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Police officers. Police college in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

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### A Forum and best practice Charter for reporters to help prevent violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel

About thirty reporters and media professionals were gathered in Dakar from June 12 to 14 in a seminar organised by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), in partnership with the UNESCO and the DFAE of Switzerland. Objective: explore new avenues to enable reporters and the media to play an active role in the prevention of violence and violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel...[Read more P.15](#)



Seminar on "The role of reporters and the media in the prevention of violence and violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel", 12 to 14 June 2017 in Dakar

## EDITORIAL

### National ownership is a must for the success of the security sector reform in West Africa and the Sahel

By Hiroute Guebre Sellassie

In the past few decades, countries in West Africa and the Sahel have enacted important and beneficial reforms to improve the performance of their political and economic institutions.

Significant progress has been realized in spite of the persistence of a multitude of challenges. The successive elections that were peacefully held in the sub-region have led to the promotion of new political alternation of power. Just as various ongoing or initiated reforms, such as the security sector reform, have helped improve governance and contributed to the emergence of an environment that is more dynamic at the economic level

and more democratic and stable at the political level.

Indeed, many countries in the region have initiated reforms of their security institutions to make them more professional, efficient and accountable. Moreover, these reforms aimed at establishing an impartial and accessible judicial system, with the objective of laying the foundation of sustainable peace and development. The security sector reform was also to address the expectations of populations seeking protection and justice when facing abuses from institutions or individuals engaged in authoritarian practices not compliant with principles of law.



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*Together for Peace*

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**UNOWAS** *E-Magazine* informs you about UNOWAS activities and efforts in consolidating peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel.

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**Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie**

Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (DSRSG)

**«It is vital that States and populations be a driving force in reform processes»**

## National ownership is a must for the success of the security sector reform in West Africa and the Sahel

In the past few decades, countries in West Africa and the Sahel have enacted important and beneficial reforms to improve the performance of their political and economic institutions.

Significant progress has been realized in spite of the persistence of a multitude of challenges. The successive elections that were peacefully held in the sub-region have led to the promotion of new political alternation of power. Just as various ongoing or initiated reforms, such as the security sector reform, have helped improve governance and contributed to the emergence of an environment that is more dynamic at the economic level and more democratic and stable at the political level.

Indeed, many countries in the region have initiated reforms of their security institutions to make them more professional, efficient and accountable. Moreover, these reforms aimed at establishing an impartial and accessible judicial system, with the objective of laying the foundation of sustainable peace and development. The security sector reform was also to address the expectations of populations seeking protection and justice when facing abuses from institutions or individuals engaged in authoritarian practices not compliant with principles of law.

The various experiences of the security sector reform in countries of West Africa and the Sahel, like elsewhere in the world, are marked by historical and political realities that influence the reform process.

Each country sets up its own security system with its various actors, and defines threats it must face to meet populations' expectations. The most common threats in the West Africa and Sahel region are organised cross-border crime, illicit drug trafficking, human traf-

**Without the commitment of state and non-state actors at the regional and national levels, as well as the clearly expressed political will of government authorities, plans and programs implemented to carry out the security sector reform will not produce results**

ficking, terrorism, piracy and banditry on the high seas and on land. All these threats jeopardize security of individuals in the region and constitute a barrier to individual economic initiatives, development efforts and country stability.

It is critical to highlight how important the role of civil society organisations is in the reform process as their participation guarantees representation and inclusion while contributing to strengthening the control of the security sector governance.

But beyond the necessity to reform the security sector, it is vital that States and populations be a driving force in reform processes. Without the commitment of state and non-state actors at the regional and national levels, as well as the clearly expressed political will of government authorities, plans and programs implemented to carry out the security sector reform will not produce results.

With the assistance of regional and international partners, but mostly supported by strong political commitment, countries in the region have successfully launched the reform of their security sector and realized extraordinary progress. ▶

► The experience of Sierra Leone is significant and provides a good example of the importance of leadership and national ownership of the security sector reform process which allowed – by itself alone – to consolidate peace. There is no doubt that the Sierra Leone experience is an example that should be followed by other countries committed to the same type of reform.

Major countries like Liberia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina, Mali or Gambia, to name only a few, have initiated reforms of their security sector that will be key to their stability and that of the region.

The security sector reform remains a cornerstone for stability and development. We – regional, national and international actors – must continue to support countries in the region in their endeavour to reform the security sector which will pave the way for populations’ access to the rule of law and prosperity.

**We – regional, national and international actors – must continue to support countries in the region in their endeavour to reform the security sector which will pave the way for populations’ access to the rule of law and prosperity**

This is the purpose of the regional commitment of UNOWAS through its support of the ECOWAS reform of the security sector and governance, and through its continued support of the capacity-building of leadership and the national ownership of reforms.

## THEY HAVE SAID



“

*The reform of the National Armed Forces aims to build a professional, operational and republican Army, in line with the ambitions of Burkina Faso and the demands of democracy... Security and peace are prerequisites for development. That is why, at the request of the Government of Burkina Faso, the United Nations is committed to accompany us in a process of security sector reform in order to share with us its accrued expertise through its many experiences in the field of security.”*

**Roch Marc Kabore, President of Burkina Faso – 2016 End of Year Speech**



“

*The recent events in Cote d’Ivoire have again shown that political leadership, national reconciliation, the fight against impunity, and Security Sector Reform must go hand in hand. We all agree that bringing the security sector under full democratic control must be a priority.”*

**Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Representative of the UN Secretary General in West Africa and the Sahel - 51st Ordinary Summit of the ECOWAS in Monrovia- Liberia, 04 June 2017**



“

*The recent events in Cote d’Ivoire have again shown that political leadership, national reconciliation, the fight against impunity, and Security Sector Reform must go hand in hand. We all agree that bringing the security sector under full democratic control must be a priority.”*

**SSR Expert of the United Nations Mission in Liberia – Launching of the SSR think Tank in the University of Liberia**



“

*In The Gambia, «the support to the reform of the security sector was identified as another key priority for sustaining peace. The assistance of the UN on security sector reform will include a comprehensive assessment of the security sector, covering all security and defense institutions.”*

**Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary General for peace-building support – During his visit to The Gambia in April 2017**

## The SSR, a pillar for peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel

Today, West Africa and the Sahel region is considered to be one of the main regions on the African continent to make significant progress in the area of security sector reform. Both at the policy and national levels.



Police officers. Police college in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

**D**uring the past decades a number of countries in the West Africa region experienced conflicts, political turmoil and instability. In order to address the security challenges and to resolve conflicts, some countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Burkina Faso and The Gambia have initiated processes aiming at transforming their security sector into democratically governed institutions in line with the rule of law and human rights principles. In June 2016, the Heads of States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a policy framework on security sector reform and governance (SSRG) which is in coherence with the African Union as well as the UN SSR policies. ECOWAS is currently in the process of disseminating the policy throughout the region for better ownership and operationalisation.

While the regional policy was being developed by ECOWAS, security sector reform processes were initiated and implemented at national levels.

**Sierra Leone** for example, is often cited as one of the countries, which after 11 years long civil war, conducted a successful security sector reform process. Such endeavour contributed to consolidate peace and have since 2005, after the departure of the United

**Countries in the region have initiated processes aiming at transforming their security sector into democratically governed institutions in line with the rule of law and human rights principles**

Nations Peacekeeping Mission, prevented the country to relapse into conflict. During the past decade, Sierra Leone comprehensively transformed its security structures including those providing, governing, overseeing and managing security related issues.

