



# REGIONAL SECURITY REPORT: WEST AFRICA





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Regional Security Report provides empirical data, undertakes rigorous analysis and highlights key trends about the peace and security situation in West Africa. It highlights trends and patterns of security issues on an annual basis, as much as reflect on longer term dynamic with a view to pinpointing continuities, changes, mutations and 'game-changing' dynamic. Through this, it offers deeper insights into the underlying causes and drivers, impacts and their spatial distribution, and the challenges of preventing and containing security challenges in West Africa. The key observations in the trends of peace and security in West Africa are as follows:

- 1) **Deterioration in security situation in West Africa:** Over the past decade, West Africa has witnessed steady and sometimes rapid deterioration in the security situation, especially the threats to human security; for instance, between 2008 and 2017, West Africa recorded a 616% increase in the number of violent events. There was corresponding increases in the scale of fatalities.
- 2) **Nigeria as driver of regional security patterns:** Nigeria single-handedly shaped the trends and patterns of violent events and fatalities over the past decade; in 2017, Nigeria accounted for 54% of all violent events, and 76% of fatalities. This trend is consistent with patterns over the last decade.
- 3) **Structural weaknesses:** Clear evidence of structural weaknesses across conflict-affected and stable countries and the lack of a clear framework to transform these mean that sustainable peace remains a challenge in West Africa. Even where progress has been made in stabilization, much of underlying structural issues remain unaddressed, including issues such as marginalization and exclusion of certain social groups, inequality, lack of legitimacy and trust in government institutions amongst citizens, socio-economic deprivation (especially of youth and women).
- 4) **Violence, not armed conflict, the real challenge:** As part of the structural weaknesses, violence appears to be ubiquitous in West Africa. Conflict affected countries and so-called ostensibly stable ECOWAS member states (e.g. Ghana, Senegal, Togo, etc.) are increasingly affected by different types of violent events, including riots and protests, election-related violence, gender-based violence and inter-communal clashes.
- 5) **Riots and Protests as new frontiers of peace and security:** Over the past decade, riots and protests have increased in their frequency and spatial distribution, and fatalities. Riots and protests defy extant regional mechanisms and even constitute 'grey areas' in respect of extant normative frameworks over convergence principles e.g. over non-constitutional take-over of power and the identity of the 'sovereign' (between people and regime).
- 6) **Emerging frailties in the "edge parts" of West Africa:** Patterns observed point to the concentration of violent events in the countries on the edges of ECOWAS region, namely Mali in the Sahelian axis and Nigeria and Niger in the Lake Chad Basin.
- 7) **Lack of capacities to effectively address emerging trends in violent events:** Much of extant capacities and approaches to human security issues are less attuned to contemporary security challenges such as riots and protests, farmer-herders violence, gender-based violence, etc. and asymmetrical conflicts such as violent extremism.

# INTRODUCTION



This Regional Security Report (RSR) for West Africa is part of the African Leadership Centre (ALC) evidence-based research and analysis of peace and security dynamic in selected regions of Africa. The ALC initiated the RSR series in 2018 as part of its current Research Agenda on “Peace, Society and the State in Africa”. This report for West Africa in 2017 is a pilot version designed to test-run the analytical template, methodology and framework of analysis. In 2019–10, the ALC plans to formally roll-out two Regional Security Reports for East and West Africa. In subsequent years, the ALC will expand the coverage and increase the number of regions covered to include Southern Africa, Central Africa and North Africa.


The RSR series is a response to the identified gap (absence) of cutting-edge, data-based analysis of peace and security trends in Africa’s geo-political regions. The RSR series is aimed at informing policy debates, research and analysis, and advocacy activities related to peace and security issues in West Africa. It is intended as a factual overview of security trends with a view to providing policy actors and institutions, researchers and students, civil society groups and advocacy networks with evidence to underpin policy debates and choices, and research and advocacy agenda. It also provides a factual basis for benching-marking the responsiveness and effectiveness of policy actors and institutions in relation to observed events and trends.

The Regional Security Report provides empirical data, undertakes rigorous analysis and highlights key trends about the peace and security situation in West Africa.

It highlights trends and patterns of security issues on an annual basis, as much as reflect on longer term dynamic with a view to pinpointing continuities, changes, mutations and ‘game-changing’ dynamic. Through this, it offers deeper insights into the underlying causes and drivers, impacts and their spatial distribution, and the challenges of preventing and containing security challenges in West Africa.

This Regional Security Report for West Africa covers the number and scale of armed conflict and violence, their spatial distribution (by country and region), the scale of threats to civilians and the overall fatalities recorded. The Regional Security Report template also provides an overview of peace processes in West Africa by assessing progress, disruptions and challenges faced by national, regional and international stakeholders in addressing security challenges. In addition, the RSR for West Africa in 2017 reviews and provides trends and patterns of applicable thematic issues, including violent extremism, farmer-herder conflicts, migration, gender-based violence and mass protests and riots. Much of the analysis is prefaced (contextualised) by a review of the structural causes and vulnerabilities of states in West Africa.

The Regional Security Report analytical template follows orthodox geo-political groupings (as indexed by extant Regional Economic Communities, RECS), as the point of departure in identifying and demarcating regions.



Nonetheless, recent empirical realities across Africa's peace and security landscape continues to show gaps and limitations of using orthodox regional groupings, as much as raise questions about the possibility of exploring alternative approaches and perspectives as to the meaning and definition of a "region". The advent of new quasi-regional security mechanisms in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin alongside orthodox institutions and processes (by RECs) are pointers in this respect. To reflect the emerging dynamic, specifically the cross-border, trans-region and cross-continental dimensions of conflicts and insecurity, the RSR template uses the REC-based delineation, alongside covering conflicts and insecurities that criss-cross two or more orthodox REC-based regions, especially events and trends in the Lake Chad Basin and in the Sahel. Thus in some cases, data and analysis do cover 'non-West Africa' state states such as Cameroon, Chad, Mauritania, etc.

The choice of case studies is guided by factual and thematic relevance, and regional spread.

The definitions, indicators and approaches to counting of conflict issues and events are important methodological issues in evidence-based analysis such as the RSR. A conscious choice was made to adopt the framing and coding practices as contained in extant databases, specifically those by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project, and the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, notwithstanding potential limitations. In most cases, the RSR uses the raw data from the listed databases to derive quantitative datasets, generate graphical illustrations and drive its analysis. Overall inferences, including trend analysis, and key findings are derived from combining quantitative data with qualitative data. The combined data sources are listed as follows:

The RSR template focus on trend analysis involves the identification and breakdown of empirical events by themes, actors and groups, area and geography affected, and responses and interventions. The trend analysis is done to document annual patterns and longitudinal dynamic. In undertaking the RSR, the analytical template allows for a level of analysis to allow the dissection of security trends across subnational, national, regional and continental and global levels, as well as interrogate linkages across those levels. Crucially, the RSR uses specific case studies of themes (based on particular events and incidents) to illustrate trends, scale or intensity of threat or their unique dimensions.

- Official Documents of national governments, AU, RECs, UN, and other inter-governmental institutions.
- AU-PSC and UNSC Resolutions and Reports on particular countries, events/incidents, etc.
- Reports of Specialized Missions such as Peace Missions, Election Observation Missions, Human Rights Commission, Expert Panels, etc.
- Academic Publications such as scholarly articles, books, monographs and op-eds on particular incidents/themes, countries and regions.





- Reports of Non-Governmental Actors such as local and international NGOs, CSOs, and major advocacy groups such as Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, etc.
- Media Reports into particular incidents in countries/regions of interest in 2017.
- Existing International Datasets such as the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Project, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), UNFPA State of the World's Population Report, Mo Ibrahim Governance Index/Report, Global Peace Index, ADB's Africa Economic Outlook, Human Development Index, UNFPA's State of the World's Population, World Development Report, etc.

## OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AND ARMED CONFLICT IN WEST AFRICA IN 2017

The peace and security landscape for West Africa in 2017 was characterized by observable changes from the previous year both quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of intensities, spread and fragmentation. Based on analysis of data released by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project of the University of Sussex, West Africa witnessed a sharp increase in the total number of armed conflicts and violent events in 2017. There were 3021 armed conflicts and violent events in 2017 compared to 2213 in 2016 and 2531 in 2015.<sup>1</sup> The state of peace and security in West Africa was shaped by variety of security issues namely violent extremism, elections and political violence, migration, herder and farmer violence.

### The Dominant Kinds of Violent Events in 2017

In 2017, Nigeria had the highest number of violent events with 1636 incidents (54%), followed by Mali with 475 incidents (16%); Burkina Faso with 206 events (7%) and the Ghana with 110 events (4%). The conflict events in Nigeria were dominated by a mixture of riots/protests, violence against civilians and battles; in Burkina Faso and Ghana, conflict events were dominated by riots and protests; in Mali, it was battles involving none territorial changes.

When disaggregated by event types, the dominant form of violent events in West Africa in 2017 was riots and mass protests against governments and other incumbents of power (1288 events or 43% of total events). This was followed by violence against civilians (741 events or 24%) and battles between armed groups, including government and non-government insurgent groups, and militias (684 events or 23%). As indicated in Table 1.0 and Figure 1.0 below, protests, violence against civilians and battles accounted for 90% of all conflict incidents in West Africa in 2017.

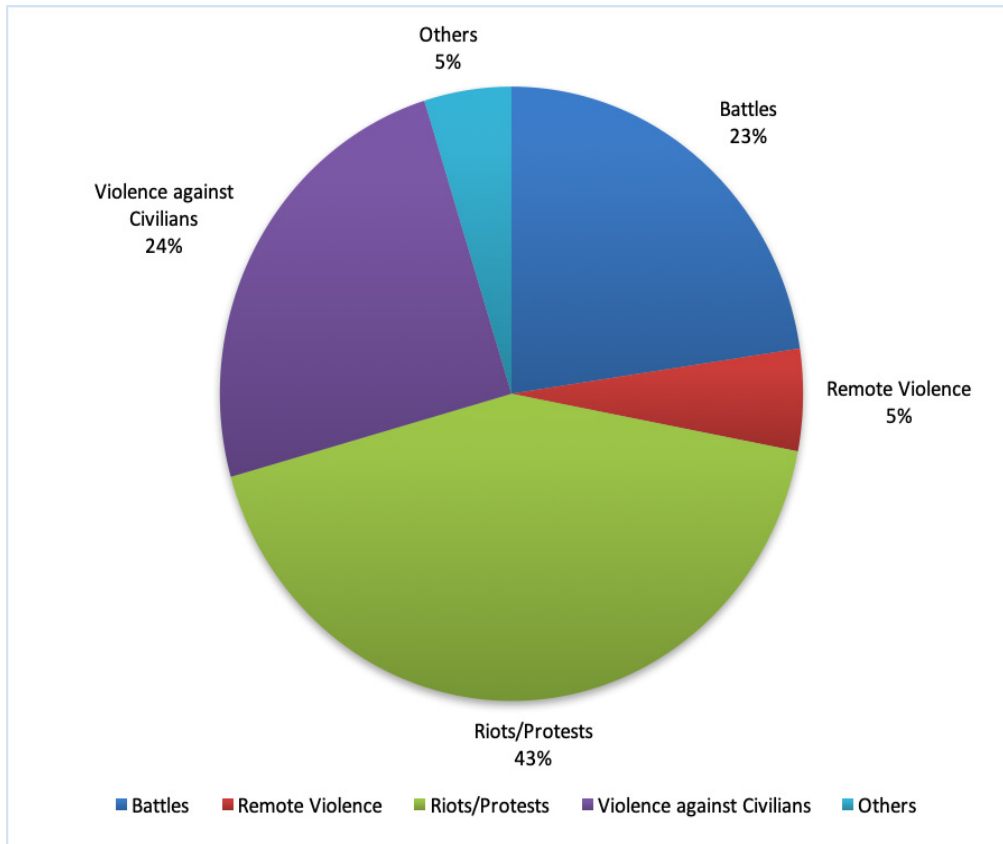
**Table 1: Breakdown of Conflict Events in Western Africa in 2017**

Event Type <sup>2</sup>	Number of Records
1. Battles	684
2. Remote violence	162
3. Riots/Protests	1,288
4. Violence against civilians	741
5. Others	146
<b>Grand Total (Occurrences)</b>	<b>3,021</b>

<sup>1</sup> This is based on the analysis of the data released by ACLED for the period spanning 2008 – 2018, available at <https://www.acleddata.com/data/> Accessed 3 October 2018

<sup>2</sup> These typologies follow ACLED's methodology; battles are violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Explosions/Remote violence are events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive device was used to engage in conflict, including to create conflict asymmetry. Violence against civilians are violent attacks on unarmed civilians and populations. Riots are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganized, unaffiliated members of society. Protests are non-violent demonstrations, involving typically unorganized action by members (citizens and civil society groups) of society. Strategic developments include 'non-violent' activities in context of disorder such as looting, peace-talks, high profile arrests, non-violent transfers of territory, recruitment into non-state groups etc.

**Figure 1: Breakdown of Conflict Types by Share of Conflict Events in 2017**



Over the past ten years (from 2008 to 2017), a total of 16,179 conflict events were recorded in West Africa. The conflict landscape has been changing in quantitative terms in the course of the 10-year period, characterized by huge jumps, steady increases year-on-year, major dips and rapid increases. Overall, there was a major increase in the number of armed conflicts and violent events, from 395 in 2008 to 2829 in 2017, representing a 616% increase. This suggests that the security situation in West Africa has deteriorated since 2007.

As Table 3 below indicates, while the number of conflicts in 2008 and 2009 remained constant (395), there was up to a 96% jump in the total number of conflict events from 2009 to 2010. The region witnessed a slight increase from 776 in 2010 to 905 in 2011. The year 2012, however, witnessed an increase of 83% from the previous year, recording a total of 1659 conflict incidents. From 2012 to 2015, there was a steady year-on-year increase: 1944 in 2013; 2340 in 2014; and 2531 in 2015. There was, noticeably, a major dip in 2016 with a 12.5% decrease in the number of conflict incidents witnessed in 2015, while from 2016 to 2017, there was a rapid increase of 36.5%.

**Table 2: Conflict Event types by count of year, over a 10-year period**

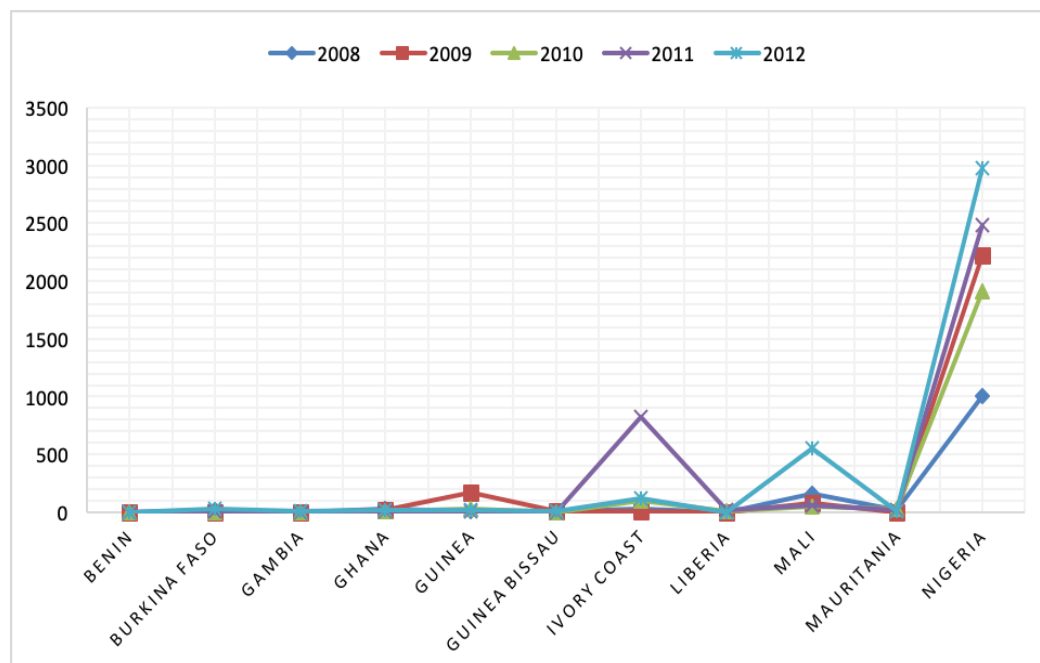
Year	Battles	Remote Violence	Riots/ Protests	Violence against civilians	Others	Total
2008	177	6	62	140	10	395
2009	127	15	96	135	22	395
2010	206	24	294	240	12	776
2011	231	87	281	284	22	905
2012	384	143	495	517	120	1659
2013	501	92	716	549	86	1944
2014	410	101	1059	689	81	2340
2015	465	73	1268	655	70	2531
2016	515	88	1018	497	95	2213
2017	684	162	1288	741	146	3021
<b>Total</b>	<b>3700</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>6577</b>	<b>4447</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>16179</b>
2018	603	156	889	959	222	2829
<b>Total</b>	<b>4303</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>7466</b>	<b>5406</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>19008</b>

The disaggregation of all 16,179 conflict events that were registered over the 10-year period showed that riots and protests account for 41% of the incidents, followed by violence against civilians (27%), battles (23%), remote violence (5%) and others (4%).

