

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

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE DYNAMICS AROUND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

February 2022

Conducted by:
Indigo Côte d'Ivoire
Equal Access International



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



This study summary is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Equal Access International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Abbreviations and Acronyms | iii |
| Introduction..... | I |
| Methodology..... | I |
| Specific Dynamics | I |
| Bounkani Region (Reference Annex I) | I |
| Tchologo Region (Reference Annex 2)..... | 3 |
| Bagoué Region (Reference Annex 3)..... | 5 |
| Folon Region (Reference Annex 4)..... | 8 |
| The Transversal Dynamics | 9 |
| Conclusion | II |
| Annexes | 12 |



Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|--------------|--|
| CNJCI | Conseil National des Jeunes de Côte d'Ivoire (National Youth Council of Côte d'Ivoire) |
| PAR | Participatory Action Research |
| SDF | Security and Defense Force |
| VE | Violent Extremism |



Introduction

As part of its support for the implementation of the Resilience for Peace project, the Indigo Côte d'Ivoire team's achievements in Year I, from August to December 2021, involved continuous research on vulnerability dynamics and resistance. Research took place in the various project intervention localities of Bouna, Doropo, and Téhini in the Bounkani region; Kong and Sikolo in the Tchologo region; Tengréla, in the Bagoué region; and Kimbirila-Nord, Tienko, and Gouéya in the Folon region. The data collected were analyzed in reports by zone.

This system analysis report aims to examine both determining and explanatory factors, show the complexity of the dynamics at work and how they mutually feed each other, and compare functions in the different zones.

Methodology

The team's approach involved participatory action research (PAR). As an intervention approach, PAR is based on the idea that the diagnosis of contextual dynamics must be made by the communities themselves through an inclusive and participatory process. This is because the solutions to the challenges that communities face must be developed, decided upon, and owned by them in order to be effective and sustainable. Indigo Côte d'Ivoire has contributed to creating a culture of dialogue and joint analysis of the dynamics of vulnerabilities and resilience, as well as the challenges and solutions to development and social cohesion. This approach is also based on the assumption that such a process can enhance local knowledge and know-how, generate collective awareness and a sense of shared responsibility, and establish dialogue as an instrument for consolidating a peaceful social life. The success of such a process

depends on the level of trust between the researchers and the communities, on the one hand, and among the community members themselves, on the other hand, with regard to such sensitive recently emerged subjects as violent extremism (VE).

Thus, within the framework of this research, Indigo used observation, focus groups, and formal and informal individual interviews as the main data collection tools. These tools allowed Indigo to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, particularly the Fulani, youth, women, community and religious leaders, administrative authorities, and local elected officials in a constructive analysis of the dynamics at work in their localities concerning VE.

The analysis below is structured in two parts. The first part presents the specific dynamics in each region. The second part exposes the transversal dynamics.

Specific Dynamics

Bounkani Region (Reference Annex 1)

The Bounkani region is located in the extreme northeast of Côte d'Ivoire. Since the second half of 2020, kidnappings for ransom, the planting of improvised explosive devices, and attacks on security and defense force (SDF) positions by armed groups have become common practice in this area. It is adjacent to the Comoé National Park, which is one of the strategic locations in the area. Analysis of the socio-security context indicates that, in addition to the structural dynamics related to its geographic proximity to Burkina Faso and Ghana, where jihadist groups are known to be present, the Bounkani region has significant socio-security dynamics that make the situation sufficiently vulnerable to the security threat.



I. Tensions in community cohabitation and resentment toward the Fulani community

Culturally recognized as a Koulango territory, the Bounkani region is experiencing the emergence of a Lobi elite confronting the Koulango leadership. The more this confrontation intensifies, the more it gives rise to acts of inter-community defiance. This is reflected in the denial of landowner status to the Koulango and the empowerment of the Lobi camps. In fact, because of the process of delimiting village territories, those in Lobi camps that have acquired village status feel that they are no longer accountable to the Koulango host villages. They feel this new status strengthens their rights to use the land they occupy and gives them the right to create an administration to govern the land: *“There is another problem that is coming up and that we must be careful about. There are Lobi leaders who go from village to village to tell their relatives that they are no longer accountable to the Koulangos. They are just as much landowners as they [the Koulango] are. They can thus settle and install people themselves without the agreement of the Koulango.”*¹

