

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

EARLY WARNING SIGNALS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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Between the English and French versions of this document, English is the controlling version.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEA	Census Enumeration Areas
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
EAI	Equal Access International
ECOWARN	Economic Community Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EWS	Early Warning Signals
GPS	Global Positioning System
INS	National Institute for Statistics
NORC	National Opinion Research Center at University of Chicago
R4P	Resilience for Peace
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



Executive Summary

The USAID Resilience for Peace (R4P) Project implemented a survey in northern Côte d'Ivoire to further understand views of violent extremism and strategies of resilience in the region. The survey explored views about socioeconomic conditions and governance, the security situation and service provision, and assets of resilience. The effort also included a series of questions to capture early warning signals (EWS), which are used as a measure to assess the potential for outbreaks of violence and conflict. While Côte d'Ivoire has not experienced the same level of violent extremist activity as have its neighbors, Burkina Faso and Mali, the country is nevertheless vulnerable, particularly the northern region. Bounkani (Nassian, Doropo, Téhini), Tchologo (Diawala, Ouangolodougou, Larelaba), Poro (M'Bengué), and Bagoué (Tengréla) regions along Côte d'Ivoire's shared borders with Mali and Burkina Faso are not only geographically proximate to unrest, but the regions are economically marginalized, are challenged by wide income disparities, and have limited government service provision.

EWS are vital for assessing the political, economic, and social conditions that contribute to vulnerabilities to conflict, extremist violence, and other forms of instability. EWS enable the development of resilience strategies that can help communities adapt, mitigate, or prevent conflict and violence. These are explored in Côte d'Ivoire, with the aim of tracking signal indicators over time.

Key Findings

Key findings from the survey, which was conducted with a random sample of approximately 2,468 adults, 18 years of age and

older in northern Côte d'Ivoire, November 2 to 21, 2021, are summarized below.

- Most of the survey population in the north is not experiencing many of the indicator EWS of violent extremism listed in the current survey, including bank and supermarket robberies, kidnappings for ransom, and changes in social and religious practices. However, most the respondents who did report kidnappings and robberies reported high incidences (i.e., more than one) occurring over the past 12 months, and gangs and bandits were identified by most respondents as those who were most responsible.
- Importantly, conflicts between farmers and herders, as well as cattle theft, are among the most frequently observed EWS. However, more than half of the survey population said there had been a decrease in the number of both incidents compared with that in previous years. Ethnic groups were identified by most respondents as those most responsible for conflicts between farmers and herders. Youth were identified by most respondents as those being most responsible for cattle theft.
- Public discourse promoting hate and violence is among the least frequently observed EWS. However, the survey population in the north is evenly split on whether they observed an increase (34%) or decrease (34%) in this kind of discourse compared with previous years. Youth were again identified by most respondents as those who were most responsible for public discourse promoting hate and violence.



Introduction

Early warning and early response systems are used in diverse ways and disciplines, from managing disease to predicting various forms of armed attacks. As referred to in this report, early warning involves the collection, analysis, and communication of key indicators of rising tensions and conflict. Measuring and monitoring indicators related to crime, intercommunal conflict, hate speech, or illegal trade can offer data for communities to develop strategies to counter violent extremism (CVE).

Recurrent attacks in northern Côte d'Ivoire during 2020 and 2021 point to the growing expansion of Islamist militants who have been operating from Burkina Faso and Mali near Côte d'Ivoire's northern border. These extremists take advantage of recurring and unresolved conflicts, such as those between farmers and herders. Extremist activities also exacerbate security gaps, such as illicit engagements and lack of government services in the north. Key stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire, including policy makers and civil society, can use EWS to mitigate the potential for conflict.

Early warning indicators of conflict are commonly divided into three broad categories (Walton 2011): (1) long-term structural indicators, (2) medium proximate indicators that may enable conflict, and (3) short-term shocks and events. Approaches to early warning systems often draw on both qualitative and quantitative methods (Walton 2011). The indicators analyzed in this report are based on a perception survey that includes demographic, economic, public opinion, external, and security factors to capture context-specific measures.

Recent interventions deploying early warning and early response systems in Africa are based in conflict areas and have helped increase the capacity of communities to prevent incidents of violence. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), which collects and analyzes data for action from the ECOWAS Commission, helped prevent crises in Guinea and Togo through early warning reports and coordinating with response mechanisms to de-escalate situations (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development 2009). Findings based on the EWS questions of this survey can help identify, monitor, and respond to trends linked to conflict and violent extremism.

Methodology

The results discussed in this report are based on a face-to-face quantitative survey conducted with a random sample of approximately 2,468 adults 18 years of age and older in northern Côte d'Ivoire from November 2 to 21, 2021. The margin of error is approximately $\pm 2\%$.

Sampling

A total of 11 departments in northern Côte d'Ivoire were selected for the current survey: Minignan, Kaniasso, Tengréla, M'Bengué, Ouangolodougou, Ferkessedougou, Kong, Téhini, Doropo, Bouna, and Korhogo. All but Korhogo are on the northern border.

