Resilience for Peace (R4P)
Understanding the Border Area in
Northern Côte d'Ivoire Research Series

POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS (PEA) SECURITY GOVERNANCE

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data
CAPEC	CIRES Economic Policy Analysis Unit
CCE	Ethics Advisory Committees
CCM	Civil-Military Cell
CDLM	Local Mining Development Committee
CDS	Departmental Security Committees
COGES	Management Committee
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
EAI	Equal Access International
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEI	Improvised Explosive Devices
FACI	Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire
FCFA	Franc of the African Financial Community
GIE	Economic Interest Group
GTIA	Inter-Army Technical Group
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
R4P	Resilience for Peace
SDF	Security and Defense Forces
TAC	Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire

Executive Summary

Context

The objective of this security governance Political Economy Analysis (PEA) is to understand and map the power dynamics of local security governance in the northern border regions. Specifically, this involves mapping mandated national and local state systems of security governance, and describing informal and community-based systems that foster or hinder the proper functioning of state security governance systems on the ground. This PEA also identifies relevant formal and informal decision makers, as well as "spoilers" of effective security governance regarding matters of financial flows, behavior of security forces, political influence, and public communication.

The study builds on a document review and qualitative data collection from 160 interviews and 37 focus group discussions with 407 individuals. Triangulating the collected information allowed researchers to note the quality of security governance regarding civil-military relations. Research findings were also shaped by two key limitations: classified security data was unavailable (e.g., national security strategy and planning, staffing, budget), and military authorities did not allow meeting troops deployed in sensitive locations.

Key Findings

Basic factors of security governance

Legacies of the previous decade of instability (2002–2011) limit the legitimacy of state security institutions in northern border areas. The long absence of central state institutions across the north makes it harder to prove their legitimacy today—mistrust and suspicion are widespread. Populations are reluctant to obey the orders

of agencies involved in security management. This resistance, led mainly by young people, will likely compromise the civil-military relationship currently under construction, and could undermine the prevention of terrorist activities.

Social norms serve as a shield against violent extremism, but they also weaken the effectiveness of security institutions. All along the northern border, a cultural homogeneity connects cross-border communities (e.g., common language, culture, and rituals) and explains the high mobility of populations in the five study areas. These common identities strengthen information sharing, helping to consolidate cross-border social capital and remove barriers to mutual understanding and decrease stigmatization. However, unmarked, unmanned borders make for a porosity that allows any visitor to move freely without being noted or reported as a "suspicious presence" to competent authorities.

Specifics of the Burkina Faso border and underground economies within Comoé National Park. Since the decade of instability, the park has been the site of illegal extraction (e.g., clandestine gold panning, animal poaching) whose financing and ultimate benefactors are opaque. At the heart of these activities are idle youth from local communities who are easily enticed and manipulated by economic actors with no clear identity.

Economic opportunities are increasing but not reaching the most fragile strata—youth and women. Economic opportunities in the communities visited are limited in scale and diversity, which drives the borderland informal economy (i.e., smuggling) and attracts a large segment of young people. Hidden tracks used by smugglers also serve as

crossing points for other forms of illicit trade, often run by youth as an alternative to subsistence livelihoods.

Natural resource competition. Three major resources are subject to scarcity and competition: arable land, pasture and water, and mining sites. Each of these are controlled informally or opaquely and generate rents to varying degrees, attracting diverse actors with disparate interests. Arable land, once widely available, is now subject to competing claims and disputed, particularly since the rise of the cashew as a valuable cash crop. Land tenure, being informal and subject to verbal or written contracts with inaccurate boundaries, becomes a conflict trigger for neighboring communities or with outsiders investing in large-scale farming. Regarding limited pasture and water for grazing, this exacerbates community tensions when livestock graze in cultivated areas, destroying crops. These disputes are fueled by (i) disregard for established transhumance corridors and their boundaries, (ii) local beliefs that ascribe nutritional value to the consumption of cropland (e.g., sorghum, cashew) by livestock, and (iii) the intensification of local identity politics. Regarding gold resources, artisanal mining activities are spreading informally and unregulated, although the activity itself is well organized and structured. Another unregulated economy, illegal gold panning, is justified by some as a response to the perceived inequalities of formal gold mining, which has few economic benefits and little access for local communities. Gold panning revenues are distributed transparently between economic operators, local communities, and security forces. This social balance is broken when state brigades invade gold panning sites, evicting workers and confiscating equipment.

Rules of the Game around Security Governance

Formal rules. The institutional and regulatory frameworks informing security governance in the border regions aim to guide troop behavior and improve public perceptions of defense and security forces (e.g., Law of Military Programming of January 4, 2016, charter of ethics and code of ethics). The proliferation of civ-mil dialogue frameworks (e.g., Civil-Military Cells [CCM], Departmental Security Committees [CDS], Ethics Advisory Committees [CCE]) is beneficial at the local level because of the need for public exchange around local security concerns. Yet their effectiveness appears limited because (i) security and defense forces [SDF] are generally perceived as lax and unreliable in witness protection, (ii) recurring restrictions on civic freedoms (e.g., kickbacks and arbitrary fines at innumerable roadblocks), (iii) human rights violations, and (iv) the exclusive nature of some civ-mil dialogue frameworks. Cross-border security cooperation is strengthened through the Accra Initiative[1] and the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire (TAC), but their effectiveness is

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[1] The Accra Initiative was launched in September 2017 by Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo, in response to growing insecurity linked to violent extremism in the region. It aims to prevent the spread of violent extremism from the Sahel and to fight against transnational organized crime in border areas. (Source: Institute for Security Studies 2019).

undermined by security crises[2] in Mali and Burkina Faso.

Social norms and dispute resolution. Endogenous norms grant legitimacy to traditional hunters or "dozos" to provide security locally, thus increasing the public sense of safety. Officially, state authorities deny any collaboration with dozos, yet informal coordination and collaboration between SDF and dozos are widely observed. This denial of any relationship is seen in the absence of dozos in various civil-military dialogue bodies, such as CCMs. While their protection is comforting to communities, this study notes that the extra-judicial dispute resolution offered by dozos can violate human rights in cases and exacerbate hostilities where it backs local communities against perceived outsider groups like the Fulani.

Political games. Competition between local leaders and political elites detracts from their contribution and commitment to improving civil-military relations. Local political leaders compete for public support to further their ambitions of wider influence and control, which they pursue at from the bottom up at the level of neighborhoods, large families (e.g., Kablas), and youth social circles and networks (e.g., tea "grins" or tea-sharing rituals). Consequently, these power struggles take expression at the community level, disrupting the social fabric and heightening antagonism between communities as they seek to dominate local political power.

Here and Now

No commonly shared awareness or appreciation of the terrorist threat. Risk awareness around terrorist action is higher in areas that have experienced attacks or incidents. Populations do not appear to link other facets of insecurity (e.g., kidnappings, violent theft) with violent extremism but attribute them to chronic poverty and despair. This study notes that the deployment of military detachments (the GTIA, or Inter-Army Technical Group) across northern borderlands has helped restore a relative calm.

Insecurity factors. Several factors and/or actors could upset the precarious balance maintained by the army in the border areas. These include the straining of social cohesion marked by escalating farmer-herder conflict against a background of Fulani aggression, intensified racketeering and harassment by police at checkpoints, and emerging factors such as the profusion of child beggars (talibés) and the expansion of smuggling routes to avoid official border crossings and road checkpoints.

Actors essential to building better security governance. The main agents of change are the Ministry of Defense, which defines the overall terrorism response strategy, including the construction of better civil-military relations; the administrative authorities (e.g., prefects and sub-prefects) providing security governance leadership at local levels; local political authorities (e.g., deputies, mayors) who can act as either friends or foes of local security; and local civil society in its multiple forms (e.g., community leaders,

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[2] Coups have been perpetrated in Mali (August 2020) and Burkina Faso (January 2022). These countries are now led by military juntas and are subject (especially Mali) to political and economic sanctions from

ECOWAS and international institutions, which can hinder the fight against violent extremism.

religious leaders, youth leaders, women's organizations), which provide viable entry points for community engagement. Alongside these positive agents of change, other actors should be closely monitored and incorporated into civil-military dialogue around security matters. These are marginalized communities (Fulani, primarily); traditional hunters (dozos), with their extra-legal legitimacy and public trust; the clandestine mining community; and motorcycle taxi drivers.

Security Governance Dynamics

Recent developments suggest future progress: (i) national government commitments to reduce poverty and vulnerability in border regions, which help reconfirm State legitimacy in the security space, and (ii) increasing use of civ-mil dialogue frameworks as effective vehicles for debate, with a view to improving cross-border cooperation as this becomes more coordinated and focused. This latter development is manifest through increased information exchange and joint counterterrorism and community resilience efforts that mobilize local social norms and cross-border social capital. The increasing acceptance of gold panning and State efforts to regulate it will foster positive local economic dynamics.

Dynamics that hinder effective security governance. These involve racketeering at checkpoints and borders by uniformed officials, with its corresponding sense of injustice and perception of SDF as being above the law. The threat of terrorist attack drives heightened suspicion between groups, eroding social cohesion and accelerating identity-based grievance and aggression. Limited socio-economic opportunities for young people fuel desperation, crime (e.g., smuggling, banditry), and anti-State sentiment. Lack of a coordinated communication strategy for security management sows doubt and suspicion and erodes civic spirit. The limited amount of concrete progress in normalizing the underground economy of clandestine gold panning encourages outlaw opportunism among local youth.

Implications

The main implications of this security governance PEA in the northern border areas are (i) the need for dedicated high-level advocacy, drawing on local examples and lessons, to motivate and shape the professionalization of national security forces (by applying existing ethical codes and service charters), and to increase the use of civ-mil dialogue frameworks; (ii) a need for cross-border cooperation efforts to more widely incorporate cross-border social norms and cultural practices; (iii) a dire need for intensive investment in the diversification of economic opportunities for young people and women, adapted to local contexts; (iv) a more inclusive approach to accommodating the frustrations and aspirations of marginalized communities, and (v) the integration of natural resource considerations (e.g., access and tenure, dispute resolution) into all civ-mil dialogue frameworks.

Area prioritization. Areas that have already experienced terrorist attacks or are close to other areas already targeted should be clearly prioritized for concrete actions aimed at improving security governance. This study found the localities of Téhini, Kong, Sikolo, Doropo, Kapégué, and Flabougou to be most deserving at the time of this research.

Actions to support security governance via the Resilience for Peace (R4P) project include:

- Support the development of mass communication strategies on security issues, government response, and planning (to improve civic engagement).
- Advocate with State agencies responsible for youth services so that efforts to restore social cohesion and civic duty include young perspectives and needs, and that vocational studies of economic opportunities for youth are conducted in adherence to market realities (supply/demand).
- Support stronger civ-mil dialogue frameworks by encouraging participation from all SDF elements, but also all communities affected by security governance issues (e.g., minority groups).
- Include natural resource monitoring and management as priority topics in all civ-mil dialogue frameworks.
- Support stronger operational capacity of land tenure agencies and dispute settlement mechanisms, and increase their transparency and access for all.
- Advocate with the appropriate administrative agencies to simplify the process of obtaining artisanal mining permits for young operators in the burgeoning gold panning sector.