However, the more this defiance is accepted by members of the Lobi community, the more it gives rise to strong forms of political manipulation, mainly by young people. Exacerbation of these tensions between Indigenous communities and former conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities weaken the social fabric because they contribute to developing resentment toward certain communities, particularly the Fulani. As this resentment grows stronger, it leads to stigmatization of the Fulani

community. The more this community feels stigmatized, the more they withdraw into themselves. The more society seeks to withdraw the Fulani from society on the basis of their identity, the more the Fulani community claims Indigenous status and greater participation in economic life: *“Many of us were born here, grew up here, went to school here, got married here; did everything here. We know nowhere else but here. Many of us even have Ivorian nationality. But they continue to call us flatchê (Peulh [Fulani] man); to consider us like foreigners. It is stigmatizing. It is revolting.”*² The struggle for control of the Bouna beef park between the Indigenous community and the Fulani is a perfect illustration: *“There is a Peulh [Fulani] group who claims ownership of the Bouna beef yard, who wants to claim ownership from town hall.”*³

2. Feelings of insecurity: Institutional and community responses

As the confrontation between the Koulango and Lobi leadership and resentment toward the Fulani community intensify, rumors also intensify and feed into the resentment toward the Fulani. This massive circulation of rumors is itself fed by the increase in kidnappings for ransom recorded in the region, increased attacks against SDF positions, and the supposed involvement of Fulani in these kidnappings and attacks.

The intensification of rumors and criminogenic activities in this part of the country have both generated a shared awareness of the threat and a shared sense of insecurity: *“Elsewhere, people may not believe it. But in Bounkani, every day there are many things being said. It’s true, it’s false, we don’t know. But we also see everything that happens: the attacks, the robberies, the mines*

¹ Individual interview with youth leader, August 2021.

² Individual interview with youth leader, August 2021.

³ Individual interview with youth leader, August 2021.



that explode, our children who are taken hostage. We can't see all that and then believe that it doesn't exist. In any case, here in Téhini there is not a single person who will say that he does not believe in terrorism.”⁴

In response to this shared awareness of the threat and the feeling of insecurity it induces, the institutional response has been militarized and characterized by a significant deployment of SDFs. However, this massive deployment generates negative effects because it increases checkpoints which, in turn, increase racketeering and arbitrary arrests.

On the other hand, the more the SDFs are deployed and confined to urban areas because of regular attacks on their positions, the more this increases the pressure on the communities and generates a feeling of invasion: *“Now, the uniformed forces no longer go far to set up their checkpoints. They go right into the village itself to buy people out. (...) If someone tells you that there are more uniformed forces in the city, he is not wrong. They have invaded the area, they are not working with us. But we're the ones who have to put up with it.”⁵* This situation is creating a crisis of confidence between the SDFs and the communities and is weakening collaboration between these two groups.

In such a security context, as communities become less trusting of the SDFs and less willing to collaborate with them, the more community-led initiatives develop to manage (in terms of verifying, confirming, or informing) rumors and mitigate this sense of insecurity.

Tchologo Region (Reference Annex 2)

The Tchologo region, located in the northeast of Côte d'Ivoire, is one of the two project areas adjacent to the Comoé National Park,

along with the Bounkani region. This region is where the first two attacks attributed to jihadist groups in northern Côte d'Ivoire were perpetrated. The first, which took place in Kafolo on the night of June 10-11, 2020, officially killed 14 Ivorian SDFs. The second attack took place on March 29, 2021, during which two army positions were attacked in Kafolo and Kolobougou. The official death toll from this attack was six, including three Ivorian army soldiers and three “terrorists.” Investigations by the SDFs revealed significant Fulani involvement in these attacks.

Separated from Burkina Faso by the Comoé River, this area, due to its proximity to the Comoé National Park, has a large flow of people and serves as a refuge or development area for criminal activities of armed groups. The dynamics around the park, in conjunction with the Fulani problem, are the main factors in the vulnerabilities highlighted by the participants.

