frustration over corruption, ineffective governance as well as national security threats facilitate military interventions. Additionally, divided commands, autonomous elite units with strong regime loyalties, and personal ambitions of top military brass enable actual plotting.

Comparative examination of recent coup attempts highlighted the frequent pivotal role of presidential guards and special forces in decisively toppling leaders, arresting them or shielding putschists. Their privileged status nurtured intense institutional interests, allowing them to shape transitions. Case studies on Burkina Faso and Niger epitomized this dangerous dynamic. Consequently, seizures of power, though initially stabilizing, typically empower factions, restrict liberties and weaken institutional control.

Moreover, the paper demonstrated the inconsistent leverage of external actors like ECOWAS and former colonial powers against interventions based more on security alignments rather than democratic principles. And while wide-ranging efforts to deter coups and strengthen civilian authority have been undertaken, deeply-rooted incentives and capabilities for military interference persists.

Ultimately, the analysis underscores the need for comprehensive initiatives aimed at depoliticizing militaries in the region, avoiding the aggrandizement of specific elite regimes units, ensuring unified chains of command, increasing transparency regarding defense policies and strengthening oversight bodies. Tackling underlying graft and governance deficiencies is equally imperative. Without concerted efforts on these fronts, the region's vulnerability to recurring bouts of military interference placing democracy in peril may continue unabated for the foreseeable future.

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