**In Guinea**, after a long period under dictatorial and military rules marred with political instability

and repeated military coups, the country elected democratically a new President in for first time in 2010. The new leadership embarked the country into a security sector reform process. Before then, the security sector was characterized by disorganization, confusion of roles on the ground, lack of civilian control, lack of means and efficiency, and the judicial system was dysfunctional while violations of human rights were rampant. This posed a real threat to the security of the people. The first years of the reform process helped clarify the roles and responsibilities of the defence and security forces, and allowed the armed forces to return into barracks. Since then, the military has not sought its way back into power. Nevertheless, much progress needs to be done concerning the management and behaviour of law enforcement agencies especially when it comes to conduct crowd control.

**In Burkina Faso** after the popular uprising of 2014 that led to the first democratic elections, the new President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré requested the United

## Heads of States of the ECOWAS adopted a policy framework on security sector reform and governance (SSRG)

Nations support to initiate the reform of the security sector. Given the challenges faced during the previous regime and the role played by the military, the national authorities have taken actions in view of conducting a reform process that will lead to the depoliticisation and professionalization of the defence and security forces, as well as their submission to civilian democratic control and the rule of law.

**In The Gambia**, after 22 years of military rule by the former President Yaya Jammeh, the country is confronted with the challenge to build the foundations of long-term peace and development. The new dispensation that came to power in February 2017 is facing a high level of distrust in the national armed forces, the police and other security actors in ensuring the security of the state and the people. Going forward, the government's priority would be to carry out urgent reforms of the security sector including defence, police, justice, corrections, judiciary, border management and customs with a focus on cross-border cooperation between The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, as well as relevant commissions within the parliament and independent oversight actors and civil society organisations. Such reform will take into consideration the security needs of the population in order to restore confidence that will facilitate the consolidation of the embryonic democratic system.

## The SSR experience of Sierra Leone, a shining model in West Africa and beyond

After 11 years of a ravaging civil war, Sierra Leone with the support of the international community, undertook with determination to reform the security sector as one of the critical component of a nation building. Today, the experience of Sierra Leone is not only a major national achievement, but also a shining model that countries in West Africa and in the Sahel could get inspiration from.



A policeman uses a poster to show a woman how to mark a ballot correctly in Freetown days ahead of the country's presidential elections on 11 August 2007. Thanks to security forces, Sierra Leone organized, in 2007, violence-free election after 11 years of civil war. Credit: IRIN

Following a horrific 11 years civil war which led to the disintegration of the security sector, Sierra Leone embarked in its first SSR program which was implemented by the United Kingdom (UK), in support of a broader UN peacekeeping mission. The first objective of the UK was police reform after the 1996 general elections. The dramatic development in the conflict marked by the kidnapping of UN peacekeepers and the rebel threat to Freetown in 2000 resulted in the deployment of British forces to help put an end to the growing insecurity. Following this intervention, the UK increased its engagement in the SSR in Sierra Leone and began an intensive training program for the Sierra Leone armed forces, along with institution building in the entire justice sector and Ministry of Defense (MOD). However, while the UK and the international involvement remains important in the

country, the security sector has operated independently since the end of the mandate of the last UN peacekeepers in late 2005.

**A success story.** The SSR success story in post war Sierra Leone emanated from the Disarmament demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, which resulted in the disarmament of combatants and community members. According the Global facilitation network for SSR (GFNSSR)<sup>1</sup>, a total of 72,490 combatants were disarmed and 71,043 demobilised, 63,545 former combatants participated in the reintegration process, including 6,845 child soldiers. Participation rates in the DDR programme were high paving the way for a successful SSR process.

In 2007, for the first time in two decades, Sierra Leone conduc-

<sup>1</sup> - *Security Sector Transformation in Sierra Leone 1997-2007*, Birmingham: DFID/GFN-SSR.



Sierra Leone Two gallant female officers leading the inspection parade

ted a generally peaceful national election without international peacekeeping assistance. This successful election earned the praise of international election observers as free, fair and credible. Most importantly, these elections were conducted by and for the people of Sierra Leone, who exercised their right to vote in a generally orderly environment made possible by their own security forces.

Seen within the context of the level of violence experienced by the people of Sierra Leone during the 11 years civil war, the fact that Sierra Leone conducted this generally violence-free election only five years after the end of the conflict is a remarkable achievement. The ability of the citizens of Sierra Leone to exercise both their democratic franchise and sustain themselves is also due to improved personal security that resulted from substantial UN and UK support. But the key to this security transformation has been and continues to be the leadership provided by the Sierra Leonean authorities who have sustained the security sector reform effort over an extended period of time. What happened in Sierra Leone was not merely security sector reform, but a comprehensive transformation of the objectives of security provision, the mission, management and coordination of security institutions.

Comprehensive transformation of security structures in Sierra Leone during the past

10 years spread across a breadth of institutions. It reached deep into internal and external security institutions, altered command structures, provided top-to-bottom training and established staffing policies, procedures and behavior. It created agencies to coordinate security information and facilitated a two-way flow of that security information from the community level up to the President. It also reached out to the people of Sierra Leone, who had experienced horrific violence at the hands of their own security forces during the war, and began the difficult task of reversing public suspicion of security forces and involving citizens in their own security.

An additional key development in this phase centered on producing and linking security strategy and development objectives for Sierra Leone. In practical terms, this was reflected in the completion of the partly-interrelated Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Security Sector Review processes, where the latter was reflected in the former's Pillar One, which promotes good governance, peace and security.

**Impact.** The impact of the Security Sector Reform process cannot be underestimated. First, it gave much needed conceptual clarity to the institutions involved in or contributing to the security system, institutions that had a stake in defining what security meant for Sierra Leonean people. Second, the Office of National Security (ONS), established in 1999, as a mechanism for coordination of input from Sierra Leone's security institutions, matured during this phase and became one of the most capable and trusted security institutions in the country. Third, the fact that the SSR was integrated into the Poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) aligned security and development to a degree that they had not been before in Sierra Leone or elsewhere.

SSR is a political project that requires a long-term commitment by both national and international actors. It is not for the faint of heart; the effort requires endless reserves of patience and perseverance. The experience of Sierra Leone shows how dedicated, capable people who are provided political and professional space to conduct such activities can achieve a great deal under challenging circumstances.





## Three questions and answers to understand SSR

For the past decades, security has evolved to be understood in a human centred approach which encompasses economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Three questions and answers to understand the importance of the SSR and its process.



Security creates the space where other development, political economic and social developments can take place. Credit: IFAD

### What is security sector about?

There is no single definition, standard or model of the security sector as it depends on each country and context. However, the UN, the AU, ECOWAS and member States converge around a similar understanding. As stated by the Secretary General in his report (2008) <sup>1</sup>the security sector is a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, governance, provision and oversight of security in a country. It includes defence, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services and institutions responsible for border management, customs and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, in many instances, also included. Furthermore, the security sector includes actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as

1 - <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/SSR%20S%202008%2039.pdf>

ministries, legislative bodies and civil society groups. It should be understood that there is a move from the narrow security and state focused scopes of definition to the broader definition of security, which includes governance actors as well as state and non-state actors such as customary or informal authorities and private security services. In West Africa, vigilante groups, such as the dozos or the Kolglweogo in Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso play a key role in the security sector as protection actors as well as source of concern.

Individual States define their respective security sector or system. While sector versus system are one and the same thing, system is sometimes used to highlight the interconnected nature of the security sector, the need to moves beyond taking a purely sectoral approach. For example the reform of the police service, will require that attention be paid to the Ministry of the Interior, the parliament on oversight issues, and the finance ministry on budgeting. It is crucial to understand how these different institutions and actors interconnect.