I. The dynamics around Comoé National Park and the Fulani

The Tchologo region is one of the main regions bordering the Comoé National Park. Several community farming areas are contiguous to it. The absence of the State during a decade-long sociopolitical crisis has led to an increase of settlements in the reserve by the communities as well as by those from the neighboring countries of Burkina Faso and Mali. However, militias and armed groups have also taken advantage of this situation to establish themselves in the area as part of their criminal activities: *“In Burkina Faso, there is no land as fertile as here. So, it attracts everyone. In Côte d'Ivoire, the sociopolitical crisis of 2002 did not spare any protected area in all those zones*

⁴ Individual interview with women's leader, August 2021.

⁵ Youth focus groups, August 2021.



that were under the control of the rebellion. The wealth in these forests served as a refuge and to financially feed all these militias from neighboring countries, particularly Burkina.”⁶ The policy of taking back control, initiated by the State in the aftermath of the post-electoral crisis of 2010, has led to the systematic eviction of all occupants, farmers, herders, and those installed on the outskirts of the park, because of growing insecurity from this massive occupation. For illegal occupants to continue benefiting from their activities in this area over which the State is working to establish and strengthen its control, informal negotiations with the evicted illegal occupants have developed, leading to an underlying insecurity that local communities, administrative authorities, and other stakeholders perceive as a strategy for maintaining or controlling an economic area.

In addition, the evictions in the park increased pressures over rural lands and exacerbated tensions concerning farmer-herder cohabitation. As land pressure intensified, the living conditions and ability to raise livestock worsened for the Fulani: “Before you could take your cattle into the park and then have them eat. But that’s changed. We can’t do that anymore. You need a pass that gives you access to the park within a period that varies between two weeks and 45 days.”⁷ As conditions worsened, community elders’ and administrative authorities’ control over the Fulani community strengthened, their resentment toward the Fulani grew, and anti-Fulani rhetoric became commonplace: “One day, we ourselves are going to demand our young people to drive them out of here.”⁸ Their alleged involvement in the attacks that have taken place in the region, notably in Kafolo, have

further exacerbated social control and resentment.

2. Community responses

a. Preserving local Islam from outside influence

Culturally, Islam as it is practiced in the Kong department is considered atypical and, from the point of view of local religious leaders, a target for extremist groups: “These people, we know that they want to come and destroy our mosques because they’re our pride. So they want to come and sweep away all this culture to force us to worship like them.”⁹ This targeting is justified because the mosques there signify a symbolic period when the religion was established in the whole subregion (Samory Touré’s territorial conquest). Prayer services are essentially concentrated around these historic mosques, and the function of imam belongs exclusively to a single family. In fact, no outside preacher is allowed to preach in these mosques or build new mosques or Koranic schools.

b. Occupying the space differently

In response to the risk of the areas being occupied, Indigenous community leaders decided on a massive reinvestment in agriculture by facilitating access for youth and women. From now on, youth and women have privileged access to cultivation areas. For the Indigenous communities of this region, the best response to a strategy of land occupation is to occupy it themselves: “The more we leave our fields empty, the more the enemy will try to occupy them, so the strategy is to stay. We encourage our young people and women to go and

⁶ Individual interview with administrative authorities, September 2021.

⁷ Fulani community focus group, December 2021.

⁸ Focus group with community leaders, September 2021.

⁹ Individual interview with religious leader, September 2021.



cultivate the fields.”¹⁰ “The old people have decided that from now on a young person, if he is capable, can have as many acres as he wants to cultivate. All of this is to prevent bad people from occupying the land because nature hates emptiness. If you don’t occupy it, someone else will.”¹¹ The greater the efforts of land reinvestment are, the more the access to land for non-Indigenous communities like the Fulani is subject for renegotiations. These communities are developing responses to this renegotiation process and to the feeling of victimization induced by rumors of their alleged involvement in the jihadist attacks in northern Côte d’Ivoire.

c. Carrying out an economic reconversion and working toward deconstructing the imaginary

The Fulani community has become more aware of the need to deconstruct resentment toward them caused by increased security threats. Members of this community are carrying out activities to become more sedentary. They are shifting away from herding toward real estate and business operations in their localities or in the surrounding areas. They also set up frameworks for interaction to work to rebuild trust with other communities, social elders, and administrative and military authorities.

