



THE SAHEL PEACE INITIATIVE

Steps Toward Peace

A CONFLICT ASSESSMENT OF THE LIPTAKO-GOURMA ZONE
BURKINA FASO, MALI AND NIGER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Sheldon Gellar, with significant inputs from Robert Groelsema (CRS Senior Technical Advisor for Justice and Peacebuilding) and Patrick Williams (CRS Program Manager for the Sahel Peace Initiative). The team received additional support and guidance from Jennifer Overton (CRS Regional Director for West Africa), Abigail Johnson (CRS Regional Technical Advisor for Gender Equality), Caritas Burkina Faso (OCADES), Caritas Development Niger (CADEV), Caritas Mali and the CRS West Africa team. This assessment and report could not have been completed without innovative support and high-quality data collection by the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) teams in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.



Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the United States Catholic community. CRS' relief and development work is accomplished through programs of emergency response, HIV, health, agriculture, education, microfinance and peacebuilding. CRS eases suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality.

Copyright 2016 Catholic Relief Services. Any reproduction, translation, derivation, distribution or other use of this work is prohibited without the express permission of Catholic Relief Services ("CRS"). Please obtain permission from pqpublications@crs.org or write to:

Catholic Relief Services
228 West Lexington Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-3443 USA
1.888.277.7575
www.crs.org

Ouagadougou le 13 Novembre 2019

A:

Monsieur Seal L Callahan
Président de l'Agence Catholic Relief Services
Baltimore, USA

Estimé Monsieur le Président,

Nous venons d'achever un atelier qui a réuni des évêques délégués des conférences du Burkina-Niger et du Mali qui a connu la participation de deux délégués du Ghana et de Cote d'Ivoire.

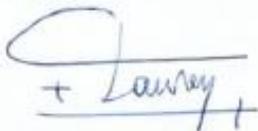
Comme vous le savez, la réflexion a porté sur la situation d'insécurité au Sahel, les causes et les conséquences du phénomène qui dépassent le Sahel. Nous voudrions vous remercier d'avoir recueilli ce projet qui, grâce à l'engagement de tout CRS, est devenu une réalité.

Alors que les travaux qui sont bien déroulés s'achèvent, nous voudrions vous demander encore d'user de ce qui est en votre pouvoir pour accompagner le processus déclenché par cet important atelier afin que les actions retenues et planifiées puissent se concrétiser en vue de provoquer les changements souhaités en matière de cohésion social, de sécurité et de paix au sahel.

Veillez féliciter votre équipe de CRS Afrique de l'Ouest pour la fructueuse collaboration que nous avons eue dans l'organisation et la tenue de cette rencontre inter-conférence sur la sécurité au Sahel.

Persuadés que la bonne collaboration nous réunira toujours autours des défis auxquels l'Eglise fait face en Afrique de l'Ouest en général et au Sahel en particulière, nous vous assurons de nos prières et de notre disponibilité.

Monseigneur Laurent B. DABIRE



**Président de la Conférence Episcopale
Burkina-Niger**



Monseigneur Jonas DEMBELE



**Président de la Conférence Episcopale
du Mali**

FOREWORD

Our sisters and brothers in the Sahel are living through an unprecedented period. Communities in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are under direct attack by violent factions who seek to aggravate and exploit community grievances and tensions for their own gain. The increasing number, severity and scale of these attacks against civilians, displaced persons and families is shocking. Millions of innocent people need immediate, lifesaving assistance and the region needs a solution for long-term, sustainable peace.

The Catholic Church stands united against this violence and has been working tirelessly to respond to the humanitarian and development needs of the region. Working across all three countries, among those displaced as well as the families hosting them, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has provided cash distributions, water, food and shelter over the past year. We are also continuing our work to provide healthcare, education and agricultural assistance, as well as carrying out peacebuilding activities. These efforts are led and championed by the Catholic Church in West Africa and grounded on an overriding priority for justice and peace in the region. CRS strongly supports this call as essential to its vision that all people fulfill their God-given human potential. We are proud to witness the superhuman efforts undertaken in response to this crisis, efforts that are to be celebrated.

But we are also alarmed by the growing demand for help that far exceeds available resources. While governments have recognized the critical importance of investing in the Sahel, we are calling on donors, policy makers, advocates and humanitarian responders to redouble their efforts to make peace a reality in the region.

In response, the Sahelian Catholic Church is leading a multi-country effort, The Sahel Peace Initiative, to raise awareness about this violent conflict and advocate for positive change. Toward this end, we present *Steps Toward Peace*, a multi-level conflict assessment of the ongoing crisis in the Sahel. Its ultimate message is clear: those who seek peace must focus on reinforcing social cohesion, vertical and horizontal, while engaging local leaders and civil society in all responses, activities and policies.

The findings and recommendations in this report are a reflection of the work conducted by Caritas Burkina Faso (known as OCADES), Caritas Niger (known as CADEV), Caritas Mali and CRS and shaped by extensive first-hand primary data collection, analysis and review. Our integrated team engaged with and listened to hundreds of individuals from the most vulnerable communities so that we could understand their challenges and reality, and better coordinate a unified response.

We invite you to consider how to actively support the application of these recommendations to ensure the integral human development of each and every person living in the Sahel. Similarly, we pledge to adopt these recommendations in the promotion of a new era of collaborative, integrated peacebuilding that seeks to unite communities across the region, and we invite you to join us. Although we are troubled by the gravity of the crisis, we are optimistic about a brighter, more just and secure future for the Sahel.

Thank you for your tireless efforts to build peace in the region

Monseigneur Laurent B. Dabire

Président de la Conférence
Episcopale Burkina-Niger

Monseigneur Jonas Dembele

Président de la Conférence
Episcopale Du Mali

Sean Callahan

Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Relief Services

Contents

- Acknowledgements i**
- Foreword iii**
- Executive Summary 1**
- Introduction 8**
 - Sahel Peace Initiative 8**
 - Rationale 8
 - The Unified Church’s Response 9
 - Goals and Objectives 10
 - Geographic Focus: Tri-border area 10
 - Purpose of the Assessment 13**
- Design and Methodology 14**
 - Assessment Design: 14**
 - Desk Study/Literature Review 14**
 - Sampling 15**
 - Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) 17**
 - Mini Social Cohesion Barometer 18**
 - Fieldwork Logistics 18**
 - 18
 - Data Analysis / Limitations 19**
- Findings 19**
 - Profile 19**
 - Political Context 19
 - External Forces 21
 - Socio-Cultural 22
 - Economic 24
 - Gender 25
 - Social Cohesion Estimate 26
 - Gender and the Social Cohesion Barometer 31
 - Problem 34**
 - Insecurity 34
 - Economy 35
 - Insufficient Humanitarian and Development Responses 36
 - Declining Faith in and Legitimacy of National Government 36
 - People 37**
 - Perpetrators of Violence 38
 - Key Governance Mobilizers 42
 - Mobilizers for Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion 43
 - Process 46**
 - Factors Escalating Conflict 46
 - Factors Contributing to Peace and Social Cohesion 50
 - Triggers 51**

Trends	51
Trajectories	52
Deterioration of Status Quo	52
Moderate Progress	52
Best Case	53
Country-Level Nuances	53
Mali	53
Niger	54
Burkina Faso	56
Recommendations	58
Reinforce Interfaith Peacebuilding Task Forces (PBTFs)	58
Strengthen and Diversify Traditional Conflict Management and Social Cohesion Mechanisms	59
Engage women as direct actors in building and managing peace	59
Buttress humanitarian Options for the Poor in Tri-Border Region	60
Link foreign peace actors with national civil society for indigenous innovation	60
Conclusions	62
Annex A: Works Consulted	64
Annex B: The Mini Social Cohesion Barometer	71
Annex C Sampling Matrix	74
Respondent Demographics	76
Annex D: Review of Literature Summary	77
Annex E: Qualitative Protocols	100

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report

This report summarizes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of a conflict assessment commissioned by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Catholic Church in West Africa. In November 2019, in cooperation with its local partners in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Niger, CRS launched an initiative to help build peace in the Sahel, the [Sahel Peace Initiative](#) (SPI). The SPI seeks to assist the Church and civil society actors to design and implement locally led strategic responses to the spiraling violence and complex humanitarian and development crisis their communities face, especially in the tri-border area of Liptako–Gourma, the epicenter of the violence. This study recognizes the importance of national and interregional militarized responses, but focuses on civil society and local-level dynamics.¹ The authors call on governments, regional and international, to balance military interventions with an equal commitment to humanitarian assistance, development and peacebuilding because the root causes and drivers of the conflict cannot be addressed through military intervention alone.

Research questions

The conflict assessment prioritized the following research questions:

- What are the underlying causes of violence, who are the perpetrators, and what are their motives, incentives, interests and grievances?
- Who are the main victims of the violence and what are their resiliencies?
- What have been the impacts on and consequences of the violence for local economies, government, services, political stability and social cohesion?
- What are possible ways forward?

Methodology

The assessment employed mixed qualitative and quantitative methods comprising key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), a literature review, direct observation, and a perceptions survey of social cohesion. KIIs and FGDs were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires, and the survey was based on an adapted version of CRS' Mini Social Cohesion Barometer (the Barometer), containing 18 indicators grouped by socio-cultural, economic and political spheres. The assessment framework combined CRS' 4Ps (profile, problem, people and process)² and USAID's [Conflict Assessment Framework \(CAF\) 2.0](#).³ CRS' [Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, Protection and Youth Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners](#)⁴ provided additional guidance. CAF 2.0's focus on grievances and resiliencies and the 4Ps analytical structure were useful to identify factors to consider when making macro- and micro-recommendations.

Sampling was conducted within nine zones of the Liptako–Gourma tri-border area which straddles Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Six of the zones are high-conflict zones. Focus groups and interviews were organized with individuals most affected and/or involved in violence—women, youth, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, self-protection groups, marginalized ethnic groups, peacebuilders, administrative and security officials,

¹ The study was completed before the August 2020 coup in Mali.

² CRS. 2018. [Peacebuilding Fundamentals: Participant's Manual](#). CRS.

³ USAID. 2012. [Conflict Assessment Framework \(CAF\) Version 2.0](#). June 2012. Washington D.C.: USAID.
USAID. 2012. [Conflict Assessment Framework Application Guide](#). June 2012. Washington D.C.: USAID.

⁴ CRS. 2015. [Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, Protection and Youth Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners](#). CRS.

and traditional chiefs and religious authorities. Across the nine study zones, 45 FGDs and interviews were held alongside 90 surveys administered to government officials, traditional leaders and community members.

Participants were identified through purposive and snowball sampling.⁵ Sampling relied on references from Caritas staff, mayors, religious leaders and others working in the target zones. The outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent restrictions on movement required some activities in Mali and all activities in Niger to be conducted by telephone.⁶

Qualitative data were processed manually through matrixed relational content analysis, which relies on the co-occurrence and identification of concepts captured in focus groups and informant interviews. The assessment team explored relationships among violent conflict, peaceful conflict, governance, livelihoods and poverty across generations and gender.

Quantitative Barometer data were disaggregated and summarized using descriptive statistics. The limited sample size imposed by COVID-19 restrictions prevented the relevance or use of inferential statistics.

Assessment limitations

Snowball convenience sampling resulted in an oversampling of men and members of major ethnic groups but endeavored nonetheless to engage women and minority ethnic groups. For security reasons, violent extremists were not interviewed. COVID-19 restricted the team's movements and compelled it to replace face-to-face interviews with telephone interviews in some locations. Findings of the Mini Social Cohesion Barometer are not representative as the study did not attain a sufficient sample size. To mitigate limitations, CRS and partners hosted two virtual validation workshops during which partners and key respondents critiqued, corrected and confirmed the findings and recommendations.⁷

Summary of key findings

1. Insufficient and inequitable access to wealth, livelihoods, and natural resources is the driving force behind the deterioration of the social fabric and uptick in violent conflict, especially for youth from traditional pastoralist backgrounds. Individuals emigrate, join violent groups, or perpetrate violence as an escape from poverty and injustice.
2. The scale and scope of violence surpass the capacity of government and local leaders to coordinate a unified and effective response.
3. The conflict has impacted men and women differentially with women the least involved in conflict management at national and local levels.
 - a. Women are managing families while under attack as men have fled or been killed.
 - b. Displaced women lack access to basic goods, land and formal representation in management mechanisms.
4. Religious leaders and traditional chiefs are committed to peace and social cohesion. They command respect from their communities for their objectivity and neutrality. Communities value traditional conflict management mechanisms and perceive them as essential resources.
 - a. Leaders in Mali and Burkina Faso will consider engaging women in peacebuilding; in Niger, conservative social and cultural norms pose greater challenges for women peacebuilders.
 - b. Traditional governance systems need to be more inclusive of and better understood by women and younger generations.

⁵ Snowball sampling is a nonrandom technique where known study participants recruit future participants from among their social network. Naderifar, Mahin & Goli, Hamideh & Ghaljaei, Fereshteh. (2017). Snowball Sampling: A Purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*. In Press. 10.5812/sdme.67670.

⁶ A complete list of those engaged can be found in Appendix C.

⁷ Moving forward, CRS will continually engage communities in focus group discussions while regularly administering the Mini Social Cohesion Barometer to inform regular reporting and sharing of data.

5. Whereas self-defense groups are well-established locally in Niger and Burkina Faso, in Mali they are less prominent and less respected as peace actors. Self-defense groups do not necessarily make their communities more secure; indeed, they may perpetuate violence.
6. Unaccountable and unresponsive political leadership, especially at national levels, has eroded faith in democracy and civic engagement. In the tri-border area, governance failures exacerbate weak connections to modern economic and political systems.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are not one-size-fits-all as contexts, key persons and grievances differ by community, commune, region and country. These five recommendations seek to build the resilience of communities by supporting local mechanisms to respond to conflict and promote social cohesion. Communities cannot directly confront violent actors, but they can unite and present a unified front to those seeking to exploit divisions. All recommendations are fully elaborated with demonstrative activities in the *Recommendations* section.

- *Reinforce peacebuilding task forces (in response to findings 4 and 6).*

Existing peacebuilding task forces (PBTFS) should bring together religious leaders at national levels to advocate for the adoption of realistic, just and humane policies to overcome the suffering caused by the current crises and to reverse political and religious polarization, violent extremism and social unrest. National PBTFS in each country would reach out to grassroots members to promote interfaith collaboration in their local communities and ensure that local communities' voices are heard at the national levels.

- *Strengthen and diversify traditional conflict management and social cohesion mechanisms (in response to findings 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6).*

Peace actors should seek to strengthen and diversify conflict management mechanisms while avoiding the creation of parallel platforms that create redundancies and confusion. Tapping into local knowledge about traditional conflict management mechanisms, supporting local leaders and encouraging the inclusion of women and youth in decision-making will empower chiefs, mayors and governors to lead while enhancing inclusive civic participation for democratic local governance and accountability.

- *Engage women as direct actors in the construction and management of peace (in response to findings 1, 3, 4 and 6).*

Women must be engaged and mobilized to take a more direct role in peace processes and social cohesion. Women's participation has improved at national levels, but more effort must be directed toward increasing their contributions in rural communities, towns and districts across the tri-border area. Protocols to include women in civic matters beyond the family are needed. Raising the status of women as peacebuilders must respect local cultural norms and practices, but advances in this traditionally male-dominated domain could significantly improve accountability and strengthen the social fabric in the long run.

- *Buttress humanitarian options for the poor (in response to findings 1, 2 and 3).*

The greatest untapped resources in the Sahel are its people, most of whom live below the poverty line, and many of whom lack formal education and skills that could enable them to ascend social and economic ladders. Stakeholders supporting peace efforts should redouble efforts to target populations most vulnerable to violence and its causes and ensure that

development resources are directed toward their safety, their resilience and their right to be protected from exploitation and marginalization by predatory governments and extremists. High priority should be given to finding and applying local solutions that can revitalize rural economies, upgrade skills, and protect women and children.

- *Promote civil society solutions, especially regarding livelihoods (in response to findings 1, 4, 5 and 6).*

Peace actors should facilitate collaboration between and among learning networks linking external peace actors with Sahelian civil society. Peace actors should take advantage of critical indigenous expertise within *paysan* (smallholder farmer) universities⁸ and apply it holistically to emergency and development assistance. Sahelian civil society has successfully responded to many of the root causes of indigenous conflicts; they now need political and financial resources to implement at scale.

Analysis

The analysis merges USAID’s Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) 2.0 and CRS’ signature 4Ps methodology (profile, problem, people and process), CAF 2.0 offered advantages at the macro level because of its focus on national and international actors, concepts and language familiar to speakers of a European language, and shared understanding of Western institutions. The 4Ps complemented these strengths by emphasizing historical perspectives, micro level dynamics, and framing questions and concepts in language easily grasped by diverse cultures and people without formal schooling. The overlay of these frameworks encouraged a comprehensive contextual analysis.

Profile

The conflict analysis first investigated political contexts, external forces, and religious, socio-cultural and economic factors that set the stage for conflict. The analysis then applied CRS’ [Mini-Social Cohesion Barometer](#) (Barometer) to provide a cross-sectional view of social cohesion in each assessment zone. By triangulating findings, it becomes apparent that the economic and political contexts are closely interrelated as the most influential factors contributing to the crisis. Other data were reviewed separately to identify patterns related to gender, youth and ethnicity. Although women and youth are key actors, and have suffered disproportionately from the violence, they constitute untapped forces for peace.

The assessment team applied the Barometer to measure the strength of the socio-cultural, economic and political dimensions of social cohesion in target zones. Based on a cross-sectional analysis, social cohesion estimates (SCE) were calculated for each zone and country (0-5). Scores lower than three indicate a critical gap, while scores above 4 indicate a high level of social cohesion. The data collected through the Barometer strongly correlate with data collected through focus groups and interviews, suggesting that the economic context is the largest contributor to the deterioration of social cohesion in the region.

TABLE 1 BAROMETER SCE RESULTS BY COUNTRY AND REGION

	Burkina Faso (3.37)	Mali (3.23)	Niger (3.08)
--	----------------------------	--------------------	---------------------

⁸ Paysan universities are informal schools used to share learning on agricultural best practices.

	Kaya	Ouahigouya	Kong oussi	Koro	Tominian	Ansongo	Ouallam	Torodi	Ayorou
Socio-cultural	3.33	3.30	3.38	4.00	3.80	3.48	3.31	3.73	3.88
Economic	2.74	2.99	2.89	2.75	3.00	2.27	2.29	2.53	2.28
Political	4.08	4.03	3.63	3.18	3.37	3.22	2.78	3.58	3.33
Overall	3.39	3.44	3.30	3.31	3.39	2.99	2.80	3.28	3.17

Problem

Insecurity. Respondents widely expressed concern that there could be no meaningful peace without security. For them, peace was a moral state in which people could feel secure, trust their neighbors, and work together to make their lives better. As stated by a leader in Niger, “Peace is not only the end of a conflict, but it is also young people sheltered and employed.” From the KIIs and FGDs it was clear that extremist groups exploited political corruption, bad governance, economic desperation, and social and ethnic divisions to divide and stoke grievances. Groups affiliated with Al Qaeda and Islamic State offer communities carrots, but brandish sticks to advance their agendas. Violent extremists lure followers with enticements and instill fear with coercion and targeted attacks often directed against community and religious leaders. Recruited youth, once armed, engage in banditry and illicit economic activities.

- *Mali* – Insecurity sparked by failure to fully implement the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has created numerous autonomous militarized and extremist groups, which seek territorial control.
- *Burkina Faso* – Insecurity is perpetuated by the incursion of external groups seeking to exploit native grievances, and a bleak economic reality to gain support and undermine state presence.
- *Niger* – Insecurity is perpetuated by the incursion of external groups seeking to exploit native grievances and bleak economic realities to gain support and access to natural resources such as gold.

Economic desperation and hopelessness. Poor economic prospects are a major cause of the deterioration of the social fabric and rise in violent conflict. Virtually all focus groups identified youth unemployment and the lack of economic opportunities for youth as the main cause and consequence of violent conflicts. The lack of employment opportunities and government support, as well as feelings of hopelessness, have motivated unemployed and underemployed rural youth to abandon agriculture and seek their fortunes elsewhere. Further, the political, economic and social marginalization of these young people has increased anti-government sentiment and led many to join violent extremist movements or turn to crime and banditry to earn a living.

Insufficient humanitarian and development responses. The literature review and KIIs indicated that European and American development and aid programs designed to counter extremist violence have largely been fragmented and ineffectual due to an insufficient knowledge of local conditions and lack of consultation with local communities. Moreover, the donor community has largely focused on humanitarian aid, but neither Sahelian governments nor humanitarian aid organizations have sufficient resources to serve large numbers of people in need.

Declining faith in and legitimacy of national government. Key informants noted that citizens trusted local government more than national government. Top-down, poorly designed and executed

decentralization policies have hindered the development of local government institutions. The disconnect between people and government is most apparent in neglected, poor and rural areas. A sharp difference between men and women arose as women were more likely to speak favorably of the government and to describe the government as the only entity that could resolve the conflict at scale. Men tended to stress the importance of self-defense groups.

People

Intersectionality of identity. The data analysis showed that although ethnicity tended to shape thinking and behavior about relationships, it should be viewed as one of several markers that include age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, class and socio-economic status. For example, not all Tuaregs are rebels and therefore should be accorded equal citizenship status vis-à-vis dominant groups. Key actors fall into different categories depending on context. National military and security forces may be perpetrators of violence in some settings and mobilizers for peace in others.

Victimhood. Perpetrators of violence can also be victims of violence. While women, and especially children, are the most victimized, they rarely perpetrate violence.⁹ Most interviewees felt that they had been victimized at some point, but all those consulted reported feeling a strong sense of nationalism and pride in their national identity. However, it is worth noting that Barometer respondents in Mali and Niger felt that their compatriots did not share the same values or history whereas Burkinabe respondents did, and demonstrated a strong sense of unity.

Mobilizers for peace. While national-level politics have sought to be more inclusive by increasing the engagement of women, they have largely missed the mark with youth. Local governments and authority structures are the purview of older men. Women and youth remain disengaged at local levels.

Process

Factors escalating conflict. Multiple, overlapping factors drive conflict. Among these are competition for the control of trans-Saharan trade routes, overly securitized responses to conflict, conflicts over control and access to natural resources, failure to fully implement the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, and an over-reliance on national-level leaders. The negative political and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising number of people in need of humanitarian aid could exacerbate conflict and increase pressure on limited state resources.

Factors promoting peace. Traditional chiefs and religious leaders are strong supporters of non-violent resolution of conflict, community cohesion and peacebuilding. They uniformly oppose violent extremists and denounce bad governance while actively providing resilient local conflict management mechanisms. Rural communities, especially those above the age of 35, have high trust in traditional authorities and religious leaders. All respondents indicated a strong belief in the importance of traditional conflict mediation and practices to prevent, mitigate and transform violence at the communal level, but valued a strong national response to the presence of violent extremist and external provocateurs. Three main obstacles have limited the effectiveness of traditional chiefs and religious leaders: 1) the lack of inclusivity of women and youth; 2) the gradual disempowerment of local leaders by national governments; and 3) the targeted assassination of local leaders by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs).

⁹ Attacks on children and violence across the Central Sahel continue to rise and more than 4.3 million children are now in need of humanitarian assistance. See UNICEF. January 2020. [Crisis in the Sahel Advocacy Brief](#).

Conclusion

A mixture of incentives has driven external actors to war against Sahelian communities and their protectors. Some motivations appear to ride on greed and thirst for control over lucrative illicit trans-Saharan trade. Others have deep roots in religious ideology, grievances and propagandistic interpretations of global hegemony and marginalization. Various theories explain manipulative jihadist behavior. However, decades of misrule and neglect in the Sahel have advantaged these movements and increased their ideological appeal, especially to marginalized and unemployed youth with few prospects for a brighter future. On the bright side, few people in Liptako Gourma embrace jihadist goals and ideologies.

The results of this assessment show that Sahelians and their governments have been living on borrowed time, **Sahelians must rebuild a tattered social contract**, and with the help of their allies, restore order, reconcile conflicted groups, and strengthen social cohesion. Reforms must address chronic unemployment, inequitable access to land and unaccountable leadership. Peacebuilding needs to become the mandate and responsibility of ordinary people including traditional chiefs, religious leaders, women and youth. Actors for peace can make a difference. If they can value indigenous knowledge and implement locally generated solutions, they can reinforce vertical and horizontal social cohesion by engaging local leaders and civil society, thereby giving voice, opportunity and support to the people of the Sahel.

INTRODUCTION

This conflict assessment was commissioned by Catholic Relief Services' West Africa Regional Office and conducted from February 10 to April 28, 2020, by an independent consultant with 50 years of research experience in the region. CRS and Caritas country program teams validated tools and collected data. This assessment comes at a time when the Sahel region of West Africa is experiencing unprecedented levels of violence. In this regard, the regional Catholic Episcopal Conference stated:

“We reaffirm our commitment to collaborate with all people, to put a stop to the killings and the displacement of the populations. The Church further reaffirms that the causes of the violence must be eradicated, ensuring that the victims are not abandoned on their own, but that their material, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual care is ensured, and that work is committed to effective conflict prevention, and lasting peace and sustainable living.”¹⁰

This assessment acknowledges the importance of security to peace and development in the Sahel, but the findings argue for a more balanced and nuanced response to external and internal threats. The evidence suggests that the daily manifestations of violence linked to radicalism and extremism mask the root causes of conflict that run deep within Sahelian society. Decades of failed governance, for example, have eroded faith in government, and have undermined fruitful citizen-state relationships. A robust social contract remains beyond reach. But the findings also sound a hopeful note: if the root and proximate causes of violence embedded in Sahelian economic and political systems are clearly identified, better understood, and fully appreciated, the fissures dividing polities and peoples can be bridged through community re-visioning, restructuring and the transformation of social constructs.

The grounds for this assertion are found in this assessment's review of the vast and evolving literature on the Sahel, and in the myriad testimonies of hundreds of women, men and youth at the grassroots living at the epicenter of the violence. Frank and forthright reactions, ideas and insights offered in interviews, group discussions and surveys reveal a telling fact: Sahelian civil society, of which a plethora of vibrant community-based organizations forms the bedrock, has been greatly undervalued regionally and internationally. If Sahelian history, social institutions, faith traditions and belief systems receive the attention and respect they merit, they can be leveraged for peace and stability. Sahelians – in solidarity with the global human family – need to be able to reposition themselves to unleash their creativity and to realize their potential for transformative change.

SAHEL PEACE INITIATIVE

RATIONALE

For more than a decade, the Sahel has experienced unprecedented upheaval. Violent incidents occur daily displacing hundreds of thousands of families, destroying property and assets, forcing schools to close, and claiming the lives of civilians, military and peacekeepers alike. Peace-loving communities have encountered a five-fold increase in the number of violent attacks since 2016. Conflict plays out at multiple levels: extremist attacks, ethnic clashes, pastoralist/farmer disputes, religious disagreements, and a growing estrangement between civil society

¹⁰ Unified Message of Bishops, Priests, and Secular Delegates of Episcopal Conferences Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Ivory Coast, and Ghana. Inter-Conference Workshop on Security in the Sahel. November 12-13, 2019.

and state.¹¹ Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have been especially impacted, and as this analysis shows, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and other coastal states are vulnerable to similar threats.

The violence affects health and social welfare long-term. Farmers are unable to plant and harvest; a generation of children are going unschooled; and families are going to bed hungry when humanitarian agencies cannot reach them. Chronic poverty in the sub-region has been pervasive for years, but poor governance, food insecurity, youth unemployment, limited access to basic services, and recent extreme climate events have rendered the fragile soils and lands of the Sahel fertile ground for extremists. Uncontrolled migration, human trafficking, and illegal trade in small weapons, drugs and other illicit goods flourish along millennia-old trade routes. If the social and economic marginalization of the Sahel continues apace; if people can no longer trust each other; if governments and citizens do not strive for the common good, then hope for a brighter future will be lost and abandoned. Violence and destruction will prevail and unity, prosperity, freedom and justice for millions will remain a distant dream.

THE UNIFIED CHURCH'S RESPONSE

The Sahel Peace Initiative (SPI) represents the Catholic Church in West Africa's response to the crisis. In May 2019, at the third plenary assembly of the Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA) in Ouagadougou, a small group of senior Church leaders led by the Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Cardinal Philippe Ouédraogo, began intense discussions around the devastating impact of the crisis on Sahelian life and its implications for the future of the sub-region. Subsequently, CRS West Africa Country Representatives held consultations with these leaders to better understand the Church's views on the crisis, and its role as a peace actor. Specifically, CRS discussed potential advocacy measures and possible interventions that could influence key stakeholders and lead to constructive responses. To gain additional perspectives, CRS met with donors and government officials in the sub-region.

The Sahel Peace Initiative is a multi-country, multi-divisional effort whose purpose is to reduce violence and restore peace in the Sahel and neighboring countries. It prioritizes four areas: 1) communications, 2) influence, 3) fundraising, and 4) development and humanitarian programming. SPI places a priority on Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, which are at the epicenter of the violence, but also includes neighboring Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. SPI's approach is holistic and comprehensive. It integrates justice and peacebuilding with and through Church networks and local partners. The initiative is designed to help West African communities, societies, and polities overcome destabilizing circumstances and build lasting peace.

In September 2019, CRS leaders met in Baltimore to develop a "whole of Agency" approach to addressing the crisis in the sub-region. This meeting served to align CRS' collective efforts for a multi-pronged response across departments to ensure collaboration and coordinated efforts.

Subsequently, in November 2019, the episcopal conferences in the target countries convened a three-day workshop to design a unified, strategic response to the crisis. Presided over and hosted by Cardinal Philippe Ouédraogo, the workshop attracted participation from the Mali and Burkina-Niger Episcopal Conference presidents, 11 bishops from Burkina Faso, representatives of the Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire Episcopal Conferences, a member of the USCCB and representatives of CRS headquarters and field offices. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to ending the forced displacement of populations; to providing material, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual care to victims; and to working to prevent violent conflict and ensuring lasting peace through dialog, justice and reconciliation. Together, the bishops released a public statement; CRS issued [a press](#)

¹¹ USAID. November 2014. *Assessment of Risk of Violent Extremism in Niger* (Washington, DC: The Mitchell Group). Augustin Loada and Peter Romaniuk. 2014. *Prévention de l'extrémisme violent au Burkina Faso: vers une résilience nationale dans un contexte d'insécurité régionale*. Global Center on Cooperative Security.

[release](#), and the USCCB published [letters](#) appealing for the U.S. Government to support an end to the violence in the region.

The Catholic Church in West Africa has a legacy of social justice and conflict resolution, but never have the national conferences united to collaboratively respond to a crisis or an issue of this magnitude. Although Catholics comprise a small percentage of the total population in the Sahel, the Catholic Church is a respected voice by the population regardless of their faith and is seen as a neutral, objective and non-political actor across the region. Further, the Church has been instrumental in convening interreligious and intergroup dialog across the Sahel which continues to this day. Overall, the Catholic Church enjoys a high level of influence by people of all walks of life from the grassroot to the government.

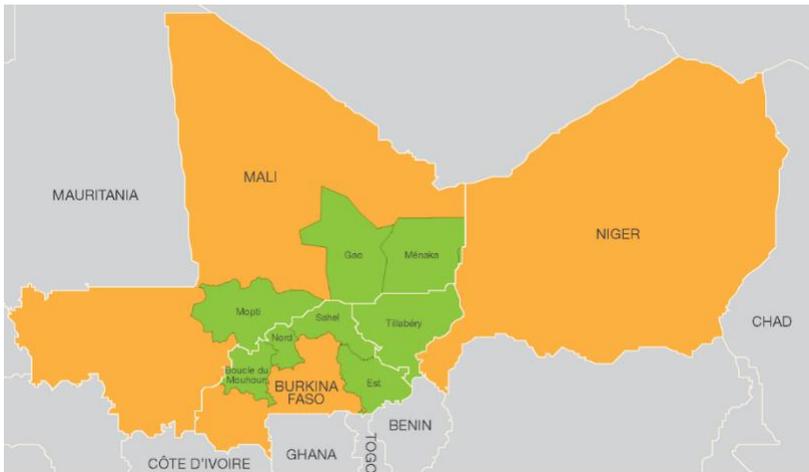
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The SPI was launched to promote peace, social cohesion and resiliency. The Church and CRS seek to work at the center of humanitarian, development and peace efforts, or “the triple nexus,” by identifying and addressing the root causes of the ongoing conflict while also responding to the emergent humanitarian needs of individuals living in the Sahel.

The goal of this conflict assessment is to provide an in-depth analysis of the conflict, and actionable recommendations that can inform gender-responsive justice and peacebuilding activities across the region, with an emphasis on social cohesion, governance and development. Specifically, this assessment was commissioned to respond to the following objectives: (1) generate new knowledge and more effective approaches to mitigate the Sahelian crisis; (2) identify opportunities to mainstream peacebuilding, social cohesion and governance into humanitarian and development aid programming; and (3) identify entry points and strategies for the Church and civil society to respond to the Sahelian crisis with special emphasis on advocacy-based and effective communication approaches that support and give voice to local community needs, priorities and initiatives.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS: TRI-BORDER AREA

The SPI focuses on five sovereign states in the Sahel: Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Niger. Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana are categorized as prevention zones while the others form *response zones*. The response zones have been further narrowed to the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, known as the Liptako–Gourma region.



SOURCE: [THE DEFENSE POST](#)

This analysis focuses on the designated response area. The people in the tri-border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger share strong cultural ties and a common history of neglect and poverty under colonial and postcolonial rule. More recently, within the past five years, they have experienced a massive increase in violence that has forced millions of people to flee their villages, destroyed local economies, and increased the need for protection and humanitarian aid.

The assessment team, local Caritas and CRS staff, further identified three sites in each country to participate in the conflict assessment. Sites were selected based on the presence of displaced persons, refugees, exposure to violent conflict, accessibility, and strategic importance. These criteria were thought to identify those most vulnerable and were recommended by CRS and Caritas field staff in each country.

In Burkina Faso, the assessment team selected Kaya, Kongoussi and Ouahigouya; Ansongo, Koro and Tominian in Mali; and Ayorou, Ouallam and Torodi in Niger.

Burkina Faso

Kaya is the capital of Sanmatenga Province in the Center-North region of Burkina Faso. Kaya sits 100 km north of the capital, Ouagadougou, and has an official population of 66,851, which is growing quickly as displaced people seek refuge from non-state armed groups (NSAGs). The town and surrounding area operate largely as agricultural centers of millet and cotton. The Center-North region has been severely affected by violent conflict with most displaced people seeking refuge in Kaya. This study engaged respondents at the city level and in the village of Barsalago.

Kongoussi is the capital of Bam Province in the Center-North region of Burkina Faso. Kongoussi is 110 km north of Ouagadougou and has been the epicenter of much of the violent conflict in the Center-North region. The town hosts a population of 18,400 people and supports smaller agricultural towns. The land is relatively fertile and has reliable access to water.

Ouahigouya is the capital of the Yatenga Province and the Northern region of Burkina Faso. Ouahigouya is 185 km north of Ouagadougou, has strong trade ties with Mali and is on the national route connecting the two countries. Ouahigouya relies heavily on irrigation channels that support year-round gardening of fruit and vegetables. The city has a population of 122,000 and has received

large numbers of IDPs and refugees from the region. The Northern region has been dramatically affected by violent conflict. This study engaged respondents at the city level and in the village of Bogouya.

Mali

Ansongo is located in the Gao Region of eastern Mali. The commune has a population of 181,391 and is on the Niger river, 1,283 km from the capital city of Bamako. The local economy revolves around animal husbandry, agriculture, fishing and trade; all of which are connected to the town's location along the Niger river. Insecurity and violent conflict have negatively affected the commune since the start of the Malian conflict in 2012.

Koro is located in the Mopti Region of Mali. The commune has a population of 498,435 principally representing the Dogon and Peulh ethnicities. The city is on the national road connecting Mali and Burkina Faso and is 721 km from Bamako. The economy is based largely on agriculture and animal husbandry while trade is rather limited. The commune has become an extremely dangerous conflict zone, with NSAGs, bandits and self-defense groups operating in the region.

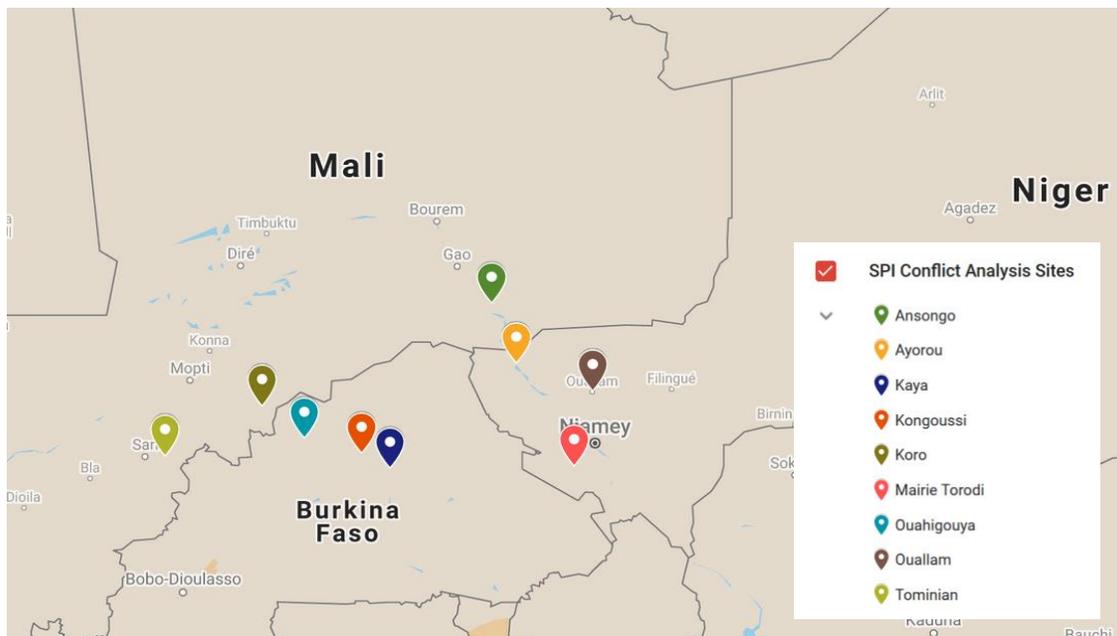
Tominian is the single predominantly Christian community studied. The commune is located on Mali's border with Burkina Faso and has a population of 303,978. The commune is 460 km from Bamako. The economy relies heavily on agricultural products and is home to an increasing number of IDPs fleeing violence. Despite the commune's relatively peaceful history, insecurity is increasingly becoming a concern as targeted assassinations and harassment from NSAGs begin to affect communities.

Niger

Ayorou The department of Ayorou includes two communes with a total population of 80,000, representing Zarma, Tuareg, Peulh and Hausa ethnicities. The department is 200 km from the capital city of Niamey. The economy and community are agro-pastoral, and Ayorou hosts one of the largest cattle markets in West Africa, attracting traders from across the region. The department has experienced a marked increase in violence related to NSAGs, bandits and communal conflict.

Ouallam The department of Ouallam includes 400,000 inhabitants from the Zarma, Tuareg and Peulh ethnic groups. The department is 102 km north of Niamey and is a center for livestock and pastoralists. Ouallam hosts a Malian refugee camp in the village of Mangaize and has been the target of several attacks by NSAGs.

Torodi The capital of the Torodi department, Torodi is a natural resource rich area 65 km southwest of Niamey. Exact population numbers are unknown, but ethnic groups include Peulhs, Gourmantches, Djerma, Hausa and Tuareg. The inhabitants of this region rely on agro-pastoral lifestyles, although gold is also mined both formally and informally. Violent conflict in the region was previously intercommunal, exacerbated by increased activity of bandits and NSAGs.



PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

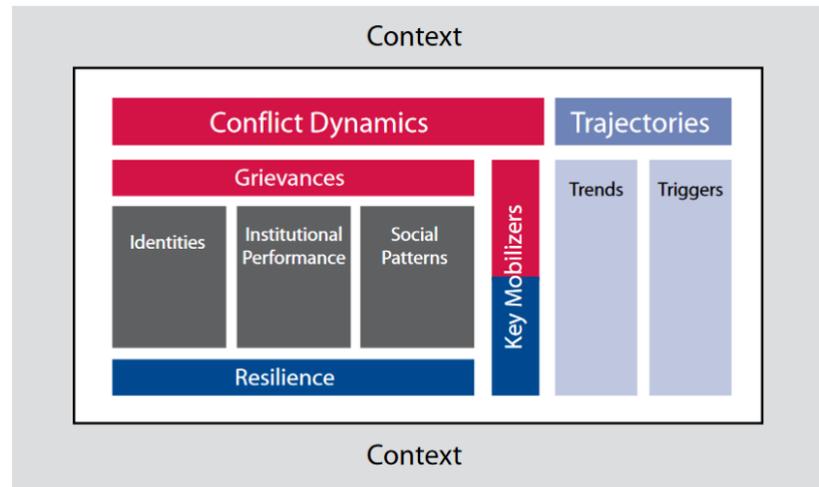
The conflict assessment sought to identify the main perpetrators and victims of the violence; the principal causes and consequences of violent conflict; the effectiveness of current policies to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict; and the level of social cohesion and resilience of the victims. The data suggests actionable steps to transform the crisis. For example, to what extent does greed versus grievance explain the motivations of the perpetrators of violence, and what role do economic agendas play in causing and perpetuating the conflict in the tri-border area?

- Who perpetrates the violence and why (violent extremists, ethnic groups, self-defense organizations, military and security forces, bandits and crime networks)?
- Who is harmed by the violence (local communities, specific ethnic groups, military and security officials, government officials, religious and traditional chiefs)?
- What is the extent of the violence (grievances, incentives, interests, values)?
- How do perpetrators carry out violence (support from allies and sympathizers, source and nature of resources, strategies and tactics)?
- What are the consequences of the violence (destruction of local economies, reduced service delivery, political instability)?
- Who gains and who loses?
- What is the impact of the violence on the social cohesion and resilience of local communities?

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

ASSESSMENT DESIGN:

The assessment methodology draws inspiration from USAID's Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) 2.0,¹² *CRS' Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, Protection and Youth Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners*,¹³ and CRS' signature 4Ps methodology (profile, problem, people and process). CRS chose CAF2.0 because it provided a rigorous framework for balancing grievances with resiliencies, for discerning the trajectories of conflicts, and for projecting future scenarios.¹⁴ Core elements of the CAF 2.0 framework include conflict dynamics, grievances, identities, institutional performance, social patterns, resilience, conflict triggers and key mobilizers. In the assessment team's opinion, CAF 2.0 offered advantages at the macro level because of its focus on national and international actors, concepts and language familiar to speakers of a European language, and shared understanding of Western institutions. The 4Ps complemented these strengths by emphasizing historical perspectives, micro level dynamics, and framing questions and concepts in language easily grasped by diverse cultures and people without formal schooling. The overlay of these frameworks encouraged a comprehensive contextual analysis.



USAID'S CONFLICT DIAGNOSIS. USAID (2012) CAF 2.0. PAGE 15.

DESK STUDY/LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on conflict and violence in the Sahel is vast. The desk study, which culminated in a 25-page report, perused a range of topics including violent conflict, migration, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs); agricultural and pastoral practices; issues around youth, gender and livelihoods; and history, ethnicity, religion, economics and politics. The review covered reports by the United Nations, U.S. Government agencies, regional African organizations, think tanks, academic researchers, and nongovernmental organizations. Documents reviewed dated from 1960 to the present, with most published between 2015 and 2020.¹¹ To further narrow the field, the study prioritized documents analyzing and assessing conflict in the tri-border area in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger within the last ten years.

The review identified a shift in donor orientation toward a more holistic approach to looking at interrelationships between different forms of aid, notably an emphasis on the intersection of peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian programming – *the triple nexus*. In addition, the study noted that donor agencies and NGOs emphasized consultations with local communities to learn more about their needs and priorities, and solutions to their problems. The review also detected a trend on the part of donors to “Africanize” conflict-assessment teams and to collaborate with Sahelian organizations and NGOs. These developments have produced highly useful micro-analyses that portray local realities more accurately and with greater nuance. Grassroots dynamics

¹² USAID. 2012. *Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) Version 2.0*. Washington D.C.: USAID.

USAID. 2012. *Conflict Assessment Framework Application Guide*. Washington D.C.: USAID.

¹³ CRS. 2015. *Peacebuilding, Governance, Gender, Protection and Youth Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners*. CRS.

¹⁴ CRS. 2016. [Social Cohesion Analysis: Cameroon](#). CRS.

had previously been largely overlooked by broad-brush macro regional- and national-level analyses.¹⁵

The desk review identified four major gaps in the literature. These included the lack of in-depth analysis of the victims of violence and the activities and motives of key perpetrators; insufficient historical perspectives at both the macro- and micro-levels; inadequate disaggregation of data into constituent parts; and insufficient investigations of links between poverty and conflict. For example, the literature does not reach conclusions about who is doing the killing in the Sahel and who is protecting Sahelian civilians and communities from violence. The lack of actor specificity complicates military and social interventions. The primary data collected for this conflict assessment also found a high level of ambiguity among interviews regarding the identity of perpetrators of violence, and who was most victimized by the violence.

The desk review also observed that many analyses and conflict assessment frameworks underemphasized the weight of historical antecedents in determining present and future trends. The CAF 2.0, for example, focuses on trajectories that track events in the present into the future. Forecasting that overlooks the proportional impact of historical precedent would indeed miss critical precolonial and colonial political, economic, social and cultural antecedents that help us understand the roots of Sahelian conflict.