### Why would States choose to proceed with the reform of its security sector?

There are threats and security challenges which the security sector is not in position to address because it is ineffective, inefficient, dysfunctional, and sometimes constitutes the source of insecurity. For example, when called upon for an intervention in a case of crime, the Police is not always in a position to respond efficiently by arriving timely on the ground. This is usually due to several reasons stemming from lack of resources, expertise and knowledge, corruption within the institution, and lack of cooperation with other services such as the civil protection or the judiciary. It is the deficit in the governance of security institutions and their inability to respond to security needs of the people and the State that often create the necessity to conduct reforms. Security sector reform (SSR) is therefore a process led and owned by national actors, aimed at ensuring that security providers are effective and accountable to the State and its people without discrimination and with full respect for hu-

man rights and the rule of law. Practically, it is about enhancing the security and the protection of individuals and their property, promoting as such their social inclusion and improve their conditions for economic development. SSR is all about making people feel safe in their daily lives.

Security sector reform can also be considered as security sector transformation, development or governance. In the West Africa region, ECOWAS has chosen to associate reform to governance as member States consider that enhancing the governance of the security sector will increase the effectiveness and accountability of actors such as for instance the police, civil protection, the army, prison guards in protecting the States and its citizens.

### Why is SSR important?

Security creates the space where other development, political, economic and social developments can take place. If security worsens, the costs of business go up and the economic growth goes down. In a fast changing contexts where threats at the national and regional levels evolve, States ought to ensure that their institutions, and all actors are sufficiently equipped in terms of knowledge, expertise, rules, legal framework, and resources to address them while protecting the State and its people.

In West Africa most regional threats include, transnational organized crimes such as illicit trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking, terrorism, piracy and armed banditry on sea and land. All these threats which undermine the security and safety of people of the region, constitute obstacle to individual economic initiatives and states stability.

## UNOWAS supports SRR processes in the sub-region

Since its establishment, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel has been engaged to supporting governments and partners to implement ambitious SSR programs.



Security Forces training on Press Freedom, Freedom of Expression and the Safety of Journalists in Mali. © UNESCO

To consolidate peace and security, many countries in West Africa have initiated crucial reforms of their security sectors with the support of several partners. As a major regional actor, UNOWAS has been engaged since its establishment in 2002\* in supporting national authorities and regional organizations to articulate and implement new reforms of the security sector.

At the regional level, UNOWAS has supported ECOWAS in developing its policy framework on security sector reform and governance (SSRG) which was adopted by Heads of States in June 2016 in Dakar, and it continues to support the rolling-out of the SSRG with the objective of promoting a coordinated approach to security sector reform in the West Africa region.

At national levels, the support of UNOWAS has been vital in several countries like in Guinea, Burkina Faso, or recently in The Gambia.

Since 2010, UNOWAS supported the full assessment in Guinea that led to the identification of weaknesses, gaps, threats and people's needs for protection following the multi-

ple political crisis involving the military. At a request of the authorities of Guinea, UNOWAS contributed to the design and the implementation of an SSR programme which helped restore democratic civilian oversight of the defence and security forces. In addition to restoring the discipline and the return of the soldiers in the barracks, the support

**UNOWAS has been engaged since its establishment in 2002 in supporting national authorities and regional organizations to articulate and implement new reforms of the security sector**

of UNOWAS was critical to the retirement of some 3500 military personnel who otherwise would have not been retired.

The Guinean Police personnel is another significant example. For the past 16 years, Police personnel have been recruited without having undertaken formal training. In

March of last year, the first 304 police staff were graduated from the newly established Police school as part of the SSR programme.

In Burkina Faso, after the popular uprising of 2014 that led to the first democratic elections, the new President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré requested the United Nations to support and guide the authorities to initiate the reform of the security sector. As part of the framework of the UN Sustaining Peace initiative launched in 2016, UNOWAS deployed a senior adviser on SSR to the President to help finalize a road map which will look, among others, at providing concrete responses to the expectations of people for justice, and at improving the security.

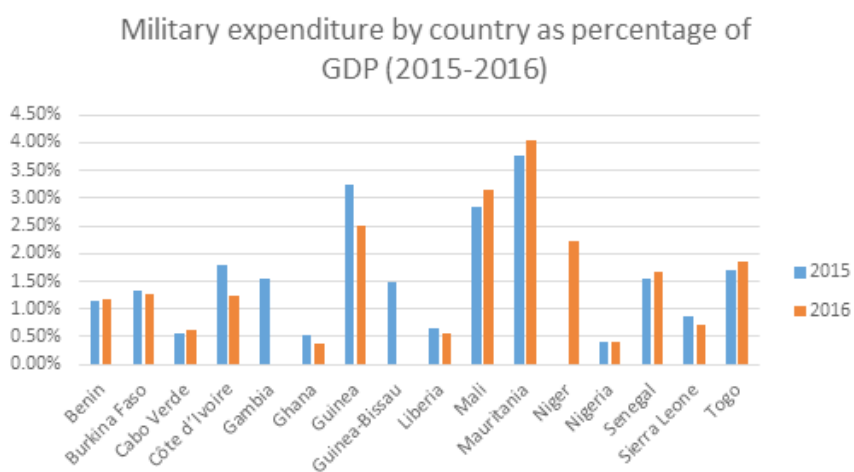
Recently, in The Gambia, with the change of regime, there is a high level of distrust in the capacity of the national armed forces, the police and other security actors to ensure the security of the national institutions and of the people. Through the good offices of the SRSB Ibn Chambas, UNOWAS is actively involved in guiding the new authorities to conduct an ambitious reform of the security sector that will aim at restoring confidence and consolidating peace in The Gambia.

As a major actor in the region, UNOWAS, in coordination with other regional entities such as UNODC, DPKO and Interpol, plays an instrumental role through the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) programme, advocating for enhanced law enforcement agencies to counter transnational organized crime, drug and other illicit trafficking.

In the Gulf of Guinea, UNOWAS has been engaged in encouraging States members of ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) to coordinate their efforts to develop and implement the Yaoundé maritime security architecture.

## Recent trends of military expenditure in West Africa and the Sahel

If the SSR is important, it is also useful to look at the trends in military expenditure by countries in West Africa and the Sahel.



According to recent data published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the total world military spending in 2016 accounted for 2.2 % of the global GDP.

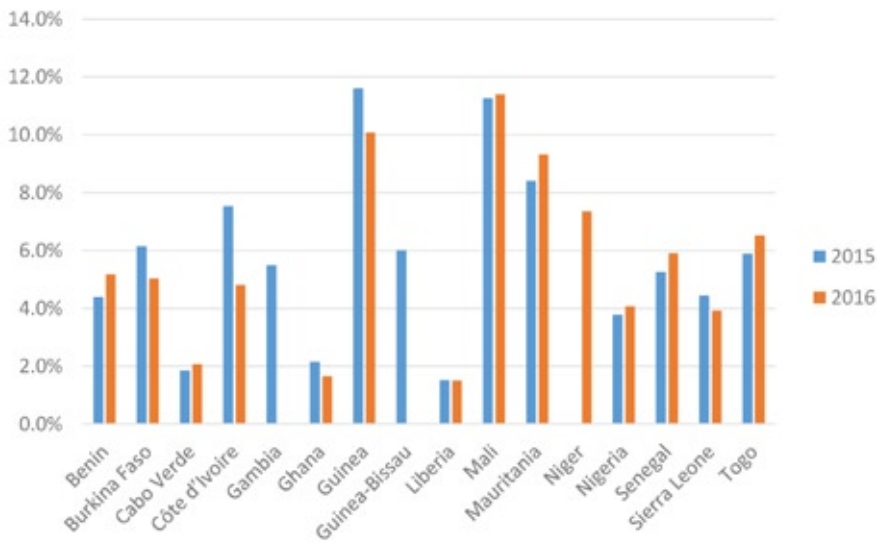
From among the countries in West Africa and the Sahel that are under UNOWAS' mandate only four reached or exceeded the world average, which is Mauritania (4.1%), Mali (3.2%), Guinea (2.5%), and Niger (2.2%). Conversely, military expenditure of Cabo Verde, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria did not even exceed one percent (1.0%) of their gross domestic product.