1. Introduction

1.1. Study Rationale

The decade of military-political conflict, violence, and human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire has posed a real threat to the country's peace and stability. This situation has, among other things, shaken the social fabric and undermined the country's development gains, fostered a drastic increase in insecurity, and considerably reduced trust between citizens and the State.

Various initiatives have been launched by the Ivorian government and the international community (e.g., United Nations, African Union, Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS]) to consolidate peace and stability in the country, a sine qua non for growth and development. GDP grew by an average of 8% per year over the 2012–2015 period, and the poverty rate fell from 49.8% in 2011 to 46.3% in 2015 (National Institute of Statistics 2015). The security environment has improved significantly, with a security index that went from 3.8 in 2011 to 1.11 in 2016.

Despite these advances, Côte d'Ivoire continues to face major security challenges, including terrorist attacks and other threats in the northern border regions. Indeed, since the first terrorist attack on the seaside resort of Grand-Bassam in March 2016, the terrorist threat has been omnipresent in the north of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the regions of Bagoué, Bounkani, Folon, Poro, and the Tchologo. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) database, between 2016 and 2021 there have been more than 212 violent events causing more than 198 deaths, including 98 in the Bounkani region, 38 in the Tchologo region, 12 in Bagoué, and eight in Poro. In June 2020, and then in March, April, and June 2021, the localities of Kafolo, Téhini, and Tougbo were the scene of attacks, confirming the vulnerability of these regions to violent extremism.

To respond to these threats, the State of Côte d'Ivoire has accelerated its presence in its northern border regions with Mali and Burkina Faso by deploying military detachments and other agencies involved in sovereign security operations, such as the national police; the gendarmerie; and the customs, parks, and reserves police. At the same time, significant investments in economic and social

infrastructure are gradually being put in place to reduce the vulnerability of populations.

Despite these advances, these regions bordering Mali and Burkina Faso (two countries strongly marked by terrorism) could produce conditions favorable to the transfer of violent extremist ideology to cross-border populations, who remain vulnerable to terrorism if profound changes are not achieved quickly. If it is accepted that factors known to produce violent extremism—such as the continued porousness of borders, cross-border inter-ethnic conflicts, untampered religious ideology, and extreme poverty—then opposing factors such as inter-ethnic and kinship alliances, religious tolerance, and State commitment to strengthening democracy, security, and prosperity, will likely increase public resilience and thereby slow the advance of radical extremism. This report therefore proceeds from a political economy analysis of security governance to better identify the factors likely to help contain the rise of violent extremism.

According to the United Nations Development Program (2016), security governance is understood as the way in which power and authority are exercised at the international, national, and local level, formally and informally, by various actors, state (e.g., governments, municipalities, regions) and non-state (e.g., associative groups, traditional chiefdoms, religious leaders). In this study, local security governance therefore focuses on northern border regions from the perspective of civil-military relations (Leboeuf 2016).

In a restrictive sense, Irondelle (2008) defines civil-military relations as those between political power and the military institution, or between political elites and military elites. Referring to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Holshek (2017) speaks of civil-military coordination— that is an intrinsically strategic effort that consists in managing the interactions between the different actors involved or associated with the processes of peace and managing the transition to peace. This effort is therefore part of a framework of dialogue between the civilian, police, and military components, taking into account the political, security, and development aspects, among others. In the fight against terrorism— an asymmetric war—the civil-military relationship is understood from the perspective of a partnership between military institutions and the general public: specifically, the communities in which terrorists recruit, so as to ensure respect for human rights and the public trust needed for a successful social contract (Gitau 2016).

This study therefore attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- What is the current state of public sentiment regarding security operations in a context of permanent terrorist threat? How does this affect relations between communities in these regions from a human security perspective?
- What institutions are in place? What is the degree of collaboration between them? Do they include the aspirations of marginalized groups?
- What are the games of power and interests that shape these relationships?
- What is the state of the civil-military relationship? How will it evolve in the face of the many challenges of collaboration?
- What communication channels are in place? How do they shape the communication policy for enhanced security?
- What are the implications for the implementation of the R4P project?

1.2. Study Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of the assignment is to understand and map the power dynamics of local security governance. Specifically, this involves (i) mapping mandated national and local state systems of security governance, (ii) describing informal and community-based systems that support or thwart the proper functioning of state security governance systems on the ground, and (iii) identifying formal and informal decision makers and "spoilers" in effective security governance in its various dimensions, such as financial resources, behavior of security forces, political influence, and communication.

More specifically, the report aims to:

- Conduct a brief literature review on local governance and the security context in the regions concerned.
- Analyze the governmental system, in particular the organization chart of governmental structures and their contact with the so-called traditional or customary authorities.
- Understand the management of power and security at the local level, and the links with border officials in Mali and Burkina Faso.
- Carry out an analysis in each of the areas of intervention to identify the singularities of each area.

1.3. Methodology

The study was conducted using exploratory, analytical, and participatory methods that drew on qualitative research techniques to collect and analyze empirical data. The main steps in implementing the study were:

- **Mission kickoff meeting:** The meeting took place on December 6, 2021, with the participation of Equal Access International (EAI) and CIRES Economic Policy Analysis Unit (CAPEC). It established a shared understanding of the R4P intervention logic, to validate the areas to be visited during the field phase and define the content of the meeting with United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- **Study methodology presentation meeting at USAID:** Held on December 7, 2021, with the participation of USAID, EAI, and the CAPEC research team. During the meeting, USAID's PEA framework, key research questions related to the R4P project, and study methodology were presented and discussed.
- **Training of the research team on the PEA methodology:** The CAPEC research team benefited, on December 7 and 8, 2021, from an orientation session on the PEA approach thanks to the support of an international consultant recruited by the project. The discussions and reflections carried out made it possible to specify the dynamics, actors, and problems to be considered in the study, particularly when developing the tools.
- **Initial documentary review:** The documentary review made it possible to identify, structure, and analyze a documentary base on the R4P project, and on the political, social, and security situation of the five targeted border areas.[3] These documents, for the most part, were

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[3] A list of reports consulted is attached in Annex 1.

obtained from the EAI project team and through research carried out by the CAPEC research team. The documentary review also contributed to finalizing the main data collection tools of the mission, in particular the interview guide,[4] identifying the key informants to meet and developing the field deployment plan for data collection.

- **Training of agents:** CAPEC organized, on December 13, 2021, a training session for research assistants on the study methodology and on the interview guide.
- **Data collection:** Data collection took place in two phases in the area targeted by the study:
  - Folon and Bagoué regions, from December 14 to 23, 2021.
  - Region of Poro, Tchologo and Bounkani, from January 5 to 15. 2022.

Data collection was carried out by two research teams from CAPEC, each composed of two senior researchers and two research assistants. Data collection was carried out in the following locations:

- Folon region: Minignan, Sokoro, and North Kimbirila.
- Bagoué region: Boundiali, Tengréla, Flabougou, and Kapégué.
- Poro region: Korhogo.
- Tchologo region: Ferkessedougou, Sikolo, and Kong.
- Bounkani region: Bouna, Doropo, and Téhini.

During data collection, the research teams conducted individual interviews and group interviews and made direct observations.

Thus, based on these tools, 160 individual interviews and 37 group discussions were carried out. These interviews made it possible to meet with approximately 407 individuals, including 86 women (21.30%), representing the diversity of actors in local governance. In particular:

- Administrative authorities: Prefects and sub-prefects.
- Local authorities: Regional councils, town halls.
- Community leaders: Local chiefdoms, community leaders, religious guides, leaders of women's/youth associations, neighborhood presidents.
- The formal and informal private sector, in particular certain companies and other economic interest groups (e.g., trade, agriculture, gold panning, transport, village committee for the management of natural resources).
- Members of local communities: For example, natives and non-natives.
- Officials and agents of the decentralized administration in specific sectors, such as education, health, mines and energy, and agriculture.
- Technical or sectoral coordination structures at the local level, such as the local mining development committees (CDLM), the education and health management committees (COGES), the youth employment agency.
- Security institutions including the GTIA, the national gendarmerie, the national police, the water and forest guards.
- Relevant formal and informal actors: Tea grins, rural development agents, and community radio personnel.

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[4] See the interview guide in Annex 2.

- EAI operational teams in the areas visited.

During the interviews, the research team collected, when available, administrative data on the socio-economic sectors of the areas visited.

During the mission, the research team used direct observation to make certain observations by visiting socio-economic infrastructures (e.g., schools, health centers, village pumps), borders between countries, clandestine tracks, places where young people gather, and so on. These visits helped the research team appreciate the social dynamics of certain aspects of governance.

Box 1: Local governance classification criteria, by area

- Number of violent incidents over the past two years (ACLED).
- Quality of civil-military relations.
- Degree of vulnerability of youth to the jihadist threat.
- State of cohesion and degree of suspicion between communities.
- Degree of cross-border cooperation.

- **Data analysis and preparation of reports:** The analysis and exploitation of data were carried out through exploratory factor analysis of the content of individual interviews and group interviews. It was supplemented by the triangulation of the information collected to ensure the quality and consistency of the information obtained from the different sources (interviews and administrative data).

This approach made it possible to describe, examine, and explain the dynamics of the relationships between the various actors involved in security governance, allowing researchers to identify fundamental interests, rules of the game, current situation on the ground, and the political dynamics of security governance.

The analysis also made it possible to comment on the status of governance in each region based on a certain number of criteria (see sidebar), to propose actions likely to be implemented by the R4P project and key actors to target to facilitate these processes. This approach thus made it possible to provide, during the data collection, periodic summary reports on observations made and to develop this final report which, after a brief review of the literature on security governance, presents the security context, main results, and implications for the R4P project.

2. Brief Literature Review on Security Governance

An abundant literature related to security governance has focused on the issue of the expansion of violent extremism in the Sahel region in general and West Africa in particular. Bernard (2021) produced a report on the rise of violent extremism in West Africa. This document tracks the jihadist movements in the West African region by trying to establish a link between the countries of the Sahel and those of the coastal regions such as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana.

This work, which uses a qualitative approach with interviews and group discussions conducted in the countries concerned, shows how extremist movements exploit transhumance corridors to transit from one country to another and weave their web in West Africa. Bernard (2021) shows that the exploitation of social vulnerabilities (e.g., youth unemployment, social fragmentation), the stigmatization of certain strata (the Fulani in

particular), the role of certain traditional actors in the construction of security (e.g., dozos) can amplify feelings of exclusion and thus create fertile ground for these movements to grow a base of local support.

The inefficiency of military institutions to improve their relationship with local communities, the poor management of natural resources, and the precarity of young people was also highlighted. The report recommends a community-based approach to better anchor countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts in local challenges, opportunities, and realities.

This suggestion is in line with the peacebuilding approach advocated by Holmer (2013) in his report on the prevention of violent extremism written for the United Nations. Holmer identifies several factors that push a given individual to subscribe to a logic of violent extremism: (i) the incentive factors (i.e., push factors) that reflect structural conditions (e.g., poverty, limited access to justice and political process, grievances against the state); (ii) psychological factors, such as sense of belonging, human dignity, revenge, and chronic conflict; (iii) influence of social groups and peers; and (iv) and pull factors such as recruitment with promises of a more just society, economic transformation, and vengeance against the state.

Holmer (2013) argues for tackling these challenges at the community level from a peacebuilding perspective by advocating for a more neutral approach to understanding violence, with a focus on local ownership, gender considerations, and civil society involvement.