The review also found that studies and reports generally did not disaggregate categories like “rural populations,” “village structures,” “youth, women, and farmer groups,” “students,” and “military and security forces.” With some exceptions,¹⁶ many studies relied more on national-level findings than local knowledge. Disproportionate weight given to actors at the national and regional levels distant from the conflict would presumably reflect their biases.

Lastly, the desk study noted that the connection between the lack of livelihood opportunities and deteriorating economic conditions and the resulting impact on the spread and intensification of violent conflict, was understudied. The dearth of livelihoods is most pronounced in rural areas depleted of men and boys, who, in search of work, have migrated to urban and peri-urban centers. Unemployed and under-employed male youth with few skills are prime targets to mobilize for banditry, criminality and extremism.

SAMPLING

In response to the third gap identified in the literature review—inadequate disaggregation of data into constituent parts—the assessment team sampled a broad spectrum of community members via village-level focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). The team designed a stratified sample of male and female youth, adult males and adult females. FGDs were divided by gender where appropriate. Female enumerators were not included in engagements with

¹⁵ For example, see Gellar, S. “Conseils ruraux et gestion décentralisée des ressources naturelles au Sénégal: le défi: Comment transformer ces concepts en réalité?, in Philippe Tersiguel and Charles Becker, eds. *Développement durable au Sahel* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997), 44-69, which looks at donor, government and rural population perspectives in a Sahelian country from independence in the 1960s to the late 1990s. Donor models constantly shifted approaches and priorities, national Sahelian governments accepted donor models as a means of getting foreign aid, and rural populations were not involved in the design, implementation or monitoring and evaluation of donor and government programs. This pattern has persisted until the present. Emphasis on the “Triple Nexus” of integration of governance, development and conflict assessment is a relatively new development. It remains to be seen the extent to which this approach will be implemented. For a critique of the Triple Nexus in a Sahelian country based on donor failure to integrate local perspectives, see Emmanuel Tronc, Rob Grace, and Anaïde Nahkian, *Realities and Myths of the “Triple Nexus”: Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Action in Mali*. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, June 2019.

¹⁶ Two noteworthy exceptions are USAID’s Peace through Evaluation, Learning and Adapting (PELA) activity, and the International Crisis Group’s work. Both are increasingly staffed by francophone academics with extensive field experience and personal contacts with government officials, media, NGOs and local communities.

USAID. 2019. [Peace Through Evaluation Learning and Adapting Activity \(PELA\)](#).

International Crisis Group. October 12, 2017. *The Social Roots of Jihadist Violence in Burkina Faso’s North*. Africa Report No. 254.

all male self-defense groups, and groups composed of women were required to have at least one female enumerator. A total of 326 (122 women) individuals participated in focus groups and interviews, and 90 persons responded to Social Cohesion Barometer surveys (see Appendix C for sampling criteria).

Groups sampled included the following:

- Elders above the age of 65;
- Self-defense groups;
- Internally displaced persons ;
- Host communities of displaced persons;
- Male and female youth aged 18 to 35;
- Poor and unemployed youth;
- Community religious leaders (Imam or Quranic teacher);
- Village chiefs;
- Commune prefects;
- Adults engaged in governance activities.

The local Caritas organization and CRS jointly elected assessment zones. Six of the nine sites were in high-conflict areas with need for humanitarian aid. For security reasons, areas controlled by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) or declared off-limits by government, were not selected. Communities with high numbers of IDPs and refugees were also given priority. To capture a diversity of experiences, the team chose Tominian in Mali where insecurity and violence are lower than elsewhere. Additionally, within each of the other assessment zones, one relatively secure village was selected. *Cheflieux*, or administrative centers were selected as key respondent recruitment sites in all nine zones.

Assessment participants were identified through purposive sampling relying on references from Caritas staff. Mayors, religious leaders and participants from previous projects also proposed interviewees. The assessment team employed snowball sampling method to reach isolated groups.¹⁷ At the local level, interviewees and survey respondents included government officials, traditional and religious leaders and community members. At the national level, individuals were either subject matter experts or had in-depth knowledge of national politics. These included researchers and NGO staff specializing in governance and conflict issues and possessing in-depth knowledge of perpetrators of the violence (Appendix C). In all, the team developed 19 protocols with 15 key questions framed for each group (Appendix D); conducted 45 FGDs and interviews, and 90 surveys. Owing to COVID-19, some interviews in Mali and all interviews in Niger were conducted by telephone.

Country	Zone	Men > 35 years	Men <35 years	Women >35 years	Women <35 years
Burkina Faso	Kaya	18	1	16	11

¹⁷ Snowball sampling is a nonrandom technique where known study participants recruit future participants from among their social network. Naderifar, Mahin & Goli, Hamideh & Ghaljaei, Fereshteh. (2017). Snowball Sampling: A Purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*. In Press. 10.5812/sdme.67670.

	Kongoussi	33	12	2	0
	Ouahigouya	6	6	17	6
Mali	Ansongo	17	5	4	5
	Koro	25	7	17	14
	Tominian	19	11	14	2
Niger	Ouallam	8	3	0	6
	Ayorou	11	6	2	0
	Torodi	13	3	2	4

Country	Zone	Ethnic minorities	Ethnic majority
Burkina Faso	Kaya	2	44
	Kongoussi	3	44
	Ouahigouya	3	32
Mali	Ansongo	4	6
	Koro		1
	Tominian	6	1
Niger	Ouallam	3	14
	Ayorou	12	6
	Torodi	14	8

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KIIS) AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

Key informant interviews and FGDS utilized semi-structured questionnaires featuring the principal research questions. Focus groups comprised two to seven participants grouped by age, sex, profession and governance structures (Appendix C). FGD participants included refugees, IDPs, returnees, members of self-defense groups, local authorities and traditional leaders, and CBO members. Several FGDS centered on governance to generate information on institutional performance, land tenure, corruption, and protection.

MINI SOCIAL COHESION BAROMETER

CRS' Mini Social Cohesion Barometer (Barometer) is a survey that gauges perceptions of the level of social cohesion in a specific population or geography. It consists of 18 indicators grouped by socio-cultural, political, and economic categories of activity. When aggregated, the indicators offer a snapshot of a group's perception of the strengths and weaknesses in the social fabric of their community or society.¹⁸

For this conflict assessment, the Barometer captured a cross-section of perceptions regarding social cohesion in each study zone. The data was triangulated with results from the KIIs and FGDs to nuance the analysis, compare findings, and boost confidence in the conclusions. Community members – mayors, chiefs, farmers, merchants and pastoralists – were surveyed.

FIELDWORK LOGISTICS

Data collection protocols differed slightly depending on security and logistics. Master trainers¹⁹ received training from the lead consultant and practiced the tools with CRS monitoring and evaluation staff. The master trainers delivered two-day trainings, including practice sessions to enumerators. Master trainers co-designed tools, refined questions, and developed protocols. Enumerators received materials on consent, body language and data management.

Each FGD had three enumerators and each KII had two enumerators. A moderator and two observers noted participant demographics, responses and body language, and developed concise summaries for each activity. Where possible, responses were attributed to specific persons. Activities were conducted in local languages. The team recorded FGDs in Burkina Faso and Niger.

Owing to COVID-19 travel protocols, data collection teams in Niger and Mali had to amend collection procedures to account for physical distancing and restricted movement, and include hygiene sensitizations into their activities. Malian field staff were equipped with

Répondant	Âge	Sexe	Emploi	Ethnique minoritaire / majoritaire	Autre ¹
1 (mossi)	49	f	Agriculture et maréchaiculture	Majoritaire Mossi/ Minoritaire Dogon	
2(mossi)	45	f			
3(mossi)	40	f			
4(mossi)	39	f			
5(mossi)	45	f			
6(mossi)	46	f			

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS WAS CAPTURED.

Réponses	Observations
<p>1. Qui sont les personnes séjournant dans les camps? D'où viennent-ils? Pourquoi sont-ils ici?</p> <p>N°1 : Il s'agit de déplacés internes qui ont fui des troubles dans leur localité. Ils sont venus jusqu'ici à cause des attaques qu'ils subissent ;</p> <p>N°2 : Ce sont des déplacés internes et composés en majorité de femmes, de vieilles personnes et d'enfants. Ils sont venus ici parce qu'ils sont à la recherche de la paix.</p> <p>N°5 : Ils sont venus de plusieurs localités telles que Barga, Rimassa et Tiou. ils sont venus à cause des conflits ;</p> <p>N°3 Certains d'entre eux sont venus également de Ingaré. D'autres ont simplement eu peur de ce qui se passe chez leurs voisins, raison pour laquelle ils ont fui leurs localités.</p> <p>N°6 : Yen a même dont nous ne savons d'où exactement ils viennent, nous savons seulement qu'ils ont fui des attaques. ils sont venus ici à cause de la crainte d'être attaqués</p> <p>N°4 : Certains sont venues des localités comme Mounoug-Boko.</p>	<p>D'une manière générale, les six(6) répondantes étaient inspirées quant aux réponses aux différentes questions posées. Il y avait de l'engouement et l'ambiance du groupe était au beau fixe. Une d'entre elles s'est illustrée par des paroles comiques qui ont contribué à détendre l'atmosphère. Cependant, au début du focus, elles voulaient toutes parler à la fois à chaque</p>

ALL RESPONSES WERE ATTRIBUTED TO INDIVIDUALS.

¹⁸ The development of the Barometer was informed by the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) developed by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation (IJR); research done by the Research Center for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions (CREDOC), and the Council of Europe's (CoE) methodological guide on the concerted development of social cohesion indicators. The CRS Barometer can be used in workshops within a pre- and post-test format and as a means for getting a cross-sectional view of the level of horizontal and vertical social cohesion. In the Central African Republic, CRS staff applied it to establish baseline and endline metrics to gauge changes in the perceptions of social cohesion in larger populations. In Bangladesh, the Barometer served as the basis for a pre-design assessment.

¹⁹ CRS trained two master trainers in Burkina Faso, three in Niger and five in Mali.

hygiene kits while, in Niger, the team switched to a telephone-based approach. After each FGD or interview, the teams held debriefs and summarized their notes in expanded field notes. Burkina Faso completed data collection prior to travel restrictions.

DATA ANALYSIS / LIMITATIONS

The team processed qualitative data through “matrixed relational content analysis,” which identifies the co-occurrence of concepts captured in FGDs and interviews, and groups them into categories. This approach permitted a structured analysis of relationships between and among different types of conflict, governance issues, livelihoods and poverty, disaggregated by generation and gender.

Quantitative data collected by the Barometer was summarized and compiled to produce descriptive statistics. The team did not conduct inferential statistical analysis owing to the small sample. Because the study employed snowball convenience sampling, majority ethnic groups were oversampled with some minority ethnic groups not included at all. Further, conducting interviews and focus groups by telephone meant that direct observation of body language was impossible, and individuals without access to a telephone – e.g., marginalized women and youth – were under-sampled.

Finally, informed by experience from the Central African Republic, the team allows that Barometer respondents tend to overstate the strength of their community’s social fabric. The team was also unable to conduct a random survey with the Barometer due to COVID-19 restrictions. To compensate for these limitations, the team invited key stakeholders to a virtual validation workshop before finalizing the report.

FINDINGS

Findings are grouped by profile, problem, people, and process. Under Profile the report considers political, external, socio-cultural, and economic contexts; gender; and an estimate of local levels of social cohesion. Under Problem the report considers insecurity, economy, insufficient responses, and national government legitimacy. The section on People is organized by perpetrators of violence, governance mobilizers, and mobilizers for peacebuilding and social cohesion. Process discussion covers factors escalating and deescalating conflict. The findings section concludes with an analysis of potential trajectories as the conflict evolves.

PROFILE

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Pre-colonial legacies still impact the values and behavior of people living in Sahelian Africa. Of specific note is the model of governance found in the Mandé Charter elaborated by Soundiata Keita, the founder of the Mali Empire in the thirteenth century.²⁰ The Charter offered a federated model of governance granting a high degree of political autonomy and religious freedom to the diverse

²⁰For more details about the Mali Empire and its legacy, see: Nehemia Levtzion. 2000. *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London: Methuen). Cheibane Coulibaly. 2016. *Crise Politico-Institutionnel au Mali: Essai de philosophie Mandingue* (Paris: Harmattan).

political entities within the Mali empire and rules for maintaining interethnic harmony.²¹ Sahelian and other pre-industrial empires were ruled under patrimonial modes of governance.²²

French colonial rule replaced the pre-colonial political order, especially the Muslim states resisting the French conquest, with centralized French administrative structures, while allowing small villages to retain their traditional authority structures, which remain strong in the present day tri-border area.²³ Fixed territorial borders separated ethnic groups previously living together and divided groups between different states while closed borders restricted the mobility of pastoralists and stimulated smuggling.

The French created a small African auxiliary elite based on French education that became an “inheritance elite”²⁴ which assumed power at independence and control over inherited French colonial institutions without the human, military and financial resources that enabled France to rule over millions of their colonial subjects. The French model of decentralization adopted by postcolonial francophone Sahelian states unilaterally set the size, boundaries and number of local government units on uniform criteria established by the central government without consulting local communities. The model also imposed the same uniform rules for local government units without adjusting for differences in size, economic structure, capacity to deliver services, traditional ties with other communities, and local authority structures.²⁵ This practice continued after independence.

In general, postcolonial (1960-2020) politics have been marked by long periods of autocratic and military rule while open and free multi-party elections are a recent development. National politics have largely been based on clientelism and cronyism, and dominated by an aging political class that is losing legitimacy. State inability to provide adequate public services has increased distrust in national governments, political parties and national leaders. Additionally, the exclusion of youth, women and other marginalized groups have further disenfranchised the general population, which sees government as supporting the needs of a small minority.

Like the colonial state, the postcolonial states have largely concentrated financial and public services in the capital cities while neglecting the periphery. The states are failing to invest in infrastructure, agriculture, education and health facilities. The state’s minimal presence at the periphery when combined with deteriorating environmental conditions, youth bulge and high youth unemployment set the stage for outbreaks of inter-ethnic and inter-community conflicts and banditry. In turn, the state’s failure to enter the tri-border area and address these issues opens the

²¹ For example, see Ousmane Sy, Ambroise Dakouo, and Kadari Traoré. 2016. *National Dialogue in Mali: Lessons from the 1991 National Conference for the Nascent Conference of National Understanding* (Berghof Foundation) for references to the importance of Mandé traditions in opposition to the French concept of secular centralized state not respecting local autonomy and religious traditions.

²² Sahelian rulers in poor, still essentially pre-industrial states operate much like patrimonial rulers. See S.N. Eisenstadt. 1962. *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe) and Sheldon Gellar “State-Building and Nation-Building in West Africa,” in *Building States and Nations*, Vol. II Edited by S.N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan (Beverly Hills, Sage Publications), 384-426 for extensive application of the concept of neo-patrimonialism to Sahelian and other West African states.

²³ Robert Delavignette. 1950. *Freedom and Authority in French West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press). The author highlights and praises traditional village authorities, which remained unchanged under colonial rule. They survive today in the economically neglected tri-border regions where French colonial and postcolonial state structures were largely absent.

²⁴ For more details on the concept of the inheritance elite, see J.P. Nettl and Roland Robertson. 1968. *International Systems and the Modernization of Societies: The Formation of National Goals and Attitudes* (London: Faber and Faber).

²⁵ For an early critique of centralized state models, see *The Failure of the Centralized State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa*. 1995. Edited by James S. Wunsch and Dele Olowu (San Francisco: ICS Press).

For a critique of more current decentralization policies and weaknesses of centralized states in Africa, see *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*. 2014. Edited by J. Tyler Dickovick and James S. Wunsch (Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers).

“It’s like the doctor visiting the patient after he’s already dead.”

Peulh male pastoralist referring to government’s response to insecurity in the region.

door for violent extremists. Instead of fighting to protect populations against banditry, criminal networks and extremist attacks, the state has fled and allowed the tri-border area to become a chaotic, ungovernable, high-conflict zone and hotbed of anti-government activity.

One Peulh pastoralist in Mali said of the government’s response to insecurity in the region: “It’s like the doctor visiting the patient after he’s already dead.” This dim view of service delivery and center versus periphery is supported by Afrobarometer surveys. The 2019 Afrobarometer²⁶ showed a continued decline of popular support for

democracy, with increased respect for local and religious leaders. According to Afrobarometer (2016, 2018), West Africans trusted their local leaders more than any other form of authority, with 72% of Burkinabe respondents indicating their trust in these institutions (68% in Niger and 63% in Mali).

EXTERNAL FORCES

Forces external to the Sahel continue to play a role in shaping the cultural, economic and political landscape of the tri-border region. First, there is a long tradition of religious influence on the sub-region from the Middle East via trans-Saharan trade routes connecting Mali and Niger to North Africa and the Muslim world.

Leadership of Sahelian-led extremist movements have links—both ideological and economic—with ISIS and Al Qaeda in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia and other Arab Sunni Gulf states have promoted Wahhabi doctrines by financing the building of mosques, providing scholarships for study in Arab countries, and attacking Sufi and other tolerant forms of Islam in Sahelian Africa with some success. Violent extremist movements based on Salafist principles—like Al Qaeda and ISIS in the Middle East and AQIM in North Africa—seek to create a global Islamist state. These movements have influenced the religious ideology, strategy and tactics of affiliated North African and Sahelian violent extremist movements operating in the tri-border area.

There is a long tradition of religious influence on the sub-region from the Middle East via trans-Saharan trade routes connecting Mali and Niger to North Africa and the Muslim world.

Second, France, as the former colonial power, has been working with G5 Sahel²⁷ forces to fight extremist organizations, but is criticized for not having done more to defeat them.²⁸ The United States and Germany are other external powers to have small contingents of special forces and bases in the Sahel. Powerful international donors continue to shape Sahelian economic and financial policies which do not always represent the most marginalized communities and individuals.

²⁶ [Afrobarometer](#) is a non-partisan, pan-African research institution conducting public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economy and society in more than 30 countries repeated on a regular cycle.

²⁷ G5 Sahel is an institutional framework for the coordination of regional cooperation in development policies and security. Its members are Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

²⁸ In Mali, massive demonstrations led by Mahmoud Dicko in Bamako in June demanding the resignation of the president have also criticized the French and called for the withdrawal of French troops. For their part, violent extremists have demanded the departure of French and foreign troops as a pre-condition for negotiating with the government. Following three months of persistent protests, by midnight August 18, 2020, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, on state-run television, announced his resignation after a military coup.

Third, Libya under Muammar Gaddafi, had ambitions to become leader of a pan-African union of states, and was a major influence in Sahelian Africa. Gaddafi had close ties with many Sahelian presidents. He championed Tuaregs in the 1980s and 1990s and brought in thousands of Tuaregs to Libya as workers and mercenary soldiers while oppressing the Toubou minority.²⁹ His fall and death in 2011 resulted in thousands of heavily armed Tuaregs returning to Mali, many of whom joined the Tuareg rebellion or violent extremist and self-defense groups led by Tuaregs.

Finally, Algeria is a significant player as a recipient of illicit goods from Mali in the Trans-Saharan trade route and a source of arms and consumer goods for Mali. Algeria's southern desert border also served as a sanctuary and launching pad for AQIM and other North African Jihadist groups. In June 2020, Abdelmalek Droukdel, AQIM's leader, was killed by French commandos only a few kilometers south of the Algerian border.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Islam is the majority religion in Mali (90%), Niger (98%), and Burkina Faso (60%), but Burkina Faso is the most religiously pluralistic as it is also home to sizable communities of Catholics, Protestants, and adherents of traditional religions comprising 40% of the population. When originally converting to Islam, African rulers made no attempt to impose Islam on their subjects and continued to maintain traditional African religious rituals while hosting Muslim clerics in their courts.³⁰ For their part, Muslim clerics followed the Suwarian tradition, which believed in the separation of politics and religion, and rejected the use of force and proselytizing and regarded conversion to Islam as the result of their piety.³¹ Focus group discussions indicated that most Muslims continue to practice respect for and coexistence with other religions. Muslim organizations affiliated with the Tijani brotherhood are the strongest Sufi organizations in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso.³² Traditional African religious practices and Catholic Church influence are strongest in Burkina Faso.

Modern Wahhabist religious practices and doctrines gained momentum after independence and permitted Sahelian countries to renew and strengthen ties with Muslim states in North Africa and the Middle East. These relationships had been sharply curtailed and controlled by the French colonial administration. The strongest Wahhabi presence is in national capitals like Bamako and Niamey and large urban centers. Wahhabis have criticized Sufi and Suwarian religious practices, such as visiting the tombs of famous religious leaders, celebrating the birth of Mohammed as a religious holiday, and laxity in adhering to Sharia law.³³ Wahhabi leaders attracted young men through loans, arranging low cost marriages and establishing Muslim learning institutions.³⁴ They criticize the failings of westernized secular states and political leaders and offer Islam as the alternative and solution. Despite differences in doctrines, Wahhabi and Sufi religious leaders in Mali

²⁹ The Toubou were a repressed pastoralist minority in southern Libya until the fall of Gaddafi. See Christophe Boisbouvier. 2012. "[Libye: Quand les Toubous se réveillent](#)" *Jeune Afrique*, May 12, 2012. Tuaregs and Toubous comprise 85% of the population in the Sahara Desert. They have been allies and enemies of the Tuaregs. The Toubou joined the Tuareg rebellion in the early 1990s. For Toubou presence in Niger, see Ressortissants Toubou, *Note d'Information sur la Communauté Toubou-Teda du Niger*. Niamey: May 2012.

³⁰ See Lamin Sanneh. 1996. *Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa* (New York: Orbis Books).

³¹ Salim Suwari was an influential Muslim Sahelian cleric in the 16th century who provided theological justification for Muslim acceptance of other religions and coexistence with non-Muslim rulers that took place after the demise of the Mali and Songhai Empires.

³² Various branches of the Tijani brotherhood have emerged as the prominent Sufi brotherhoods in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Members of the Niassene Tijani branch originating in Senegal have millions of followers in Nigeria and Niger. Tijani religious leaders are also very influential in Mali. For the history of Tijani influences and late 18th century and early 19th century jihads launched primarily against lax Muslim states, see Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson (eds.). 2000. *La Tijaniyya: Une Confrérie Musulmane a la conquête de l'Afrique* (Paris: Karthala).

³³ For analysis of conflicts between Wahhabis and Sufis, see David Westerlund and Eva Rosander (eds.). 1997. *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters Between Sufis and Islamists*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press. The book was written before the rise of Sahelian jihadist movements.

³⁴ For the origin and spread of Wahhabi doctrines in West Africa, see Lansiné Kaba. 1974. *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

and Niger vigorously opposed Family Code legislation violating traditional Sharia regulations, including those that would advance women's rights.³⁵

In the face of the rise of radical violent extremist movements, conflict between Wahhabi and Sufi leaders has somewhat declined. Both movements condemn religious violent extremism and reject Salafist doctrines articulated by the jihadists. Though religious conflicts are a reality, religion is not a major cause of violent conflict in Sahelian countries.

Tuaregs³⁶ and Peulhs³⁷ and have historically been more Islamized than the Bambara, Mossi,³⁸ and Dogon³⁹ ethnic groups. Conflicts between the more and less Islamized ethnic groups are based primarily on differences in occupational and political majority-minority statuses which exacerbate relationships between these groups. Peulhs and Tuaregs are primarily nomadic pastoralists while the Mossi, Djerma, and Bambara are agriculturalists. Many Peulhs and Tuaregs have adopted sedentary lifestyles while Bambara, Mossi, and Djerma have acquired livestock. The Peulhs and Tuaregs were dominant during pre-colonial times but the Mossi, Djerma, and Bambara have become dominant groups. The Dogon are hunters and a minority group that seeks to maintain power in their land. Traditionally, these groups have been governed by a caste system with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.⁴⁰

Ethnic groups are by no means biologically homogeneous. Intermarriage between different ethnic and religious groups is common and attendance at other religious groups' ceremonies is commonplace, especially in Burkina Faso.

The persistence of the traditional caste system based on a hierarchy consisting of nobles, hunters, artisans, musicians, and former slaves continues to determine individuals' social and economic status. Although steadily declining in urban areas, the social hierarchy based on inherited status continues to survive, especially in poor rural Sahelian areas in the tri-border region.

Former slaves and dependents comprise the troops of Sahelian jihadist groups led by some Tuareg and Peulh leaders. The leaders offer material incentives as well as an appeal to the injustices and poor treatment imposed on them by the state, employers and society. The former slaves and dependents are also tempted to engage in banditry and work for criminal networks, and are often used by politicians to break up protests and rival political party rallies.

Members of the warrior and religious nobility have high social status in their ethnic and religious groups.⁴¹ The hunter caste in particular plays a major role in many of the self-defense groups in Burkina Faso and Niger. The Dogon, for example, are known for their powerful self-defense group.

Rural and urban cultures are increasingly growing apart as educational and economic opportunities diverge in favor of towns and cities.⁴² The resulting urban migration leads to increased competition

³⁵ Pressure by Muslim leaders in Mali and Niger succeeded in getting their governments to cancel Family Code reforms that violated traditional norms.

³⁶ Devon Douglas-Bowers. 2013. The Crisis in Mali: A historical perspective on the Tuareg People. *Global Research*. February 2013. Notes complexity of socio-economic and cultural patterns among Peulhs and political differences Tuareg communities.

³⁷ Modibo Ghaly Cissé. April 22, 2020. [Understanding Fulani Perspectives on the Sahel Crisis](#). Africa Center for Strategic Studies, April 22, 2020. Boukary Sangare. 2019. Fulani People and Jihadism in Sahel and West African Countries. *Observatoire du monde arabo-musulman et du Sahel*. La Fondation pour la recherche stratégique.

³⁸ Elliott Skinner. 1984. *The Mossi of the Upper Volta: Political Development of the Sudanese People*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

³⁹ For a history of relationships between Peulhs and Dogons, see Alpha Oumar Dougoukolo, Ba-Konare. 2019. [Peulhs et Dogons dans la tourmente au Mali: histoire d'une longue relation ambivalente](#). *The Conversation*, March 2019.

⁴⁰ For details of precolonial caste systems, see Tal Tamari. 1997. *Les Castes de l'Afrique Occidentale: Artisans et musiciens endogames*. Nanterre: Société d'Institut d'ethnologie.

⁴¹ For a discussion of role differences between warriors and marabouts, and evolving practices among the Malinké, see Robert Lau nay. 1992. *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a West African Town*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁴² This can be seen in differences between language and vocabulary used by rural youth in outlying areas and young people in the capital.

for scarce employment opportunities and leaves many university graduates unemployed yet unwilling to return to rural communities where modern infrastructure and commodities are not available. University education provides few guarantees for employment and, despite their diplomas, most university graduates remain unemployed. Conversely, those remaining in rural environments have little formal education and are often unable to secure land for agriculture or animals for husbandry activities. The resulting unemployment for urban and rural youth has led to an increase in illicit drug use, crime and banditry.

In many FGDs, young people said that they were increasingly moving away from traditional systems such as caste which are perceived as lacking authority or power. They also held negative views of national government and state structures which hold legitimate power. In the words of the president of a transnational *paysan* NGO, “We are in a region where rural youth feel hopeless.” The resulting lack of estimable government structure has created a power vacuum that external forces seek to fill. By comparison, FGDs made it evident that local traditional and religious leaders garner significantly more trust and confidence than national leaders. This point highlights the difference between the referent power of traditional leaders and the legitimate power of national leaders; and the resulting dissonance created in community members.

“We are in a region where rural youth feel hopeless.”

NGO president, Mali

ECONOMIC

Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali rank near the bottom of human and economic development scales. Economic outputs in the Sahel continue to be connected largely to land ownership and subsistence agriculture, which generates little surplus. Outputs include cereals and grains, forestry products, and minerals such as gold. For pastoralists, animals are the main source of economic opportunity.⁴³ Legacy land tenure systems are based on the rights of the founder of the village and his descendants to allocate land to family members and newcomers.⁴⁴ Traditionally, land could not be sold, which accorded free access rights to the fisherman, hunters and pastoralists in need of livestock grazing land, water points and forests. In some rural areas, this legacy system prevails, but the push for land titles is restricting access to the commons. The result has been an increase in pastoralist-farmer conflicts over grazing lands, watering points and forests.

Additionally, government takeover of the commons for large-scale economic development projects, such as gold mining and irrigated agriculture, has restricted access to resources and land, depriving local communities of control over and use of natural resources. While generating revenues for the state, its office holders, concessionaires and investors, this wealth has contributed little to the well-being of the ordinary citizen. Indeed, mining for the masses has been reduced to artisanal forms that have led to pollution of water sources, degradation of grazing areas, and fighting among youth seeking to stake claims. Because much of the profit from artisanal ventures is siphoned by middlemen, extremist groups and crime networks have benefitted materially from mal governance

⁴³ For a detailed description of the pastoralist system, see United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. August 2018. *Launch of Study on Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel*. UNOWAS.

⁴⁴ For a review of land tenure systems and policies, before the coming of the violent extremists, see Oliver Hughes. 2014. *Literature Review of Land Tenure in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali: Context and opportunities*. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services.

of precious resources.⁴⁵ The Liptako Gourma triangle offers a prime example of the enabling links among extremism, crime and corrupt exploitation of precious minerals.⁴⁶

Although less pronounced than in resource-cursed states like Nigeria, the Sahel's mismanagement of its natural wealth has made it vulnerable to extremist ideology. French control over uranium mining and Chinese control of oil production in Niger have denied residents access to large swaths of land while providing few employment benefits.⁴⁷ This situation provoked violent protests and anti-government sentiment.⁴⁸ Similarly, when world market prices for oil and uranium were high, rampant rent-seeking by Niger's politicians and their allies undid potential gains for development. The FGDs in this assessment reflected the views of the average citizen – and especially youth – that those in power merely exist to satisfy their greed while the majority stays mired in poverty.

Until recently, Sahelians' most reliable economic asset has been land. However, the shocks and stresses related to climate change and high annual population growth averaging 3% or more, have placed enormous pressure on marginal land. The exhaustion of the soil, soil erosion, and frequent drought and flooding have made farming and livestock production more precarious and unpredictable. A decline in productivity, the exodus of young males, and the need for income have pushed male family heads to give women access to land. This trend is most salient in Burkina Faso and Mali but was also referenced in discussions with women in Niger.

A result of this trend in the tri-border region is increasing economic deprivation for poor male and female youth, who face dim prospects of owning land, livestock or social capital. Studies on this topic show marked increases of migration in the sub-region, with lower levels of migration by young women who are less free to pick up and leave as their male counterparts.⁴⁹ Migrants typically are low-caste dependents of wealthier farmers and pastoralists. They care for animals of farmers and merchants. Adult male family heads often sell land and livestock to meet basic needs, leaving no legacy for male children who then have insufficient means to marry. Female children have less chance of inheriting land and rely on marriage. Understandably, rural young men and women seek work in urban centers, mining areas, and in neighboring countries. Others join jihadi movements for pay.

GENDER

Gender inequality is a major contributing factor to conflict and fragility. Studies have shown that countries with higher levels of gender inequality are more likely to be involved in conflict, experience more intense violent conflict, and have more fragile post-conflict peace than countries where women have a higher status in society.⁵⁰ Further, gender inequality is more directly linked as a factor contributing to civil war than either democratic or economic development.⁵¹ All three

⁴⁵ See International Crisis Group. November 13, 2019. [Getting a Grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush. Africa Report No. 282](#). For a detailed analysis of the importance of gold-mining in generating incomes for poor Burkinabé in the Centre-Nord region, see Hermann M. Konkobo and Issaka Sawadogo. February 2020. GLOCON Country Report, No. 5, Berlin: GLOCON.

⁴⁶ Assanvo, Williams. Dakono, Baba. (2019) Violent extremism, organised crime, and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma. Institute For Security Studies.

⁴⁷ World Nuclear Association. 2020. Uranium in Niger.

⁴⁸ A controversial report completed by the Réseau des Organisations pour la Transparence et l'Analyse Budgétaire (ROTAB) analyzed extractive industries in Niger in 2014. The "[Etude de référence sur les entreprises et les droits de l'homme: cas des industries extractives au Niger](#)" identified a number of conflict points between local communities and extractive industries.

⁴⁹ International Organization for Migration. 2019. [Setting up a road map for mixed migration in West and North Africa](#).

⁵⁰ Caprioli, M. 2005. [Primed for violence: The role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict](#). *International Studies Quarterly*, 49, 161–178.

Demeritt, J. H. R., Nichols, A. D., and Kelly, E. G. 2014. Female participation and civil war relapse. *Civil Wars*, 16, 346–368.

Gizelis, T.-I. 2009. [Gender empowerment and United Nations peacebuilding](#). *Journal of Peace Research*, 46, 505–523.

Gizelis, T.-I. (2011). [A country of their own: Women and peacebuilding](#). *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 28, 522–542.

Melander, E. (2005a). [Gender equality and intrastate armed conflict](#). *International Studies Quarterly*, 49, 695–714.

⁵¹ Bjarnegård, E., Melander, E., Bardall, G., Brounéus, K., Forsberg, E., Johansson, K., et al. 2015. Gender, peace and armed conflict. *SIPRI Yearbook*. Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Sahelian countries have national quotas on the number of women who must be represented in the national assemblies, but lack significant implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Mali is the closest to meeting that quota and elected 41 women to its 147-seat assembly in 2020. Burkina’s representation of women to men is 17:127 and Niger’s 29:171. Despite this low representation at national and municipal levels, women are recognized by religious and traditional leaders as valuable and contributing members of Sahelian society and peace. One example of their influence is the 2014 march widely credited with the removal from office of President Blaise Compaoré.⁵² Across the region, women play an important role in building social cohesion by reinforcing family values through formal and informal women’s associations, sharing positive morals and values with children, and advocating for formal education and health centers.

Traditional land tenure laws in the Sahel prohibit the ownership of land by women, but these norms and official laws are beginning to change⁵³. Further, Imams and Quranic schoolteachers interviewed openly welcomed the participation and engagement of girls and women in their schools and mosques. Despite this openness, women consulted in the study did not feel they held any significant power outside of the household. However, as men flee rural areas or join militias, women manage the fields, businesses, and income-generating activities for households. FGDs and interviews also demonstrated the generosity displayed by women in host communities toward IDPs and refugees. Further, women tended to define peace and normalcy as a return to markets and schools, while men focused on the removal of violent actors, local and external.

SOCIAL COHESION ESTIMATE

Data collected through the CRS Mini Social Cohesion Barometer was used to establish quantitative estimates of the level of social cohesion for each of the nine study zones. The social cohesion estimate (SCE) is used to gauge the level of social cohesion in the context of each zone. Three dimensions were identified for each zone (0-5, with 5 being the highest) based on the dimensions of social cohesion captured by the Barometer: socio-cultural, economic and political. A summative estimate was then calculated based on the means of the three distinct dimensions. A higher SCE implies a community may be better equipped to resolve conflict and resist divisive outside influences. Community leaders and traditional leaders usually reported higher levels of social cohesion than their less-well-off peers.

As these data were collected concurrently with lockdown protocols in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sample size and representativeness of the data are severely limited. Only 90 individuals (24 women) were accessible by telephone, and data collectors were instructed to prioritize community leaders.⁵⁴ These data points are preliminary and will continue to be expanded over time, creating a series of chronological snapshots of community social cohesion.

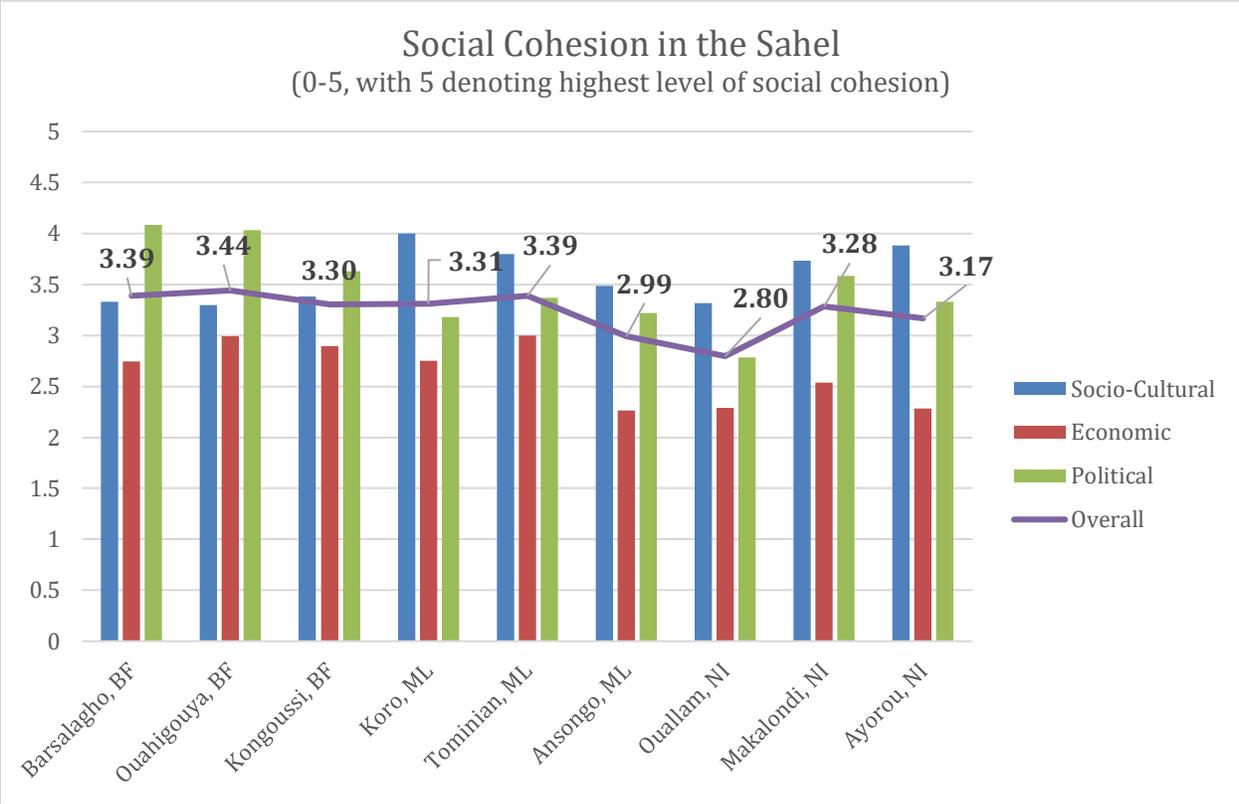
	Burkina Faso			Mali			Niger		
Dimension	Kaya	Ouahigouya	Kong oussi	Koro	Tominian	Ansongo	Ouallam	Torodi	Ayorou

⁵² BBC. October 28, 2014. [Huge Burkina Faso march against President Compaore](#). One author participated in the referenced march and witnessed the engagement and contributions of women. Women spoke on television and radio, and directly called for the removal of President Compaore.

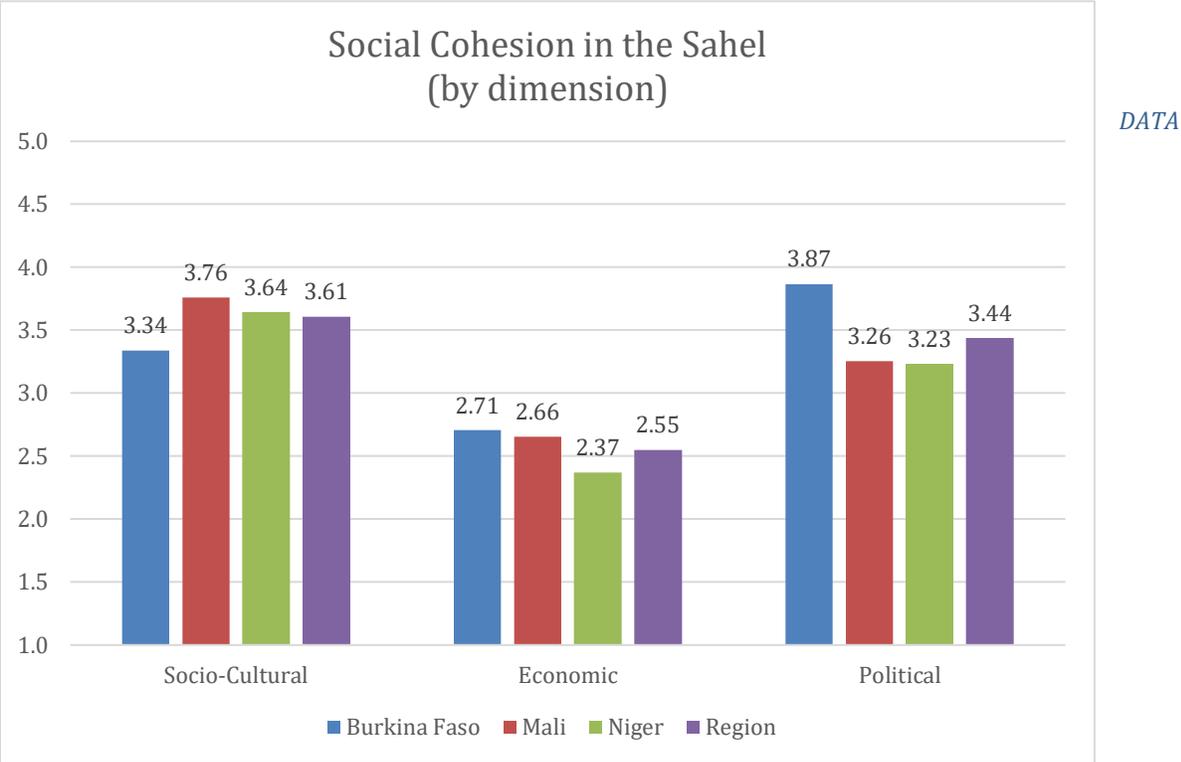
⁵³ Artisanal mining is creating new property ownership opportunities for women in Burkina Faso and Mali while also reconfiguring land tenure rights. See: Brottem, L.V, Ba, L. 2019. Gendered livelihoods and land tenure: The case of artisanal gold miners in Mali, West Africa. *Geoforum*, 105, 54-62.

⁵⁴ The SPI project team is, however, implementing the Barometer on an ongoing basis to expand the database of responses. The data will be used to track social cohesion estimates across time and identify trends.

Socio-cultural	3.33	3.30	3.38	4.00	3.80	3.48	3.31	3.73	3.88
Economic	2.74	2.99	2.89	2.75	3.00	2.27	2.29	2.53	2.28
Political	4.08	4.03	3.63	3.18	3.37	3.22	2.78	3.58	3.33
Overall	3.39	3.44	3.30	3.31	3.39	2.99	2.80	3.28	3.17



DATA REPRESENT THE RESPONSES OF 90 COMMUNITY LEADERS ACROSS THE 9 ZONES.



REPRESENT THE RESPONSES OF 90 COMMUNITY LEADERS ACROSS THE 9 ZONES..

Economic social cohesion scores were significantly lower than other scores across all zones, because most respondents answered, “not at all” or “slightly” to the following prompts.

- E3: Wealth is managed fairly.
- E4: Living conditions are decent for all.
- E6: Well-being is guaranteed to all.

Conversely, scores were high for prompts addressing national pride and integration into their communities. Across all zones and countries, respondents were proud to call themselves a national of their country. While proud, respondents did not always feel they were united or shared a common history or value system; this was particularly true of Mali.

Respondents across the region also identified weaknesses in political social cohesion as very few individuals agreed that “everyone has the opportunity to participate in the political process,” that “legality is respected” or that community members “share the same values.” The Burkinabe interviewed scored particularly high on political social cohesion. Triangulation of Barometer results with qualitative data indicates that the ouster of Blaise Compaoré continues to drive a narrative of empowerment for Burkinabe. Raw data and findings can be found on tables 1, 2, 3 with red indicating critical weaknesses.

TABLE 2. SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION RESPONSES BY ZONE

Socio-Cultural	Kaya, BF	Ouah, BF	Kongou, BF	Koro, ML	Tominian, ML	Ansongo, ML	Ouallam, NI	Makalon di, NI	Ayorou, NI
You feel integrated in your community	3.50	3.50	3.90	3.80	4.10	3.60	4.00	4.50	4.20

People are accepted as they are	3.50	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.30	3.50	3.40	3.30	4.10
Generations respect each other	3.60	3.90	3.40	4.20	4.00	3.50	2.90	3.50	3.40
Cultural diversity is put at the service of the nation	2.80	2.40	3.20	3.80	3.50	3.00	2.80	4.10	3.50
Neighbors have a friendly relationship	3.60	3.50	3.40	4.60	4.60	4.00	3.60	3.90	3.90
The dignity of every person is respected	3.00	2.80	2.60	3.80	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.10	4.20

TABLE 3. ECONOMIC DIMENSION RESPONSES BY ZONE

Economic	Kaya, BF	Ouah, BF	Kongou, BF	Koro, ML	Tominian, ML	Ansongo, ML	Ouallam, NI	Makalondi, NI	Ayorou, NI
People in my community help one another in times of need	4.22	4.20	3.60	4.20	3.80	3.90	2.80	3.80	3.60
People have equal access to livelihood and employment opportunities regardless of who they are	2.80	3.00	3.10	3.40	3.30	2.70	2.20	2.50	2.20
Wealth is managed fairly	1.60	2.30	2.40	2.10	1.90	2.20	1.40	1.40	1.10
Living conditions are decent for all	1.60	2.30	2.50	1.40	2.30	1.00	2.30	2.30	2.00
People in trouble are helped	3.40	3.00	2.90	3.10	3.80	2.30	2.50	3.10	3.20
Well-being is guaranteed to all	2.83	3.14	2.88	2.30	2.89	1.50	2.55	2.11	1.60

TABLE 4. POLITICAL DIMENSION RESPONSES BY ZONE

Political	Kaya, BF	Ouah, BF	Kongou, BF	Koro, ML	Tominian, ML	Ansongo, ML	Ouallam, NI	Makalondi, NI	Ayorou, NI
-----------	----------	----------	------------	----------	--------------	-------------	-------------	---------------	------------

I am proud to be my nationality	5.00	5.00	3.89	4.90	4.60	4.40	4.00	5.00	4.70
The people of my nationality are united	3.00	3.30	3.20	3.20	1.80	3.20	3.30	4.20	4.10
Everyone has the opportunity to participate in the political process	3.90	4.10	4.00	2.10	2.80	3.50	2.80	2.80	1.90
Legality is respected	4.00	3.90	3.70	2.70	3.80	2.70	2.30	2.20	1.70
We share the same values	3.60	2.90	2.90	2.80	3.60	3.00	2.40	4.30	3.80
We share the same story	5.00	5.00	4.10	3.40	3.60	2.50	1.90	3.00	3.80

In the Sahel study, two additional questions were added to the Barometer; the first to gauge the number of people who had been recruited or knew someone recruited to a violent actor, and the second to evaluate respondent perceptions around the prudence of sending children to school. These questions were added to try to understand how widespread recruitment was in specific communities and to gain a better understanding of access to schools.