Bagoué Region (Reference Annex 3)

Located in the extreme north of Côte d’Ivoire, Tengréla is the main transit area between Côte d’Ivoire and Mali. In addition to Mali, it shares borders with Burkina Faso and Guinea. Movement among these countries are made via dozens of trails on which there is often no SDF presence. The following analysis highlights

three important risk factors: first, the risks related to social pressure placed on young people, which is at the heart of their socioeconomic vulnerability; second, the creation and strengthening of a group of young people who use violence in a community context where violence is socially accepted by community elders; and finally, the cultural isolation induced by the Malinké Muslim community in relation to the Senoufos. The communities have developed responses to mitigate the effects of these risks.

I. Youth economic vulnerability caused by the social belief of being indebted to one’s parents, early empowerment, and attraction to rapid-gain activities

The various discussions with the Tengréla inhabitants revealed that the risk of young people in this locality turning to VE is the result of very strong social pressure on young people because of social norms concerning women, household responsibilities, and the obligation of young people to be indebted to their parents.

In fact, although women in Tengréla are culturally relegated to a secondary role, they participate in the local economy to the same degree as men, if not more so, and are primarily responsible for the family. Convinced that their husbands cannot support them in times of need, they do not hesitate to join solidarity and mutual aid groups called *tontines* to either build up capital to develop or increase their work, or to contract debt to build a business: “Women look for their own means for their activities. The men think that if they help their wives to become independent, they

¹⁰ Focus group with community leaders, September 2021.

¹¹ Individual interview with youth leader, September 2021.



will no longer respect them.”¹² When these remedies prove ineffective, the mothers turn to their sons who are a strong support in the search for working capital for their financial independence. Faced with the poor socioeconomic condition of their parents, young people feel forced to break away prematurely and turn to activities that are likely to bring quick profits, such as gold panning and massive investment in motorcycles: *“Here in Tengréla, you will not find a single parent who is against young people being involved with clandestine gold mining. Because everyone knows what’s inside. Parents ask around, parents take steps, parents make sacrifices, some pay money to get their children into the mines.”*¹³ This desire for early independence is often correlated with a vulnerability to petty crime: *“Here in Tengréla, not a day goes by without an indication of motorcycle theft ...”*¹⁴ The youth’s role in Tengréla social life as “financial backers of the mothers” and the family is very important. As a result, a weakening of social control over young people by the community elders has gradually taken place.

In Tengréla, every young person feels indebted to himself, or by default to his parents, to those who helped him build his social life and to those who guarantee him money through work. This propensity toward empowerment and gain by any means or at all costs leads young people to defy senior community members’ authority: *“The young people you see here, at least 50% of the family relies on them to have food at home, each one has at least 10 dependents.”*¹⁵ Much more than in any other place the research team visited, the elders seem to have lost control over the youth. To

downplay their responsibility, some elders blame modern times and the provisions aimed at protecting the rights of vulnerable groups (due to diverse interpretations of the issue of women’s and children’s rights): *“Today we no longer have the right to hit our own children. We can’t even go to the field with them anymore. As soon as you do, they talk to you about the right to this, the right to that. So, to avoid problems, we also let them do what they want to do.”*¹⁶ This lack of control is perceived differently by the youth. Indeed, young people believe that the breakdown of the social structure and the weakening of older members’ social control over younger members of society have been caused by the struggle for control over the economy and local revenue: *“This is where the phrase that says that ‘He who has the money has the power’ takes on its full meaning. Look at the last election of the president of the CNJCI [National Youth Council]. Basically, it’s a matter of controlling the resources made available to young people by the mining company that is based here. Each of our executives wants to position someone to better control the money.”*¹⁷

2. Creating and maintaining a group of young people who commit community violence where violence has become the norm

Interviews and focus groups showed that resources are very rare in this area and there are struggles for control over them, thus the most productive and violent people are those who control both the gold mining space and the motorcycle domain. Thus we are witnessing the emergence of violent business leaders who present themselves to the youth

¹² Focus group with women, October 2021.