A CVE study by Rosand (2016) follow the same line. The author suggests focusing on addressing issues of marginalization and alienation by telling governments that how they treat their citizens is critically important in preventing violent extremism. Community-focused solutions are to be preferred in lieu of a strictly security-focused approach.

The present approach of Côte d'Ivoire will therefore require improvements in civil-military relations. In a review of security sector reform in Côte d'Ivoire, Ricard (2021) shows that the fight against violent extremism in the northern border areas must prioritize improved relations between populations and the SDF to dissolve the cumulative mistrust toward security agents, and to curtail racketeering.

While it is true that there has been a marked improvement in the behavior of the troops (e.g., stronger discipline, internal oversight) with the numerous reforms undertaken by the government since the end of the post-electoral crisis of 2011 (Ricard 2021), the majority of Ivorians remain wary of the SDF. Indeed, Yéo et al. (2021) indicate in the Afrobarometer report that 55% of citizens have no confidence or very little confidence in the country's defense and security forces.

3. Security Context

Côte d'Ivoire has considerably improved its security climate since the end of the post-electoral crisis of 2011. This newfound stability has helped boost economic recovery by attracting significant private investment. However, since 2016, with the terrorist attack in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire has now experienced the upheavals of the threat of violent extremism, which is on the rise across the Sahelian and littoral regions of West Africa. The current threat is especially acute in the northern border regions of Côte d'Ivoire.

From 2016 to 2021, there have been more than 123 violent incidents in the five northern border regions with Mali and Burkina Faso, causing 156 deaths (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of violent incidents in border regions in 2016 and 2021

Region	Number of Violent Incidents	Number of Deaths
Bounkani	41	98
Tchologo	40	38
Poro	28	8
Bagoué	11	12
Folon	3	0
TOTAL	**123**	**156**

Source: Authors' calculations based on ACLED data.

This violence takes different forms, the most important of which are armed conflicts, attacks by armed groups, the use of improvised explosive devices (EEIs), and landmines and kidnappings (see Table 2). This creates a general feeling of insecurity.

Over this period, there were 10 cases of kidnappings, 10 cases of the laying of remote explosives/landmines, and six attacks, creating a climate of terror in the border areas.

To deal with this threat, the State has stepped up the deployment of military units with enhanced operational capabilities. The security situation is generally calm today, even if the threat is still high due to the recurrent cases of kidnappings and the incessant harassment of army positions by unidentified actors.

The major challenge for the strengthening of this relative peace is the construction of a well-established relationship of trust between the security forces and the population. As mentioned earlier, 55% of Ivorians have little or no confidence in the armed forces, the police, or the gendarmerie (Yeo et al. 2021. The main reason for this distrust is a perception of corruption perpetrated by this category of security agents. Indeed, 58% of Ivorians believe that most of the time the police and gendarmes are associated with acts of corruption (Yeo et al. 2021).

Table 2: Typology of violent incidents recorded between 2016 and 2021

Type of Violence	Bouna	Doropo	Téhini	Korhogo	Ferké	Kong	Tengréla	Minignan	Total
Armed conflicts	6	2	10	2	-	14	-	-	**34**
Abductions	2	2	2	2	-	2	-	-	**10**
Remote explosives / landmines	-	-	4	-	-	6	-	-	**10**
Attacks	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	**6**
Others	7	2	2	22	12	6	9	3	**63**
TOTAL	**17**	**6**	**18**	**28**	**12**	**28**	**11**	**3**	**123**

Source: Author's creation, based on ACLED data.

It follows from these results that in an environment where violent extremism is spreading, the persistence of acts of corruption could compromise the establishment of a solid civil-military partnership.

4. Results

4.1. Foundational Factors

This section explores the embedded or fixed structures that affect security governance in the border localities visited. We examine here the socio-spatial, economic, and political characteristics and how these influence the security situation in a context of terrorist threat. Thus, the fundamental factors most apparent in the localities of the study are the legacy of the decade of instability, social norms and practices, the underground economy around Comoé National Park, the limited economic opportunities, and the competition over natural resources.

4.1.1. The legacy of a decade of instability that still limits the legitimacy of security institutions at the local level

The decade of socio-political instability of the period 2002–2011, characterized by the absence of State representatives in the northern zone, makes it difficult for security institutions to ensure their legitimacy with the populations. Added to this is the "demystification" and "desacralization" of the image of the soldier (e.g., soldier, gendarme, policeman) during this period of crisis, during which time anyone could wear an SDF uniform. Populations are still reluctant to obey the orders of the agencies in charge of security management.

Local populations along the northern border do not identify with these institutions, which for a long time remained outside the security space (occupied by the rebel movements). They do not hesitate to highlight their autochthony (i.e., ethnicity as granting eminent domain where State presence is weak or perceived as corrupt) and therefore increased autonomy and indifference to certain security control operations (e.g., road safety). In their understanding, strict law enforcement should apply only "to foreigners," a view that troubles their understandings with the SDF. *"This is our land (chez nous),"* they say.

To maintain a relatively peaceful relationship between SDF and populations, there seems to be a segregation in certain control operations that are more severe or aggressive toward certain foreign communities (e.g., Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea) and the Fulani in particular, versus a clear tolerance or deference for young Indigenous people. The words of an SDF agent in Folon bear witness to this quite eloquently: *"It is from local youth that you learn about the problems; affairs are less clear when we talk to foreigners."* This dynamic was observed in the five regions visited during the field phase.

Moreover, this feeling of mistrust toward the forces of order is reinforced by the prevailing level of poverty of the inhabitants of the region, which often does not allow them to undertake the administrative procedures necessary to comply with the requirements of the law and regularize the many sources of tension that negatively affect their relationship with the SDF. This remains the case despite attempts by prefectural and decentralized authorities to make public services more accessible to citizens. Finally, it should be noted that the presence of the SDF challenges an underground economy of "small cross-border businesses," contraband, and other untaxed products. This activity is now carried out under the control of the operations of the SDF, all of which nourishes among citizens this feeling of being harassed by the SDF. These activities, mostly carried out by young people, are likely to compromise the civil-military relationship under construction and undermine the effectiveness of actions to prevent terrorist activities.

4.1.2. Social norms and practices as a shield against violent extremism, but also as a factor in the weakening of security institutions

A set of social norms and practices affect local security governance. Regarding social norms, the study highlights the power of invincibility of "dozos," or traditional hunters, due to their supposedly possessing mystical ancestral qualities, which earns them the full trust of local populations, unlike the SDF. Also, social norms limit women's leadership, where greater visibility (e.g., public speaking) would risk stigmatization by the community. This fear of public shaming limits their participation in and contribution to building security through local institutions such as civil-military cells (CCMs). Added hurdles to increased collaboration between residents and SDF include local animist beliefs in ritual sacrifice and offerings as guarantees of personal safety (especially in Kong).

In relation to social practices, on both sides of the border there is a cultural homogeneity which promotes the mobility of people in the five study areas. Populations speak the same language and share the same culture and rites (e.g., weddings, funerals, baptisms, socio-cultural activities). They *"are the same families on both sides of the border,"* in the words of one security officer. This cultural proximity has the advantage of promoting information sharing, strengthening ties, and removing barriers to misunderstanding, which in turn can strengthen the construction of security from a community perspective.

From this angle these social norms would appear to favor intelligence gathering as a bulwark against terrorist threats. However, due to border porosity and the network of smugglers' tracks hidden from the SDF, local communities can easily receive "suspicious

visitors" from the other side of the border without reporting this presence to the competent authorities, precisely because of strong family ties between these peoples. Often these family ties are put forward to demand leniency from the SDF during controls at roadblocks when a given "visitor" is the subject of a routine check: *"because it is a relative from the other side of the border who is visiting,"* as described by one security officer.

4.1.3. Specifics of the Burkina border: Comoé National Park's underground economy

Comoé National Park covers 1,146,150 hectares and is monitored by a dozen forest police officers based in Téhini. It is a reservoir of biodiversity long protected from human exploitation. The park has been under constant threat since the decade of instability. This human interference, previously limited to poaching, is due to a significant increase in illegal gold panning.

The proximity of the park to the localities of Téhini and Kong and the border raises serious security challenges. There is a relatively well-structured underground gold mining economy around the park.

Poorly educated youth, with a median age of 25 and no prospects of employment, are the main labor force mobilized to siphon off park resources. These young people may perceive gold panning as a quick way to improve their living conditions, but the minimal income they receive keeps them chasing the prospect of extraordinary potential rewards. This ongoing state of suspense is what drives their commitment to this low-revenue unskilled labor.

For example, according to group discussions with young artisanal miners in Téhini, the average individual earnings "on the best days"

vary between 500,000 FCFA to 600,000 FCFA. At the same time, these young people are exposed to detection (apprehension by park police, who receive bonuses for arrests) and high punishment (heavy prison terms).

These daily earnings appear to be high but are in fact highly irregular (once every 23 months), and are therefore not sufficient to cover the expenses of the young person. Indeed, most of these young people concede to social pressures to cover expenses for their extended family. Since most of them, between these high-earning days, accumulate high debts with local merchants to meet their subsistence needs as well as those of their parents.

On the other hand, obscure economic operators act as investors, recruiters, and equipment suppliers, and offer protection to young people. The gold buyers set the prices irrespective of wider market forces, and thus keep young people in relative precariousness, giving them enough income to survive and maintain dreams of sudden wealth. Youth perceive these "bosses" as protectors and benefactors because they spend large sums to liberate them from jail whenever they are caught by authorities. These bosses buy clemency from security forces or pay to stop legal proceedings to obtain the release of these youth.

The income generated by these activities is generally insufficient for those youth at the bottom of the labor chain who themselves are "visible" while the largest share of the income is destined for "invisible bosses." Any resources generated illegally must still be controlled and traced in the sense that they must enrich private interests, however opaque these are. In addition, although in relative decline (due to decreased supply), it is also necessary to track the "poached products market" as a source of animal protein to "feed

the troops." In the words of a security agent: *"Most of the perpetrators of poaching or gold panning in the park are Burkinabès, who cross the border from Bavè, Tougbo, in groups of seven to 10, whereas there is a classified forest in Burkina not far from Moro-moro. That's tons of meat. The real problem is that we don't know where the meat goes."*

4.1.4. *Economic opportunities are rising, but too slowly to include the most fragile strata—youth and women*

There are few economic opportunities in the communities visited, which drives the informal economy of smuggling in most border areas. The activity has become an attractive economic model for a large segment of young people. Indeed, the circumvention of the "artificial border" (from a community perspective) through smugglers using hidden paths is socially acceptable to communities. When the SDF detect a hidden track used for smuggling, it is disused and immediately replaced by another track. Similarly, these tracks serve as a crossing point for small (illicit) businesses often carried out by young people as a means of survival. In Sokolo, for example, *"Certain tracks are forbidden to the police,"* according to the words of a senior administrative official. This would be justified by the intensity of smuggling and cross-border trade activities on these tracks where the SDF would be perceived as those who hinder the main sources of income for young people—all things that signal the challenges of collaboration between the SDF and populations, and with youth in particular.

4.1.5. *Competition over natural resources*

Three major resources are subject to competition: arable land, pastures and water, and gold resources. These resources generate rents to varying degrees around which

gravitate several actors with divergent interests.

