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Crystals...the new “Blood diamonds” in the Sahel?

Crystals...the new “Blood diamonds” in the Sahel?

Abstract:

The Sahel is an area characterized by the complex challenges it faces, among which the illegal activities supported by illicit criminal and terrorist organizations stand out.

Given its geographical location and relief, it has numerous natural resources hidden in mines and deposits, such as crystals. These are attractive natural creations that have been gaining fame and fashion in the Western world and whose uses have led to massive demand, which in turn generates increasing procurement, extraction and trade.

But, these crystals, as happened with blood diamonds in the past and with other natural resources today, could be the target of illicit groups that are gaining traction in the Sahel and whose traceability, prevention and control every day It is more complex.

Keywords:

Sahel, crystals, illicit trafficking, ilegal markets, criminal groups.

***NOTE:** The ideas contained in the Opinion Papers shall be responsibility of their authors, without necessarily reflecting the thinking of the IEEE or the Ministry of Defense.

Cristales... ¿los nuevos «diamantes de sangre» del Sahel?

Resumen:

El Sahel es una zona caracterizada por los complejos desafíos a los que se enfrenta, entre los que destacan las actividades ilegales que sustentan organizaciones ilícitas criminales y terroristas.

Dada su localización geográfica y su relieve, cuenta con numerosos recursos naturales escondidos en minas y yacimientos, como son los cristales. Estos son creaciones naturales atractivas que han ido ganando fama y moda en el mundo occidental y cuyos usos han derivado en una demanda masiva, que a su vez genera una obtención, extracción y comercio en aumento.

Pero, estos cristales, al igual que ocurrió con los diamantes de sangre en el pasado y con otros recursos naturales en la actualidad, podrían ser el objetivo de los grupos ilícitos que están ganando operatividad en el Sahel y cuya trazabilidad, prevención y control cada día es más complejo.

Palabras clave:

Sahel, cristales, tráfico ilícito, recursos naturales, grupos criminales.

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The complex sahelian framework:

The Sahel stands as a delimited political region that includes several countries: Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria¹. Nevertheless, other sources also include Sudan and Eritrea in this union. It is about states whose borders go from Atlantic Ocean to Red Sea, and whose throughout more than 5000 kilometres along, make up the south border of Sahara Desert, with a name, the “Sahel”, which can be translated as “shore” or “coast” from the Arab.

Besides, there is “institutional” conception of the Sahel that includes the countries encompassed within the organisation known as “Sahel G5”², created in 2014: Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. These countries are most similar in terms of political and administrative characteristics, and they grouped together with the aim of guaranteeing the security and stability inside their boundaries.

In either case -Sahel as a whole or Sahel G5-, it is a question of countries that face with numerous and important challenges. On the one hand, the climate change³, which worsens the already complicated life conditions in the area and affects a population whose main support are the agricultural and livestock activities exploiting the natural environment. By the other hand, the impact on markets, especially in the food sector⁴, after the Covid-19 pandemic.

But, among these problems, two of them stand out: the political instability of their governments, which has derivated in the fact that the most of them are consequence of a coup d'état; and the exponential increase of violence and insecurity in the zone, both factors related. Consequently, the countries that make up the Sahel are mostly located

¹ “El Sahel: afrontar los retos del desarrollo sostenible en el Sahel” (s.f.). Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), Invertir en la población rural. Available in: <https://www.ifad.org/es/web/operations/regions/wca/sahel#:~:text=La%20región%20pol%C3%ADtica%20del%20Sahel,se%20enfrenta%20a%20numerosos%20desaf%C3%ADos>.

Note: all the internet links in this document active in the date of closing: 7th may 2024.

² COLOMA PEÑATE, A. (2020). “El crimen organizado en el Sahel y su conexión con el terrorismo yihadista”. Instituto Universitario General Gutierrez Mellado, pp. 27. Available in: http://e-spacio.uned.es/fez/eserv/bibliuned:master-IUGM-PSD-Acoloma/Coloma_Penate_Africa_TFM.pdf

³ FERNÁNDEZ ARRIBAS, G. (2023). “Cambio climático, inestabilidad y desplazamientos en el Sahel. Desafíos y respuesta por parte de la Unión Europea”. Revista Española de Derecho Internacional, 75, pp. 51. Available in: <https://www.revista-redi.es/redi/article/view/63/65>

⁴ “El Sahel: afrontar los retos del desarrollo sostenible en el Sahel” (s.f.). Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), Invertir en la población rural. Available in: <https://www.ifad.org/es/web/operations/regions/wca/sahel#:~:text=La%20región%20pol%C3%ADtica%20del%20Sahel,se%20enfrenta%20a%20numerosos%20desaf%C3%ADos>.

into de definition of “Failed States”⁵.