When disaggregated by type of violent event, the trend for violence against civilians was found to be consistent with the overall data for the 10-year period; with a dip in 2016 and a major jump from 2016 to 2017. Riots and protests follow a similar trajectory with no alarming changes until 2015; there was a 20% decrease in the number of conflict incidents resulting from riots and protests between 2015 and 2016. Battles and remote violence trends reveal some quantitative changes over the decade albeit these were not alarming as shown in Figure 6 below.



**Figure 2: Trend of Conflict Events over a 10-Year Period**



## Spatial Distribution of Violent Events in 2017

Riots and protests were highest in Nigeria with 54% of the total 889 events recorded in Western Africa in 2017. This was followed by Senegal (6.5%), Burkina Faso (5.7%), Guinea (5.1%), and Mali (4.8%). According to the ACLED data, Nigeria accounted for almost two thirds (64%) of the total incidences of violence against civilians for the region (959), with Mali accounting for 19%, Burkina Faso 6% and Niger 4%. The country's distribution showed that Nigeria alone accounted for over half of all battles in 2017 with 331 incidents (55%) followed by Mali (27%), Burkina Faso (7.6%), and Niger (4.1%). With respect to remote violence, Mali accounted for 88 of the total 156 incidences for the region, representing 56.4%, followed by Nigeria (34.6%) and Burkina Faso (9%). All incidences of remote violence in West Africa for 2017 occurred in these three countries. Consistent with the above trend, Nigeria again bore the brunt of the total number of 'other' conflict events such as strategic development, the establishment of headquarters or base, and the non-violent transfer of territory. While Nigeria accounted for 40% of these conflict events, Mali accounted for 28.4%, Burkina Faso for 10.8% and Niger for 4.5%.

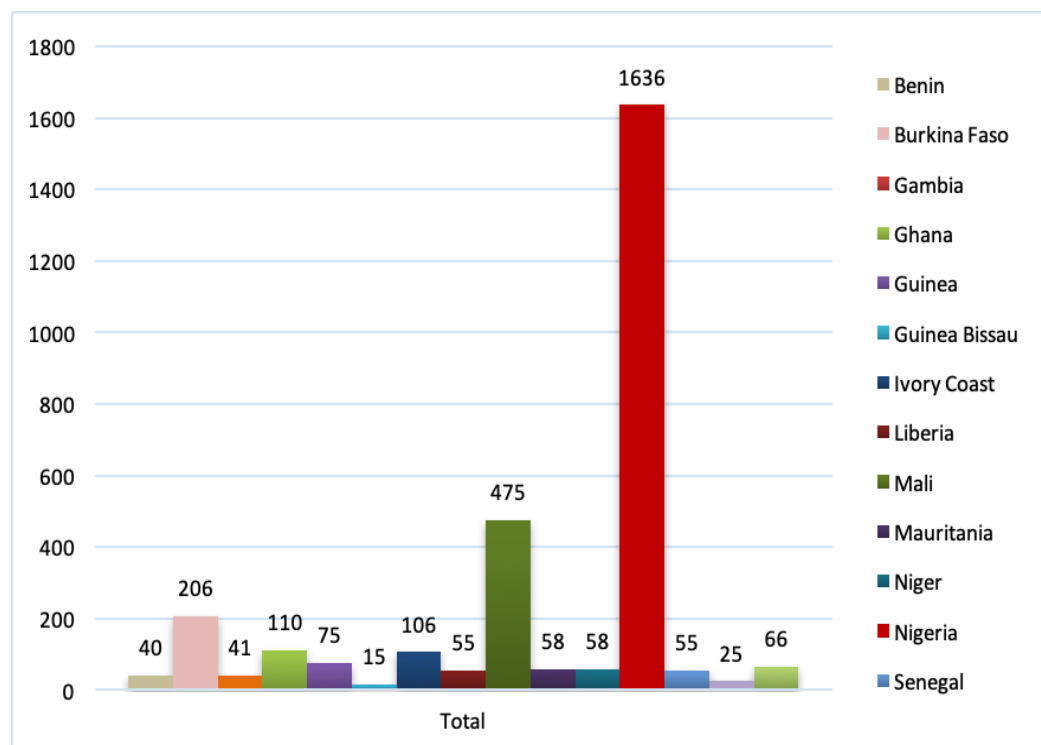
**Table 3: Distribution of Conflict Events by Country**

Country	Battles	Remote Violence	Riots/Protests	Violence against civilians	Others	Total
Benin	2	0	12	11	5	40
Burkina Faso	46	14	51	61	24	206
Gambia	1	0	7	1	1	41
Ghana	7	0	33	9	7	110
Guinea	8	0	46	12	5	75
Guinea Bissau	0	0	3	0	2	15
Ivory Coast	10	0	20	3	2	106
Liberia	1	0	24	4	1	55
Mali	163	88	43	180	63	475
Mauritania	1	0	31	7	7	58
Niger	25	0	23	39	10	58
Nigeria	331	54	477	610	84	1636
Senegal	6	0	58	5	5	55
Sierra Leone	1	0	32	17	3	25
Togo	1	0	29	0	3	66
<b>Grand Total (Occurrences)</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>3021</b>

In 2017, Nigeria had the highest number of violent events with 1636 incidents (54%), followed by Mali with 475 incidents (16%); Burkina Faso with 206 events (7%) and the Ghana with 110 events (4%). The conflict events in Nigeria were dominated by a mixture of riots/protests, violence against civilians and battles; in Burkina Faso and Ghana, conflict events were dominated by riots and protests; in Mali, it was battles involving none territorial changes.

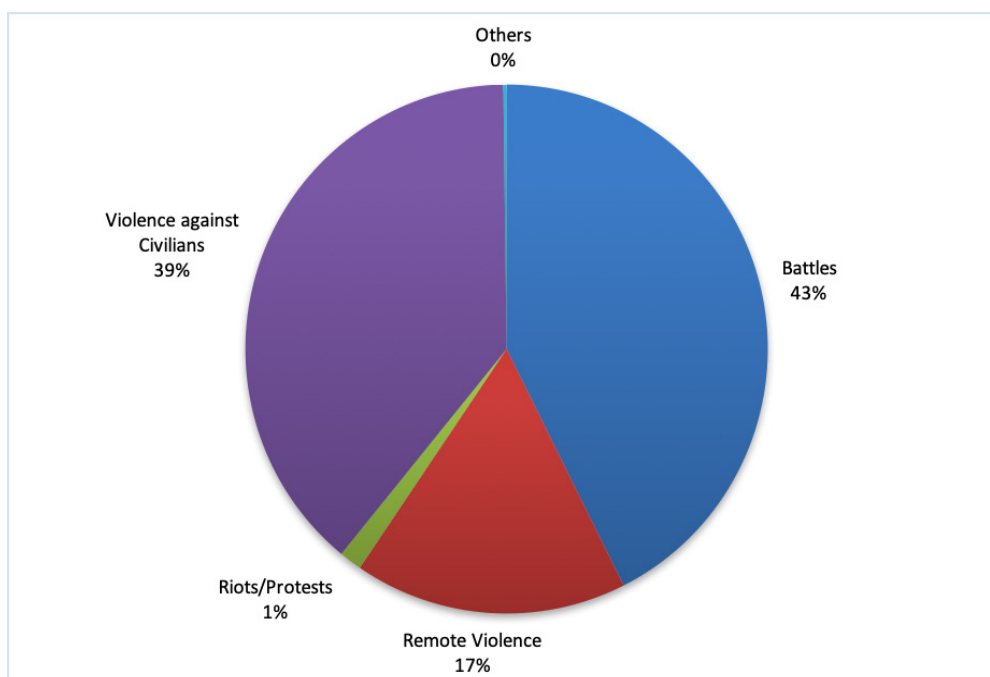


**Figure 3: Spatial Distribution of Conflict Events in Western Africa in 2017**



### The Scale and Kinds of Fatalities in 2017

According to ACLED data, Western Africa recorded up to 6386 fatalities from 3021 conflict incidents in 2017. This represents a 9% increase over the level recorded in 2016 (5850). As indicated in Figure 4.0 below, almost half of the fatalities in 2017 were from battles (43%), more than a third were from violence against civilians (39%), up to 17% were linked to remote violence, and 1% from riots and protests.

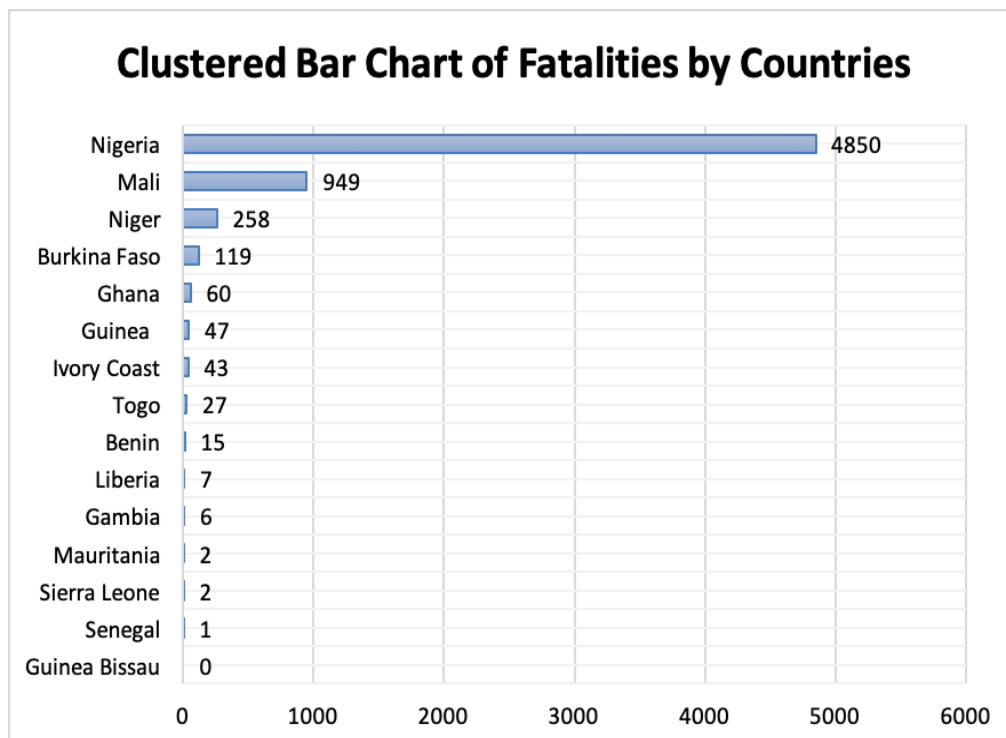
**Figure 4: Conflict Event/Type and Fatalities in 2017****Figure 5: Fatalities by Conflict Event/Types in Western Africa in 2017**

When disaggregated by country as indicated in Figure 5.0 below, Nigeria accounted for more than three quarters (76%) of all fatalities in 2017, followed by Mali (15%), Niger (4%) and Burkina Faso (2%).





**Figure 6: Fatalities by Countries in 2017**



When disaggregated by fatalities, Nigeria had the highest fatalities from violence against civilians with 2715 deaths (77%) followed by Mali with 15% of fatalities and Niger with 4% of the deaths. Most fatalities resulting from battles were concentrated in Nigeria (67%), followed by Mali (26%) and Burkina Faso (2%). Nigeria produced the highest of fatalities from remote violence with a total of 378 deaths, followed by Mali (146), and Burkina Faso (34). The disaggregation of 86 deaths resulting from riots and protests showed that Nigeria remained the most affected with more than half of the fatalities (55%); Mali recorded 22%, followed by Guinea (9.3%).

**Table 4: Distribution of Fatalities by Country**

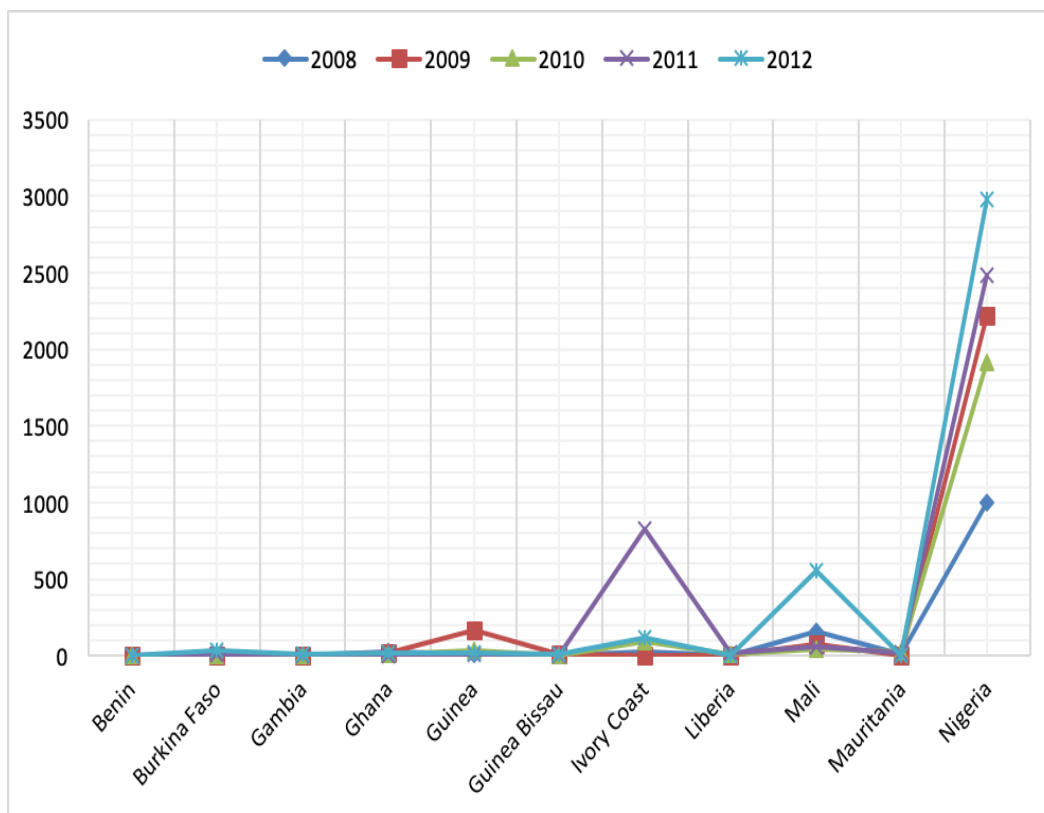
Country	Battles	Remote Violence	Riots/ Protests	Violence against civilians	Others	Total
Benin	4	0	0	21	0	15
Burkina Faso	58	34	0	65	0	119
Gambia	0	0	3	0	0	6
Ghana	5	0	0	11	0	60
Guinea	6	0	8	16	0	47
Guinea Bissau	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ivory Coast	6	0	3	1	0	43
Liberia	0	0	0	2	0	7
Mali	644	146	19	527	2	949
Mauritania	2	0	0	0	0	2
Niger	68	0	0	123	0	258
Nigeria	1651	378	48	2715	3	4850
Senegal	10	0	1	29	0	1
Sierra Leone	0	0	3	2	0	2
Togo	0	0	1	0	0	27
<b>Grand Total (Occurrences)</b>	<b>2454</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>3512</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6386</b>

Of the 16,179 conflict events registered, West Africa recorded up 56,104 fatalities. While most of the conflict incidents resulted from riots and protests, violence against civilians is the deadliest as it produced 26,740 (48%) fatalities. Battles accounted for 39% of the fatalities; remote violence for 9%; riots and protests, interestingly, only accounted for 3% of the fatalities, while other conflict event types including the non-violent transfer of territory, strategic development and the establishment of a headquarter or base only accounted for 1% of the total fatalities over the 10-year period.