In each department, 11 census enumeration areas (CEAs) were randomly selected using data from the National Institute of Statistics (INS). Another three CEAs in each department were selected in case replacements were needed. A total of 121 main CEAs were therefore randomly selected, plus a total of 33 backup CEAs. Detailed maps



Challenges

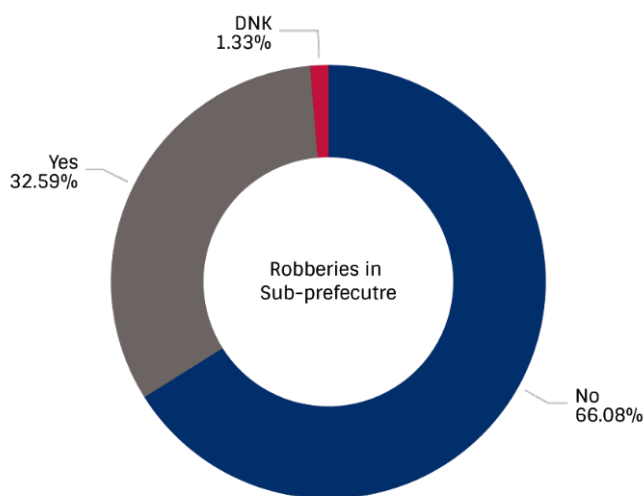
- Local language barriers were the principal challenge encountered during survey fieldwork. Despite forming teams to include a range of local language capabilities and assigning each team to geographic areas that matched the language skills of members, regional differences in dialect and the presence of communities speaking less common local languages still occurred on occasion. However, enumerators reported that they quickly became more familiar with regional dialects or would generally find a common language that allowed for the interview to take place.
- Another challenge was the difficulty of physically accessing certain CEAs where even 4x4 vehicles could not travel. The teams used local motorbikes whenever possible to address this challenge.
- Security was the third challenge encountered. In a few cases, primarily in the Doropo and Bouna departments, selected CEAs had to be replaced with substitutes based on advice from the local authorities, security forces, or the field manager.
- A final challenge was internet reception. The team conducted the surveys using tablets and also recorded global positioning system (GPS) coordinates. Unstable internet reception, however, occasionally prevented the team from capturing GPS data. This did not prevent the team from capturing sufficient GPS data for most observations to understand geographic trends.

Because the team was able to mitigate and respond to the above-mentioned unexpected developments, none precluded outcomes of a reliable survey that permits arriving at generalizable conclusions.

Findings

Among the survey population, 66% reported that there were no cases of bank or supermarket robberies in their subprefecture during the past 12 months. In sharing their view on whether these kinds of robberies had increased or decreased, 29% of respondents said they had “decreased a lot,” whereas 19% said they had “increased a lot.” Only 9% of respondents to this question said there was no change. However, 49% of those who said there were cases of robberies in the past 12 months reported that more than five robberies had occurred.

Figure 1.

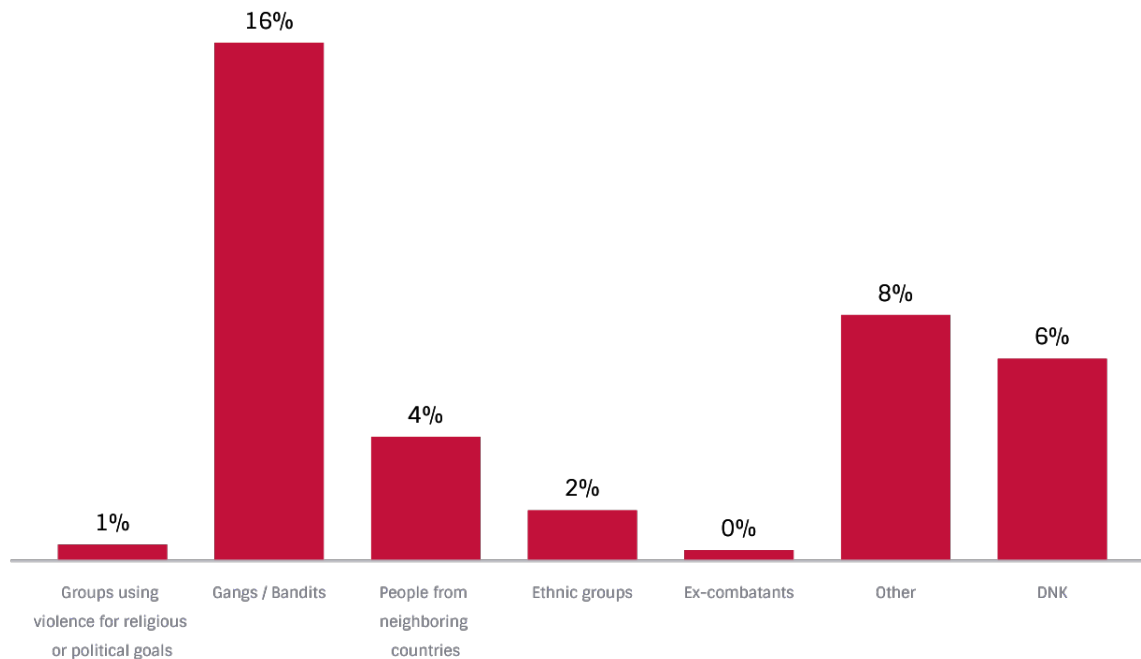


Although bank and supermarket robberies were not a common experience among the survey population in the north, those who do experience these incidents have had high exposure. At the same time, 56% of the survey

population in the north noted that robberies had “decreased a lot” or “slightly decreased.” Among the survey population, 16% believed that gangs and bandits were most responsible for these robberies.