From 2010 till 2016 Benin, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo showed an increase in terms of spending on military as percentage of their GDP. At the same time, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone show a downward trend.

**Mali, Guinea and Mauritania spent the highest portion of their national budgets on the military in 2016, with Mali and Guinea spending exceeding 10 %. On the other extreme, Liberia and Ghana spend less than 2 % of their national budgets on their military**

Mali, Guinea and Mauritania spent the highest portion of their national budgets on the military in 2016, with Mali and Guinea spending exceeding 10 %. On the other extreme, Liberia and Ghana spend less than 2 % of their national budgets on their military. From 2010 till 2016 Benin, Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal showed a positive trend in terms of government military expenditure, with Mali almost doubling

Military expenditure by country as percentage of government spending (2015-2016)



Sources: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

its military expenditures over that period of time.

Nigeria spends most on the military compared to other countries in the region (in 2016 Nigeria spent more than 1.7 billion US\$). Second biggest is Cote d'Ivoire, which spending on military in 2016 reached 425 million US dollars. Conversely, Cabo Verde, Libe-

**Second biggest is Cote d'Ivoire, which spending on military in 2016 reached 425 million US dollars**

ria and Sierra Leone spend smallest gross amounts on military. Nevertheless, if we are to factor in population, countries that spend most on military per inhabitant are Mauritania (32.6 US\$) and Mali (20.3 US\$), followed by Cabo Verde (19.3 US\$), Cote d'Ivoire (18.3 US\$) and Senegal (16.3US\$). The rest of the countries spent less than 15US\$ per inhabitant on military.

In 2016, Mauritania, Mali and Guinea spent most on military in terms of the percentage of GDP (4.05, 3.16 and 2.49 % respectively) and percentage of government spending (9.32, 11.39 and 10.07 % respectively). In addition, Mauritania and Mali lead in terms of net spending on military per inhabitant (32.6 S\$ and 20.3 US\$ respectively). Amid Mali's continuing efforts to fight terrorism, the country almost doubled its military spending since 2013, taking a lead among the countries in the region in terms of percentage budget expenditure and coming in second in terms of per capita spending.

Countries facing growing security threats, like Niger and Burkina Faso, place themselves in the middle-range group of countries in terms of percentage government spending on military (Niger – 7.34% and Burkina Faso 5.04%), spending as percentage of GDP (Niger 2.22% and BF 1.26%) as well as per capita spending (both around 8.0US\$). Nevertheless, while Niger shows positive trend from 2010 to 2016, Burkina Faso shows negative or, at best, a stea-

**In 2016, an average per capita spending for the military in Africa amounted to 44US\$. For the Sub-Saharan Africa, the average per inhabitant spending on the military amounted to 36.7US\$. All the countries in West Africa and the Sahel place themselves well below these values**

dy trend (in case of per inhabitant spending). Cote d'Ivoire, which experienced waves of military mutinies at the beginning of this year, registered sharp decrease in spending for military in 2016 compared to 2015 (as percentage of GDP, government spending and per capita).

Nigeria, despite being the biggest gross spender on the military in the region, spent no more than 0.58 % of its GDP and 4.07 % of its budget for military between 2010 and 2016. Also, its spending per capita (9.2 US\$ in 2016) is quite low compared to other countries in the region. Even though the Nigerian government has been spending more on military each year in the period under review in terms of budget allocations, the spending against the country GDP shows a downward trend.

In 2016, an average per capita spending for the military in Africa amounted to 44US\$. For the Sub-Saharan Africa, the average per inhabitant spending on the military amounted to 36.7US\$. All the countries in West Africa and the Sahel place themselves well below these values. Only Mauritania, with 32.6US\$ per capita spending came relatively close to the average for the Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Pierre Lapaque, UNODC Regional Representative: *“In West Africa, insecurity comes partially from the security sector itself”*

The United Nations Organisation against Drugs and Crime (UNODC) plays an important role in the fight against terrorism, illicit trafficking, organised crime and corruption. It is also mandated to contribute to strengthening the Security Sector Reform (SSR) through an integrated approach. In this interview, Pierre Lapaque, UNODC Regional Representative for West Africa, talks about the importance of SSR and provides an overview of the various SSR processes involved in the sub-region which continue to face new challenges that threaten peace and security.



Mr. Pierre Lapaque, UNODC Regional Representative

**Could you explain to us what exactly the Security Sector Reform (SSR) is?**

The SSR is a process whose objective is to reform and strengthen at the same time institutions, structures, legislations and staffs in charge of security control in order to increase their professional

**The fundamental objective is to guarantee to the State and populations an efficient security system respectful of the Rule of law**

ism and accountability. It is most important in post-crisis contexts. The fundamental objective is to guarantee to the State and populations an efficient security system respectful of the Rule of law. In West Africa, experience has de-

monstrated that insecurity comes partly from the security sector itself, whether it is due to its shortcomings or its politicisation.

**There are multiple threats to peace and security in West Africa and in the Sahel. On what aspects of these threats should the focus be?**

The Mali crisis violently reminded us of the precariousness of peace in West Africa and in the Sahel which remain “hot spots” of the continent. It is emblematic of the hybrid and transnational character of the security threats in the West African space today. Even though a majority of countries are not afflicted by open conflicts, the existence of flashpoints of tension that could flare up at any time, as well as episodic tensions notably related to electoral processes, underline the risks of tipping into open crisis situations. In addition to structural and historical vulnerabilities of the past, there are

today new factors of cross-border conflicts such as international terrorism, drug trafficking or maritime piracy. The rise of these new threats constitute a priority in the agenda of the States and their partners, such as UNODC, as they jeopardize great advances in peace and security achieved these past ten years.

**The SSR process involves various actors. Who are they? And what mechanisms are implemented to facilitate the coherence of their action?**

The SSR involves multiple actors headed by Countries driving this process, the Regional Economic Communities (REC) such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as partners that provide support in this area. The latter are numerous and specialized in different themes. It is not just about reforming the army, the police or the justice system, but rather the entire security system, and it subjects all its various components to a democratic control run by the State, the civil society and the media. This is why SSR is often defined in conjunction with other transition and development processes such as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the traditional justice system. At the United Nations level, to facilitate a holistic and coordinated approach, the Secretary General has created a special inter-organisations team, jointly headed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Programme for Development (UNPD) to which participate ▶



Police facing demonstrators in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso - 30 October 2014. © AFP

about a dozen of United Nations entities working in this domain.

**What role does the United Nations in general, and the UNODC in particular, play in the SSR process in West Africa and in the Sahel?**

West Africa has experienced a series of deadly conflicts, notably during the 1990s, in countries that are part of the Mano River Union and the Gulf of Guinea and, more recently, in Mali. In each case, these conflicts have necessitated complex SSR processes in which the United Nations did play and continue to play an important role. Throughout its SSR and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reinsertion (DDR) branches within peacekeeping missions in the region, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations plays a major role in this apparatus.