¹³ Focus group with young people, October 2021.

¹⁴ Focus group with young people, October 2021.

¹⁵ Individual interview with religious leader, July 2021.

¹⁶ Focus group with community leaders, October 2021.

¹⁷ Individual interview with youth leader, October 2021.



as being able to offer opportunities for quick monetary gain. Indeed, in a context where violence is perceived as a means of self-promotion, brutality and the consumption of psychotropic drugs are ways for young people to obtain work and become desensitized toward others: *“In Tengréla here, when the same young person, even one who doesn’t speak when he goes to the gold mining sites, when he returns you don’t recognize him anymore. He becomes bizarre and he doesn’t respect anyone, he is no longer scared of anything; we don’t even know what they give them over there.”*¹⁸ Therefore, violence is socially accepted. In order to protect and maintain themselves in competition or to feel they are invincible, the youth have recourse to magico-religious rituals. This belief is so widespread in the area that it has given birth to petty crime among people who don’t have the means but who desire to create a name for themselves in the community. A manifestation of the widespread nature of the magico-religious practice is that, today when you go to the market and want to buy a chicken, the first instinct of the trader is you ask you what color of chicken you want. The young people who partake in easy- money activities and use extreme brutality for self-promotion do so for the control of groups who can easily be mobilized to execute violent acts for extremists. In order to perfect their violent ways, young people look to negative influences from neighboring countries.

3. Cultural isolation induced by the Malinké Muslim community in relation to the Senoufos

The interviews and focus groups highlighted the long years of conflicts between the two Indigenous communities, the Malinkés and the Senoufos, in the Tengréla area. They share the

same living space, but their opposite beliefs cause cohabitation issues. Indeed, the zeal of the Malinké community to make the Senoufos accept Islam has sometimes led them toward practices that do not always facilitate peaceful cohabitation. To establish political dominance over the Senoufos, the Malinkés of Tengréla rely on their cultural connections with the Malinkés from Mali and Guinea to develop their ethnic strategy. Tengréla’s geographic position makes it an area where the back-and-forth movement of people is very important. This strong cultural connection to Mali and Guinea (in terms of religion, marriage, language, or economic activities, for example) is regularly used to ensure economic dominance for the Malinké. This ethnic occupation strategy has increased inter-community resentment and violent confrontations between the Malinkés and the minority Senoufos. Cultural isolation has become the only option for the two communities.

4. Developed community responses

a. Economic reconversion: The abandonment of agriculture in favor of trade

Before the new security threat in the northern border area of Côte d’Ivoire, the Tengréla population, primarily young people and women, practiced agriculture (cotton, peanuts, and truck farming). This led them into suitable farming lands; however, they could be exposed to armed groups in these areas. Due to increasing rumors of extremist attacks in the area, the youth and women have abandoned farming in favor of trade. Because Tengréla is isolated from Ivorian supply towns, both youth and women rely on a network of smugglers.

¹⁸ Individual interview with religious leader, July 2021.



b. Family members' awareness

Despite the secondary role attributed to them by local society, women feel they benefit more than men from the trust of their children when it comes to information or advice. Thus, they plan to continue the work of alert and prevention by regularly raising awareness among their children and husbands about the risks of their various activities.

Folon Region (Reference Annex 4)

In the Folon region in northwestern Côte d'Ivoire, the security threat is perceived differently by natives and immigrants. From the natives' viewpoint, the lack of strategic interests for the extremist groups (who seem to prefer areas rich in forestry and minerals) actually protects the area from threats. However, depending on their location, some immigrants perceive this zone as being at risk because of the subtlety of certain local dynamics that escape collective awareness.