Figure 2: Groups believed to be most responsible for robberies

Groups Believed to be Most Responsible for Robberies

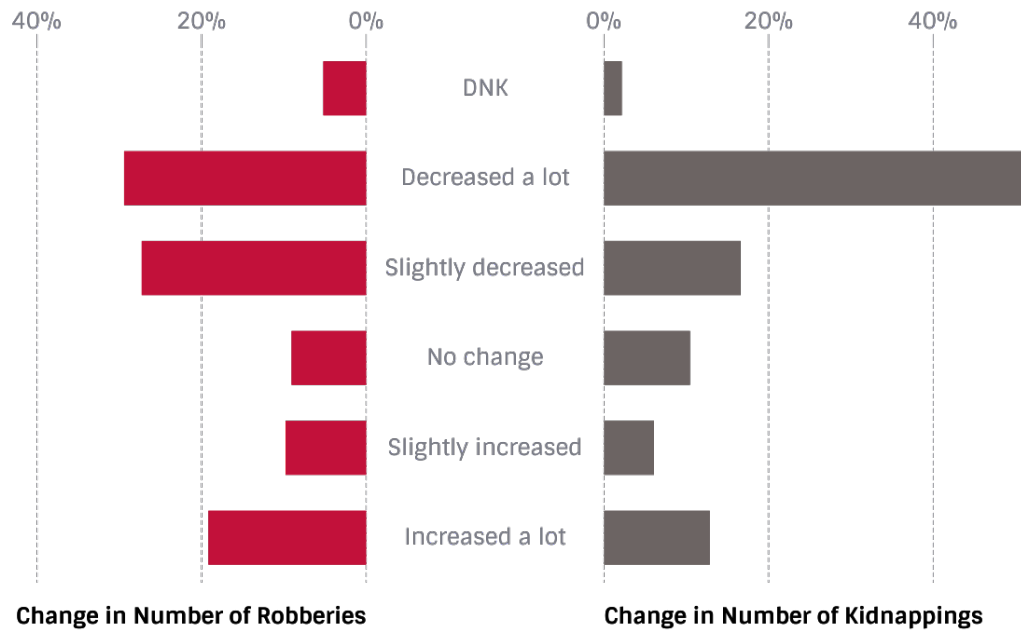


*Weighted
Sample size n = 2,468
Population size N = 1,567,715



Figure 3: Change in number of robberies and kidnappings

Change in Number of Robberies and Kidnappings

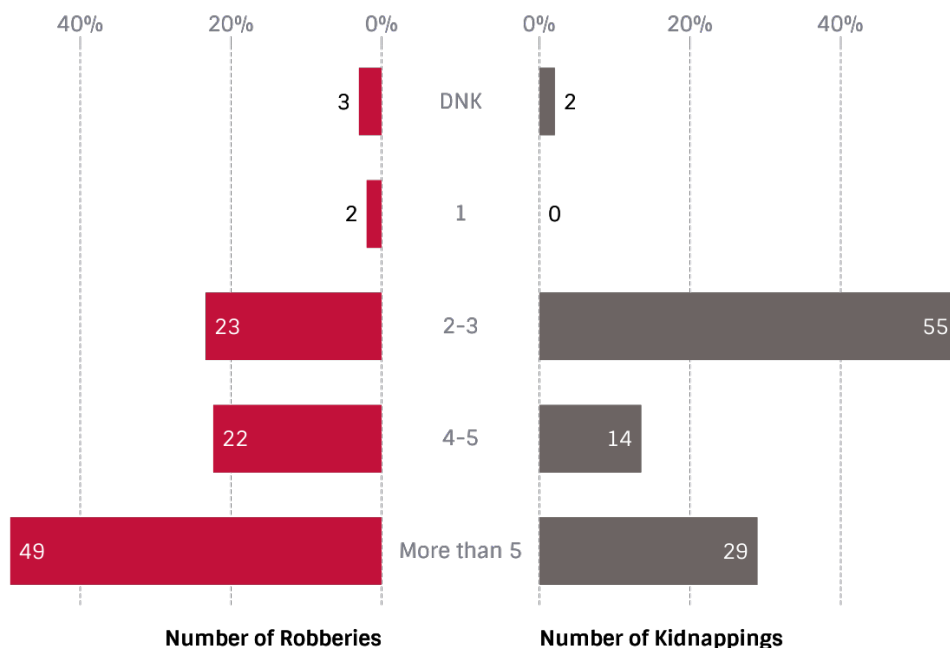


*Weighted
 Change in robberies sample size n = 792
 Change in robberies population size N = 510,972
 Change in kidnappings sample size n = 101
 Change in kidnappings population size N = 59,160