The UNODC, through its mandate to fight terrorism, illicit trafficking, organised crime and corruption, contributes to the strengthening of the SSR using an integrated and holistic approach made of several components. First of all, we provide legal assistance to the States in the adoption of legislation, strategies and national programmes,

in terms of security and criminal justice, in accordance with international conventions and the respect of human rights. This includes, for example, the adoption of new anti-terrorist laws in Burkina Faso (December 2015) and in Niger (May 2016). Then, the UNODC implements various capacity-building programmes to security and

**The UNODC, through its mandate to fight terrorism, illicit trafficking, organised crime and corruption, contributes to the strengthening of the SSR using an integrated and holistic approach made of several components**

judiciary actors in the entire chain of the criminal justice system: from identifying criminal behaviour to judicial inquiry, to the judgement and imprisonment. All of this while complying, in each step, with democratic standards and international conventions. In this respect, our office works in close collaboration with the REC, par-

**The ability of States to demonstrate political leadership and take ownership will be of paramount importance**

ticularly the ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel, as well as other international partners such as the integrated United Nations Multidimensional Mission for the Stabilisation of Mali (MINUSMA).

**What are the challenges faced by the countries in the implementation of these reforms? How do you resolve them?**

The combined action of ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) achieved significant results these past few years in terms of SSR at the country level, but also at the regional and continental levels. The development of a SSR strategy for ECOWAS, and of initiatives such as the development of a Code of Conduct for the Armed and Security Forces, constitute important steps that are praiseworthy. However, the recent degradation of the security situation in some countries emphasizes the fact that these advances are fragile and may be reversed. Moreover, the capacities of qualified staff, from the ECOWAS as well as from the States must also be built, in order to lend a coherence and a greater efficiency to the reforms. At the State level, the enactment of ECOWAS protocols in this domain, as well as the strengthening of national judicial frameworks and the adoption of coherent and integrated programmes and action plans remain priorities. In this respect, the ability of States to demonstrate political leadership and take ownership will be of paramount importance. Finally, the partners will have to ensure that there is a good coordination of actions to be undertaken, based on detailed assessment needs and on a political context favourable to reforms.

## A Forum and best practice Charter for reporters to help prevent violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel

About thirty reporters and media professionals were gathered in Dakar from June 12 to 14 in a seminar organised by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), in partnership with the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAE) of Switzerland. Objective: explore new avenues to enable reporters and the media to play an active role in the prevention of violence and violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel.

“The role of reporters and the media in the prevention of violence and violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel”. This was the theme of the seminar that brought together in Dakar, from June 12 to 14, about thirty reporters and media professionals from West Africa and the Sahel region.

Violent extremism is no longer a new phenomenon. The profusion of conferences and publications on this theme is a testimony to its significance, but also to the full-scale mobilisation of many national and international actors. Through its various agencies and entities, and through the Action Plan of the UN Secretary General on the fight against terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, the United Nations wished to raise States’ awareness of the spread of this scourge by insisting on the necessity to combine the security approach with a prevention approach in which state and non-governmental actors will have a major role to play.

It is also in this mind frame that UNOWAS, in partnership with the DFAE and the International Peace Institute (IPI), has jointly organised last year in Dakar a regional conference that made it possible to identify a few practical pathways for strengthening the prevention of violent extremism, in particular through the involvement of young people, women and the media.

Furthermore, in the second round of discussions on the same theme held in N’Djamena on May 31 and June 1st 2017, promising initiati-



Opening ceremony seminar of the seminar on “The role of reporters and the media in the prevention of violence and violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel”, 12 to 14 June 2017 in Dakar.

ves in the domain of community radios and online news have been identified. These initiatives have called for the speed-up of the implementation of programmes and action plans designed to enable the contribution of reporters and the media in the prevention of violent extremism.

**It became consequently urgent to explore possible ways to enable reporters and media professionals to provide an effective contribution to the prevention of violent extremism**

This seminar on the role of reporters and the media in the prevention of violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel was thus held as a follow-up of recommendations from the UN Secretary General’s Action Plan and of those of the Dakar and N’Djamena mee-

tings. It became consequently urgent to explore possible ways to enable reporters and media professionals to provide an effective contribution to the prevention of violent extremism.

This was indeed the strong message conveyed to the participants during the opening of this seminar. M. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary General and Chief of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) stated: “Because of their traditional and influential role, we are convinced that the media and reporters can – and must – provide a vital contribution to the prevention of violent extremism”. Among attendees were special guest M. Demba Ali Jawo, Minister of Information and Communication Infrastructure of The Gambia, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Senegal, the UNESCO Regional Director, and the representative of the Minister of Culture and Communication of Senegal.

Echoing this message, participants explored in workshops and plenary sessions that lasted two and a half days issues related to forms of violent extremism and to how this phenomenon was presented by various media in the sub-region.

Participants emphasized that, in the course of carrying out their work, it is important for reporters to go beyond the responsibility to inform by participating to the improvement of security. They pointed out that it is also important that, while they fulfil their duty to provide security, security forces help the movement and field work of reporters.

The seminar also dedicated a substantial part of its programme to existing initiatives in the domain of community radio and online media. Experts attending the seminar provided “successful” examples of community radios, in particular in Chad and Cameroon, which could be emulated elsewhere in the sub-region as “good practices”.

At the conclusion of their work rich in lessons, participants reiterated the importance of providing sound information to the population and the necessity to raise its awareness and better prepare it, especially the youth, against the warning signs of violent extremism. For this purpose, reporters

**«Media and journalists can and must bring a vital contribution to the prevention of violent extremism»**

and media representatives attending this seminar have come to the agreement to adopt a Charter of good practices and to launch a Regional Forum of reporters for the prevention of violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel. The Charter’s objectives will be to encourage reporters and media representatives to rely on

clear professional principles and implement good practices in order to strengthen the prevention of violent extremism. As for the Regional Forum, it will help to further mobilise actors of the media domain to contribute to the implementation of the UN Secretary General’s Action Plan for the prevention of violence and extremism.

The Dakar seminar on the role of reporters and the media in the prevention of violent extremism will have enabled to put in place good practices which, with the efficient tracking from UNOWAS and its partners in charge of the Charter implementation and the launch of the Forum, are expected to become very useful in the prevention of violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel.

*For more information on this theme:*

**Speech of the SRSG Ibn Chabbas:** <http://bit.ly/2gMH6hL>

**Joint press release:** <http://bit.ly/2uFeLze>

**Press Book:** <http://bit.ly/2uMfxeQ>



Seminar on “The role of reporters and the media in the prevention of violence and violent extremism in West Africa and in the Sahel”, 12 to 14 June 2017 in Dakar.



## Mohamed Ibn Chambas :*“Traditional and new drivers of insecurity are hampering efforts for development in West Africa and the Sahel”*

West Africa and the Sahel region have witnessed positive progress in democratic consolidation. However the security situation remains of a great concern. It was in substance the message of the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas during his briefing to the UN Security Council on Thursday 13 July.

In his address to the UN Security Council, Mohamed Ibn Chambas wanted to share a clear message. Despite progress in democratic consolidation, countries in the region are facing new factors that are hampering their development efforts.

Mohamed Ibn Chambas told the U.N. Security Council that *«efforts by member states in the region to deliver on development, improve infrastructure, create jobs and strengthen human security are being hampered by traditional and new drivers of conflict and insecurity.»*

Traditional and new drivers of conflict and insecurity are hampering the capacity of countries to improve life conditions and strengthen human security, said Ibn Chambas, adding that clashes between farmers and herders are another threat that, if they are not contained, they have the potential to undermine peace and stability across the region.

The Special Representative expressed concerns about the ongoing instability in Mali which is spilling over into Burkina Faso and Niger while insecurity in the Lake Chad basin, where Boko Haram remains active, is proving equally challenging.

In the Lake Chad basin, which spans parts of seven countries, *«an equally challenging pole of insecurity remains»* despite a multinational task force's efforts that *«have substantially degraded Boko Haram's capabilities, shrunk its geographical reach, and freed thousands of captives,»* he stressed.



