

When Security Actors Truly Listen to Women

How the civil-military dialogue in Tengrela allowed security forces to adapt the pattern of their patrols, thereby contributing to a decrease in nocturnal aggressions

In Tengrela, a northern border town in Côte d'Ivoire, the Resilience for Peace (R4P) governance team identified challenges with inclusivity and female representation in local public institutions.



Women participants after the workshop

The governance component of R4P aims to improve local governance in project areas. On September 25 this year, a training and information workshop was held for women on how to lodge a complaint when a deficit in public services is noted. This workshop also served as a platform for local women's groups to

interact directly with representatives from various State services, including security and defense forces. Women highlighted the increase in aggressions and theft in homes and on the streets during the night, of which they are common targets.

An important outcome of this exchange is the deployment of mixed patrols in city neighborhoods and their impact at critical hours of the night. An outcome of a request made by the women, security forces from mixed teams operate in specific areas through the late hours. They patrol in two ways now: First, motorized patrols in army transport trucks act as dissuasive presence, covering all Tengrela district. Second, as foot patrols by mixed units, as women described their attackers as generally on foot or on motorbikes. Working in pairs, security officers dress in civilian clothes and roam dark alleys and back streets to attract potential attackers. The army transport trucks are never far from the foot patrols and can quickly respond with support as needed.

My neighborhood, Sikabala, is not the same today as a month ago. Houses have not changed, people are the same; but a month ago I was scared when I went to sell at the market because at any time thieves could break your door in your absence. In the early morning I was afraid to go to the mosque because it was the right time for the thugs to attack us women.

For a few weeks now, the security forces have been patrolling a lot. I would say this began with the R4P workshop where we alerted the security forces about the aggressions. They started patrolling and it calmed the thugs. Now I go to prayer in the morning.

Mme Coulibaly Korotoum , quartier Sikabala