Figure 4: Number of robberies and kidnappings

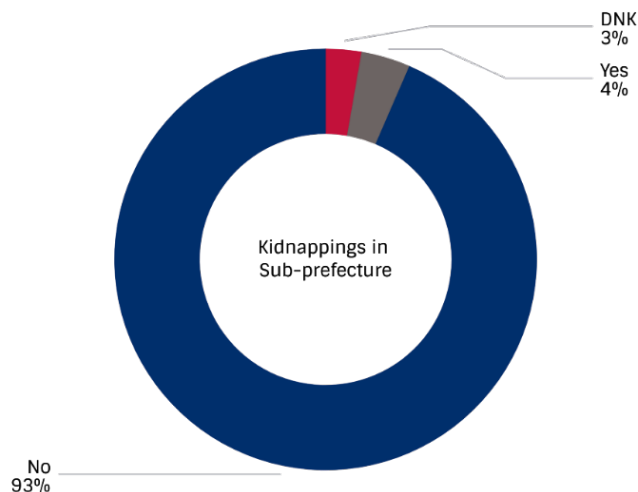
Number of Robberies and Kidnappings



*Weighted
 Number of robberies sample size n = 291
 Number of robberies population size N = 148,152
 Number of kidnappings sample size n = 27
 Number of kidnappings population size N = 11,194

A majority of the survey population in the north (93%) said there were no cases of kidnapping for ransom in their subprefecture in the past 12 months. In sharing their view on whether these kidnappings had increased or decreased, 52% of respondents said they had “decreased a lot,” whereas 13% of respondents said they had “increased a lot.” Only 10% of respondents to this question said there was no change. However, for the question “During the past 12 months, how many kidnappings for ransom took place in your community?,” 29% of respondents reported that more than five kidnappings had occurred.

Figure 5:



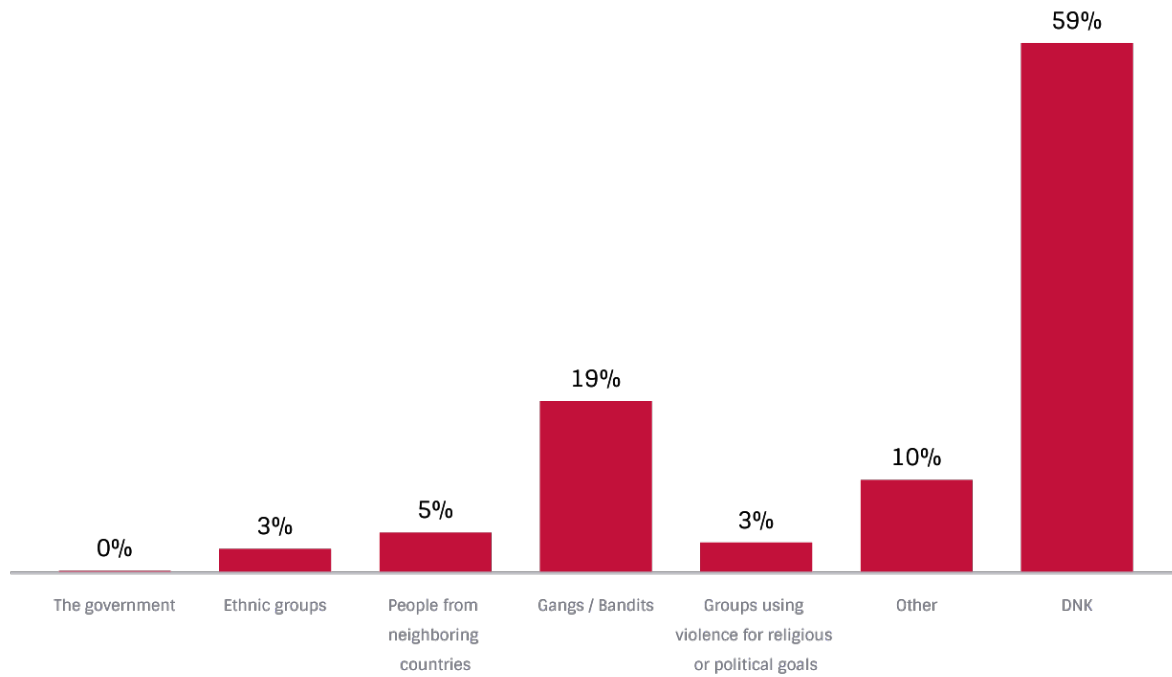
Similar to the survey population’s experiences with bank and supermarket robberies, their experiences with kidnappings for ransom are not common.

In addition, 68% of respondents said that cases of kidnapping for ransom had “decreased a lot”

or “decreased a little.” Of those who responded to the question, 19% believed that gangs and bandits were most responsible for these kidnappings.