**Table 5: Conflict Event types by Sum of Fatalities, over a 10-year period**

Year	Battles	Remote Violence	Riots/ Protests	Violence against civilians	Others	Total
2008	442	4	763	156	0	1365
2009	1017	1212	49	256	0	2534
2010	573	53	54	1494	0	2174
2011	662	424	120	2291	1	3498
2012	1442	358	91	1874	16	3781
2013	3082	464	96	2272	0	5914
2014	4689	776	226	6412	1	12116
2015	4583	475	318	7097	13	12486
2016	2871	463	121	2395	0	5850
2017	2721	1081	91	2481	12	6386
<b>Total</b>	<b>22082</b>	<b>5310</b>	<b>1929</b>	<b>26740</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56104</b>
2018	2454	558	86	3512	5	6615
<b>Total</b>	<b>24536</b>	<b>5868</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>30250</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>62719</b>

From 2008 to 2013, there was a steady increase in the total fatalities recorded in West Africa, with a dip in 2010. The number of fatalities in 2014, however, was more than double that of 2013, from 5914 to 12116, representing a 105% spike. Fatalities remained high in 2015 before considerably dropping by 53% in 2016. When disaggregated against conflict event types, the number of fatalities from battles increased over the 10-year period, with peak points in 2013, 2014 and 2015. With an all-time high in 2009 (1212) and 2017 (1081), the trend in remote violence was unsteady. The number of fatalities produced from riots and protests over the 10 years was highest in 2008 (763 fatalities) and has since oscillated between highs and lows. The periods 2010–2012 and 2014–2015 saw violence against civilians produce the highest number of fatalities.

**Figure 7: Fatalities over 10-year period**

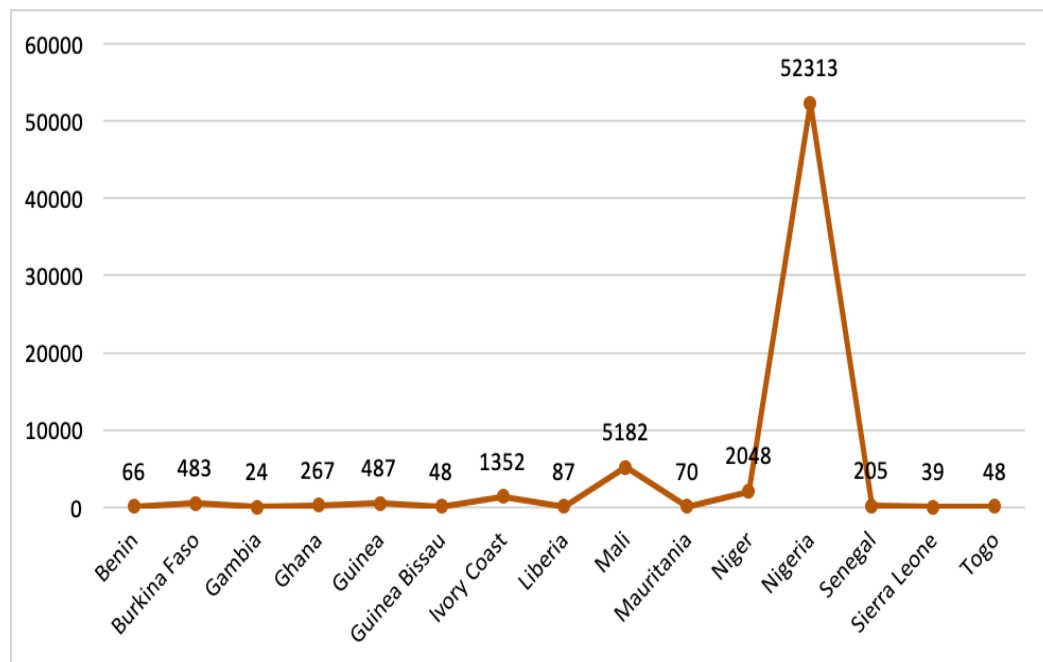
In 2008, riots and protests were the deadliest of all conflict event types in the region, with 763 fatalities, followed by battles (442), and violence against civilians, including targeted attacks (156). Of the 763 fatalities recorded, Nigeria alone accounted for 762. In 2009, remote violence accounted for a majority of the fatalities (48%), with highest number of deaths registered in Nigeria (1200 out of 1212). Battles also accounted for a huge proportion of the fatalities (40%); 90% of these were from Nigeria alone.

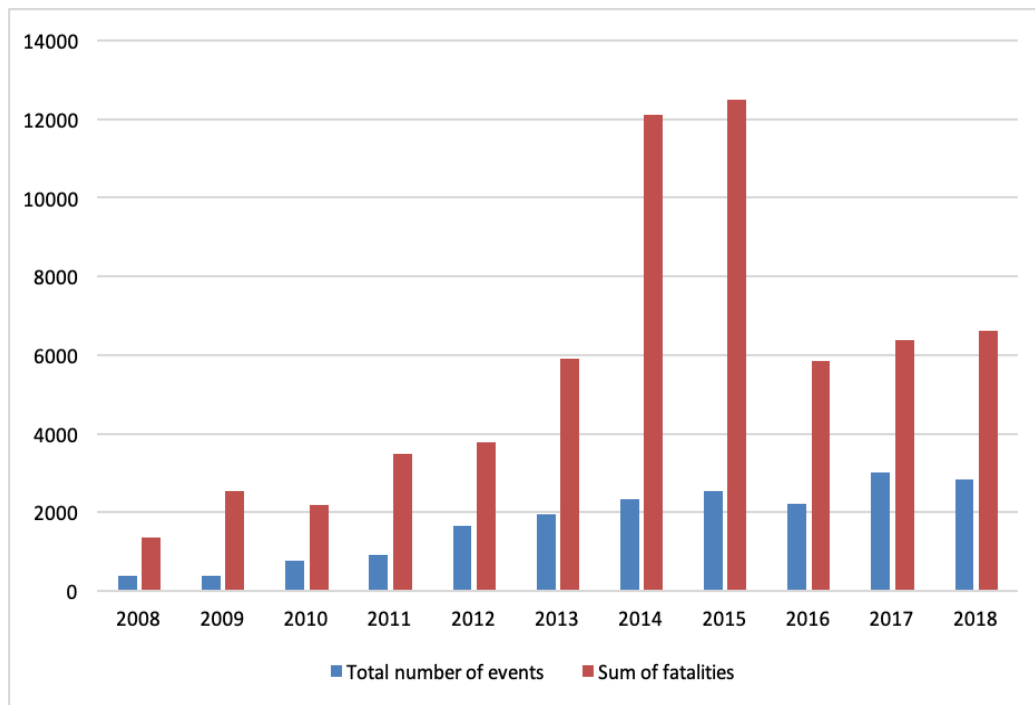
Violence against civilians accounted for most of the fatalities from 2010 to 2015, followed consistently by battles. However, while the number of fatalities dropped for Nigeria, from 2219 in 2009 to 1912 in 2010, there was a spike in the number of fatalities resulting from violence against civilians, from 64 in 2009 to 1394 in 2010. The year 2011 saw a steady increase in fatalities from all conflict event types from the previous year, with violence against civilians still accounting for the lion's share (65%) of the total 3498 deaths recorded. While Nigeria accounted for 1589 of the 2291 fatalities from violence against civilians, Ivory Coast witnessed a spike, from 78 in 2010 to 654 in 2011.

Battles accounted for the highest number of fatalities in 2013, with Nigeria the most deadly country (2330 fatalities), followed by Mali (590 fatalities) and Guinea (96 fatalities). Riots and protests became deadlier between 2014 and 2015. In 2014, Nigeria accounted for 74% of the riot-related fatalities; Burkina Faso accounted for 10% and Liberia for 9%. In 2015, Nigeria accounted for 80%; Guinea for 8% and Burkina Faso for 3%.

In 2016 and 2017, the majority of fatalities resulted from battles – 49% in 2016, and 37% in 2017. Of all the 2871 fatalities in 2016, Nigeria alone accounted for 2200, Niger for 324 and Mali for 214. While Nigeria remained the deadliest country, the number of fatalities from battles dropped in Nigeria to 1651 and in Niger to 68, but increased in Mali to 644. When disaggregated by country as indicated in Figure 9 below, Nigeria accounted for up to 83% of all fatalities over the 10-year period, followed by Mali (8%), Niger (3%) and Ivory Coast (2%). Clearly, Nigeria remains the most-deadly country in the region as it consistently recorded the highest number of fatalities every year over the 10-year period. While Nigeria accounted for 1589 of the 2291 fatalities from violence against civilians, Ivory Coast witnessed a spike, from 78 in 2010 to 654 in 2011.

**Figure 8: Share of fatalities over 10 years by country**



**Figure 9: Deadliness of conflict events by type over 10-Year period**

### STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND INSECURITY IN WEST AFRICA

Conflicts and large scale insecurities in West Africa are rooted in a number of interrelated structural causes. First, the sheer number of young people who are excluded and marginalised from socio-economic and political governance processes in West Africa conditions the structural weakness in the region. West Africa faces a growing youth bulge- the number of young people under the age 24 is more than 37.7 percent of the total population in the region. This high youth bulge is conditioned by high fertility rates. According to UNFPA, State of the World Population 2018, high fertility rates translates into faster population growth with a disproportionate share of the population aged 15 or younger posing challenges for governance including struggles to meet social demands such as education and health services.<sup>3</sup> According to the UNFPA figures above, Niger alone has one of the highest fertility rates in the world at 7.1 per woman. The predominance of young people in West Africa has not translated into a demographic dividend due in large part to the exclusion of young people from socio-economic and governance process. As a result, a sheer number of young people in West Africa have been recruited and are involved in militia, insurgent groups, and armed groups and violent protests. However, the presence of a youth bulge in West Africa doesn't translate into violence, instability and conflicts as a majority of young people find alternative coping mechanisms to their exclusion and vulnerabilities.<sup>4</sup>

3 UNFPA.2018. State of the World Population: The Power of Choice Reproductive Rights and the Demographic Transition. Available at: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA\\_PUB\\_2018\\_EN\\_SWP.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_PUB_2018_EN_SWP.pdf)


4 Wale Ismail, 'Funmi Olonisakin, Bob Picciotto and Dave Wybrow.2009. Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion (YOVEX) in West Africa: Synthesis Report CSDG Papers Number 21 April. Available at: [https://www.nigerdeltabudget.org/CSDG%20Papers%20on%20Youth%20Vulnerability%20and%20Exclusion%20in%20West%20Africa%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.nigerdeltabudget.org/CSDG%20Papers%20on%20Youth%20Vulnerability%20and%20Exclusion%20in%20West%20Africa%20(1).pdf)


**Table 6: Demographic Table of West Africa**

Country	2018 Total Popula- tion in Millions	Popula- tion aged 0-14, per cent 2018	Popula- tion aged 10-24, per cent 2018	Popula- tion aged 15-64, per cent 2018	Population aged 65 and older, per cent	Total fertility rate, per woman
Benin	11.5	42	32	54	3	4.8
Burkina Faso	19.8	45	33	53	2	5.2
Cape Verde	0.6	43	34	54	4	4.7
Cote D'Ivoire	24.9	42	32	55	3	4.8
Gambia	2.2	45	33	53	2	5.3
Ghana	29.5	38	31	58	3	3.9
Guinea	13.1	42	32	55	3	4.7
Guinea-Bissau	1.9	41	31	56	3	4.5
Liberia	4.9	41	32	55	3	4.4
Mali	19.1	48	33	50	3	5.9
Niger	22/3	50	32	47	3	7.1
Nigeria	195.9	44	32	53	3	5.4
Senegal	16.3	43	32	54	3	4.6
Sierra Leone	7.7	42	33	56	3	4.3
Togo	8.0	41	32	56	3	4.3
<b>Grand Total (Occurrences)<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>

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5 [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA\\_PUB\\_2018\\_EN\\_SWP.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_PUB_2018_EN_SWP.pdf)



Second, ecological and environmental stressors are a key structural issue in West Africa that underlines the vulnerabilities of populations in West Africa to conflict and insecurity. Climate change for example profoundly impacts livelihoods of populations in West Africa worsening the already dire food and nutritional crisis in the region. In the Lake Basin Countries of West Africa namely Niger and Nigeria, climate change and associated rainfall variability has eroded the adaptive capacities of populations, and reduced agricultural production and hampered cattle farming and fisheries. In West Africa, ecological stressors have been exacerbated by demographic pressures, human activities including the mismanagement of water resources. Climate variability affects the distribution and availability of resources exacerbating to natural resource related conflicts.<sup>6</sup> Environmental stressors namely scarcity of grazing land and water resources creates and sustains conflict among pastoralist and farmer in Nigeria. While triggered by issues related to land and water use, herder and farmer conflicts in Northern Nigeria Sahelian zones are rooted in drought and desertification that degrades pastures, dries up water resources. The result in migration of herders to the South in search of pasture and water leading conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

Third, poor governance in the form of institutional weakness and leadership failure structures conflict and instability in West Africa. This poor governance manifests in mismanagement of the economy, mismanagement of natural resources, entrenched corruption, inequality, delayed and ineffective responses to crisis, social injustice and limited citizen participation in governance processes. The nature of political governance in most West Africa is characterised by elite centre governance that excludes the broader society, limited legitimacy. This has resulted in authoritarian rule, civil war, military rule, repression, mutinies, and emergence of radical politics including religious radicalisation and violent extremism. Niger's fragility and instability including the current rise of terrorist activities, migration and smuggling is rooted in decades of democratic deficits, authoritarian, and military rule, communal tensions, marginalisation of the poor and rural societies, and fragile institutions of the state including the economy.<sup>8</sup>


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<sup>6</sup> Nyong, Anthony. Climate-Related Conflicts in West Africa Report from Africa Population, Health, Environment, and Conflict ESCP Report Issue No.12 <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Nyong12.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> International Crisis Group. 2018. Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict. Africa Report. 252 Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict>

<sup>8</sup> International Crisis Group. 2013. Niger: Another Weak Link in the Sahel? Report. No.208. Africa Report. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/niger/niger-another-weak-link-sahel>  
UNADIR. 2008. The Complex Dynamics of Small Arms in West Africa, Disarmament Forum <http://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-complex-dynamics-of-small-arms-in-west-africa-en-329.pdf>





The fifth is enabling or driving factors of conflict and insecurity in West Africa and in particular the proliferation of Small and Light Weapons (SALW). SALW in West Africa are easily accessible and affordable and the proliferation is enabled by porosity of borders. This circulation increases the proclivity to conflict and large scale insecurities. Both state and non-state actors in West Africa are involved in criminal and illegal networks of arms transfer.<sup>9</sup> SALW are the primary weapons in communal conflicts, armed insurrections, and terrorist activities fulling overlapping conflicts throughout the region. In Northern Mali most of the weapons used by armed and terrorist groups were looted from Malian national defence and security forces stockpiles in 2012, from previous rebellions in the North, and from the Libyan stockpiles following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime.<sup>10</sup> Insurgent groups use weapons from the cold war era soviet and Chinese arms, and weapons recently produced from Bulgaria and China in addition to large calibre weapons and man portable air defence systems.<sup>11</sup> In Nigeria it is estimated that more than 6.2 million illegal and legal firearms are held by civilians, ranking Nigeria as one of the top, 16 of 25 countries in the world with the highest number of civilian held arms.<sup>12</sup> These arms increase the intensity and impact of conflicts.

