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**LEVERAGING CHINA'S GLOBAL  
SECURITY INITIATIVE FOR  
AFRICA'S REGIONAL SECURITY  
CHALLENGES.**

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March 2025

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# Start Here

In 2024, terrorist attacks in the Sahel claimed over 8,000 lives, while eastern DRC saw Goma fall to M23 rebels, displacing millions. These crises underscore Africa's persistent security challenges—terrorism, political instability, and regional fragmentation—that defy easy solutions. Amid this turbulence, China's Global Security Initiative (GSI), unveiled in 2022, offers a new framework for cooperation, emphasizing sovereignty, non-interference, and collective stability.

As Western influence wanes and regional bodies like ECOWAS falter, Africa faces a pivotal moment to redefine its security partnerships. This article argues that leveraging GSI could bridge Africa's fragmented security frameworks, providing resources and diplomacy to tackle crises like the AES-ECOWAS rift and DRC's unrest. Yet, success hinges on balancing China's support with African agency, avoiding dependency, and navigating geopolitical rivalries. By blending GSI with local strategies, Africa could forge a path to resilience in an era of uncertainty.

## Contemporary Security Challenges in Africa

Africa's security landscape is fracturing. In the Sahel, the Alliance of Sahel States (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) formed in 2023 and exited ECOWAS in January 2025 after coups and disputes over sanctions. This split has weakened regional counterterrorism efforts, leaving a vacuum exploited by groups like Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State affiliates. Violence has surged, with AES states turning to Russia's Wagner Group for support, further complicating dynamics. Meanwhile, ECOWAS's credibility has eroded, its sanctions failing to deter coups or unify West Africa against shared threats.

In the DRC, the M23 rebellion, allegedly backed by Rwanda, captured Goma in late 2024, intensifying a conflict that has displaced over 7 million people. Mineral-rich eastern DRC remains a flashpoint, with regional spillover threatening stability in the Great Lakes. These crises share roots in governance failures, external meddling, and inadequate coordination. From the Sahel's terrorism to DRC's militia wars, Africa urgently needs innovative, cohesive security responses to stem the tide of chaos.

## China's Global Security Initiative: A Potential Framework?

Launched in 2022 by President Xi Jinping, the Global Security Initiative champions a world order based on sovereignty, mutual respect, and cooperative security—principles resonating with Africa's aversion to external dictates. Unlike Western models often tied to democratic reforms, GSI offers practical aid: military training, equipment, and infrastructure investment. China's footprint in Africa is already significant—drones bolster DRC's army, armored vehicles equip Sahel forces, and the 2024 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation pledged billions for development.

As France retreats from the Sahel and U.S. engagement wanes, China's non-aligned stance appeals to coup-led regimes and states wary of neo-colonialism.

GSI's flexibility could complement African Union (AU) peacekeeping or regional blocs like the Lake Chad Basin Commission, providing resources without the baggage of historical domination. For cash-strapped nations battling insurgents or militias, China's support promises a lifeline. By aligning GSI with Africa's needs—counterterrorism in the Sahel, stabilization in DRC—it could enhance existing efforts, offering a fresh paradigm for a continent seeking alternatives to faltering Western frameworks.

## **Bridging GSI with African Security Frameworks**

In the Sahel, GSI could bridge the AES-ECOWAS divide. China's neutral stance and economic leverage—via Belt and Road projects—position it as a mediator to restore dialogue. Beijing could facilitate joint counterterrorism training or supply AES states with surveillance tech, addressing their security needs while encouraging reintegration with coastal ECOWAS members. This dual approach avoids escalating tensions, fostering a unified front against JNIM and ISGS. In the DRC, GSI-backed initiatives could bolster AU-led peacekeeping, with China funding rapid-response units or conducting bilateral military drills to counter M23.

Infrastructure investments—roads linking conflict zones to markets, energy grids reducing resource wars—could tackle root causes, complementing MONUSCO's overstretched mandate. Beyond these hotspots, GSI's utility extends to frameworks like the Accra Initiative, where China's drones and training could enhance border security, or the Multinational Joint Task Force, disrupting Boko Haram's supply lines. Success requires alignment with the AU's Agenda 2063, ensuring GSI supports African-led solutions. By integrating China's resources with regional mechanisms, Africa could amplify its response to terrorism, rebellions, and instability. This hybrid model leverages GSI's strengths—funding, flexibility—while rooting solutions in local contexts, offering a blueprint for continent-wide security cooperation.

## **Opportunities and Challenges of Leveraging GSI**

GSI presents clear opportunities. China's financial muscle—evident in \$50 billion FOCAC commitments—can equip African forces with drones, vehicles, and training, vital for cash-strapped states like Niger or DRC. Its non-aligned approach suits coup-led AES nations wary of Western lectures, fostering trust.

Regionally, GSI could link fragmented blocs through shared projects, like Sahel-West Africa security corridors. To succeed, Africa must retain agency in integrating GSI with AU and ECOWAS frameworks. A balanced approach—using China's resources to plug gaps while prioritizing local leadership—could mitigate risks. GSI offers a potent tool to help Africa navigate security challenges and build a stable region.

## **Conclusion**

Africa's security crises—from the Sahel's AES-ECOWAS schism to DRC's unrelenting conflict—demand innovative solutions. China's Global Security Initiative, with its focus on sovereignty and cooperation, offers resources and a framework to bridge gaps in regional stability. By mediating in West Africa, bolstering DRC peacekeeping, and supporting broader AU efforts, GSI could transform Africa's security landscape. African leaders must proactively shape GSI's role, ensuring it complements rather than local initiatives.

The continent's future hinges on blending resilience with global partnerships—GSI is a promising tool for such endeavours. As threats evolve in 2025 and beyond, Africa's ability to harness China's support while steering its own course will help yield lasting peace on the continent.



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