Up to 5.2 million people displaced across the Lake Chad basin *«struggling for their very subsistence.»*

*«The failure to provide basic services and viable livelihood opportunities for communities in affected areas risks derailing recent successes against Boko Haram,»* Ibn Chambas warned the Security Council members.

In the Sahel, the Liptako Gourma region linking Mali with Burkina Faso and Niger *«has seen a significant expansion of violent extremist and terrorist activities in the past months, including coordinated cross-border attacks against security posts and ransacking of border settlements.»*, he said

Ibn Chambas said violent extremist groups targeted Burkina Faso's northern provinces of Soum, Loroum and Yatenga and Niger's western regions of Tillaberi and Tahoua, which has had *«detrimental effects on the local economy.»*

*«Terrorism and violent extremism, in addition to the humanitarian*

*crisis and threats to state integrity that they generate, have exacerbated traditional threats,»* he said.

Ibn Chambas underlined that these factors, along with climate change, a growing youth population and lack of jobs, and unchecked urbanization are pushing a surge in migration and human trafficking.

The Special Representative said that smugglers are crisscrossing borders and establishing new operational areas where governments have withdrawn or maintain only *«a tentative presence.»* Insecurity and lawlessness now stretch to the Gulf of Guinea, *«where criminal elements increasingly resort to piracy and hostage-taking,»* he added.

While it is vital to continue to tackle security threats, the international community must remain engaged to help the governments set the foundations for democratic, cohesive, and resilient societies, said Ibn Chambas.

## The Ministerial Coordination Platform must be revitalised

Two years after the last Ministerial Coordination Platform (MCP) meeting, actors and partners involved in the Sahel gathered on 14 June in N'Djamena for their fifth meeting to exchange updates and assess prospects. The MCP must be revitalised in order to play its role.



Fifth Meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel strategies, 14 June 2017 in N'djaména. © Tchad Diplomatie

While the MCP for Sahel Strategies remains the sole mechanism that enables an efficient coordination between partners and ensure coherence in the implementation of various initiatives benefitting Sahel countries, it is necessary now to revitalise this mechanism to better address expectations of countries in the region. This is in essence the message the participants drummed up during the opening ceremony of the MCP's fifth meeting.

Presided by Chad, the session enabled participants to make an assessment of the two years that followed the last MCP meeting held in 2015, and confer on priorities that should drive the Chad presidency in the next two years ahead. In this regard, the participants have welcomed the roadmap proposed by Chad and have called upon the MCP to initiate an action plan that will enable the implementation of priorities contained in the roadmap.

Indeed, considering the many challenges which constrain the de-

**The MCP will have to bring a new energy for its revitalisation and to fully play its role of initiatives and strategies coordinator**

velopment of Sahel countries, it is important for the MCP to further strengthen the coherence and the coordination between various strategies and initiatives and accelerate their implementation in order to bring to Sahel countries and their population the support they need.

The MCP will have to overcome the challenge of the multiplicity of initiatives and the necessity to ensure a proper coordination between them. It will also have to speed up the implementation of projects identified in the various strategies to bring concrete solutions that could improve the living conditions of Sahel populations.

The MCP will have to bring a new energy for its revitalisation and to fully play its role of initiatives and strategies coordinator so that they might bring change to the situation in Sahel countries.



Fifth Meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel strategies, 14 June 2017 in N'djaména. © Tchad Diplomatie

# A Mapping of initiatives and projects to improve coordination between partners in the Sahel region

To facilitate the implementation of the UNISS, UNOWAS has supported the production of a Sectorial Mapping of initiatives in the Sahel to enhance coordination among partners.



Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger: the five Sahel countries covered by the UNISS © UNOWAS

At the request of the the Technical Secretariat of the Ministerial Platform for the Coordination (MPC) of Sahel Strategies, and thanks to the funding by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), a Mapping of initiatives and projects aiming at improving coordination between partners in the Sahel region was conducted by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

With the support of UNOWAS, the ISS and ECDPM have developed a valuable tool that is the first of its kind for the region. It will help make effective coordination possible.

Together, governments and international institutions can improve prospects in the Sahel. But collaboration is never easy,' says Hiroute Guebré Selassié, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel.

The Mapping of initiatives and projects which was presented to

the Ministerial (MPC) in N'Djamena on 14 June 2017, captures more than 450 projects launched between January 2011 and April 2016 in the Sahel region.



**Résumé**  
Après la fiche régionale dans le Sahel (mars/avril 2016) demeurant encore une exception, la majorité des pays continuant jusqu'à à être mise en œuvre sur le plan national. En outre, le Mali demeure le point focal des initiatives de coopération en matière de gouvernance et de sécurité. Les projets ciblant les institutions existantes sont deux fois plus nombreux que ceux destinés à la société civile. Enfin, les projets relatifs à la gouvernance tendent à avoir des budgets plus élevés que ceux qui concernent les domaines de la sécurité.  
Ce sont quelques-uns des constats qui émergent de la cartographie sectorielle des initiatives déployées dans les pays du Sahel en matière de sécurité et de gouvernance. Ce travail, réalisé à la demande du Secrétariat technique de la Plateforme ministérielle de coordination des stratégies Sahel et sur transcriture du Bureau des Nations unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et le Sahel (UNOWAS), par l'Institut d'études de sécurité (ISS) et le Centre européen de gestion des politiques de développement (ECDPM), a permis de collecter des informations sur plus de 450 projets lancés entre janvier 2011 et avril 2016.  
La présente note d'analyse est assortie d'une base de données en ligne accessible sur le site de UNOWAS. Pour constituer un outil efficace de mise en commun de l'information en vue d'une meilleure coordination des efforts de coopération dans le Sahel, cette base de données devrait être mise à jour régulièrement. Cet exercice ne sera utile que s'il bénéficie d'un soutien politique fort des différents partenaires concernés.

## Cover of the report

The technical support provided by ISS and ECDPM follows independent research conducted by the two organisations in 2014 that stressed the need for additional coordination in the Sahel.

'The difficulties we faced in collecting information show that the challenge of coordination in the Sahel remains,' says Lori-Anne Thérroux-Bénoni, Director of the ISS Dakar Office. 'This mapping is an important first step towards more effective planning and programming in the areas of security and governance the Sahel.'

At its June meeting in N'Djamena, the MPC recommended that the database be updated and expanded to include the resilience and development sector, and to document national initiatives.

'The excellent work of the ISS, which has a track record of reliable research in the Sahel, shows that governments in the region must take the lead on joint strategies,' says Angel Losada, Special Representative of the European Union for the Sahel.

For more information :

<https://unowas.unmissions.org/fr/cartographie-sectorielle-interventions-relatives-a-la-securite-et-a-la-gouvernance-dans-le-sahel>

## Mali and Niger strengthen intelligence analysis through the G5 Sahel

Countries in the Sahel region face multiple challenges affecting both national and human security. As evidenced by the recent terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, as well as the important illicit flows of migrants, firearms and drugs passing through the Sahelo-Saharan strip, these threats are transnational in nature. In response, the states of the region have set up a regional structure, focused on security and development cooperation: the G5 Sahel.



The participants during the workshop in Bamako

In the framework of its close partnership with the G5 Sahel, and particularly with its Security Cooperation Platform (in French «Plateforme de Coopération en Matière de Sécurité»-PCMS), UNODC delivered two national training workshops in Niamey and Bamako, from 19 to 30 June 2017. These sessions focused on intelligence gathering and analysis, considered as a fundamental aspect of countries' efforts to fight terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Mr. Nakagawa, the Representative of the government of Japan, who attended the closing ceremony of the workshop of Niamey, stated that «*transnational organized crime, armed groups and firearms in circulation, constitute the soft underbelly of the security in the region and in the world.*»

In addition to enhancing techniques for intelligence gathering in relation with terrorist acts or criminal cases, UNODC has chosen to integrate the «analytical» dimension in training sessions to strengthen participants' capacities to extract as much information as possible from the data collected. These two sessions gathered 56

participants (25 in Niamey, and 31 in Bamako), including 9 women, from various law enforcement agencies and national units of the PCMS, as well as judicial officers, in order to train all the components of the criminal chain and to promote increased cooperation between the different services.