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9 UNADIR. 2008. The Complex Dynamics of Small Arms in West Africa, Disarmement Forum <http://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-complex-dynamics-of-small-arms-in-west-africa-en-329.pdf>

10 Anders, Holger. 2018. Monitoring Illicit Arms Flows: The Role of UN Peacekeeping Operations, Briefing Paper. Available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SANA-BP-Monitoring-Illicit-Arms-Flows-PKOs.pdf>

11 <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2015/eng/Small-Arms-Survey-2015-About-2-Cover-sheet-EN.pdf>

12 Estimating Global Civilian HELD Firearms Numbers Aaron Karp, Small Arms Survey Briefing Paper. No. Available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf> p.4

## POLITICAL TRANSITIONS, MASS PROTESTS AND VIOLENCE IN WEST AFRICA

Political participation takes many forms. It takes place both directly and indirectly. It takes place, for example, when citizens participate in the election of their leaders, when they influence government decision making processes, when they are represented in public and private spheres, and when they engage political activities such as voting and contesting during elections. In West Africa, while states generally have constitutions which protect the right of citizens to participate in the political life of the state, there are many barriers to political participation. Populations such as women, the youth, and minority groups have often encountered paradigms of exclusion which are social, political, economic, and cultural in nature. Young people have faced many challenges, including increased levels of poverty, unemployment, and under-employment. The demand for inclusion and representation by the youth has sometimes been characterised by mass protests, some of which have turned violent.


Women have remained under-represented in elections, political parties, civil society, the media, the academia, civil service, elected positions, and the private sector. In Cameroon, despite a marginal increase in women's representation in parliament (31%) and senate (26%), women's political participation has remained very low. Women constitute only 8% of local councillors, and less than 2% of leaders of political parties are women.<sup>13</sup> Women's representation at the municipal level is only 8%.<sup>14</sup> In rural areas, the participation of women in political processes has been impeded by many barriers, including the lack of national identity cards and birth certificates.<sup>15</sup> In Libya, women played a significant role in the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The fall of Gaddafi was characterised by opportunities for increasing women's political representation and participation, including repealing or amending Gaddafi-era laws, regulations, and practices which subject women to discrimination and abuse. However, the political instability and fragile security situation has been characterised by the marginalisation and silencing of women. In Guinea Bissau, women are entitled to equal political rights. However, their participation is constrained by a number of barriers which are social, cultural, political, and economic. As a result, they are underrepresented in positions of leadership.

In West Africa, multiparty competition is permitted. Recent presidential and legislative elections were generally contested by a large number of parties, including independent candidates. However, participation in electoral processes was undermined by many electoral malpractices. The credibility of elections was tainted by malpractices such as state-party conflation, egregious violations of human rights, political violence, intimidation, coercion, and the "capture" of the state media, the judiciary, and Election Management Bodies (EMBs) by incumbent parties.

<sup>13</sup> UN Women Cameroon. 2018. Traditional authorities and rural women poised to improve women's participation in the electoral processes in Cameroon. Available at: <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2018/04/traditional-authorities-and-rural-women-in-cameroon>, accessed on 19 November 2018.

<sup>14</sup> UN Women Africa. Elections stakeholders debate strategies to eliminate violence Available at: <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2018/04/elections-stakeholders-debate-strategies-to-eliminate-violence-against-women>, accessed on 19 November 2018.

<sup>15</sup> UN Women Cameroon. 2018. Available at: <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/cameroon>, accessed on 19 November 2018.



Elections were associated with violence. For example, in Guinea, between 05 February and 10 November 2018, 21 people were killed as a result of election-related violence.<sup>16</sup> In some countries, elections were postponed because of different challenges, including disagreements between political actors. For example, in Guinea Bissau, legislative elections which had been scheduled to be conducted on 1 November 2018 were postponed to December 2018. In Mali, the opposition exerted pressure on the government to postpone elections on grounds that the electoral environment was not germane to the conduct of free and fair elections. The government has resisted the implementation of meaningful electoral reforms.

There was a trend in the repression of human rights and democratic freedoms. In Guinea Bissau, although citizens were relatively free to express their views on political issues, some citizens were arrested in connection with expressing political views which are critical of government. In September 2017, Prime Minister Sissoco declared that anyone who “insults” the president, the prime minister, or the leader of the parliament would be arrested.<sup>17</sup> In Burkina Faso, while the constitution provides for full political rights and electoral participation for citizens; the political environment has been dominated by a few people, especially the military and the elite. However, there were some improvements after the ouster of President Compaoré. For example, the state media faced less political interference, and journalists were generally able to report freely and critically on the government and its policies. The media environment also improved because of the licensing of several private newspapers and television and radio stations.


The activities of terrorist and rebel groups have remained one of the greatest barriers to political participation in the region. These activities have cultivated an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, making it difficult for citizens to exercise democratic freedoms. In Mali, extremist groups committed most of the election-related human rights abuses. These groups attacked polling stations and individuals and groups they perceived to be supportive of the elections.<sup>18</sup> In Burkina Faso, the rise of terrorism since 2016 was characterised by widespread intimidation and attacks against civilians. In Libya, political competition and participation were made virtually impossible by the unstable political and security situation since the removal of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The country has remained divided between rival political and military factions which continue to fight militarily and politically. Armed groups have carried out indiscriminate shelling of residential areas, abductions, torture of detained persons, summary executions, (gang) rape, and the destruction of property.

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16 ACLED. 2018. Regional overview Africa. Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/11/13/regional-overview-africa-13-november-2018/>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

17 Freedom House. Freedom in the World 2018. Available here: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/guinea-bissau>, Accessed on 23 November 2018.

18 UN Security Council. 2018. Situation in Mali. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/866>, accessed on 23 November 2018. Report of the Secretary-General.



In Anglophone Cameroon, perceptions of being marginalised, oppressed, and underrepresented are widespread. Human rights abuses such as arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, rape, and extrajudicial killings have been committed with impunity. The perpetrators include security forces and armed groups. Secessionist groups have attacked state security forces, state institutions, and civilians accused of not participating in the secessionist agenda or perceived to be cooperating with the state. Between September 2017 and May 2018, the separatist groups killed at least 44 members of state security forces and between February 2017 and May 2018, they attacked at least 42 schools.<sup>19</sup> The government claimed that since the eruption of the violence, separatist groups have killed over 100 civilians and 84 security forces.<sup>20</sup> Violence escalated towards the October 2018 election when the separatist groups stated that they would boycott the elections. Scores of citizens were forced to flee.<sup>21</sup> By August 2018, about 246 000 people had been internally displaced.<sup>22</sup>

West Africa has witnessed a rise in protests. Security forces used excessive force against demonstrators, journalists, and human rights defenders. The force was characterised by beatings, harassment, mass arrests, arbitrary detentions, and killings. These abuses were generally committed with impunity. Legal, administrative, and other measures were used to impose unlawful restrictions and bans on peaceful protests. For example, in Togo, the government banned weekday protests and disrupted internet and mobile phone services. At least 10 people were killed during a crackdown by security forces. In Guinea Bissau, street protests became frequent, but they decreased when the new government was appointed.<sup>23</sup> At least 18 people were killed and scores were injured during protests against the political crisis in the country. 7 people were killed during protests against government's decision to close schools and to review the terms and conditions of teachers. The security forces used tear gas, batons, and live ammunition. On November 2018, 2 people were killed by security forces following a violent demonstration.<sup>24</sup>

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19 Amnesty International. 2018. A return for the worse: Violence and human rights violations in Anglophone Cameroon. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR1784812018ENGLISH.PDF>, accessed on 23 November 2018.


20 "Government Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan in the North-West and South-West Regions 2018-2019," Government of Cameroon, June 20, 2018.

21 Amnesty International. 2018. A return for the worse: Violence and human rights violations in Anglophone Cameroon. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR1784812018ENGLISH.PDF>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

22 ACLED. 2018. Continued clashes between the government and Anglophone separatists in Cameroon put civilians at risk. Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/11/08/continued-clashes-between-the-government-and-anglophone-separatists-in-cameroon-put-civilians-at-risk/>, accessed on 18 November 2018.

23 Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary General. Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. Available here: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/771>, Accessed on 19 November 2018.

24 ACLED. 2018. Regional overview Africa. Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/11/13/regional-overview-africa-13-november-2018/>, accessed on 23 November 2018.



In Cameroon, in October 2017, security forces used deadly force against demonstrations which took place across the Anglophone regions. Security forces shot dead 20 peaceful protesters. Hundreds of protesters were wounded, arrested, and internally and externally displaced.<sup>25</sup> The government banned some civil society organisations, declared a curfew, disrupted the internet, and deactivated phone lines for about 6 months. Between 22 September and 2 October 2018, security forces killed at least 20 protesters and arrested more than 500.<sup>26</sup>

In Niger, the government passed a finance law which established new taxes on electricity and housing in November 2017. This was followed by demonstrations as citizens denounced what they regarded as an unconstitutional legislation. The state responded by banning the protests and arresting 9 of the civil society leaders who had organised the protests. The leaders were arbitrarily detained for many months.<sup>27</sup> In Nigeria, state security forces killed at least 45 supporters of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) who were holding peaceful religious procession around Abuja. The members were demanding the release of IMN leader, Sheik Ibrahim El Zakzaky.<sup>28</sup> However, although protests were met with brutal force, there are a couple of countries which witnessed peaceful protests. In Burkina Faso, the new government opened the space for demonstrations and protests. This was evidenced by peaceful protests which took place throughout 2017. In Ghana, although the country experienced an increase in politically motivated violence from the beginning of 2017, the protests were relatively peaceful.

## **Togo: the unfinished business of the mass protests**

In August 2017, Togo witnessed a wave of unprecedented protests which were called for by opposition parties to demand wide-ranging constitutional reforms. More than 100,000 people protested in the streets of Lomé.<sup>29</sup> The protesters demanded the reinstatement of a two-round election system, the right of Togolese diaspora to vote in national elections, and returning to the 1992 constitution, which had a presidential term limit provision. They also wanted the presidential term limit provision of the 1992 constitution to be applied retroactively, in order to disqualify President Faure Gnassingbe from contesting the 2020 elections.

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25 Amnesty International. 2018. A return for the worse: Violence and human rights violations in Anglophone Cameroon. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR1784812018ENGLISH.PDF>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

26 Human Rights Watch. 2018. "These killings can be stopped": Government and separatist groups abuses in Cameroon's Anglophone regions. Available at: [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/cameroon0718\\_web2.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/cameroon0718_web2.pdf), accessed on 23 November 2018.

27 Amnesty International. 2018. Niger: Wrongly prosecuted human rights defenders must be immediately and unconditionally released. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/07/niger-les-defenseurs-des-droits-humains-poursuivis/>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

28 Amnesty International. 2018. Nigeria: State security forces must be held accountable for killing at least 45 peaceful Shi'a protesters. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/nigeria-security-forces-must-be-held-accountable-for-killing-of-at-least-45-peaceful-shia-protesters/>, accessed on 22 November 2018.

29 African Confidential. 2017. A test for people power. Vol.58. No.20.



Gnassingbe assumed power in 2005, when he succeeded his father who was in power from 1967. As the protests gathered momentum, the protesters demanded the immediate resignation of the president. The government's response was repressive and draconian. State security forces used tear gas and live ammunition against the protesters. Government-sponsored vigilantes were also used to disrupt the protests and to intimidate the protesters. The government also banned weekday protests, disrupted internet and mobile phone services, and harassed and intimidated journalists and human rights defenders. Scores of protesters were arrested, arbitrarily detained and sentenced, beaten, and tortured.<sup>30</sup> At least 10 people were killed.<sup>31</sup> The government's response caused the political tension which "radicalized" the protesters, resulting in violent clashes.

ECOWAS responded by facilitating dialogue between the parties. The regional body also called for the implementation of constitutional reforms which include: the introduction of a two term limit for the president, a two-round voting system, and a reconstitution of the Constitutional Court.<sup>32</sup> As a result of pressure, the government offered superficial concessions such as introducing a presidential term limit, but without applying it retroactively. Government critics considered this concession meaningless, because it allows president Gnassingbe to contest the 2020 and the 2025 elections. It was from this position that the opposition boycotted a National Assembly vote to introduce the term limit. The government has decided to hold a referendum, but the opposition has refused to cooperate. Negotiations between the opposition and the government collapsed a number of times because of these irreconcilable positions. While the protests have exerted pressure on the government to introduce presidential term limit and to postpone elections pending the implementation of substantive electoral reforms, no substantive reforms have been implemented since thus far.

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30 ACLED.2018. Regional Overview – Africa 21 May 2018(online).Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/05/22/regional-overview-africa-21-may-2018/>

31 Amnesty International report. 2018. The State of the World's Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF>, accessed on 19 November 2018.

32 ECOWAS.2018. Fifty-third ordinary session of the ECOWAS authority of heads of state and government, Available at: <http://w3.wahooas.org/web-oas/sites/default/files/actualites/1626/final-communique-ecowas-summit-lome-2018.pdf>, accessed on 19 November 2018.

## PEACE PROCESSES IN WEST AFRICA IN 2017



### Guinea-Bissau: It takes more than elections

Guinea-Bissau relapsed into political instability in August 2015, when President José Mário Vaz dismissed the government of Domingos Simões Pereira. The dismissal left the country without functional institutions. The first major step which was taken towards extricating Guinea Bissau from its political and institutional impasse was the signing of the ECOWAS-brokered Conakry Agreement of October 2016. Apart from brokering the accord, ECOWAS played a central role in pushing for its speedy and full implementation. ECOWAS-led consultations resulted in the signing of a six-point road map for the resolution of the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. These include the holding of an inclusive national round-table dialogue, the formation of an inclusive government responsible for preparing for the 2018 elections, the establishment of an ECOWAS monitoring and follow-up mechanism, and the implementation of reforms in the defence and security sectors.<sup>33</sup> In February 2018, ECOWAS imposed sanctions on individuals and organisations accused of impeding the implementation of the Conakry Agreement.<sup>34</sup> A Committee was set up to monitor and review the sanctions regime. Religious leaders (such as the Catholic bishop of Bissau), the African Union, the European Union, the United States, and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries also played a crucial role. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS), which was established in 2009, was mandated to support inclusive political dialogue, national reconciliation, institutional reforms, the reviewing of the constitution, and the implementation of electoral processes.<sup>35</sup>

A number of positive developments towards resolving the political crisis took place. The first significant step towards the implementation of the Conakry Agreement was the appointment of Aristide Gomes as consensus Prime Minister in April 2018. This was followed by the formation of an inclusive government, the reconvening of the National Assembly, and the vote of state budget by parliamentarians. President Vaz also set 18 November 2018 as the date for the holding of legislative elections.<sup>36</sup> Following these and other pockets of positive developments, various actors who mediated the political impasse turned a significant part of their attention to the conduct of credible elections, considering this as the litmus test of the successful implementation of the Conakry Agreement. For example, the permanent mission of France to the United Nations stated that the conduct of elections “will be a significant test of the genuine will of the various stakeholders to make progress towards the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement.”<sup>37</sup>


33 Habibu Yaya Bappah. 2017. Why Peace Fails in Guinea Bissau? A political Economic Analysis of the ECOWAS-Brokered Conakry Accord. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

34 ECOWAS. 2018. ECOWAS imposes individual sanctions for non-implementation of Conakry Agreement in Guinea-Bissau. Available at: <http://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-imposes-individual-sanctions-for-non-implementation-of-the-conakry-agreement-in-guinea-bissau/>, Accessed on 22 November 2018.