Although, as mentioned above, the economic activities of the area are essentially linked to agriculture and grazing⁶, it is necessary to consider that countries in the continent in their occidental and central zone are characterized by being rich in natural resources. Nevertheless, the benefits that these resources produce are more than unevenly distributed.

This unequal distribution, among the exponential demographic increase and the lack of control that there are in these territories, constitute factor that approach citizens to criminal activities typical of organised crime related with the obtention of those resources⁷ in an unlawful way.

This way, in a context marked by a general low life level⁸; a constant fight between tribes, clans and ethnic groups for the territorial control and the economic activities that can be carried out there; and borders that are more than permeable, terrorist groups and criminal organizations find in the Sahel a perfect scenery to move as they please. They carry out illegal activities that evolve and adapt to both local circumstances and international resources demand, and for which territorial expansion is key, controlling trade ruts.

Their central focus is situated in the area of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger⁹, and their main advance is focused to Gulf of Guinea.

The Sahel has emerged as the terrorism epicentre, collecting a total of 47% of dies in 2022. To this respect, among the countries that make up this region, highlight Burkina Faso and Mali, because together they rise the 73% of the total of dies in the Sahel

⁵ “Estado fallido”, según el teórico Marx Weber, haría referencia a aquellos Estados incapaces de mantener el monopolio de la violencia en sus territorios.

Alonso Berrio, M. (2003). “Los Estados fallidos”. Cuadernos de Estrategia, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, Ministerio de Defensa, 120, pp. 199. Available in: <https://publicaciones.defensa.gob.es/media/downloadable/files/links/P/D/PDF253.pdf>

⁶ AGUIRRE UNCETA, R. (2021). “Inseguridad alimentaria en el Sahel: una realidad persistente, pero evitable.”. Notes Internacionales, CIDOB (Centro de Pensamiento Global). Available in:

[https://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionales_cidob/252/inseguridad_alimentaria_en_el_sahel_una_realidad_persistente_pero_evitable#:~:text=Las%20principales%20actividades%20económicas%20de,\(IDM%2C%20Banco%20Mundial\).](https://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionales_cidob/252/inseguridad_alimentaria_en_el_sahel_una_realidad_persistente_pero_evitable#:~:text=Las%20principales%20actividades%20económicas%20de,(IDM%2C%20Banco%20Mundial).)

⁷ MAZZITELLI, A. L. (2006). “El desafío de las drogas, el crimen organizado y el terrorismo en África Occidental y Central”. Real Instituto Elcano. Available in: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/el-desafio-de-las-drogas-el-crimen-organizado-y-el-terrorismo-en-africa-occidental-y-central/>

⁸ SÁNCHEZ HERRÁEZ, P. (2021) “Sahel: ¡Tormenta perfecta de amplitud e intensidad creciente!”. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, Ministerio de Defensa. Available in: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/panoramas/PGC2021/Cap_8_Sahel.pdf

⁹ DÍEZ ALCALDE, J. (2020) “Yihadismo en el Sahel Occidental: una amenaza creciente y compartida”. Revista Fundación Víctimas del Terrorismo, pp. 93. Available in: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/documento/yihadismo-sahel-occidental-una-amenaza-creciente-compartida>

because of this reason. Not only there are more terrorism attacks, but these are also starting to be more lethal, increasing the number of killed people by attack a 48% since the previous year, 2021¹⁰.

It is about an essentially local terrorism¹¹ that, although it sets out relations with international groups, focus its attention in Sahel territories and in recruitment and training of new jihadists. In line with the economic instability mentioned in previous paragraphs, and that it generates almost non-existent expectations for the future, jihadist groups raise the support for the cause as a credible and beneficial alternative.