In Mali, half of respondents (46%) knew someone or had themselves been recruited to a violent group. The majority of respondents (70%) also felt that it was not at all possible to send children to school.

In Burkina Faso, more than half of respondents mentioned that they or someone they knew had been recruited to a violent group (87%). Some 20% of respondents mentioned that it was not prudent to send children to school.

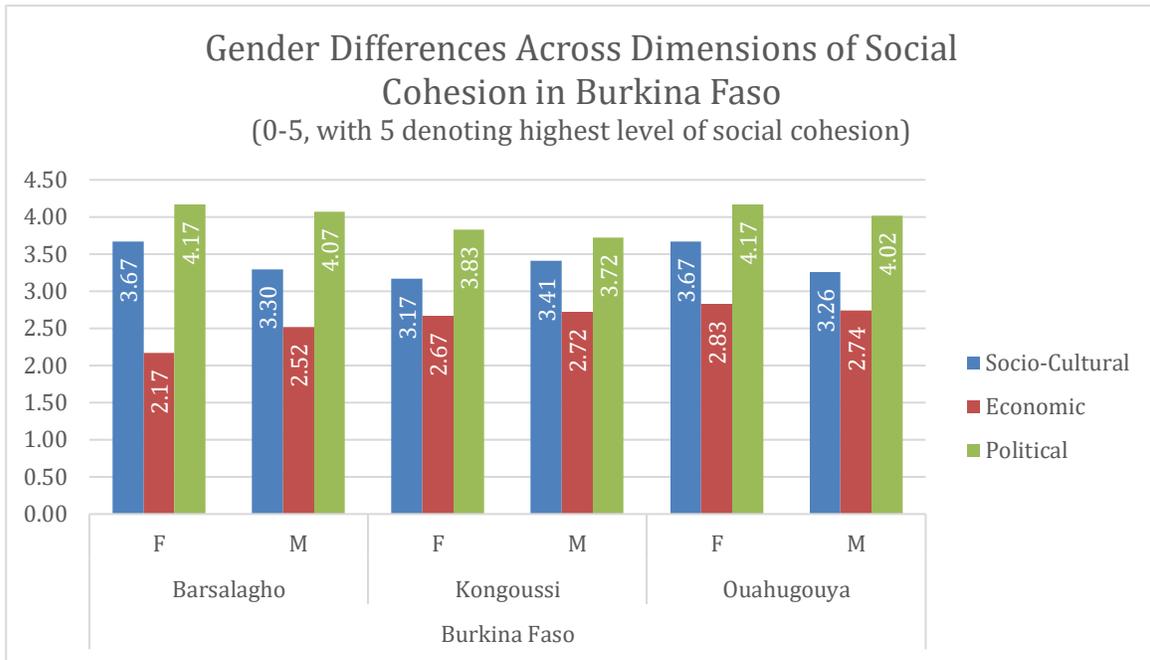
Conflict	Kaya, BF	Ouah, BF	Kongou, BF	Koro, ML	Tomini an, ML	Anson go, ML	Ouallam, NI	Makal ondi, NI	Ayoro u, NI
In the last 6 months, have you or someone you know, been invited to join an armed group? (includes self-defense group)	3.60	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.30	1.80	0.40	0.40	0.30
It is prudent and possible to send children to school today.	2.50	3.00	2.90	1.40	1.40	2.20	4.00	2.40	2.60

GENDER AND THE SOCIAL COHESION BAROMETER

The Social Cohesion Barometer was used to engage community members in each of the intervention zones, but oversampled men due to their participation in communal and regional leadership. Limiting the depth of analysis, the Barometer focused on village chiefs, mayors, prefects and merchants while largely overlooking the participation of farmers or herders. As the analysis was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the sample size was further restricted to participants owning a mobile phone and a desire to engage in a phone survey. While the limited sample size restricts the representativeness of the data, significant trends concerning economic access and political representation are discernable. Further, the gender-aggregated results speak to the limited inclusion of women in local governance and positions of leadership. A comparison of results between men and women is restricted by the weak availability and engagement of women, especially in Burkina Faso.

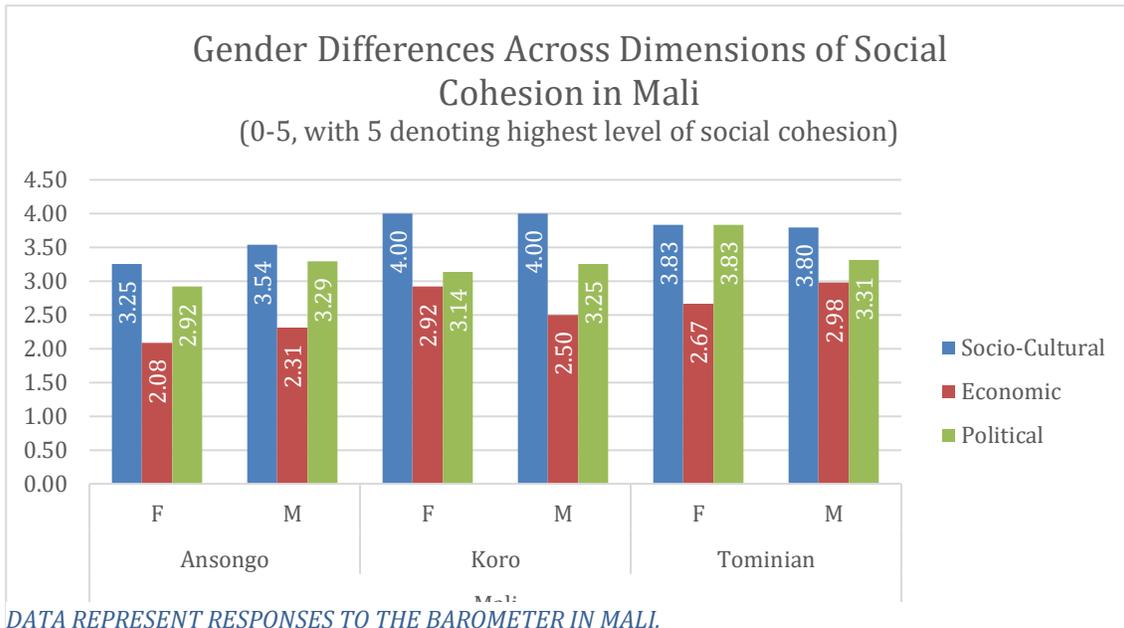
TABLE 5. GENDER BREAKDOWN OF BAROMETER RESPONDENTS

Country	Zone	Female	Male
Burkina Faso	Kaya	1	9
	Kongoussi	1	9
	Ouahigouya	1	9
Mali	Ansongo	2	8
	Koro	6	4
	Tominian	1	9
Niger	Ayorou	5	5
	Ouallam	4	6
	Torodi	3	7
Total		24	66



DATA REPRESENT RESPONSES TO THE BAROMETER IN BURKINA FASO.

In Burkina Faso, only one female respondent was engaged in each zone. Gender-disaggregated measures of social cohesion were difficult to compare in Burkina Faso due to the extremely limited number of women engaged in positions of power and leadership.⁵⁵ Because the Barometer was administered mostly to officials and traditional leaders, men were oversampled. The scores



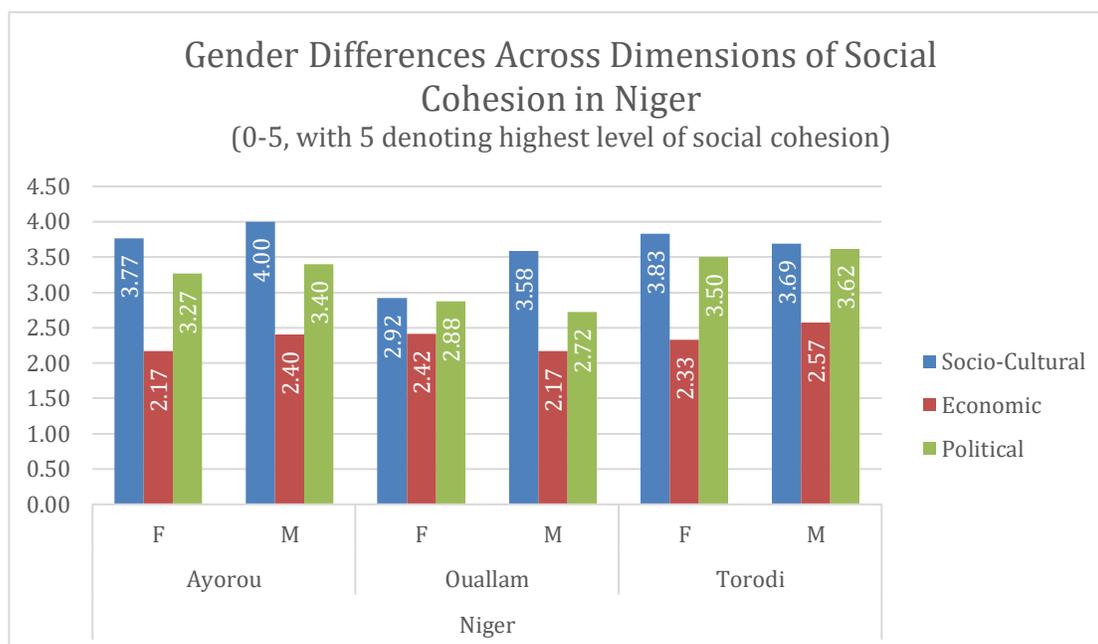
DATA REPRESENT RESPONSES TO THE BAROMETER IN MALI.

⁵⁵For this study, the assessment team applied the Barometer to ordinary citizens, but oversampled leaders and office holders.

between men and women were roughly equivalent, with political social cohesion the strongest dimension and the economic dimension the lowest.

Gender-disaggregated measurements of social cohesion in Mali presented mixed results. Men and women scored comparably on cultural cohesion, but diverged around political and economic criteria. Men largely reported higher levels of political and economic cohesion, except in Koro, where women reported stronger levels of economic cohesion than their male counterparts. In Ansongo, women reported significantly lower scores than their male counterparts across all dimensions. In Tominian, only one woman was available for consultation.

Results in Niger largely aligned with those in Mali. The cultural dimension of social cohesion ranked very high, while the economic dimension scored low. Scores between men and women were roughly equivalent with men perceiving stronger levels of social cohesion across the three dimensions.



DATA REPRESENT RESPONSES TO THE BAROMETER IN NIGER.

The limited sample size restricted the representativeness of the data, but identifies trends that can be triangulated with data from FGDs and interviews. Notably, men and women viewed the economic dimension of their social cohesion as the weakest, and women identified economic challenges and lack of access to markets as major barriers to peace in their communities.

Trends in Social Cohesion Dimensions across the Intervention Zone			
	Strongest Dimension	Medium Dimension	Weakest Dimension
Burkina Faso	Political	Cultural	Economic
Mali	Cultural	Political	Economic
Niger	Cultural	Political	Economic

PROBLEM

INSECURITY

Security is the overriding problem and priority for people in the tri-border area. Governments have struggled to provide for the general well-being, safety and protection of their citizens and people within their borders. Physical insecurity caused by extremist attacks and other forms of extreme violence have produced one million IDPs and thousands of refugees, destroyed local economies, and led to sharp increases in the need and demand for humanitarian aid. Focus group and interview participants shared confusion over who the perpetrators of the violence were. In Burkina Faso, a housewife said: “The problem is that we do not know the reason for this war. If someone declares war on you but you do not know the reason why, how can anyone resolve it?”

“The problem is that we do not know the reason for this war. If someone declares war on you but you do not know the reason why, how can anyone resolve it?”

Housewife, Burkina Faso

The number of IDPs continues to grow, especially in rural areas where communities abandon their villages en masse and flee to neighboring communities, towns and cities. Humanitarian aid organizations lack the resources to meet the need and find it increasingly difficult to access displacement zones because of the violence and COVID-19.⁵⁶

Security is more than freedom from physical harm. It includes food, health, and economic and environmental security.⁵⁷ Lacking security in these areas leads to lower standards of living, poorer health, fewer economic opportunities, greater stress and anxiety about the future, and higher mortality. In the high-conflict zones, local economies have been crippled by frequent attacks from violent extremists, bandits and self-defense organizations; severe restrictions on the mobility of residents; and state-enforced restrictions on markets. Violence is both a cause and effect of these other insecurities. As the president of a regional youth council in Niger said: “Peace is not only the end of a conflict, but it is also young people sheltered and employed.”

“Peace is not only the end of a conflict, but it is also young people sheltered and employed.”

President of regional youth council, Niger

Despite increased military spending, force of arms - as evidenced by the increase in violent attacks since 2018 - has not improved security.⁵⁸ This dilemma is partially explained by the blurring of lines between the perpetrators and victims of violence. Ethnic minority groups, state defense forces, and self-defense groups are the perpetrators and victims of violence against civilians. To paraphrase a focus group participant, “there are no good or bad sides. The good side today becomes the bad side tomorrow.”

⁵⁶ Alexandra Lamarche. June 11, 2020. [Mounting Hunger in the Sahel: The Unintended Impact of COVID-19 Prevention](#). Issue Brief. Refugees International.

⁵⁷ For an exploration of the relative importance of different forms of insecurity as perceived by local communities in Niger, see CASPA. 2017. *Etude sur la perception de l'insécurité par les populations du Niger*. Niamey: CASPA. 86.8% of Tilabéri residents expressed food and economic insecurity as the most important form of insecurity.

⁵⁸ Cooke, Jennifer G. November 15, 2017. [Understanding the G5 Sahel Joint Force: Fighting Terror. Building Regional Security?](#) Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies.

Women and children are the most vulnerable to violent conflict in the Sahel. Households are attacked, and women raped, kidnapped, left alone to fend for the family representation in government. For women, peace is a state in which they can feel secure enough to engage in market activities and send their children to school. In Burkina Faso, women demonstrated support of self-defense groups, such as the Kogleweoogo but also recognized that self-defense groups could be magnets for violent attacks. Nonetheless, because they could not rely on government, women supported these groups and their male family member participants. According to one Burkinabe woman, “we do not know who a terrorist or criminal is. Maybe they begin as criminals but become terrorists.” In such ambiguous circumstances, self-defense groups are known to their communities and are flourishing.

In Mali, women said they relied on self-defense groups such as Dozos and the government for physical security. Even though women believed the government should be providing security, they expressed little faith in the government’s defense forces. Because self-defense groups were generally smaller and less well-armed than in Burkina or Mali, women in Niger relied heavily on the government for physical security and had relatively positive views of government defense forces. FGD participants and interviewees uniformly agreed that the conflict had moved beyond the scope of local authorities and self-defense groups but had varying levels of faith in the ability of their governments to end the conflict.

When asked to identify the targets of violence, the majority of Burkinabe women claimed to have no idea. They said that everyone was a target and at risk of being killed. One woman said: “I’m sure there are targets, but we do not know who they are, and this is why everyone flees. It is impossible to know if it’s you or your neighbor.” Women in Mali and Niger identified traditional chiefs, *griots*, mayors and religious leaders as the targets of violent attacks.

ECONOMY

“We feel their pain and suffering, but we too lack everything.”

Burkinabe woman

The FGDs and the Barometer surveys indicated that insufficient and inequitable access to wealth, livelihoods and natural resources were destroying the social fabric and increasing violent conflict. Everyone, from small-scale farmers to government officials, was concerned about the lack of economic opportunity and the inequitable access to jobs and natural resources.

Most of the sub-region’s wealth consists of subsistence farming and pastoralism. The declining availability of arable land and grazing areas, population pressure, and competition for control of and access to natural resources, have aroused latent animosities among pastoralists and agriculturalists. Scarcity affects host communities’ ability to welcome displaced persons. One

Burkinabe woman said: “We feel their [IDP’s] pain and suffering, but we too lack everything.”

Scarcity of arable land leaves many young men unemployed. Poor and unemployed rural pastoralist youth are the most prone to joining or collaborating with violent organizations, crime networks or bandit groups to earn money. Virtually all focus groups identified youth unemployment and lack of economic opportunities as the main cause and consequence of violent conflict. The lack of employment opportunities, government support and access to economic resources needed to survive and start a family, ethnic stigmatization, and feelings of hopelessness have pushed unemployed and underemployed rural youth to abandon agriculture and seek their fortunes elsewhere. Further, the political, economic and social marginalization of these youth has increased anti-government sentiment and led many to join extremist movements or turn to crime and banditry to earn a living.

Women identified economic disparities as the root cause of conflict in Burkina Faso and Mali. Women felt that social unease derives from poor living conditions and the inequitable distribution of wealth. One Burkinabe woman said that if the country was wealthy, then authorities should ensure that the entire population benefits. “We see one or two people profiting from the wealth of our country,” she said. Women across the tri-border area said their access to land was limited despite progressive land tenure laws at national levels. Women in local leadership positions said village women were not courageous enough to ask for land. This point is rendered moot however by the same women’s admission that decision-makers would not seriously consider the request for land anyway.

Virtually all focus groups identified youth unemployment and lack of economic opportunities as the main cause and consequence of violent conflict.

Women also worried about being able to feed their families. They noted that insecurity had caused market prices to double. They could no longer safely collect firewood from forests and were forced to buy it from distributors in towns. When asked to identify the perpetrators of violence, women cited uneducated and unemployed youth. They pleaded for job training and placement, savings clubs, micro-loans, and continued monitoring and check-ins from the providers of said services.

INSUFFICIENT HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT RESPONSES

The enormity and urgency of the humanitarian crisis underscores the inadequacy of national and international responses. Communities have done their best to provide IDPs basic foodstuffs - corn, oil, rice and household supplies. However, they acknowledge that “donations are not enough, and we cannot give them everything.”⁵⁹ Burkinabe women credited the national government for food assistance but lamented the lack of water and shelter. Women in Niger and Mali recognized local and international NGOs for their contributions, but noted the dearth of shelter and economic opportunities. Women uniformly identified endemic poverty as the main source of conflict. “For me, the source of the conflict is poverty. Most people live in poverty and misery. [It is] irrelevant if you are employed or unemployed, you still live in misery.”⁶⁰

“For me, the source of the conflict is poverty. Most people live in poverty and misery. [It is] irrelevant if you are employed or unemployed, you still live in misery.”

DECLINING FAITH IN AND LEGITIMACY OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

According to Afrobarometer surveys, confidence in national governments is low. The surveys indicate that most citizens prefer democracy over non-democratic systems and they strongly support decentralization and local government institutions. Burkina Faso has seen an increase from 38% to 47% in perceived “supply of democracy,” reflecting improvements since the ouster of President Blaise Compaoré.⁶¹ But the perceived supply of democracy in Niger and Mali has dropped from 59% to 27% in Niger and from 44% to 28% in Mali. Perhaps more sobering is the

⁵⁹ Burkinabe housewife in Kaya describing host communities’ inability to respond to all the needs of IDPs.

⁶⁰ Young Burkinabe woman describing conflict in her community.

⁶¹ [Afrobarometer](#). 2016/2018.

decline in the demand for democracy, which has slipped from 40% to 23% in Burkina Faso, and from 53% to 34% in Niger.⁶²

This result could signal widespread cynicism regarding national leadership, and indicate deep malaise surrounding vertical social cohesion. FGDs and interviews confirmed that citizens put more trust in local than national government. Decentralization acts and policies have been implemented unevenly and resistance at the top to devolving powers has stymied democratic local governance.⁶³

Women across all three countries said only their national-level governments had the scope and resources to manage the macro-level conflict. However, none of the women interviewed thought it realistic to rely on national government. They instead turned to local and traditional leaders to provide mediation and relief. A Burkinabe woman said: “When there is conflict, the village chief, imam, and self-defense groups step forward to resolve or mediate. But for the case of terrorism, this issue is beyond their scope and therefore the government should step in.” Reports from respondents suggested government intervention often arrived late, if at all, and did not stay in the community where there was need.

In sum, focus group respondents felt that government and national leaders were out of touch with the people and cared little about their needs and concerns. Respondents felt that inequities in wealth and living conditions were generally recognized, but unaddressed by authorities. High levels of corruption, impunity, inequitable distribution of national income, and difficulty providing quality basic services and responding to youth unemployment have fueled grievances and strong anti-government sentiment. This sentiment manifests itself in the lack of trust and confidence in national structures, including the military.

PEOPLE

The literature review underscored the intersectionality of identity. Although ethnicity and affective identity traits are salient, people have multiple identities based on age, gender, family history, religious affiliation and class/socio-economic status. For example, not all Tuaregs are militants seeking to overthrow the government. The significance of each category as a central component of identity changes over time as do perceptions of these markers.

Gender emerged as a strong indicator regarding violence perpetration and victimization. Women are often the indirect targets of violent attacks and manage the long-term consequences. They are rarely the perpetrators of physical violence, but may indirectly perpetuate violence. As primary caregivers, they pass along implicit biases to children or actively act on prejudices by favoring their in-group in the competition for resources.⁶⁴

Focus group discussions confirmed that women often must fend for themselves in post-attack settings. They struggle with rising market prices, buying firewood, tending fields, and caring for out-of-school children. Children of IDPs must adapt to new locations and schools. They may be forced to engage in dangerous or illicit economic activity, or work as virtual slave labor in gold mines. Women are subject to gender-based violence and may act as informants for violent groups.

This study found that the perpetrators of violence can also be the victims of violence, as all those consulted felt that they were victimized at some point. More than half of the Barometer respondents in Burkina Faso (60%) and Mali (70%) said they or someone they knew had been

⁶² Robert Mattes. 2019. *Democracy in Africa: Demand, supply, and the 'dissatisfied democrat'*. Afrobarometer Policy Paper, No. 54, February 2019.

⁶³ For more on decentralization policies and motivations please see Boone, Catherine. (2003). *Decentralization As Political Strategy In West Africa*. Comparative Political Studies - COMP POLIT STUD. 36. 355-380.

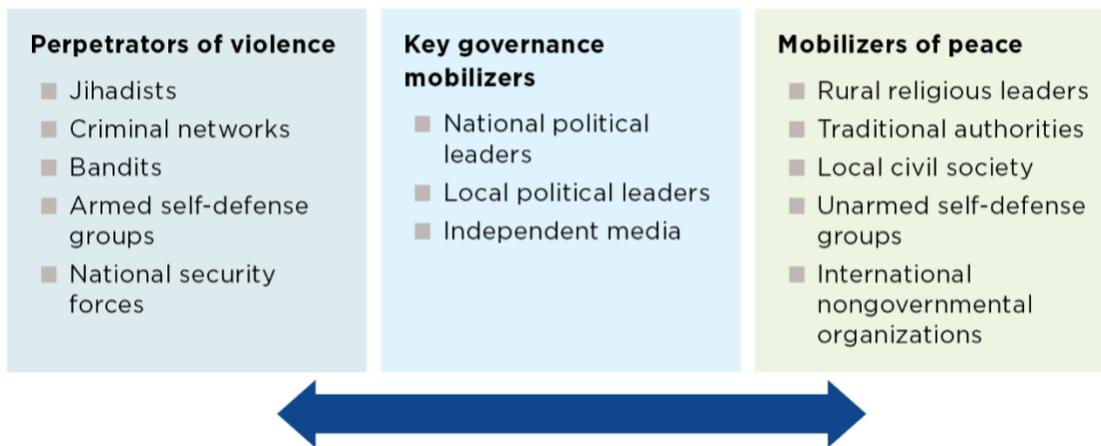
⁶⁴ For an in-depth analysis of gender dynamics in the Malian conflict, see Lackenbaure H, Lindell M, and Ingerstad G. November 2015. *"If our men won't fight, we will. A Gendered Analysis of the Armed Conflict in Northern Mali."* FOI-R-4121-SE.

asked to join a violent group. Despite reporting that they felt a strong sense of pride in their national identity, respondents – except the Burkinabe, felt their fellow compatriots did not share the same values or history. This finding illustrates the precarious state of horizontal social cohesion in Mali and Niger.

The assessment also found that national military and security forces may be perpetrators of violence in some settings and mobilizers for peace in others. The difficulty of identifying perpetrators was exemplified by a Burkinabe chief: “If they would fight face to face, we would be victorious. The Burkinabe is not a coward!” A female FGD participant insisted that the confusion surrounding the identity of attackers had caused people to lack confidence in their neighbors. “This is especially true when someone approaches you; you have no idea how to even behave with others.”

“The Burkinabe is not a coward”

Burkinabe chief expressing frustration at the inability to identify an enemy



Competing identities. Classifications reflected here are generalizations; they may shift based on setting.

PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE

JIHADIST AND NON-STATE ARMED GROUPS⁶⁵

In response to the absence of a state presence and authority in the tri-border area, non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and extremist groups have emerged as identifiable perpetrators of violence. NSAGs include ethnic militia, self-defense groups, criminal networks and well-financed bandits. What is confusing is that ethnic militia and self-defense groups claim to be protectors of their communities, and a bulwark against violent extremists, hostile ethnic groups and bandits. Sahelian-led extremist organizations such as Ansarul Islam, Ansar al Din, Katibat Macina, and Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (JNIM) have thrived by exploiting anti-government sentiments and inter-ethnic and

⁶⁵ For descriptions of the major violent extremist, self-defense and Malian rebel groups, see Andrew Lebovich. May 19, 2019. [Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel](#). European Council on Foreign Relations.

intercommunity conflict. They have spread by offering protection to vulnerable communities while promoting their own agendas.

As extremist groups are expanding southward from the tri-border area, they seek to conquer territory by attacking local communities and state military forces, forcing local officials and teachers to flee. They also lure adherents by offering high salaries. This recruitment tactic has been especially directed at Peulhs and Tuaregs. Despite recent gains, extremists lack the popular support and numbers needed to control and occupy the Sahel. Converting locals to Salafist forms of Islam and calling for an Islamist caliphate with Sharia law are unpopular, and particularly resisted by local leaders. For this reason, extremist groups target community leaders, who are often imams and teachers, and if successful in forcing them to flee, coerce and manipulate community residents to adhere and commit acts of violence.

The North African (AQIM) and Sahelian-led affiliates of the Islamic State (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda originating in the Middle East constitute the main extremist groups operating in the Sahel. The extremists embrace an exclusionist ideology affirming Islam's superiority over all other religions and their obligation to create Islamist caliphates through intimidation, conquest and forcible conversions if necessary to achieve an Islamic world order. A major development over the past five years has been the localization of jihadi leadership and movements, and the decline of influence of North African and Arab influences in on-the-ground decision-making.⁶⁶

Sahelian extremist groups are led primarily by nobles, persons born of respected or wealthy families, or religious leaders educated in North African and Middle Eastern religious institutions. Since 2015, Sahelian groups (Ansarul Islam and Katibat Macina) led by ethnic Peulhs and Tuaregs (Ansar al Din) have stepped up their activities in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Their success hinges on creating a no man's land that can serve as a base of operations and a staging area for southward expansion.⁶⁷ Importantly, an extremist leader's ethnicity does not imply that he represents the goals and interests of a specific ethnic group, nor does it mean that he enjoys widespread support from members of the group with which he identifies.

An extremist leader's ethnicity does not imply that he represents the goals and interests of a specific ethnic group, nor does it mean that he enjoys widespread support from members of the group with which he identifies

Violent extremists have targeted civil servants, school teachers, military officials, Christian institutions, moderate Muslim leaders, and traditional chiefs, while indiscriminately killing men, women and children to demonstrate their power and the inability of the state to protect them. These activities have dramatically decreased the presence of the state and state services in the tri-border area and transformed hundreds of thousands of terrorized villagers fleeing the violence into IDPs and refugees, leaving increasingly larger swaths of land under the control of violent extremists.⁶⁸

The main strengths of extremists are their military experience, weaponry and resources. Locally, they can self-finance by controlling gold mines, and trans-Saharan drug, arms, human trafficking and smuggling routes. Recruiting new fighters and allies depends on offering financial rewards and capitalizing on communal grievances and anti-government sentiment. They curry favor by offering

⁶⁶ Abdel Droukdel, the Algerian leader of AQIM, a major non-Sahelian violent extremist, was killed during an assault by French commandos in June 2020.

⁶⁷ International Crisis Group. December 20, 2019. [The Risk of Jihadist Contagion in West Africa](#). Briefing No. 149, Africa. Also see Africa Center for Strategic Studies. January 18, 2020. [Threat from African Militant Islamist Groups Expanding, Diversifying](#). Infographic.

⁶⁸ Burkina Faso has suffered the most from villagers fleeing their homes. Alexandra LaMarche. February 11, 2020. [Burkina Faso and the Sahel's New Frontline: Responding to the World's Fastest Growing Displacement Crisis](#). Field Report. Refugees International.

protection to Peulhs, Tuaregs and other marginalized minorities threatened by bandits, self-defense groups and the state.⁶⁹

However, extremist movements are not united and are fractured by frequent internal leadership battles. Their religious ideology and practices are repugnant to most Sahelian Muslims. Hence, for the lack of popular support, they resort to violence to divide and control.

CRIMINAL NETWORKS AND BANDITRY

Trans-Saharan trading routes harbor major criminal networks and many minor networks.⁷⁰ The members of the most well-known criminal networks come from nomadic Tuaregs, Toubou and Arabs in the Sahara, a vast, unpoliced and ungoverned space. Violent extremists and rebel movements have also organized criminal networks in the Sahara and have used the desert as a sanctuary. Under Muammar Gaddafi, Libya served as the main destination for human trafficking, drugs and arms. North Africans and Arabs controlled much of the drug trade. After Gaddafi's fall, the Toubou seized large quantities of arms and became major arms traders. The Agadez region of Niger became a key launching pad for human trafficking and mass African migration to Europe through Libya.

Until recently, transporting migrants had provided employment for young Tuaregs, and other youth. Changes in regional migration policies have deprived these groups of sources of revenue and have pushed many towards banditry and selling drugs and arms. The increase in drug use in turn has fueled banditry, while cheap, accessible arms have enabled small-time operators to move between criminality and local defense by selling protection to communities. Competition for control over various strands of the lucrative Saharan trade has sparked violent conflicts among various groups including large self-defense organizations. Given several factors - the absence of police and state presence, the complicity of corrupt officials, and deteriorating economic conditions - the demand for illicit goods, including humans, will continue to strengthen.

SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS

The proliferation of extremist violence *and* widespread banditry has spawned a new kind of self-defense group that differs from small traditional village policing groups guarding against petty thieves and livestock theft. The latter's goal was to return what was stolen to the owners and to fine the thief to cover costs incurred in policing. But many of the newly established self-defense groups are heavily armed and ready to engage in reprisals against other villages and ethnic group to punish alleged support for extremists, to expel competitors for control over land and natural resources, and to settle old scores. Self-defense groups are steadily increasing as national governments such as Burkina Faso adopt policies that empower and train them.⁷¹ Elsewhere, self-defense groups include Dogon hunters traditionally associated with policing the local environment; dominant groups (Mossi, Djerma, Bambara); minority groups (Peulhs, Tuaregs), agriculturalists, and pastoralists; and

⁶⁹ For violent extremist tactics in this area, see Ammour, Laurence-Aïda. February 26, 2020. [How Violent Extremist Groups Exploit Intercommunal Conflicts in the Sahel](#). *Spotlight*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

⁷⁰ USAID. November 2014. *Niger: Conflict and Crime Assessment* (Washington: USAID).

International Alert, Sustainable Approaches to Organized Crime in Mali and the Sahel, November 14, 2014.

⁷¹ The Burkina Faso parliament passed a new Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland law in January 2020 to repulse attacks on villages that were causing tens of thousands to flee. On the other hand, Mali has announced the dissolution of self-defense groups.

people from the same ethnic groups fighting each other.⁷² Sometimes, the dominant groups attack Tuaregs and Peulhs, with the complicity of the state and the military.⁷³ Reflecting on the prominence of newly formed or reconfigured self-defense groups, one elder in Mali said: “There are no winners in a conflict where each side wrongs the other.”

“There are no winners in a conflict where each side wrongs the other.”

Elder, Mali

TUAREG-LED AUTONOMY MOVEMENTS IN MALI AND NIGER

The Tuareg rebellions have destabilized the Sahel for decades. Tuaregs became marginalized citizens of several nation states (Algeria, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso) in the early 1960s. Tuaregs historically practice a liberal non-Arabized form of Islam. They resisted French rule and after independence, fought for autonomy, and resisted efforts by the Modibo Keita regime to suppress slavery and reform their hierarchical political and social system led by nobles and based on caste. They first waged war against the Keita regime in Mali and later against national governments in Mali and Niger during the 1990s in the name of self-determination to gain more autonomy for Tuaregs and other nomadic groups. In 2012, Tuareg rebel groups associated with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL) joined forces with extremist movements from Algeria and controlled much of Northern Mali. The extremists betrayed the MNL and created a short-lived Islamist state in their place. The MNL then joined forces with the French to stop the extremists’ advance and dismantle the Islamist state. Although the MNL and Malian government signed a peace agreement in 2015, it has not been fully implemented or accepted by all parties within both groups.

While strong and resilient enough to hold onto territory in the North, Tuareg autonomy has been weakened by internal leadership divisions, differences in the movement’s stance on autonomy and collaboration with Mali’s national government, and the rise of parallel movements led by Tuaregs opposing the government and an autonomous secular Tuareg region.

NATIONAL MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES

Military and security forces in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso are principal players in Sahelian violence. They have been defenders of national sovereignty, objects of attacks by extremist and rebel forces, and perpetrators of violence and extra-judicial executions against minority ethnic groups and communities. Such attacks have been in retaliation for alleged affiliation or collaborating with extremists and rebels.

In Burkina Faso, the dismantling of Compaoré’s Presidential Security Force, the best-equipped and trained anti-terrorism unit in Burkina Faso, weakened the capacity of the military to fight extremists.⁷⁴ In Mali, the failure of President Amadou Toumani Touré to

⁷² The most notable Dogon self-defense group is Dan Na Ambassagou, which operates in areas of Mopti, Mali, known as Dogon country. Malian officials believe that this highly militarized group is responsible for the massacres of Peulhs in Ogassadou that killed more than 100 people on March 23, 2019.

⁷³ In January 2019, Peulh villages around Yirdou in the Centre-Nord were attacked by Koglweogo self-defense groups. For more details on the attack on Peulhs, by terrorists, Mossi self-defense groups and the military, see Sophia Douce. February 4, 2019. Au Burkina Faso, Les peulhs sont victimes d’un délit de faciés. *Le Monde*.

⁷⁴ Bettina Engels. Political Transition in Burkina Faso: The Fall of Blaise Compaore. *Governance in Africa*, (2) 1, (2015) 1-6.

adequately support the military in fighting violent extremists and armed Tuareg separatist groups led to the coup that ousted him and the withdrawal of the military from the main battlefields. In Niger, the defense ministry diverted tens of millions of dollars from Niger's defense forces to politicians and businessmen affiliated with the ruling party. National political leaders suppress news reports of government atrocities to cover up their failure to properly equip the army.

Focus group respondents from majority ethnic groups in Mali were more supportive of the army than those from minority groups surveyed.⁷⁵ They were also more supportive of the government in their fight against extremists and armed groups, and honored their sacrifices. Regardless of ethnicity, adult males in FGDs stressed the need for more dialogue between local communities and security forces to reduce tensions with military and security forces.

Military reprisals against ethnic or community groups are motivated primarily by frustration, anger and desire to avenge losses. But these operations have had devastating impacts on local economies. For their alleged collaboration with extremists, Peulhs have been the main targets of military and security forces. Tuareg and Peulh communities are targeted primarily in Mali, but these groups constitute significant minorities in Burkina Faso and Niger. In the tri-border zones especially Burkina Faso and Niger, anti-military sentiment is growing. Army attacks on the Peulhs, massive displacement of populations in the name of fighting extremists, and curfews and other restrictions on mobility and cross-border trade have antagonized local populations against national armed forces.⁷⁶

KEY GOVERNANCE MOBILIZERS

NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS

The former president of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and the current president of Niger, Mahamad Issoufou, belong to the same political class that emerged in the mid-1990s during multiparty elections. Elected in 2015, Roch Christian Kaboré of Burkina Faso was a minister in the Compaoré regime before joining the opposition. All three ran and won as reform candidates,⁷⁷ but have become increasingly unpopular, especially in the impoverished tri-border area.

Their main strength comes from excessively powerful executive patronage systems with few checks and balances, which gives them the capacity to reward followers, punish dissidents, co-opt the opposition, and deploy military and security services. They control the levers of state aid, and public services, but rule with a mixture of corruption, cronyism, clientelism, and political repression.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ For Peulh minority perspectives in Mali, see Mana Farooqhi and Louisa Waugh. December 2016. [‘They treat us all like jihadis’: Looking beyond violent extremism to building peace in Mali](#). International Alert.

⁷⁶ International Crisis Group. June 12, 2018. [The Niger-Mali Border: Subordinating Military Action to a Political Strategy](#). Report 281, Africa.

⁷⁷ For information about the evolution of Mali politics leading to the 2012 coup, see Gregoire Chauzal and Thibault van Damme. 2014. [The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving beyond the 2012 Crisis](#). The Hague: Clingendael Institute.

⁷⁸ Devermont, Judd. December 6, 2019. *Politics at the Heart of the Crisis in the Sahel*. Washington, D.C: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

National political parties retain their importance as key mobilizers because they provide a structure for participation in national and local elections; give citizens the opportunity to choose candidates; and offer rewards to their elected officials and their supporters. They also comprise a political base for those aspiring to high political office. Their support base is made up of friends, family, ethnic groups and local communities. Their grievances reflect feelings that they, their political supporters, and constituents do not get their fair share of political spoils. They sometimes use violence against party rivals to break up campaign rallies and demonstrations and to prevent people from voting.

One of the major complaints of rural populations is that national-level parties are visible only during an election campaign, make empty promises, and do not return until the next election. The politicians act as neo-patrimonial rulers and patrons rather than representatives of their constituents. While local political officials such as mayors also belong to national political parties, they are often seen as neutral or unbiased once in power. Focus group participants unanimously stated that local officials were independent of political parties, despite their membership in a party.

MEDIA, HUMAN RIGHTS NGOS AND CITIZEN MOVEMENTS

The state-controlled media in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso serve the president and his agenda. The assessment detected censorship of news from the war fronts in the name of security, and the silencing of government critics who dared call out human rights violations by defense forces, and the failure to properly equip soldiers. State media describe attacks as perpetrated by “non-identified groups.” It is not clear whether this label indicates the state of play regarding intelligence failures or whether it represents a form of appeasement. Despite their limited resources, community radio stations have reported more accurately on the crisis.

National-level citizen movements represent platforms for change because they depend little on external funding and are receptive to greater participation of youth and women in decision-making. These movements offer alternatives to traditional Sahelian rural societies with social hierarchies and set gender roles dominated by male elder decision-makers. Perhaps surprisingly, western-educated, urban-based reformers and traditional authorities show signs of dialoging and working together to curb violent extremism, and to build more socially just societies that harmonize old and new values.

MOBILIZERS FOR PEACEBUILDING AND SOCIAL COHESION

FGDs and interviews in the tri-border area indicated that religious leaders and traditional authorities were supportive of peacebuilding activities, as were women, traders, agriculturalists and pastoralists. Major agents of social cohesion and century-old traditions and practices calling for religious tolerance and respect for all religions still prevailed among Muslims and traditional religious authorities as well as Catholic and Protestant clergy.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Most religious leaders interviewed in the rural conflict zones were imams and Quranic schoolteachers with varying degrees of formal education. Village chiefs often nominate imams or are imams themselves. Nearly all respondents identified as Muslim rather than as members of a Sufi brotherhood or a specific denomination. Their main objective was to improve the knowledge of Islamic moral values and practices in their community. They were financially supported by contributions from the parents of their students. The imams and Quranic schoolteachers did not oppose village children going to French schools. They welcomed Muslim girls in Quranic schools and often tutored young Muslim mothers. Some were open to allowing women to inherit or be given land, but less than that given to male children. They rarely expressed grievances and seemed satisfied with the level of respect shown by the government to the Islamic faith. The imams said that they regularly intervened to mediate marriage and inheritance disputes. Rural religious leaders did not describe violent extremists by their religious ideology and did not hold reverence or affection for extremist beliefs or organizations. Nearly all enthusiastically endorsed the idea of interfaith dialog and peacebuilding, but few had contacts with Christians or people of other faiths. While discussing interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding, one Quranic schoolteacher in Mali said: "I am ready to join any group to bring peace because peace has no price."

"I am ready to join any group to bring peace because peace has no price."

Qur'anic School Teacher

At the national level in Burkina Faso, most Muslim, Catholic and Protestant leaders, and leaders of traditional African religions, condemned extremist violence and supported the continuation of their country's long-standing traditions of respect for and acceptance of religious pluralism. The Episcopal Conference of Burkina Faso and Niger has been particularly active in promoting inter-community peace, good governance, and equitable development.

In Niamey, Niger, a younger generation of Muslim preachers has reached out to university students and unemployed urban youth to advocate a less rigid form of Islam. They are preachers who wear baseball caps, play sports, speak the language of urban youth, and accept women with western educations. Few have gone to North Africa or the Middle East for religious training. Many of their followers have graduated from Abdou Moumouni University.⁷⁹

Cherif Ousmane Mamani Haidara, the current president of the *Haut Conseil Islamique* (HCI) in Mali, has emerged as an unorthodox spiritual guide who offers an alternative to Wahhabi and Salafi forms of Islam.⁸⁰ His main rival is Mahmoud Dicko, his predecessor at the HCI and an advocate of a less rigid form of Wahhabi doctrine. Both men have called for national unity and peace while condemning inter-ethnic violence and the stigmatization and slaughter of Peulhs.

Muslim leaders like Haidara and Dicko have huge followings and are key players in Mali's national politics. Both men backed Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) for president in the 2018 national election, which helped him to win over 90% of the vote. Their influence reflects the rising tide of Islamization in Mali. Dicko led the movement of opposition politicians and civil society organizations to pressure IBK to resign.⁸¹ Like Dicko, Haidara has attacked IBK for government

⁷⁹ Abdoulaye Sounay. [Salifa Youth on Campus in Niamey, Niger: Moral Motives, Political Ends](#). In *What Politics: Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*. 2018. Edited by Elina Oinas, Henri Onodera, and Leena Suupaa. Brill, 209-229. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356368_014.

⁸⁰ See Gilles Holder. Chérif Ousmane Madani Haidara and the Islamic Movement Ansar Dine: A Popular Reformism in Search of Autonomy. *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 206-207, No.2, 2012, 389-425. Haidara's Ansar Dine movement has followers in other countries.

⁸¹ Dicko organized and led massive demonstrations in Bamako in June and July 2020.

corruption, nepotism and failure to end the violence in Central Mali, but has opposed pressure to force Keita's resignation as divisive and undermining of national institutions.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

Sahelian national governments increasingly recognize traditional authorities as mediators of conflict and pillars of social cohesion. The table below highlights the presence of traditional leaders at all levels of society from the village to the capital cities. These roles hold historical significance and fill the authority gap in

communities which are far removed from centralized state authorities. They view their roles as keepers of peace and promoters of prosperity dating to pre-colonial modes of governance, divisions of labor, and conflict resolution mechanisms.⁸² These roles still exist but have been stripped of legitimate authority as their responsibilities have been transferred to centralized states. Despite this, rural communities continue to turn to these leaders for guidance and security. Noticeably, men occupy all positions. Women enjoy the benefits of these positions by association with men.

Traditional leaders exist at all levels of society from the village to the capital cities. They view their roles as keepers of peace and promoters of prosperity dating to pre-colonial modes of governance, divisions of labor, and conflict resolution mechanisms.

TABLE 6. THE DIVISION OF POWER IN TRADITIONAL SAHELIAN COMMUNITIES

Administrative power	Resource-based power	Knowledge-based power	Religion-based power	Historical power
Village chief along with the 5-15 village advisors from the general population	Land Chief (<i>Chef de terre</i>)	Traditional storyteller or communicator (<i>griot</i>)	Imams and preachers	Founding families
Faction chief (for nomadic peoples) along with faction advisors	Water Chief (<i>Chef des eaux</i>)	Traditional hunters and healers	Pastors	Noble tribes or branch families
Neighborhood chief (in urban settings) along with neighborhood advisors	Chief of Pastures (<i>Chef des pâturages</i>)	Trade unions (traditional brotherhoods including blacksmiths, weavers and shoemakers)	Priests	Nobles and influential persons
	Chief of forests (<i>Chef des forêts</i>)	Spiritual leaders		
		Religious judges		

⁸² The table is based on Institute of Development Studies. *Étude de Cas 4: autorités traditionnelles et religieuses dans la gouvernance locale au Mali* (Berne/Bamako: IDS, October-December 2015), p. 14.