1. Weakening social control of the old over the young

The tendency to consider adults of 30-50 years old as "young" makes the community lose sight of the vulnerability and risks that pre-adolescents, adolescents, and young adults who are younger than 30 years old are subjected to. The latter are not always considered in community decisions and seem to escape senior community members' awareness since they are considered children. Strongly aware of the influences from Mali, young adults are particularly receptive to certain calls for sedition and defiance in Malian music, which is very popular in the area. Thus, the stronger the feeling of infantilization, the more the youth engage in quests for self-worth, create alternative spaces for socialization, and perform acts of defiance toward authority, whether it is parental or the

State. In participating continuously in these alternative social spaces in their quest for self-esteem, the youth develop a feeling of isolation. The more they develop this feeling, the more these spaces and their habits and content become unknown to the parents. This weak control over these young people makes them an easy target.

2. Reinforcement of radical Islamic influence

The geographic proximity and strong cultural ties between populations in this part of the country and in neighboring Mali are perceived as both as an asset and a vulnerability. Although they consider themselves to be rightful Ivorian nationals, the Indigenous populations of the Folon area tend to more forcibly sublimate the sociocultural influences and religions that they share with neighboring Malian communities. Thus, they solicit Malian religious guides for sermons and to open mosques and Koranic schools in the area. Because of this cultural and geographic proximity with Mali, the Folon region is increasingly concentrated with signs of religious radicalism. The presence of non-national religious guides and leaders is observed more often. Their teachings influence attitudes to the point of developing a form of hostility toward other cultures and religions. It was noted that there is a certain religious rigor in the Folon region, imported from Mali, which permeates local social life. For example, women are banned from dressing lightly (short dresses, pantyhose, or formfitting clothes, for example), even when they do not come from the region, and from mingling with men on public transport. Moreover, there is a stronger tendency to send children to Koranic schools, which are given greater prestige from the community: *"At the entrance of the village, you have well-*



maintained schools, with a brand-new paint. On the other hand, the modern school, the roofs are gone, the walls dilapidated. At night, the young people of the village turn it into a hotel.”¹⁹

Moreover, at the level of religious diversity, the community is rarely open to the establishment of other denominations. Therefore, in most localities, such as Kimbirila-Nord and Gouéya, religious buildings other than the mosques do not exist. In rare cases, permission to build a place of worship for a religion other than Islam can be acquired, with restrictions, after years of negotiations: *“It took more than three years for the community leaders to agree to allow us to build a church here. And it’s because I intervened. Here, there is only one religion that has the right to exist: Islam.”²⁰*

3. Responses oriented toward awareness and bottom-up, collaborative responses

In the face of current threats, communities have developed two forms of responses. The first of these is oriented toward awareness. The youth and women participate in a collective effort to regularly collect security information. The youth are encouraged to regularly visit neighboring communities and markets for observing, questioning, and bringing back information. The women have an obligation to systematically inform the leadership of any encounters during their various trips.

Additionally, in response to the large deployment of SDFs and to the trust issues induced by roadblocks and racketeering, Dozo

security auxiliaries erected roadblocks on bypass roads, and they conduct night patrols in Kimbirila-Nord and its surroundings.²¹ Collaborative responses have been developed to prevent the risks associated with local communities’ lack of trust in the SDFs deployed in their neighborhoods and to prevent possible jurisdictional conflicts between the Dozos and the SDFs. In Kimbirila-Nord, at the initiative of the sub-prefect, a collaborative initiative between the SDFs, the Dozos, and the communities has been put in place. In Tienko, while the community is in a kind of denial of the risk of VE taking root in the locality, the municipality has set up a discreet surveillance and intelligence mechanism. These measures, centralized at the level of the town hall, relies on a network of anonymous informants scattered in the village: *“We have identified, discreetly from people throughout the village. They work anonymously. They must survey all that happens in the area, verify the information as fact and inform us.”²²* In Gouéya, the young people, in collaboration with the young people of Malian localities situated at the border, have put in place an interactive network that allows regular sharing of information. The objective of this exchange network is to ensure that their respective localities do not serve as a refuge for extremist groups.

The Transversal Dynamics

The systematic analysis the research team performed highlighted certain transversal dynamics that are present across all

¹⁹ Individual interview with a teacher, November 2021.

²⁰ Individual interview with administrative authority of Mahandiana Sokourani, December 2021.