In this respect, although studies say that territorial expansion of Al-Qaeda-branched networks and other terrorist groups are unlikely, they ensure that they could use African occidental territories to implant logistic facilities¹² -related with the trade of these natural resources and with other properties from illegal markets-. They would be also used to create partnerships with local criminal groups and terrorist organizations from the zone, united and communicating for an increasingly precious good: crystals.

A good that is becoming the focus of attention of the illicit organizations in recent times.

Crystals...the attractive and new wealth:

The Sahel, in the field of the natural resources' illegal market, is marked by a clear precedent: **Blood Diamonds**.

During the end of 20th and 21st century these beautiful goods were the main characters of organized crime networks: they were diamonds obtained using slave population¹³. Despite this, its sale in the black market reached the same price as other diamonds with different sources. Therefore, its more remarkable characteristic was the infringement and absolute violation of human rights in their procurement process¹⁴, as well as the huge

¹⁰ “Global Terrorism Index” (2023). Institute for Economics & Peace, pp. 2. Available in:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2023>

¹¹ SÁNCHEZ HERRÁEZ, P. (2022) “Sahel: epicentro yihadista en África Occidental”. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, Ministerio de Defensa, pp. 88. Available in:

https://www.ieee.es/en/Galerias/fichero/cuadernos/CE_214/Cap_3_El_Sahel_epicentro_yihadista_en_Africa_Occidental.pdf

¹² MAZZITELLI, A. L. (2006). “El desafío de las drogas, el crimen organizado y el terrorismo en África Occidental y Central”. Real Instituto Elcano. Available in: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/el-desafio-de-las-drogas-el-crimen-organizado-y-el-terrorismo-en-africa-occidental-y-central/>

¹³ “Esclavitud: ¿qué son los diamantes de sangre?” (2022). EPE: El Periódico de España. Available in:

<https://www.epe.es/es/sociedad/20220117/son-diamantes-sangre-13107236>

¹⁴ “Datos sobre los diamantes de sangre y su comercio” (s.f.). Lonité. Available in: <https://www.lonite.es/educacao/Datos->

economic benefit that its sale assured.

They are also known as Conflict Diamonds because its sale and market produced benefits that were used, largely, to finance confrontations and wars in the African continent. Moreover, the control of the extraction areas and the procurement of the diamonds was also a reason for dispute between rival groups -and criminal groups- from the zone, because they wanted to achieve the monopoly of its traffic and, therefore, a bigger economic benefit derivate from it¹⁵.

But what is the current situation with regard to crystals? In the last years, the crystal and precious stones industry has increased considerably due to the exponential growth of its request¹⁶. Famous and popular people in Occident have disseminated their use, providing them with a certain prestige and with connotations that border on the mystical.

One of the big problems that this crystals trade faces shares origin with its potential referrals, Blood Diamonds. Regarding the later, the United Nations Organisation was forced to draw up a regulation that would serve as the basis and the guideline when it comes to checking the origin of these precious stones and to credit its purchaser that they were not obtained by bloodshed, violence, dies and human right violations. Was thus created Kimberley Process Certification System¹⁷ in 2005 with the last aim of stop the illegal commerce of these resources obtained fraudulently and inhumane and to stablish a control.

In this respect, crystals commerce in African continent currently coexists with a similar situation that the Blood Diamonds faced to: the absence of a regulatory legislative framework. It is an industry heavily associated with ethical, environmental and labour dilemmas and complications¹⁸, such as the workers' age or the extreme work conditions. Therefore, this increasing commerce faces the problem of determinate the raw materials'

[sobre-los-diamantes-de-sangre-y-su-comercio.html](#)

¹⁵ Ídem

¹⁶ “Materia de cristales: ¿por qué causa tanto debate dentro de la industria?” (2019). Tiempo Minero. Available in: <https://camiper.com/tiempominero-noticias-en-mineria-para-el-peru-y-el-mundo/mineria-de-cristales-por-que-causa-tanto-debate-dentro-de-la-industria/>

¹⁷ “Los diamantes de Conflicto: el proceso de Kimberley” (2011). Dirección General de Relaciones Institucionales, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, Ministerio de Defensa, pp. 1. Available in: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA01_2011DiamantesDeConflictoKimberley.pdf

¹⁸ “Materia de cristales: ¿por qué causa tanto debate dentro de la industria?” (2019). Tiempo Minero. Available in: <https://camiper.com/tiempominero-noticias-en-mineria-para-el-peru-y-el-mundo/mineria-de-cristales-por-que-causa-tanto-debate-dentro-de-la-industria/>

origin, of that crystals that are being sold in increasing quantities.