A growing generational divide has further weakened social cohesion, as traditional authorities complain that young people no longer understand traditional conflict resolution techniques used to prevent, mitigate and stop violence. Some of the factors undergirding the popularity and authority of traditional chiefs include the recognition of their legitimacy based on ancestral consent; high levels of trust in their integrity; the attempt of most to avoid partisan politics; their reputation for fairness in allocating land; demonstrated success in mediating conflicts; and their concern for the well-being of local communities. Weaknesses that hinder their influence as peacebuilders and pillars of social cohesion include violent competition for succession; generational gaps and sharp cultural differences between urban youth and chiefs concerning lifestyles, values, and modes of communication; participation in partisan politics; their inability to protect their villages against attacks by non-state armed groups; and the erosion of their authority to allocate land. Traditional authorities are weakest in Central Mali because of the presence of powerful extremists and self-defense groups, and decentralization laws that have stripped much of their power to control the allocation of land in their domain.

Traditional authorities are weakest in Central Mali because of the presence of powerful extremists and self-defense groups, and decentralization laws that have stripped much of their power to control the allocation of land in their domain.

PROCESS

FACTORS ESCALATING CONFLICT

Competition by violent extremists and crime networks for control of trans-Saharan trade routes, and the “jihadization of banditry”

The literature on banditry and criminality in the sub-region reveals that competition for control over lucrative trans-Saharan trade routes has created opportunistic and uneasy collaboration among violent extremists, criminal networks and bandits. The rise of heavily armed ethnic militias and self-defense organizations has also exacerbated the spread of violence. However, occasional military successes by national governments and their allies have set back the extremists. Such gains are temporary, and have lulled some into believing that because radicals seemingly lack the numbers, resources and popular support to overthrow established order, they will one day be vanquished or vanish from their present strongholds. This view is not shared by the communities assessed in this analysis, and lacks credibility. As noted elsewhere in this report, competition for control over lucrative, illicit Trans-Saharan trade routes has fueled incentives to join and grow criminal networks, justify self-defense groups and ethnic militias, and perpetuate grand and petty corruption,

The “jihadization of banditry”⁸³ based on collaboration and alliances of convenience among jihadist movements, criminal networks and local bandits has also spread violence. Symbiotically, violent extremists have provided heavy weapons and hard currency to criminal networks and local bandits. In exchange, criminals and bandits have provided intelligence, logistics and manpower to

⁸³ Heni Nsaibia. January 17, 2019. [Insecurity in Southwestern Burkina Faso in the Context of an Expanding Insurgency](#). ACLED.

extremists. Despite suffering heavy losses at times, violent extremists have been resilient. They have leveraged relationships with allies of convenience to regroup and stage new attacks.

Securitized Responses

The priority given to military solutions to counterterrorism has not worked and has intensified grievances and conflict. The military and security forces have not been able to defeat rebel movements fighting for autonomy in Mali nor violent extremists in the tri-border area. The resulting failures have left national military forces with these grievances:

- The militaries feel that the national governments have not provided them with sufficient training, weapons, protective clothing and equipment needed to confront and defeat the enemy. These grievances in Mali precipitated the 2012 military coup and withdrawal of troops from Northern and Central Mali.
- Defense forces feel that large amounts of funds intended to support their efforts have been diverted into the hands of corrupt officials and businessmen. An example of this is the recent scandal resulting from an audit of the Niger Defense Ministry which revealed financial discrepancies.⁸⁴
- Defense forces feel harassed by watchdogs such as human rights groups who allege defense forces are murdering innocent people.
- Defense forces have suffered significant casualties following attacks by non-state armed groups. They seek revenge by attacking Peulh or Tuareg villages and groups alleged to be collaborating with non-state armed groups.

These grievances are often shared by citizens who deplore the lack of support the army gets from their government and resent the charges by external human rights groups that the military is violating human rights when doing their duty of fighting the “enemy.”

Actions by the defense forces have also aroused widespread grievances, anger and anti-government feeling, especially from populations in high-conflict zones:

- Communities feel the military has fled rather than stayed to fight the enemy.
- Communities feel the security forces arrive too late. As one respondent said: “The doctor is visiting the patient after he is dead!”
- Communities feel that the restrictions on mobility, the government displacement of populations without providing lodging and food, and border closures, are destroying livelihoods and local economies while pushing youth to join the violent extremists or to become bandits.
- Innocent Peulhs and Tuaregs experience bitterness when they are called jihadis and beaten and arrested. They have seen their villages destroyed and their people killed by military and security forces in the name of fighting violent extremists.

Conflicts over control of and access to land and other natural resources

Interviews confirmed that the struggle for control over land and grazing areas is the major cause of conflict between agriculturalists and pastoralists and has intensified bloody ethnic conflict between the two groups. Both sides present grievances when asked, but triangulation between primary and secondary data sources clearly indicated that pastoralists have been the biggest losers in this conflict because of their minority status and government policies favoring agriculturalists.

⁸⁴ New Africa Daily. 2020. [In Niger, a Defense Audit Could Weaken the President](#). March 26, 2020.

Unemployed rural youth resentful of the lack of economic opportunities and political, social and economic exclusion are the most prone to joining violent extremists, criminal networks and militant ethnic militias.

Control over land and access to wealth continue to be major challenges for women in the Sahel. Although national laws permit the ownership of land by women, some local authorities continue to balk at the idea of granting land to women. Yet some men are willing to share their land with women because they recognize that they do not have enough male labor to farm family land. This has resulted in an increase in women working in the fields but not necessarily owning land. This is further complicated as men are killed, kidnapped or forced to flee their communities. When the land belongs to the men, how can their wives legally access the land in the future? One female advisor said: “We must do everything possible to ensure that a woman who requests access to land actually gains it.” Access to wealth allows women to manage their families while contributing to the health and vitality of local communities.

Land tenure systems continue to spark conflict in the region as there is sporadic application of national policies that conflict with traditional or local methods of resource management

access based on scarcity, irrelevant of their true sentiments on whether or not women should be granted access.

The tri-border area has been the major arena of violent conflict related to resource scarcity. Nigeriens claim cattle rustlers are coming from Mali and Burkina Faso, while Burkinabe claim that they are coming from Mali and Niger. Both are true as cattle rustlers are generally nomadic. In Niger, Djerma and Songhai farmers battle with Peulh and Tuareg pastoralists as Peulh pastoralists are also competing with Tuaregs. Pastoralists’ grievances are mounting as farmers enter their traditional grazing grounds. Farmer grievances mount when pastoralists cause damage to their food crops and fodder. These grievances have sparked the creation of village self-defense organizations whose main goal is to protect their control over and access to land, grazing areas and water points that they believe are theirs to manage or own.

Another major source of grievance that stirs anti-government sentiment in Niger is the state’s granting of land and control over oil, and uranium- and gold-mining resources to external investors. Oil and uranium mining generate little employment for the residents of these areas, while often

Triangulation between primary and secondary data sources clearly indicated that pastoralists have been the biggest losers in this conflict because of their minority status and government policies favoring agriculturalists.

Land tenure systems continue to spark conflict in the region as there is sporadic application of national policies that conflict with traditional or local methods of resource management.⁸⁵ One Burkinabe chief said that because land was so scarce “every human being must not forget to be grateful for the little bits that we have.” This sentiment challenges the progress of women as landowners, as decision-makers can further limit

⁸⁵ The French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement-AFD) through the Land and Development Technical Committee has done many studies on land tenure issues and supported land tenure reform in Sahelian Africa. For examples, see AFD, *Different Strategies and procedures to formalize rural land rights*, March 2018; *Opportunités et défis d’une approche par les communs de la terre et des ressources qu’elles portent*, September 2017; and *Investissement dans l’agriculture familiale d’Afrique subsaharienne, sécurité foncière et formalisation des droits*, February 2018. For relationships between land tenure issues and politics, see Catherine Boone. 2014. *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*. (New York: Cambridge University Press). Also see Elinor Ostrom. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

polluting local water sources. Grievances have erupted into violent anti-government demonstrations. Gold mining is particularly harmful to many thousands of poor landless people who seek to derive a modest income from artisanal gold mining.⁸⁶ In the gold-mining areas, violent conflicts arise over competition to access and mine specific sites.

Gold mining also provides armed groups and violent extremists with a new source of funding.⁸⁷ Violent extremists offer to “protect” mining enterprises while artisanal miners enter gold mining areas to earn money and sell gold to Middle Eastern buyers.

Grievances have sparked the creation of village self-defense organizations whose main goal is to protect their control over and access to land, grazing areas and water points that they believe are theirs to manage or own.

Failure to implement 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali⁸⁸

The collapse of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulted from divisions within the Tuareg group and from resistance within the Malian government and among Malian citizens, who believed that too much autonomy had been granted to the Tuareg-held north. Divisions within and between Tuareg and Arab rebel signatories, led to the withdrawal of the Arab-led *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* (CMA) and fueled fighting in Mali's Northern Region. Despite their demand for a greater role in peace negotiations and implementation, Malian women's associations were excluded.⁸⁹ Clashes between pro-government Tuaregs and the MNL have continued to the present. One of the main coalition groups negotiating with the government is Gatia, a Tuareg self-defense organization led by El Haj Gamou. Gatia joined French forces, but has been accused of banditry, intimidation and the murder of civilians.⁹⁰

In Niger, Tuareg rebels under the leadership of Mohamed Anacko made peace with the government, which in turn named a Tuareg prime minister and instituted reforms ceding control of local government in the north to Tuaregs.⁹¹ The Issoufou regime also appointed Anacko as High Commissioner for the Consolidation of Peace. In contrast to Mali, Tuaregs in Niger, who are found throughout the country, have not demanded autonomy.

Malian women continue to support village governance systems through their associations and husbands' connections. Women use these channels to gain influence and exercise voice in civic affairs. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is seeking to create an independent women's observatory to monitor implementation of the 2015 peace accords..

⁸⁶ Hermann Konkobo and Issaka Sawadogo. 2020. Exploitation minière artisanale et semi-mécanisée de l'or au Burkina Faso. *Glocon Country Report Series*, No.5, February 2020. The study identifies 39 different positions involved in gold-mining operations in Burkina Faso, which provide thousands of jobs for men and women in the Centre-Nord region.

⁸⁷ International Crisis Group. November 13, 2019. [Getting a Grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush. Africa Report No. 282.](#)

⁸⁸ International Crisis Group. March 1, 2017. [The Sahel: Mali's Crumbling Peace Process and the Spreading Jihadist Threat.](#)

⁸⁹ Jenny Lorentzen. February 2, 2017. *Women and the Peace Process in Mali*. GPS Policy Brief, 2. Oslo: PRIO.

⁹⁰ Andrew Lebovich. May 2019. [Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel.](#) This report has a detailed description of the major organizations involved in fighting and peace.

⁹¹ For details on Tuareg rebellions in Niger under different political regimes, see International Crisis Group. September 19, 2013. *Niger: un autre maillon faible dans le Sahel?* Africa Report No. 208.

Also see USAID. November 14, 2014. *Assessment of the Risk of Violent Extremism in Niger*. Washington, DC: USAID.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PEACE AND SOCIAL COHESION

Religious peacebuilding networks and interfaith collaboration

The assessment found that traditional chiefs and religious leaders were champions for community cohesion and peacebuilding, opposed violent extremism, and denounced bad governance. In FGDs, community members expressed their trust in traditional authorities and religious leaders, and their confidence in traditional conflict mediation and practices. Religious leaders in the tri-border area affirmed their commitment to peace and acknowledged the role that interfaith collaboration could play to strengthen unity, and reinforce social cohesion in the sub-region.

At the national level, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant leaders, and leaders of traditional African religions have consistently condemned extremist violence and supported long-standing traditions of religious tolerance and pluralism. In Burkina Faso, the Moro Naba, the traditional chief of the country's largest ethnic group, joined national-level faith leaders in signing an appeal for peace and an end to violence. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) enlists several Catholic and Protestant faith-based civil society organizations working for peace, justice and human rights in Burkina Faso. These religious and faith leaders are all working towards peace but may not necessarily be coordinating their efforts.

The High Muslim Council in Mali has vigorously condemned terrorism, intercommunal violence and ethnic discrimination. Cherif Ousmane Madani Haidara, the most popular and outspoken proponent of interfaith collaboration in Mali, was recently honored by the Burkinabe government for working for peace and stability in the Sahel. Unlike Mahmoud Dicko, his Wahhabi religious rival, he has worked closely with faith leaders for peace, interfaith harmony and political reform in Mali.⁹² In Niger, thanks to the efforts of Mama Kiota,⁹³ the Tijani spiritual center in Kiota has become a model of interfaith collaboration. Kiota has attracted diverse Muslim traditions, Nigerien Catholics, Protestants and adherents of traditional African religions as well as members of different Sahelian ethnic communities who live and work together in harmony in Kiota.

Resilience of traditional conflict mediation and social cohesion mechanisms

As noted elsewhere in this report, Sahelian traditional institutions are under threat, but exhibit an abiding resiliency. Chiefs are called upon to hear grievances and resolve conflicts, and in some instances have websites and advocacy groups to bolster their chiefly authority, and to promote good governance, social cohesion and peace.

Village women's associations are active in making peace within families, educating children, and mediating domestic and communal conflict. At national levels, women's peace associations - especially in Mali and Niger - have advocated for gender equality legislation. In 1991, urban women helped ouster Moussa Traoré in Mali, and depose Blaise Compaoré in Burkina Faso in 2014. Traditional conflict management mechanisms include:

- **Joking relationships.** These consist of exchanges of insults between members of different ethnic groups and social categories, and are widely used to defuse tension. Mutual insults are accompanied by the obligation to not harm the other person or group. In Mali, some peacebuilders are suggesting that the

⁹² Somaila T Diarra. February 10, 2020. Cherif Ousmane Madani Haidara: 'Il n'y a pas de contrainte dans la religion. *Le Républicain*. Cherif Haidara has close ties with religious leaders in Burkina Faso whose government honored him for his work for peace in the region.

⁹³ Mama Kiota is the leader of a Sufi Muslim women's movement in Niger, and received a Global Humanitarian Citizen award from Tufts University in 2018 for her work with women and as a model for building tolerance, peace and social cohesion in the Muslim world. For more information on peacemaking in Niger, see Aminatou Daouda Hainikoye. 2016. *Courants Islamiques et Consolidation de la Paix au Niger*. Niamey: USAID.

Dogon revive their old joking relationship traditions with the Peulh.⁹⁴ Traditional chiefs encountered in the assessment indicated their desire to revitalize joking relationships among rural and urban youth, who are no longer aware of the tradition.

- **Traditional mediation.** Members of different ethnic groups or within the same ethnic group are designated as peacemakers to mediate conflicts. For example, the Rugga were Peulh peacemakers who resolved conflicts within the Peulh pastoralist communities. Blacksmiths intervene in marriage disputes.
- **Management of the commons.** Heads of different social-economic categories—agriculturalists, fishermen, hunters, pastoralists—mediate disputes taking place in their domain, water, forests and grazing areas. They also hold consultations to determine access to and management of the commons.
- **Traditions of reconciliation.** Making peace by engaging with, apologizing to, and asking for forgiveness from the other party in the conflict was evoked by many participants in FGDs and interviews in high-conflict zones. The tradition has been a major feature of resolving disputes between farmers and pastoralists. It has been used in South Africa to promote reconciliation between races, and in Rwanda between Tutsi and Hutu.
- **Griots.** *Griots* are the singers, musicians, historians and praise singers in traditional Sahelian societies. Today many descendants of *griots* using traditional and modern styles of singing (reggae and hip hop) are conveying tolerance, peace, democracy, good governance and respect for traditional values. Sams’K Le Jah and Smockey founded Balai Citoyen (Citizen Broom) mobilized youth and women to oust Blaise Compaoré. They belong to a steadily growing network of influential singers and musicians promoting peace and democracy throughout Africa.

Reducing the political and cultural generation gap. Traditional chiefs have become more open to change, to listening to the voice of youth, and to supporting youth and women in decision-making. Despite this, young people and especially women comprise a small percentage of all local councils. At the national level, urban youth have become hostile to the aging, corrupt political class governing their countries. In Niamey, a younger generation of Muslim preachers is reaching out to engage angry university students and poor, unemployed youth. They dress like and speak the language of the young. They call for political and economic reform, non-violence, and greater understanding of peaceful Islamic values

TRIGGERS

The fragility of Sahelian states leaves little room for error regarding human protection, basic needs, restoration of degraded lands, and secure livelihoods. Events and incidents that could trigger fresh violence could also escalate armed responses and spread insecurity and chaos to neighboring coastal states. The assessment calls attention to:

- The potential spread of COVID-19 and government responses;
- The Malian junta, which could prolong military rule;
- Potentially flawed elections that could spark mass protests;
- Climate-induced shocks;
- State collapse that could require large-scale international interventions.

TRENDS

The assessment observes that armed responses have not reduced violence overall in the Sahel. The G5 and allies have won limited victories against armed groups and bandits. The trend is toward increasing military support and intervention from foreign powers - France, the United States and

⁹⁴ Sy, Ousmane, Ambroise Dakouo, and Kadar Traoré. 2016. *National Dialogue in Mali: Lessons from the 1991 National Conference of National Understanding*, Berghof Foundation.

Germany, They have managed to protect large urban areas and some rural cities and towns. If this trend holds, organized violent groups may retreat, but state fragility could further erode service delivery and rejuvenate violent groups. Communities and governments will need to identify ways to reliably manage conflict.

Respondents continue to feel that their voices are unheeded, and their interests ignored. Respondents shared a lack of faith in political systems. The dominant pattern of flawed elections could tip the scales toward increased terror and violence as Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger and Ghana host presidential elections in 2020. Budget cuts to development and humanitarian programs will place additional stress on national governments and civil societies in the three countries. A demonstrated lack of capacity to respond to development and humanitarian issues risks continuing the southern spread of violent conflict, which exposes coastal states. The flow of arms into the sub-region has been a trend for decades and has raised the stakes as disputes and clashes become increasingly bloody and violent.⁹⁵

TRAJECTORIES

Based on current trends, the assessment team has projected three scenarios: worst case, status quo, and best case. All scenarios are affected by recent events in Mali. Notably, the best-case scenario is dependent on the increased transfer of power and resources to rural areas as well as the full engagement of women and youth in issues of governance and resource management.

DETERIORATION OF STATUS QUO

1. The Malian government collapses under a coup d'etat, and the military clings to power;⁹⁶
2. Mali fails to implement its 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, allowing violent groups to remain active;
3. National protests in one or more countries spiral out of control, and evidence of government-sponsored extra-judicial killings pushes more civilians to join NSAGs;
4. Violent groups use Mali as a staging area to infiltrate neighboring countries;
5. Al Qaeda, Islamic State and organized crime continue to extend their grip on land and resources;
6. Militarized responses to extremism escalate violence and conflict;
7. Inter-ethnic and interreligious dialog are undermined by extremist organizations and the radicalization of conservative Muslim clergy.

MODERATE PROGRESS

1. Mali continues to struggle to implement the peace and reconciliation agreement;
2. Military campaigns curb extremist attacks, and security improves;
3. Displaced persons return to their homes, but women and youth remain excluded in civic affairs;
4. Civil society becomes more robust, but governments in Mali and Niger clamp down on basic freedoms and civil rights;
5. Clashes between pastoralists and farmers become less intractable because traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are being invoked;

⁹⁵Access to weaponry is financed by violent groups' involvement in illicit activities and markets. Assanvo, Williams and Dakono, Baba (2019) "Violent Extremism, organized crime, and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma." Institute For Security Studies.

⁹⁶ This scenario was in play as this report went to press in September 2020.

6. Dialog between national governments and NSAGs bear fruit; national armed forces become more professional and inclusive, but attacks continue;
7. Interreligious leadership and collaboration improve government accountability.

BEST CASE

1. Mali implements the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, and installs a government that strengthens the social contract with all ethnic groups;
2. Violent extremists no longer pose a major threat; and equitable governance of the commons prevails, e.g., grazing lands, water points, forest resources. New technologies are adopted to reclaim pastureland, marginal farmland and forest resources;
3. Pressure from civil society and interreligious peacebuilders leads to major reforms and accountable political leadership. Elections are free and fair. Revenue from extractive industries funds basic public services;
4. Governments transfer more human and financial resources to local communities while engaging youth and women;
5. Cross-border ties between neighboring countries flourish based on mutual interests and pooled economic and security resources.

COUNTRY-LEVEL NUANCES

MALI

The collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 triggered the current Sahel crisis when thousands of heavily armed Tuareg mercenaries returned to Mali to support the MNLA-led Tuareg rebellion in 2012 to create the independent state of Azawad in Northern Mali. The 2012 Tuareg rebellion was strengthened by an initial alliance between jihadist organizations and the MNLA. The rebels gained control over most of northern Mali, but Arab and Algerian-based jihadist groups and a new Tuareg-led jihadist group headed by Iyad Ag Ghaly, pushed the MNLA aside and established an Islamist state. The defeat of Malian security forces caused a coup d'état and deterioration of state presence in north and central Mali.⁹⁷

The 2012 French military intervention and MNLA forces defeated the jihadists, dismantled the Islamist state, drove the jihadists back toward the Algerian border, and permitted Tuareg rebels to control Kidal. Despite the signing of the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the infighting among different Tuareg pro-independence, pro-government, and Tuareg-led jihadist groups coupled with strong, anti-Tuareg sentiment in government circles delayed a settlement concerning the degree of autonomy to be granted. Although violent conflicts have declined considerably in Kidal, as reflected in the small number of IDPs in that region, the major locus of conflict has shifted to central Mali, particularly in the tri-border area. The Islamic State and organized networks have exploited historic grievances and authority vacuums, and have profited from ambiguity and equivocation. Their actions have spurred a proliferation of self-defense and more criminality.

As described elsewhere, Mali's August 2020 coup ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Mahmoud Dicko, an influential, moderate imam, led the anti-IBK protests. Security forces attempted to repress dissension with brute force. The size and fervor of the protests, however, unveiled the

⁹⁷ For more details on the dangers of a stalled peace process, see International Crisis Group: *Mali : Réformer ou rechuter*, Africa Report No. 210, January 10, 2014; *Mali: Dernière chance à Alger*. Briefing No. 104, November 18, 2014; and *Mali : la paix à marche forcé*. Africa Report No. 226, May 22, 2015. Also see International Crisis Group. 2008. [The Niger/Mali Border: Subordinating Military Action to a Political Strategy](#).

severity of underlying stressors - unemployment, corruption, and natural shocks such as droughts. Violent conflicts on the Mali side of the tri-border differ from conflict dynamics on the Niger and Burkina sides in important ways:

- Self-defense organizations, ethnic militias and criminal networks are more heavily armed;
- Ethnic self-defense groups and militias - Songhai, Bambara and Dogon - are prominent;
- Ethnic cleansing of Peulhs is more intense, especially in Dogon areas, and anti-Peulh sentiment is more prevalent among dominant agriculturalist groups. Anti-Tuareg sentiment remains strong among the Songhai and Bambara;
- Peulhs are organizing more aggressive self-defense groups and joining jihadist groups in greater numbers because they identify with the pre-colonial Peulh Macina Islamist state;
- Agriculturalist–pastoralists conflicts drive ethnic competition because ethnic identity correlates with occupation. Further, such conflicts have deep roots in historical grievances, class differences and stigmatization;
- Alliances and conflicts between and among jihadists, criminal networks, self-defense groups, and politicians over trans-Saharan trade routes with outlets in Algeria assume greater importance owing to geography, and historical and present value;
- Peulh and Tuareg-led jihadist groups are more active than in Niger or Burkina Faso, for example, Katibat Macina, Ansurul Din and JNIM;
- Residents in high-conflict zones have lower expectations of or trust in army or security forces;
- Male migration to urban areas, other regions, and other countries is higher than in Niger and Burkina Faso;
- Mali has no major refugee camps in high-combat zones. Malian refugees can be found in Burkina Faso and Niger camps close to the border.

Mali has a powerful Islamic civic society - 93% of Malians identify as Muslim, and Islamization has intensified since independence. Hence, Islamic civil society and political influence is stronger in Mali than in Niger or Burkina Faso. Muslim leaders like Mahmoud Dicko, Cherif Ousmane and the High Islamic Council of Mali are highly influential and have called for the formation of a new Malian government. They hold conservative views on gender equality but support political reforms and preach the need for reconciliation, dialog and non-violent protests. To date, few Muslim or other religious leaders have supported the August 2020 coup.

Like Niger and Burkina Faso, Mali ranks near the bottom of the 2018 Human Development Index. It is a major exporter of gold and cotton and has not fully exploited the Senegal River and Niger River basins. The south, which has more rainfall and arable land, and fewer pastoralists, also has fewer conflicts and threats from jihadists. Central Mali is tiring of the vicious cycle of killing, reprisals and lose-lose situations, and Sahelian-led jihadists in Mali may be more amenable to negotiating a ceasefire, or peace, with a new government, if the government has the confidence of popular Islamic leaders.

NIGER

Niger is bordered by Algeria and Libya in the North, with Burkina Faso and Mali to the West and South. Most of the population is concentrated in the southern half of the country, which shares borders with Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad. According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook Database, Niger ranks 187/191 in terms of GDP per capita (\$1,280). Some 99% of the population is Muslim. There are six main ethnic groups in the country with the Tuareg and Peulh comprising

11% and 6.5% of the population respectively. The Nigerien government withstood the exodus of mercenaries from Libya because it already had relatively positive governance arrangements with northern regions of the country, thus no independence movements or militia for mercenaries to join. Like Mali, Niger hosted Tuareg rebellions in the early 1990s and again in 2008. Nigerien Tuaregs did not join the rebellions in Mali because the Niger government introduced reforms to end Tuareg marginalization. These included decentralization measures that enabled Tuareg leaders to head regional and municipal governments in areas with majority Tuareg populations, and culminated in the naming of a Tuareg as prime minister. Unlike in Mali, where Tuaregs were concentrated primarily in the north, in Niger Tuaregs are distributed throughout the country.⁹⁸

Niger's situation and violent extremism differ from Mali and Burkina Faso in several ways:

- Unlike Mali, Niger has no indigenous jihadist organizations;
- Boko Haram, the major jihadist group threatening Niger, originated in Northern Nigeria along Niger's southeastern border and is now operating primarily in the Lake Chad Basin and carrying out periodic attacks in Niger's Diffa region. Before 2015, Boko Haram regarded the Diffa region as a sanctuary rather than a major attack target where it could blend in with family members from the same ethnic groups;
- Before 2015, attacks by external jihadist organizations in Niger were sporadic. Most of the violence then involved conflicts between and among agriculturalists and pastoralists, bandits, and criminal networks in the tri-border area, with the causes described as high youth unemployment, feelings of hopelessness, drugtaking, and competition for and access to land, water and grazing grounds. Peulh pastoralists were the biggest losers in this struggle;
- Peulh-led jihadist groups like Ansourul Islam and Katibat Macina based in Mali stepped up attacks on government and military targets, and exploited the situation to recruit new members from the Peulh community and transform the tri-border zone into a no man's land where they could operate more freely;
- Efforts to fight the jihadists by displacing populations, setting curfews, and forbidding cross-border trade wrecked local rural economies in Diffa and Tillaberi, and did little to stop the jihadists, making the situation worse;
- Self-defense groups have proliferated and are increasingly based on geography rather than ethnicity. Their main goal is to prevent attacks and retaliate against other groups felt to be intruding on their territory. The result of the proliferation is the multiplication of small-scale and increasingly deadly conflicts pitting agriculturalists, pastoralists and ethnic groups against each other;
- The US has a military base in Niger and sent small numbers of Special Forces troops to train Niger's defense force; U.S. forces have suffered casualties in Niger.

Some 98% of Niger's population is Muslim. The Tijaniyya brotherhood has replaced the Qadiriyya as the largest Sufi group in the country. Since the 1980s, Hausa traders from Nigeria have been promoting orthodox Wahhabi doctrines, criticizing Sufi practices and gaining ground in the capital and large cities. Religious leaders in rural areas, as well as Sufi and Izala religious leaders, oppose reforms to family codes promoting gender equality. Islamic civil society is weaker in Niger and less influential in national politics than in Mali. Muslims in Niger reject jihadist doctrines and violence.

Despite having vast uranium resources, oil and gold, Niger in 2018 was the last of the 188 countries on the Human Development Index. Unlike Mali and Burkina Faso, Niger has no major agricultural exports. Little has been done to improve rural economies, especially in the periphery. Niger is heavily dependent on American and European military, development and humanitarian aid which has done little to improve living conditions or physical security. The Nigerien government and

⁹⁸ USAID. November 2014. *Assessment of the Risk of Violent Extremism in Niger*. Washington, DC, Mitchell Group.
International Crisis Group. September 19, 2013. *Niger : un autre maillon faible dans le Sahel?* Africa Report No 208.

military have received significant support from western powers in the wake of the 2015 migration crisis. Although the support did not necessarily respond to the root causes of irregular migration, it did reinforce the national borders and strengthen coordination between peace actors in Niger. Before 2015, many of the violent groups operating in Niger were from outside of the country, including Boko Haram from Nigeria operating in the Diffa region. Later, jihadists and bandits entered the Tillaberi region and began attempts to destabilize the region. Their destabilization efforts were further supported by the Nigerien government's unintended damage to rural economies by restrictions on movement and trade, specifically affecting Peulhs.⁹⁹

Like Mali and Burkina Faso, Niger has an aging political class perceived to be corrupt, out of touch with the people, and unwilling to transfer power to younger leaders. Compared to Mali and Burkina Faso, Niger has a relatively weak secular civil society and conservative social structures resistant to change. Traditional chiefly society is stronger in Niger than in Mali, but weaker than in Burkina Faso. The Islamization of politics and politicization of Islam have resulted in resistance to western models of political and economic reform such as gender equality and neo-liberal models of development, but to date have not generated a strong demand for the overthrow of an unpopular regime.

Of the three countries engaged in the tri-border conflict, Niger's problems seem to be the most challenging. Its political class and government lack sufficient will or capacity to address the country's growing problems.¹⁰⁰ The steep decline in world market prices of uranium and oil¹⁰¹, the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the economy, and likely cuts in foreign development and humanitarian aid will exacerbate the current crisis.¹⁰² The disclosure of millions of dollars diverted from the defense budget to the pockets of overcharging contractors and politicians from the ruling party is likely to further aggravate grievances and underscore the need for change.

BURKINA FASO

Unlike Mali and Niger, Burkina Faso does not share borders with any North African states and did not receive mercenaries after the collapse of the Gaddafi regime. Tuaregs make up a relatively small percentage (2%) of the population and Burkina Faso hosts over 40 ethnic groups that practice Islamic, Christian and traditional religions. Nomadic Peulhs are a minority group nationally but make up a sizable majority in northern regions. The violent conflict under consideration in this report has largely been limited to the northern tri-border region, but has crept southward where Burkina Faso borders Benin, Togo, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. Violent non-state actors view Burkina Faso as the gateway to coastal expansion, but religious extremism finds little tolerance in Burkina Faso.

Until 2016, Burkina Faso was considered the most unlikely Sahelian country in danger of attack by jihadist groups for the following reasons:

- While 60% of the country identify as Muslim, it is the least Islamized of the three Sahelian countries, with the highest percentage of citizens adhering to traditional African religions (18%) and Christianity (22%);
- Muslim leaders follow the Suwarian tradition of respecting different religions and non-Muslim rulers provided that Muslims can practice their own religion freely;

⁹⁹ Mahanty, Daniel. July 24, 2019. [Niger: A Bulwark against Further Instability in West Africa](#). Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

¹⁰⁰ Devermont, Judd. December 6, 2019. Politics at the Heart of the Crisis in the Sahel. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

¹⁰¹ [Business Insider](#) has captured the sharp decline in Uranium prices since 2012.

¹⁰² Devermont, Judd. January 10, 2020. What to Watch in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

- Most of the territory in what is now Burkina Faso was never conquered by Muslims. In 1900, adherents of traditional African religions comprised 85% of the population, while Muslims comprised a small but respected minority. Muslims became a majority after independence;
- After independence, traditional authority structures remained highly respected for their non-partisan approach to politics and concern for the welfare of their communities;
- While Muslims had grievances concerning their underrepresentation in political institutions and lack of significant recognition of Muslim holidays, they remained on good terms with non-Muslim government and religious authorities.

Economic conditions in the neglected tri-border region have much in common with those in Niger: marginalization of poor pastoralists; growing competition between agriculturalists and pastoralists for access to land, water, and grazing areas; poor infrastructure; inadequate schools and medical services; and little hope for the future for poor, low-status farmers and herders. The major differences affecting conflict dynamics in Burkina Faso are:

- The Peulhs are the outlier ethnic group with low economic status, desperate for dignity and respect;
- The founder of Ansarul Islam was Ibrahim Dicko, a Salafist Peulh preacher from Burkina Faso with ties to Ansar Dine and Katibat Macina, led by Peulh preacher Amadou Kouffa in Mali. Ansarul Islam is now composed largely of Peulh fighters recruited in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso and aligned with JNIM in attacking targets in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso;
- The main thrust of the jihadist strategy is to advance southward through Burkina Faso, which has become the jihadist gateway to coastal West African countries;¹⁰³
- As a group, the Peulhs have become the main target for ethnic stigmatization because of their alleged support of and affiliation with the Peulh-led jihadist groups. The security forces and ethnic majority self-defense forces (Kogleweoogo) target Peulh communities for revenge and reprisal attacks.

Burkina Faso has an engaged civil society that forced Blaise Compaoré to flee the country to the Ivory Coast following demonstrations in Ouagadougou under the banner of *Balai Citoyen* and other civil society actors. With the support of anti-Compaoré military units, the movement also succeeded in reversing a military coup in 2015 engineered by one of Compaoré's trusted generals and head of an elite military unit trained by the West to gather intelligence and fight jihadist terrorists. The dismantling of this group divided and weakened Burkina's defense forces and made it easier for jihadists to operate in the country. Public support for defense forces and self-defense organizations is stronger in Burkina Faso than in Niger and Mali. At the same time, religious leaders, traditional authorities and rural communities condemn the stigmatization of and vicious attacks on innocent Peulh communities.

Although more popular with the general public than in Mali or Niger, the political class in power and in the opposition is largely composed of former members of Blaise Compaoré's party and has not lived up to public expectations for ending corruption.

Of the three countries, Burkina Faso may have the best chance of addressing the Sahelian crisis:

- Jihadist operations and extremist violence are largely limited to the north;
- Burkina Faso has the smallest pastoralist population;
- The Moro Naba, Catholic, Protestant and Muslim religious leaders have joined together to denounce jihadist violence;
- There is greater support for traditional mechanisms of mediation and reconciliation such as joking relationships, asking forgiveness, and public messaging through musicians and singers;

¹⁰³ International Crisis Group. October 12, 2017. [The Social Roots of Jihadist Violence in Burkina Faso's North. Report No. 254 Africa.](#)

- Burkina Faso has a vigilant press, vibrant community radio stations, and a robust and resilient civil society;
- There is slightly less gender inequality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The acceleration of violence in the tri-border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger continues to bring misery and suffering to the inhabitants, and has swelled the numbers of refugees and internally displaced people to over 1.5million. Since the commissioning of this report, the COVID-19 pandemic has further challenged the sub-region.

The following recommendations call for five distinct categories of intervention: interfaith advocacy, conflict management at local levels, dynamic engagement of youth and women in peacebuilding, humanitarian action, and learning. The recommendations are not a one-size-fits-all approach as contexts, key persons, and grievances and resiliencies differ by community, commune, region and country. The intent is to support local mechanisms to respond to conflict and promote social cohesion. A village chief in Burkina Faso provided a powerful example of how communities can unite against violent actors. The chief of Bogouya empathized with two young landless men who had left the village to join an extremist group. He wrote to them and offered to give them land to start a farm to induce them to return. The two men returned to Bogouya to farm and rejoin their community. Communities like Bogouya may be unable to confront violent actors directly, but they can present a unified front to opportunists seeking to create and exploit divisions.

REINFORCE INTERFAITH PEACEBUILDING TASK FORCES (PBTFS)

Responding to Pope Francis' call for solidarity and an end to indifference, the Catholic Church and CRS should initiate Peacebuilding Task Forces (PBTFS) composed of national religious and customary leaders, to act as a catalyst for creating new and mobilizing existing networks from the local to the national level. The PBTFS should capitalize on high levels of trust and respect for religious leaders, and should include male and female representatives from Christian, Muslim and minority faith communities. Members of the overseas African diaspora may also be solicited to partner with the PBTFS to promote fundraising and awareness-raising abroad. Significant Muslim engagement is critical as they constitute the majority in Sahelian Africa, and Muslims have been the main victims of jihadi violence in countries that for centuries have been models of religious tolerance. While miniscule in adherents, the Catholic church is viewed as a respected yet neutral actor for peace and provider of social services.

The PBTFS should advocate for good governance and humanitarian relief, denounce violent extremism and other forms of repression and injustice such as inequitable economic

opportunity, corruption and poor service delivery. They should convene civil society and government to consult and identify innovative solutions to radicalism and extremism. They should lead local efforts to support the neediest and marginalized while strengthening social cohesion. In addition, they should promote inter-ethnic collaboration locally and advocate for strong national leadership concerning tolerance, respect and solidarity.

Communities may be unable to confront violent actors directly, but they can present a unified front to opportunists seeking to create and exploit divisions.

STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY TRADITIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION MECHANISMS

Peace actors should seek to strengthen and diversify traditional conflict management mechanisms that have proven effective over time. In recognition of the contribution of women to society and local economies, and to temper the severity of intergenerational conflict, local and traditional leaders must adapt to present realities. Change involves the meaningful participation of women and youth in the affairs of their communities and having a voice in the decisions that impact them. Younger generations and women need to become more familiar with traditional conflict management mechanisms. High-level delegations from the international community should empower local chiefs, mayors and community groups. Actions could include:

- Diversify local governance structures demographically, and engage consistently with chiefs, mayors and governors instead of ministerial- and presidential-level politicians. Support leaders, who include youth and women into their councils and governance structures;
- Allow musicians, artists and *griots* to transmit peace messages and to transform gender norms;
- Strengthen local associations, such as savings and loans, youth and women's groups. These groups bring people together and reinforce positive social norms of collaboration and tolerance while building social capital;
- Use high frequency radios to connect villages across the tri-border zone, and to serve as an early warning system. Make better use of community radio to disseminate peace and reconciliation messages;
- Reinforce the power and authority of traditional power structures, including traditional chiefs, religious leaders and locally-elected representatives;
- Reduce generational, ethnic, gender and cultural gaps by reinforcing social cohesion;
- Involve local civil society in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development programming;
- Connect local communities to government economic operations (e.g., gold mining), which have had adverse impacts on communities without providing economic benefits. Employ young people in these operations.

ENGAGE WOMEN AS DIRECT ACTORS IN BUILDING AND MANAGING PEACE

This assessment has shown that women must be engaged and mobilized to play a more direct role in the quest for peace and social cohesion. In Mali, MINUSMA's mandate actively seeks to "promote the full participation and representation of women at all levels in the stabilization process." Similar initiatives by government and civil society to honor women as architects of peacebuilding, governance and social cohesion are vital. Actors for peace can do the following:

- Support Recommendation #2 by incentivizing local governance structures to actively include women, beyond simple attendance counts;
- Build women-only local platforms that go beyond the usual focus on family life, education and food, and enable women to organize and ensure their voices contribute to debates on vital public concerns;
- Commission studies to identify strategies to ensure the voices of women are considered without doing harm, e.g., the village level may expose women to stigmatization.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, studies should identify best practices and CBOs in the forefront of women's empowerment;
- Train women (and men) at the local level in peacebuilding, mediation, and social cohesion;

¹⁰⁴ Women who engage directly in politics or government are often seen as overstepping their natural position in life. See: Lackenbaure, Helene, Magdalena Lindell and Gabriella Ingerstad. November 2015. *If our men won't fight, we will. A Gendered Analysis of the Armed Conflict in Northern Mali*. FOI-R-4121-SE.

- Provide high frequency radios to connect women and men across villages and communities in the sub-region. This strategy has worked in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where early warning, clear communications, and social cohesion protect vulnerable villages against deadly attacks.

BUTTRESS HUMANITARIAN OPTIONS FOR THE POOR IN TRI-BORDER REGION

Peace actors must redouble and sustain their humanitarian and development programs with an emphasis on refugees and IDPs. Migrants, homeless and dispossessed peoples are among the most vulnerable groups. The massive increase in IDPs in the tri-border area, especially in Burkina Faso, has placed a heavy burden on receiving communities. Host communities are generous, but are overwhelmed and desperately need humanitarian aid.

Possible actions include:

- Integrate social cohesion, peacebuilding and livelihoods into development and relief initiatives to assist vulnerable youth; develop labor-intensive projects such as road construction;
- Link humanitarian aid with development projects;
- Train displaced persons to upgrade skills and prevent radicalization;
- Expand and protect the natural resource base by reclaiming land, forests and grazing areas;
- Introduce technological innovations to increase food production and agricultural productivity, and conservation measures;
- Improve relationships between displaced persons and host communities by facilitating social cohesion activities;
- Improve sanitation and access to water in host communities and camp settings;
- Provide schooling, psychological care for children, and trauma healing services;
- Organize functional literacy courses for women in camps.

LINK FOREIGN PEACE ACTORS WITH NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FOR INDIGENOUS INNOVATION

This recommendation calls for greater incorporation of local knowledge, Sahelian expertise, innovative and holistic thinking as essential to elaborating the high-value policies, programs and projects needed to alleviate the Sahel crisis. To achieve this goal, learning networks and joint partnerships should be created and strengthened between international actors and Sahelians to share and learn from their respective experiences and expertise.

The literature review and CRS' experiences underscore the insufficient use of local knowledge¹⁰⁵ and Sahelian expertise in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating aid programs as major causes contributing to the failure of many projects, the wasting of resources, and violations of the principles of Do No Harm. Since the 1980s, Sahelian expertise has been steadily increasing as local NGOs work with local communities to solve problems using local knowledge, values, and resources.

The literature review noted a recent shift in the thinking of international, US and European development agencies away from rigid, top-down and technical sector-oriented development policies, programs and projects toward consultation with local communities and community-driven development.¹⁰⁶ But application of this shift in approach is incipient. While the Africanization of

¹⁰⁵ Bernard Le Compte. Participation Paysanne à l'aménagement et techniques des projets. *Revue Tiers-Monde*, Vol.19, No. 73 (Janvier-mars 1978), 93-108. Le Compte quotes village chiefs who complained that outsiders never asked for their advice or ideas about projects. He also notes that the management techniques formulated by outside technicians are usually based on external models that don't work in an African village context.

¹⁰⁶ See USAID Rise II (Resilience In Sahel Enhanced). 2019. *Technical Approach Working Paper*.

development aid field staff has increased considerably, policies and programs still adhere to old accountability models. Decision-making remains largely in the hands of non-African officials and institutions.

This recommendation depends on building relationships, which fell out of favor after the Cold War. The proposed linkages would connect foreign and Sahelian knowledge, funding, and respective expertise in political, economic, religious, cultural, technological and environmental areas which contribute to:

- Holistic thinking, Triple Nexis approaches, and morality and spirituality;
- Identifying best practices and novel mechanisms through which women and youth can be more readily engaged in peacebuilding and governance;
- Elaboration of policies that reflect local realities, needs, aspirations, values and priorities;
- Consultation and collaboration with local leaders to understand and tap traditional ways of resolving crises;
- Use of technological innovations to improve quality of life and increase economic and agricultural productivity;
- Sharing of bibliographies on African perspectives, methodology, local knowledge, innovations, and initiatives, strategies and case studies;
- Dissemination of and conferencing on lessons learned.

Papa Sene's projects¹⁰⁷ are a prime example of how local expertise and holistic thinking can be used to successfully improve the lives of Sahelians. His project in Burkina Faso and Niger (2015-2018)¹⁰⁸ activated a Peulh tradition in which wealthy Peulh women gave goats to poor Peulh women in the village. The sharing of four to five goats was enough to pull pastoralist women out of poverty when combined with training on the vaccination and care of milk-producing animals. The multi-dimensional project also provided employment for traditional artisans, raised agricultural production and nutritional levels, revitalized local markets, reclaimed marginal land, and fostered village integration into local government institutions by working closely with traditional chiefs.

The following list provides examples of African organizations generating and using local knowledge and Sahelian expertise to define problems, identify causes, discover opportunities, and elaborate realistic policies and projects that reflect their values, priorities, and knowledge of their physical environment.

- *Paysan* universities and *Paysan* organizational networks
- The *Réseau des Organisations Paysans et Producteurs Agricoles* (ROPPA) is the most prominent *paysan* network and confederation of farming organizations operating in 13 West African states including Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. It is a strong advocate for small family farms and the integration of traditional and innovative modern techniques to raise agricultural production and productivity. ROPPA seeks to bring together farmers and pastoralists to promote family farms, improve production and productivity, and provide livelihoods for unemployed rural youth. Its climate change programs focus on finding organic alternatives to chemical inputs. Roppa has been instrumental in creating schools where farmers undergo training programs and share information about improvements in productivity based on their knowledge of the local physical environment, and success and failure stories. Ibrahima Coulibaly, the Malian

¹⁰⁷ Papa Sène has worked in Sahelian Africa for over 40 years in many fields. He is best known for his innovative participatory development strategies that have inspired, trained and empowered thousands. In recognition of his outstanding work, he was inducted into the United States Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2014. His participatory methods of international cooperative development have been applied to programs promoting food security, natural resource development, community-based health, good governance, and the empowerment of women and young people. Papa Sène now works in his home village in Senegal to produce drought-resistant and more nutritious varieties of seeds.