Figure 6: Groups believed to be most responsible for kidnappings

Groups Believed to be Most Responsible for Kidnappings

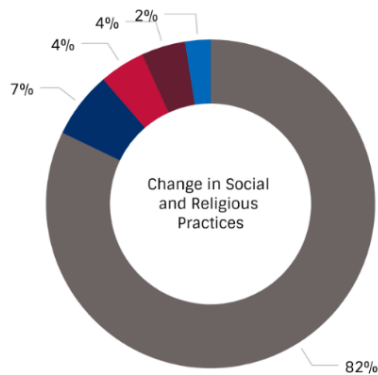


*Weighted
Sample size n = 101
Population size N = 59,160



Among the survey population, 82% reported “no change” in social and religious practices in their subprefecture during the past 12 months. When asked to specify what changes had occurred in social practices, 4% of those who had reported change said, “women and girls are required to cover,” but fewer than 1% said, “men are required to wear beards.” Of those who gave their opinion on who is most responsible for women and girls being required to cover, 59% said, “Imams/Muslim figures.” Similarly, the greatest reason (33%) from those who gave their opinion on who is most responsible for men being required to wear beards was Imams/Muslim figures.

Figure 7:



● No change ● Only a little change ● DNK ● Some change ● A lot of change

Regarding a change in the number of unregulated (artisanal) gold mines operating in survey population communities over the past 12 months, most respondents (66%) said they noticed “no” change, whereas 19% said they did notice a change. In sharing their opinion on who most likely operates these unregulated mines, 38% of those who answered the question said, “people from neighboring countries.”

Figure 8:

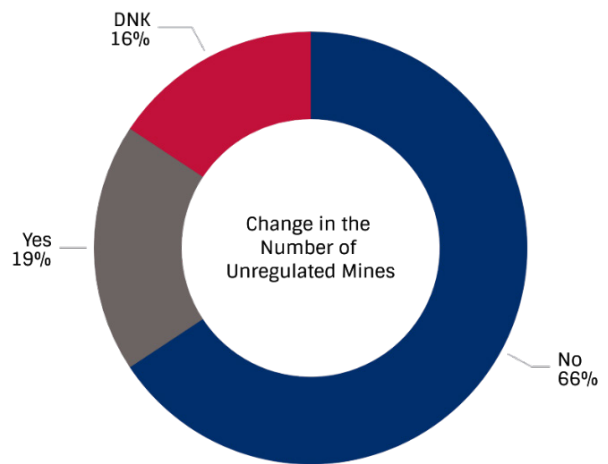
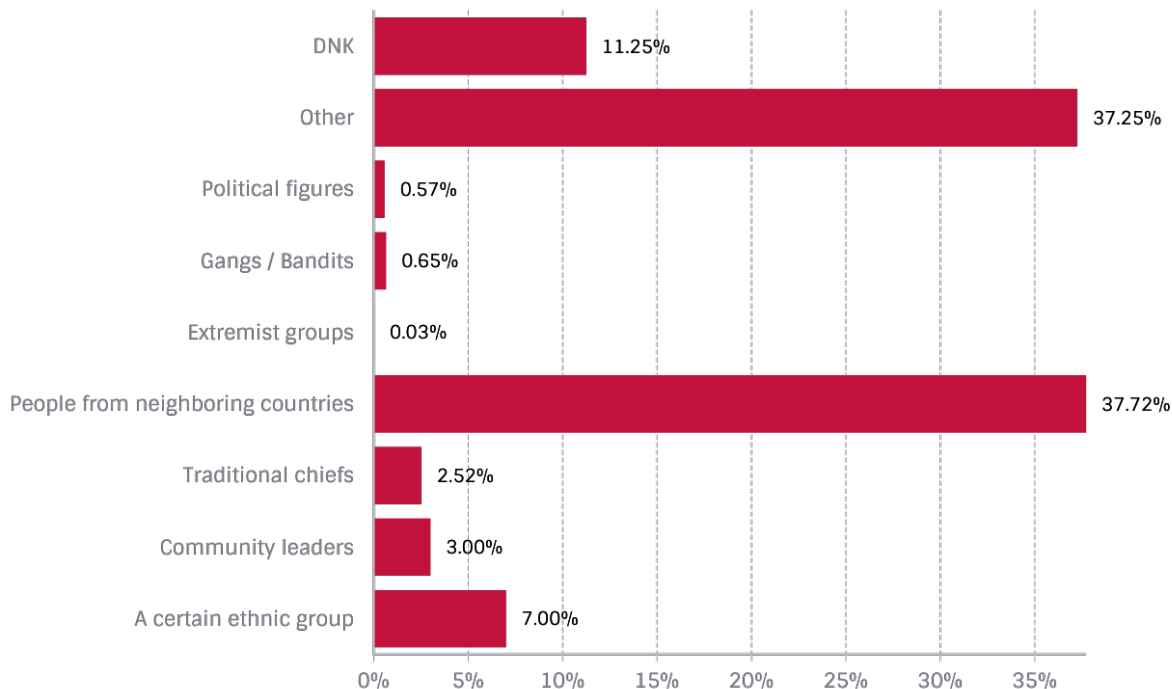