- **Land**: Once widely available, arable land is now contested since the advent of cashew, a cash crop. Extensive cashew cultivation increases the value of land and maintains an informal land market often governed by verbal or written contracts with poorly defined outlines. The void contained in these contracts is a source of conflict between indigenous communities (e.g., Malinké in Kimbirila and Sokoro; Sénoufo in Tengréla; Lobi in Téhini; and Koulango in Doropo) and against non-natives elsewhere (e.g., Malians in Sokoro, Burkinabè in Téhini and Doropo). In fact, in addition to having become the most profitable product, the cashew nut is a perennial speculation whose practice causes occupation of space for a long period (more than 30 years). Thus, in the current context of land competition, cashew cultivation becomes, in addition to income, a strategy for strengthening one's land ownership. This spirit of marking is so developed that even non-natives who ask for it for the cultivation of food crops devote themselves to planting cashew. Conflicts then arise between the co-contractors.
- **Pasture and water resources**: The exploitation of pastures causes community tensions due to numerous conflicts between farmers and herders. There are several reasons for these conflicts. First, there is the failure to respect transhumance corridors, colonized by farmers due to the extension of agricultural holdings. This situation has been accentuated by the decade of instability marked by the absence of public bodies managing and regulating these spaces. The inability of communities to

explain the upsurge in crop destruction, and hence in farmer-herder conflicts, has led to the development within communities of beliefs that attribute "nutritional virtues" to the destruction of farmers' fields by pastoral activity. In fact, several tentative explanations are likely:

- Herders, who have previously paid administrative fees authorizing transhumance, are unable to find "fresh" grasslands for their livestock and therefore find themselves exploiting areas already being cultivated.
- In the opinion of stockbreeders, pastoral activity would be incompatible with penning livestock in demarcated areas because of its impact on livestock health. As a result, pastoralists, mostly nomads, favor the free movement of their herds over stretches of land, thereby increasing the probability of ending up in areas already under cultivation.
- In addition, according to most of the people interviewed, the destruction of crops takes place at night, at times when the grass is "cooler" and the controls on the movement of livestock are less strict. Which, from the point of view of the communities, constitutes deliberate acts of destruction of cultures by the Fulani pastoralists. This is all the more so since they do not respect the pre-established hours of cattle parking in the enclosures set up for this purpose.

All in all, the persistence of herder-farmer conflicts seems to have repercussions on the magnification of autochthony and leads to inter-community clashes (e.g., conflicts between Senoufo and Malinké in Tengréla).

- **Clandestine gold panning as a response to the unequal distribution of the income generated by gold resources:** Here it is necessary to distinguish illegal gold panning in Comoé National Park from artisanal and illicit mining in other sites. The border area is rich in gold. The government has granted exploitation permits and exploration permits to legally incorporated companies in the area.

At the same time, relatively well-structured artisanal mining activities are developing in all directions. Gold panning here appears as a response to the unequal distribution of income generated by the exploitation of gold. The state secures its tax revenue by licensing legal businesses, which in turn protect their property to ensure their profit. On the other hand, the local populations ("landowners") seem to be marginalized, not benefiting sufficiently from the resulting rent. For the communities, *"We are at home and we only issue permits. They search for four or five years. We see them mining for gold and then they say they found nothing. When they come, they barricade themselves, we can't even approach to look for work. We too will manage on the other sites."*

These activities are predominant in the localities of Sokoro, Tengréla, Téhini, and Doropo, and they mainly involve young people. The income generated by this activity is generally well distributed, according to an informal grid well established beforehand—the operations managers (the bosses), the supervisors, the young miners (labor suppliers), the owners of the space, the chieftaincy, the security suppliers (young people and dozos), and the SDF of the locality.

This form of remuneration creates a certain balance at the local level, which is only broken when unexpected "muscular" raids are carried out, from Abidjan or Korhogo, by the special brigade for the fight against clandestine gold panning. The resulting destruction creates frustrations with regard to the positive externalities generated by the gold panning activity on the local economy (e.g., construction of buildings, shops/services around the gold panning sites, basic infrastructure built/rehabilitated by some gold washers).

Similarly, these moments of destruction reinforce the vulnerability of young people who have no other alternatives, especially during the lean period of cashew production. This accentuated fragility can provide a fertile recruiting ground for violent extremist movements that could compromise security. There is an increase in incidents of *"road bandits when the gold panning activity is on hold,"* according to the main community leaders interviewed.

4.2. Rules of the Game

Two main groups of rules support security governance at the local level: formal rules and institutions, and informal rules and institutions supported by social norms and societal practices and politics.

Box 2: How revenues generated by clandestine gold panning are distributed

The mode of distribution of the gains generated in artisanal gold mining obeys well-established principles of distribution, according to the information collected from young gold panners.

The sharing of the rent, which varies according to the quality of the gold (in carats), is carried out between a panoply of actors presented as follows:

- **The landowner:** Usually a farmer who is the owner of the field and not the owner of the site. Due to the opportunity cost linked to the abandonment of agricultural activities, they receive an initial amount of 500,000 FCFA, which acts as a guarantee to start the site exploitation activity. They then receive, during the operation, either a lump sum (100,000 FCFA per fortnight in Doropo) or an amount per gram of gold extracted on the site, which varies according to the locality (e.g., 200 FCFA/gram in Doropo or 7,500 FCFA/gram of gold in Sokoro).
- **The supervisors or security guards:** This role is entrusted to the young people of the village (in Doropo) or to the dozos (in Sokoro). These agents receive the sum of 300 FCFA per gram of gold for the control and security services provided on the site.
- **The village chief and the notable:** As guarantors of the community interest, they receive an percentage of every gram of gold sold, from 1,000 FCFA/gram to 7,500 FCFA/gram, depending on the site.
- **The SDF:** Receives the sum of 500 FCFA per gram of gold for their "tolerance" vis-à-vis this illegal activity.
- **The convergence** of these different actors' interests creates a certain balance in the management of illegal mining.

4.2.1. Formal rules

At the level of formal provisions, the existing institutional and regulatory framework around security governance aims, in its principles, to change behavior and improve the image of the army and all defense and security forces among the civilian population. To this end, the Ivorian Constitution indicates that the defense of the nation and the integrity of the territory is a duty for every Ivorian. It is ensured exclusively by national defense and security forces under the conditions determined by law. Public property is inviolable; everyone is required to respect and protect it.

The Military Programming Law voted on January 4, 2016, by the National Assembly goes further on these principles by highlighting the age pyramid, the level of recruitment, and training—all of which are essential for improving relations between the troops and the civilian population, with the creation at the local level of CCMs that work on this rapprochement, in close collaboration with the departmental security committees, chaired by

the prefect. In a context of terrorist threats, the existence of a charter of ethics and a code of conduct is essential to improve discipline within the army, and therefore improve civil-military relations during deployment. This framework for dialogue also exists at the police level with the CCEs.

Even if the existence of these different instruments is beneficial because of their ability to initiate dialogue on security issues at the local level, their effectiveness seems limited. Indeed, the CCMs seem essential in terms of resolving disputes during crises between the SDF and the populations. For example, in Doropo, the CCM was at the forefront, with the prefectural authorities, of the return of peace when a member of the SDF was accused of rape in Lagbô, and during the attempted fire at the police station in Doropo by disgruntled youths over a racketeering incident.

On the other hand, the CCMs appear ineffective in building lasting relationships of mutual trust between civilian populations, especially young people, even though such relationships are essential to facilitate military intelligence. Several explanations can be considered. First, the army and therefore the SDF are generally perceived in public opinion as unprofessional, and therefore unreliable in protecting witnesses, especially in a context of threats from violent extremist groups. The recurring restriction of freedoms (e.g., racketeering, innumerable roadblocks) and human rights violations reinforce this opinion.

Second, the low inclusion levels of certain actors in the CCMs—such as women in Minignan (two out of 30 members); the Fulani, who are stigmatized and thus covered under the ECOWAS category (a multi-country designation); or the dozos (who are both providers of and obstacles to security in

Folon)—who therefore do not take part in the debates within the consultation frameworks.

Third, the limited resources of the CCMs, not regularly available due to administrative red tape (the budget made available to the CCM by the prefect).

And last, specific to the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FACI), the regular rotations of which do not make it possible to perpetuate the achievements resulting from the dialogue with the troops.

The words of a CCM member illustrate this well: "After the meetings, each time, the same nonsense starts again. They can stick to resolutions for a month, it comes back. The rotation of the SDF, the racketeering, it is especially the soldiers and the gendarmerie, the old ones are all gone, it is new faces. With the old ones, we got used to it." It should also be noted that the existence of special anti-terrorist units, which often land on missions without "apparent coordination" with the forces in place, contribute to weakening the image of the army.

4.2.2. Cross-border cooperation

Cross-border security cooperation is being strengthened through several frameworks, namely the Accra initiative, which promotes joint military maneuvers between Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso. At the Burkina Faso border, it is above all the TAC that is used to promote local cross-border cooperation between the two States. Despite the official closure of the borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the actors of the various countries are trying at the local level to strengthen this cooperation, especially in terms of security. Note, however, that the effectiveness of this system may be negatively affected by recent political events in Mali and Burkina Faso.

4.2.3. Social norms and dispute resolution

The second category of rules is that which includes endogenous social dynamics or norms. Social norms and cultural practices are a crucible for building security. Within local communities, there are internal mechanisms for resolving conflicts and disputes. These mechanisms are generally led by community leaders with a support from youth organizations.

By way of illustration, in farmer-herder disputes, amicable resolution is often advocated within communities around the leadership of customary authorities.

Also, social norms favor cross-border collaboration based on cultural and religious proximity. Thus, we are witnessing exchange frameworks and regular meetings between community leaders (e.g., traditional chiefs, customary authorities), women's organizations, and youth associations. For example, in Kimbirila-Nord, we note the organization of sports competitions (e.g., football) between Ivorian youth and youth from localities close to the Malian border. The celebration of baptism, marriage, and funerals are also frameworks for strengthening social ties between communities on both sides of the border. All these informal initiatives define a framework for sharing information and an alert system in the event of an imminent terrorist threat.

This second category is fed and mobilized by the "dozos," leaders who have a positive influence in the process of security governance of the localities visited. In this game, the dozos constitute a pillar of the provision of the security service, particularly in Folon, Bagoué, and Tchologo. These entities inspire confidence in the populations, giving them a certain legitimacy among the natives: *"The dozos are our army,"* said one youth leader in

Sokoro. These dozos, who have occupied a space long left empty by the State, have better control of the terrain and have a strong cross-border social capital due to the religious proximity in a brotherhood that transcends the official borders between states (especially the Côte d'Ivoire–Mali).

"We do not collaborate with the dozos—they are not army auxiliaries," says a prefectural authority in the north. But, in fact, informal collaborations are common between SDF and dozos to take advantage of the latter's field knowledge and intelligence. The application of this principle explains the absence of dozos in recognized public platforms such as CCMs.

It should be noted, however, that due to their status as Indigenous, legitimate traditional security management forces, as well as their low level of education, the dozos pose a threat to human rights through the provision of justice, which tends to accentuate the gap between the local community and foreign communities. For example, in the event of crop damage (farmer-herder conflicts), the tendency of the dozos to proclaim variable sentences depending on the author is a source of frustration for the Fulani community in Sokoro.