¹⁰⁸ REGIS builds on local knowledge and a Sahelian staff. USAID REGIS-ER (Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel -Enhanced Resilience) project reports (2015-2018).

president of ROPPA,¹⁰⁹ attributes the failure of African national leaders and governments to support family farmers to their uncritical acceptance of western models and multinational agricultural businesses. These models often are inapplicable to African conditions, unsustainable, and defended by external experts, who have never lived in an African village.

- *Sahelian NGOs and think tanks*

- ENDA (*Environnement et Développement du Tier-Monde*). ENDA's action research division does research *with* local communities rather than *about* local communities. For over three decades, it has been working closely with rural communities that use their knowledge of local environmental conditions to define, analyze and find solutions to their problems. ENDA stresses the importance of relationships. It produced a series of books, starting in the mid-1980s, highlighting the expertise of rural communities and *paysan* organizations in defining their own problems and seeking solutions based on their deep knowledge of local environmental conditions.¹¹⁰ ENDA also produces accounts of citizen initiatives to improve informal educational and training institutions to enable them to find work and livelihoods in the modern economy, and was an early proponent of *paysans* universities staffed by agriculturalists and other rural producers. Other divisions of ENDA have specializations in environmental issues, urbanization and homeless youth.¹¹¹
- Alternative Report for Africa (*Rapport Alternatif Sur L'Afrique*). RASA is a network of Sahel-based researchers and development practitioners elaborating African-based development paradigms.¹¹²
- *Balai Citoyen*. BC is a grassroots citizen organization in Burkina Faso that mobilized hundreds of thousands of youth and women through music to oust a long-time president who sought to amend the constitution to extend his position after 27 years of power. *Balai Citoyen* recently held concerts to fight against stigmatization of the Peulh community.¹¹³
- WATHI. WATHI is a broad-based Sahelian network that provides a forum for discussion of a wide range of issues such as climate change, violent extremism, COVID-19 and gender, from an African perspective.¹¹⁴
- CASPA (*Cabinet d'analyses et d'Actions pour la Securite et la Paix*). CASPA is a Nigerien think tank founded by Mohammed Anacko, a former leader of Tuareg rebellion groups in Niger during the 1990s and now an advocate for peace.¹¹⁵

CONCLUSIONS

A mixture of incentives has driven external actors to war against Sahelian communities and their protectors. Some motivations appear to ride on greed and thirst for control over lucrative illicit trans-Saharan trade. Others have deep roots in religious ideology, grievances and propagandistic interpretations of global hegemony and marginalization. Various theories explain manipulative jihadist behavior. However, decades of misrule and neglect in the Sahel have advantaged these movements and increased their ideological appeal, especially to marginalized and unemployed youth with few prospects for a brighter future.

¹⁰⁹ Agnes Faivre. May 29, 2020. Ibrahima Coulibaly: L'agriculture a petite échelle peut nourrir nos pays. *Le point*.

¹¹⁰ These are collective works produced by ENDA and *paysan* committees:

ENDA. 1985. *Initiatives paysannes au Sahel*.

Pierre Jacolin et al. 1991. *Diobass: Les Paysans et leurs Terroirs: Guide Pédagogique*. Dakar. Imprimerie NIS.

ENDA-Graf. 1992. *Avenir des terroirs: la Ressource Humaine*. Dakar: Enda-Editions.

For more information about ENDA Graf and Emmanuel Ndione, see endagrafsahel.org [French].

¹¹¹ For other ENDA programs, see endatiersmonde.org [French].

¹¹² For more information about RASA, see <https://www.rasa-africa.org/> [French].

¹¹³ See <https://www.facebook.com/CitoyenBalayeur>.

¹¹⁴ For more information, see <https://www.wathi.org/> [French].

¹¹⁵ For CASPA, see www.caspa.asn.au.

Internally, centuries-old inter-communal, inter-ethnic and farmer-herder conflicts have intensified. The rise of such conflicts owes their existence to growing scarcity of arable land and viable pasturage, and to the neglect of traditional conflict management mechanisms. Climate stressors and shocks can trigger violence on massive scales owing to modern communications and the free-flow of automatic and semi-automatic weapons into the sub-region. It is logical that unemployed young men and women with no hope for a livelihood would make easy recruitment targets for organized crime, bandits and jihadist groups. On the bright side, few people in Liptako Gourma embrace jihadist goals and ideologies. The staying power of radical and criminal organizations is questionable, particularly if viable alternatives exist. Yet, armed force alone will not end the violence, or resolve the crisis.

The question arises: Given the scope and scale of the violence, and the multiple, complex causes, what can be done to coordinate a unified, effective response? And while citizen protests can topple autocrats, how long will it take them to change systems of rule that have existed since colonial days?

The results of this assessment show that Sahelians and their governments have been living on borrowed time. **Sahelians must rebuild a tattered social contract**, and with the help of their allies, restore order, reconcile conflicted groups, and strengthen social cohesion. Reforms must address chronic unemployment, inequitable access to land and unaccountable leadership. Peacebuilding needs to become the mandate and responsibility of ordinary people including traditional chiefs, religious leaders, women and youth.

Like the residents of Bogouya village demonstrated, when empathy, solidarity, trust and respect abound, opportunities for livelihoods will appear. Actors for peace can make a difference. If they can value indigenous knowledge and implement locally generated solutions, they can reinforce vertical and horizontal social cohesion by engaging local leaders and civil society, thereby giving voice, opportunity and support to the people of the Sahel.

ANNEX A: WORKS CONSULTED

ACLED. "Insecurity in Southwestern Burkina Faso in the Context of an Expanding Insurgency," January 17, 2019.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. "Africa's Pastoralists: A New Battleground for Terrorism," *Spotlight*, January 11, 2017.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. "How Violent Extremist Groups Exploit Intercommunal Conflicts in the Sahel," *Spotlight*, February 26, 2020.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. "Mitigating Farmer-Herder Violence in Mali," *Spotlight*, August 8, 2019.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. "Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel," *Africa Security Brief*, No. 36, December 2, 2019.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. "Strategies for Peace and Security in the Sahel," Video, September 27, 2019.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies. "Threat from African Militant Islamist Groups Expanding, Diversifying," Infographic, January 18, 2020.

Assanvo, Williams and Baba Dakono. "Violent Extremism, organised crime, and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma". Institute For Security Studies. 2019.

Baduel, Pierre Robert, " Le territoire d'État entre imposition et subversion : exemples saharo-sahéliens" , *Cultures & Conflits*, no 21-22 , pp. 41-74, summer 1996.

Ba-Konaré Dougoukolo Alpha Oumar. "Peuls et Dogons dans la tourmente au Mali: histoire d'une longue relation ambivalente," *The Conversation*, March 2019.

Boisbouvier, Christophe. "Libye: quand les Toubous se reveille," *Jeune Afrique*, May 15, 2012.

Boone, Catherine. *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Boone, Catherine. *Decentralization As Political Strategy In West Africa*. *Comparative Political Studies - COMP POLIT STUD*. 36. 355-380. 2003.

Brottem, L.V, Ba, L. Gendered livelihoods and land tenure: The case of artisanal gold miners in Mali, West Africa. *Geoforum*, 105, 54-62. 2019.

Cabinet d'Analyses et d'actions pour la Sécurité et la Paix. *Rapport de Recherche: Etude sur la perception de l'insécurité par les populations du Niger* (Niamey: CASPA, 2017).

Caprioli, M. "Primed for violence: The role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict," *International Studies Quarterly*, No. 49 (2005) 161-178.

Catholic Relief Services. [Peacebuilding, Governance and Gender Assessments: A Basic Guide for Busy Practitioners](#). CRS: March 2015.

Catholic Relief Services. [Social Cohesion Analysis: Cameroon](#), October 2016.

Catholic Relief Services. *Protecting Lives and Enhancing Recovery: CRS Emergency Response and Recovery Strategy (2019-2021)*, August 2019.

Center for Strategic & International Studies. *Niger: A Bulwark Against Further Instability in West Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019).

Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. *Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Community Engagement in West Africa and the Sahel: An Action Agenda*, July 2013. ECOWAS.

Chambers, Robert. *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1983).

Charlick, Robert B. *Niger: Personal Rule and Survival in the Sahel* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1991).

Chauzel, Charles and Thibault von Damme. *The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis* (The Hague: Clingendel Institute, 2014).

Cissé, Modibo Ghaly. "Understanding Fulani Perspectives on the Sahel Crisis," African Center for Strategic Studies, April 22, 2020.

Comité Technique, Foncier et Développement. *Investissements dans l'agriculture familiale d'Afrique subsaharienne, sécurité foncière et formalisation des droits* (Paris: Ministère de 'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères (MEAE) Agence Française de Développement, February 2018).

Comité Technique, Foncier et Développement. *Different strategies and procedures to formalize rural land rights* (Paris: Ministère de 'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères (MEAE) Agence Française de Développement, March 2018).

Comité Technique, Foncier et Développement. *Opportunités et défis d'une approche par les communs de la terre et des ressources qu'elle porte* (Paris: Ministère de 'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères (MEAE) Agence Française de Développement, September 2017).

Comité Technique, Foncier et Développement. *Les trajectoires des politiques foncières en Afrique de l'Ouest et a Madagascar: Identifier les déterminants du changement pour définir des stratégies d'action*. No. 28, December 2018.

Cooper, Barbara. "Secular States, Muslim Law and Islamic Culture: Gender Implications of Legal Struggles in Hybrid Legal Systems in Contemporary West Africa," *Droit et Cultures*, No. 59 (2010), 97-120.

Coulibaly, Cheikbane. *Crise Politico-Institutionnel au Mali: Essai de Philosophie Mandingue* (Paris: Harmattan, 2016).

Coulibaly, Cheibane. *Problématique foncière et gestion des conflits en Afrique Noire* (Paris: Harmattan, 2016).

Delavignette, Robert. *Freedom and Authority in French West Africa* (London: Oxford University, 1950).

Demerit, J.H.R., A.D. Nickols, and E.G. Kelly. "Female participation and civil war relapse". *Civil Wars*, 16 (2014). 346-368.

Devermont, Judd. December 6, 2019. Politics at the Heart of the Crisis in the Sahel. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Devermont, Judd. January 10, 2020. What to Watch in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Diagne, Pathé. *Pouvoir politique traditionnel en Afrique occidentale* (Paris : Présence Africaine, 1967).

Diallo, Youssouf. "Identités et relations de plaisanterie chez les Peules de l'Ouest du Burkina Faso," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, No. 184 (2006), 794.

Diarra, Somaila T. "Chef Ousmane Madani Haidra : Il n'y a pas de dans la religion," *Le Républicain*, February 10, 2020.

Dickovick, J. Tyler and James S. Wunsch, eds. *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength* (Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014).

Douce, Sophie. "[Au Burkina, la chefferie traditionnelle peut restaurer le dialogue et la cohésion sociale](#)," *Le Monde*, January 23, 2020.

Douce, Sophie. "Au Burkina Faso, les forces de sécurité démunies face au djihadistes," *Le Monde*, December 4, 2019.

Douce, Sophie. "Au Burkina Faso, les peuls sont victims d'un délit de faciés," *Le Monde*, April 17, 2020.

Douglas-Bowers, Devon, "The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People," *Global Research*, February 1, 2013.

Eisenstadt, S.N. *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

Elischer, Sebastian. *Burkina Faso: State and Religious Authority in Turbulent Times*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 28, 2019.

ENDA-GRAF. *Avenir des Terroires : La Ressource Humaine* (Dakar : Enda-Editions, 1992).

ENDA. *Initiatives paysannes au sahel : d'organiser et lutter contre la fatalité*. Série, Etudes et Recherches, No. 97-98, November-Décembre 1985.

Engelbert, Pierre Engelbert. *Burkina Faso: Unsteady Statehood in West Africa* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1996).

Engels, Bettina. "Political Transition in Burkina Faso: The Fall of Blaise Compaore," *Gouvernance en Afrique*, No.2, 1, 2015.

Gellar, Sheldon. "Conseils ruraux et gestion décentralisée des ressources naturelles au Sénégal, le défi : Comment transformer ces concepts en réalité ?" in Philippe Tersiguel and Charles Becker, eds. *Développement durable au Sahel* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997), 44-69.

Gellar, Sheldon. "State-Building and Nation-Building in West Africa," in *Building States and Nations: Models, Analyses, and Data Across Three Worlds*, Vol. II. Edited by S. N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan, 384-426 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976).

Gizellis, T.I. "A country of their own: Women peacebuilding," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 28 (2011), 522-542.

Gizellis, T.I. "Gender Empowerment and United Nations Peacebuilding," *Journal of Peace Research*, 46 (2009), 505-523.

Gorman, Zoe and Chauzal, Gregory. "Hand in Hand': A study of insecurity and gender in Mali," *SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security*, No. 6 (December. 2019).

Hainikoye, Aminatou Daouda. *Courants Islamiques et Consolidation de la Paix au Niger* (Niamey : USAID, 2016).

Harsch, Ernest. *Burkina Faso: A History of Power, Protest, and Revolutions* (London: Zed Books, 2017).

Hassane, Moulaye, Marthe Diarra, and Oumarou Makama. *Etude sur les Pratiques del'islam au Niger* (République du Niger, Niamey : Ministere Chargé des Affaires Religieuses, August 2006).

Holder, Giles. "Cherif Ousmane Madani Haidara et l'association islamique Ancar Dine," *Cahiers d'études africaines*, No. 206-207 (2012), 389-425. [https:// journals.openedition.org/etudesafriaines/17056](https://journals.openedition.org/etudesafriaines/17056).

Hughes, Oliver. *Literature Review of Land Tenure in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali: Context and Opportunities* (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, August 2014).

International Alert. "If victims become perpetrators: Factors contributing to vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the central Sahel," 2018.

International Alert. "They treat us all like Jihadis: Looking beyond violent extremism to building peace in Mali," Policy Brief, December 2016.

International Alert. "Sustainable approaches to organized crime," November 2014.

International Crisis Group. "Getting a grip on Central Sahel's gold rush," Africa Report, No. 282, November 13, 2019.

International Crisis Group. "The Niger-Mali Border: Subordinating military action to a political strategy," Africa Report, No. 281, June 12, 2018.

International Crisis Group. "Niger : un autre maillon faible dans le Sahel?" Africa Report, No. 208, September 19, 2013.

International Crisis Group. "Islam et politique au Mali:entre réalité et fiction," Africa Report, No. 249, July 18, 2017.

International Crisis Group. "Réformer ou rechuter," Africa Report, No. 210, January 10, 2014.

International Crisis Group. "Mali: la paix a marche forcé," Africa Report, No. 226, May 22, 2015.

International Crisis Group. "Mali central: la fabrique d'une insurrection?" Africa Report, No. 238, July 6, 2016.

International Crisis Group. "Speaking with the 'bad guys': Towards dialogue with Central Mali Jihadists," Africa Report, No. 276, May 28, 2019. International Crisis Group. "Risk of jihadist contagion in West Africa," Briefing 149, December 20, 2019.

International Crisis Group. "Burkina Faso: Preserving the religious balance," Report No. 240, September 6, 2016.

International Crisis Group. "The social roots of jihadist violence in Burkina Faso's North," Report No. 254, October 12, 2017.

International Crisis Group. "Nord du Burkina Faso: ce cache le jihad," Report No. 254, October 12, 2017.

International Migration Organization. *Setting up a road map for mixed migration in West Africa and North Africa*, 2019.

Kaba, Lansina. *The Wahhabiya: Islamic reform and politics in West Africa* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

Lackenbaure, Helene, Magdalena Lindell and Gabriella Ingerstad. "If our men won't fight, we will. A gendered analysis of the armed conflict in Northern Mali." FOI-R-4121-SE. November 2015.

Launay, Robert. *Beyond the stream: Islam and society in a West African town* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Lamarche, Alexandra. "Burkina Faso and the Sahel's New Frontline: Responding to the Fastest Growing Displacement Crisis," *Refugees International Report*, February 11, 2020. <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2020/2/11/burkina-faso-and-the-sahels-new-frontline>

Lamarche, Alexandra. "Mounting Hunger in the Sahel: The Unintended Consequence of Covid-19 Prevention," *Refugees International Report*, June 11, 2020. <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/2020/6/8/mounting-hunger-in-the-sahel-the-unintended-impact-of-covid-19-prevention>

Leclerc, Stanley and Geoffroy Matagne. "With or Without You: The Governance of (Local) Security and the Koglweogo Movement in Burkina Faso," *International Journal of Security and Development*, March 26, 2020.

Lebovich, Andrew. "Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel," European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2019. [EcfR/mena/sahel/mapping/](https://www.ecfr.eu/analysis/article/mapping-armed-groups-in-mali-and-the-sahel)

Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London: Methuen, 2000).

Loada, Augustin and Peter Romaniuk. *Prévention d'extrémisme violent au Burkina Faso: Vers une résilience nationale dans un contexte d'insécurité régionale*. Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, June 2014.

Lomeir, Roman. Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa, *Journal of Religion in Africa* Vol. 33, No. 2 (2003), 237-262.

Lorentzen, Jenny. *Women and the Peace Process in Mali* (Oslo: Prio Centre on Gender, Peace, and Security, February 2017).

Mattes, Robert. "Democracy in Africa: Demand, supply, and the 'dissatisfied democrat'," *Afrobarometer*, African Policy Paper No. 54, February 2019.

Melander, E. "Gender inequality and intrastate armed conflict," *International Studies Quarterly*, 49 (2005a), 695-714.

Molenaar, Fransje et al. "The Status Quo Defied: The legitimacy of traditional authorities in areas of limited statehood in Mali, Niger, and Libya," Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, CRU Report September 2019.

Nettle, J.P. and Roland Robertson. *International Systems and the Modernization of Societies: The Formation of National Goals and Attitudes* (London: Faber and Fabor, 1968).

Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1990).

OXFAM International. "Survivors and Heroines: Women in the Crisis in Burkina Faso." May 2020.

Ressortissants Toubou-Téda. *Note d'Information sur la Communauté Toubou-Téda du Niger* (Niamey, May 2012).

Rosalind, Eva and David Westerlund, eds. *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters Between Sufis and Islamists* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997).

Roth, Gunther. "Personal Rulership, Patrimonialism, and Empire-Building in the New States," *World Politics*, 20, No. 2 (January 1968), 194-206.

Sangare, Boukary. "Fulani people and Jihadism in Sahel and West African Countries," *Observatoire du monde-arabo-musulmane et du Sahel*, March 2019,

Sanneh, Lamin. *Piety & Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996).

Search for Common Ground. *Evaluation Finale : Impliquer les jeunes comme acteurs de la paix au Centre du Mali et au nord du Burkina Faso*, November 2018.

Skinner, Elliott. *The Mossi of the Upper Volta: The Sudanese People in Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964).

Sounaye, Abdoulaye. "Salafi Youth on Campus in Niamey, Niger: Moral Motives, Political Ends," in *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*. Edited by Elina Oinas, Henri Onodera, and Leena Suurpaa. (Brill, 2018) 209-229. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356368_014

Swiss Agency for Development. "Etudes, Cas 4 : Autorités traditionnelles et religieuse dans la gouvernance locale au Mali." https://sahelresearch.africa.ufl.edu/files/Autorite%CC%81s_traditionnelles_et_religieuses_Malicasestudy_2015.pdf

Sy, Ousmane, Ambroise Dakouo and Kadar Traoré. *National Dialogue in Mali: Lessons from the 1991 National Conference of National Understanding*. Berghof Foundation, 2016.

Tamari, Tal. *Les Castes de l'Afrique Occidentale: Artisans et musiciens* (Nanterre: Société d'Institut d'ethnologie, 1997).

Triaud, Jean-Louis and David Robinson, eds. *La Tijaniyya: Une Confrérie Musulmane a la conquete de l'Afrique* (Paris: Karthala, 2000).

Tronc, Emmanuel, Rob Grace and Anaïde Nahkian. Realities and Myths of the "Triple Nexus": Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Action in Mali. *Harvard Humanitarian Initiative*, June 2019.

UNHCR. [In 12 months Sahel violence displaces more than 700,000 in Burkina Faso](#), February 21, 2020.

UNICEF. May 21, 2020. [2.3 million children in need of protection in the Central Sahel region in 2020, a more than 80 per cent increase in one year](#),

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. August 2018. *Launch of Study on Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel*.

USAID. *Assessment of the Risk of Violent Extremism in Niger* (Washington, D.C.: The Mitchell Group, November 2014).

USAID. *Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) Version 2.0*. June 2012. USAID.

USAID. *Conflict Assessment Framework Application Guide*. June 2012. USAID.

USAID. *Path to Resilience: Report on Fragility and Resilience Assessment Methodology and Conflict Assessment Findings*. 2019. USAID.

USAID (PELA). *Community Generated Indicators: Burkina Faso Report*, October 29, 2019.

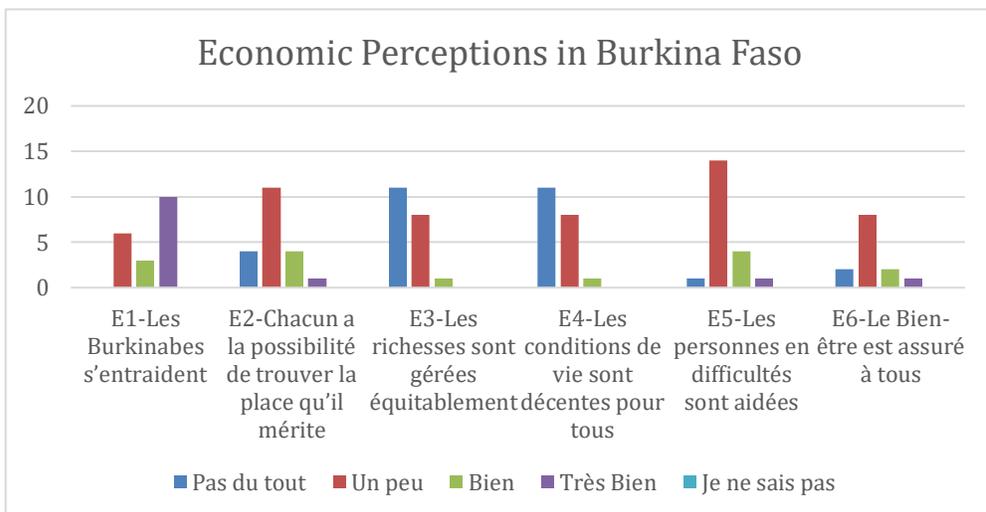
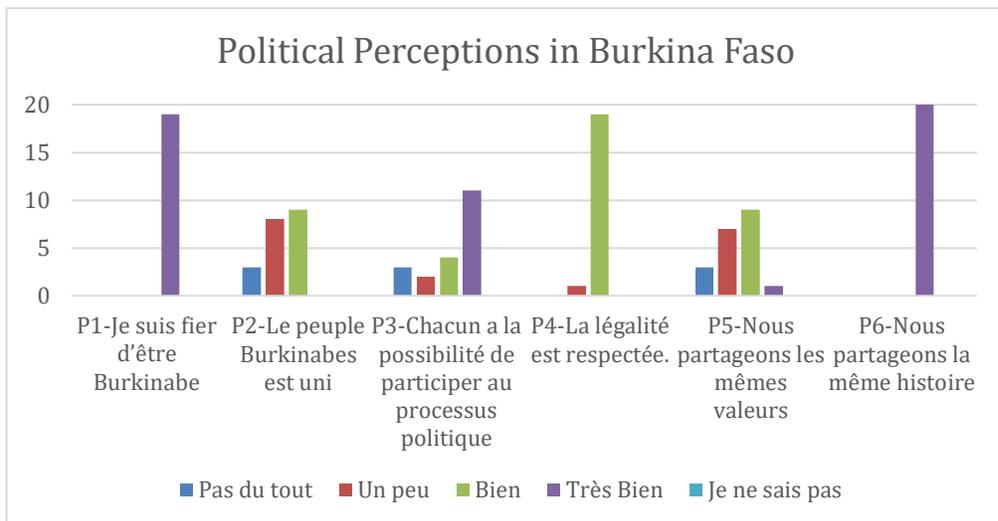
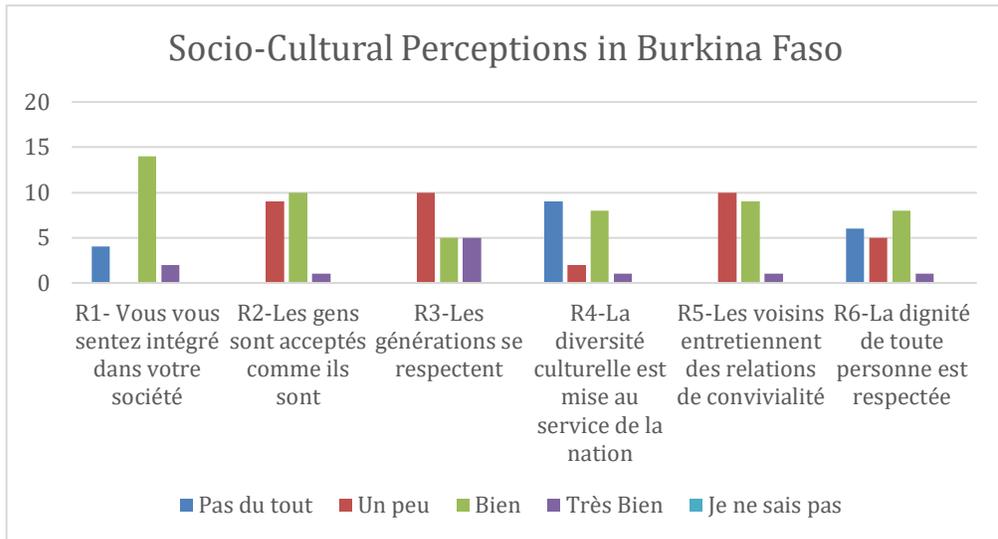
USAID (PELA). *Community Generated Indicators: Mali Report*, November 6, 2019.

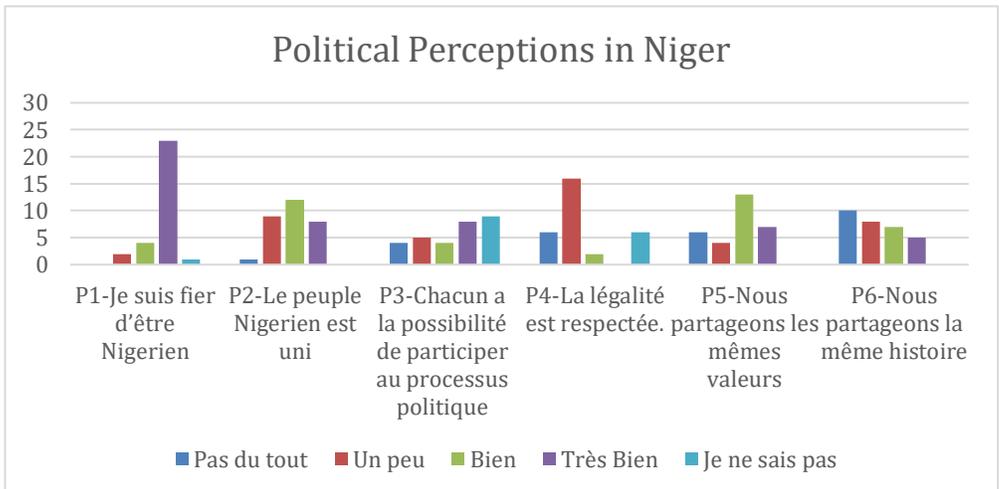
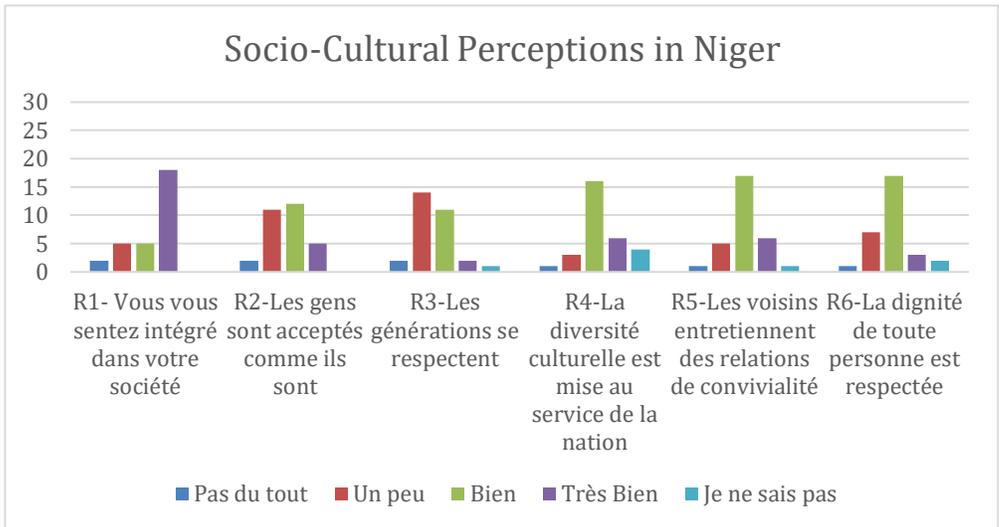
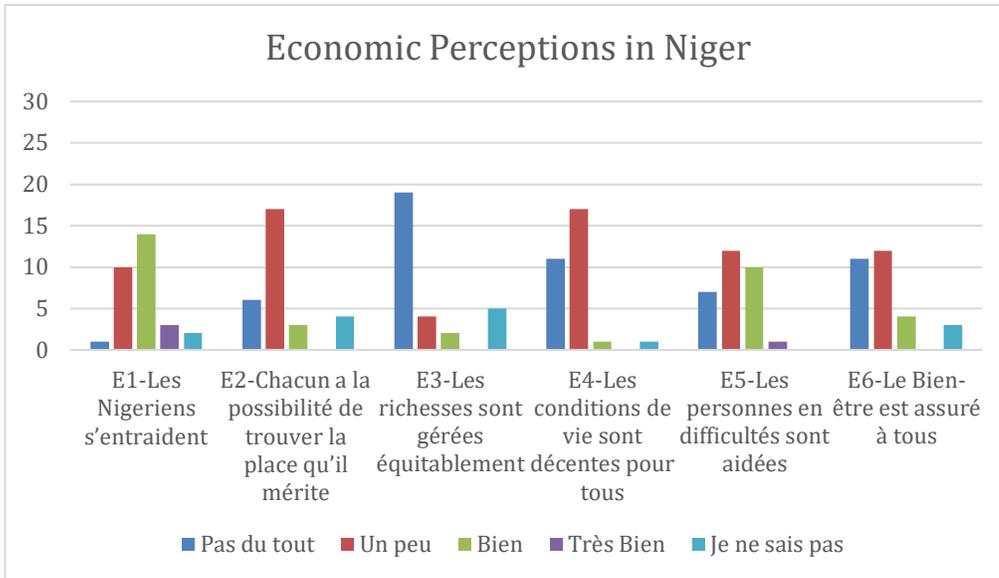
USAID (PELA). *Community Generated Indicators: Niger Report*, November 6, 2019.

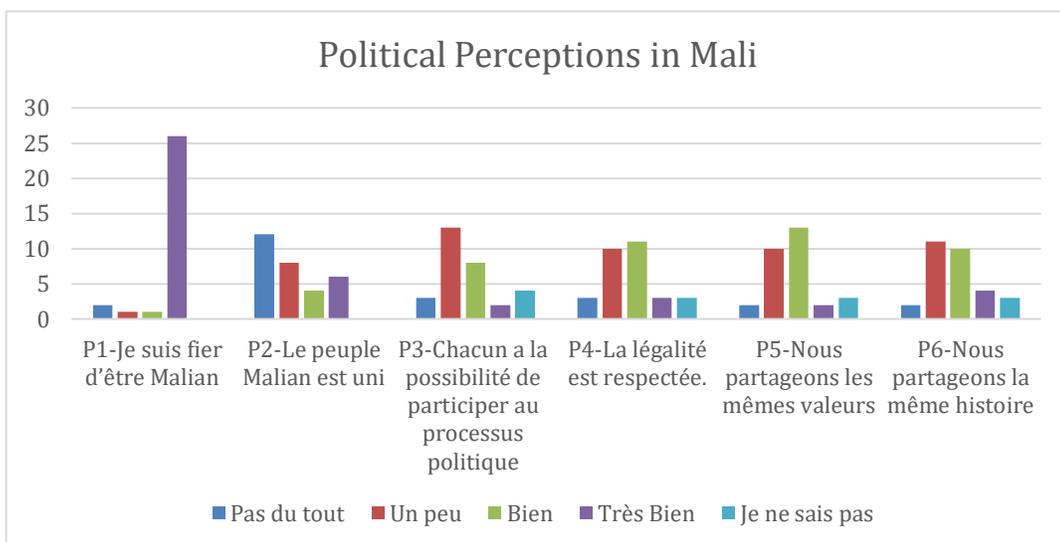
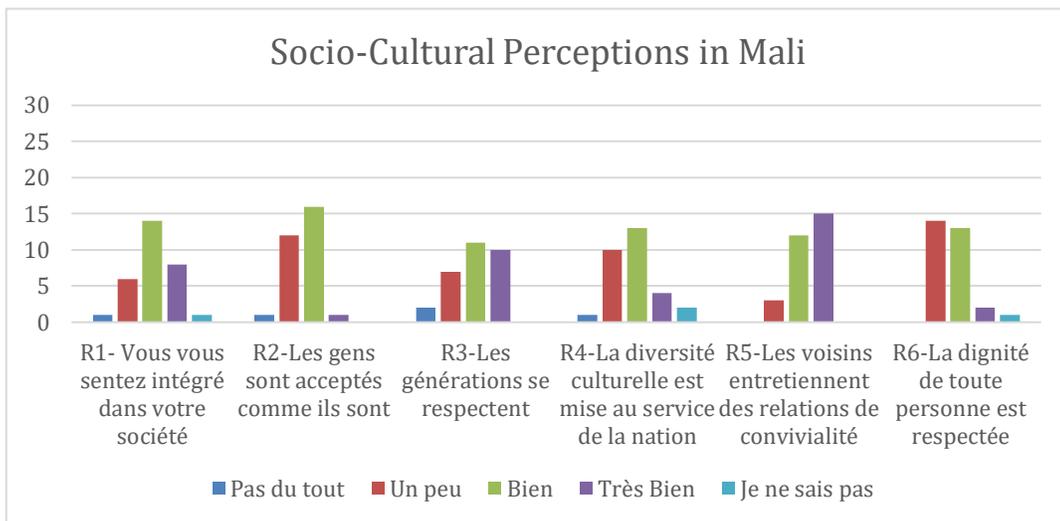
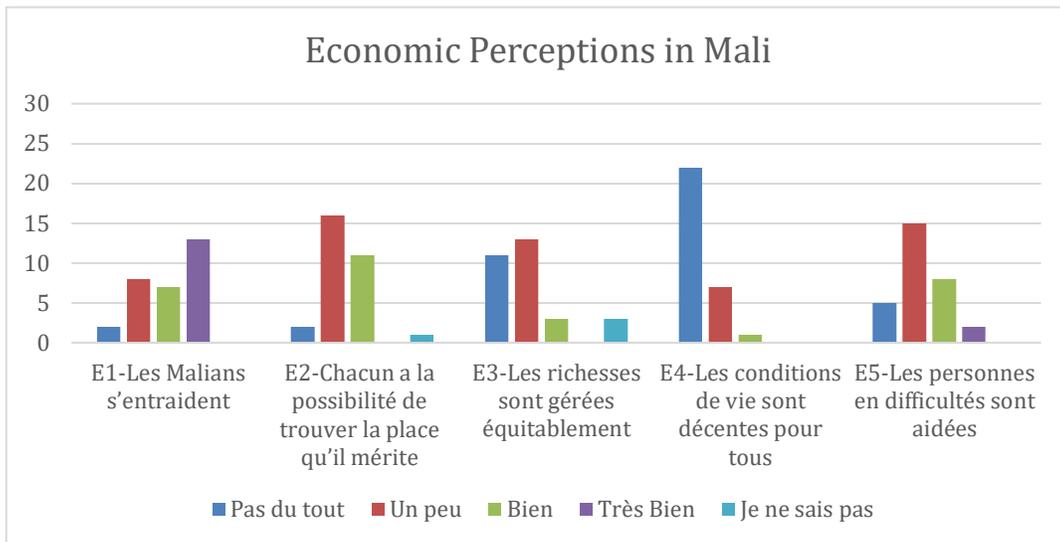
World Nuclear Association. 2020. [Uranium in Niger](#).

Wunsch, James S. and Dele Olowu, eds. *The Failure of the Centralized State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa* (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1995).

ANNEX B: THE MINI SOCIAL COHESION BAROMETER







ANNEX C SAMPLING MATRIX.

SPI Conflict Analysis Sampling Matrix

ID	Tool	Country									Total
		Burkina			Mali			Niger			
		Kaya	Kongoussi	Ouahigouya	Ansongo	Koro	Tominian	Ouallam	Ayorou	Torodi	
1-INTEL	Elders: Interviews: Age 65-85+	1	1			2	1		1	1	7
2-FGY	Youth Focus Group- Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso	1		1	1	1		1	1		6
3-FGPY	Focus Group: Poor and Unemployed Youth:		1				1			1	3
4-FGDH	Focus Group: Adult males:	1		1	2	1	1	1	1	2	10
5- FGDF	Adult Women's Focus Group :	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
6-INTRM	Interviews with Returnees: Male Tuaregs to Mali					1	1				2
7-FGMR	Malian Refugees Focus Groups								2		2
8-FGIDP	IDP Focus Group	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	14
9- FGCH	IDP Host Communities FGD		1	1					2		4
10-FGSD	Village-Based Self-Defense Organization		1	1				2			4
11-INTPB	Interview Interfaith Peace Building Groups (1male 1 female)	1	1			2			2		6
12-INTCV	Interview: Chefs de Village:	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
13-INTGOV	Interviews with young men and women, adult males and females on governance issues:	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	18
14-INTH	Interviews: Adult Males, farmer and herder, same village	1	1	1	1			1			5
15-INTF	Interviews: 2 young woman: and 1 from farm family; 1 from pastoralist family	1		1		2			2		6

16-INTM	Qur'anic School Teachers or Imam: Village	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
17-FGCL	Focus Group (or Interview): Chef lieu of Rural Commune	1	1	1			1				1	5
18-FGOCL	Interviews: Villages Outside the Chef Lieu		1			1			1			3
19-INTP	Interview with Prefect at Department/Cercle Level	1	1		1		1	1			1	6
	National Level Interviews	3			3			3			9	
Total		14	14	13	12	17	12	13	20	12	45	

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Country	Zone	Men > 35	Men <35	Women >35	Women <35	Ethnic Minoritie	Ethnic Majority	IDP- Male	IDP- Female	Female Official	Male Official	Traditional Leader	Religious Leader	Eleveur	Agriculturalist	Self-Dafancea	Employed	Unemploved	Housewife
Burkina	Kaya	18	1	16	11	2	44		6	2	3	1	2	2	17	3	11		1
	Kongoussi	33	12	2		3	44	8		2	6	2	3		28	8		8	
	Ouahigouya	6	6	17	6	3	32		6	4	1	1	1		16		2		
Mali																			
	Ansongo	17	5	4	5	4	6	5	6			1	1	9	1		13		5
	Koro	25	7	17	14		1	8	8	2	3		1		20		15		21
	Tominian	19	11	14	2	6	1	6			6	1	1	8	11		4	7	8
Niger																			
	Ouallam	8	3		6	3	14				1			2	4		5		3
	Ayorou	11	6	2		12	6					1		3	2		12		1
	Torodi	13	3	2	4	14	8				4			2	3	4	5	4	

ANNEX D: REVIEW OF LITERATURE SUMMARY

Sheldon Gellar

Sheldon.gellar@gmail.com

972-52-784-8971

PUTTING THE LAST FIRST

A LITERATURE REVIEW FOR CRS' SAHEL PEACE INITIATIVE

Introduction

As a response to the escalating crisis in the Sahel region, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has commissioned this literature review as part of its efforts to identify and address the root causes of conflict and elaborate a new comprehensive Sahelian Peace Initiative (SPI) strategy. With its Catholic Church partners in West Africa, the SPI will be used to raise public awareness of the crisis and mobilize funding for humanitarian and development programs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. CRS will work with other faith-based organizations and humanitarian actors to avoid duplication, fill gaps in knowledge, and improve coordination. Finally, the SPI will enable CRS and inspire others to work more closely and effectively in partnership with poor and vulnerable local communities to decrease violence and find community-led solutions to their problems.

This paper provides a synthesis and evaluation of a sampling of recent documents analyzing and assessing conflict situations in tri-border area in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. It reviews the approaches, findings, and recommendations of the producers of these documents which include the United Nations, USAID agencies regional African organizations, think tanks, academic researchers and development NGOs.

After analyzing current conflict assessments (CAs) and their contribution to understanding conflict dynamics, the paper identifies weaknesses and gaps in CA methodologies and how they are applied in formulating and implementing policies, programs, and projects designed to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict. This part will be followed with recommendations as to how gaps in CA assessments and methodologies can be filled and methodologies revised, improved, and applied effectively. Hopefully, the analysis, conclusions, and recommendation will achieve the following objectives: (1) contribute to generating new knowledge and approaches to the discussion on how to deal with the Sahelian crisis; (2) identify opportunities to effectively mainstream peacebuilding, social cohesion, and governance into humanitarian and development aid programming; and (3) identify new entry points and strategies for the Church and civil society to respond to the Sahelian crisis with special emphasis on communications and advocacy-based approaches.

The Sahel Today: A Gloomy Conjuncture

Virtually all the documents consulted in the conflict literature review share and highlight the following gloomy set of facts and short-term trends in the tri-border regions in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger:

- Islamic Jihadist terrorism has increased at an alarming rate. The Sahel has experienced the most rapid rise in Jihadi activities of any African region over the past five years. The surge in violence has uprooted more than 900,000 people including 500,000 in Burkina Faso alone.
- Increased international and national financial support, training, and priority given to military operations against Jihadist terrorism have not succeeded in stopping deadly attacks on military targets and civilian population. In many instances, counter-terrorism military interventions have aggravated the growing humanitarian crisis through extra-judicial killings, indiscriminate attacks on Fulani and other ethnic groups and communities allegedly supporting the jihadi terrorists.

- Herder-farmer conflicts over access to land, water, and grazing areas are intensifying throughout the region and accompanied by murderous ethnic and inter-community violence. The violence has resulted in the destruction of villages, the loss of thousands of lives, and disruption of local economies.

Transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking, and banditry have become an attractive alternative source of income and livelihoods for rural youth, of local economies, especially in border areas. Drug use among rural youth is also growing.

- The United Nations ranks Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali near the bottom of its human development scale. High annual population growth rates have placed enormous pressure on and competition for existing natural resources. Climate change resulting in floods, drought, and higher temperatures disrupt agricultural calendars and reduce output. Women and children suffer the most from the absence of water, health and sanitation services and food shortages.
- Higher annual national economic growth rates, increases in national budgets, and foreign aid to Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have not decreased the number of poor and vulnerable populations in need of humanitarian aid nor alleviated their misery.
- Corruption, clientelism, misallocation of public resources, growing inequality and the failure of national governments to provide adequate public services –e.g., education, health, sanitation, electricity, and security--have undermined public confidence in state institutions.

Positive Responses to the Sahel Crisis: Greater Awareness, Focus, and New Approaches

First, the deterioration of living conditions for poor and vulnerable populations combined with the shocking acceleration of violence over the past five years in the Sahel now receives more coverage from public media. Although this attention may be fleeting, it provides a window of opportunity to move public opinion to support and channel more resources to peacebuilding, development and humanitarian aid programs.

Second, the international donor community, academic research institutions and think tanks, African institutions, and African governments are focusing more attention to the Sahel crisis. They are also seeking to better understand the causes of violent conflicts and persistent poverty, prevent further deterioration of conditions and to formulate and implement more effective strategies to resolve the crisis.

Third, there is greater realization that previous policies, programs, and projects have failed to stem the tide of violence and growing need for humanitarian aid. More significantly, new and promising approaches based on greater knowledge of context and local conditions, are being formulated and tested. These approaches will be discussed in greater detail after a review of the contributions and shortcoming found in the documents consulted in the literature review.

Review of Documents

International Organizations

United Nations Security Council West Africa Office Report

This report provides a description of trends in West Africa over a six-month period in five substantive areas; Political developments and Governance; Security; Sustainable Development; humanitarian trends; and gender issues and an account of meetings of UN officials with different stakeholders. Most of these meetings are with high ranking government officials at the national and G5 levels and discuss efforts to create national commissions and new strategies

Analysis: Provides mainly descriptive updates of trends, and UN activities in West Africa, meetings of national level institutions, and references to new approaches and buzzwords—e.g. New Ways of Working: the triple nexus of humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding. No critical analysis of UN and UN-sponsored institutions and activities. Main emphasis on national level –e.g. political section discusses national elections, political parties: gender section

describes women’s advances into higher national level positions. The Sustainable Development section uses macro-economic annual economic per capita growth rate which is listed as 3% for 2019 as its sole indicator for sustainable development with nothing to say about the fact that ordinary citizens are not benefitting from the high growth rate. Little indication of knowledge as to how the new institutions and strategies to fight terrorism, mitigate conflicts, and promote peace and development are working or sensitivity to suffering at the grassroots level.

UN Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA)

The positive aspects of the United Nations Security Council report include the following:

- The report reflects commitment to allocate billions of dollars to implement strategies, programs and projects to support security, peacemaking, good governance, development, and humanitarian goals.
- The report endorses the “New Way of Working “which gives priority to development, humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding working together (Triple Nexus) to prevent, mitigate, and end violent conflicts. This triple nexus is now the strategy for CRS, USAID, and other donors operating the tri-border area of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.
- The report also lists UN activities to coordinate, encourage, and assist West African institutions (national governments, G5, ECOWAS, etc.) to (a).formulate specific strategies, legal frameworks, and national plans (b), reform existing government institutions; (c) and create new agencies to plan ,monitor, and evaluate sectoral goals.