Figure 9: Groups believed to be most likely to operate unregulated mines

Groups Believed to be Most Likely to Operate Unregulated Mines



*Weighted

Sample size n = 577

Population size N = 291,139

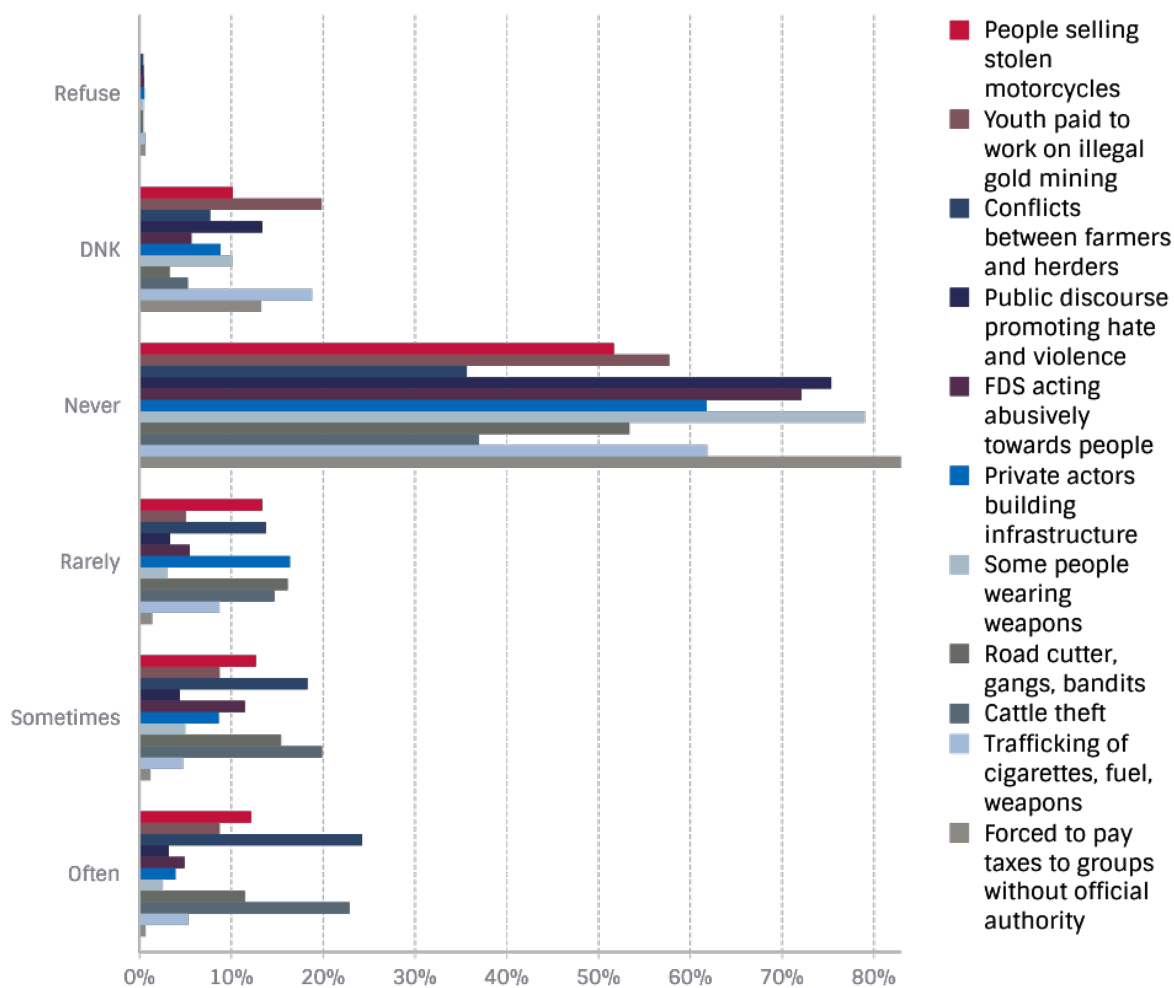
Populations surveyed in northern Côte d'Ivoire reported the frequency of experiencing or observing various incidents in their communities. **The incidents experienced or observed most frequently were conflicts between farmers and herders (24%) and cattle theft (23%).**

Of those who responded to the question, 52% of respondents said there was a decrease in conflicts between farmers and herders compared with previous years, whereas 24% said these incidents had increased, and 22% said there had been “no change.” Similarly, 51% of respondents experienced cattle theft less often than in previous years, 27% experienced this incident more often, and 18% said there had been “no change.”