4.2.4. Political games

The competition between leaders and local political executives through games of influence limits their ability to contribute effectively to the improvement of the civil-military relationship. Local political competition can be a cause of the withering of the civil-military relationship. There is an intrinsically well-established mutual influence between local communities and local political leaders. It is recognized that these actors can play a crucial role in strengthening the links between the army and the populations. In Folon, for example, despite the predominance

of the party in power in the region, there is a play of interests among the political actors that tends to want to control the neighborhoods and large families (e.g., the Kablas) or to master the spaces of expression of young people, such as tea grins. This desire to have the consent of community leaders limits the power to facilitate dialogue between communities and security forces.

Similarly, this competition can disrupt the social fabric between antagonistic Indigenous communities in the possession of local political power (e.g., Koulango and Lobi in Doropo). In any case, in the event of a crisis the reflex of local political leaders is to "espouse the cause of the parents," thus closing the door to changes in the behavior of the populations, which are essential for building security.

At the level of Tchologo, these ambient political divisions constitute a probable breeding ground for jihadist movements. The still strong influence of the former president of the National Assembly, Soro K. Guillaume, in the collective consciousness of the natives, particularly young people (especially in Ferkessédougou) reinforces the crisis of confidence between the population and the SDF, seen here as emanating from the central state. Indeed, the mission noted that several people claimed to support Guillaume and felt in solidarity with his situation vis-à-vis the government. They denounce the ingratitude of the ruling party despite the previous high office occupied by their leader and his contribution to the entrenchment of democracy in Côte d'Ivoire.

This situation fuels suspicion, distrust, and feelings of victimization and revenge: *"Tchologo is an incubator, tensions are high, we cannot abandon our children . . . if jihadists come here, I will be the first to enlist. The State is not bothered by our fate."*

4.3. Here and Now

This section examines the current state of security governance in the border areas under study. We discuss the feeling of security, the security factors, and the main actors of local security governance by examining their influence and the resources mobilized in the local governance process.

4.3.1. Varied perceptions of insecurity and feelings of security

At the security level, there is a high awareness of the population regarding the terrorist threat. This collective awareness is more pronounced in areas that have experienced terrorist attacks or incidents (e.g., Kong and Téhini) compared to Minignan, Sokoro, Kimbirila Nord, Tengréla, or Doropo. In Téhini, for example, a series of events marked by improvised explosive device (EEI) attacks and the kidnapping of community leaders have reinforced the feeling of insecurity. Paradoxically, Doropo residents report feeling relatively removed from the terrorist threat, although they are regularly subject to kidnappings with ransoms ranging between 4 and 10 million CFA francs.

This situation could be explained by the fact that the key indicator of the perception of the terrorist threat seems to be attacks on villages or SDF positions by jihadists without necessarily making a link between ransom payments and the expansion of the ideology of violent extremism. The populations do not establish a real causality between the facts of insecurity (e.g., kidnappings and robberies) and the terrorist threats, attributing them in many cases to the consequences of economic shocks (e.g., gold panning or extortion of wealthy businessmen by relatives).

In fact, the deployment of special forces (e.g., the GTIA) is beneficial because of their

reinforced operational capacities, which has led to a relative return to serenity in the border areas. The presence of military detachments is a real relief factor, especially in the communities that testify to the effective presence of troops (the GTIA, specifically). This feeling of security is marked by the growing presence of refugees in Côte d'Ivoire (e.g., Gôgô): *"Before, it was our people who fled to take refuge in Burkina Faso. Now the opposite movement is happening."*

In addition, the deployment of public security agencies has been reinforced with physical infrastructure, including construction of police stations and the gendarmerie barracks (e.g., a joint police-gendarmerie station in Doropo). Despite this positive trend, the capacity of these security agencies still seems limited. For example, the gendarmerie of Minignan and that of Doropo do not yet have adequate means of transport, with patrols often carried out with the officers' personal vehicles or on motorbikes. The enclosures housing these institutions are not fenced, creating breaches in the security system. Téhini, for example, does not yet have a police station. The deployment of these different agencies is essential to boost community policing, which will be a first step toward improving civil-military relations.

Ultimately, the major challenge to strengthening the legitimacy of the State in its ability to ensure security seems to be the improvement of civil-military relations, as indicated by the words of a military leader: *"At the level of the relationship between the army and the population, we cannot say it is going well or it is not going well. . . . Not too long ago, an [EEI] was discovered which is a very heavy load that takes 15 to 25 minutes to install. . . . We were not aware, he is a good person that informed us. . . . There are some people who provide information*

and others who don't. One day the captain and the elements came across a group giving sermons, but we hadn't been informed, we ran into them like that, there was an exchange of fire between the terrorists and the army."

4.3.2. Insecurity factors

Several factors or actors are likely to upset the precarious balance established by the army in the border areas. These are the withering of social cohesion marked by the farmer-herders conflict against a background of stigmatization of the Fulani, the corruption of the police marked by ubiquitous racketeering, and emerging factors such as the presence of the talibés and the many checkpoints.

Widespread SDF corruption (e.g., racketeering) undermines civil-military relations, still a work in progress

Corruption reduces the efficiency of public administration, hinders the application of good governance measures by national institutions, and increases the costs of public services, making them inaccessible to the most vulnerable. Although it can be extended to a broader set of public services, this section approaches the issue from the angle of corruption in the transport sector (e.g., racketeering) given its harmful effects on burgeoning civil-military relations.

We first present the underlying contextual factors that would favor racketeering, the consequences on the local economy, then the actors involved and their motivation before highlighting the sanction mechanisms in force and their effectiveness.

In the study areas, several contextual factors would favor the intensity of racketeering in the transport sector, the most decisive of which are the clandestine tracks and the absence of administrative documents for motorcyclists. The existence of numerous ways to

circumvent SDF checkpoints, under the background of small cross-border businesses, feeds the phenomenon of racketeering in the northern border regions of Côte d'Ivoire. This situation, which arises with support from communities, results in high mobility and flux at the borders.

In Kong, for example, the rallying point from the Comoé River is supplied by non-Burkinese immigrants settled in the locality with the complicity of certain village chiefs. This situation makes the northern borders quite porous, as an SDF officer from Tengréla put it: *"Officially, because of the COVID-19 crisis, the border may be closed but people still come every day. On the strip that separates us from Mali, there are many tracks to bypass the SDF roadblocks. Motorcycles, pedestrians, and carts can pass through many corners."*

In addition, the existence of a multitude of SDF roadblocks on the gold-bearing routes and the tracks regularly used by motorcycle taxis accompany this phenomenon. By way of illustration, transporters (e.g., motorcycle taxis) and other motorcyclists pay the sum of 2,000 FCFA at each roadblock in Tengréla. The people met the FACI troops on duty in the various corridors on the main axes as perpetrators of the racket. Everything suggests that the deployment of law enforcement in these areas has had adverse effects in terms of the organization of racketeering.

For example, the distance between Tengréla and Nigouni is five kilometers, but there are seven SDF roadblocks there on Mondays, five on Thursdays, and three on days when traffic is less. The Tengréla–Papara route, 24 kilometers long, has up to 14 SDF roadblocks due to the intensification of economic activities. The soldiers have deviated from the purpose of their presence at the border, according to a national of Tengréla: *"they all*

come to get rich . . . Tengréla is surrounded by the SDF roadblock just to extort us. They are on all tracks. The border here in Tengréla has never been closed, it is only the main road that is closed otherwise the clandestine tracks are open and there are roadblocks on all its tracks."

This situation is not only symptomatic of Tengréla; it is observed in all the regions visited. The number of checkpoints and the presence of security forces intensifies on market days when there is a significant movement of goods and people. If this massive presence of the SDF seems to be justified by security requirements, it is also motivated by the high probability of collecting larger sums through racketeering (e.g., residents paying more to security agents on market days). Such an attitude is likely to weigh down an already fragile economic dynamic, due to the enormous indirect costs to be borne by the communities who would like to do good business on these particular days.

It should also be noted that the trivialization of racketeering extends to all motorcyclists due to the primacy of this type of means of transport in the region. For example, on the roads leading to artisanal mining sites, pedestrians would pay 200 FCFA per checkpoint, and the illegal gold miners themselves subject to sums of 2,000 to 3,000 FCFA per military checkpoint.

This situation has unfortunate consequences on economic activities in a region characterized by increased impoverishment. Women, the most economically vulnerable stratum, cannot easily sell their agricultural products. This situation is also recurrent on ordinary days, as indicated by the words of a leader of a women's organization: *"Someone who goes to the field, you know he is going to the field, you tell him to pay 2,000 FCFA."*

The intensity of racketeering in the region also finds its justification in the absence of administrative documents required for the operation of two-wheeled vehicles. The collective awareness of the absence of administrative documents for two-wheeled vehicles makes people accept a certain threshold of the amount to be paid to appease the SDF. However, the recurrence of the phenomenon deeply compromises the civil-military relationship, with the security institutions taking advantage of the difficulties of the populations to regularize their situation to achieve their performance objective.

For example, the number of fines issued (especially in the transport sector) is a performance indicator for the gendarmerie. *"During the year 2021, the gendarmerie recorded deposits of 200 million FCFA for the Ivorian treasury. Compared with other localities, for example, Bouna, which deposited only 2 million. When we hear that, we say, 'You aren't doing your job.' The only hurting our reputation with residents is the fines that we give, that's all."*

The police are well aware of the deterioration of their image with the population and the consequences of this phenomenon on the civil-military relationship. Despite this awareness, few actions are taken to limit this behavior. The absence of discipline within the units, given the low respect for ethical standards and the implementation of sanction mechanisms, contributes to the entrenchment of racketeering. Due to the security context, the sanction mechanisms are little activated in order to spare the troops.

The words of an army officer in Téhini illustrate this well: We are content to "raise awareness," they say, of the agents involved. *"There is a system of rackets on the different positions, I worked on that, so it's fine, at home in Téhini, it's fine… When we know that an element of our troops is in this situation, we call the agent concerned, we try to make him face his responsibilities. We are raising awareness."*

This observation is not unique to the armed forces but is generalized in all components of the defense and security forces (e.g., gendarmerie, police, armed forces). It should be noted, however, that this acknowledgment of the acts of corruption is tinged with a denial by the senior officers of the SDF, who believe that the racketeering is only a matter of isolated acts of a few unscrupulous agents—*"in all the services, there are bad apples"*—reflecting the widespread impunity that perpetuates the phenomenon.

This dynamic suggests that racketeering is encouraged by the high echelons of SDF hierarchy, given that these agents are deployed to checkpoints on the orders of their superiors. In addition, under the pretext of issuing fines, there is a tendency to present racketeering with an image of compassion, even tolerance toward the population. Such a situation could support the idea that the sums collected would benefit both the troops on missions and their hierarchical superiors. The words of a gendarmerie officer seem to illustrate this: *"The law says that if you are given the ticket, you have to go and pay in Bouna, but we arrange for them to pay here in Doropo. We prefer to give fines of 1,000 FCFA, because if you give those of 10,000 FCFA to someone, you have killed him."*

Moreover, the leeway of the administrative authorities seems too narrow to curb the phenomenon. The prefect, for example, is also content to launch awareness-raising activities by rarely writing to the hierarchical superiors of the incriminated elements in order to initiate the procedures in force. *"Everything that happens in terms of the behavior of the military, me as the head of motorbike taxis in Tengréla, we*

always inform the prefect about the security that is threatened because of the behavior of the military . . . but so far nothing, no reaction.”