35 Institute for Security Studies. 2018. Guinea-Bissau: Reform Electoral Laws. Available at <https://issafrica.org/research/books-and-other-publications/guinea-bissau-reform-electoral-laws>, accessed on 22 November 2018.

36 Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary General. Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. Available here: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/771>, Accessed on 19 November 2018.

37 Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York. 2018. Guinea Bissau: Important Step towards the Implementation of the Conakry Agreement. Available: <https://onu.delegfrance.org/Important-step-towards-the-implementation-of-the-Conakry-Agreement>, accessed on 22 November 2018.



José Viegas Filho, the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of UNIOGBIS, stated that “the holding of timely and credible elections is of paramount importance at this juncture.”<sup>38</sup> While the conduct of credible elections is important, a durable and consensual resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau cannot be attained without addressing the diverse and intricate structural causes and drivers of the crisis. Without making substantive progress in other areas such as fighting corruption and organised crime, constitutional and security sector reforms, provision of social services, improving public administration and management of state revenue, and promoting inclusion; the conduct of elections is unlikely to bring a lasting resolution of the crisis. This is especially considering that the government has struggled to reach consensus on the modalities for the holding of elections. Progress in resource mobilisation, as well as making the technical preparations of elections, has remained slow. As a result, the elections were postponed from November to December 2018 in order to give the electoral body more time to complete the voter registration process. It is therefore important for the stakeholders who are involved in the resolution of the political crisis to focus on the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement, and not the conduct of elections.

## The conflict in Mali


The conflict in Mali started in 2012, when rebels launched attacks in northern Mali to pursue a secessionist agenda. In the same year, the Malian armed forces staged a military coup. However, following pressure from the local, regional, and international community, the army ceded power to an interim government. Presidential elections were conducted in 2013, but the new government struggled to re-establish its authority in the north, which had fallen under the control of rebel and terrorist groups.<sup>39</sup> Different actors responded to the conflict. The government responded through signing the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 2015; establishing the Agreement Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of the Agreement; embarking on a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration registration exercise; deploying the security and defence forces; establishing interim administrations and territorial collectivities to facilitate the provision of basic services at the local level; conducting multi-stakeholder conferences; conducting joint patrols; and implementing national reconciliation processes.

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<sup>38</sup> UN Security Council. 2018. Timely, credible elections in Guinea-Bissau critical to retain fragile political progress, senior officials warn Security Council. Available at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13479.doc.htm>, accessed on 22 November 2018.

<sup>39</sup> UN Security Council. 2018. Letter dated 8 August 2018 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) on Mali addressed to the President of the Security Council. Available at: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/581>, accessed on 18 November 2018.





On the other hand, the international community responded in both political and military terms. In 2013, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The mission's strategic priority is to support the parties to speedily and fully implement the Bamako agreement, particularly its political and institutional reforms provisions. It was also mandated to support the restoration of state authority, good offices and reconciliation, protect civilians, promote and protect human rights, and to provide/facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid. The African Union and ECOWAS promoted dialogue and reconciliation.


Non-governmental organizations implemented peacebuilding processes, particularly at community levels.<sup>40</sup> The European Union Training Mission (EUTM Mali) and European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP Sahel Mali) provided training and strategic advice to the Malian security and defence forces. Under resolution 2374 (2017), the Security Council imposed sanctions on individuals and entities designated by the Committee as responsible for directly or indirectly obstructing the peace process. An international mediation team was set up to mediate the peace process. The Group of Five for the Sahel, in collaboration with the French force, conducted various operations to address terrorism and transnational organized crime. As of November 2018, the responses had generated a number of positive outcomes. These include the conduct of a peaceful election, the return of national administration and basic services in localities which were under the control of armed groups, the nomination of interim authorities at the district level, the creation of municipalities for the Ménaka and Taoudenni regions, the introduction of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and the adoption of a national security sector reform strategy. However, despite these positive developments, the responses have failed in a number of ways. The atmosphere of insecurity has remained in the north and central areas of the country because of weak state authority. The responses have not addressed the socio-economic dimension of the conflict such as poverty, marginalization, and inequality, as well as its complex cross-border dynamics and drivers. The mistrust between government and other actors, which slowed the implementation of the peace process, has remained entrenched.<sup>41</sup>

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40 UN Security Council. 2016. Security Council Adopts Resolution 2295 (2016), Authorizing

41 UN Security Council. 2018. Successful elections, new peace pact in Mali fosters hope for stability despite spread of extremism across Sahel, peacekeeping chief tells Security Council. Available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13546.doc.htm>, Accessed on 18 November 2018.

## GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN WEST AFRICA



In West Africa, as is the case in other parts of the world, women accounted for the majority of the victims of violence. The major perpetrators of gender based violence are rebel groups, extremist groups, and state security forces. In Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) reported 129 cases of human rights abuses, of which 68 of the victims were women.<sup>42</sup> The mission also recorded 16 cases of rape and gang rape which took place in 2017.<sup>43</sup> In the Timbuktu region, 5 women were raped.<sup>44</sup> During the conflict northern Mali in 2012–2013, scores of women were victims of rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage.<sup>45</sup> A coalition of non-governmental organisations brought before the court 120 cases of sexual violence which were perpetrated during the 2012 conflict. In Libya, women and girls, particularly migrants, were victims of rape, forced prostitution, and other forms of sexual violence. These abuses were perpetrated by state officials, armed groups, smugglers, and traffickers.<sup>46</sup> In Nigeria, 997 cases of sexual violence in the northeast were reported in 2017. The use of abducted women and girls as suicide bombers also increased.<sup>47</sup> Women who defend women's rights, and those who hold public office, have faced different forms of threats from armed groups and state security forces.<sup>48</sup>

### Interventions to address gender-based violence

In the region, a number of steps have been taken to address gender-based violence. These include the provision of medical, psychological, and legal support services to victims; increasing the representation of women in public service, including police services; raising awareness; training and sensitizing security forces on gender based violence; and launching and implementing National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security. In Mali, after the election, the new government increased the representation of women in accordance with the 30% legal threshold.<sup>49</sup> However, many of the attempts to promote women representation have been superficial, making it difficult for women to influence the outcome of peace processes. In Mali, MINUSMA facilitated the economic reintegration of survivors of sexual violence through quick-impact projects for income generation. In Bissau-Guinean, the Women's Council held a series of conferences in all regions with a view to gather information about how to promote women's participation in national peacebuilding, reconciliation, and political processes.

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42 UN Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/900>, Accessed on 23 November 2018.

43 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. 2018. Mali. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/mali/>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

44 Human Rights Council. 2018. Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, Suliman Baldo.

45 Human Rights Council. 2018. Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, Suliman Baldo.

46 UN Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary General. United Nations Support Mission in Libya. <http://undocs.org/S/2018/429>, accessed on 22 November 2018.

47 UN Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence. <http://undocs.org/S/2018/250>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

48 UN Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/900>, Accessed on 23 November 2018.

49 UN Security Council. 2018. Security Council Press Statement on Mali. Available at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13547.doc.htm>, accessed on 23 November 2018.



The information which was gathered during the conferences was presented at the National Forum. The Forum was attended by representatives from the Government, non-governmental organisations, and regional and international organisations.<sup>50</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire an awareness-raising campaign on conflict-related sexual violence was started in 2017. It targeted 5,000 members of the security sector.

## Common Challenges of dealing with gender based violence

Efforts to address gender based violence have encountered a number of common challenges. First, many cases of gender based violence go unreported. This is due to barriers which include logistical problems, the scarcity of services, the lack of trust in public institutions, cultural-related taboos, and the fear of stigmatisation, ostracization, and reprisal. As a result, many of the victims suffer in silence. Second, in cases where incidents of gender based violence were reported, state institutions have tended to lack the capacity and willpower to prosecute alleged offenders. This has entrenched the culture of impunity. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, it is almost a decade after the 2010-2011 post-election violence, but none of the 196 cases of sexual violence which were perpetrated during that period has been adjudicated.<sup>51</sup> In Mali, the independent expert on the human rights situation expressed grave concern regarding the impunity which is enjoyed by alleged perpetrators of sexual violence. Third, governments have little capacity to monitor and investigate gender-based violence, especially during violent conflicts. They also have little capacity to provide protection to victims and witnesses. This makes it difficult to get information on gender-based violence. Fourth, there is lack of facilities which attend to victims of gender based violence. In Mali, 55 per cent of areas affected by conflict have minimal or no specialised assistance to victims of gender based violence.<sup>52</sup> This is compounded by the lack of capacity to pay reparations and to socioeconomically reintegrate the victims. Fifth, there has been stagnation, regression, or very slow progress towards addressing the representation of women in public office. As a result, women play a peripheral role in peace processes because they are either not represented or underrepresented.

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<sup>50</sup> Security Council. 2018. Report of the Secretary General. Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. Available here: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/771>, Accessed on 19 November 2018.

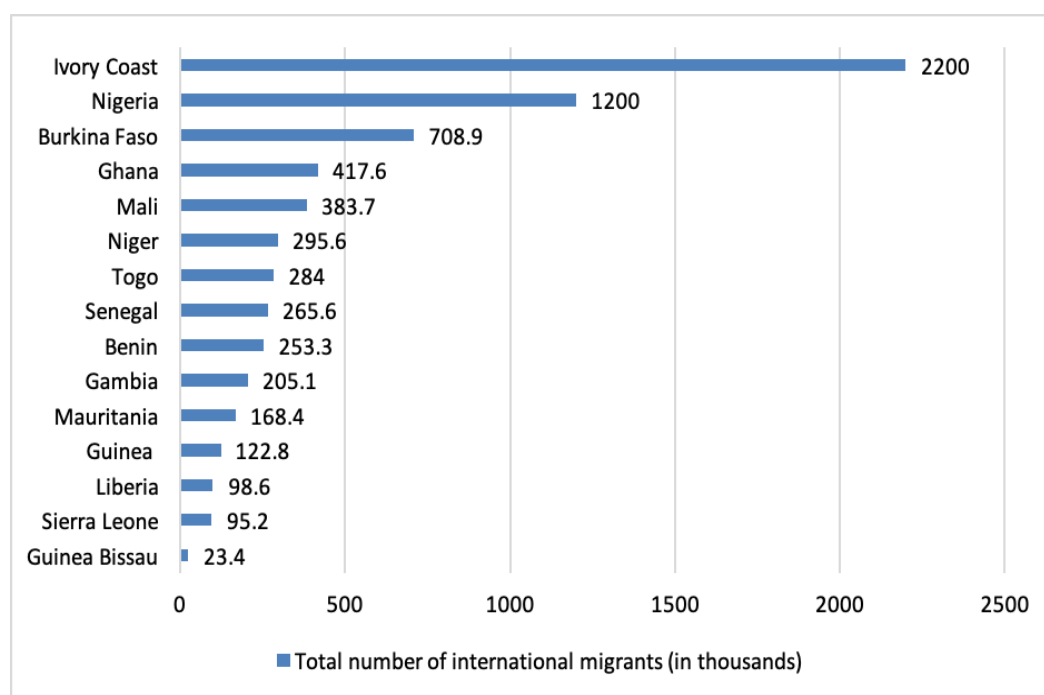
<sup>51</sup> Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. 2018. Côte d'Ivoire. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/cote-divoire/>, accessed on 23 November 2018.

<sup>52</sup> UN Security Council. 2018. Letter dated 8 August 2018 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) on Mali addressed to the President of the Security Council. Available at: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/581>, Accessed on 18 November 2018.

## MIGRATION, PEACE AND SECURITY


The international migrant stock has continued to grow rapidly over the past few years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010. The regional distribution provides additional insights into current trends. More than 60 per cent of all international migrants worldwide (80 million) live in Asia while 78 million live in Europe. The third largest number of international migrants live in Northern America (58 million), followed by Africa which hosts 25 million, Latin America and the Caribbean (10 million), and Oceania (8 million).<sup>53</sup> Of the 25 million international migrants in Africa, 6.8 million reside in West Africa. In 2017, half of the international migrants in West Africa were living in just two countries – Ivory Coast and Nigeria. Most of the region's migrants live in Ivory Coast (2.2 million), representing 32% of the total migrant population for 2017; Nigeria hosts 1.2 million, representing 18% of all international migrants living in the region. Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali host the second, third and fourth largest number of migrants in the region, followed by Niger, Togo, and Senegal as indicated in the Figure below.

Figure 10: 2017 Regional Migrant Stock by Country<sup>54</sup>



<sup>53</sup> UN DESA (2017). International Migration Report 2017. Available: [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017\\_Highlights.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf) Accessed 14 November 2018

<sup>54</sup> Based on data from UN DESA (2017). International Migration Stock: The 2017 Revision. Available: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml>. Accessed 15 November 2018



The above trends of migration within and from West Africa result from the complex interaction between such as economic, geopolitical and endemic conflict dynamics at the local, regional and global levels. Apart from Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Senegal, the other countries in the region suffer from small economies.<sup>55</sup> Besides, owing to the increasingly limited capacity of the public sector, the economic health of most countries in the region remain affected by acute unemployment. The gap between the upward-trending working-age population<sup>56</sup> and the static level of labour force participation appears continues to widen. As such, the most vulnerable groups comprising youth, women, and people living in rural areas rely on informal trade, services, and manufacturing to earn a living. While poverty levels declined everywhere in the region, except in a few countries such as Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, 43 percent of the regional population continues to live below the international poverty line, according to recent estimates.<sup>57</sup> According to the 2018 Human Development Index, Niger, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Mali and Liberia are among the poorest countries in the world according to the United Nations' Human Development Index (189, 184, 183, 182 and 181 respectively out of 188).<sup>58</sup>

This poor economic outlook has created a sustained pressure for emigration within the region. Migrants from Burkina Faso prefer to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire, and the situation is similar for migrants from Sierra Leone, who mainly migrate to Guinea.<sup>59</sup> Such intraregional migration leads to a significant amount of brain circulation: between Ghana, Gambia and Nigeria; Togo and Cote d'Ivoire; Burkina Faso and Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire, all countries with shared colonial legacy.<sup>60</sup>

Beyond intraregional migration, there are also clandestine flows of migrants from West Africa to Europe and North America which promise prospects for better living conditions. On their journey to Europe and North America, however, migrants encounter several security challenges including being sold as slaves. On November 13, 2017, the media spotlight focused on a CNN footage showing how some young migrants from Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and other African countries were being auctioned at undisclosed locations in Libya, some for as little as \$400;<sup>61</sup> an exclusive report followed on November 14, exposing how others were being held by smugglers and forced to work for little or no money.<sup>62</sup> The footage sadly re-echoed findings from an International Organization for Migration (IOM) investigation of human trafficking activities in Libya in April 2017; the IOM found evidence of maltreatment of migrants, including beatings and torture, killing, rape, and starving to death

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55 Nigeria alone accounts for over 70% of regional GDP, and if Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal are included, the total adds up to 90 percent. AfDB (2018). West African Economic Outlook 2018: Macroeconomic developments and poverty, inequality, and employment Labor markets and jobs. Available: [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/2018AEO/African\\_Economic\\_Outlook\\_2018\\_West-Africa.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/2018AEO/African_Economic_Outlook_2018_West-Africa.pdf) Accessed 14 November 2018.