Figure 10: Frequency of experienced or observed crime

Frequency of Experienced or Observed Crime



*Weighted
Sample size n = 577
Population size N = 291,139

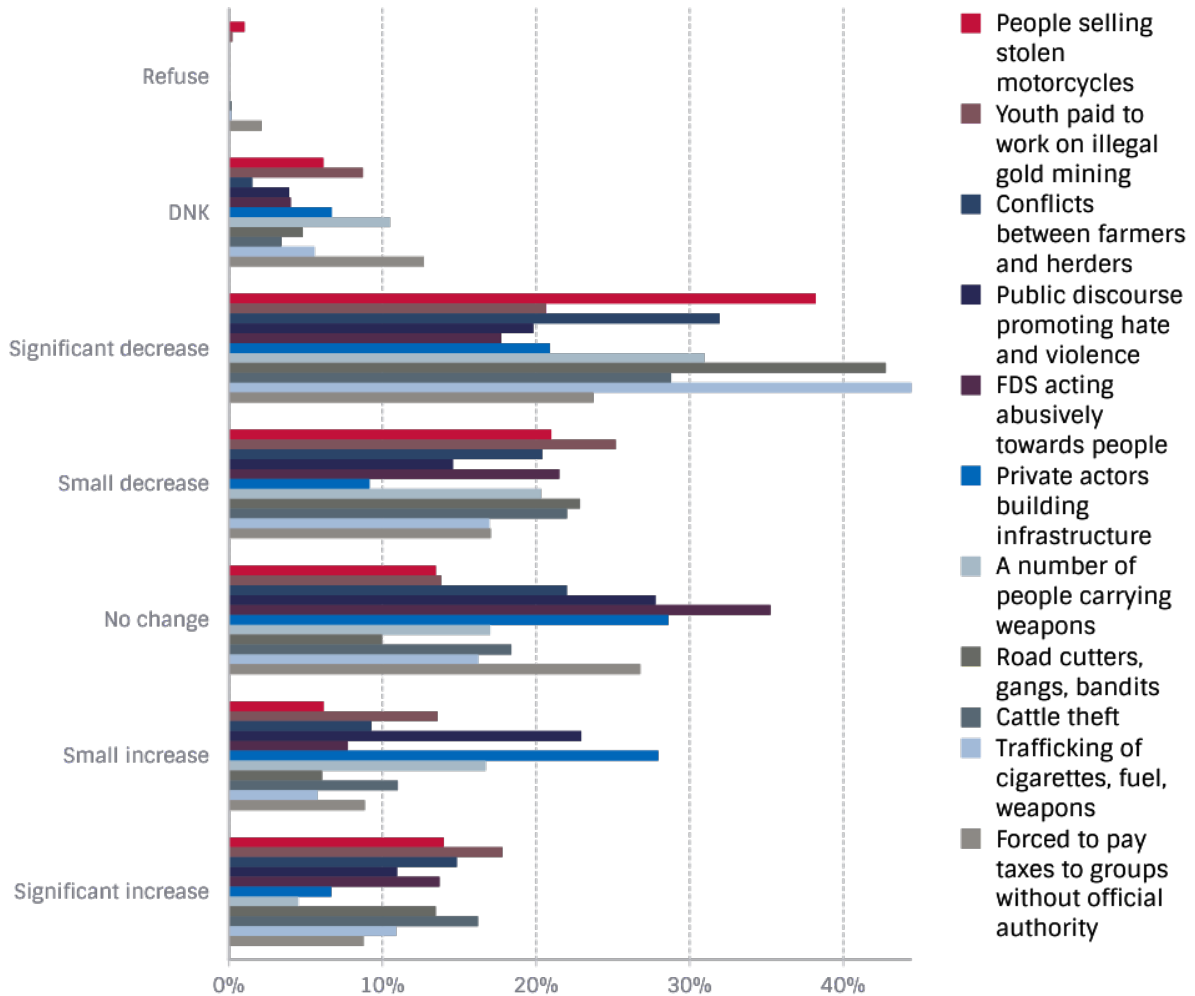
The incidents experienced or observed least frequently were having to pay taxes to groups without official authority (83%), seeing people wear weapons (79%), and having public discourse promoting hate and violence (75%). Even though these incidents were reported as being the least frequent, they also appear to have decreased in occurrence compared with

previous years. Of those who responded to the question, 41% said there was a decrease in having to pay taxes to groups without official authority compared with previous years, whereas 18% said these incidents had increased, and 27% said there had been “no change.”



Figure 11: Change in frequency of experienced or observed crime from previous years

Change in Frequency of Experienced or Observed Crime from Previous Years



*Weighted
Sample size n = 577
Population size N = 291,139

Of the survey population who responded to the question, 51% said there was a decrease in the number of people carrying weapons compared with previous years, whereas 21% said these incidents had increased, and 17% said there had been “no change.” Of those who responded to the question, 34% said

there was a decrease in public discourse promoting hatred and violence compared with previous years, whereas 34% said these incidents had increased, and 28% said there had been “no change.”



When asked about how frequently they had seen or experienced the Security and Defense Force (SDF) behaving abusively toward the members of their community, most of the survey population in the north (76%) “rarely” or “never” observed such behavior. Still, approximately one-fifth (16%) of respondents perceived that the FDS either “often” or “sometimes” behaved abusively toward people. Of the survey population who responded to the question, 39% said there was a decrease in the number of incidents involving FDS abuse, whereas 21% said these incidents had increased, and 35% said there had been “no change.”