Faced with the recurrence of the phenomenon, the populations tend to regularly develop an attitude of mistrust and hostility to authority, thus maintaining a vicious circle of racketeering and therefore weakening the security climate. Despite the efforts of the administrative authorities (although sporadic) to bring the public services concerned (e.g., vignettes, gray card, insurance) closer to the population, the communities remain reluctant to update themselves with the requirements of the law in road safety.

The meteoric rise of talibés, which reinforces suspicions between communities

There is also growing concern about certain emerging actors such as talibés, mainly in the Tchologo region. From the perception of the populations, these talibés could constitute probable sources of intelligence for the jihadist movements. Such a situation risks accentuating the exclusion of these children and exposing them to manipulation by jihadists (see Box 3).

Box 3: Talibés in Northern Côte d'Ivoire: Potential security threat

The word *talibé* originates from "talib," which means pupil, a student who has come from elsewhere in search of knowledge. The talibé (pupil or student) may or may not be a beggar when outside of school. The talibé is a pupil who belongs to a Koranic school. He receives some instruction but must often beg on the street to supplement his Koranic master's limited income.[5]

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[5] Indigo Côte d'Ivoire and Interpeace, 2019 : « Enfants talibés et Ecoles coraniques en Côte d'Ivoire : Enjeux et perspectives. » Mai 2019

The appearance of talibés is not a new phenomenon for Côte d'Ivoire. The children concerned, as well as those around them, consider this practice to be *"banal,"* even *"natural"* and accepted by the community.

For almost all the actors interviewed, the issue of talibés has become a cross-border problem that worries local and administrative authorities. Indeed, there are changes in the dynamics of this phenomenon that makes it a social challenge, in particular in a context of violent extremism. This dynamic manifests itself as follows:

- Change in the age of the "talibés," who once were 3 to 7 years old, today including adolescents (up to age 18), giving a well-structured hierarchy who supervise the *"youngest"* in the field. Almost all adolescent talibés come from Mali and Burkina Faso. These children are without administrative papers, without parental reference, and do not have access to the national education system.
- Change in the modus operandi of their interventions. Indeed, initially focused on begging involving donations in kind or in cash to ensure their subsistence (food needs in the Koranic school), they are now focused on begging activities involving only cash.
- Cross-border context: The phenomenon has increased on the northern borders of Côte d'Ivoire, especially after the terrorist events in the Sahel (Mali and Burkina Faso), which is manifested by an influx of this type of children in the northern regions of Côte d'Ivoire.
- The Koranic teachers who ensure their social supervision and their religious education are mostly from Mali and Burkina Faso. They have developed a quasi "self-sufficient" way of life, living almost in seclusion, having little contact with local Muslim religious authorities, and little interaction with the communities in which they live.

The combination of these factors gives the appearance of a profound change in the question of the talibés, allowing it to appear as an emerging phenomenon that must be taken into account in the overall understanding of the security challenges linked to violent extremism.

In Ferké, for example, the speech of a local leader suggests that the issue of talibés has taken on dizzying proportions, to the point that they are becoming aggressive and engaging in subversive acts such as theft, and that they are indicators for traffickers.

Because of their cultural proximity with Mali and Burkina Faso, the fear is accentuated especially with the phenomenon of jihadists and terrorists on our borders. This respondent does not say anything else when he says, *"I inform you that the case is more serious in Ouangolo and Ferké . . . over there, the talibés are no longer children, they are grown-ups who sleep under the sheds of the market and master the city perfectly. They no longer want food, which was once the aim of their begging . . . now they seek nothing but money. When you give them your food, it will be thrown away. Vulnerable, they are ready for anything if someone offers them a large sum of money. As they develop, such behaviors and practices could well curb the opportunities for socio-economic development in cross-border cities or, at the very least, affect the effectiveness of activities oriented in particular toward the protection of people."*

The stigmatization of the Fulani community, as a determining factor in a withdrawal of identity at the community level

In a similar pattern, public distrust and scapegoating of the Fulani forces them to isolate further and to withdraw from community life. This trend is observed in the five regions visited. According to popular

beliefs, while all ethnic groups can commit criminal acts, the Fulani are associated with all acts of terrorism, violence, and banditry, since the people arrested most of the time would be of Fulani culture or speak the Fulani language. The words of a security officer reflect this idea: *"If at any time those who are caught in the act of robbery or terrorism are Fulani, what do you want us to do? It is not stigmatization, when there is an event we conduct our investigation before arresting anyone. In addition, it is not us who catch them but rather units formed to fight terrorism."*

The singularity of the peoples along the border combined with the increased cooperation between the different states, especially through technology, can make the "local Fulani" often well-integrated "collateral victims" of the weak collaboration between agencies, special anti/counter terrorists, and security actors at the local level.

Indeed, there are two categories of Fulani in the area: the sedentary Fulani and the nomadic Fulani, who are "potentially actors of insecurity." The sedentary Fulani are generally settled either in the community or on the outskirts of villages, sharing social interactions with other communities. The nomadic Fulani move with their herds continuously from one locality to another. Most of the time, they benefit from the temporary hospitality of the sedentary Fulani because of ethnic proximity.

In the collective consciousness of the communities, it should be noted that nomadic Fulani are accused of being actors of insecurity, in particular their involvement in acts of terrorism. Indeed, the nomadic Fulani are generally involved in cultural damage and the resulting acts of violence and conflict. Also, the terrorists killed during attacks in certain localities (e.g., Téhini, Kafolo) presented, from the point of view of the communities and the SDF, characteristic traits of the Fulani (e.g.,

clothing, morphology). These are all things that tend to associate the Fulani community with the growing violent extremism in the region.

This situation creates tensions between the populations and the sedentary Fulani who live there because people are unable to distinguish and dissociate the two categories of actors. Thus, they put all the Fulani in the same category (*"There is no Fulani with a capital F and no Fulani with a small F,"* according to a Téhini youth leader), accentuating mistrust of the sedentary Fulani community. *"We have very good relations with the Fulani, but there are always people in a community who have behaviors that affect the community; they gave two rams to my men at Gôgô for the party. The Fulani who were born here do not associate with those who come from elsewhere,"* according to a community leader.

Moreover, the Fulani are relatively prosperous economic agents (herders), often having liquidity due to the absence of quality banking services, thus exposing them to all types of abuse. When *"you are Fulani, you dress in a certain way, you don't dare to take the roads because you just have to blame yourself for something and then you will obey what they say. They took more than 500,000 from the other Fulani because they know that if you don't pay, they'll put you through a procedure that you don't master."*

This stigma has the consequence of accentuating the identity withdrawal of the Fulani, who previously had a nomadic way of life and therefore were little integrated into community life. As a corollary, the Fulani refuse to associate themselves with various events organized within the localities visited. For example, in Doropo, the Fulani community demanded and obtained from the central imam a mosque entirely dedicated to them, where

sermons and other visiting preachers are often beyond the control of local religious leaders.

It should be noted that these cleavages accentuate the growing distrust between the Indigenous communities (e.g., Malinké, Lobi, Lorhon, Koulango) and outsiders (e.g., Fulani, Mossi). This friction of the social fabric constitutes a great threat to security, particularly in the civil-military relationship since it limits the possibility of collecting information within communities. This withdrawal of identity is all the more a threat to security as some Ivorian communities of Burkinabè origin, for example, still do not seem to have the feeling of belonging to the nation and therefore would refuse authority by boycotting major administrative operations. such as the general population and housing census.

4.3.3. Essential actors in the construction of security governance

The security context of the areas visited is the result of the successive socio-political crises that Côte d'Ivoire has experienced for two decades, but also of the jihadist threat at the border. It is a relatively volatile context due to the persistence of mistrust between the population and the SDF, in particular the gendarmerie in the Kong, Doropo, and Téhini area and the soldiers in the Tengréla and Téhini area. Born of the massive presence of the SDF in these areas, this distrust dominates the relationship between the SDF and the populations, both in urban and rural areas. With the action of the security authorities, a new social contract is being built between the population and the SDF in an environment where the challenge of social cohesion remains closely linked to the evolution of this feeling of mistrust. The main agents of change are:

- **Administrative authorities (prefects and sub-prefects), who provide leadership in security governance.** These authorities preside over all the formal institutions for strengthening social cohesion (e.g., committee for settling disputes over cultural damage, social cohesion, village boundaries) and all frameworks for dialogue on security (e.g., CCM and CDS). They coordinate government action at the local level. The prefects have a significant power of influence through their ability to mobilize both community leaders and public security agencies and to conduct awareness campaigns around public security issues. These authorities also manage to restore peace in the event of serious crises between populations and defense and security forces. However, their power to sanction security units seems limited.

- **Local civil society in its diversity.** This civil society includes revival groups (*comités de réveil*) composed of community leaders, religious guides, youth leaders, and women's organizations. They are the entry points for the communities, the influential actors par excellence in the different localities. As a senior army officer put it: *"It is the prefect and the sub-prefect who manage communication, the awareness of community leaders and the communities . . . the message to the population, it is the administrators. If we want to send a message, it is with the heads, the village chief, the president of the young people. We talk all the time, they send our messages to the people, I call them. If we have to make a curfew, I call the prefect, I inform him, if he agrees, I call the village chief, the president of the young people and I make the curfew."*

- **Women's organizations:** Specific forums for discussion of issues specific to

women in a cultural context that gives little place to female leadership.

- **Youth organizations:** It is sometimes possible that political divisions attenuate youths' inclusion in certain activities (the case of the president of the municipal youth of Minignan), but they are vectors of community mobilization and settlement of disputes.
- **Local political authorities—deputy, mayor, president of regional council:** As holders of local political power and their intrinsic links with communities, they can be agents of positive change in the construction of local security. Their role will be crucial in terms of strengthening social cohesion, improving civil-military relations, and in cross-border cooperation (local diplomacy).

Alongside these positive agents of change, there are categories of populations to monitor and include in the security dialogue. Those are :

- **Marginalized communities (e.g., the Fulani):** Regaining the trust of these communities is imperative in order to improve the civil-military relationship and, in turn, strengthen military intelligence.
- **Traditional hunters (i.e., the dozos):** Dozos are an important element in strengthening the security of village populations. They have supposed mystical ancestral qualities, which gives them a certain legitimacy with the communities. However, they can also be a source of insecurity and perpetuate the frustration of foreigners.
- **Clandestine gold miners and motorcycle taxis:** This category of actors was considered as potential adversaries to the process of security governance. Clandestine gold panning is led by landowners, young non-natives, natives/non-natives, village chiefs, and SDF (by their complicity). Based on this observation, this social category has a negative influence on security governance. Added to this are the motorcycle taxis that supply the clandestine trails (see Box 3).
- **Local political authorities—deputy, mayor, president of a regional council:** These are actors who can be allies in the construction of security (e.g., creation of basic infrastructure, establishment of municipal police), but they can also undermine security by competing for dominance in local power struggles.
- **Ministry of Defense/National Security Council:** The National Security Council and the Ministry of Defense define the overall strategy for responding to the terrorist threat. At the heart of this strategy is the improvement of the civil-military relationship. One of the challenges in improving this report is the effective application of the army's ethics charter and code of conduct. A close collaboration with this institution is essential to stimulate the change of behavior of the men deployed in the theater of operations to secure the border regions of the north.

