

Building public trust one document at a time

How Resilience for Peace (R4P) is improving relations between security forces and civilians, and restoring confidence in public services



A motorcyclist shows his new documents in Kogienou

A key driver of public distrust in national security forces in Côte d'Ivoire's northern border areas are the armed check-points on local roads. Intended to curb suspicious traffic, these surveillance stops are generating lucrative kick-backs for security forces as most motorcycle users lack required paperwork, but no local facilities exist to provide them. According to a recent Resilience for Peace (R4P) Perception Survey of over 2,000 northern citizens, more than 60% of respondents claimed that pay-offs are required either "often" or "always". The rising number of checkpoints fuels public hostility, at times

producing public indifference when security forces are attacked by armed groups.

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. The one-stop mobile service clinic started moving between villages, meeting citizens where they live and offering administrative support to meet basic needs in their everyday lives. The move was met with unprecedented enthusiasm, answering long-held frustrations with State services and security forces.

"I've been in Doropo 25 years, and it's my first time to see people coming here for motorcycle documents. Before we were told to go to Boundoukou [one day away]. Imagine you know no one in Boundoukou. Where will you sleep? How will you eat? And driving there with no paperwork, imagine the bribes you'd pay on the road." Head of Doropo Women's Association

In partnership with the Ministry of Transport, a pilot mission was organized in the Bounkani region where petty corruption is reportedly high (77% of respondents in the R4P Perception Survey). A technical team visited eleven R4P project sites to provide registration services and related documents: customs clearance, vehicle registration, insurance, technical inspection, and driver's licenses. This mobile approach is a first in Côte d'Ivoire and was heartily endorsed by the Ministry of Transport, the National Security Council, and local authorities.



Technical services verifying motorcycles in Doropo



“We thank the State because this activity is doing us a great service.” Mohamad, Mauritanian national, Doropo



Doropo Prefect and his Deputy show support alongside R4P staff

The one-stop mobile clinic has long surpassed all initial targets. By the end of the 9th day, over 1,900 requests had been resolved on the spot. High citizen demand for this service surprised State officials – technical services from the capital, regional towns, and local authorities. In many villages and towns, this was the first time any state service for issuing documents for motorcycles arrived, signaling a priority for the State to meet the needs of citizens in the northern border areas. Motorcyclists now carrying compliant paperwork are far less likely to have negative encounters at

armed checkpoints, and relations with State security forces are expected to improve. By improving cooperation and mutual respect between citizens and authorities, it is hoped that a common entry point for violent extremists will now be closed.

“[Having my documents] is a relief for me. [Now], if an officer whistles, I will stop and offer my papers. It's about dignity. It's about the harmony between me and our security forces. [...] It makes you free. You can go where you want, whenever you want.” Young man, Kogienou

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. In support of Ivorian State efforts to prevent and fight violent extremism, Resilience for Peace was launched by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2021. The project will run for five years.

“Changing public habits is not easy. [...] In the past, our security forces were not present. Since 2002, the population lived under rebellion, and people here paid nothing to the State. They had no incentive to register their motorcycles or get paperwork. For 10 years they lived without the State, and drove their motorcycles freely. So began the bad habit of not getting required documents.” Doropo Prefect

