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Institutional responses to the illegal narcotic trade in West Africa

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Abstract

The trafficking of illegal narcotics on the African continent and into West Africa has resulted in human insecurity and state insecurity in the region. Furthermore, it has helped facilitate shadow economies such as the illegal trade in fire arms and human trafficking within the region deteriorating law and order, judicial enforcement, and political institutions in these countries. The West African region serves as a transit point in the distribution of narcotics to Europe from Latin America and has increasingly become a destination in drug trafficking.

Various national, regional, and international strategies have been undertaken in combating this perceived scourge. The African Union, European Union, United Nations, and West African states themselves have all provided frameworks in combating drug trafficking in Africa. Despite these various strategies drug trafficking still thrives in West Africa. This thesis will assess one of these strategies that being the West African Coast Initiative (WACI). This thesis attempts to outline the various reasons for the growing importance of West Africa in the regional and international drug trade whilst assessing the impact WACI has had in dealing with the drug trade in West Africa.

The reason the paper seeks to assess the effectiveness of the West African Coast Initiative is to highlight the obstacles and challenges the strategy has faced over the last eight years of its existence, to make recommendations in this regard, and to identify specific shortcomings in African institutional efforts in engaging with threats that exist outside the state