56 West Africa has the fastest youth population growth in Africa and is projected to grow even further in the next few years. With the highest population growth in the world, Niger is experiencing even stronger youth population growth.

57 AfDB (2018). West African Economic Outlook 2018, pp. 17–18.


58 UNDP (2018). 2018 Human Development Index. Available: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries> Accessed 15 November 2018

59 ICMPD (2015). A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa. ICMPD and IOM: Dakar

60 Adepoju, A. (2005). Migration in West Africa. Available: [https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy\\_and\\_research/gcim/rs/RS8.pdf](https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/rs/RS8.pdf) Accessed 12 November 2018

61 CNN (2017). Migrants being sold as slaves. Available: <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2017/11/13/libya-migrant-slave-auction-lon-orig-md-ejk.cnn> Accessed 13 November 2018

62 BBC News 2017. "Libya migrant 'slave market' footage sparks outrage", 18 November 2017. Available: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42038451> Accessed 13 November 2018



Earlier in February 2017, UNICEF had made similar observations, underlining how women and children transiting the Central Mediterranean migration route to Europe had been victims of sexual violence, exploitation, abuse and detention on this perilous journey.<sup>63</sup>

The large number of West African migrants passing through Niger on their way to Libya in hopes of reaching Europe, lends itself to a shifting geopolitical landscape. In the late 1990s, West Africans started to make up a more significant component of migration to Libya. However, President Muammar Gaddafi became an important partner of the European Union (EU) in fighting illegal migration in the 2000s, leading to a decline in the number of migrants reaching Libya from West Africa.<sup>64</sup> With his departure from power in 2011 and the ensuing instability and high levels of violence in Libya, many migrants saw an opening in their quest to reach Europe, and the number of West Africans transiting through the Niger-Libya corridor grew significantly.<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, shocks such as armed conflict in the Sahel and the Sahara over past decades (in Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone), and high levels of insecurity, rebellions, and environmental stress have increased the volatility of migration rates in the region.<sup>66</sup> The combination of these destabilizing shocks, both internal and external, shows, however inchoately, that the links between migration, peace and security in West Africa are manifold.

The irregular migration caused by these shocks further facilitate large-scale trafficking in arms, humans and other illicit goods, which is a major source of income for non-state actors such as organized transnational criminal networks and armed insurgencies. However, that organized crime and armed insurgencies are inflated by migratory flows is not as straightforward as it may appear to be. In Nigeria, human trafficking is largely performed by criminal-tribal networks, while, at best, only anecdotal evidence exists of the involvement of terrorist group like Boko Haram. The presence of feared terrorists in the north of Mali is reportedly an incentive to look for alternative routes and has contributed to encouraging the role of Niger's Agadez as a regional hub. Several such observations suggest that human smuggling across West Africa generally resorts to the services provided by local networks than to organized criminal cartels.<sup>67</sup>

Policies and actions towards curbing the security threats associated with migration in the region exist. The most comprehensive policy seems to be the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common Approach on Migration which underlines the imperative of harmonizing national migration policies, strengthen migration management capacities of Member States, and control irregular migration and human trafficking especially of women and children.<sup>68</sup>

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63 UNICEF (2017). A Deadly Journey for Children The Central Mediterranean Migration Route. Available: [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/EN\\_UNICEF\\_Central\\_Mediterranean\\_Migration.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/EN_UNICEF_Central_Mediterranean_Migration.pdf) Accessed 13 November 2018


64 Brachet, J. (2018), "Manufacturing Smugglers: From Irregular to Clandestine Mobility in the Sahara", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 676/1, pp. 16-35

65 Tinti, P. & Westcott, T. (2016). The Niger-Libya Corridor: Smugglers Perspectives. ISS Paper 299, November 2016. Available: <https://issafrica.org/research/papers/the-niger-libya-corridor-smugglers-perspectives> Accessed 14 November 2018.

66 Walther, O. (2017), "Wars and Conflicts in the Sahara-Sahel", *OECD West African Papers*, No. 10, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/8bbc5813-en>

67 Raineri, L and Rossi, A. (2017). The Security-Migration-Development Nexus in the Sahel: A Reality Check. IAI Working Papers 17, 26 September 2017.

68 ECOWAS Commission (2008). 33rd Ordinary Session of the Head of State and Government, Ouagadougou, 18 January 2008. ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration. Available: <https://www.unhcr.org/49e47c8f11.pdf>



Following the global outcry against the slave trade in Libya, AU and EU leaders committed to tackling migrant smuggling, speed up assisted voluntary returns of migrants to their countries of origin, and to jointly address the drivers of irregular migration through the Mediterranean to Europe, during their 5th Summit held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast between 29–30 November 2017.<sup>69</sup> Some funding has been committed towards enhancing the Libyan border management, and funding job creation schemes in migration-prone countries like Niger.<sup>70</sup> Border control has also been undertaken in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal by US-sponsored programmes such as the Pan-Sahelian Initiative (PSI) and the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).<sup>71</sup>

There has also been commitment by the Government of Spain and ECOWAS towards harmonizing existing migration policies and promoting free movement of people, goods and services.<sup>72</sup> The Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA), inaugurated by the ECOWAS Commission met in July 2018 to deliberate on the return and reintegration of migrants in the region, harmonization of migration data and the review of regional statistics, and the development of policies geared towards reinforcing regional collaboration on border management in the region.<sup>73</sup> At the national level, almost all ECOWAS Member States, apart from Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau, are explicitly planning to develop a national migration policy or develop a similar adequate strategic framework.

However, a number of gaps exist: most of these countries (except Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, all of which had commenced the process of drafting a national migration policy) lack a comprehensive national migration strategy in place;<sup>74</sup> in other countries, existing migration policies are based on strategic documents that only address parts of migration, resulting in an unbalanced approach that neglects key migration aspects, for example, emigration issues in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, and human trafficking and protection of migrants at risk in Togo.<sup>75</sup> Lasting solutions to the migration-related insecurities in the region will largely depend on how these challenges are addressed.

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69 AU-EU (2017). Investing in Youth for Accelerated Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development. Final Declaration AU-EU Summit 2017. Available: [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31991/33454-pr-final\\_declaration\\_au\\_eu\\_summit.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31991/33454-pr-final_declaration_au_eu_summit.pdf) Accessed 20 November 2018

70 Africa Confidential (2017). All at sea over migration, Vol 58, No 17, 25th August. Available: [https://www.africaconfidential.com/article/id/12080/All\\_at\\_sea\\_over\\_migration](https://www.africaconfidential.com/article/id/12080/All_at_sea_over_migration)

71 Raineri, L and Rossi, A. (2017). The Security-Migration-Development Nexus in the Sahel: A Reality Check. IAI Working Papers 17, 26 September 2017.

72 ECOWAS (2018). ECOWAS and Spain strengthens collaboration on migration and development in the region. Available: <http://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-and-spain-strengthens-collaboration-on-migration-and-development-in-the-region/> Accessed 18 November 2018

73 ECOWAS (2018). ECOWAS Moves to Address Migration Challenges in the Region. Available: <http://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-moves-to-address-migration-challenges-in-the-region/> Accessed 18 November 2018.

74 ECOWAS Commission (2008). ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration.

75 ICMPD and IOM (2015). A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa, p. 50.



## VIOLENT EXTREMISM: SUSTAINED MILITARY GAINS AND MUTATING THREATS

The year 2018 witnessed the sustained military gains against violent extremism that were made over the last two years in which the threat of violent extremism was contained and rolled back. In 2016 and 2017, the rolling back and containment of terrorist groups in West, a trend which was also consistent with continental and global trends was evidenced by a reduced operational ability to carry out large scale conventional attacks, constriction of space to operate, loss of territory, massive loss of fighters and assassination of top leaders, limited or collapsed support infrastructures. In 2018, these military gains over the last two years were sustained as evidenced by the inability of terrorist groups to regain lost territories, continued rescue of thousands of hostages, continued surrender of tens of combatants and integration of ex-fighters into security and defence ranks, continued struggles for financial resources, increased kidnapping as a strategy for recruitment

While the threat of Boko Haram remains the greatest threat to security and stability in the region, Boko Haram activities in 2018 both in Nigeria and Niger reduced significantly. Boko Haram attacks reduced in lethality and were limited to small raids and guerrilla style attacks against civilians and military targets.<sup>76</sup> A radical shift in the use of children as suicide bombers and the surrender of thousands of Boko Haram fighters particularly in Nigeria were also indicative of the restricted capability of the terrorist group in 2018. These sustained military gains against Boko Haram coupled with internal divisions limited the organisational capability of the group. As a result, the group resorted to carrying out small scale and suicide bombs and kidnapping for ransom in order to generate financial resources.<sup>77</sup> Periods of lull in Boko Haram activities were interposed with a sharp rise in terrorist attacks. Despite these sustained military successes, Boko Haram continued to demonstrate resilience and remarkable difficulty to rout.<sup>78</sup> Nigeria remained the site with the most significant attacks as measured by the number of fatalities and terrorist attacks in the region.

### Burkina Faso

From 2016, Burkina Faso experienced “fledgling” terrorist activities. By 2018, the activities had intensified into full-blown terrorism, with massive increase in the frequency and lethality of attacks.<sup>79</sup> On 13 August 2017, 19 people were killed and 25 others were injured when jihadists attacked a Turkish restaurant in Ouagadougou.<sup>80</sup>

76 ACLED.2018. Will The Military's Focus On The Fulani Threat Allow For A Resurgence Of Boko Haram?(Online). Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/07/06/will-the-militarys-focus-on-the-fulani-threat-allow-for-a-resurgence-of-boko-haram/>

77 ACLED.2017. Nigeria – September 2017 Update (Online). Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2017/09/22/nigeria-september-2017-update/>

78 ACLED.2018. Will The Military's Focus On The Fulani Threat Allow For A Resurgence Of Boko Haram?(Online). Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/07/06/will-the-militarys-focus-on-the-fulani-threat-allow-for-a-resurgence-of-boko-haram/>

79 ACLED. 2018. Burkina Faso: Available at: Something is stirring in the east. <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/06/22/burkina-faso-something-is-stirring-in-the-east/>, accessed on 22 November 2018.

80 Crisis Group International. 2018. Burkina Faso's Alarming Escalation of Jihadist Violence. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/burkina-fasos-alarming-escalation-jihadist-violence>





The groups have targeted government buildings, schools, educators, embassies, cafés, and other gathering places. The growing presence of the groups has its roots in the fragile security atmosphere in neighboring Mali, where northern regions fell to separatist Tuareg and Al-Qaeda-linked armed groups in 2012.<sup>81</sup> The rise of terrorism in Burkina Faso took place at a time when significant gains have been made in containing terrorist activities, not only in West Africa, but globally. According to the Global Terrorism Database, 2017 marked the third consecutive year of declining numbers of terrorist attacks and deaths worldwide. The data shows that terrorist attacks declined from around 17, 000 in 2014, to around 11, 000 in 2017 and that the number of fatalities declined by almost half during this period.<sup>82</sup> In response to the growing terrorist activities, the government has conducted counterterrorism operations. The operations have been characterized by reports of extrajudicial killings, torture of suspects, and arbitrary arrests and detentions. Burkina Faso has also used regional and international partnerships to fight against the threats. However, it is important for the country to engage non-military strategies, especially the local actors.

## **Boko Haram in Nigeria: When military gains are not enough**

Boko Haram insurgency remains the greatest threat to peace, security, and stability in Nigeria. The Nigerian government and the regional and international community have responded in various ways. These include increasing the defence budget; strengthening anti-terrorism legislation; strengthening the operational capability of the security forces; using regional military cooperation and coordination schemes, particularly the Multinational Joint Task Force; increasing federal and state government expenditure on development and humanitarian activities in north-east Nigeria; launching recovery and livelihood initiatives aimed at rapid stabilization; dialogue; declaration of a state of emergency in affected areas; launching military offensives against the group; using community-based security groups; arresting, detaining, and prosecuting its members; and developing and implementing the “Buhari Plan”.

Countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States have provided different forms of assistance, including equipment and intelligence. Although Nigeria adopted a multi-pronged response, it has heavily relied on military offensives against Boko Haram. Significant gains have been made, but the approach has produced mixed results. On the one hand, it has enabled the government to weaken the group by disrupting its activities, liberating hundreds of hostages, arresting its members, reclaiming territory, disrupting the flows of funds and other economic resources to Boko Haram, and forcing hundreds of its fighters to defect.<sup>83</sup> On the other, it has been characterized by corruption, bribery, destruction of livelihoods, grievous violations of human rights, impunity, and “operational mistakes” in which civilians were killed, such as the January 2017 strike in Rann.<sup>84</sup>

81 Human Rights Watch. 2018. “By day we fear the army, by Night the Jihadists”: Abuses by Armed Islamists and Security Forces in Burkina Faso. Available at: [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/burkinafaso0518\\_web2.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/burkinafaso0518_web2.pdf)

82 Global Terrorism Database

83 United Nations Security Council. 2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2017/563 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2017/563>, Accessed on 17 November 2018.

84 Institute for Security Studies. 2018. Helping those affected by Boko Haram to get back on their feet. Available at: <https://issafrica.org/pscreport/situation-analysis/helping-those-affected-by-boko-haram-to-get-back-on-their-feet>, Accessed on 20 November 2018.



The military gains which were made in the last two years have witnessed a significant reduction of Boko Haram activities in 2018. The operational capability of the group was significantly weakened. However, despite the evident military gains, Boko Haram has remained defiant. This shows that while the military approach is important, it needs to be complemented by responses which address the root causes and drivers of the Boko Haram insurgency. These include “development deficits”, marginalization, (gender) inequality, and the “absence” of the state in affected areas. This can be achieved through interventions such as (re)building the education system in the affected areas, addressing adverse economic conditions, promoting civilian participation in governance, promoting women empowerment and participation, engaging and mobilizing local communities, and extending the authority and presence of the state in the areas where Boko Haram is active. An effective and comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy should appreciate the nexus between security, development, and human rights. It is also important to implement targeted policy responses which address the drivers of the radicalization of women and children; to respond to the humanitarian needs of communities which host refugees and displaced persons, to develop strategies which counter the violent extremist narrative which has enabled the emergence and survival of Boko Haram, and to implement policies which encourage defections from the group.

## **Mutations of violent extremist threats in the face of sustained military victories**

Despite the sustained military gains, there were noticeable mutations in the threats posed by violent extremist groups. The declining fortunes over the last two years for these terrorist groups resulted for example in the formation of regional alliances as strategy and adaptive mechanism that facilitated coordinated and sophisticated attacks. Such mutations unmasked the continued threat of terrorist groups in the nature of terrorist activities and resilience of these groups in 2018 in the face of sustained military victories.