Further on the subject, what are crystals? These are solid bodies made up of particles arranged in a orderly manner, following a particular pattern¹⁹. By this way, they create a crystalline structure that can give rise to different outward appearances, normally marked by geometric lines that, far from being perfect, generate a variety of structures. As well as these forms, their colours, shine, transparency and fluorescence can variate... and both issues make them “different stones”.

The growing uses that are given to crystals are related with the increasing demand in recent decades. Crystals used to fabricate photovoltaic panels stand out, commonly known as solar panels, able to transform photons of sunlight into electrical energy and whose demand is growing exponentially, associated with the development of renewable energies. But this is not its only use possibility, because in its liquid state, crystals are used to fabricate the screens of electronic devices, especially computer screens; and they are also useful to decrease the chips’ size that those devices need to operate²⁰.

Although that crystal uses are very important daily, there is one that stands out from the rest: the ownership of a crystal collection and their use with therapeutic purposes. Around these stones, that stan out precisely because they do not look like stones given their colours, textures, shapes... he belief that they have magical properties has built up²¹.

These properties hover around their healing power because they have been used since centuries ago, specially by indigenous cultures. And, by the other side, some religions as Hinduism and Buddhism have also disseminated the practice of using crystals as amethyst and jasper to balance mind and body²². A practice that is follow by a lot of supporters.

Among its uses stans out one that is called “manifestation”²³, a new trend which consists

¹⁹ “La ciencia de las piedras: ¿qué es un cristal?” (s.f.). FDMINERALS. Available in: <https://www.fDMINERALS.es/2019/10/12/qué-es-un-cristal/>

²⁰ “Cristalización y ambientes petrogenéticos: aplicaciones de los cristales” (s.f.). Ministerio de Educación, Gobierno de España. Available in: <http://recursos.cnice.mec.es/biosfera/alumno/1bachillerato/cristalizacion/contenido7.htm>

²¹ BRYANT, J. (2020). “¿Qué hay con los cristales? Te decimos cómo esas piedras pueden ayudar ahora mismo”. Los Ángeles Times. Available in: <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/vida-y-estilo/articulo/2020-04-19/sanacion-cristales-piedras-pueden-ayudar-ahora-mismo>

²² ECHEVERRI CASTRO, C. (2023). “Guía sobre cristales o piedras sanadoras que debes conocer”. Mejor con salud. Available in: <https://mejorconsalud.as.com/guia-cristales-piedras-sanadoras/>

²³ MENDOZA, C. (2022). “Estos son los cristales de manifestación más efectivos”. AD Magazine, Estilo de vida. Available in: <https://www.admagazine.com/articulos/cristales-y-cuarzos-para-rituales-de-manifestacion>

of trying to make what you wish in your mind true through effort, work, discipline... always based on the energies that universe provides. Energies that are more present and accessible in -and through- crystals.

Each of them would have a specific purpose²⁴. For example: the financial abundance that citrine brings; the wound closure and the healing of past ties and heartbreaks that the obsidian facilitates; the protection that black tourmaline grants; the transformation of negative energies thanks to quartz; the emotional balance thanks to rhodonite... and a large etcetera.

So strong is the belief around the magic powers of these stones that traders have stated that the increase in the sale derives in part from the emergence of bad news and the buyers and population's stress growth²⁵.

The African continent is one of the areas where the illicit crystals traffic concentrates the most. In this respect, the value chain is not made up only by these materials, also by the mines and deposits where they are obtained. A constant fight is generated between different organizations for the control of them, especially for unexploited deposits²⁶. Similar to what happened more than 25 years ago with Blood Diamonds, this control becomes in a focus of conflict in a continent area already marked by the instability.

The natural resources exploitation as crystals in African communities are characterized by their export objective and by a widespread social concept that its use corresponds to powerful institutions and people. Precisely the later is what encourages certain leaders to use institutional privileges to obtain private benefits which, in addition, reinforce their position of power²⁷. This reality gives extreme value to that type of commerce, leading organizations and individuals to set up extensive local and international illegal networks which create a social model in that the money can buy everything, beyond legal or human considerations.