The following comments point to gaps and weakness in UN level strategies and the degree of commitment of national governments, especially authoritarian to promote or block the implementation of these strategies:

- The UN Security Council does not reflect a **united** international community committed to the noble goals and strategies listed above. While many of the UN agencies are committed to implementing these goals,

many nations, external forces, and national governments in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso may be a major part of the problem rather than an important part of the solution.

- Many national leaders and countries signing international agreements and passing national legislation designed to provide a legal framework to implement UN endorsed goals and policies have no or little intention to do so.
- While the UN cites bad governance and violations of human rights as major causes of conflicts, as an institution it rarely openly criticizes national leaders of powerful nations or those engaging in war, supporting parties to civil war with money, arms, and training, and brutally repressing their own citizens or Sahelian national leaders and governments.

United Nations Office of Coordination and Assistance for Humanitarian Aid (OCHA)

OCHA's Sahel: Un appel à l'Action raises the alarm using sub-titles like 'Millions (4.2) of people fleeing their home and 22 million people in need of humanitarian aid. The report places great emphasis on how violent attacks and insecurity force people off their lands and into refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. It also shows the direct consequences of violent attacks in closing schools and health centers, and aggravating the suffering of children, women, and other vulnerable elements in the Sahel region. This short report does not provide information concerning how OCHA organizes and provides humanitarian aid to displaced populations and the problems it faces in running refugee camps and IDPs and operating in disaster areas.

Positive elements:

- *Sahel: Un appel à l'Action* is a very powerful advocacy report in describing the high cost and suffering resulting from forced migration due to violence directed against civilian populations.
- Although it is not mentioned in the report, OCHA is also the prime UN agency providing humanitarian aid to poor vulnerable populations suffering from malnutrition, bad health, and substandard living conditions.
- OCHA is the largest UN institution that works directly with poor vulnerable populations at the grassroots level and is very much aware of local conditions.
- OCHA has recently initiated campaigns to provide training and find employment for refugees and IDPs inside and outside the camps and to lobby for host communities and national governments to provide opportunities for employment in the host country.
- OCHA provides extensive statistics concerning the cost of activities, number origins, and social composition of groups helped, and forecasts for the cost, numbers of recipients, and kinds of services needed.

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- OCHA is equipped primarily to respond to emergencies and limited primarily to offer humanitarian aid. It has no mandate to pull people out of poverty.
- OCHA is having difficulty in providing basic services for rapidly rising numbers of displaced people and those suffering from drought, floods, and other natural disasters. Inadequate budgets are forcing OCHA to cut down on basic services.
- Although it is responsible for managing IDP and refugee camps, OCHA is not responsible for protecting people in the camps. One of the main problems of IDPs and refugees in many the camp is the lack of protection against violence---e.g. rape, banditry, and attacks by members of local communities and hostile local militias—when they leave the camps in search of food, water, wood and freedom.
- OCHA has no power to prevent national governments from displacing thousands of citizens in military operations not accompanied by a plan for lodging and provision of basic human services.
- Beneficiaries are usually not involved in the management of camps and the distribution of humanitarian aid which often leads to misunderstanding and conflicts between OCHA officials and beneficiaries

UNOWAS: United Nation Office for West Africa in conjunction with ECOWAS

The long (103 page) UNOWAS *Pastoralism and Security in West Africa Report* demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the pastoral system, herder-farmer relationships, changes in the natural environment that have contributed to growing competition and conflict around access to land, water, and grazing lands. It also discusses the political and social factors affecting the trajectory and intensity of herder- farmer conflicts. Three of the case studies cover Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Mali has the most problems and kinds of conflict—a weak state, long history of rebellions, and presence of external and local Islamist Jihadi groups. In Niger, the pastoral economy suffers from depletion of livestock, insufficient animal feed, and shrinking pasture areas. Burkina Faso seems to be in the best position of the three states with more land and grazing areas for farmers and herders in the main conflict areas than in Niger, relatively peaceful relations in the past, and the absence of major rebellions.

Positive Elements:

- Unlike many general studies on causes of conflict, this study focuses on the pastoral system and changes in the natural environment while not neglecting political and social factors.
- The report bases its conclusions and recommendations on the specificity of each country.

- The in-depth knowledge of the pastoral strongly supports concrete detailed recommendations concerning how to stop further environmental degradation and deflate tensions between herders and farmers.
- The report recommendations stress the importance of engaging local communities to find their own solutions to their problems.

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Insufficient discussion of broader, political, social, and economic issues and factors.
- Needs more discussion of legislation and rural codes related to land tenure, farmer-herder relationships, rural council powers, how they are applied, and knowledge and views of farmers, herders, and local communities concerning these codes
- Lacks detailed description of evolution of traditional methods of regulating access to land, water, and pastures and mediating herder-farmer conflicts and the extent to which they could be used today.
- Needs more analysis of influence and power of local government administrators (prefects and sous-prefect) and elected officials to regulate and enforce national legislation related to land use involving herders and farmers.
- Needs more analysis of past and present role of customary chiefs and local religious leaders in mediating conflicts and extent to which they cooperate with formal local government officials to prevent and mediate conflicts.
- More discussion concerning degree of communications between local communities and national level planners, commissions, and administrative, technical and services.
- Needs more information about organization and functioning of local herder groups as well as location, composition and organization of Fulani, Dogon, and other ethnic militias
- Need to identify and share knowledge with other donors and NGOs working on herder-farmer conflicts and land tenure issues in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.

Consulting firms, NGOs, Think Tanks, Academic Institutions and Researchers

This section briefly examines a sampling of reports and studies produced by the above categories and often financed by donor agencies. They focus on different aspects of the triple nexus (conflict, development, and peacebuilding) as well as security, religious, and democratic governance issues.

Security, Islamist Jihadi Movements, and Violent Extremism

Africa Center for Strategic Studies: *Responding to the Rise of Violent Extremism in the Sahel*

This study focuses on the expansion of militant Islamist Jihadi movements operating in the Sahel since 2015, its tactics, and success in amplifying local grievances and intercommunal differences to foster anti-government sentiments among marginalized communities to recruit new members and allies. The study looks only at military responses to the security problem while recommending that Sahelian governments should strengthen mobile security forces and try to bolster solidarity with communities in contested regions.

Positive Points: Adds very little knowledge not covered in other security agency documents.

Weak Points and Gaps

- Narrow security approach and focus only on Jihadist groups and security forces
- No discussion of other major conflicts in the country.
- Superficial and abstract analysis of Jihadist strategies
- Shows no interest and knowledge of local communities

International Crisis Group: *Risk of Jihadist Contagion in West Africa*

This report warns of the danger of Jihadist movements using Burkina Faso as a gateway to coastal West Africa---Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo. It argues that political turbulence combined in the coastal regions combined with insecurity in the northern Sahelian states could destabilize the West African region. Recommendations call for greater sharing of intelligence, tightening border controls avoiding electoral elections.

Positive Points:

- In-depth knowledge of thinking of West African national leaders and intelligence services. Rarely found in other reports.
- Effectively integrates historical knowledge of West African political history and politics into the analysis.

- Stresses importance of porous borders as major factor permitting Jihadist movements to move south
- Connects the dots between mobility and different migration patterns.
- Highlights lack of cooperation and coordination of West African states and G5 in actions to fight terrorism.

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Limited analysis of causes of non-jihadi conflicts and ideas for solutions to these conflicts
- Limited analysis as to why and how Sahelian governments, military, and G5 populations don't protect their populations in conflict areas.

International Alert: *They Treat Us all like Jihadis, (Mopti, Timbuktu, and Segou) and*

Sustainable Approaches to Organized Crime

- These two studies looked at diverse drivers of extreme violence using multidimensional mapping of drivers of conflict at the horizontal (local level) and vertical (top down) forms of violence. The reports stressed the importance of having a context-specific understanding and applying conflict-sensitive approaches in local communities. Because organized crime is closely linked to trade and the informal economy, it has to be dealt with very sensitively, since it is also the source of many people's livelihood.

Positive Points:

- Very strong on methodology for understanding local perspectives concerning different forms of violence
- Promotes dialogue and discussion of issues with the local community and local authorities
- Demonstrates how different forms of violence and lack of trust in government for protection adversely affect the psychology of different sectors of the population ---e.g. women and children.
- Rejects use of terms like "extreme violence" as culturally inappropriate terms for starting dialogue
- Effective use of quotes to illustrate points

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Needs more details about issues discussed in dialogues between local communities and local authorities
- Effective quotes not enough for understanding the dynamics of local debates
- Focus on methodology and short length left little room to tell what happened during the dialogues. Who spoke? What were points of conflict between community and local authorities? To what extent did debates help clear the air and reduce violence?

Search for Common Ground: *Building Mutual Trust and Confidence Between Security and Defense Forces Communities, and Local Authorities in Mopti, Gao, and Tillaberi*, and *Evaluation Finale: Impliquer les Jeunes comme Acteurs de la Paix au Centre du Mali et au Nord du Burkina Faso* and *Unis pour Tillaberi* and *Mon Voisin, Mon Frere*.

The project used a conflict scan to gauge community perceptions concerning security and followed by training and activities to promote dialogue, better communication, and social cohesion. Community radio was used extensively to provide credible information and listening clubs organized to inform and induce listeners to participate in peace-building activities. The project gave high priority to youth and women who were encouraged to organize theatre groups to transmit peace messages and football teams to promote group solidarity, reducing the spread of weapons and using third party ethnic groups to mediate interethnic conflicts.

Positive Points:

- Strong emphasis on strengthening community radio
- Effort to gauge perceptions of different actors regarding causes and consequences of different types of conflict --e.g. inter-ethnic conflicts, violence against women, and banditry

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Little analysis of social background, cultural differences, and roles of youth, women, traditional and religious authorities, administrative and security officials. Presented little concrete evidence to justify claims of success. Project success expressed in traditional terms of outputs rather than results.
- Projects activities seem to be initiated and organized by project staff rather than the community.
- Recommendations for youth projects reflect top-down effort in calling for more Search staff and Search initiating groups in each commune to ensure continuity of the Search project.

Democratic Governance, Development, Religion, and Triple Nexus,

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative: *Realities and Myths of the Triple Nexus: Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Aid in Mali*

This paper claims to expose the myths of the triple nexus and reveal local perspectives on peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian aid in Mali. It evokes Tuareg separatist rebellions, discrimination against the Peulhs, bad governance, and rising Islamic conservatism as weakening the Malian state. Dependency on development assistance, emergency humanitarian aid, and security assistance has not strengthened the Malian state which has put little effort into improving the lives of its citizens.

Positive Points:

- Well documented coverage of evolution and causes of conflict.
- Points to failure of foreign aid and security assistance to improve security situation

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Shows little understanding that Triple Nexus represents an alternative strategy that stresses listening to grievances of local populations and understanding the causes, conditions and consequences of violence, limited development, and bad governance.
- Presents no alternatives concerning what kind of external aid and policies could improve the situation.

Sebastian Fisher: *Burkina Faso: State and Religion in Turbulent Times*

The author traces the evolution of state-religion relationships in Burkina Faso. He notes the rise of a Catholic educated elite under French colonial rule, postcolonial efforts by the secular state to curb the influence of the Catholic Church, the emergence of a Muslim majority (61 percent) and the decline of traditional African religions (5%). The study describes the political stances of the different religious denominations. The Muslim community generally supported the regime in power while the Catholic Church maintained its independence and adopted a more critical stance towards the state in advocating political reform, social justice and freedom of the press. Radical Muslim elements have recently taken root in the Muslim north. President Compaoré made a deal with Jihadist forces to let them enter Burkina Faso in exchange for promising to not attack state institutions, a deal which ended after his overthrow in 2014 and ushered in an era of terrorism by radical Islamists.

Positive Points:

- Provides a useful historical perspective to enhance understanding the significance of evolving relationships between the state and different religious groups and the emergence of radical Islamist elements.
- Suggests an entry point for Catholic Church to work closely with Balai Citoyen and other citizen groups to find solutions thanks to its former collaboration with Thomas Sankara regime and advocacy for political, social and economic reforms.

Weak Points and Gaps:

- Scope of analysis does not deal with non-religious conflicts

Oxfam West Africa: *Emergency in the Sahel: Choosing the Fight Against Inequalities*

The Oxfam press release is an advocacy piece stressing fighting against all forms of inequality as a priority. It asserts that environmental, humanitarian, and security crises in the Sahel are all rooted in different forms of inequalities and a growing gap between rich and poor which in turn undermines communal life and leads to more and more tension and violence. It calls for urgent fiscal and social service reforms to narrow the gap and urges redirect development aid towards this issue.

Positive points:

- Identifies Climate and Environment inequalities as contributing to the gap
- Emphasizes inequality as a major source of grievances

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Passion not matched with clarity of vision
- Covers too many bases too quickly—governance, fiscal policy, social policy, appeals to too many actors
- Probably a poor English translation of what was originally in French

Opinion Research Business (ORB) for USAID Peace Through Learning and Adaptation Program (PELA): *Community Generated Indicator Reports (CGI) for Burkina Faso, Mali, and*

Niger

The study objective was to collect, evaluate, and deliver data on what the communities in Liptko-Gourma perceive as indicators of peace and violent extremism in their daily lives. The study drew on participatory methodological approaches using Community Generated Indicators (CGI). This participatory research approach encourages communities to develop their own, nuanced indicators that are grounded in the situations, feelings, and cultural contexts of various localities. The CGIs reflected the perspective of villagers who defined their own concepts of peace and what conditions had to prevail in order to conform to their vision.

Positive Points:

- Very effective use of participatory research methodology based on rigorous training of organizers, moderators, note takers, careful listening, understanding of cultural traditions, gender, norms and social relations, and observation of body language.
- Deals with psychological effects on population neglected in most studies
- Detailed concrete analysis of context –e.g. forced migration- and impact on lives of and relationships of displaced persons and host communities
- Reveals gender differences in definitions and feelings about peace, violence, and relationships with security forces
- Demonstrates understanding about local rural economies and specific negative effects of violence on local economies
- Extensive use of communications in local languages with targeted communities to verify validity of analysis, findings, and recommendations
- Approach and activities incorporate most of CRS's 4 Ps, 3 Bs, and 4 Ds

Weaknesses and Gaps:

- Absence of analysis of the impact of macro political, economic, and social factors, on the local communities
- No effort to compare PELA programs' methodology and results with other USAID and donor programs in Liptako–Gourma tri-border area.

Summary and Findings in Literature Review of External Documents Sent by CRS

The documents reviewed reflect current thinking on dealing with the deepening Sahel Crisis. All were published after 2015. Most were produced for and/ or financed by the International Donor Community. They include analyses and project reports by academics, consulting firms, and international NGOs. Most are focused on Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The central theme is conflict.

The documents provide analyses of the causes, evolution and consequences of different forms of conflict; sets of objectives needed to prevent, mitigate, and end conflict; conflict assessment methodologies; and reports concerning activities, results, and recommendations of specific projects, and short advocacy pieces.

Conclusions

The CRS documents and USAID conflict assessment and application documents will be examined more closely as more holistic models to build a comprehensive Sahel Peace strategy in a separate section.

The literature review points to a major shift in theory to donor orientation from blueprint to process; from top down- to bottom up approaches; from a division of labor between different sectors and issues to a more holistic approach stressing interdependence between technical sectors, issues, and values; from telling the poor what to do to listening to them as pools of knowledge and agents of solutions. However, it is easy to pay lip service to the new goals and orientation. It remains to be seen to what extent this shift will be implemented.

The UN Security council reports provide sketchy descriptions of activities and costs of UNSC priority sectors and relationships and joint cooperation with African institutions and governments and endorses the Triple Nexus without giving much detail how these operations are going to be implemented.

The security-oriented documents don't show any depth of understanding of local conditions and neglect non-jihadi conflicts and specific details concerning origins, differences in ideological orientations and targets attacked.

The UNOWAS Report on Security and Pastoralism in its detailed discussion of climate change, physical environment, and livestock economy provides the most detailed description of all aspects of the pastoral system but its findings have not been integrated into reports dealing with farmer-herder conflicts.

Fact-sheet reports on Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, have been left out of the literature reviews because they deal primarily with general and updated information about context.

The majority of the documents sent for the literature review reflect the new orientation. The Pela reports come closest to touching most of the bases in how to listen to the poor. The ICC reports on the Jihadist movements connect the dots and provide the most credible forecasts concerning the danger of Jihadist expansion.

Most of the grassroots-based non-jihadi analyses present small pieces of the total picture and different methodological approaches. Search for Common Ground continues to use similar and more conventional approaches to those used in the past in emphasizing strengthening community, youth-based listening groups, peace caravans, theatre groups and peace dialogs. International alert deals with international crime which is one of the major topics in ICAF assessments and highlights Peulh community bitterness about name calling and confusion in labels leading to heightening inter-ethnic conflict.

Recommendations for use of literature review document

1. UNSC documents can be quoted to legitimize the Triple Nexus approach, progressive reforms and greater emphasis on bottom-up approaches favored by CRS and ostensibly continued and favored in most international donor strategies.
2. CRS should map other donor activities in the tri-border regions and weave different pieces sector by sector and issue by issue into a comprehensive Sahel Peace Strategy.
3. Mapping and pooling information could be facilitated by using big data processing techniques.
4. The OCHA advocacy document could be used to mobilize public support and fund-raising for CRS.
5. CRS also needs to gather supplementary information from documents, reports, books, and other sources not covered in this review

Selection and Review of Documents Not in Literature Review

1. Similar kinds of documents produced and/ financed before 2015 by the international donor community concerning the Sahel region starting with 1960. The comments that follow are based on reports and research that I have done and review of materials over the past 60 years. Bibliographic references will be included in an appendix in the final version of the desk copy following completion of field work and synthesis of findings.

Review of past documents could increase our knowledge of changes in priorities, perspectives, approaches, global economic, allocation of human and financial resources; climate conditions; and types of conflict. Some examples of what we could learn:

- Since the late 1980s, donors and national governments have neglected the agricultural and livestock sectors in landlocked African Sahelian countries, a factor which in addition to rapid population growth and pressures on existing land, water, and grazing area contributed to the decline of these sectors, rural exodus, and gaps in equality between urban and rural areas.
- Review of these documents indicated that donors and governments rarely consulted with rural Africans concerning development priorities and demonstrated little knowledge about how rural economies worked. For example, French aid projects in the 1960s and 1970s harmed the fragile environment of Senegal's peanut basin by inappropriately promoting then popular "green revolution" policies based on promoting plow culture, cutting down trees, and pushing chemical fertilizers. Large-scale projects designed to modernize the livestock and promote river basin development failed miserably.
- Positive changes in recent development aid perspectives found in the literature review indicate that donors have begun to recognize the need to listen more closely to the people in setting goals and priorities and that local knowledge, skills, and social capital can be mobilized to solve problems. The donors could learn from the work of and writings of Sahelian development practitioners as far back as the late 1970s.

2. Documents dealing with conflict in other Sahelian and African Countries,

None of the documents in the literature look at Senegal which is a Sahelian country. Senegal has been the most stable country in West Africa since gaining independence. It has not had a military coup. It has not suffered from violent inter-ethnic and religious conflict. The Casamance insurrection is fading out. Here are some of the factors that might explain Senegal's relative success which are missing from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger:

Security:

- A well-trained professional army staying out of politics and recognizing supremacy of civilian government
- Strong diplomatic service and foreign policy based on good relations with its neighbors and the rest of the world
- Strong intelligence service
- More defensible and less porous borders: Atlantic Ocean, Senegal River, and Gambia River
- Good road infrastructure
- Absence of ungovernable areas
- Senegal not sending troops to G5

Conflict:

- Lack of discrimination of Peulh population: Senegal has a Peulh president
- Strong Peulh presence on both sides of border with Guinea and Mauritania
- Despite Diola led conflict in lower Casamance, no discrimination or retaliation against Diola populations in the capital
- Long tradition of religious tolerance, respect, and good relations between Muslim and Catholics
- Strong commitment of Muslim religious and Catholic leaders to maintain political peace, social cohesion, and mediate conflicts
- Culture of dialogue to maintain peace and cohesion and manage political, social and ethnic conflicts
- Migration abroad as source of resources to support poor populations back home
- Strong local hometown and village development associations

Donor documents usually feature success stories. One can also learn from failure stories. Until the peaceful December revolution that deposed the al-Bachir regime, Sudan was a great failure story.

Security and Conflict:

- Islamist-led military coup in 1989
- Civil war with South Sudan
- Genocide and Ethnic cleansing campaigns in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan regions
- Use of chemical warfare, rape, and torture against Darfur
- Discrimination against African Muslim and Christian populations
- Repression of Religious freedom and imposition of strict Sharia laws, adversely affecting women
- 70% of national budget allocated to military, security, and intelligence services,
- Porous borders and frequent conflicts with Sudan's neighbors
- Harbored radical Islamists and terror groups
- Alliances with Iran in support of radical movements before shifting to alliances with Sunni Arab states
- Creation of local Arab militias in Darfur to seize land and kill civilians
- Creation of Islamist militias and Rapid Force Services to back regime and crush opposition
- Refusal to let humanitarian aid into conflict zones
- Sent troops to Yemen and Libya on behalf of Sunni Arab Gulf states

Lessons learned from peaceful revolution

- **Solidarity** and unity among opposition groups
- Strong role of women and youth in demonstrations
- Strong organizational skills and presence in most regions of the country
- Ability to maintain non-violence sit-in campaigns
- **Solidarity** with Black African minorities---"We are all Darfur"
- Sharing of limited resources
- Development of effective communications systems to transmit messages
- Reference to traditional symbols, past democratic revolutions and use of music and songs to foster and maintain **solidarity**.
- Establishment of free media (Radio Dabanga and Sudan Tribune) outside the country
- Persistent pressure in the form of sit-ins and demands for departure of al-Bachir and establishment of democratic regime

3. External literature review of the desk copy did not include official documents and reports produced by national level government officials, academic researchers, NGOs, consulting firms.

Official national publications and reports give information about the organization, objectives, policies, budgets and activities of different ministries, national commissions, and conferences.

- Interior: decentralization, local administration, police, relations with NGOs, community associations, religious associations
- Defense and Security Defense Ministries, --military, intelligence,
- Technical Ministries—health, education, energy, infrastructure,
- Planning Finance, and Employment ministries—national budget, development strategies,
- Rural Development, Agriculture, and Livestock Ministries
- Inter-Ministerial Committees
- National Commissions organized to explore specific issues--, e.g. the 3 N national commission in Niger.

Major complaints of citizens at the grassroots level revealed through field studies included failure to deliver needed public service, failure to listen to concerns, grievances and priorities of local populations, failure to consult them in elaborating national policies, and failure to protect them. Grievances were responses to bad governance activities which occurred when national security forces forcibly displaced local populations, restricted economic trade and mobility, and engaged in extra-judicial executions of ethnic groups alleged to collaborating with the Jihadists in the name of fighting the enemy. In some regions, rural populations regard the national government as the enemy.

International aid institutions overwhelmingly frame government failures in terms of technical and financial “capacity.” Government institutions and agencies are also key actors when they don’t do their jobs. To understand grievances and growing anti-government feeling, it is important to ascertain the areas and extent of Bad Governance—e.g. stealing government funds, inequality in allocating public resources, cronyism and discrimination in hiring personnel and granting government contracts, abuse of power—and their impact in generating conflict and perpetuating poverty.

A second set of official documents concerns legal frameworks, laws, and decrees

- Rural Codes and Land Tenure Legislation—regulation of access to land, pastures, and water
- Decentralization codes- organization, attributes, power and resources of local government and territorial administration
- Mining and Energy codes--- related to regulation of oil production, uranium, and gold mines-- a major conflict area
- Electoral Codes---often controversial and rigged to ensure victory of party/parties in power.

- Environmental Codes

Many of these codes exist primarily on paper. This is especially true of decentralization codes which transfer wide powers and formal control over many technical sectors to rural councils and communes without transferring financial and human resources needed for these local government institutions to deliver public services and regulate the local economy. Rural and land tenure codes are particularly relevant concerning herder-farmer conflicts. If applied, these codes need to be evaluated in terms of how they generate or mitigate conflict and help or harm poor vulnerable populations.

4. There is insufficient use of research and documents produced by Sahelian scholars, development NGOs, research institutions, and advocacy organizations.

Research by academics, NGOs, consulting firms, and journalists based in the country may not be as sophisticated and footnoted as those produced by international academics. However, they often produce more detailed, concrete, accurate and pertinent information than research done by outsiders and at much lower costs.

For example, in Niger, CASPA (Cabinet d'Analyses et Action pour la Sécurité et de la Paix) produced a report, *Attractiveness and Analysis of Communication Strategies of Fundamentalist Movements in Diffa Niger*, that provided more knowledge and understanding than the reports of other academic researchers and consulting firms. It identified and analyzed the historic, socio-economic and cultural factors that fostered the emergence and growth of religious radicalism in Diffa; identified the propaganda instruments used by Islamist movements, measured their influence and proposed mechanisms to prevent the spread of radicalism and preserve social peace in the region. Data was collected based on the perceptions of the people of Diffa concerning Boko Haram, its attractiveness, methods of operation, and impact on the populations.

CRS staff in the three countries should make greater use of nationally based researchers who are better qualified than outsiders to produce more holistic, concrete and comprehensive reports. They know the context, language, and culture through their life experiences. CRS staff should consult with well-informed national researchers and institutions to get more data and support answering the key questions and issues raised in surveys, focus groups, and interviews to be carried in the next phase of the CRS Sahel Peace Initiative Project's Conflict Analysis.

Major Gaps Needed to Be Filled Based on Conclusions from the Literature Review

1. Lack of In-depth Analysis of the Activities, Grievances, Perceptions, and Motives of Key Actors in a Major Conflict Issue: Who Kills and Who Protects?

The list of actors includes people and groups who kill and who also claim to protect. We need to know *why*, (grievances, incentives, interests, and values); *how* (organization, support from allies, source and nature of resources, resources needed to attack); and *consequences and impact* (fear, trauma, destabilization, destruction of local economies affected, retreat of government security forces and services. We also need to know who gains and who loses? These are all questions which will shed light on conflict dynamics in areas where violence is greatest.

Jihadi Groups

Jihadi groups' targets include government officials and forces; kidnapping and killing foreigners; terrorist attacks, and raids on villages and markets; assassinations of government, religious, and community leaders; and attacks on Christian populations and churches.

They also claim to aid and protect certain villages and ethnic groups (Fulanis). They provide food and other basic needs and services and offer protection to villages willing to shelter, hide and give intelligence about the movement of security forces. They also claim to be defending Islamic values and providing protection against government neglect, abuses, and social injustice as their main motives for overthrowing the government.

The Government

The second major group who kill are the government, G5 security forces, and French troops. They all kill Jihadi fighters. Government troops kill alleged collaborators (e.g. Kanouris in Diffa; Fulanis in Tillaberi and Mopti), and in radical Tuareg groups fighting for independence. They all claim to be protecting the state and the people of Mali against Islamist Jihadi forces seeking to conquer the Sahel, their country, and their people.

Armed Groups and Militias.

The third major category doing a lot of killing are ethnic and other local militias who claim they are acting in self-defense. The best-known examples are the Dogon hunter groups who are killing members of the Fulani ethnic groups, especially Fulanis who are accused of killing Dogons in Mali.

The situation is further muddled by theories and rumors asserting that the inter-ethnic fighting is instigated by the national governments supporting farmer populations and discriminating against herder populations or by jihadi, and/or government agents to fan the flames of violence for their own reasons.

The above analysis describes the worst cases of violence. It would also be useful to look at areas in the tri-border zone where conflict is least intense and ask what factors account for their being less killing and physical insecurity in those areas.

2. *Insufficient Historical Perspective at Both the Macro-Level and Micro-Level*

One of the major gaps is a lack of historical perspective. For example, USAID's conflict assessment methodology and application documents view context (*Facts*) as static and based on short-term trends prior to the present. *Trajectory* is essentially tracked from Presence to Future (*Forecasts*).

A long-term historical perspective can provide more insights concerning trajectories leading to present conflict contexts and forecasts about the future. For example, can we fully understand Tuareg rebellions without looking into the role of Tuaregs in Trans-Saharan trade with Sahelian West Africa, French colonial policies in Algeria, and French support of a Tuareg republic in the Sahara region on the eve of Algerian independence in 1961.

Having a long-term historical perspective on key issues; changing political, economic, social, and environmental conditions; kinds of conflicts and their resolution; changes in international aid methodologies and objectives; and success and failure stories can increase our understanding of the causes of conflict.

A longer and deeper historical perspective is also essential for micro-level analyses of causes and trajectories of conflict. For example, most focus groups generally include only two generations of people interviewed.

By organizing focus groups and informant interviews with elders, women, customary chiefs, religious leaders, farmers, herders, and merchants from 60 to 80+, we can have a better understanding of why and how things changed and how people responded to these changes. It will tell us more about the perspectives of all the categories listed above during the first two decades of independence when they were either young men and women or children.

It will also provide more information about how, if, and why levels of social cohesion changed, the main causes leading to conflict, and measures taken to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts.

3. Insufficient Disaggregation of General Categories into Constituent Parts

One of the major weaknesses in methodology in most of the documents reviewed was the failure to disaggregate general categories like rural populations, village structures, youth, women, farmers, military and security forces, and students into their constituent parts.

Many projects identified rural women and youth as key actors, organized youth and women's focus groups, and made generalizations about youth and women's views concerning causes of conflicts, grievances, and solutions without providing information about the diversity of identities, professions, values, outlooks, and behavior of those participating in focus groups.

For example, rural youth includes farmers, herders, artisans, children of wealthy people, poor youth with no assets, delinquents, and entrepreneurs, with different levels of secular and religious educational and social backgrounds, different ethnic identities, family upbringings, and experiences outside the villages. Analysis of this diversity could also help identify and understand "why" and "which" individuals and groups of young people are most likely to engage in, suffer from, and benefit from different types of conflicts.

Villages vary in terms of size, populations, levels of poverty and prosperity, ethnic composition, differences in cultivable land, crops produced, access to water supplies, political affiliations, and levels of social cohesion. These are all factors which could affect the frequency, types, and intensity of conflicts.

Broad macro categories like national governments, political parties, military and security forces, also can and should be disaggregated and analyzed to see who does what, why, and how in order to learn which factors facilitate conflict.

4. Gaps in Analyzing the Correlation Between Lack of Opportunities for Livelihoods, Deteriorating Economic Conditions and Increases in the Spread and Intensity of Violent Conflicts

Many conflict assessments describe the lack of opportunities for livelihoods for youth as leading to their taking drugs, engaging in crime and joining Jihadi groups because they offer high pay. Conflict assessments also point to the negative effects of violent conflicts in creating deteriorating economic conditions. However, they rarely systematically look at why and how there may be a strong correlation between the spread and intensity of violent conflict and deteriorating economic conditions and conversely, why and how deteriorating economic conditions, especially those related to the limited opportunities for livelihoods foster the spread of conflicts and extreme violence.

One way of doing this is to systematically examine areas in the tri-border regions where there are the most widespread conflicts and extreme violence and areas where there are fewer conflicts and lower levels of violence. At the same time, researchers can identify and analyze areas in the tri-border regions which have good economic conditions and more opportunities for employment and livelihoods as well as areas which have the worst economic conditions and rare opportunities for employment and livelihoods.

The results would document the extent to which improvements in economic conditions and more opportunities for livelihoods might reduce the number of and intensity of conflicts. CRS conflict assessments stress identifying internal resources of local communities and see local citizens, groups and communities as active agents in improving their situation.

Four Basic Research Questions Informed by the Gaps in the Literature Review

1. Who is doing the killing and who is being killed? Why and how? Who gains and who loses from different kinds of conflict?
2. How are historical trends affecting the present and future trajectories of different kinds of conflicts, patterns of economic development, and social cohesion?
3. How can disaggregating general categories into its constituent parts help in identifying specific key actors and mobilizers, specific political, economic, social, and cultural conditions, environmental changes, and policies that positively or negatively affect efforts to reduce levels of conflict and need for humanitarian aid?

4. To what extent is there a correlation between relative prosperity and less violent conflicts on the one hand, and between widespread violent conflicts and deteriorating economic conditions on the other hand.

ANNEX E: QUALITATIVE PROTOCOLS

1-INTEL Entrevues avec les aînés: Age 65-85+

Le but de ces entretiens est de combler les lacunes des perspectives historiques identifiées dans la revue de la littérature. Les entretiens avec des hommes et des femmes plus âgés offrent une perspective historique plus longue qui montre que de nombreux types de conflits peuvent avoir des racines dans un passé lointain. Les entrevues avec des aînés combinées à des groupes de discussion d'hommes et de femmes adultes et jeunes couvrent trois générations de répondants.

Nombre d'entretiens: au moins 2 dans chaque pays répartis également entre hommes et femmes.

Les aînés répondront probablement à bon nombre de ces questions dans leur récit (Q1) sans que l'enquêteur ait besoin d'intervenir pour les poser. Laissez-les parler. Comparez les réponses avec celles des groupes de discussion adultes et femmes.

The purpose of these interviews is to fill in gaps in historical perspectives identified in the literature review. Interviewing older men and women provides a longer historical perspective that shows that many types of conflicts may have roots in the distant past. Elder interviews combined with male and female adult and youth focus groups cover three generations of respondents.

Intended participants: Elder men and women (65-80+) from ethnic groups involved in areas of high conflict--e.g., Dogon, Peulh, Tuareg, Mossi,

Number of interviews: 2 in each country divided equally between men and women.

The elders will probably answer many of these questions in their narrative (Q1) without interviewer needing to intervene to ask them. Let them talk. Compare answers with those in adult and female focus groups.

Questions:

1. Start with asking history of the village: "Tell me about the history of your village."
 - a. Commencez par demander l'histoire du village: "Parlez-moi de l'histoire de votre village."
2. What main changes for good and bad affecting your village have taken place in your lifetime—when a youth, when an adult, and when an elder, especially over the past 20 years?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux changements positifs et négatifs qui ont affecté votre village et qui se sont produits au cours de votre vie - quand vous étiez jeunes, adulte et un aîné, surtout au cours des 20 dernières années? (Laissez le répondant parler de tout ce qu'il veut. S'il a besoin de conseils, mentionnez la gestion des terres)
3. Can you tell me about any conflicts which have affected the community?

- a. Pouvez-vous me parler des types de conflits qui ont affecté votre communauté au cours des 20 dernières années ?
4. What are the main causes of specific forms of conflict evoked by the elders? (farmer-herder and inter-ethnic and conflict, land disputes, banditry)
 - a. Quelles sont les principales causes de ces différents conflits ?
5. Who engages in the conflict and why?
 - a. Qui s'engage dans le conflit et pourquoi?
6. Who supports and who opposes the conflict?
 - a. Qui soutient et qui s'oppose au conflit?
7. Who gains and who loses as a result of the conflict?
 - a. Qui gagne et qui perd à la suite du conflit?
8. Who and what actions intensify conflict?
 - a. Qui et quelles actions ou facteurs intensifient le conflit?
9. What are the consequences on the community? Who suffers most from the conflict?
 - a. Quelles sont les conséquences sur la communauté? Qui en souffrent le plus ?
10. Who is responsible for stopping the violence and protecting the community?
 - a. Qui est chargé d'arrêter la violence et de protéger la communauté?
11. How are administrative officials and security forces intervening to stop conflicts and protect the community.
 - a. Comment les autorités administratives et les forces de sécurité interviennent-ils pour mettre fin aux conflits et protéger la communauté.
12. What can be done to mitigate the violence? What are the traditional ways the community avoids violence?
 - a. Que peut-on faire pour atténuer la violence?
 - b. De quelles manières traditionnelles la communauté évite-t-elle la violence?
13. To what extent are traditional modes of preventing, mitigating, and stopping violence effective? How can they be revitalized?
 - a. En général quels sont les facteurs qui peuvent constituer les moteurs de paix ?
 - b. Comment les revitalizer?
14. Do you think government officials, national security forces, and foreign aid agencies can fully ensure peace and security? If not, why have they failed?
 - a. Pensez-vous que les autorités gouvernementales, les forces de sécurité et les forces étrangères suffisent pour rétablir la paix et la sécurité ? Sinon, pourquoi ?
15. Who is currently taking action in the community to mitigate conflict? How? Any Success?
 - a. Qui prend actuellement des mesures dans la communauté pour atténuer les conflits? Comment? Un succès?
16. Do you believe that your community can find solutions on their own?
 - a. Croyez-vous que votre communauté peut trouver des solutions par elle-même ?
17. Are you optimistic about the future or do you believe that violence will continue to rise in the near future? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste quant à l'avenir ou pensez-vous que la violence continuera d'augmenter dans un proche avenir? Pourquoi?
18. What events or actions do you see that might trigger more violence and insecurity?
 - a. Quels événements ou actions voyez-vous qui pourraient déclencher plus de violence et d'insécurité?

2-FGY Youth Focus Group

Youth Focus Group (age 18-25) composition

L'objectif principal de ces groupes de discussion est de comprendre comment les différences de points de vue de catégories spécifiques de jeunes concernant les conflits influencent la façon dont ils voient et réagissent aux situations de conflit affecte le degré de cohésion sociale dans leur communauté. Les groupes de discussion intègrent différentes catégories de jeunes souvent considérés comme un groupe homogène et fournissent une analyse plus approfondie du rôle des jeunes dans les situations de conflit.

Participants visés. Chaque groupe de discussion comptera de 6 à 8 participants dont certains devraient être des agriculteurs et éleveurs riches et pauvres, enseignants, jeunes impliqués dans des activités économiques telles que en tant que riches commerçants, petits commerçants, transporteurs de moto-moto et faux.

The main purpose of these focus groups is to understand how differences in perspectives of specific categories of youth concerning conflict influence the way they see and react to conflict situations affects the degree of social cohesion in their community. The focus groups incorporate different categories of youth often regarded as a homogeneous group and provide a more-in-depth analysis of the role of youth in conflict situations.

Number of focus groups. Total of six; 2 in each country.

1. What are some youth economic activities in your community?
 - a. Quelles sont les activités économiques des jeunes dans votre communauté?
2. What were the main changes for good and bad affecting your village that have taken place in your lifetime?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux changements positifs et négatifs qui ont affecté votre village et qui se sont produits au cours de votre vie?
3. To what extent are you worried about the danger of violent groups entering the region and attacking your community?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure vous inquiétez-vous du danger que des groupes violents entrent dans la région et attaquent votre communauté?
4. Why are they coming here and what do they want?
 - a. Pourquoi viennent-ils ici et que veulent-ils?
5. Who do you think is supporting them and why?
 - a. Selon vous, qui les soutient et pourquoi?
6. What specific actions are needed to stop the advance of violent groups?
 - a. Quelles actions spécifiques sont nécessaires pour arrêter l'avance des groupes violents?
7. What are the other types of conflicts in your region?
 - a. Quels sont les autres types de conflit qui existent dans votre communauté ?

8. What are the causes and triggers of other conflicts in your region?
 - a. Quelles sont les causes et les déclencheurs d'autres conflits dans votre région?
9. Who do you blame for initiating and/or aggravating the conflicts? Why?
 - a. Qui blâmez-vous d'avoir déclenché et / ou aggravé les conflits? Pourquoi
10. Do you support self-defense groups to maintain community security? If so, why?
 - a. Soutenez-vous les groupes d'autodéfense pour maintenir la sécurité de la communauté? Si oui, pourquoi?
11. How do these conflicts undermine community solidarity?
 - a. Comment ces conflits minent-ils la solidarité communautaire?
12. How do these conflicts harm the local economy?
 - a. Comment ces conflits nuisent-ils à l'économie locale?
13. Who are the main peacebuilders and mediators of conflict in the community?
 - a. Qui sont les principaux artisans de paix et médiateurs des conflits dans la communauté?
14. How effective have they been?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure ont-ils été efficaces?
15. What is the rôle of youth in these conflicts ? What drives young people to adhere or not to the ideals of conflict ?
 - a. Quel est le rôle des jeunes dans ces conflits ? Qu'est ce qui pousse les jeunes à adhérer ou non aux idéaux liés au conflits (approfondir : Chômage, pauvreté, manipulation, désinformation, intoxication, etc.)
16. To what extent have youth been involved in conflict resolution?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure les jeunes ont-ils été impliqués dans la résolution des conflits?
17. What are traditional approaches to mediating conflicts?
 - a. Quelles sont les approches traditionnelles de médiation des conflits?
18. Do you believe that traditional approaches to mediating local conflicts can still be effective? If not, why?
 - a. Croyez-vous que les approches traditionnelles de médiation des conflits locaux peuvent encore être efficaces ? Sinon, pourquoi?
19. What actions have you or your community specifically done to reduce the level and intensity of conflict?
 - a. Quelles mesures avez-vous ou votre communauté spécifiquement prises pour réduire le niveau et l'intensité des conflits ?
20. Do what extent do you depend on government officials, national security forces, and foreign aid agencies to ensure security?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure comptez-vous sur les autorités gouvernementales, les forces de sécurité nationales et les agences d'aide étrangère pour assurer la sécurité?
21. Do you believe that your community can find solutions to conflict on their own? If yes, why and how? If not, what are the major obstacles?
 - a. Croyez-vous que votre communauté peut trouver par elle-même des solutions aux conflits ?
 - b. Si oui, pourquoi et comment? Sinon, quels sont les principaux obstacles?
22. Are you optimistic about the future or do you believe that violence will continue to rise in the near future? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste quant à l'avenir ou pensez-vous que la violence continuera d'augmenter dans un avenir proche? Pourquoi?
23. What events or actions do you see that might trigger more violence and insecurity?
 - a. Quels événements ou actions voyez-vous qui pourraient déclencher plus de violence et d'insécurité?
24. Where do you get your primary sources of information about the conflicts?
 - a. Où obtenez-vous vos principales sources d'informations sur les conflits?

3-FGPY Focus Group: Poor and Unemployed Youth: (18-25)

L'objectif principal de ce groupe de discussion est de comprendre les perspectives des groupes vulnérables de la société avec un avenir sombre, leur niveau de cohésion sociale et de solidarité, et la mesure dans laquelle ils sont ouverts au recrutement par des groupes extrémistes et / ou criminels. Ce sont des groupes rarement inclus dans la plupart des groupes de discussion de jeunes. Leurs perceptions, attitudes et perspectives seront comparables à celles des autres groupes de discussion.

Participants visés: Chaque groupe de discussion (4-5) devrait inclure des fils d'agriculteurs et d'éleveurs sans perspective d'hériter des terres et du bétail, des diplômés de l'école coranique sans emploi, des jeunes sans emploi titulaires d'un diplôme d'études secondaires ou collégiales et des délinquants.

The main purpose of this focus group is to understand the perspectives of vulnerable groups in society with bleak futures, their level of social cohesion and solidarity, and the extent to which they are open to being recruited by extremist and or criminal groups. These are groups rarely included in most youth focus groups. Their perceptions, attitudes, prospects will be compared with those in other focus groups.

Intended Participants: Each focus group (4-5) should include sons of farmers and pastoralists with no prospects for inheriting land, and livestock, unemployed Qur'anic school graduates, unemployed youth with high school or college degrees, and delinquents.

Number of focus groups: Total of 3: 1 in each country

1. What are some youth economic activities in your community?
 - a. Quelles sont les activités économiques des jeunes dans votre communauté?
2. To what extent are you worried about the danger of violent groups entering the region and attacking your community?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure vous inquiétez-vous du danger que des groupes violents entrent dans la région et attaquent votre communauté?
3. Why are they coming here and what do they want? (Only ask in conflict zones)
 - a. Pourquoi viennent-ils ici et que veulent-ils? (Ne pose la question que dans les zones de conflit)
4. Who do you think is supporting them and why?
 - a. Selon vous, qui les soutient et pourquoi?
5. Do you think some of your friends would ever be tempted to join one of these groups? If so why?
 - a. Pensez-vous que certains de vos amis seraient tentés de rejoindre l'un de ces groupes? Si oui, pourquoi ils sont tentés?
6. Do farmer-herder and interethnic conflicts concern you?
 - a. Les conflits agriculteurs-éleveurs et interethniques vous concernent-ils?
7. Who do you blame for your situation in life? Why?
 - a. Qui blâmez-vous pour votre situation dans la vie? Pourquoi?
8. Are you a member of any youth groups? Which ones and what do they do?
 - a. Êtes-vous membre d'un groupe de jeunes? Lesquels et que font-ils?
9. What do you need to earn a livelihood?
 - a. De quoi avez-vous besoin pour gagner votre vie?

10. Would you be interested in farming if you could get or had access to land? If not, why not?
 - a. Seriez-vous intéressé par l'agriculture si vous pouviez obtenir ou avoir accès à la terre? Sinon, pourquoi pas?
11. Has your father/family helped you build your life? How?
 - a. Votre père/famille vous a-t-elle aidé à construire votre vie? Comment?
12. Who do you ask when you need help?
 - a. À qui demandez-vous quand vous avez besoin d'aide?
13. What do you do when you can't get help?
 - a. Que faites-vous lorsque vous ne pouvez pas obtenir d'aide?
14. Do you see any future for yourself in your community?
 - a. Voyez-vous un avenir pour vous-même dans votre communauté?
15. Have you thought of migrating to another part of the country, neighboring African countries, or Europe? If not, why not?
 - a. Avez-vous pensé à migrer vers une autre partie du pays, les pays africains voisins ou l'Europe? Sinon, pourquoi pas?

