

## Effect of diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts on government performance

The diplomatic pressures with the threat of invasion had a small negative impact on African governments exerting control over ungoverned regions. performance, with no significant improvements in public goods provision, such as water and sanitation, and a decline in infrastructure projects.

Geographical region: sub-Saharan Africa.

Effect size: Small adverse effect ( $g=-0.06$ )

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence (1 study; 4 ES)

### Short summary

The cell evaluates U.S. foreign policy's impact on encouraging governance in ungoverned spaces in Africa post-9/11, with a threat of invasion if they do not do so. While aimed at enhancing state capacity through deterrence, there was limited government expansion into these areas: there were no significant improvements in public goods provision (World Bank, water, sanitation projects) and a significant decline in infrastructure projects in low-governed areas. The cell has low confidence due to a limited number of studies.

### Long summary

#### *The intervention*

The intervention involved U.S. foreign policy post-9/11, pressuring African nations to reduce terrorist safe havens and govern ungoverned spaces. By emphasizing deterrence through the threat of military intervention, it sought to expand state capacity, territorial control, and public service delivery in minimally governed areas to counter terrorism and promote stability.

#### *How the intervention is expected to work*

This intervention was based on deterrence, where the U.S. demanded that nations, particularly in Africa, reduce terrorist safe havens by expanding governance in ungoverned spaces. The policy assumed that the credible threat of U.S. military intervention would compel governments to strengthen their territorial control, improve state capacity, and enhance public service delivery. By establishing a stronger state presence, these regions would become less hospitable to terrorist groups, reducing threats to global security. The approach expected that increased governance would foster stability, improve access to justice, and promote economic development, ultimately bolstering state legitimacy and reducing reliance on external military actions.

#### *The evidence base*

The cell consists of one study which employed a quantitative design using a difference-in-differences approach to analyze the impact of U.S. interventions on governance. It focused on 764 provinces across 49 African countries.

#### *Evidence findings*

Diplomatic pressures with the threat of invasion had a small negative impact on African governments exerting control over ungoverned regions. performance, with no significant improvements in public goods provision, such as water and sanitation, and a decline in infrastructure projects.

### *Included studies*

**Downey (2021)** evaluates the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy during the Bush administration in encouraging African governments to govern ungoverned spaces as part of the global war on terror. The study examines the Bush administration's foreign policy post-9/11, emphasizing deterrence through the global war on terror. The administration demanded that nations actively reduce terrorist safe havens under threat of U.S. intervention. This policy was intended to pressure governments to expand territorial control and state capacity in ungoverned or minimally governed spaces. The study analyses data from 49 African countries. The author uses a difference-in-difference strategy to test for evidence of government expansions, using subnational data on conflict, government presence, and public goods in Africa. The results show that African states did not engage in these expansions into ungoverned spaces. There was limited impact on public goods provision with no significant change for World Bank projects (-0.085,  $p > 0.10$ ), water projects (0.013,  $p > 0.10$ ), and sanitation projects (-0.034,  $p > 0.10$ ), while infrastructure projects (-0.091,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly declined in low-governed areas. The study rated as low confidence quantitative study due to the lack of depth qualitative analysis limit the understanding of the underlying factors affecting governance in ungoverned spaces. Overall, broad-based deterrence is an ineffective diplomatic policy strategy to reduce ungoverned spaces.

### *Confidence assessment*

The cell has low confidence due to a limited number of studies.

### **Other outcomes in the study/cell**

- Community and state governance/Access to justice, rights and public services
- Human security/Food security and nutrition & health security