First, while 2016 and 2017 witnessed a continued use of suicide bombers, in 2018 there was a sharp increase in suicide attacks. This use of suicide bombers is perhaps an adaptation mechanism by these terrorist groups in response to their reduced and restricted operational capabilities for large scale conventional attacks or battles. A noticeable shift in the suicide attacks was an increased use of female and children as suicide bombers. One in every 5 every suicide bomber was a child and girls accounted for 75% of all suicide bombers.<sup>85</sup> These include the increased use of pregnant mothers or mothers with babies in Nigeria.<sup>86</sup>

Boko Haram was largely responsible for the sharp rise in suicide attacks and use of female suicide bombers, and abduction of women and young people. Women and girls also continued to experience the greater negative impacts of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin. They were subjected to forced marriage, faced stigma after freeing or escaping boko Haram, and were sexually exploited in the humanitarian camps by security forces and authorities through transactional sex over access to food and non-food items.<sup>87</sup>

85 United Nations Security Council.2018. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2018/649 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/649> p.5

86 United Nations Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2017/563 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2017/563> p.5

87 Security Council Report.2018. Women, Peace and Security: Sahel and Lake Chad Basin. July 2018 Monthly Forecast. Available at: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-07/women\\_](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-07/women_)



The second emerging trend in mutations in terrorist activities in 2018, was the increased targeting of humanitarian efforts. This is perhaps due to the degradation of the ability of terrorist groups to carry out large conventional attacks. This sharp rise in attacks on humanitarian workers manifested itself through kidnapping of humanitarian workers in Nigeria and Niger and attacks on humanitarian camps.<sup>88</sup> This trend impeded and reduced in some parts humanitarian access to destitute populations.

### **Mutating threat of violent extremism in Mali**

The security situation in northern and central Mali remained volatile and complex. Terrorist groups and other non-state actors continued to undermine the implementation of the peace agreement. The attacks in Mali continued to target both civilian, military and security forces including MINUSMA, and other signatory armed groups to the peace process. The human rights situation remained worrying as marked by the human right violations conducted by mainly Malian security and defence forces and terrorist elements.<sup>89</sup> The violence in Mali had significant spill over effects into border areas of Niger and Burkina Faso. The period between June and September 2018 witnessed the increased use of improvised explosive devices with the number of IED incidents increasing to 133 in 2018 compared to 73 in the same period in 2017.<sup>90</sup> The same period saw the highest number of attacks on civilians 287 fatalities, since the deployment of MINUSMA.<sup>91</sup> Violence in 2018 is also attributed to self-proclaimed community self-defence groups, mainly Dan Nan Ambassador and Dogon Ambassador, which claim to defend the Dogon community and the Alliance pour le salut du Sahel, which claims to defend the Fulani community.<sup>92</sup>

The third emerging trend is the continued worsening of the humanitarian crisis in the region as evidence by new groups of displaced persons and new groups of those suffering food insecurity. The humanitarian crisis was compounded by climate change, and a chronic vulnerability of populations to epidemics. More than 5,300 new cases of cholera were recorded in the north – eastern Nigeria and 2,035 cases of hepatitis E in the Diffa region of the Niger.<sup>93</sup> Thus there was no noticeable positive change in the humanitarian situation in region in 2018. Across the Lake Chad basin, 10.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance with 8.5 million of this in Nigeria.<sup>94</sup> 7.2 million People suffered from severe food insecurity and 515,000 were expected to suffer from acute malnutrition with 45000 in North-Eastern Nigeria.<sup>95</sup> Conflicts especially the insecurity in Mali and Nigeria continued to drive the number of displaced populations in the region. The number of displaced people in Northern Eastern Nigeria remained stable at 2.4 million with 1 million having returned to government areas.<sup>96</sup>

88 ACLED.2018. Regional Overview – Africa 24 September 2018[Online] Available at: <https://www.acled-data.com/2018/09/25/regional-overview-africa-24-september-2018/> ;ACLED.2018. Regional Overview – Africa 24 September 2018[Online] Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/09/25/regional-overview-africa-24-september-2018/>

89 United Nations Security Council, 2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. 30 March 2017, S/2017/271. Available at <http://undocs.org/S/2017/271> p9.

90 United Nations Security Council Report. 2018. Situation in Mali Report of the Secretary-General S/2018/866, 25 Septembers. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/866> p.7

91 United Nations Security Council Report. 2018. Situation in Mali Report of the Secretary-General S/2018/866, 25 Septembers. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/866> P.8


92 United Nations Security Council Report. 2018. Situation in Mali Report of the Secretary-General S/2018/866, 25 Septembers. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/866> p.8

93 United Nations Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, S/2017/1104. Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2017/1104>

94 United Nations Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2017/563 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2017/563> p.2-3

95 United Nations Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2017/563 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2017/563> p.2-3

96 United Nations Security Council.2017. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2017/563 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2017/563> p.2-3



The fourth emerging trend was the sustained targeting of particular hot spots by terrorist groups. This trend is both indicative of the restricted operational capabilities of terrorist groups to carry out attacks in across geographical spaces. Borno and North East Adamawa States of Nigeria and Diffa regions of Niger were the sites of consistent and concentrated terrorist attacks in 2018. Borno State was the epicentre of Boko Haram violence and the humanitarian crisis accounting for over 1.3 million of the 1.6 million displaced persons in north-eastern Nigeria.<sup>97</sup>

### **Mutating threat of violent extremism in Niger**

Attacks by Boko Haram in Niger were located in the south east of the country especially in the Diffa region. In the Northwest, most activities which are small scale and infrequent and were located in Niamey and Tahoua and Tillabéri departments. These attacks are associated with the merger of in March 2017 of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar Dine – who, along with the Macina Liberation Front and Al-Mourabitoun merged to form the Nusrat al-Islam. Attacks against aid workers continued amid a growing presence of non-state armed groups in the Western region of Tillabéri. While Boko Haram activities reduced, violent criminal activities rose in Diffa region.<sup>98</sup> The Mali– Niger corridor experienced a dramatic shift from battles to violence against civilians. This shift was due to the targeting by Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) of communities associated with militias that are part of the counter insurgency operations with the French Operation Barkhane and the attacks by these same militias on communities during these counter-insurgency operations. As a result, there was a flare up of inter communal tensions risked intensifying the use of ethnic militias in counter-insurgency operations.<sup>99</sup> In September alone, close to 50 Islamic State (Greater Sahara) combatants surrendered in exchange for integration into the defence and security forces.<sup>100</sup>

The fifth shift in terrorist activities in 2018 was the geographical spread and sharp rise in terrorist activities in Burkina Faso. 2016 and 2017 saw the geographical spread of terrorist attacks countries that were not previous objects of terrorist attacks namely Burkina Faso and Cote D'Ivoire. 2018 witnessed an escalation of attacks in Burkina Faso which increased both in frequency and lethality. The Est region of Burkina Faso which borders Benin and Togo was the site of these new and increased terrorist attacks. The attacks in East Region represent as shifts in the geography of attacks in Burkina as previous attacks in 2016 and 2017 were located in the Northern region and in the Capital.<sup>101</sup>

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97 Security Council Report.2018. Lake Chad Basin. March 2018 Monthly Forecast. Available at: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-03/lake\\_chad\\_basin\\_1.php](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2018-03/lake_chad_basin_1.php)

98 United Nations Security Council.2018. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2018/649 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/649> p.4

99 ACLED.2018. From The Mali–Niger Borderlands To Rural Gao – Tactical And Geographical Shifts Of Violence[online].Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/06/06/from-the-mali-niger-borderlands-to-rural-gao-tactical-and-geographical-shifts-of-violence/>

100 ACLED.2018. Regional Overview – Africa 24 September 2018[Online] Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/09/25/regional-overview-africa-24-september-2018/>

101 ACLED. 2018. The Fledgling insurgency in Burkina's East. <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/09/20/the-fledgling-insurgency-in-burkinas-east/>

## Mutating threat of violent extremism in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso was the site of an escalation of terrorist attacks continuing the trends in 2017. In 2018, these attacks were located in the capital Ouagadougou, Burkina's Sahel province to new sites of attacks in Est Region. The attacks were against security and civilians forces. The groups responsible for this surge in violence included the Islamic State (Greater Sahara) and Ansaroul Islam. Ansaroul Islam was particularly responsible for the targeting of schools in 2017 as it hallmarks form of attack against civilians. They group in addition to targeting of schools was responsible for several assassinations and kidnapping of chiefs and local officials in 2018.<sup>102</sup> While the attacks in Burkina Faso are an extension of the violence in Mali, the violence which is mostly associated with Ansa Roul militants was rooted in local dynamics.<sup>103</sup> These militants in Burkina possessed significant militant tradecraft which is evidenced by their ability to carry out complex ambushes and manufacture and efficiently deploy IEDs.<sup>104</sup> By September 2018, 12 incidents involving IEDs were reported in Soum and Est region compared to only one IED attack in 2017.<sup>105</sup>

Violent extremists groups in the Sahel continued to pose a threat to security and stability in West Africa despite the sustained military successes. This was evidenced by the increased regional linkages that reveal a growing presence in the region and in particular the geographical spread of terrorist activities into Burkina Faso and Niger and an increase in the lethality and complexity of these attacks.<sup>106</sup> These regional linkages were also evidenced by a growing presence of violent militants along the Niger, and Burkina Faso and Malian borders since the summer of 2015 (Liptako-Gourma Border).<sup>107</sup> Boko haram despite the significant losses the groups experienced over the last two years demonstrates tempered and resilient ability to engage the military and to carry out significant attacks across the Lake Chad basin.

<sup>102</sup> ACLED.2018, Regional Overview-Africa. 16 April 2018. Available at <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/04/17/regional-overview-africa-9/>

<sup>103</sup> The Social Roots of Jihadist Violence in Burkina Faso's North, Crisis Group Africa Report N°254, 12 October 2017. Available at: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/254-the-social-roots-of-jihadist-violence-in-burkina-faso-s-north.pdf> p1.


<sup>104</sup> ACLED. 2018. The Fledgling insurgency in Burkina's East. <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/09/20/the-fledgling-insurgency-in-burkinas-east/>

<sup>105</sup> ACLED.2018. The Fledgling insurgency in Burkina's East. <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/09/20/the-fledgling-insurgency-in-burkinas-east/>

<sup>106</sup> United Nations Security Council.2018. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. S/2018/649 Available at: <http://undocs.org/S/2018/649> p.4

<sup>107</sup> ACLED.2017. Insecurity In The Liptako-Gourma Region(online).Available at: <https://www.acleddata.com/2017/03/10/insecurity-in-the-liptako-gourma-region/>

## FARMER-HERDER CONFLICTS IN WEST AFRICA



The phenomenon of farmer-herder conflict across West Africa has become a source of concern largely due to the perception that this type of violence has changed both in intensity and scale. Indeed, Armed Conflict Event Location Data Set (ACLED) on conflicts involving the Fulani (who constituted more than 90% of the pastoralists in West Africa) with other mostly agricultural groups indicate that such conflicts are posing fundamental security and developmental challenges for the region.<sup>108</sup> ACLED data (indicated in the following table), but also qualitative literature on the issue, further reveal that the epicentre and key determinant of the regional trend in farmer-herder conflict in West Africa is Nigeria. Though there are a number of instances of such conflict in Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali during the year 2009–2018, their number and (thus) their fatalities is relatively limited. Between 2009 and 2018, there have been 995 farmer-herder conflict incidents of which more than 90 percent are due to the conflict in Nigeria. These conflicts have caused 6958 deaths, more than 95% of which are accounted by Nigeria. Hence, farmer-herder conflict is a primarily Nigerian phenomenon. Moreover, both the regional trend in the number of farmer-herder conflict incidents and their fatalities largely follow the trend in Nigeria. In both cases, after a sharp rise between 2009 and 2010, the it somehow stabilizes until 2013 only to shot up in the next two years. After a significant reduction in 2015 (by about 62% the previous figure), the incident of conflict continues to rise steadily up until 2018 where there is another major steep rise. The fatalities level also largely follows the number of incident except 2017 where the rise in the number of incident is accompanied by decline in the level of fatalities.

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<sup>108</sup> Though the Fulani indeed might fight with other pastoralists, to the extent they are the dominant pastoralist group in the region using the number of conflict incidents involving the Fulani with other ethnic group and their fatalities would serve as a proxy for the overall patterns of farmer-herders conflict in West Africa.

**Table 7: Farmer–herder conflict incidents and fatalities**

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Grand Total
Benin							2	2	4	9	17
Burkina Faso						2		1	1		3
Ghana	2			1	1			6	4	3	17
Guinea		1									1
Mali				3		1	1	1	3	18	27
Niger	3	28	25	31	89	134	81	92	111	335	929
<b>Sum of fatalities</b>											
Benin				2			1	10	11	11	33
Burkina Faso						1		1	1		3
Ghana	5			0	1			15	13	2	36
Guinea		0									0
Mali				25		30	6	5	7	44	117
Niger							2				2
Nigeria	1	345	232	270	645	1508	642	947	443	1734	6767
Total Count	5	29	25	35	90	136	85	102	123	365	995
Total Sum of fatalities	6	345	232	295	646	1539	651	978	475	1791	6958

Source: ACLED dataset

## Causes of farmer–herder conflicts

The rise in farmer–herder conflict is underpinned by certain common structural and triggering factors across the region. At the surface, they are about crop destruction, blockage of traditional pastoralist routes by farm–land, disagreement over the use of land and water, and livestock theft. While these issues might not result in deadly conflict previously, the widespread proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons has increased their deadliness. However, the deeper drivers and recent rise in this conflict is due to interweaving factors of climatic, demographic, and political and security conditions. First, a strong trend in desertification, drought, and rise in temperature and a shortening of the rainy cycle across the Sahel all resulted in southward movements of Fulani herders. As metrological data indicates in Nigeria there has been a 20% reduction in the days of the annual rainy season in the last 30 years, and that 350, 000 sq.km has turned into desert area in the last six decades.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, 35% of the Northernmost part of Northern Nigeria states that used to be cultivated 50 years ago has now turned into a desert and that there has been a 20% reduction in crop yield.<sup>110</sup> The Lake Chad basin contracted by about 80% from 25,000 to 4,800 sq. km.<sup>111</sup> As temperature rise and the number of warm spells increased, drought has become frequent in the Sahel that has faced three droughts just a decade.<sup>112</sup> The combined effect of these together with population and herd growth is multifaceted. It has caused a move towards livelihood convergence as farmer begin to diversify through herding cattle and pastoralist engage in agriculture.<sup>113</sup> Framing areas expanded into areas that has been used for animal husbandry and pastoralism intrude into areas of crop cultivation. It also increased competition over land for farming and grazing as pastoralist moved southward towards area that are already under cultivation.<sup>114</sup> Consequently, there has been greater concentration of animals and farming activities and that pastoralist tend to stay for longer period, and return earlier than the regular seasonal movement.<sup>115</sup> Finally, the price of animal feed and crop tend to rise while the rate of increase of livestock price is not keeping pace with this.

109 International crisis Group (2017). Herders against Farmers: Nigeria’s deadly expanding conflict. Africa Report N°252. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict> on 14/11/2018

110 International crisis Group (2017). Herders against Farmers: Nigeria’s deadly expanding conflict. Africa Report N°252. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict> on 14/11/2018

111 GIZ (2018). Adapting to climate change in the Lake Chad Basin. Available at <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/24845.html> on 14/11/2018


112 Cabot C. (2017) Climate Change and Farmer–Herder Conflicts in West Africa. In: Climate Change, Security Risks and Conflict Reduction in Africa. Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace, vol 12. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg

113 Muhammed Ibrahim, Ismaila, Abdurrahman Belet, and Bibi Umar Muhammed (2015). An assessment of farmer–pastoralist conflict in Nigeria using GIS. International Journal of Engineering Science Invention. Volume 4 Issue 7, PP.23–3 [www.ijesi.org](http://www.ijesi.org)

114 International crisis Group (2017). Herders against Farmers: Nigeria’s deadly expanding conflict. Africa Report N°252. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/252-herders-against-farmers-nigerias-expanding-deadly-conflict> on 14/11/2018

115 Jones–Casey Kelsey and Knox Anna (2011). Farmer–herder conflict in Mali, accessed from <http://www.focusonland.com/fola/en/countries/brief-farmerherder-conflicts-in-mali/> on 14/11/2018; International Crisis





Second, climate induced pressure is further aggravated by the traditional marginalization of pastoralist from the political and development process of countries of the region. This is manifested in different ways. In Nigeria, though 415 grazing areas were reserved in the immediate post-independence period, there are only 114 reserves.<sup>116</sup> The government's strong encouragement for farming and politicians' preference for sedentary farmers as opposed to pastoralist who might not be there during election time marginalized these communities.<sup>117</sup> In Mali, Fulani's (perceived) exclusion from the political processes has encouraged them to easily ally themselves with other forces following the country's crisis.<sup>118</sup> The political void created following the state's withdrawal from many areas has also accentuated the conflict as these communities reverted to self-defence groups.<sup>119</sup> In Ghana, the government's push for a neoliberal development measures of private agricultural investment generated dynamics that ultimately fuel farmer-herder conflict.<sup>120</sup> Also the biggest problem of these states has been their failure to arrest impunity. The Nigerian state has not been able to effectively contain violence perpetrated by Boko Haram that has forced pastoralist to move south but also it failed to prevent banditry, cattle resulting, and the ensuing farmer-herder violence. These forced committees to establish vigilante and self-defence groups that led to cycles of retaliation.