4-FGDH Focus Group: Adult males: (age 25- 60)

L'objectif principal de ces groupes de discussion est de comprendre comment les différences de perspectives de catégories spécifiques d'hommes adultes concernant les conflits influencent la façon dont ils voient et réagissent aux situations de conflit et affectent le degré de cohésion sociale dans leur communauté. La comparaison avec les groupes de jeunes révélera également dans quelle mesure les différences et les identités générationnelles affectent différentes perspectives et réactions aux situations de conflit affectent la cohésion sociale et créent des conflits entre les générations.

Participants visés: Groupes de 6 à 8 personnes comprenant différentes catégories - fermier riche et pauvre, éleveur riche et pauvre, professeur d'école artisanale, commerçant, transporteur, etc.

The main purpose of these focus groups is to understand how differences in perspectives of specific categories of adult males concerning conflict influence the way they see and react to conflict situations and affect the degree of social cohesion in their community. Comparison with youth groups will also reveal the extent to which generational differences and identities affect different perspectives and reactions to conflict situations affect social cohesion and create conflict between the generations.

Intended Participants: Groups of 6 -8 consisting of different categories -- wealthy and poor farmer, wealthy and poor herder, artisan schoolteacher, trader, transporter, etc.

1. What were the main changes for good and bad affecting your village that have taken place in your lifetime?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux changements positifs et négatifs qui ont affecté votre village et qui se sont produits au cours de votre vie?
2. To what extent are you worried about the danger of violent groups entering the region and attacking your community?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure vous inquiétez-vous du danger que des groupes violents entrent dans votre région/village et attaquent votre communauté?
3. Why are they coming here and what do they want?
 - a. Pourquoi viennent-ils ici et que veulent-ils?
4. Who do you think is supporting them and why?
 - a. Selon vous, qui les soutient et pourquoi?
5. What specific actions are needed to stop the advance of violent groups?
 - a. Quelles actions spécifiques sont nécessaires pour arrêter l'avance des groupes violents?
6. What are the causes and triggers of other conflicts in your region?
 - a. Quelles sont les causes et les déclencheurs d'autres conflits dans votre région?
7. Who do you blame for initiating and/or aggravating the conflicts? Why?
 - a. Qui blâmez-vous d'avoir déclenché et / ou aggravé les conflits? Pourquoi?
8. Do you support self-defense groups to maintain community security? If so, why?
 - a. Soutenez-vous les groupes d'autodéfense pour maintenir la sécurité de la communauté? Si oui, pourquoi? Si non pourquoi?
9. How do these conflicts undermine community solidarity?
 - a. Comment ces conflits minent-ils la solidarité communautaire?
 - b. Quel est l'impact des conflits sur les hommes?
 - c. Quel est l'impact des conflits sur les femmes?
10. How do these conflicts harm the local economy?
 - a. Comment ces conflits nuisent-ils à l'économie locale?
11. Who are the main peacebuilders and mediators of conflict in the community?
 - a. Qui sont les principaux artisans de paix et médiateurs des conflits dans la communauté?
12. How effective have they been?

- a. Dans quelle mesure ont-ils été efficaces?
13. To what extent have youth been involved?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure les jeunes communautés (jeunes, adultes, hommes et femmes) ont-ils été impliqués?
14. What are traditional approaches to mediating conflicts?
 - a. Quelles sont les approches traditionnelles de médiation des conflits?
15. Do you believe that traditional approaches to mediating local conflicts can still be effective? If not, why?
 - a. Croyez-vous que les approches traditionnelles de médiation des conflits locaux peuvent encore être efficaces ? Sinon, pourquoi?
16. What actions have you or your community specifically done to reduce the level and intensity of conflict?
 - a. Quelles mesures avez-vous ou votre communauté spécifiquement prises pour réduire le niveau et l'intensité des conflits ?
17. To what extent do you depend on government officials, national security forces, and foreign aid agencies to ensure security?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure comptez-vous sur les autorités gouvernementales, les forces de sécurité nationales et les agences d'aide étrangère pour assurer la sécurité?
18. Do you believe that your community can find solutions to conflict on their own? If yes, why and how? If not, what are the major obstacles?
 - a. Croyez-vous que votre communauté peut trouver par elle-même des solutions aux conflits ?
 - b. Quel rôle les femmes peuvent jouer dans la création et mitigation de conflits ?
 - c. Quel rôle les hommes peuvent jouer dans la création et mitigation de conflits ?
 - d. Si oui, pourquoi et comment? Sinon, quels sont les principaux obstacles?
19. Are you optimistic about the future or do you believe that violence will continue to rise in the near future? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste quant à l'avenir ou pensez-vous que la violence continuera d'augmenter dans un avenir proche? Pourquoi?
20. What events or actions do you see that might trigger more violence and insecurity?
 - a. Quels événements ou actions voyez-vous qui pourraient déclencher plus de violence et d'insécurité?
21. Where do you get your primary sources of information about the conflicts?
 - a. Où obtenez-vous vos principales sources d'informations sur les conflits?
22. Qui s'occupent des victimes des conflits ? Quels services sont offerts aux victimes et par qui ?

5-FGDF Adult Women's Focus Group : (age 25- 60)

L'objectif principal de ces groupes de discussion est d'identifier les différences de perspectives et de réactions des différentes catégories de femmes, la façon dont elles et leurs enfants sont touchés par les conflits violents et leur potentiel pour devenir des bâtisseurs de la paix.

Participants visés: La composition des groupes de discussion de 6 à 8 personnes pourrait comprendre des mères jeunes et adultes, des agriculteurs, des éleveurs de chèvres, des petits commerçants, des enseignants, des spécialistes de l'artisanat, des vendeurs du marché et des sages-femmes traditionnelles.

The main purpose of these focus groups is to identify differences in perspectives and reactions of different categories of women, how they and their children are affected by violent conflicts, and their potential for becoming peacebuilders.

Intended Participants: Composition of focus groups of 6-8 could include young and adult mothers, farmers, goat herders, petty traders, schoolteachers, handicraft specialists, market vendors, and traditional midwives.

1. What were the main changes for good and bad affecting your village that have taken place in your lifetime?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux changements positifs et négatifs qui ont affecté votre village et qui se sont produits au cours de votre vie?
2. To what extent are you worried about the danger of violent groups entering the region and attacking your community?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure vous vous inquiétez-vous du danger que des groupes violents entrent dans la région et attaquent votre communauté?
3. When violent groups attack, who are the targets? How do they bother the community?
 - a. Lorsque des groupes violents font des attaques, qui sont généralement les cibles? Comment dérangent-ils la communauté? Quels sont les défis spécifiques des femmes et filles à la suite de ces conflits ?
4. Why are they coming here and what do they want?
 - a. Pourquoi viennent-ils ici et que veulent-ils?
5. Who do you think is supporting them and why?
 - a. Selon vous, qui les soutient et pourquoi?
6. Do you feel safe travelling to complete your regular routine? (collect firewood, to the market, to health center, and pumping water)
 - a. Vous sentez-vous en sécurité pour voyager afin de terminer votre routine régulière quand vous vous déplacez pour aller dans vos activités de routine ?? (Ramasser du bois de chauffage, au marché, au centre de santé et pompage de l'eau)
7. Who do you count on to protect you?
 - a. Sur qui comptez-vous pour vous protéger?
8. What specific actions are needed to stop the advance of violent groups?
 - a. Quelles actions spécifiques sont nécessaires pour arrêter l'avance des groupes violents?
9. What are the causes and triggers of other conflicts in your region?

- a. Quelles sont les causes et les déclencheurs d'autres conflits dans votre région?
10. Who do you blame for initiating and/or aggravating the conflicts? Why?
 - a. Qui blâmez-vous d'avoir déclenché et / ou aggravé les conflits? Pourquoi
11. Do you support self-defense groups to maintain community security? If so, why?
 - a. Soutenez-vous les groupes d'autodéfense pour maintenir la sécurité de la communauté? Si oui, pourquoi? Si non Pourquoi?
12. How do these conflicts undermine community solidarity?
 - a. Comment ces conflits minent-ils la solidarité communautaire?
 - b. Quel est l'impact des conflits sur les hommes ?
 - c. Quel est l'impact des conflits sur les femmes ?
13. How do these conflicts harm the local economy?
 - a. Comment ces conflits nuisent-ils à l'économie locale?
14. Who are the main peacebuilders and mediators of conflict in the community?
 - a. Qui sont les principaux artisans de paix et médiateurs des conflits dans la communauté?
15. How effective have they been?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure ont-ils été efficaces?
16. To what extent have youth been involved?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure les jeunes communautés (jeunes, adultes, hommes et femmes) ont-ils été impliqués?
17. What are traditional approaches to mediating conflicts?
 - a. Quelles sont les approches traditionnelles de médiation des conflits?
18. Do you believe that traditional approaches to mediating local conflicts can still be effective? If not, why?
 - a. Croyez-vous que les approches traditionnelles de médiation des conflits locaux peuvent encore être efficaces ? Sinon, pourquoi?
19. What actions have you or your community specifically done to reduce the level and intensity of conflict?
 - a. Quelles mesures avez-vous ou votre communauté spécifiquement prises pour réduire le niveau et l'intensité des conflits ?
20. To what extent do you depend on government officials, national security forces, and foreign aid agencies to ensure security?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure comptez-vous sur les autorités gouvernementales, les forces de sécurité nationales et les agences d'aide étrangère pour assurer la sécurité?
21. Do you believe that your community can find solutions to conflict on their own? If yes, why and how? If not, what are the major obstacles?
 - a. Croyez-vous que votre communauté peut trouver par elle-même des solutions aux conflits ?
 - b. Si oui, pourquoi et comment? Sinon, quels sont les principaux obstacles?
22. Are you optimistic about the future or do you believe that violence will continue to rise in the near future? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste quant à l'avenir ou pensez-vous que la violence continuera d'augmenter dans un avenir proche? Pourquoi?
23. What events or actions do you see that might trigger more violence and insecurity?
 - a. Quels événements ou actions voyez-vous qui pourraient déclencher plus de violence et d'insécurité?
24. Where do you get your primary sources of information about the conflicts?
 - a. Où obtenez-vous vos principales sources d'informations sur les conflits?
25. Who takes care of the victims of conflict ? What services are available to the victims and who offers?
 - a. Qui s'occupent des victimes des conflits ? Quels services sont offerts aux victimes et par qui ?
26. When you and your family are short on food, who do you depend on to help you?
 - a. Lorsque vous et votre famille manque de nourriture, de qui dépendez-vous pour vous aider?
27. What social groups and economic associations do you belong to? Can you count on their help in time of need?
 - a. À quels groupes sociaux et associations économiques appartenez-vous? Pouvez-vous compter sur leur aide en cas de besoin?
28. Do families depend on young women to make money and contribute the money to the household?

- a. Les familles dépendent-elles des jeunes femmes pour gagner de l'argent et apporter de l'argent au ménage?
29. Are there women in your village and surrounding villages participating in peacebuilding groups? Can you name these groups and tell us how they work?
- a. Y a-t-il des femmes dans votre village et les villages environnants qui participent aux groupes de consolidation de la paix? Pouvez-vous nommer ces groupes et nous dire comment ils fonctionnent?

6-INTRM Interviews with Returnees: Male Tuaregs who left Mali but have now returned to Mali

Ces entretiens donnent un aperçu de la façon dont les Touaregs fuyant la violence ou le manque d'opportunités économiques sont traités dans d'autres pays, dont le Burkina Faso et le Niger. Ils expliquent également pourquoi ils sont partis et pourquoi ils sont revenus malgré l'insécurité et la pauvreté économique au Mali, et ce qu'ils font maintenant pour survivre.

Participants visés. Les personnes interrogées comprendront des jeunes hommes et femmes Touaregs, des hommes et des femmes adultes retournant dans des zones de conflit élevé. Nous essaierons également de trouver de jeunes hommes Touaregs revenant de Libye pour en savoir plus sur le flux d'armes et le trafic d'êtres humains ainsi que des individus revenant des camps de réfugiés au Niger et au Burkina Faso pour savoir pourquoi ils sont revenus.

These interviews provide insights as to how Tuaregs fleeing violence or lack of economic opportunities are treated in other countries, including Burkina Faso and Niger. They also provide information about why they left and why they returned despite insecurity and economic poverty in Mali, and what they are now doing to survive.

Intended participants. People interviewed will include Tuareg young men and women, adult men and women returning to high conflict areas. We will also try and find Tuareg young men returning from Libya to learn more about the flow of arms and human trafficking as well as individuals returning from refugee camps in Niger and Burkina Faso to learn why they came back.

Number: Interviews will take place in Ansongo and Koro, two high-conflict zones in Mali

1. Tell me more about yourself and your family—education, livelihoods,
 - a. Parlez-moi de vous et de votre famille - éducation, moyens de subsistance,
2. What were conditions like where you lived before the events that made you leave?
 - a. Quelles étaient les conditions dans lesquelles vous viviez avant les événements qui vous ont fait partir?
3. Before the conflict did most men stay and work in your community? How did they earn a living?
 - a. Avant le conflit, la plupart des hommes restaient-ils et travaillaient-ils dans votre communauté? Comment gagnaient-ils leur vie?
4. What caused you to leave your community?
 - a. Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé à quitter votre communauté?
5. If violence, who launched the violence? How did it start?
 - a. Si c'est à cause de la violence, qui a déclenché la violence? Comment ont-ils commencé?
6. Why did you not migrate to another region in Mali?
 - a. Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas migré vers une autre région du Mali?
7. Where did you go and why? Who did you travel with?
 - a. Où êtes-vous allé et pourquoi? Avec qui as-tu fui?
8. Did you spend time in a refugee or IDP camp?
 - a. Avez-vous passé du temps dans un camp de réfugiés ou de déplacés internes?

Ne posez les questions 9 et 10 que si la réponse à Q8 est Oui.

9. As a Tuareg and foreigner, did you experience discrimination? Why?
 - a. En tant que Touareg et étranger, avez-vous été victime de discrimination là où vous étiez réfugiés/ dans les camps?? Pourquoi?
10. What was the degree of solidarity and participation in groups with other Tuaregs inside and outside the camp?
 - a. Quel était le degré de solidarité et de participation à des groupes avec d'autres Touaregs à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur du camp?
11. Why did you decide to return to Mali?
 - a. Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de retourner au Mali?
12. How were you received?
 - a. Comment avez-vous été reçu?
13. How have you been able to resume a normal life?
 - a. Comment avez-vous pu reprendre une vie normale?
14. How has the Malian government facilitated your social reintegration after your return from camps? What support have you received for your reinstallation? Who helped?
 - a. Comment le gouvernement malien a-t-il assuré votre réinsertion sociale après votre retour des camps ? Quel appui avez-vous reçu pour vous réinstaller ? Qui a donné ces appuis ?
16. Do you now have more or less trust in the Malian government?
 - a. Faites-vous maintenant plus ou moins confiance au gouvernement malien?
17. What needs to be done on the ground to end the violence?
 - a. Que faut-il faire sur le terrain pour mettre fin à la violence?
18. Which Tuareg groups in Mali do you see as working to end the conflict?
 - a. Quels groupes touareg au Mali voyez-vous comme travaillant à mettre fin au conflit?
19. What are these groups doing to end the conflict?
 - a. Que font ces groupes pour mettre fin au conflit
20. What obstacles need to be overcome before conflict can be ended?
 - a. Quels obstacles doivent être surmontés avant de mettre un terme au conflit?
21. Where do you get your primary sources of information about the conflicts?
 - a. Où obtenez-vous vos principales sources d'informations sur les conflits?

7-FGMR Malian Refugees in Camps Focus Groups (Niger)

Les groupes de discussion fourniront des informations sur les raisons du départ des réfugiés maliens, pourquoi ils ne sont pas revenus et ce qui est arrivé aux communautés qu'ils ont quittées. Les évaluations des conflits incluent rarement les camps de réfugiés et signalent les souffrances des personnes, principalement des femmes et des enfants, fuyant la violence. D'autre part, les évaluations de l'aide humanitaire se concentrent sur l'évaluation et la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux des réfugiés. Ils ne se plongent pas dans les raisons pour lesquelles les camps de réfugiés deviennent et restent des centres de pauvreté permanents et pourquoi leurs résidents ne peuvent pas retourner dans leur pays d'origine.

Participants visés: 6-7 personnes dans chaque groupe de discussion, de préférence des femmes et des hommes provenant de la même communauté ou de communautés voisines, des mères jeunes et adultes, des mères célibataires, des hommes et des femmes âgés.

Focus groups will provide information about why Malian refugees left, why they didn't return, and what happened to the communities they left. Conflict assessments rarely include refugee camps and report the suffering of the people mostly women and children, fleeing violence. On the other hand, humanitarian aid assessments concentrate on assessing and meeting the basic needs of refugees. They don't delve into the reasons why refugee camps become and stay permanent poverty centers and why their residents are unable to return to their homeland.

Intended participants: 6-7 people in each FGD, preferably women and men coming from the same or neighboring communities, young and adult mothers, single mothers,, elder men and women.

1. Where in Mali do you come from?
 - a. D'où venez-vous au Mali?
2. When was the last time you felt safe from extreme violence in your original village/neighborhood?
 - a. À quand remonte la dernière fois où vous vous êtes senti à l'abri d'une violence extrême dans votre village / quartier d'origine?
3. What were the conditions in your village/region that induced you to leave your homes? (attacks by foreign and Malian Jihadi terrorists: fighting between different Tuareg rebel groups: attacks and summary executions by Malian government military forces; destruction of homes and economic infrastructure)
 - a. Quelles étaient les conditions dans votre village / région qui vous ont poussé à quitter votre domicile?
4. Who do you blame for these conditions?
 - a. Qui blâmez-vous pour ces conditions?
5. Why did you decide to flee to Niger?
 - a. Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de fuir au Niger?
6. Please describe the conditions inside the camp.
 - a. Veuillez décrire les conditions à l'intérieur du camp
7. Did you experience any discrimination by camp officials?
 - a. Avez-vous été victime de discrimination de la part des responsables du camp?
8. Did officials in the camp consult with the refugees in making decisions affecting your living conditions inside the camp?

- a. Les responsables du camp ont-ils consulté les réfugiés pour prendre des décisions affectant vos conditions de vie à l'intérieur du camp?
9. What kind of groups were formed inside the camp by your fellow refugees? Social, hometown associations from your village and area, cultural groups?
 - a. Quels types de groupes ont été formés à l'intérieur du camp par vos camarades réfugiés? Associations sociales, ville natale de votre village et de votre région, groupes culturels?
10. Were you able to work while inside the camps and earn some money?
 - a. Avez-vous pu travailler à l'intérieur des camps et gagner de l'argent?
11. What has been your experience with the host community of the camp?
 - a. Quelle a été votre expérience avec la communauté d'accueil du camp?
12. Where do you get your primary sources of information about the conflicts in Mali?
 - a. Où obtenez-vous vos principales sources d'informations sur les conflits au Mali?
13. Would you like to return home?
 - a. Souhaitez-vous rentrer chez vous?
14. Have the security situation and economic conditions back home improved to the extent that you would be willing to return?
 - a. La situation en matière de sécurité et les conditions économiques dans votre pays se sont-elles améliorées dans la mesure où vous seriez prêt à rentrer?
15. What changes need to be made to induce you to return to Mali?
 - a. Quels changements faut-il apporter pour vous inciter à retourner au Mali?
16. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about this happening?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste à ce sujet?

8-FGIDP IDP focus groups:

Ces groupes de discussion sur les déplacés internes comblent une lacune majeure dans les évaluations de la sécurité et des conflits qui se concentrent sur les causes de l'extrémisme violent, les acteurs initiant la violence et les réponses à la violence. Ces groupes de discussion sur les personnes déplacées se penchent sur des personnes qui ne sont pas des réfugiés étrangers, mais des «réfugiés» dans leur propre pays qui ne peuvent pas rentrer chez eux. Ces groupes de discussion cherchent à comprendre les forces qui les ont poussés à partir, ce qui est arrivé à leurs villages et communautés après leur départ, la mesure dans laquelle ils ressentent l'hostilité ou la solidarité des communautés d'accueil où ils vivent maintenant; et pourquoi ils sont encore des déplacés internes.

Participants visés: (5-7 dans chaque groupe de discussion) Membres de groupes ethniques minoritaires et majoritaires de leur région, jeunes hommes et femmes, hommes et femmes adultes et hommes et femmes âgés, les groupes de PDI comprendront également différentes catégories sociales, par ex. instituteurs, institutrice coranique, membres d'associations culturelles et sportives, agriculteurs, éleveurs, mères célibataires, veuves, commerçants, femmes commerçantes, transporteurs de motos, etc.

These IDP focus groups fill a major gap in security and conflict assessments which focus on causes of violent extremism, the actors initiating the violence, and responses to the violence. These IDP focus groups look at people who are not foreign refugees, but "refugees" in their own country who are not able to return to their homes. These focus groups seek to understand the forces that caused them to leave, what happened to their villages and communities after they left, the extent to which they feel hostility or solidarity from the host communities where they now dwell; and why they are still IDPs.

Intended Participants: (5-7 in each FGD) Members of minority and majority ethnic groups from their region, male and female youth, adult male and female and male and female elders, IDP groups will also include different social categories, e.g. school teachers, Qur'anic school teacher, members of cultural and sports associations, farmers, pastoralists, , single mothers, widows, merchants, market women moto-bike transporters, etc.

Number: Total: 14 for the three countries.

1. When did the acute insecurity in your community begin?
 - a. Quand l'insécurité aiguë dans votre communauté a-t-elle commencé?
2. When was the last time you felt safe from extreme violence in your original village/neighborhood?
 - a. À quand remonte la dernière fois où vous vous êtes senti à l'abri d'une violence extrême dans votre village / quartier d'origine?
3. What kinds of conflicts were prevalent before the first violent terrorist attacks? (banditry, cattle thieves, herder-farmer conflicts, fighting between Peulhs and non-Peulh populations)
 - a. Quels types de conflits prévalaient avant votre déplacement?
4. What causes precipitated the conflict?
 - a. Quelles causes ont précipité le conflit?
5. To what extent were strangers involved ? Why?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure des étrangers ont-ils été impliqués? Pourquoi?
6. Who do you blame for creating and intensifying the current conflict?
 - a. Qui blâmez-vous d'avoir créé et intensifié le conflit actuel?

7. Who did you rely on to protect you from violence?
 - a. Sur qui comptiez-vous auparavant pour vous protéger?
8. Were you satisfied with the level of protection you got from the government?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait du niveau de protection que vous avez obtenu du gouvernement?
9. The attackers, do you know who they were and where they came from?
 - a. D'où venaient les groupes violentes? Qui est inclus?
10. Why did they come to your community? What did they expect to gain?
 - a. Pourquoi les groupes violents sont-ils venus dans votre communauté?
11. Did they have any support from people in your community?
 - a. Ont-ils reçu le soutien de personnes de votre communauté?
12. To what extent did your community welcome them?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure votre communauté les a-t-elle accueillis?
13. Who are the targets of the violent groups?
 - a. Qui sont les cibles des groupes violents?
14. When did the government forces intervene to fight against the terrorists?
 - a. Quand les forces gouvernementales sont-elles intervenues pour lutter contre les terroristes?
15. What changed in your region after the expansion of military operations in your region?
 - a. Qu'est-ce qui a changé dans votre région après l'expansion des opérations militaires dans votre région?
16. Did you voluntarily leave your community? Why or Why Not?
 - a. Avez-vous quitté volontairement votre communauté? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
17. Where did you first go Once you left your border village?
 - a. Où êtes-vous allé pour la première fois une fois que vous avez quitté votre village frontalier?
18. How did the government help and support your relocation away from your original community?
 - a. Comment le gouvernement a-t-il aidé et soutenu votre réinstallation loin de votre communauté d'origine?
19. Is there anyone now occupying your villages? Do you know who?
 - a. Qui occupe actuellement votre communauté d'origine?
20. How have you been received by the host populations?
 - a. Comment avez-vous été accueilli par les populations hôtes?
21. Would you like to return home?
 - a. Souhaitez-vous rentrer chez vous?
22. Have the security situation and economic conditions back home improved to the extent that you would be willing to return?
 - a. La situation en matière de sécurité et les conditions économiques dans votre pays se sont-elles améliorées dans la mesure où vous seriez prêt à rentrer?
23. What changes need to be made to induce you to return to your community?
 - a. Quels changements faut-il apporter pour vous inciter à retourner à votre communauté ?
24. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about this happening?
 - A. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste à ce sujet?

9-FGCH Focus Group: IDP & Refugee Host communities:

Niger, and Burkina Faso

Ces groupes de discussion examinent les perceptions, les tensions, les conflits et les schémas de cohésion sociale et de solidarité sociale entre la communauté d'accueil et les PDI sur leur territoire du point de vue de la communauté d'accueil. Les groupes de discussion se penchent sur l'impact psychologique et économique de devoir héberger un grand nombre de déplacés internes dans les zones pauvres à haut conflit.

Participants: 5-7 dans chaque groupe de discussion, hommes et femmes leaders communautaires, membres de la majorité ethnique dominante, membres des groupes minoritaires

These focus groups look at perceptions, tensions, conflicts, and patterns of social cohesion and social solidarity between the host community and IDPs in their territory from the perspective of the host community. The focus groups look at the psychological and economic impact of having to host large numbers of IDP in poor high conflict zones.

Participants: 5-7 in each focus group, male and female community leaders, members of dominant ethnic majority, members of minority groups

Number: Total: 4 : 2 in Ouallem in Niger and 2 in Burkina Faso; 1 male and 1 female in each high-conflict targeted zone.

1. Who are the people staying in the camps? Where did the people come from? Why are they here?
 - a. Qui sont les personnes séjournant dans les camps? D'où viennent-ils? Pourquoi sont-ils ici?
2. What do you think caused them to leave their homes and villages?
 - a. Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui les a poussés à quitter leurs maisons et leurs villages?
3. What was the government's role in bringing them here?
 - a. Quel a été le rôle du gouvernement en les amenant ici?
4. How did you feel about their coming?
 - a. Comment avez-vous ressenti leur venue?
5. Who should be responsible for taking care of them?
 - a. Qui devrait être responsable de s'occuper d'eux?
6. Does your community also receive support? From whom?
 - a. Votre communauté reçoit-elle également du soutien? De qui?
7. What needs are being met? Is the aid sufficient to meet your basic needs?
 - a. Quels besoins sont satisfaits? L'aide est-elle suffisante pour répondre à vos besoins fondamentaux?
8. Did you take any IDPs into your village? How many were you able to absorb and integrate?
 - a. Avez-vous emmené des PDI dans votre village? Combien avez-vous pu absorber et intégrer?
9. How did the arrival of so many IDPs affect your and surrounding communities?
 - a. Comment l'arrivée de tant de PDI a-t-elle affecté votre communauté et celle des environs?
10. Do the IDPs cause any trouble in your community? If so how?

- a. Les déplacés internes causent-ils des problèmes dans votre communauté? Si c'est le cas, comment?
- 11. Are you satisfied with the way the government is managing the situation? Why or why not?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait de la façon dont le gouvernement gère la situation?
- 12. Do you feel safe and protected here?
 - a. Vous sentez-vous en sécurité et protégé ici?
- 13. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the possibilities that the IDPs may be able to return to their villages soon? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant aux possibilités que les PDI puissent retourner bientôt dans leurs propres villages? Pourquoi?

REMARQUE: Ces questions peuvent également être appliquées aux organisations d'autodéfense dans tous les pays en substituant le nom du groupe ethnique organisant les organisations d'autodéfense - Dogon, Bambara, Mossi, Touareg, Djerma...

But: les organisations d'autodéfense sont à la fois les auteurs de violences et les protecteurs de leur village et des communautés locales contre la violence. Les entretiens et les groupes de discussion peuvent faire la lumière sur les causes des cycles de violence impliquant des organisations d'entraide. Parfois, les cycles de violence sont provoqués par des tiers.

Participants: le chef de l'organisation villageoise d'autodéfense, 2 à 3 membres et un chef de communauté soutenant le groupe. Habituellement, les groupes d'autodéfense villageois sont organisés dans des villages ethniquement homogènes.

Purpose at Village level: Self-defense organizations have been both the perpetrators of violence and the protectors of their village and local communities against violence. Interviews and focus groups can shed light on the causes of cycles of violence involving self-help organizations. Sometimes the cycles of violence are instigated by third parties.

Participants: the leader of the self-defense village organization , 2-3 members and a community leader supporting the group. Usually village self-defense groups are organized in ethnically homogeneous villages.

1. When was your village and other villages in the commune founded? Where did the founders come from?
How were you received by neighboring villages?
 - a. Quand votre village et d'autres villages de la commune ont-ils été fondés? D'où venaient les fondateurs? Comment avez-vous été accueilli par les villages voisins?
2. How friendly were your relationships with your neighbors? How was this friendship expressed?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure vos relations avec vos voisins étaient-elles amicales? Comment cette amitié s'est-elle exprimée?
3. What caused conflicts between yours and other villages?
 - a. Qu'est-ce qui a causé des conflits entre votre village et voisine?
4. Who intervened and how were these conflicts resolved?
 - a. Qui est intervenu et comment ces conflits ont-ils été résolus?
5. What factors intensified conflicts between you and your neighbors?
 - a. Quels facteurs ont intensifié les conflits entre vous et vos voisins?
6. When and why did they become more violent?
 - a. Quand et pourquoi sont-ils devenus plus violents?
7. When and why did your village decide to form a self-defense group?
 - a. Quand et pourquoi votre village a-t-il décidé de former un groupe d'autodéfense?

8. How was this decision made?
 - a. Comment cette décision a-t-elle été prise?
9. Who and what were you defending the village from?
 - a. De qui et de quoi défendiez-vous le village?
10. How was the self-defense group recruited and organized? Who finances it?
 - a. Comment le groupe d'autodéfense a-t-il été recruté et organisé? Qui les financent?
11. Is your self-defense group connected to others?
 - a. Votre groupe d'autodéfense est-il connecté aux autres?
12. Did the government affect your decision to start a self-defense group?
 - a. Le gouvernement a-t-il affecté votre décision de créer un groupe d'autodéfense?
13. What precipitated violent conflicts leading to people getting killed or wounded?
 - a. Qu'est-ce qui a précipité de violents conflits qui ont fait des gens tués ou blessés?
14. Who were your main opponents?
 - a. Quels étaient vos principaux adversaires?
15. To what extent did the government intervene to stop the violence?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure le gouvernement est-il intervenu pour mettre fin à la violence?
16. Did the government take sides?
 - a. Le gouvernement a-t-il pris parti?
17. Have your group been accused of being allies of jihadi groups? Why?
 - a. Les Peulhs ont-ils été accusés d'être des alliés de groupes djihadistes? Pourquoi?
18. What are the bases of these accusations?
 - a. Quels sont les fondements de ces accusations?
19. What have been the consequences of these accusations?
 - a. Quelles ont été les conséquences de ces accusations?
20. Has your village ever been attacked by other defense groups in retaliation for your killing or wounding people from other villages? Has your group ever attacked another village in retaliation for their attacking you and killing and wounding your people?
 - a. Votre village a-t-il déjà été attaqué par d'autres groupes de défense en représailles pour avoir tué ou blessé des personnes d'autres villages? Votre groupe d'auto-défense a-t-il déjà attaqué un autre village en représailles pour vous avoir attaqué et tué et blessé votre peuple?
21. What do you think can be done to deescalate the violence?
 - a. Que pensez-vous pouvoir faire pour désamorcer la violence?
22. Is it possible for your self-protection group to join forces with non-Peulh self-defense groups to protect your area from banditry, drug dealers, and other criminal activities?
 - a. Est-il possible que votre groupe d'autoprotection s'associe à des groupes d'autodéfense non Peulh pour protéger votre région contre le banditisme, les trafiquants de drogue et d'autres activités criminelles ?
23. Do you have enough weapons to stop violent terrorist attacks?
 - a. Avez-vous suffisamment d'armes pour arrêter les attaques terroristes violentes?
24. Are some of your young people tempted to join a violent group for money or ideological reasons?
 - a. Certains de vos jeunes sont-ils tentés de rejoindre un groupe violent pour de l'argent ou pour des raisons idéologiques?
25. Does your village have members of any national or regional *leveur* advocacy group?
 - a. Votre village compte-t-il des membres d'un groupe national ou régional de défense des éleveurs?
26. Do you know of any groups or individuals that are working to improve relations between farmers and pastoralists?
 - a. Connaissez-vous des groupes ou des individus qui travaillent à améliorer les relations entre agriculteurs et éleveurs?
27. How does your self-defense group support these efforts?
 - a. Comment votre groupe d'autodéfense soutient-il ces efforts?
28. Under what conditions would your self-defense organization consider disbanding?
 - a. Dans quelles conditions votre organisation d'autodéfense envisagerait-elle de se dissoudre?
29. Do you see this happening over the next few years?
 - a. Voyez-vous cela se produire au cours des prochaines années?

11-INTPB Interfaith Peacebuilding groups:

Paires d'interview: jeune homme et jeune femme

Ces groupes de discussion et entretiens sont conçus pour identifier les bâtisseurs de la paix de différents groupes confessionnels qui sont disposés à travailler ensemble pour prévenir, atténuer et résoudre les conflits là où ils vivent. Il examine les types de conflits les plus et les moins susceptibles d'engendrer un dialogue et une action interconfessionnels.

Participants: composition – interview avec adhérents masculins et féminins de différents groupes confessionnels - musulmans, catholiques, protestants et traditionnels africains - avec une priorité donnée aux fondateurs du groupe de consolidation de la paix et chef religieux au sein du groupe.

These focus groups and interviews are designed to identify peacebuilders from different faith-based groups who are willing to work together to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts where they live. It looks at the kinds of conflict which are most and least likely to bring about interfaith dialogue and action.

Participants: composition- interview) male and female adherents of different faith groups--Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, and Traditional African religions.--with priority given to founders of the Peacebuilding group and religious leader within the group.

1. When and why did you decide to be a peacebuilder or join the peacebuilding group?
 - a. Quand et pourquoi avez-vous décidé d'être un bâtisseur de la paix ou de rejoindre le groupe de consolidation de la paix?
2. Who took the initiative to create the group?
 - a. Qui a pris l'initiative de créer le groupe?
3. How many members do you have now?
 - a. Combien de membres comptez-vous actuellement?
4. What form does the interfaith dialogue take?
 - a. Quelle forme prend le dialogue interreligieux?
5. Which religious themes did you emphasize; which scriptures and religious texts do you use? Why?
 - a. Quels thèmes religieux avez-vous mis en valeur; quelles écritures et textes religieux utilisez-vous? Pourquoi?
6. What specific issues and conflicts were you addressing and prioritizing?—e.g. religious, ethnic and gender discrimination, bad governance and corruption, farmer-herder conflicts; deterioration of natural resource base, etc.
 - a. Quels problèmes et conflits spécifiques avez-vous abordés et priorisés? - Religieux, ethniques, discrimination basé sur le genre, la mauvaise gouvernance et la corruption, conflits entre éleveurs et pasteurs, détérioration des ressources naturelles ? -
 - b.
7. At which level? Individual, group, or intergroup level?
 - a. À quel niveau? Niveau individuel, de groupe ou intergroupe?
8. Has there been criticism and opposition to this group from any religious leaders? If so, who and why?

- a. Y a-t-il eu des critiques et des oppositions à ce groupe de la part de chefs religieux? Si oui, qui et pourquoi?
9. Was there opposition from political groups? Who and Why?
 - a. Y avait-il une opposition de groupes politiques? Qui et pourquoi?
10. What kinds of activities does your group participate in?
 - a. À quels types d'activités votre groupe participe-t-il?
11. What issues induced people to join and/or participate in your activities? Are they mostly young? Are they mostly men?
 - a. Quels problèmes ont poussé les gens à rejoindre et / ou à participer à vos activités? Sont-ils pour la plupart jeunes? S'agit-il principalement d'hommes?

Quelle la catégorie de personnes qui ne participent pas activement dans activités et pourquoi ?
(Femmes, groupes ethnique ou religieux, jeunes, intellectuels, etc.)
12. How do you work with traditional chiefs in solving conflicts and other problems?
 - a. Comment travaillez-vous avec les chefs traditionnels pour résoudre les conflits et autres problèmes?
13. How do you work with the government in solving conflicts and other problems?
 - a. Comment travaillez-vous avec la gouvernement pour résoudre les conflits et autres problèmes ?
14. Which media did you use to communicate your message and provide information about your activities?
 - a. Quels moyens avez-vous utilisés pour communiquer votre message et fournir des informations sur vos activités?
15. What are your connections with other interfaith peacebuilding groups? How do you communicate with them?
 - a. Quels sont vos liens avec d'autres groupes interconfessionnels de consolidation de la paix? Comment communiquez-vous avec eux?
16. Can you give examples of success stories in improving relations between different groups? How did this happen?
 - a. Pouvez-vous donner des exemples de réussites dans l'amélioration des relations entre différents groupes? Comment est-ce arrivé?
17. What are the greatest obstacles to peacebuilding?
 - a. Quels sont les plus grands obstacles à la consolidation de la paix?
18. How can religion help your community to overcome the multiple crises in the region?
 - a. Comment la religion peut-elle aider votre communauté à surmonter les multiples crises dans la région?
19. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the possibility of interreligious peacebuilding efforts leading to reduced levels of violence and higher levels of social cohesion in the future?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à la possibilité d'efforts interreligieux de consolidation de la paix conduisant à des niveaux de violence réduits et à des niveaux de cohésion sociale plus élevés à l'avenir?

12-INTCV Interview: Chefs de Village:

Les enquêtes indiquent que les populations rurales dans une grande partie de l'Afrique sahélienne reconnaissent et font confiance à leurs chefs traditionnels au niveau local et les appellent à arbitrer les conflits. Bien que les chefs de village soient souvent mentionnés dans les évaluations des conflits et de la sécurité, ces évaluations fournissent peu de détails sur les raisons pour lesquelles les chefs conservent leur autorité et quand, pourquoi et comment ils interviennent pour arbitrer les conflits et œuvrer pour favoriser la paix et la cohésion sociales. Les entretiens visent à combler cette lacune.

Participants: Chefs de village au niveau du village et au chef lieu de commune rurale; jeunes et vieux chefs de village; chefs de village affiliés à un parti politique.

Surveys indicate that rural populations in much of Sahelian Africa still recognize and trust their traditional leaders at the local level and call upon them to mediate conflicts. Although Village chiefs are often noted in conflict and security assessments, these assessments provide few details as to why the chiefs maintain their authority and when, why, and how they intervene to mediate conflicts and work to foster social peace and cohesion. The interviews seek to fill this gap.

Participants: Village chiefs at the village level, and at the chef lieu of rural commune; old and young village chiefs; village chiefs affiliated with a political party.

1. How long have you been chief?
 - a. Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous chef?
2. How were you chosen? (inherited, elected, or named by the administration)
 - a. Comment devient-on chef de village dans votre communauté
3. Do elected officials and government officials consult with you?
 - a. Les élus et les représentants du gouvernement vous consultent-ils?
4. If so, how often and concerning over what issues?
 - a. Si oui, à quelle fréquence et sur quels problèmes?
5. Have political parties made any attempt to gain your support?
 - a. Les partis politiques ont-ils tenté d'obtenir votre soutien?
6. Do you believe that traditional chiefs should stay out of politics? If so, why?
 - a. Croyez-vous que les chefs traditionnels devraient rester en dehors de la politique? Pourquoi?
7. Who currently determines who owns pieces of land in your village?
 - a. Qui octroie des parcelles de terrain dans votre village?
8. Who should determine land ownership? The state, territorial administration, or local communities and traditional authorities?
 - a. Qui devrait déterminer la propriété foncière? L'état, l'administration territoriale, la communauté ou les chefs traditionnels ?
9. Do the people in your village and surrounding villages trust traditional chiefs in the below: Why?
 - a. Allocating land and mediating and resolving conflicts over land ownership and management,
 - b. control and access to water,

- c. Control and access to grazing areas
- d. Forests, and other natural resources? Why?

Pourquoi?

Les populations de votre village et des villages environnants font-ils confiance aux chefs traditionnels:

- a. Pour allouer des terres et assurer la médiation et résoudre les conflits concernant la propriété et la gestion des terres
- b. Contrôler l'accès à l'eau
- c. Contrôle et accès aux pâturages
- d. Forêts et autres ressources naturelles?

Pourquoi?

11. Have you joined with religious authorities in interfaith and other peacebuilding groups? If Yes, Who did you work with and at what level? What activities did you do together? What was your goal?
 - a. Avez-vous rejoint des autorités religieuses dans des groupes interreligieux et d'autres groupes de consolidation de la paix? Si oui, avec qui avez-vous travaillé et à quel niveau? Quelles activités avez-vous faites ensemble? Quel était ton objectif?
12. Which religious leaders do you trust the most? Which the least? What role can traditional chiefs play in building social cohesion.
 - a. À quels chefs religieux faites-vous le plus confiance? Le moins? Pourquoi?
 - b. Quel rôle les chefs traditionnels peuvent-ils jouer dans la construction de la cohésion sociale.
13. Can you give examples of times when you felt that rural councils or the national government were unfairly giving away land?
 - a. Pouvez-vous donner des exemples de moments où vous estimiez que les conseils ruraux ou le gouvernement national distribuait inégalement des terres.
14. Why and how did this happen?
 - a. Pourquoi et comment cela s'est-il produit?
15. Are you satisfied with the services you are receiving from the government?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait des services que vous recevez du gouvernement?
16. If not, why?
 - a. Si non, pourquoi pas.
17. How do you know which villages/areas you are responsible for? Who told you this? If you could change it, how would you change the boundaries?
 - a. Comment connaissez-vous les limites de votre territoire? Qui vous a dit ça? Si vous pouviez le changer, comment changeriez-vous les limites/ frontières de votre village?
18. In your opinion, why has the level of insecurity and violence increased so much?
 - a. À votre avis, pourquoi le niveau d'insécurité et de violence a-t-il tant augmenté ces dernières années?
19. Do you approve of the government's response to the insecurity and violence? Why?
 - a. Approuvez-vous la réponse du gouvernement à l'insécurité et à la violence? Pourquoi?
20. What needs to change in order for the state to improve its services and build more trust.
 - a. Qu'est-ce qui doit changer pour que l'État améliore ses services et renforce la confiance.
21. Are you optimistic or pessimistic for the future? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste pour l'avenir? Pourquoi?

13-INTGOV Interviews with young men and women, adult males and females on governance issues:

Commune

Ces entretiens approfondissent les questions de gouvernance affectant directement les populations rurales. Ils fournissent des informations sur comment et pourquoi les populations rurales considèrent les structures officielles du gouvernement local et les causes des conflits entre les populations rurales et les institutions administratives de l'État et les élus locaux.

Participants: des citoyens bien informés connaissant la législation et les institutions de gouvernance locale. Ils seront interrogés par paires: jeunes hommes et jeunes hommes et jeunes femmes et jeunes femmes dans le chef lieu d'une commune rurale de chaque zone. Le choix des communes rurales et de leurs conseils ruraux (conseillers communaux) devrait refléter une variété de différences dans les niveaux de pauvreté, l'efficacité du conseil rural, les niveaux de conflit communal et la politisation du conseil rural.

These interviews go into greater detail about governance issues directly affecting rural populations. They provide information about how and why rural populations view formal local government structures and the causes of conflict between rural populations and state administrative institutions and elected local government officials.

Participants: well-informed citizens familiar with local governance legislation and institutions. They will be interviewed in pairs: male youth and male adult and female youth and female adult in the chef lieu of a rural commune in each zone. Choice of rural communes and their rural councils should reflect a variety of differences in poverty levels, efficiency of the rural council, levels of communal conflict, and politicization of the rural council.

1. Who makes decisions concerning the allocation of land in your village? (the village chief, chef de terre, or the rural council?) Are rural/ decentralization codes translated into local languages.
 - a. Qui prend les décisions concernant l'attribution des terres dans votre village? (Le chef de village, le chef de terre ou le conseil communal/Conseil de village) Les codes ruraux / de décentralisation sont-ils traduits dans les langues locales.
2. Are you satisfied with the present system of allocating land and determining couloirs de passage pour des animaux? If not why?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait du système actuel d'attribution des terres et de détermination des couloirs de passage des animaux? Sinon pourquoi?
3. Have you or someone you know from the village been involved in a dispute over land? On what basis was the final decision made? Can this decision be appealed to a higher authority?
 - a. Avez-vous, ou quelqu'un que vous connaissez du village, été impliqué dans un différend foncier? Sur quelle base la décision finale a-t-elle été prise? Cette décision peut-elle être portée en appel devant une autorité supérieure?
4. Who should determine land ownership? The state, territorial administration, or local communities and traditional authorities?
 - a. Qui devrait déterminer la propriété foncière? L'état, l'administration territoriale, la communauté ou les chefs traditionnels?
5. Is the maire of the commune someone you trust?