Box 4: Phenomenon of motorcycle taxis

Motorcycle taxis provide a paid service for transporting people via motorcycle. In the north of Côte d'Ivoire, motorcycle taxis transport people and goods within cities but also across borders. In the opinion of key informants, this activity is inherited from the military-political crisis that has shaken the country since 2002. With the closing of borders following the COVID-19 pandemic, motorcycle taxi drivers have turned into "smugglers" in both directions of the borders by using bypass points of the SDF checkpoints.

The activity is practiced by young natives and foreigners. Although still informal, there is a certain structuring of the activity (e.g., associations, economic interest groups [GIEs], a framework for informal exchange via social networks between these different actors from the two borders).

The motorcycle taxi activity provides substantial income for the actors and constitutes an alternative for young people to face the challenges related to their socio-professional integration. However, in a context of terrorist threat, this activity arouses fears among the populations. A religious leader in Tengréla is not saying anything else when he says: *"my home is on the edge of the road, and as soon as [it is] 2 o'clock in the morning, you expect the noise of the motorcycles transporting people from Tengréla to Mali and vice versa. This activity gives money to young people and to the SDF but, in this situation of insecurity . . . it is dangerous."*

The study highlighted the fact that this activity is little controlled, starting with the registration of motorcycle owners. Most of those interviewed remain skeptical about the ability of the authorities to deal with it, especially since the phenomenon of racketeering involving the SDF and the multiplication of clandestine tracks do not facilitate regulatory actions. According to community leaders, *"this activity works despite the dangers because everyone wins."*

4.4. Dynamic

The security governance dynamic is structured in two blocks: the dynamics leading to progress, and the dynamics relating to obstacles impeding the improvement of security governance.

4.4.1. The dynamics leading to progress

The affirmation of the political will to reduce the vulnerability of the populations of the border regions, a guarantee of the reconquest of the legitimacy of the State

The affirmation of political will that addresses security challenges from the angle of human security is projected as the best way to address the issue. The launch of the government's social policy to respond to the economic vulnerability of youth, the upgrading of poor infrastructure, and the reform of civil-military

relations will all be contributing factors to strengthen security governance, should these trends continue.

This dynamic will be essential to break down the wall of mistrust between the army and the populations since it has been shown that a weak presence of the SDF limits military intelligence due to the fear of reprisals from the jihadists. This political will will have to be further affirmed by the concretization of socio-cultural initiatives carried out by the army, to "reconquer the hearts of the populations." *"What we need to strengthen our ties, the State must give us the means, for example, to paint the schools, or even have the means to repair village pumps, provide electricity and water. To the population. By doing all these acts, the population will not see us as enemies but as friends,"* according to the words of a commander of the GTIA in the north.

The effectiveness of dialogue frameworks

The beginning of dialogue within the various established formal frameworks, such as the CCM, the CDS, and the CCE, constitutes a good crucible for the debates on improving civil-military relations. These bodies allow individuals to file complaints and raise essential issues related to security governance, even if tangible results are slow in coming.

The inclusion of marginalized strata (e.g., the Fulani) and troublemakers (e.g., the dozos) should help strengthen the legitimacy of these consultation frameworks. For greater efficiency, the conclusions should be better monitored with well-defined and measurable objectives. With a view to strengthening their operational capacities (financial and technical), the actions of these executives should improve if they are accompanied by well-structured communication campaigns.

The dynamics of cross-border cooperation are becoming more structured

Collaborative relations are being consolidated between cross-border countries for the security of the cross-border area, resulting in the exchange of information and the implementation of joint actions to combat terrorism. This collaboration tends to become generalized from a human security perspective. It is vital that all security bodies be able to lift the administrative constraints to their effective participation by giving extended powers to the prefect for greater flexibility in the coordination of State actions at the local level. This framework for sharing information and experience could support behavior change through the influence of peers stemming from this strengthening local diplomacy. A local representative commented on the notable differences between police in Burkina Faso and in Côte d'Ivoire:

"Burkina is a country that is deeply committed to combating jihadists. There, well-trained agencies take their work seriously compared to our police force; when you go to the Burkina border, agents are on alert. When you pass our checkpoints, you see how our security forces carry themselves, how they are seated, how they dress—it's anything goes. In Burkina, they are organized. Truly, even in small villages without electricity, they have solar lighting systems mounted on simple poles."

Community resilience actions

Security resilience actions are understood from two angles: social resilience and economic resilience.

Regarding social resilience, it is manifested by the mobilization of social norms and practices (e.g., rites, marriage, funerals) for the production of security (e.g., an informal framework for sharing information) and, on

the other hand, for the consolidation of cross-border social capital (e.g., family, cultural, and religious ties between populations on both sides of the borders). Also, traditional dozo hunters are mobilized to ensure the safety of people and property in both rural and urban areas. The dozos exert a positive influence in the governance of community security insofar as they are the first recourse of the populations of the villages in the event of danger. In addition, cultural proximity is regularly mobilized to transcend inter-community divisions manifested by the sharing of information and the regular organization of socio-cultural activities.

At the economic level, this resilience is manifested by the use of the income from illegal gold panning to fill the gaps in employment for the most vulnerable (young people and women) and in basic infrastructure. This dynamic also affects the local informal private sector (e.g., creation of small businesses, transport services), thus contributing to creating a positive externality of productive businesses.

The establishment of "unwritten rules" (see Box 2) for sharing the rent from traditional (clandestine) gold panning constitutes the basis of the strategies developed by the communities to mitigate the negative effects of repression by the SDF and to obtain tolerance.

Indeed, the fight against illegal gold panning, the main occupation of young people, creates vulnerabilities among young people who become easy "prey" for jihadist movements. In view of this situation, the SDF have developed a relationship of tolerance toward the young people registered in this activity. This tolerance comes from the shares they receive from gold panning earnings. A local SDF agent explained how gold panning revenues are shared:

"Clandestine gold panning must be organized for it to be recognized. Out of 100 young people here, 90 young people work in gold; if the army closes all the gold panning sites, they will have nothing to do because we will snatch their livelihood and they will be vulnerable to terrorism. The ministry must therefore formalize [and] facilitate [gold panning], and young people will invest more in gold panning than in terrorism. It will avoid the resentment of young people and populations; if we close these sites, they will no longer talk to us and it will create other problems for us."

Moreover, this relationship of tolerance is also extended to illegal cross-border commercial activities. Indeed, it emerges from the interviews with the SDF that they have also developed a relationship of tolerance with the actors involved in trafficking and commercial activities at the borders to avoid the discontent and conflicts of young people, as related by these remarks of a deputy officer at a checkpoint: *"In the area, there is all kinds of trafficking, the goods that are sold here, entries into the park and clandestine gold panning, it does not affect security. We control all the facts by our men on all fronts." "We cannot ban young people from doing their business. If we ban it, it risks creating too many conflicts, discontent because they only live from that." "When you completely ban trafficking, the young person in question is able to go get other young people and come and attack you at night on your post and then say that it is the jihadists."*

4.4.2. Impeding factors

Several factors presents themselves as dynamics that can slow down the positive transformation of security governance: (i) racketeering and its corollary of a feeling of injustice, (ii) the erosion of social cohesion, (iii) the limited number of opportunities for the sustainable socio-economic integration of young people, (iv) the lack of a coordinated

communication strategy for better security management, and (v) the lack of control of the underground economy of illegal gold panning.

Racketeering and the feeling of injustice

The intensification of the phenomenon of racketeering and its resulting corollary of a feeling of injustice risks further crystallizing civil-military relations. This concern will have to be seriously considered in the overall strategy of building security in the northern border regions. As evidenced by the words of a leader of the Fulani community:

"As long as the problem of injustice is not resolved, it will be a bit complicated. We have brothers who are arrested but the methods of doing so we see that it is exaggerated. . . . They even searched women . . . there is a woman, they took her fifty thousand francs. They claim her husband is a terrorist; all this is the fault of men in uniform."

The erosion of social cohesion

Despite the existence of conflict management mechanisms and the resolute commitment of the administrative and customary authorities, the latent tensions between the communities are far from diminishing. The dislocation of the social fabric continues with stigmatization, ambient insecurity, and conflicts around natural resources. These obstacles to social peace must be removed.

The challenge of the limited number of opportunities for the sustainable socio-economic integration of young people

The thorny issue of the employability of young people in border regions is a major obstacle to the implementation of security policy from a human security perspective. Despite the government's recent efforts, the dynamic is still far from being reversed, thereby posing a serious threat to the effective fight against violent extremism.

Lack of a coordinated communication strategy for better security management

The communication channels of security governance are essentially weekly meetings on security with the prefect of the department, which are then shared with various community leaders. Community radio and the griots also serve as relay channels. In addition, according to the security authorities, there is a framework for communication with the population through telephone calls (all community leaders have contact with one or two SDF authorities). In addition, there are exchanges via the WhatsApp application at various levels: on the one hand between community leaders and the security forces (e.g., gendarmerie, police) and between different security forces on either side of the border (e.g., Côte d'Ivoire–Mali and Côte d'Ivoire–Burkina Faso).

Several communication channels are used in the context of exchanges on security issues. Where it exists, local radio is used as a communication channel by administrative authorities, nongovernmental agencies, and communities. Letters can also serve to inform the different actors in the security network.

Between different communities, communication is the responsibility of community leaders (traditional chiefs, youth presidents, women, GIE). The tools used are the telephone, the griot, the WhatsApp platform, word of mouth, and going door to door. However, for the Fulani community, the WhatsApp platform can become a questioning element by the SDF during checks insofar as members can share links whose content they are unaware of.

Ultimately, despite the abundance of communication channels, discussions on the security issue remain elitist, focusing on the

main community leaders and the administrative and security authorities. It is difficult to understand the exact transmission to the base, especially since these channels are used more to manage crises than to anticipate them. This results in the need to develop a coordinated communication strategy essential to better prevent crises on the one hand and improve civil-military relations on the other.

The lack of control of the underground economy of clandestine gold panning

Due to the lack of knowledge and difficulties related to formalization procedures for artisanal mining, combined with repression, there is a risk that the underground economy around illegal gold panning will consolidate. Such an eventuality could intensify the development of opaque financial flows around this activity. The control (regulation) of marketing channels, actors, and financial flows then becomes an urgent issue for security governance.

At this stage, the public response is part of a repression of illegal gold panning, while a better understanding of the ecosystem that underlies it (e.g., actors, marketing circuit, destination of funds) constitutes a sustainable approach to curb this phenomenon—especially since these informal activities benefit communities and a heterogeneous set of actors (e.g., SDF, administrative authorities, economic operators).

## 5. Implications for the R4P Program

5.1. Classification of Zones

The security governance classification criteria used are the number (dynamics) of violent incidents between 2019 and 2021 (see Figure 1), the degree of vulnerability of young people, the state of social cohesion (degree of suspicion between communities), the quality of cross-border cooperation, and the quality of the civil-military relationship. In relation to each criterion, the classification is justified as follows:

- **Dynamics of violent incidents:** Figure 1 indicates that since 2019, the departments of Téhini and Kong are on an upward trajectory in terms of violent incidents. Not included in the chart: Bounkani region recorded 98 deaths and Tchologo 38 deaths since 2019, higher than all other regions.

Degree of vulnerability of young people: Young people in the departments of Téhini and (to a lesser extent) Kong are more exposed due to their proximity to Comoé National Park. The young people of Téhini swear by the gold panning activity in the park. They are *"willing to embrace another income-generating activity only if the resulting income at least equals that derived from gold panning in the park."* This state of mind makes them more vulnerable to manipulation. In addition, these are young people who for the most part come from non-native communities and are poorly educated, with narrower prospects for integration.