²⁴ Ídem

²⁵ CHAMBERS, R. (2021). "The "Healing Crystal" Conundrum". Roseanne Chambers. Available in: <https://roseannechambers.com/the-healing-crystal-conundrum/>

²⁶ BARRAS, R. & García, D. (2015). "Hacia un nuevo y diferente "flanco sur" en el gran Magreb-Sahel". Revista UNISCI (Unidad de Investigación sobre Seguridad y Cooperación Internacional), 39, pp. 11-46. Available in: <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/media/www/pag-74789/UNISCIDP39-1BARRAS-GARCIA.pdf>

²⁷ MAZZITELLI, A. L. (2006). "El desafío de las drogas, el crimen organizado y el terrorismo en África Occidental y Central". Real Instituto Elcano. Available in <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/el-desafio-de-las-drogas-el-crimen-organizado-y-el-terrorismo-en-africa-occidental-y-central/>

In this respect and having regard to this economic attractive -much higher than the one that can be obtained by the rest of the activities in this society-, these groups reach feelings of impunity, power and respect by the control of territories and, in consequence, of those deposits.

Behind these uses and the actual reality there are the ways of obtaining the crystals that, after, are commercialised from these deposits. In most of the countries where these natural resources are found does not take place a large-scale obtention²⁸. Because, for the extraction, use is made of artisanal excavations, characterized by the lack of protection and security²⁹. In them work mainly children, because the mines normally have very small entrances in the earth, with well shape or small diameter tunnels. They use picks and shovels to extract the crystals from among the rocks. It is a work of extreme physical dedication, that also involves for the workers exhausting and dangerous working days in exchange for a minimum wage.

In these work conditions there are many legality violations. Stands out, especially, the continued human rights' violation, that is accompanied by damage to wild flora and fauna that are around the deposits zone³⁰. This is enhanced by the lack of regulation mentioned previously, which makes that the trade and the natural resources' obtention is hidden under an opaque layer of silence.

In face of this opacity, this enormous benefit and the power that it generates...in addition to the people already powerful in the area, who can be benefited from this new source of wealth?

Organized crime and terrorism in the Sahel, participation in the crystals' value chain?

Organized crime and terrorism in the Sahel are destabilising events and they have different objectives, while sometimes they act cooperatively. Although they share many characteristics, the possibility of operating jointly is determinate, mostly, by the act

²⁸ CHAMBERS, R. (2021). “The “Healing Crystal” Conundrum”. Roseanne Chambers. Available in: <https://roseannechambers.com/the-healing-crystal-conundrum/>

²⁹ Ídem

³⁰ Ídem

sceneries³¹.

In this case, the Sahel is a perfect ubication for many reasons: politics (because of the convergence of borders between several states -most of them unstable- and the revolts and social conflicts that happen in them); geographics (considering their large extension and arid and depopulated zone characteristics); and economics (as we have mentioned, Africa is resource-rich, including natural resources). Where there is not law or order, it seems that actors always end up emerging to take advance of these security gaps.

In this context, some studies suggest that the exploitation of these natural resources deposits in the Sahel area is related to the terrorist activities and organizations funding³². There are specific cases of terrorist organizations related with exploitation and illegal natural resources markets.

Some examples are Al-Qaeda, that, although there have not associated directly with diamond industry investors, it is certain that they have installed in occidental Africa; or Hezbollah³³, that has received funding from diamond exploitations in the area. On their side, these criminal organizations also benefit from these markets, as it happens with petroleum traffic detected in Nigeria, which benefits are used to fund armies of other gangs and tribal operating in the Delta region.

The Informal Summit of Heads of State and European Union government and the Conference for the Sahel have ensured that, in the date of February of 2018, the 80%³⁴ of illegal flows that happened in the Sahel were related with natural resources traffic, including, in a prominent place, the petroleum.

