



LEARNING BRIEF

*on the "Early Warning Signals of Violent Extremism in the
Northern Border Regions of Côte d'Ivoire,"*

Executive Summary

This Learning brief summarizes the key highlights of the PELA II Learning Circle (LC) organized in May 2023, in collaboration with USAID's Resilience for Peace Activity (R4P). The LC provided the platform for R4P to share the findings from a study which was conducted in 11 departments in northern Côte d'Ivoire to understand the early warning signals of violent extremism. Among the many signals identified, farmer-herder conflicts and cattle theft emerged as the prominent cross cutting early warning signals while the different departments recorded their specific peculiarities.

Study Background

While Côte d'Ivoire has not experienced the same level of violent extremist (VE) activity as its northern neighbors, recurrent VE attacks in northern Côte d'Ivoire during 2020 and 2021 point to the growing expansion of violent extremist organizations (VEO) operating from Burkina Faso and Mali. In November 2021, R4P conducted a study to gain a deeper understanding of the VE situation in the northern border regions of Côte d'Ivoire and to understand and identify early warning signals of VEO attacks in the northern communities vulnerable to attacks by violent extremists.

Study Objective

The study sought to do the following:

- Identify early warning signs and the related drivers of violent extremist attacks in the localities that have either experienced extremist attacks or the presence of violent extremist organizations (VEO)
- Understand better the early warning signs of violent extremism to strategically guide R4P's interventions and enable them to engage appropriate and timely measures

Study Methodology

The research team conducted a face-to-face quantitative survey from November 2-21, 2021, with a random sample of approximately 2,468 adults aged 18+ in 11 departments in the northern regions of Côte d'Ivoire. In each department, 11 census enumeration areas (plus three additional areas in case replacements were needed) were randomly selected using data from the National Institute of Statistics. The researchers collected data from research participants including institutional actors, religious, traditional, community, women's and youth association leaders as well as other citizens with knowledge of local dynamics. The study further employed a descriptive, comparative, and analytical approach to analyze the data shared.

AXE ROUTIER AVEC "COUPEURS DE ROUTE"



Zone of Interest

The survey targeted 11 departments in the northern regions of Côte d'Ivoire namely Tchologo, Bounkani, Poro, Folon and Bagoué regions were distributed as follows:

Tchologo	Bounkani
Ferkessédougou	Doropo
Kong	Téhini
Ouangolodougou	Bouna
Poro	Folon
M'Bengué	Kaniasso
Korhogo	Minignan
Bagoué	
Tengréla	

Key Findings

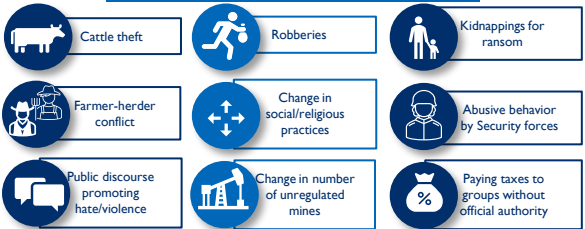
The population surveyed reported having experienced/observed various incidents as indicators of early warning signals in their communities. The **most frequently** observed/experienced signals were **farmer-herder conflicts (24%)** and **cattle theft (23%)**. Compared to previous years, 24% of the survey respondents reported an increase in farmer-herder conflicts while 27% reported an increase in cattle theft over the 12-month period from the time of the survey

Although **public discourse promoting hate and violence** was among the least frequently observed signals, the survey respondents in the north were evenly split on observing an increase of 34% and a decrease of 34% compared with previous years.

The research participants identified the tensions between ethnic groups as the key cause of farmer-herder conflicts, and youth as those most responsible for cattle theft in the zones of interest. The youth were again identified by most respondents as those who were most responsible for public discourse promoting hate and violence.

Per the study, different communities in the north are experiencing a variation of indicators/violent extremism signals. For example, some of the respondents who observed/experienced kidnappings and robberies, reported more than one signal occurring over the past 12 months.

Early Warning Signals At A Glance



Recommendation

Following the study, the research team recommended that programming should focus on awareness campaigns or interventions that highlight the role of the youth in preventing or countering violent extremism to help protect their communities. They also proposed that there should be training sessions for youth, women and community/religious leaders to strengthen local monitoring and warning initiatives, as well as livelihood interventions that target youth empowerment. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can foster a resilient environment and effectively address the challenges posed by violent extremism.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significance of early warning signals in assessing the political, socio-economic, and security conditions that contribute to the vulnerabilities of communities to violent extremist. This study is relevant, in that its findings can be used to enable the development of resilience strategies that help communities adapt, mitigate, and/or prevent conflict and violence extremism. The early warning signals are being explored in Côte d'Ivoire with the aim of tracking signal indicators over a longer period.

Further reading: Research on [Early Warning Signals of Violent Extremism in northern Cote d'Ivoire](#)

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