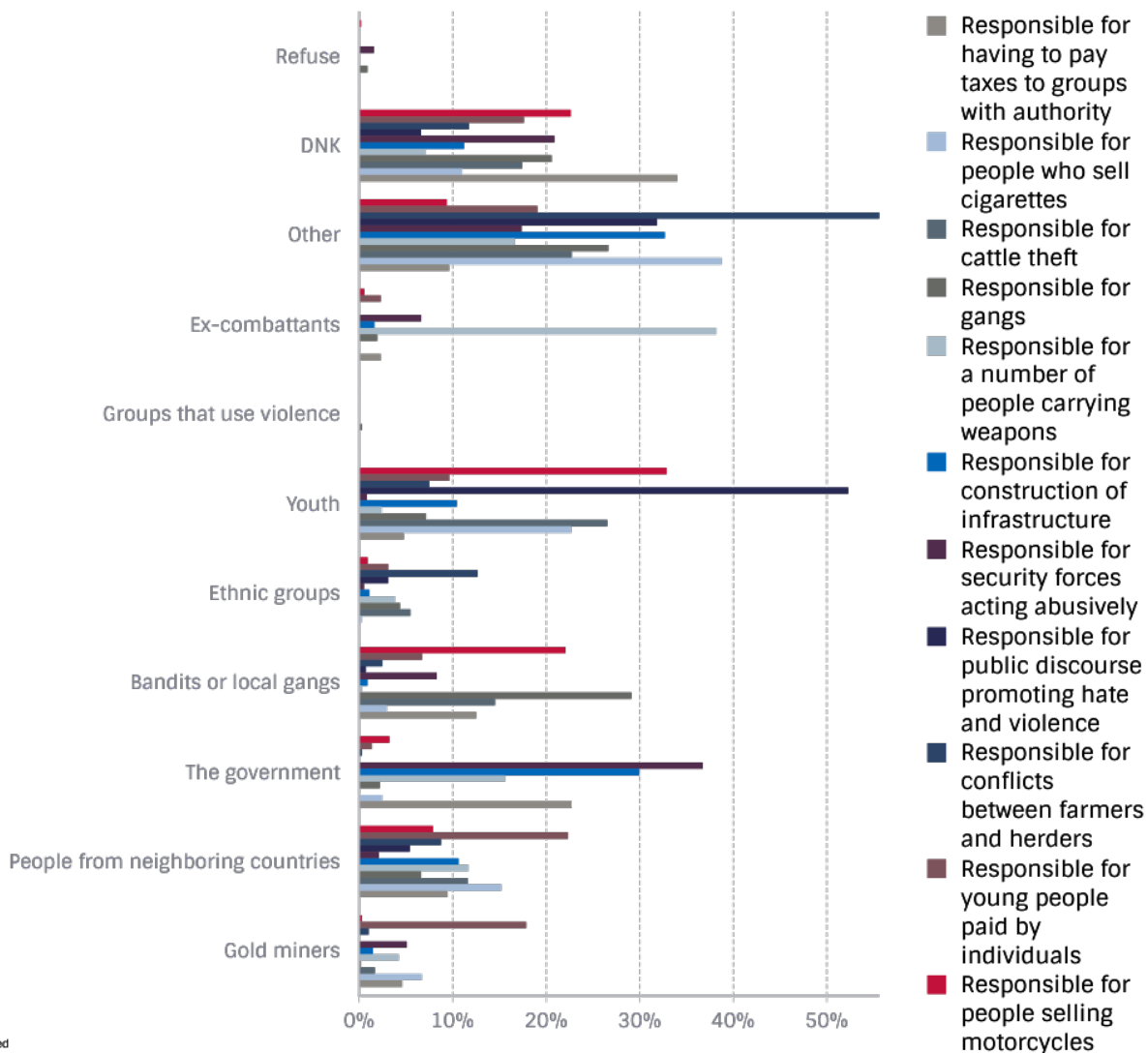
Thirteen percent (13%) of those who responded to the question about who they

believed was responsible for conflicts between farmers and herders said, “ethnic groups.” Another 9% believed that people from neighboring countries were responsible for these conflicts. Respondents to the question on who they believed was responsible for cattle theft incidents most often blamed either youth (27%) or bandits or local gangs (15%). Fifty-two percent (52%) of those who responded to the question about whom they believed was responsible for public discourse promoting hatred and violence said “youth.” Thirty-six percent (36%) of those who responded to the question about whom they believed was most responsible for security forces acting abusively said “the government.”



Figure 12: Those believed to be responsible for crimes

Those Believed to Be Responsible for Crimes



**Weighted
Sample size n = 577
Population size N = 291,139



Recommendations

Although a majority of the survey population in northern Côte d'Ivoire does not appear to be experiencing the select indicator EWS of violent extremism listed in the survey, the findings of this report highlight three indicators that may warrant additional attention.

Conflicts between farmers and herders:

Only 24% of respondents reported experiencing or observing this kind of conflict, but survey findings indicate that these incidents are perceived to be linked to ethnic and border divisions and should be monitored to avoid escalation.

Cattle theft: Although only 23% of respondents reported experiencing or observing this incident, survey findings indicate that respondents were most likely to blame youth, gangs, or bandits.

Public discourse promoting hate and violence:

Although public discourse promoting hate and violence is among the least frequently observed EWS, survey findings indicate that respondents were most likely to blame youth for this type of discourse. Programming that addresses youth and their role in CVE could help protect communities.



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