The sessions provided participants with increased knowledge of the intelligence cycle, supervised deliveries, the recruitment and management of human sources and informants. Practical training to draft briefing notes to different law enforcement agencies following a terrorist attack to inform security and political authorities and direct their decision-making process was also provided.

«*The use of criminal analysis in a proactive manner will allow us to move towards prevention*» said Prosecutor Boubacar Sidiki Samaké, head of the Malian Specialized Judicial Unit against Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime («Pôle judiciaire spécialisé de lutte contre le terrorisme et la criminalité transnationale organisée» in French), during the opening ceremony of the Bamako training. The Ambassador of the

Netherlands in Mali. H.E. Mr. Jolke Oppewal, two representatives of the Government of Denmark, the G5 Sahel Focal Point in Mali, the PCMS National Coordinator and Lieutenant-Colonel Georges Modibo Keita, Head of the Special Investigations Brigade (BIS) of the Specialized Judicial Unit also attended the opening of the training session. During the closing ceremony, the head of the Brigade stressed that «*the current context characterized by a security crisis requires strengthening the use and analysis of criminal intelligence as an essential tool to process information.*»

The G5 Sahel was created in February 2014, when the Heads of State of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger signed a convention on the creation of a regional economic and security organization. One of the most important decisions subsequently taken by this organization was the creation of a new cooperation mechanism: the G5 Sahel PCMS, which UNODC received the mandate to support following the adoption of its legal framework (also drafted with UNODC support) during the Heads of State Summit held in N'Djamena in November 2015.

The support programme submitted in January 2017 aims to enhance the operational capacities and the levels of information exchange between members of the G5-Sahel, to fight terrorism and transnational organized crime. These activities form part of the UNODC Sahel Programme, which was developed as the Contribution of UNODC to the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

# Make Sahel a priority: an integrated UNODC response against transnational organised crime

With the support of UNODC, the Sahel Programme Progress Report 2017 was officially launched in Vienna this month, showcasing the results achieved by the countries in the Sahel region regarding the fight against drug trafficking, transnational crime and terrorism.



The Sahel, the transition zone between the arid north of Africa and tropic south, has highly variable rainfall. © CIFR

**P**resented in attendance of Aldo Lale-Demoz, UNODC Deputy Executive Director; Marou Amadou, Minister for Justice of Niger; Lotfi Bouchaara, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations in Vienna; and Pierre Lapaque, UNODC Regional Representative for West and Central Africa, the report outlined that, spanning across Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, and located in a semidesert area, the Sahel remains as one of the poorest regions in the world. Two-thirds of 70 million inhabitants of the Sahel are under the age of 25, and the region needs strong support for effective border control, accountable criminal justice systems, and strengthened law enforcement capacities.

«The nexus between terrorism and transnational crime has become blatant, and it is now mandatory to involve member States towards closer cooperation in order to address these challenges, where illicit financial transactions

related to drug trafficking, and trafficking in persons are often used to support violent extremism and terrorism,» said Mr. Lale-Demoz, following the report's presentation.

**The nexus between terrorism and transnational crime has become blatant, and it is now mandatory to involve member States towards closer cooperation**

To make progress, the countries in the region established a Security Cooperation Platform and UNODC experts have provided specialized training to strengthen capacity to counter terrorism and transnational organized crime.

The main achievements of the platform include the creation of a Specialized Judicial Unit to strengthen the fight against terrorism and its financing in Burkina Faso, the dismantling of an inter-

national drug trafficking network in Mali, and the creation of a law to ensure better access to legal aid for citizens in Mauritania.

Following the adoption of an anti-corruption bill in December 2016, Niger has recovered more than \$ 5 million in assets. This year, the Government signed a UN protocol that ensures the protection of children associated with armed and terrorist groups and agrees to refer such children to protection services.

«The support of UNODC, as we have seen, has been an important contribution to improving the criminal chain in dealing with terrorist offences cases,» said Mr. Amadou.

The platform also reports on seizures of illicit drugs, passports and gold, as well as dollar bills through the training of Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) and the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) officers.

The report adds that the Sahel Programme implementation will continue with a greater focus on the South-South cooperation and on priority areas, including proactive investigation techniques to counter transnational crime in key border zones and foreign terrorist fighters, cybercrime and radicalization.

The Programme also works closely with Algeria, Libya and Morocco, as well as other UN entities in order to address the challenges affecting the region, and to strengthen countries' integration into activities and initiatives in the region.

**Find the report here:**  
[bit.ly/2tp5xTK](http://bit.ly/2tp5xTK)



Lieutenant Mariam Bamba Konaté

**“W**e are working to build security and justice institutions which act in full compliance with the law and in the interest of the population that seeks peace and prosperity.” These words might as well have been extracted from a catchy slogan of a political party or a regional or international organisation involved in peace and security in Mali! However, they are all but a slogan. They are the free and spontaneous words of a Malian woman who expresses herself without hesitation, frankly and directly, and with great conviction. This woman is Mariam Konaté Bamba, Customs Controller at the Research and Intervention Division of the Direction of Intelligence and Customs Investigations in Bamako. A professionally-committed woman and a true patriot.

### Mariam Bamba Konaté in 4 dates

**1973**

Born in Sebekoro/ Kita in the Kayes Region

.....

**2007**

Admitted to the staffing competition for recruitment to a government position in the Customs Controller division

.....

**2008**

First professional assignment in the city of Bamako

.....

**2008**

Recipient of a Certificate of Achievement from the World Customs Organisation

The situation that Mali, her country, has been facing in the past few years has forged the character of this woman in her forties and mother of one child. *“Peace, security and development is everyone’s business. Each one of us has a role to play.”* pounds this Malinké woman, born in Sebekoro/Kita in the Kayes region, who rejects the idea that Mali and Africa are doomed to a life a survival marred by instability and underdevelopment.

This rejection, which has almost become an obsession, has been nurtured by Mariam Konaté since her early childhood and has become her credo against resignation and fatalism.

In a Malian society characterized by socio-cultural barriers which restrain the sphere of action of a woman and confine her to traditional chores, it was neither given nor even expected for a woman to acquire a higher education, and much less so to hope one day to manage a team of customs officers! Despite that, after having successfully completed grammar school in a small school of Mopti-Sévaré in the northern part of Mali, Mariam, the eldest of five children, enjoys the support of her family who encourages her to pursue a secondary education and then a professional training. Far from home, in the city of Timbuktu at first, and then at the Central School for Industry, Trade and Administration (ECICA) in Bamako, in 1996 she earns a Customs Expert degree with honours. This confers her today the rank of Lieutenant in the Malian army.

In March 2007, Mariam is enlisted in the Customs General Office (Direction Générale des Douanes), after successfully passing a staffing competition. The girl from Sebekoro/Kita is from now on a civil servant of the Malian state determined to play her part as a customs officer, but also as a Malian woman



Legend

who can and must contribute to the peace building effort.

Aware of existing challenges, Mariam Konaté admits without hesitation that advances were achieved thanks to government efforts. But, true to herself and hardly containing her frustration, she confesses that there is a lot more work to do.

If Malians have conveyed their commitment to peace through the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, they now must own it to make peace a reality instead of a far-reaching objective.

