

The Road to Dignity

How Resilience for Peace (R4P) offers the Fulani community a concrete opportunity to reduce stigmatization by State security forces



Two brothers from the Fulani community purchasing their motorcycle insurance in Koflände

In the north-eastern border areas of Côte d'Ivoire, the discrimination against the Fulani community and their generalized stigmatisation as supporters of terrorists nourishes a fertile ground for violent extremist groups to exploit grievances. This discrimination becomes particularly visible at the security check-points where security forces often charge Fulani with higher kick-backs compared to other travelers. According to a recent Resilience for Peace (R4P) Perception Survey of over 2,000 northern citizens,

the proportion of respondents experiencing these pay-offs “often” or “always” is highest among the Fulani community with 85% of Fulani respondents feeling targeted. For further illustration, the security forces in this border region informally call the Fulani community their “cacao” as a reference to the main source of enrichment in Côte d'Ivoire’s more southern regions.

R4P listened to these frustrations and saw their effects on civil-military relations. In neighboring countries, public disunity and hostility towards the State opens the door to violent extremists. R4P mounted a special mission to support regional administrators to meet citizen needs locally by offering to provide motorcycle documents services. The one-stop mobile service clinic started moving between villages, meeting citizens where they live and offering administrative support.

In order to inform everyone, radio spots and social media posts were broadcast before and during the activity in five local languages, including Fulani.

"I am Fulani. I was passing by and I heard your advertisement in my language. I came and I was able to obtain the technical certification of my motorcycle. I went to our camp and informed my brother. He didn't believe me when I said that it was in the village of Koflände that I got the document. We decided to come back here together, and he said he would buy an insurance if he came to find it true. So, we came back, he bought the insurance, and I also bought the insurance". Fulani man, Koflände



Motorcyclists carrying compliant paperwork are far less likely to have negative encounters at security checkpoints, and relations with State security forces are expected to improve. This activity particularly benefits the Fulani community. Members of the Fulani community with proper documentation will be less likely to be associated with violent extremists.



Two young Fulani men using their tricycle for transborder trade present the new documents they have acquired

“We are very happy. When you go to do this kind of paperwork in the town, we Fulani are afraid. We do not know how people will receive us there. We don't speak French and often people talk to us harshly. Here, we were received like everyone else, we were shown where to go, we had the documents without any discussions”. Fulani man, Koflandé

Since 2020, Côte d'Ivoire has faced increasing attacks by terrorist groups along its northern border, with one attack in 2020 and four between January and June 2021. To increase its support of the Ivorian State to prevent and fight violent extremism, the American government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initiated the R4P project in 2021. The project will run for five years.



The technical service hands out the technical certification to a Fulani man while providing explanations