Third, the erosion of traditional conflict resolution and prevention mechanism has also been a key factor in aggravating the situation. The introduction of modern law and institutions undermine the basis of traditional leaders while not providing adequate solutions.<sup>121</sup> The lack of or biased state responses, and the weakening of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms has increased the frequencies and at times deadlines of these conflicts. Finally, the ethnic dimension of the problem should not also be underestimated. The pastoralists tend to be Fulani Muslims whereas the farmer tend to be from other ethno-religious groups and mostly Christian. Some politicians and elites of Nigeria are already considering the conflict as Fulani Jihad, calling for their community to defend themselves.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, in Mali some Fulani ally themselves with the Islamists and other armed movements whereas the Christian farmers tend to be pro-government.<sup>123</sup>

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116 International Crisis Group (2018). Stopping Nigeria's spiraling farmer-herder conflict. Africa Report N°262 | 26 July 2018

117 International Crisis Group (2018). Stopping Nigeria's spiraling farmer-herder conflict. Africa Report N°262 | 26 July 2018

118 Toble aurélien (2017). Central Mai: Violence, local perspectives, and divergent narratives. SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2017/5

119 Toble aurélien (2017). Central Mai: Violence, local perspectives, and divergent narratives. SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2017/5

120 Soeters Sebastiaan, Weesie Ruben and Zoomers Annelies (2017). Agricultural Investments and Farmer-Fulani Pastoralist Conflict in West African Drylands: A Northern Ghanaian Case Study. Sustainability, 9, 2063; doi:10.3390/su9112063

121 Toble aurélien (2017). Central Mai: Violence, local perspectives, and divergent narratives. SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2017/5

122 McGregor Andrew (2017). The Fulani Crisis: Communal Violence and Radicalization in the Sahel. CTC sentinel, pp 34-42. Vol 10, Issue 2. Available at <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-fulani-crisis-communal-violence-and-radicalization-in-the-sahel/> accessed on 14/11/2018

123 Toble aurélien (2017). Central Mai: Violence, local perspectives, and divergent narratives. SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, No. 2017/5



## Farmer–herder conflict in Nigeria and its drivers

ACLED data indicated that the rise in the number of violent incidents in the 2009 to 2010 period is mainly due to the conflict in Plateau state that increased from one incident in 2009 to 23 incidents in 2010. Though there has been a slight increase in the number of conflicts in Kaduna and emergence of new conflict in Benue in 2011, the decline of the number of incident in Plateau from 23 to 14 incidents meant that the overall conflict showed a slight decline. Thus far, the situation in Plateau state had been determining the Nigerian and West African trend. As the conflict's geographical scope expands from 5 states in 2011 to 11 states in 2012, there has been a slight increase in the number of incidents in 2012. During these periods while the number of battles showed a slight decline from 15 in 2010 to 7 in 2011 and 6 in 2012, there has been a steady rise in the number of violence against civilians. This is mainly due to the rise in Plateau state in 2010 and Kaduna in 2011 and the expansion of the scope of the conflict in 2011 and 2012. The next year the number of incident almost tripled from 31 to 89 incidents. This was due to a sharp rise in Benue from 3 incidents to 18 incidents; the emergence of widespread conflict in Zamfara state (22 incidents); an increase in Plateau state from 15 to 22 incidents and the expansion of the scope of the conflict from 11 states in 2012 to 17 states in 2013. The number of incident continue to rise steeply in 2014 as the incident increased in Benue state (from 18 to 37), Kaduna (from 6 to 19), Nasarawa (from 2 to 21), and Taraba (from 2 to 17). The scope the conflict, on the other hand, declined from 17 states to 12 states. While the conflict in Nasarawa state has contributed almost fifty percent of the increase in the farmer–herder battle, the increase in other states is mainly due to a rise in violence against civilians.

There has been a sharp reversal in the number of incident in 2015 from 134 in 2014 to 81 in 2015 though the geographic scope of the conflict increased from 12 to 13 states. This decline is mainly due to a fall in the number of incidents in Kaduna, Taraba, and Nasarawa that offset the increase in violence against civilian in Benue and Plateau state. Since, 2015 the number of conflicts continue to steadily rise until 2017, which largely is due to the geographic expansion of the scope of the conflict from 13 states in 2015 to 16 states in 2016 and 20 states in 2017, and an increase in the number of conflict incidents in some states. The number of conflict incident further step up in 2018 driven by sharp rise in violence against civilian in Adamawa (from 8 to 37), Benue (from 26 to 79), Nasarawa (from 1 to 38), Plateau (from 19 to 74), and Taraba (from 8 to 41). The rise in these states explain nearly two-third of the increase in 2018 and that about sixty percent of this increase is mainly an increase in violence against civilians. The proliferation of ethnic militias in the face of a government that failed to prevent impunity, and the introduction of anti-grazing laws in some states is behind this rise in these states.<sup>124</sup> The fact that this increase is overlapped with renewed government initiatives targeted at such conflicts meant that the increase might in some way be connected with speculation, expectations or dissatisfaction connected with government responses.

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<sup>124</sup> International Crisis Group (2018). Stopping Nigeria's spiraling farmer–herder conflict. Africa Report N°262 | 26 July 2018



The level of fatality of conflict largely followed the number of incidents of conflict until 2017. Hence, the ups and downs of fatality level till 2011 is explained by the rise (2010) and fall (2011) of the deadliness of the Plateau conflict. The increase in the level of fatality in 2012 is due to the increasing deadliness of the conflict in Plateau, Benue, and the emergence of new conflicts. The continuing deadliness of the conflict in Benue and Plateau along with a renewed deadly conflict in Kaduna caused a major spike in 2013. There had been a further leap in the fatality of conflict in 2014 as Kaduna and Plateau continued to be scene of deadly violence, Nasarawa and Taraba experienced increasing incidents of violence, and Zamfara and Katsina saw increasingly deadly conflict. The return of normalcy in Zamfara and Katsina and the fall in the deadliness and the number of conflict in Kaduna and Nasarawa led to a sharp drop of conflict fatalities in 2015. After rising again in 2016 mainly due to the increase in the deadlines of the violence in Benue and Enugu, and the rise in the number of conflict incidents, it further declined in 2017 during which the number of conflict incident continued to rise. This decline is mainly because of major decline in the deadliness of conflict in Benue, Enugu, Kaduna, Taraba, Adamawa, Nasarawa. This however is reversed as the fatality level upped once again following an increase in the number and deadliness of conflict in Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi and Taraba, and a rise in the number of conflict incident in Nasarawa and Adamawa.

Overall, the following five observations are worth noting. First, incidents in some states, mainly in Plateau, Benue and Kaduna and occasionally Nasarawa and Taraba influence the overall trend. Second, the geographical expansion of the scope of the conflict has been a key factor in the overall trend. Third, the rise and fall in the level of fatality can be explained by three factors: an increase in the number of incidents of conflict, an increase in the deadliness of conflict, and the continuation of the deadliness of conflict. Fourth, though a number of incidents and their fatality appear to go together, it is not always the case: a mere reduction in the number of conflict incidents does not automatically translate into a reduction in the fatality of conflicts. Finally, though regions that tend to shape the number of conflict incident also, at times, shape the fatality level, this is not always the case. Hence, targeting specific regions does not necessarily reduce the national fatality figure.

At any rate, farmer–herder conflict in Nigeria has become one of the biggest security threats not only in terms of people killed and displaced but also its economic cost. According to Mercy Corps studies, the Federal government would have gained 13.7 Billion dollars only if there were no such conflicts and that state governments most effected by such conflict have lost 47% of their tax due to such conflicts.<sup>125</sup> Individual would have also experienced at least 64% and up to 201% rise in income had they not faced such conflict.

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<sup>125</sup> Mercy Corps (nd.) The economic cost of conflict and the benefits of peace: Effects of farmer–pastoralist conflict in Nigeria’s middle belt on Household.

## Farmer–Herder Conflict in other West African States

Though not as pervasive as Nigeria, farmer–herder conflicts are also prevalent in other states of the region. ACLED data indicate that in the last ten years, there have been 27 farmer–herder conflicts in Mali with a total death of 117. Benin and Ghana each experienced 17 incidents that caused 33 and 36 deaths respectively. While Burkina Faso has just three incidents and three deaths, Niger has seen an incident that caused two deaths. This figure including those on Nigeria is a conservative number compared to what is reported, and in some case officially documented. Based on local news reports, there were over one hundred cases of farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana between 2006 and 2016.<sup>126</sup> The paramount chief of Ghana also indicated that between 2009–2012 there has been more than fifty cases of farmer–herder conflict in Agogo area of Ghana alone.<sup>127</sup> Between 2009 and 2013 these conflicts resulted in 12 deaths and 16 injuries. Hence, ACLED figure of just 17 incidents for the entire 2009–2018 period is an underestimation. Similarly, in southern Kaduna state and Benue states, there has been 800 and 1269 deaths respectively in 2016 alone, while the respective figure of ACLED is 169 and 529.<sup>128</sup> In Burkina Faso, the government recorded 55 deaths from Fulani–farmers conflict and indicated that there are at least 600 clashes a year.<sup>129</sup> And, in Cote d’Ivoire conflict between Fulani pastoralist and Lobi farmer has resulted in the death of 33 people, injury to 52 people and the displacement of 2194 people in March 2016.<sup>130</sup> ACLED does not record any such incident in Cote d’Ivoire.

This disparity notwithstanding, there is wider consensus that farmer–herder conflicts are becoming more frequent in recent times. Most of the incidents recorded in ACLED are mostly a recent phenomenon. The total number of incidents in Nigeria between 2009 and 2013 was just below the total number of incidents in 2014 alone. Since then there are on average 140 incidents that has hugely escalated in 2018. Nearly 90 % of the incidents in Mali are recorded in the last five years. The situation of farmer–herder conflict in Mali has specifically been aggravated by the political and security crisis unfolding in the country since 2012 that has created security vacuum exploited by armed movements.<sup>131</sup> More than three-fourth of the incident since 2009 in Ghana are recorded just in the last three years. All of the incidents in Benin are recorded in the last four years.

126 Elias Danyi Kuusaana and Kaderi Noagah Bukari (2015) Land conflict between small holders and Fulani pastoralists in Ghana: Evidence from the Asante Akim North District (AAND). *Journal of Rural Studies* 42 (2015) 52–62

127 Kaderi Noagah Bukari, Papa Sow, and Jürgen Scheffran Senufu (2018). Cooperation and co-existence between farmers and herders in the mildest of violent farmer–herder conflict in Ghana. *African Studies Association*, 78–102, doi:10.1017/asr.2017.124

128 ACAPS (2017). Nigeria: Farmer–Fulani Herder Violence in Benue, Kaduna and Plateau States. Thematic Report, 21 March 2017.

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## CONCLUSION

In view of the quantitative data and qualitative analysis, the following observations and key findings can be observed in respect of the peace and security dynamic of West Africa.

1. **Deterioration in security situation in West Africa:** Over the past decade, West Africa has witnessed steady and sometimes rapid deterioration in the security situation, especially the threats to human security. This is marked by increases in the number of violent events and fatalities, their spatial distribution and scale of displacement and destruction. Much of the deterioration are occasioned by complex conflicts and security challenges, often called 'wicked problem' as they combine local, regional and international dynamic, and continue to defy extant mechanisms and approaches for managing security by national and regional actors.
2. **Nigeria as driver of regional security patterns:** Nigeria's status as the lead nation in West Africa appears to also be reflected in its share of violent events. Nigeria single-handedly shaped the trends and patterns of violent events and fatalities over the past decade; in 2017, Nigeria accounted for slightly over half of all violent events, and three-quarter of fatalities. This trend is consistent with patterns over the last decade.
3. **Structural issues and weaknesses:** Much of the violent events in West Africa are strong indicators of structural weaknesses and the lack of a clear framework to transform these mean that sustainable peace remains a challenge in West Africa. This cuts across conflict-affected and stable countries. Even where progress has been made in stabilization, much of underlying structural issues remain unaddressed, including issues such as marginalization and exclusion of certain social groups, inequality, lack of legitimacy and trust in government institutions amongst citizens, socio-economic deprivation (especially of youth and women), and gender-based violence. To this extent, structural weaknesses are producing new forms of human insecurities that are mutating in their manifestations, including irregular migration within and between states in West Africa and across international boundaries, organized crime, etc. Some of the new forms of human insecurities are beginning to threaten or strain extant principles of regional integration, especially the freedom of movement norm in West Africa.
4. **Violence, not armed conflict, the real challenge:** Large scale violence in the context of armed conflicts is traditionally the focus of major regional and international policy institutions; however emerging patterns points to violence becoming more ubiquitous. Conflict affected countries and so-called ostensibly stable ECOWAS member states (e.g. Ghana, Senegal, Togo, etc.) are increasingly affected by different types of violent events, including riots and protests, election-related violence, gender-based violence and inter-communal clashes.
5. **Riots and Protests as new frontiers of peace and security:** Over the past decade, riots and protests have increased in their frequency and spatial distribution, and fatalities. Riots and protests defy extant regional mechanisms and even constitute 'grey areas' in respect of extant normative frameworks over convergence principles of non-constitutional take-over of power and the identity of the 'sovereign' (between people and regime), and dilemmas over the internal affairs of member states versus roles and space for ECOWAS and its normative instruments. The challenged posed by riots and protests are most acute in contexts where they threaten or actually lead to political transitions as exemplified by Burkina Faso and on-going events in Togo.



6. **Emerging frailties in the “edge parts” of West Africa:** Patterns observed point to the concentration of violent events in the countries on the edges of ECOWAS region, namely Mali in the Sahelian axis and Nigeria and Niger in the Lake Chad Basin. It is unclear if this is a statistical coincidence or something indicating geographical underpinnings; still, the edge regions of West Africa appear to have historical cross-border and cross-regional movement of people (migration), weak border controls combined, and intense activities of criminal networks.
7. **Post-conflict Countries holding firm:** Post-conflict countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire remain stable in large parts, in spite of going through elections. The first two in particular have gone through highly contentious elections, as well as cope with pandemics such as Ebola, and have yet to witness conflict relapse. The explanations for this include strong civil society activism, strong regional norms on democracy and elections, continuous investment by regional and international actors, rise of alternative (non-violent) coping strategies among youth, etc.
8. **Lack of capacities to effectively address emerging trends in violent events:** Much of extant capacities and approaches to human security issues are still concentrated on the security challenges of the 1990s (rebellion and civil wars), and less attuned to contemporary security challenges such as riots and protests, farmer-herders’ violence, gender-based violence, etc. and asymmetrical conflicts such as violent extremism.



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