²¹ Dozos are traditional hunters found in northern Côte d'Ivoire, southeast Mali, and Burkina Faso that local communities often trust to ensure surveillance

and protection, particularly in remote areas where State security provision is incomplete or lacks credibility.

²² Individual interview with local authority in Tienko, November 2021.



intervention areas: first, the unintended negative effects induced by the militarized institutional response to security threats; second, the increase in rumors regarding the perception of the threat and the anxieties that it induces; and lastly, the ill-will felt toward the Fulani community.

1. Unintended negative effects from the militarized institutional response

In response to the current security threat, the authorities have deployed a large force made up of men and military equipment. The numbers have increased. Across all of the border locations, military bases have been constructed and equipped. This massive deployment leads to more roadblocks and checkpoints. However, the higher the number of checkpoints, the higher the level of racketeering and arbitrary arrests. This creates the feeling of the State's punitive presence, which affects trust in the SDFs: *"All those uniformed persons sent to the zone, we have a feeling that it is against us that they have come. It's to check motorcycle parts and take money from the people. While the terrorists are in the bush over there."*²³ As distrust between the SDFs and the communities increases, communities feel less willing to collaborate and provide information.

2. Differentiated perceptions of the security threat

The research shows that the actual security threat is perceived differently depending on the area, subpopulation (i.e., men, youth, women, religious leaders), and Indigenous or non-Indigenous status. Indeed, depending on whether one is more or less close to the areas where the attacks were committed, the security threat is perceived differently. In the Bounkani region, this threat is associated with

cyclical violence and the struggle for economic control that was created by the long period of State absence in these areas during successive sociopolitical crises. In Tchologo, from the communities' point of view, the security threat is perceived as a strategy for the expansion of religious ideology. In Bounkani and Tchologo, the threat is perceived as real. Communities in Bagoué and Folon feel that it is a distant or even imaginary threat insofar as they believe that there are no major strategic interests likely to attract these extremist groups in the area. According to the non-Indigenous communities' point of view, this perception of threat loses sight of the risks associated with religious radicalization of youth and women, and the lasting presence of the threat in the area.

3. The increase of rumors and exacerbation of anxieties

Rumors about alleged attacks and infiltrations, the meeting or arresting of suspicious persons, and the presence of armed groups affiliated with jihadists who frequent the areas have intensified in the localities situated along the northern border of Côte d'Ivoire. This provokes greater anxiety in the communities, forcing them to give up space and put an end to some of their economic activities.

4. Feeling of hostility towards the Fulani

Resentment toward the Fulani people has amplified in the regions of Bounkani and Tchologo since their alleged implication in the Kafolo and Tougbo attacks, prevailing in localities situated on the long strip of the northern border. Today, regardless of localities, meeting a Fulani in an isolated place, alone or in the company of other people, becomes a controversial subject. In the Folon region, the relationship between traditional

²³ Focus group with young people, August 2021.



Dozo hunters and the Fulani community is challenging. The valorization and great confidence placed in the Dozo hunters by the Malinké community constitute, from the point of view of the Fulani community, a significant risk. Ultimately, this perception of the Fulani vis-à-vis the Dozo hunters could affect the view that Indigenous communities have of Fulani and create hostility toward the installation of new Fulani in the villages.

Conclusion

The overall analysis of the dynamics observed in all the intervention zones of the Resilience for Peace project during Year I shows, on the one hand, that the security threat is perceived differently depending on proximity to the areas where the attacks take place. On the other hand, it also highlights specific risk factors for each area. In the Bounkani and Tchologo regions, there is a shared awareness of the threat's effectiveness. In the border zones further west, perceptions of the effective manifestation of the threat are diverse. From

the point of view of Indigenous communities, these areas do not have strategic interests that could attract these extremist groups. For non-Indigenous communities, on the other hand, especially in the Folon region, there is evidence of social acceptance and the long-term anchoring of extremist groups in the area. There are also structural factors such as cultural proximity and cross-border mobility due to commercial exchanges. Cyclical factors include religious proselytism and influences of external religious practices and ideology, the lack of control over youth, and musical influences inciting defiance against authority.