Figure 1: Rate of violent incidents in R4P areas
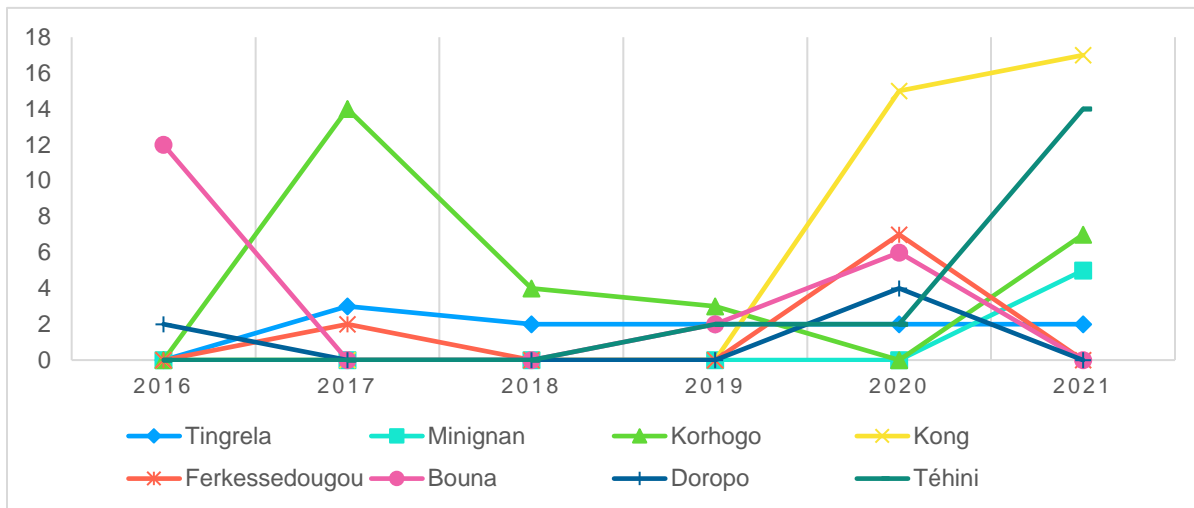
Source: Author's creation, based on ACLED data.

- **Quality of social cohesion (degree of suspicion between communities):** Social weakening is observed in all departments. However, suspicion is more pronounced in Téhini and Kong (e.g., talibés suspected of being intelligence agents for extremist groups).
- **Quality of cross-border cooperation:** It is observed in all departments. In the Bounkani region, this collaboration is well advanced in Doropo than in Téhini.
- **Quality of the civil-military relationship:** This is observed everywhere but is considered better in Folon than in the other regions.

Based on these criteria, a scoring grid is proposed, starting from 1 (bad) to 5 (good).

Based on our analysis, the least "governed" areas in terms of security are, respectively, Téhini, Kong/Sikolo, Doropo, Flabougou/Kapégué, Sokoro, and North Kimbirila. It therefore appears that areas that have already experienced terrorist attacks or are near other areas already affected by attacks are priority areas for action in terms of

improving security governance. We can mention the localities of Téhini, Kong, Sikolo, Doropo, Kapégué, and Flabougou

5.2. Actions to Support Security Governance

The main implications of this PEA for security governance in the northern border areas are:

- Have an advocacy approach both at a high level (e.g., National Security Council, government) and at the local level to address issues relating to the professionalization of security forces at the operational level (e.g., application of codes of ethics and professional conduct) and performance dialog frames. It will be a question of combining a top-down and bottom-up approach in raising awareness around security issues in connection with the civil-military relationship.
- Cross-border cooperation should be considered in its overall approach, taking into account social norms and cultural practices around borders. This

collaboration should not be limited to institutional levels; advocacy should seek to take advantage of the cultural proximity of the regions concerned.

Table 3: Classification of areas of intervention

Criteria	Doropo	Flabougou	Kapégué	Kimbirila Nord	Kong	Sikolo	Sokoro	Téhini
Dynamics of violent incidents	2	2.5	2.5	3	1.5	1.5	3	1
Degree of vulnerability of young people	2	2.5	2.5	3	2	2	2.5	1.5
Quality of social cohesion	2	2	2	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2
Quality of cross-border cooperation	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Quality of the civil-military relationship	2.5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total score	**11.5**	**11.5**	**11.5**	**13.5**	**10.5**	**10.5**	**12.5**	**9.0**

Source: Author's analysis of qualitative data and ACLED database.

- Have an approach to providing economic opportunity for young people and women, adapted to their specific context. The center of interest of young people in terms of socio-economic integration varies from one locality to another. While some are obsessed with the gold panning activities they want to carry out legally, others are looking for financial resources to undertake income-generating activities in any other sector deemed profitable. Similarly, women seem more attracted to the retail trade and the production and marketing of market gardening products.
- Develop a more inclusive approach, considering the aspirations of marginalized communities in the various advocacy and dialogue bodies (e.g., the Fulani community, dozos, women, young people).

- The integration of natural resource management in all dialogue frameworks would be a judicious approach to significantly remove bottlenecks in access to rural land, pastures and water resources, and mining revenue.

From the above, the study suggests taking into account the following actions in the implementation of the resilience for peace project.

- Support the development of a mass communication strategy on issues of security, peacebuilding, social cohesion, road safety, redress mechanisms in case of abuse of defense and security forces, and consequences of illegal gold panning (especially in parks and reserves).
- Advocate with the structures in charge of the integration of young people so that the

processes cover the adhesion of young people and that studies of economic opportunities are carried out in order to have projects adapted to the context of young people.

- Support the strengthening of dialogue frameworks by ensuring the participation of all those involved and affected by security governance issues.
- Support the inclusion of natural resource management monitoring as a point of discussion in all dialogue frameworks.
- Support the strengthening of the operational capacities of land dispute resolution frameworks to make them more transparent.

- Advocate with the competent administrative structures to obtain artisanal mining permits for young operators.
- Engage the State of Côte d'Ivoire in the fight against racketeering to facilitate the application of the code of ethics and the charter of ethics of the army.
- Conduct awareness campaigns with local populations to promote respect for the institutions of the republic and representatives of the State
- Promote the socio-educational supervision of talibés by facilitating their care by the social services of the State.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: List of Documents Consulted

REPORTS

1. The ACLED Project: https://acleddata.com/#/dashboardProject.
2. Elva. 2021. Tracking Violent Extremism Spillover from the Sahel to Littoral West Africa Executive Summary and Recommendations. Analytical Report. June 2021.
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Annex 2: Interview Guide

Situation, actors, decision-making, and influence within security governance

N°	Initial Questions	Probing Questions
1.1	How would you describe the overall state of security in your locality/region?	*Has this situation changed (improvement / deterioration) in the last 3 years? Why? Give examples.* *How do you foresee the evolution of these relations in the future (within 3 years)?*
1.2	Who are the key actors (formal and informal) capable of solving or mitigating security problems in your locality (endogenous-community, state, private actors etc.)?	*4. Are these actors the same over the last 3 years?* *5. In your opinion, what are their motivations?* *6. In your opinion, do the formal (State, communities) and informal actors have sufficient resources to ensure the safety of populations?* *7. Do the formal (State, communities) and informal actors maintain relations (visible/invisible or formal/informal) in the management of security in your locality/region? Why? Give examples.*
1.3	Is there a consultation framework between elites, local executives, community leaders on security issues in your locality/region?	*1. If YES, give examples* *2. How do they work?* *3. Are the different ethnic groups fairly represented, including minorities? Why? Give examples.* *4. Which community groups do you think are excluded from security consultation frameworks?*
1.4	What is the level of involvement of young people and women in the security governance of your locality/region?	*1. What are the measures taken and the obstacles to implementation?* *2. Are some public structures/local authorities making efforts to increase this representation? Give examples.*
1.5	Do you think there are factors in your locality and/or region (actions, ideology, behaviors, etc.) that can disrupt security?	*1. If yes, which ones (list and rank in order of importance)? Why?* *2. Has this situation changed (improvement / deterioration) in the last 3 years? Why? Give examples.* *3. What new forms of violence and insecurity are emerging in your locality and the surrounding localities? What link is there between these new forms of violence and the new security context of the locality and more broadly of the region?* *4. Through what local strategies do communities attempt to overcome security problems and what are the limitations of these strategies?*

Relations with defense and security forces

N°	Initial Questions	Probing Questions
2.1	How do you describe the relations between the security structures (police, gendarmerie) and the populations in your locality and/or region?	1. *What explains this situation? Give examples.* 2. *What are the consequences of this situation?* 3. *Has this situation changed over the past 3 years? Why? Give examples.* 4. *How do you foresee the evolution of these relations in the future (within 3 years)?*
2.2	How do you describe the relations between the defense structures (army) and the populations in your locality and/or region?	1. *What explains this situation? Give examples* 2. *What are the consequences of this situation?* 3. *Has this situation changed over the past 3 years? Why? Give examples.* 4. *How do you foresee the evolution of these relations in the future (within 3 years)?*
2.3	How do you describe the relationship between community structures (traditional hunters, self-defense or watchdog groups) for defense and security and the populations in your locality and/or region?	1. *What explains this situation? Give examples.* 2. *What are the consequences of this situation?* 3. *Has this situation changed over the past 3 years? Why? Give examples.* 4. *How do you foresee the evolution of these relations in the future (within 3 years)?*
2.4	How would you describe the relationship between community structures (traditional hunters, self-defense or watchdog groups) for defense and security and the defense and security forces in your locality and/or region?	1. *What explains this situation? Give examples.* 2. *What are the consequences of this situation?* 3. *Has this situation changed over the past 3 years? Why? Give examples.* 4. *How do you foresee the evolution of these relations in the future (within 3 years)?*
2.5	Are you aware in your locality/region of cases of incidents between the population and the defense and security forces (police, gendarmerie, army)? How do you receive information on the security situation in your locality?	1. *If YES, can you give examples?* 2. *Has this situation changed (improvement / deterioration) in the last 3 years? Why? Give examples.* 3. *How were these incidents resolved? Who were the formal and informal actors involved in the resolution?* 4. *How does the SDF inform you of their planning, practices, or strategies to secure your locality?*
2.6	Are there any positive or negative influences from neighboring countries on the security/stability of your region and/or locality?	1. *Why? Give examples.* 2. *Has this situation changed (improvement/deterioration) in the last 3 years? Why? Give examples.* 3. *How do you judge the relations between the defense and security bodies of the country and those of the neighboring country located on the border?* 4. *How do you foresee the evolution of these relations in the future (within 3 years)?*

N°	Initial Questions	Probing Questions
2.7	In the last three years, have you been aware of any incidents between women/women's groups (or young people/youth groups) and the SDF?	1. *If yes, can you give examples?* 2. *How were these issues resolved in the community?* 3. *How were these problems settled between the army and the populations?* 4. *Are these mechanisms effective? Permanent or spontaneous? inclusive?* 5. *What are the actors/groups that have favored the resolution of these problems?* 6. *What is the role of women/youth in resolving these disputes?*
2.8	Is there a communication mechanism between the SDF and the population?	1. *If yes, give examples.* 2. *If not, what do you think would be the best way to communicate with the SDF?*