- a. Le Maire de votre commune est-il quelqu'un de confiance?
6. Does he favor herders over farmers or farmers over herders or does he treat both groups fairly?
 - a. Favorise-t-il (le maire) les éleveurs aux agriculteurs ou les agriculteurs aux éleveurs ou traite-t-il les deux groupes équitablement?
7. Is the maire a member of a political party? Is political affiliation a factor in allocating investments and determining which villages resources and services? Who decides?
 - a. Le /Maire est-il membre d'un parti politique? L'affiliation politique est-elle un facteur dans l'allocation des investissements et la détermination des ressources et des services des villages? Qui décide?
8. How many young men under the age of 35 are on the rural council? Do they participate actively?
 - a. Combien de jeunes hommes de moins de 35 ans font partie du conseil communal (BF:Municipale)? Participent-ils activement?
9. How many young women under the age of 35 are on the rural council? Do they participate actively?
 - a. Combien de jeunes femmes de moins de 35 ans font partie du conseil communal (BF:Municipale)? Participent-elles activement?
10. Is your village represented on the Rural Council Which villages don't get represented? Why?
 - a. Votre village est-il représenté au Conseil communal (BF:Municipal)? Quels villages ne sont pas représentés? Pourquoi?
11. How do you get information about rural council meetings, the budget, and reports from the different commissions?
 - a. Comment obtenez-vous des informations sur les réunions du conseil communal (BF:Municipale), le budget et les rapports des différentes commissions?
12. Are young people satisfied with how the rural council is run? If not, how do they express their grievances? Does it ever lead to violence?
 - a. Les jeunes sont-ils satisfaits du fonctionnement du conseil communal (BF:Municipale)? Sinon, comment expriment-ils leurs soucis? Conduit-il jamais à la violence?
13. Have the investments and quality of services provided by the rural council changed in the past 2 years? How so?
 - a. Les investissements et la qualité des services fournis par le conseil communal (BF:Municipale) ont-ils changé au cours des 2 dernières années? Comment?
14. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about your future, that of your village, and that of your country over the next five years? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à votre avenir, celui de votre village et celui de votre pays au cours des cinq prochaines années? Pourquoi?
15. What is most needed to make conditions better?
 - a. De quoi a-t-on le plus besoin pour améliorer les conditions?

14-INTH Male Interviews:

Au Village- Hommes adultes, fermier et éleveur, même village

1. Who makes decisions concerning the allocation of land in your village? (the village chief, chef de terre, or the rural council?) Are rural/ decentralization codes translated into local languages.
 - a. Qui prend les décisions concernant l'attribution des terres dans votre village? (Le chef de village, le chef de terre ou le conseil villageois?) Les codes ruraux / de décentralisation sont-ils traduits dans les langues locales.
2. Are you satisfied with the present system of allocating land and determining couloirs de passage des animaux? If not why?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait du système actuel d'attribution des terres et de détermination des couloirs de passage des animaux? Sinon pourquoi?
3. Have you or someone you know from the village been involved in a dispute over land? On what basis was the final decision made? Can this decision be appealed to a higher authority?
 - a. Avez-vous, ou quelqu'un que vous connaissez du village, été impliqué dans un différend foncier? Sur quelle base la décision finale a-t-elle été prise? Cette décision peut-elle être portée en appel devant une autorité supérieure?
4. Who should determine land ownership? The state, territorial administration, or local communities and traditional authorities?
 - a. Qui devrait déterminer la propriété foncière?
5. Is the maire of the rural commune someone you trust?
 - a. Le Maire/chef de la village est-il quelqu'un de confiance ?
6. Does he favor herders over farmers or farmers over herders or does he treat both groups fairly?
 - a. Favorise-t-il (/maire/chef) les éleveurs aux agriculteurs ou les agriculteurs aux éleveurs ou traite-t-il les deux groupes équitablement?
7. Is the maire/chef a member of a political party? Is political affiliation a factor in allocating investments and determining which villages resources and services? Who decides?
 - a. Le maire/chef est-il membre d'un parti politique? L'affiliation politique est-elle un facteur dans l'allocation des investissements et la détermination des ressources et des services des villages? Qui décide?
8. How many young men under the age of 35 are on the rural communal? Do they participate actively?
 - a. Combien de jeunes hommes de moins de 35 ans font partie du conseil villageois? Participent-ils activement?
9. How many young women under the age of 35 are on the rural council? Do they participate actively?
 - a. Combien de jeunes femmes de moins de 35 ans font partie du conseil villageois ? Participent-elles activement?
10. Is your family represented on the village Council Which families don't get represented? Why?
 - a. Votre famille est-elle représenté au Conseil villageois ? Quels familles ne sont pas représentés ? Pourquoi?
11. How do you get information about rural council meetings, the budget, and reports from the different commissions?
 - a. Comment obtenez-vous des informations sur les réunions du conseil villageois, le budget et les rapports des différentes commissions?
12. Are young people satisfied with how the village council is run? If not, how do they express their grievances? Does it ever lead to violence?
 - a. Les jeunes sont-ils satisfaits du fonctionnement du conseil villageois? Sinon, comment expriment-ils leurs soucis? Conduit-il jamais à la violence?
13. Have the investments and quality of services provided by the rural council changed in the past 2 years? How so?
 - a. Les investissements et la qualité des services fournis par le conseil villageois ont-ils changé au cours des 2 dernières années? Comment?

14. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about your future, that of your village, and that of your country over the next five years? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à votre avenir, celui de votre village et celui de votre pays au cours des cinq prochaines années? Pourquoi?
15. What is most needed to make conditions better?
 - a. De quoi a-t-on le plus besoin pour améliorer les conditions?

15-INTF Female Interviews:

Au Village

1. Who makes decisions concerning the allocation of land in your village? (the village chief, chef de terre, or the rural council?) Are rural/ decentralization codes translated into local languages.
 - a. Qui prend les décisions concernant l'attribution des terres dans votre village? (Le chef de village, le chef de terre ou le conseil communal?) Les codes ruraux / de décentralisation sont-ils traduits dans les langues locales.
2. Are you satisfied with the present system of allocating land and determining couloirs de passage? If not why?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait du système actuel d'attribution des terres et de détermination des couloirs de passage? Sinon pourquoi?
3. Have you or someone you know from the village been involved in a dispute over land? On what basis was the final decision made? Can this decision be appealed to a higher authority?
 - a. Avez-vous, ou quelqu'un que vous connaissez du village, été impliqué dans un différend foncier? Sur quelle base la décision finale a-t-elle été prise? Cette décision peut-elle être portée en appel devant une autorité supérieure?
4. Who should determine land ownership? The state, territorial administration, or local communities and traditional authorities?
 - a. Qui devrait déterminer la propriété foncière?
5. Is the president of the rural commune someone you trust?
 - a. Le /maire/chef de la village est-il quelqu'un de confiance ?
6. Does he favor herders over farmers or farmers over herders or does he treat both groups fairly?
 - a. Favorise-t-il (le /maire/chef) les éleveurs aux agriculteurs ou les agriculteurs aux éleveurs ou traite-t-il les deux groupes équitablement?
 - b. Is the chef de village a member of a political party? Is political affiliation a factor in allocating investments and determining which villages resources and services? Who decides?
 - c. Le chef de village est-il membre d'un parti politique ? La affiliation politique est-elle un facteur dans l'affectation des terres , dans les investissements, et la détermination des ressources et des services pour le Village? Qui décide?
7. Should women also be on the rural councils? If so, why? If not, why?
 - a. Les femmes devraient-elles également faire partie des conseils villageois? Si oui, pourquoi? Sinon, pourquoi?
8. How many young women under the age of 35 are on the village council? Do they participate actively?
 - a. Combien de jeunes femmes de moins de 35 ans font partie du conseil villageois? Participent-elles activement?
9. Is your village represented on the Communal Council Which villages don't get represented? Why?
 - a. Votre famille est-elle représenté au Conseil villageois ? Quels familles ne sont pas représentés ? Pourquoi?
10. How do you get information about rural council meetings, the budget, and reports from the different commissions?
 - a. Comment obtenez-vous des informations sur les réunions du conseil villageois, le budget et les rapports des différentes commissions?
11. Are your friends satisfied with how the rural council is run? If not, why? How do they express their grievances?
 - a. Vos amis sont-ils satisfaits du fonctionnement du conseil villageois? Sinon, pourquoi? Comment expriment-ils leurs griefs?
12. Are there any major differences between you and the older women in the village?
 - a. Y a-t-il des différences majeures entre vous et les femmes plus âgées du village
13. Are young people satisfied with how the village council is run? If not, how do they express their grievances? Does it ever lead to violence?
 - a. Les jeunes sont-ils satisfaits du fonctionnement du conseil villageois? Sinon, comment expriment-ils leurs soucis? Conduit-il jamais à la violence?
14. Do you send your sons and daughters to public schools.? If so, why? If not, why?

- a. Envoyez-vous vos fils et vos filles dans les écoles publiques? Si oui, pourquoi? Sinon, pourquoi?
15. Is there a medical center in your village? Are you happy with the quality of services provided by the medical center?
- a. Y a-t-il un centre médical dans votre village? Êtes-vous satisfait de la qualité des services fournis par le centre médical?
16. Do you have access to clean water?
- a. Avez-vous accès à de l'eau propre?
17. What public services do you think are most important to the well-being of your family?
- a. Quels services publics pensez-vous sont les plus importants pour le bien-être de votre famille?
18. Are you satisfied with the quality of services you are getting? If not, why
- a. Êtes-vous satisfait de la qualité des services public que vous obtenez? Sinon, pourquoi
19. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about your future, that of your village, and that of your country over the next five years? Why?
- a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à votre avenir, celui de votre village et celui de votre pays au cours des cinq prochaines années? Pourquoi?
20. What is most needed to make conditions better?
- a. De quoi a-t-on le plus besoin pour améliorer les conditions?

Objectif: Ces entretiens contiennent des informations sur la façon dont les enseignants des écoles coraniques considèrent leur rôle et l'importance de leur école pour donner aux enfants musulmans une base solide nécessaire pour devenir de bons musulmans. Les entretiens soulignent également la diversité des antécédents et des opinions des enseignants des écoles coraniques qui ne devraient pas être considérés comme un groupe homogène et souligne la nécessité de désagréger les identités de groupe.

Participants: Des entretiens seront organisés avec des professeurs d'écoles coraniques jeunes et plus âgés, affiliés à différentes confessions musulmanes et ayant des niveaux d'éducation et des identités ethniques différents.

Purpose: These interviews contain information about how Qur'anic schoolteachers or Imams view their role as religious leaders and the importance of their Qur'anic Education in giving Muslim children a sound foundation needed to become good Muslims. The interviews also underscore the diversity in backgrounds and views of Qur'anic schoolteachers or Imams who should not be regarded as a homogeneous group and highlights the need to disaggregate group identities.

Participants: Interviews will be arranged with young and older Qur'anic schoolteachers or Imams affiliated with different Muslim denominations and having different levels of education and, ethnic identities.

1. How long has there been a Qur'anic School in your village?
 - a. Depuis combien de temps existe-t-il une école coranique dans votre village? (Si vous interviewez l'Imam, remplacez l'école coranique par une mosquée.)
2. Are you from this village?
 - a. Êtes-vous originaire de ce village?
3. Where did you get your education?
 - a. Où avez-vous fait vos études?
4. Are you affiliated with a confrerie? If so which one?
 - a. Êtes-vous affilié à une confrérie? Si oui lequel?
5. Is student enrollment increasing or decreasing? Why?
 - a. Les inscriptions des étudiants augmentent-elles ou diminuent-elles? Pourquoi?
6. Is there also a secular school in your village?
 - a. Y a-t-il également une école laïque dans votre village?
7. Do your students go there before or after they finish with the Qur'anic school?
 - a. Vos élèves y vont-ils avant ou après avoir terminé avec l'école coranique?
8. Where and how do Muslim women and young girls learn about Islamic practices? Should they attend Qur'anic School?
 - a. Où et comment les femmes et les jeunes filles musulmanes apprennent-elles les pratiques islamiques?

- b. Devraient-elles fréquenter l'école coranique?
9. Do you believe that women should be allowed to inherit land rights at the same level of men?
 - a. Croyez-vous que les femmes devraient être autorisées à hériter des droits fonciers au même niveau que les hommes?
10. Have any of your students gone on to study at more advanced Islamic institutions?
 - a. Certains de vos étudiants ont-ils poursuivi leurs études dans des institutions islamiques plus avancées?
11. How would you like to improve the curriculum you teach?
 - a. Comment aimeriez-vous améliorer le programme que vous enseignez?
12. Are there Muslims with affiliations with different confreries in your or neighboring villages?
 - a. Y a-t-il des musulmans affiliés à différentes confréries dans votre village ou dans les villages voisins?
13. Que pensez-vous des autres confrères? Do you ever pray together? Why?
 - a. Quelle est votre relation avec ces musulmans? Avez-vous déjà prié ensemble? Pourquoi?
14. Do you have non-Muslims in this village or neighboring villages? If so do you attend their baptisms, marriages, and other events?
 - a. Avez-vous des non-musulmans dans ce village ou les villages voisins? Si oui, assistez-vous à leurs baptêmes, mariages et autres événements.
15. If there are high levels of conflict and conflict in your and neighboring villages who do you think is responsible? Why? How has the conflict affected your village?
 - a. S'il y a des niveaux élevés de conflit dans votre village et dans les villages voisins, qui selon vous est responsable? Pourquoi? Comment le conflit a-t-il affecté votre village? Qui a le plus souffert de ces conflits?
16. Do you ever work with the village chief to mediate land tenure conflicts or conflicts between groups of people?
 - a. Avez-vous déjà travaillé avec le chef de village pour arbitrer les conflits fonciers ou les conflits entre groupes de personnes?
17. Are you satisfied with the level of government services? Is your village getting its fair share? If not, why?
 - a. Êtes-vous satisfait du niveau des services gouvernementaux? Votre village obtient-il sa juste part? Sinon, pourquoi?
18. Do you think the government respects Islamic law? If not, why?
 - a. Pensez-vous que le gouvernement respecte la loi islamique? Sinon, pourquoi?
19. Would you prefer that your country become an Islamic state? Why? If not, why?
 - a. Préférez-vous que votre pays devienne un État islamique? Pourquoi? Sinon, pourquoi?
20. Which modern Muslim leader do you look to for guidance?
 - a. À quel chef musulman moderne vous adressez-vous pour obtenir des conseils?
21. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the prospects for reducing violence in your region? If so, why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant aux perspectives de réduction de la violence dans votre région? Si oui, pourquoi?
22. Would you be willing to join an interreligious group to bring peace to your community? If so why? If not why?
 - a. Seriez-vous prêt à rejoindre un groupe interreligieux pour ramener la paix dans votre communauté? Si oui, pourquoi? Sinon pourquoi?

17-FGCL Interview Chef lieu of Rural Commune

Objectif: Ces groupes de discussion examineront le fonctionnement réel des conseils ruraux et compléteront les entretiens réalisés par des citoyens informés qui ne font pas partie du conseil. Cela permettra de comprendre pourquoi les conseils ruraux n'exercent pas les pouvoirs qui leur sont accordés dans les codes de décentralisation, ne fournissent pas les services publics qu'ils sont chargés de fournir et non consulter leurs électeurs.

Participants: Entretien avec le SG ou le premier adjoint. Si possible, un petit groupe de discussion avec les 2 -3 membres de l'équipe du maire. Une personne doit être bien placée pour discuter du régime foncier.

Purpose: These focus groups will examine how rural councils actually function and will complement the interviews done by informed citizens who are not on the council. It will provide some sense as to why rural councils are not exercising the powers granted them in decentralization codes, not delivering the public services they are mandated to give and not

consulting with their constituents.

Participation—Interview with the SG or first adjoint. If possible, one small focus group with the 2 -3 members of the mayor's team. One person should be well placed to discuss land tenure.

Number: Total 3, one in each country in high-conflict zones.

1. When was your rural commune founded?
 - a. Quand votre village a été érigé en commune rurale ?
2. Why was your village chosen as the chef lieu? How was that decision made?
 - a. Pourquoi votre village a-t-il été choisi comme chef lieu? Comment cette décision a-t-elle été prise?
3. How do you feel about the village and commune boundaries? Are they fair?
 - a. Que pensez-vous des limites du village et de la commune? Sont-ils justes?
4. How were the mayor and other rural councilors chosen?
 - a. Comment le maire et les autres conseillers communaux ont-ils été choisis?
5. How many people are on the rural council?
 - a. Combien de personnes font partie du conseil communal?
6. How many come from this village?
 - a. Combien viennent de ce village?
7. Have scheduled elections ever been cancelled? If so, why?
 - a. Y-a-t-il un cas où les élections prévues avaient-elles déjà été annulées? Si oui, pourquoi
8. Is the mayor a member of a political party? If so, which one?
 - a. Le maire est-il membre d'un parti politique? Si oui, lequel?
9. Does the communal council ever have any problems with the *tutelle* authority (prefect)? Why?
 - a. Le conseil communal a-t-il jamais eu des problèmes avec l'autorité tutelle (préfet)? Pourquoi?
10. Who should determine how land should be allocated?
 - a. Qui devrait déterminer comment les terres devraient être attribuées?
11. What are the major issues confronting your rural council that need immediate attention?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux problèmes auxquels votre conseil rural est confronté et qui nécessitent une attention immédiate?
12. Who determines where new schools, health centers, roads, youth centers, and other facilities are to be located?
 - a. Qui détermine où les nouvelles écoles, centres de santé, routes, centres pour jeunes et autres installations doivent être situés?
13. How large is the budget and how was it elaborated? Where does most of the revenues come from?
 - a. Quelle est la taille du budget et comment a-t-il été élaboré? D'où proviennent la plupart des revenus?

14. How transparent is the budgetary process? Can citizens attend meetings, see the figures and ask questions?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure le processus budgétaire est-il transparent? Les citoyens peuvent-ils assister aux réunions, voir les chiffres et poser des questions?
15. Has your rural commune ever been attacked? If so, why, and by whom?
 - a. Votre commune rurale a-t-elle déjà été attaquée? Si oui, pourquoi et par qui?
16. Do you feel that the government is doing its best to protect you?
 - a. Estimez-vous que le gouvernement fait de son mieux pour vous protéger?
17. Have you received protection from other non-government groups?
 - a. Avez-vous reçu la protection d'autres groupes non gouvernementaux?
18. Who elaborated the commune's local development plan? Does it reflect communal priorities?
 - a. Qui élabore le plan de développement local de la commune? Reflète-t-il les priorités communales?
19. What are the main problems that get raised at the rural council?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux problèmes soulevés au conseil rural?
20. Have any of the grievances led to violence? Which ones?
 - a. L'un des disputes a-t-il conduit à la violence? Sequels?
21. Has any violence been directed at rural council members, its facilities? If so, why and who did it?
 - a. Des violences ont-elles été dirigées contre les membres du conseil rural, ses installations? Si oui, pourquoi et qui l'a fait?
22. Do you feel any danger from foreign elements coming into your commune?
 - a. Ressentez-vous le danger que des éléments étrangers entrent dans votre commune?
23. What can be done to protect you? And who can do it?
 - a. Que peut-on faire pour vous protéger? Et par qui?
24. Is social cohesion and solidarity in your commune increasing or decreasing? Why?
 - a. La cohésion et la solidarité sociales dans votre commune augmentent-elles ou diminuent-elles? Pourquoi?
25. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the ability of the rural council to effectively mobilize and manage the commune's human and financial resources?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à la capacité du conseil rural à mobiliser et gérer efficacement les ressources humaines et financières de la commune?

18-FGOCL Focus group: (composition) Villa outside the chef lieu of the commune

Objectif Les groupes de discussion ici fournissent une perspective de base sur la façon dont les populations rurales sont liées à l'État, au gouvernement et à l'administration locale et à la politique électorale. Les évaluations des DG descendent rarement au niveau du village.

Participant: des membres du conseil villageois

Purpose: Focus groups here provide a grassroots perspective concerning how rural populations relate to the state, local government and administration, and electoral politics. DG assessments rarely go down to the village level.

Participants: Members of the Conseil Villageois

Number; Total: 3 , 1 in each country.

1. When was your rural commune founded?
 - a. Quand votre commune rurale a-t-elle été fondée?
2. How do you feel about the village and commune boundaries? Are they fair?
 - a. Que pensez-vous des limites du village et de la commune? Sont-ils justes? Expliquer?
3. How were the president and other rural councilors chosen?
 - a. Comment le président et les autres conseillers ruraux ont-ils été choisis?
4. Does the village council ever have any problems with the *tutelle* authority (prefect)? Why?
 - a. Le conseil villageois rencontre-t-il des problèmes avec l'autorité de tutelle (préfet)? Pourquoi?
5. Who determines where new schools, health centers, roads, youth centers, and other facilities are to be located?
 - a. Qui détermine où les nouvelles écoles, centres de santé, routes, centres de jeunesse et autres installations doivent être situés?
6. Who should determine how land should be allocated?
 - a. Qui devrait déterminer comment les terres devraient être attribuées?
7. What are the major issues confronting your village council that need immediate attention?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux problèmes auxquels votre conseil villageois est confronté et qui nécessitent une attention immédiate?
8. How large is the communal budget and how was it elaborated? Where does most of the revenues come from?
 - a. Quelle est la taille du budget communal et comment a-t-il été élaboré? D'où proviennent la plupart des revenus?
9. How transparent is the budgetary process? Can citizens attend meetings, see the figures and ask questions?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure le processus budgétaire est-il transparent? Les citoyens peuvent-ils assister aux réunions, voir les chiffres et poser des questions?
10. Has your rural commune ever been attacked? If so, why, and by whom?
 - a. Votre commune rurale a-t-elle déjà été attaquée? Si oui, pourquoi et par qui?
11. Do you feel that the government is doing its best to protect you?

- a. Estimez-vous que le gouvernement fait de son mieux pour vous protéger?
- 12. Have you received protection from other non-government groups?
 - a. Avez-vous reçu la protection d'autres groupes non gouvernementaux?
- 13. Do you know if all of the outlying villages have a member on the rural council?
 - a. Savez-vous si tous les villages périphériques ont un membre au conseil rural
- 14. Who elaborated the commune's local development plan? Does it reflect communal priorities?
 - a. Qui élabore le plan de développement local de la commune? Reflète-t-il les priorités communales?
- 15. What are the main grievances that get raised at the rural council?
 - a. Quels sont les principaux problèmes soulevés au conseil villageois?
- 16. Have any of the grievances led to violence? Which ones?
 - a. L'un des disputes a-t-il conduit à la violence? Lesquels?
- 17. Has any violence been directed at rural council members, its facilities? If so, why and who did it?
 - a. Des violences ont-elles été dirigées contre les membres du conseil villageois, ses installations? Si oui, pourquoi et qui l'a fait?
- 18. Do you feel any danger from foreign elements coming into your commune?
 - a. Ressentez-vous le danger que des éléments étrangers entrent dans votre commune
- 19. What can be done to protect you? And who can do it?
 - a. Que peut-on faire pour vous protéger? Et par qui?
- 20. Is social cohesion and solidarity in your commune increasing or decreasing? Why?
 - a. La cohésion et la solidarité sociales dans votre commune augmentent-elles ou diminuent-elles? Pourquoi?
- 21. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the ability of the rural council to effectively mobilize and manage the commune's human and financial resources?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à la capacité du conseil villageois à mobiliser et gérer efficacement les ressources humaines et financières de la commune?

19-INTP Interview with Prefect at Department/Cercle Level

Ces entretiens porteront sur les devoirs, les préoccupations et les performances du préfet à la tête des structures administratives de l'Etat fournissant des services aux populations rurales de sa juridiction. Le préfet est l'intermédiaire entre les institutions étatiques supérieures et les institutions locales.

Participants: un Le premier doit être choisi en fonction de sa faible expérience, mais d'un niveau d'éducation élevé. Le second préfet doit être choisi sur la base de sa longue expérience de préfet.

These interviews will examine the duties, concerns, and performance of the prefect as head of the state administrative structures providing services to the rural populations in his jurisdiction. The prefect is the intermediary between higher level state institutions and local level institutions.

Participants: One The first should be chosen on the basis of having little experience but high levels of education. The second prefect should be chosen on the basis of his long experience as prefect.

1. How long have you been prefect? Do you come from this region?
 - a. Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous préfet? Vous venez de cette région?
2. Where did you get your training to be prefect and why were you assigned to this department/circle?
 - a. Où avez-vous obtenu votre formation de préfet et pourquoi avez-vous été affecté à ce département / cercle?
3. What do you see as the main problems in your district?
 - a. Quels sont selon vous les principaux problèmes de votre quartier?
4. Do you have enough human and financial resources to deliver the public services needed by local communities in your department? If not, why?
 - a. Avez-vous suffisamment de ressources humaines et financières pour fournir les services publics nécessaires aux communautés locales de votre département? Sinon, pourquoi?
5. Do you work with local chiefs and religious leaders to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts in your jurisdiction? What kinds? How?
 - a. Travaillez-vous avec les chefs locaux et les chefs religieux pour prévenir, atténuer et résoudre les conflits dans votre juridiction? Quels types? Comment?
6. Which conflicts are still manageable?
 - a. Quels conflits sont encore gérables?
7. What has been your best success story? Your worst failure? Can you elaborate?
 - a. Quelle a été votre meilleure réussite? Votre pire échec? Pouvez-vous élaborer?
8. How do you explain the recent surge and intensity of violence in your jurisdiction and in the country?
 - a. Comment expliquez-vous la montée et l'intensité récentes de la violence dans votre juridiction et dans le pays?

9. Has your department been attacked by violent groups? Do they receive support from people in local communities?
 - a. Votre département a-t-il été attaqué par des groupes violents? Reçoivent-ils le soutien des gens des communautés locales?
10. Where are the violent groups coming from? Where do they get their resources? Who is behind them?
 - a. D'où viennent les groupes violents? Où trouvent-ils leurs ressources? Qui les soutient?
11. To what extent have these attacks led to people fleeing their homes, closing schools and markets, and government civil servants and security forces abandoning them?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure ces attaques ont-elles conduit des personnes à fuir leurs maisons, à fermer des écoles et des marchés, et conduit à l'abandon des fonctionnaires et des forces de sécurité du gouvernement?
12. Has your department experienced significant increases in anti-government activities—violent demonstrations, destruction of public property, physical attacks on government officials? If so, who is doing this and why?
 - a. Votre région a-t-elle connu une augmentation significative des activités antigouvernementales - manifestations violentes, destruction de biens publics, attaques physiques contre des fonctionnaires? Si oui, qui fait cela et pourquoi?
13. How high is youth unemployment in the department? What can be done to alleviate youth unemployment?
 - a. Quel est le taux de chômage des jeunes dans votre région? Que peut-on faire pour réduire le chômage des jeunes?
14. Why is youth unemployment increasing?
 - a. Pourquoi le chômage des jeunes augmente-t-il?
15. Has there been any major increase in the need for humanitarian aid in your department over the past three years?
 - a. Y a-t-il eu une augmentation importante des besoins d'aide humanitaire dans votre région au cours des trois dernières années?
16. Are members of national technical services reluctant to serve here? Do you notice any improvements? If so, why and in what services?
 - a. Les membres des services techniques nationaux sont-ils réticents à servir ici? Avez-vous remarqué des améliorations? Si oui, pourquoi et dans quels services?
17. To what extent has social cohesion and solidarity gone down? Why?
 - a. Dans quelle mesure la cohésion sociale et la solidarité ont-elles diminué? Pourquoi?
18. In which places are social cohesion and solidarity still high? Why do you think this is the case?
 - a. Dans quels endroits la cohésion et la solidarité sociales sont-elles encore élevées? Pourquoi pensez-vous que ce soit le cas?
19. Are there any peace building groups and projects in your department? How are they doing?
 - a. Y a-t-il des groupes et des projets de consolidation de la paix dans votre région? Comment vont-ils?
20. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of your department? Why?
 - a. Êtes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste quant à l'avenir de votre région? Pourquoi?

Burkina Faso

Professor Augustin Loada

These questions address governance issues and should provide more specific details concerning how grievances led to the ouster of the Compaoré regime and the difficulties faced by the new government's responses to the acceleration of different forms of violence, its ambivalent role as both perpetrator of violence and defender against violence, and its efforts to rebuild social cohesion at all levels.

1. What were the main causes behind the fall of the Compaoré regime in 2014?
2. To what extent did the rural populations support his ouster. To what extent were there close ties between the leaders of the demonstrations that led to the overthrow of Compaoré and the rural populations? What were the main grievances against his regime?
3. To what did you attribute the sudden appearance of Jihadi violence in 2015 coming from Mali.
4. To what extent was the government prepared?
5. What was the new government's policy in dealing with the Jihadi violence and other forms of violence—banditry, herder farmer conflicts, ethnic conflicts, land conflicts, etc.
6. How successful were these policies?
7. Were there any reforms made of previous land and decentralization code?
8. What were the main lines of the 2017 plan d'urgence ?
9. How was this plan elaborated ? Was there consultation with political parties, civil society, traditional chiefs, and religious leaders?
10. Did the plan include any provisions for land reform, measures to prevent the army to prevent violations human rights, or negotiating with Jihadi and other violent groups?
11. Who supported and who opposed which features of the plan? Did the exponential increase in the level of violence between 2017 and 2020 lead to new approaches?
12. What reforms do you think are needed to address the major grievances of the rural populations?
13. Have there been any improvements in the delivery of local government services since the fall of the Compaoré regime? If so, in what areas?
14. The Peulhs have been stigmatized as jihadis? What is the basis for this accusation? Who is behind these accusations? Why?
15. Have there been efforts to integrate the Peulhs into Burkina Faso's defense and security forces?
16. What is the government's current position on local self-defense forces?
17. What is the government's position on engaging in negotiations with Jihadi groups?
18. Why are Peulhs joining and heading jihadi groups in Burkina Faso?
19. To what extent are they allied with other foreign jihadi groups?
20. What measures can be taken to rebuild lost social cohesion.?
21. Is there any indication that the government, civil society, and traditional and religious authorities are now collaborating to fight terrorism and unite the country?
22. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the country's future over the next five years? Why?
23. What further measures, reforms, and changes in behavior are needed to mitigate violence?

Professor Yacouba Yaro – Unresponsive to Inquiry

These questions are designed to provide a historical perspective concerning the extent to which social and economic changes or lack of change affect the development of different forms of conflict. They also shed light as to why the failure of government to adequately deliver essential public services and invest in infrastructure in an equitable manner over several decades retarded Burkina Faso's social and economic development.

1. What major reforms were made in Burkina Faso during Thomas Sankara's short time in power (1984-1987)? What was the impact of these reforms on Burkinabé society?
2. Who gained from these reforms? Who lost as a result of these reforms?
3. To what extent did public services improve during Thomas Sankara's short tenure (1984-1987) as national leader? In which areas? Through what measures?
4. What were the main changes in Burkina Faso's social and economic development during Blaise Compaoré's tenure (1987-2014) as president in terms of literacy, status of youth and women, changes in land tenure, agricultural and livestock development and climate? Who gained? Who lost? To what extent were rural sectors neglected?
5. To what extent, if any did social cohesion decline during this period? If so, how and Why?
6. Did social structures change very much during this period?
7. To what extent did social conflicts increase or decline? Why and How?
8. Shortly after the election of the Kaboré-led government following the 2014 elections, what caused the sudden explosion in Jihadi attacks in 2015?
9. Did these attacks receive much support from Burkina Faso's Muslim populations?
10. Did these attacks reflect a major rise in fundamentalist sentiments?
11. What accounts for rural populations having more trust in traditional chiefs than in local and national elected officials?
12. What are the major causes resulting in the further decline in social cohesion in high conflict areas? How difficult is it to reverse the decline?
13. Which rural areas in Burkina Faso have the best public services. Why?
14. Which rural areas in Burkina Faso have the worst public services? Why?
15. Which factors most affect the failure to deliver essential public services? Corruption; lack of technical capacity; lack of financial resources; insecurity; abandonment of posts?
16. Is the Kaboré government making a greater effort to provide more and better services and to build social cohesion than the Compaoré regime? If so, how?
17. What are its chances of succeeding to rebuild social cohesion, reduce the level of conflict and improve the level of economic and social development? What conditions need to be met to do so?

Idrissa Barry -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

These questions reveal successful methods and tools for building social solidarity to oust unpopular governments through non-violent means and peacebuilding through dialogue which are rarely covered in conflict assessments.

1. What issues moved you and others to create the Balai Citoyen movement?
2. When and where was it founded?
3. What were its goals?
4. Why did you decide to adopt non-violent resistance?
5. To what extent were you inspired by Thomas Sankara and Bob Marley?
6. What values do you share with them?
7. Who joined your movement?
8. How did you organize?
9. What were your main grievances?
10. How did you communicate your message?
11. Why did music become such a powerful medium for communication?

12. What were the relationships between the men and women in your movement in terms of organization and leadership?
13. To what extent did you mobilize your members and public around specific issues?
14. What were they?
15. Did you organize in rural areas? How?
16. How did you manage to mobilize hundreds of thousands to demonstrate and demand the ouster of the president? What role did women play?
17. After Compaoré fled the country in 2014, what role did Balai Citoyen play in the transition to democracy?
18. How did you manage to overturn an attempted military coup ?
19. What are you doing now to build social cohesion to encourage dialogue to bring opposing groups together?
20. To what extent do you work with interfaith groups?
21. What are your perceptions of Burkinabé leaders of jihadi groups?
22. Who is behind them and what do they want?
23. What is Balai Citoyen doing to fight discrimination against Peulhs?
24. Who are your closest allies?
25. What are your relationships with traditional chiefs and religious leaders?
26. What reforms do you think are needed to reduce non-Jihadi conflicts?
27. How can Burkina Faso defeat the Jihadis?
28. What are you doing to encourage dialogue with the military?
29. To what extent is the government and Balai Citoyen collaborating with each other?
30. Do you see the French forces here as allies? If not why?
31. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?
32. What scenarios do you see for the country over the next five years?

International Crisis Group: Questions for Burkina Faso -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

Interviews will fill gaps in detail about who are perpetrators of Jihadi violence in Burkina Faso, their ties with other Jihadi forces in Mali, North Africa, and the Middle East, and the response of Burkinabé military and security forces.
at

1. What was the main trigger setting off Jihadi attacks in Burkina Faso in 2015?
2. What are ties between Ansurul Islam led by Ibrahim Dicko and the Etat Islamique dans la Grande Sahara ?
3. To what extent do these groups have a strong following in Burkina Faso?
4. If so, who supports these groups in Burkina Faso?
5. Where and how were their fighters recruited and trained?
6. Where and how did they get their training?
7. To what extent do they have links with Jihadi groups in Algeria and Libya?
8. To what extent are they branches of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State and share the same ideology?
9. How do you explain their ability to expand the number of attacks between 2017 and 2020 and create such havoc with relatively small numbers?
10. Who are the Malians fleeing into Burkina Faso?
11. To what extent do Peulh communities in Burkina share their ideology or regard them as protectors?
12. What are the tactics being used by the Jihadi organizations to win support in the country?
13. Why have Burkinabé military and security forces not been able to stop their attacks.
14. To what extent did the breaking up of Compaoré's elite unit weaken the army?
15. What is the present government doing to strengthen their military forces and intelligence services?
16. The Burkinabé military and security forces have been accused of summary executions and other human rights violations with Peulh communities being the main victims?

17. What is the ethnic composition of the army? What is the percentage of Peulhs in the army? Would integration of more Peulhs into the national army help defuse tensions?
18. What is the current government doing to impose greater discipline within the military and security services and to promote dialogue and cooperation with local communities in the areas in which they operate?
19. Why are large numbers of Burkinabé wary and suspicious of France's role as a military ally?
20. Why are you worried that national elections violence could lead to the collapse of the state and permit jihadi forces to move southward and down into neighboring coastal countries?

MALI

Cheibane Coulibaly -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

Interview will offer historical perspectives dating back to Mali Empire under Sundiata that present a model of African society and links between Saharan, Sahelian Africa and Muslim North Africa, the origins and persistence of conflicts between agricultural and pastoral societies, and the extent to which colonial and postcolonial states depart from the original model and destroy the autonomy and freedom.

1. What are your views concerning the Mande-led Mali Empire under Sundiata?
2. Who were the populations under their control?
3. What role did the Mali Empire play in the Trans-Saharan trade between North Africa and West Africa?
4. What were the relations between the Muslim emperors of Mali and Arab Muslim North Africa and the Middle East?
5. How did the absence of fixed borders, social mobility, and granting autonomy and religious freedom to different ethnic communities in the Empire contribute to prosperity and social peace?
6. What was the impact of the Atlantic slave trade on Trans-Saharan trade and communities inhabiting the Saharan and Sahelian zones?
7. What were the relationships between Tuaregs and Peulhs and North African and Sahelian populations before he colonial conquest?
8. Explain why contemporary conflicts between Tuaregs and Peulh pastoral communities in Mali are rooted in the past ?
9. How did the Wahhabi takeover of Saudi Arabia in the 18th century influence Peulh religious leaders who launched jihads in West Africa to purify Islamic states resisted the colonial conquest?
10. How did the colonial conquest change the relationships between pastoral and agricultural populations in the Sahel?
11. How did the abolition of slavery during affect social hierarchies in aristocratic African societies and relationships between masters and slaves?
12. To what extent did the centralized colonial state destroy the autonomy and initiative of local communities?
13. How did colonial investments favor coastal colonies and lead to marginalizing landlocked Sahelian countries in general and pastoralist populations in particular?
14. Why and how did the marginalization of Peulh and Tuareg populations in Mali and other Sahelian countries set the stage for conflict between the state and pastoralists after independence.
15. To what extent has the marginalization of Tuaregs and their lack of autonomy been the cause of several rebellions and movements to create an independent Tuareg state while discrimination against Peulhs has moved some to ally with other jihadi movements.
16. How did changes in traditional land tenure rules by the postcolonial state set the stage for conflicts between those who gained and those who lost?
17. What are your recommendations for reforming the current land tenure system in Mali and other Sahelian countries?
18. How would you change the decentralization codes to give more autonomy to local communities?

International Crisis Group-Mali -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

1. What are the links between Middle East Jihadist organizations like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State with AQIM, MUJAO and Ansar Dine which were the first Jihadi organizations to operate in Mali?
2. To what extent do these groups receive financial support from Middle East sources and how dependent are these groups on these sources?
3. To what extent have Libyan Islamist groups been involved with Jihadi groups in Mali since the fall of the Qaddafi regime in 2011? How?
4. How crucial was the support of AQIM, MUJAO, and Ansar Dine to the creation of a Tuareg state based on Sharia law in 2012?
5. After the French army drove the Jihadists of their Islamist state, most of the local populations greeted them as liberators. Since then the popularity of the French has drastically declined. Why?
6. Why are large numbers of Malians wary and suspicious of France's role as a military ally?
7. How do you explain the poor performance of G5 and ineffectiveness of UN forces in fighting jihadi terrorists and protecting local communities?
8. Why haven't the French been able to stop jihadist attacks in Northern Mali? Lack of sufficient troops? Fear of high casualties? Concern primarily over economic interests?
9. How has the recent emergence of Malian based jihadi groups like the Front pour la Liberation de Macina, Ansaroul Islam, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and JNIM changed conflict dynamics in Mali? To what extent do Peulh, Tuareg, and Arab communities in Mali share embrace their ideology, support them, or regard them as protectors?
10. What are the tactics being used by the Mali- based Jihadi organizations to win support? Support of which grievances build support and credibility?
11. If at all, how do their tactics differ from and are more effective than those used by non-Sahara based Jihadist group?
12. To what extent do they communicate and collaborate with each other?
13. Since their emergence, violence in central Mali has dramatically increased? Why?
14. Who is behind stroking inter-ethnic fighting?
15. Who are the Malians fleeing into Burkina Faso? Why?
16. The military coup d'état ousted ATT because of his failure to provide sufficient resources to fight Tuareg rebels and prevent the establishment of an independent Tuareg state (AZAWAD). What happened to the army after the coup?
17. What measures did IBK take to strengthen the army, gendarmerie, and intelligence services?
18. What measures did he take to stop reprisals against ethnic groups and communities allegedly supporting jihadis organizations ?
19. What measures did the government take to stop ethnic self-defense groups against other ethnic communities ?
20. What is the ethnic composition of the army? Would integration of more Tuaregs, Peulhs, and Arabs into the national army help defuse tensions?
21. What is the current government doing to impose greater discipline within the military and security services and to promote dialogue and cooperation with local communities in the areas in which they operate?
22. Recently, the president has announced his willingness to negotiate with Jihadi groups, especially in central Mali which is currently the region where here is the most violence. What are the chances for successful notions? What concessions would need to be made on both sides?
23. Why are you worried that national elections violence could lead to the collapse of the state and permit jihadi forces to move southward and down into neighboring coastal countries?

NIGER

Issouf Bayard: Development Anthropologist.

Purpose: This interview will provide historical perspective on inter-relationships between religious, ethnic, political, and socio-economic identities of important major groups involved in and contemporary conflicts having roots in the past. It also addresses failure to disaggregate in identifying major social and economic cleavages within Malian and Niger society with special emphasis on Tuaregs, and Peulhs.

1. What were the origins and causes of conflicts between Peulhs and Tuaregs in Mali and Niger before the colonial era –e.g. religious differences, competition for control over territory, trade routes, and access to natural resources, etc.
2. What was the social organization of these groups based on clans or tribes?
3. To what extent was there slavery within these societies and who were the slaves.?
4. What was the social status and treatment of women in these societies?
5. What were their economies based on. ?
6. Where and when did they go to what is now Niger and Mali.
7. To what extent were they Islamized and involved in jihads.
8. How did they relate to the rural farm populations and ethnic groups in these regions?
9. how did these groups relate to Tuaregs and Peulhs?
10. Where, when and why did conflicts develop between these groups? What forms did they take?
11. Who intervened to mediate?
12. How did colonial rule change things?
13. How did these groups relate to the colonial state?
14. How did the colonial state relate to these groups?
15. What changed under colonial rule?
16. What stayed the same?
17. Did conflicts increase or diminish? Why?
18. Describe the changes at an after independence?
19. How did they relate to the postcolonial state?
20. What precipitated waves of Tuareg rebellions and independence in Mali and Niger?
21. To what extent did setting of fixed territorial boundaries after independence affect relationships and migration patterns.

Mohamed Anacko -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

1. Can you tell us more about yourself? Where did you grow up and where did you get educated?
2. What were the major grievances that led Tuaregs in Niger to rebel in the 1990s?
3. Mali had several rebellions. Why were there no rebellions in Niger before?
4. How were your relationships with other Tuareg groups in Mali?
5. Did you have any links with Tuareg rebels in Mali?
6. What made you decide to end your group's rebellion and make peace.
7. Did the government accept your conditions?
8. As High Commissioner for Peace, how did you manage to get other rebel groups to make peace?

9. What sparked another Tuareg rebellion in 2007?.
10. Why didn't you join?
11. Has the government kept its promises to promote economic development and educational facilities in the Agadez region?
12. Has the government integrated more Tuaregs into Niger's defense and security forces?
13. Why have Malian Tuaregs allied with Jihadi movements and created their own movements in Mali. How much support do they have from Tuareg communities?
14. What has been the impact on the Agadez region of pressure from Europe for Niger to stop migration from West Africa?
15. What has been the impact of fighting between Toubou and Islamist groups in southwestern Libya fighting for control of major trading routes.
16. What measures need to be taken to stop the spread of radical Jihadi movements and maintain peace in Niger?
17. Who are your allies in peacebuilding?
18. To what extent has the explosion in violent conflicts in the Sahel now increased the willingness of the government and Nigeriens to work together?
19. What can the government do reduce anti-government sentiment?
20. What is your strategy for bringing to the Sahara-Sahel region ?

International Crisis Group: Niger -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

1. Why and How did Nigerien- based Jihadi groups become allied with Jihadi-based groups in Mali?
2. Why have French and American military support done little to stop the violence in North Tillaberi region?
3. How and why did Tuareg self-defense groups in Mali get involved in defending the Mali-Niger border?
4. Are radical Islamist ideologies gaining ground in Niger? If so, where, why and with what groups.?
5. Why has the government been so ineffective in stopping the violence?
6. To what extent is the strategy and tactics of jihadi groups operating in Niger different from jihadi groups operating in Mali and Burkina Faso?
7. Why is Agadez region relatively quiet when compared with Diffa and Tillaberi regions?
8. What can be done to reestablish peaceful relations between Tuaregs and Peulhs in Tillaberi region.
9. Where do jihadi groups get their financial resources from?
10. What is the Nigerian government doing to strengthen its military and security forces and intelligence services?
11. What measures are the government taking to stop reprisals and violations of civil rights against ethnic groups and communities allegedly supporting jihadis organizations?
12. Why did Malian refugees flee to Niger? Where exactly did they come from and why haven't they returned? .
13. Why are Jihadi groups attacking traditional chiefs in Tilliberi?
14. Inhabitants of attacked village often flee and become IDPs. Since jihadi groups don't stay, why don't the IDPs return to their villages?
15. To what extent has President Issoufou tried to engage in dialogue with jihadi and self-defense groups? Is he now making a greater effort than in the past?
16. Anti-government sentiment has been growing in the county because of corruption, growing inequality, and failure to deliver promised public services. To what extent has President been forced to address these issues? How?
17. Are there any signs that G5 is becoming a more effective force?
18. What will be the impact of the withdrawal of American military support and financial aid?
19. Will France increase its military presence? If so, why, If not, why?
20. What effect do you think, the Corona virus will have on the country?
21. What scenarios do you envision for the future?

Ousman Moumouni -- Unresponsive to Inquiry

1. For many years you have been a leader of civil society organizations promoting democratic governance in Niger. Can you tell us why and when you became involved?
2. What were the main issues that concerned you? Why?
3. Why do you think that Niger has suffered from a rapid increase in terrorist attacks and inter-ethnic fighting over the past 5 years?
4. What alternatives are there to a strong military to stop jihadi movements in Niger?
5. What have been the consequences of a primarily military response to the violence?
6. What are the main causes of anti-government sentiments in Niger?
7. Why has there been such little turnover in political leaders over the past thirty year?
8. To what extent is President Issoufou making an effort to improve government performance?
9. What are the main causes of rural discontent?
10. How effective has foreign aid been in raising living standards in Niger? In countering violent extremism?
11. What has the government done to rehabilitate Diffa region's shattered economy?
12. Do you see religious intolerance on the rise in Niger? If so? If not, why?
13. What governance reforms are most needed to control corruption, improve the quality of public services, and restore confidence in the government?
14. Do you see young men and women getting more involved in improving democratic governance? If so, why and how? If not, why and how?
15. Is Niger in danger of becoming a failed state?
16. What is your scenario for Niger over the next five years?