Within these resources, the illicit crystals trade have not been studied in depth, so is not feasible to affirm emphatically which terrorist organizations are funding their activity with

³¹ COLOMA PEÑATE, A. (2020). "El crimen organizado en el Sahel y su conexión con el terrorismo yihadista". Instituto Universitario General Gutierrez Mellado, pp. 24. Available in: http://e-spacio.uned.es/fez/eserv/bibliuned:master-IUGM-PSD-Acoloma/Coloma_Penate_Africa_TFM.pdf

³² BARRAS, R. & GARCÍA, D. (2015). "Hacia un nuevo y diferente "flanco sur" en el gran Magreb-Sahel". Revista UNISCI (Unidad de Investigación sobre Seguridad y Cooperación Internacional), 39, pp. 11-46. Available in <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/media/www/pag-74789/UNISCIDP39-1BARRAS-GARCIA.pdf>

³³ MAZZITELLI, A. L. (2006). "El desafío de las drogas, el crimen organizado y el terrorismo en África Occidental y Central". Real Instituto Elcano. Available in: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/el-desafio-de-las-drogas-el-crimen-organizado-y-el-terrorismo-en-africa-occidental-y-central/>

³⁴ "Los ministros de Defensa de la UE reafirman su apoyo a Ucrania y abordan la situación de seguridad en el Sahel" (2023). Presidencia Española del Consejo de la Unión Europea. Available in: <https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/es/noticias/reunion-informal-ministerial-defensa-toledo-30-agosto/>

theses resources. However, and given the trend of similar products and raw materials, their antecedents and likeness in extraction methods and marketing with the Blood Diamonds, it would take to the suspicious that this simile is already more a reality than a possibility.

That is known is that governments from the area give the control of the deposits to different local groups, as *dozos*³⁵ in Mali, to avoid the control of them by terrorist groups.

Despite this, the efforts do not avoid the access of the powerful terrorist groups and organized bands in crystal's sale in both extraction and trade, because, in addition, sometimes the mineworkers appeal to terrorist organizations to protect them³⁶. In this way, crystals and precious stones extraction is not a new issue, because other deposits -as gold ones in Mali- are subject to this dynamic.

It should be mentioned that, in addition to be used as funding sources, the deposits and mines where terrorist obtain and extract the natural resources, are also used as junction point. They take advantage of them to disseminate the terrorist message, advertising and recruitment of new supporters among the workers³⁷, who can by this way get a new “work” better paid than the hard dayworks in the mines.

In this respect, it could be a bit paradoxical that something so beautiful and “mistic” accrues from a source of disputes and violence. Would there be a way to try to avoid or, at least, mitigate the negative impact of a source of wealth to a necessitated area of the planet, between other things, of economic income?

Conclusions

Crystals are a natural resource increasingly in demand. As the new main characters of the illicit trade in African continent and, especially, in the Sahel, they could be converting in other enormous funding source in the service of criminal activities and organizations.

In this framework is determinant -and enabling factor- the increase in Occident demand

³⁵ NÚÑEZ CIFUENTES, A. (2020). “Sahel y financiación terrorista: diversidad y oportunidades del sistema financiero”. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, Ministerio de Defensa, pp. 15. Available in:

https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2020/DIEEO77_2020ANANUN_Sahel.pdf

³⁶ Ídem, pp. 7.

³⁷ NÚÑEZ CIFUENTES, A. (2020). “Sahel y financiación terrorista: diversidad y oportunidades del sistema financiero”. Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, Ministerio de Defensa, pp. 15. Available in:

https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2020/DIEEO77_2020ANANUN_Sahel.pdf

in the last decades, given the above-mentioned uses and, especially, the growth in the belief about their curative and empowering powers of feelings and positive sensations.

Nevertheless, we can not forget that, although belief about their “mistic” valour are shared, crystals are still part (and growing) on day-to-day basis. Due to the energetic transition and the ongoing technology and given its use in solar panels and electronic devices screens, industrial demand of them is also important.

By this way, a mass trade of resources obtained illicitly could be in the making, by also violating human rights, whose benefits are mainly directed to organizations dedicated, in part, to illegal activities in the same area where they have been obtained: the Sahel. An area already unstable without the additional factor of crystals.

To reduce the impact of a new factor of destabilisation in an already complex zone of the planet, it could be used as a referent the Kimberley process, that tried to deal with Blood Diamond trade, and which achieved, greatly, to put an end on their marketing.

It would be about, in consequence, to avoid those crystals started to be known as, in short, “Blood Crystals” and, in addition demonstrate how learned by a hard price lessons do not fall into forgetfulness.

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