This ownership process, Mariam experiences it every day in the course of her work. As a responsible and knowledgeable official, she views, for example, the implementation of the security sector reform (SSR) not only as a necessity, but also as a priority, as it will enable Mali to modernise its security and justice institutions, and strengthen the rule of law for all.

In an action that echoes Mariam's conviction, the SSR Commissariat, in partnership with MINUSMA, has

launched on May 11, the National Council for RSS in Mali which will develop, among other things, a strategy for the national reform of security and defence.

**Mariam Bamba Konaté reaches out to women for their active participation in the security sector reform process, insisting that *"the fight for peace and stability is everybody's business"***

In order to fully play her role in the framework of the RSS, Mariam takes all available trainings in Security in Customs Control: Power of Customs Agents; Securing Customs revenue; Customs Investigations and Fight against Fraud; Training on UNODC kits against drug and crime; Introduction to Professional Techniques of Control and Intervention; etc. In January 2016, she is honoured with a Certificate of Achievement from the World Customs Organisation.

With such an experience and determination, our Lieutenant of the Malian army doesn't shy away from making proposals to government authorities to help secure the success of the SSR implementation. Her initiatives include, among others, the mobilisation of resources to deliver projects of the security sector reform, and the implementation of capacity-building programmes through professional trainings.

Keeping up with her commitment as a patriotic woman, Mariam Bamba Konaté reaches out to women for their active participation in the security sector reform process, insisting that *"the fight for peace and stability is everybody's business"*.

As an adept of walking, her favourite sport, Mariam knows that efforts are rewarded. Despite the many difficulties her country is going through, she wears a generous smile as she keeps great hope on the determination of her fellow countrymen in general, and Malian women in particular, to build a prosperous and peace-driven Mali.

## UNOWAS convened a meeting of the UNISS Steering Committee

**A**s part of the UNOWAS engagement to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, chaired on Friday 23 June the Steering Committee of the UNISS.

Heads and representatives of regional UN agencies met at UNOWAS to discuss ways to improve the UN support to the Sahel region, and to ensure coherence in the UN interventions.

“We should have a clear division of labor among UN actors in the Sahel to tackle the challenging multiplicity strategies in the region, and streamline the UN’s interventions towards an effective effort to improve

the situation in the Sahel”, said M. Ibn Chambas in his opening remarks.

In order to streamline the UN support and improve its coordination, the participants agreed improve coherence and synergies across sahelian countries; increase the documentation and sharing of best practices across countries; enhance the coordination between relevant strategies and funding for the Sahel; and finally facilitate access to additional resources, once supplementary UNISS-dedicated pledges are redeemed.

UNISS was launched in 2013 by the United Nations Secretary-general to provide a framework for UN interventions in the Sahel region.

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## Women and young people from West Africa supportive of The Gambia

**T**he Workgroup Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel (GTFJPS-AO) organised a solidarity mission to Banjul, from March 28 to 31, 2017. This mission had two objectives : on one hand, provide support to women and men from Gambia, in the aftermath of the post-electoral crisis of December 2016; and on the other hand, help implement an action plan aimed at strengthening peace and social cohesion in Gambia, notably through the promotion of women’s and young people’s involvement in the electoral process. During the audience granted to the members of the

Workgroup, the President of Gambia, Adama Barrow, expressed his strong commitment to the respect of human rights, particularly those of women and the youth.

Organised under the leadership of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), this mission was composed of about fifteen women and young leaders from a dozen countries from the West African sub-region and the Sahel.

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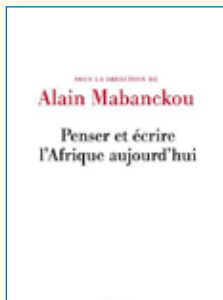
## UNOWAS welcomes the ECOWAS’ commitment to strengthen collaboration

**F**rom 31 to 4 June, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, accompanied by his deputy, DSRSG Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, participated in the 51st Ordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Monrovia, Liberia. In his address to ECOWAS Heads of State, SRSGB Ibn Chambas welcomed the Community’s commitment to strengthen collaboration. In this vein, he offered further support from the United Nations in the implementation of the ECOWAS

Framework on Security Sector Reform and Governance, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the ECOWAS Decision on transhumance. “Ringing the security sector under full democratic control must be a priority”, said Mr. Ibn Chambas stated. UNOWAS has developed a close cooperation with regional organizations aiming at developing common and coherent positions and strategies to address some of the region’s most pressing problems, in particular unconstitutional changes of Government and other political crises.



## Think and write Africa today



By Alain Mabanckou  
Published on January 02, 2017  
Pages: 224  
Price: \$13.99

**L**ettres noires : des ténèbres à la lumière – This is under this title that Alain Mabanckou gave, on 17 March 2016 at the Collège de France, his inaugural lesson as a visiting professor. A lesson that saw the participation of more than a thousand listeners. Confirmed by this echo, Alain Mabanckou called out the researchers, writers and thinkers of postcolonial Africa, inviting them to come and debate on the theme Think and write Africa today. It is the proceedings of this symposium held on 2 May 2016, that we publish, the interven-

tions of 19 participants from all fields of knowledge and creative writing. The deep wish is that this symposium «resounds as a call to the beginning of African Studies in France». This is one way of questioning «the delay France has made in the place to be given to postcolonial studies, while in America almost all universities have recognized them and consider them as one of the most dynamic and promising fields of research.»

**For more information :** [bit.ly/2t5dDjX](http://bit.ly/2t5dDjX)

## Cross-border Co-operation and Policy Networks in West Africa



By OECD Publishing  
Published on January 13, 2017  
Pages: 224  
Price: \$48

**T**his publication examines how policy actors involved in cross-border co-operation contribute to the regional integration process in West Africa. It uses a pioneering methodology, known as social network analysis, to visualise the formal and informal relationships between actors involved in cross-border policy networks, showing that borders have notable and diverse impacts on exchanges of information and the relative power of networks. The report then analyses a range of regional indicators of co-operation potential, visually

demonstrating that borders can also affect the ability of sub-regions within West Africa to develop cross-border initiatives in a number of ways. Combining these two analyses with the perceptions of regional policy makers as to which border areas they consider as priorities for regional integration, the publication concludes with the analytical foundations for more effective place-based policies that can enhance cross-border co-operation in West Africa.

**For more information :** [bit.ly/2kL0sRy](http://bit.ly/2kL0sRy)

## Migration and Environmental Change in the West African Sahel : Why Capabilities and Aspirations Matter



By Victoria van der Land  
Publication date: 21 Sep 2017  
Pages: 200

**T**he West African Sahel is one of the regions predicted to be heavily affected by climate change in the future. Slow-onset environmental changes, such as increasing rainfall variability and rising temperature, are presumed to worsen the livelihood conditions and to increase the out-migration from the affected regions. Based on qualitative and quantitative data from study areas in Mali and Senegal, this book examines the relationship between population dynamics, livelihoods and environment in the Sahel region, focussing specifically on motives for migration. Critiquing the assumption that environmental stress

is the dominating migration driver, the author demonstrates the important role of individual aspirations and social processes, such as education opportunities and the pull of urban lifestyles. In doing so, the book provides a more nuanced picture of the environment-migration nexus, arguing that slow-onset environmental changes are actually less important as drivers of migration than it is often depicted in the media and climate change literature. This book will be of great interest to scholars of environmental sociology, migration and development studies.

**For more information :** [bit.ly/2tjYK0u](http://bit.ly/2tjYK0u)



**Security Sector Reform is a priority area in UNOWAS’s conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The SSR strategy of UNOWAS is directed at supporting and advising ECOWAS and ensuring that the United Nations approach to SSR in West Africa and the Sahel is harmonized.**