Nevertheless, the potential for community resilience exists, on which the project can capitalize. Responses in line with community cohabitation the occupation of space; rumor management; awareness; collaboration between involved parties; and economic reconversion, notably concerning women, are all aimed at reducing communities' level of exposure to risk.



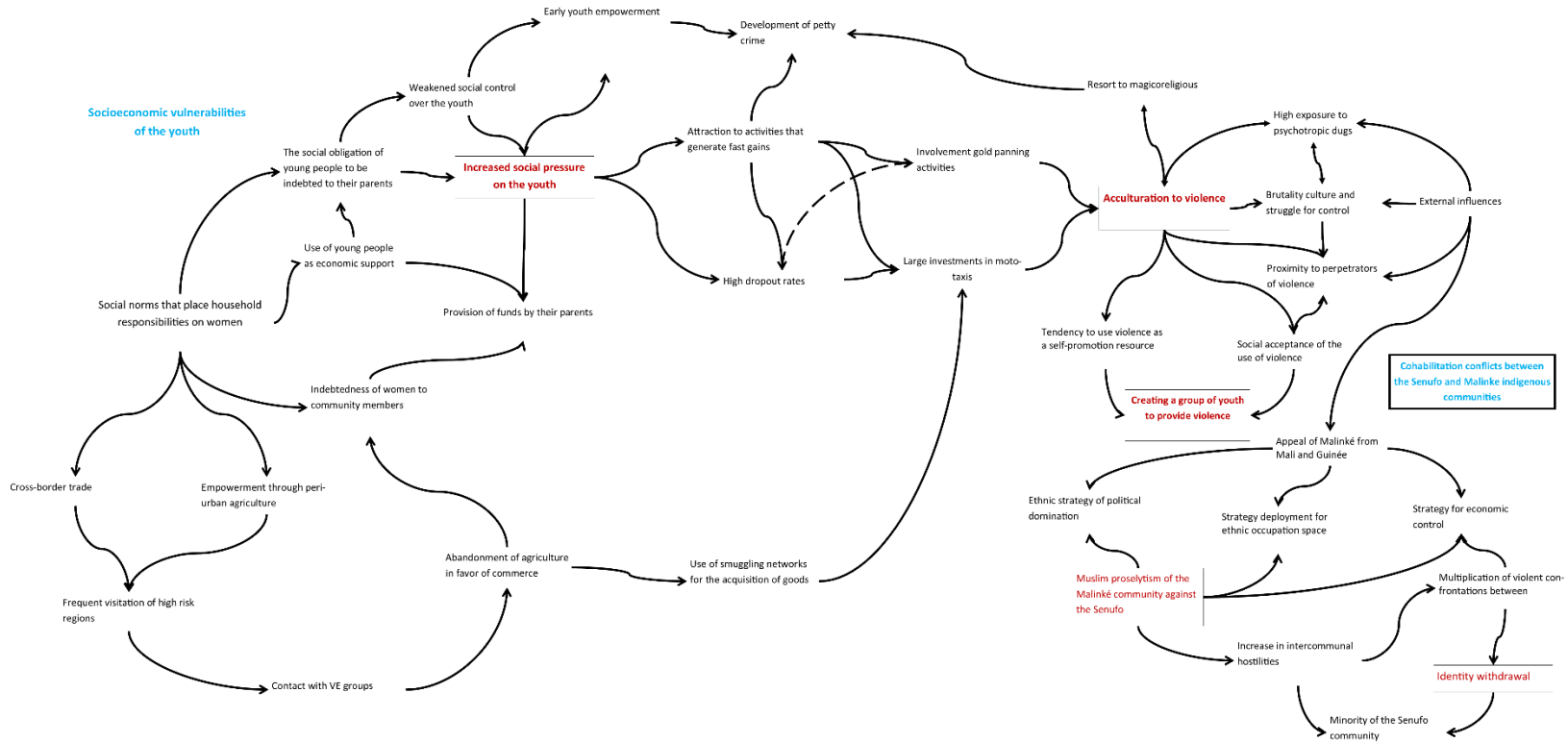
Annex 1

[illegible]



Annex 3

Bagoué : Tengréla



FOLON : Kimbirila-Nord,
Tienko and Gouéya

