The rise of cross-border insecurity

What 800 Sahelians have to say

Burkina Faso National Report

*Perception study on the drivers of insecurity and violent extremism
in the border regions of the Sahel*

AN 'EPIC, UNUSUAL AND STRATEGIC STUDY'

This research project on perceptions of insecurity and violent extremism drivers in the cross-border regions of the Sahel has offered a unique opportunity to embark on a major and innovative study at the regional level regarding global issues such as armed violence, radicalization, jihadism and security. The project was undertaken without preconceptions and its multinational scope, through the study of frontier regions of countries in the Sahel, together with the decision to listen to the views and ideas of the region's own people and take account of their perceptions and representations, has contributed to the broad, generous and ambitious orientation of an exercise. In general, very little is known about how the populations most affected by armed violence, extremism and insecurity perceive and react to it. In fact, a dominant paradigm exists regarding these questions, which are generally seen from 'top-down' perspective by national and international institutions. These institutions opt for political, security, police and military responses to violent radicalism based on religion.

While perceptions and representations do not necessarily precisely reflect reality, they contribute towards conveying an idea of its depth, intensity, and texture: its sound, its tonality and its contrasts. Most often what is 'perceived' is a distortion, an exaggerated vision of what is, in fact, 'lived'. However, the characteristic distance between what is lived and what is perceived may also take an inverted form, with the latter offering an attenuated and filtered reconstruction of reality. The respondents express themselves, for the most part, in a sober manner in describing the misfortunes and the mortal dangers they have suffered. The responses of the 800 Sahelians who have been interviewed during this study reveal a practical rationality in the face of the challenges of radicalization, violence and insecurity, which is evinced by vulnerable individual actors whose circumstances are precarious and painful.

In addition to the difficulty and danger involved, readers of this report should be aware of the experimental nature of this enquiry, which was undertaken simultaneously in eight Sahelian countries. This wide area of research, studied in depth over a short period of time, has opened up ideas for action and reflection which have hitherto been disregarded or insufficiently considered. Thus, it has given access to fruitful lines of research and identified latent solidarity networks. It is agreed that this exploratory work should be furthered.

Over a period of between five and eight days, 59 researchers made round trips totalling some 24,000 kilometres, covering the frontier zones linking Senegal to Mauritania and Mali, the zones linking Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, and those of the countries bordering on Lake Chad, namely Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon. A questionnaire was used to collect responses from 698 individuals in all, spread throughout these eight countries of the Sahel including, in descending order, 147 respondents in Mali (21 per cent of the regional sample); 120 in Nigeria (17 per cent); 100 in Niger (14 per cent); 88 in Mauritania (12 per cent); 74 in Senegal (10 per cent); 71 in Chad (10 per cent); 60 in Burkina Faso (8 per cent); and 38 in Cameroon (5 per cent). Supplementary in-depth interviews were carried out with more than 50 people during additional consultations.

Through these two stages of the inquiry process, the teams identified a pool of 80 key contacts who were subsequently invited to come to Abuja, Bamako, Dakar, N'Djamena, Niamey, Nouakchott, Ouagadougou and Yaoundé to compare and exchange their perceptions of the reasons for insecurity and violent extremism in their respective frontier zones. Interviews were also set up, to the extent this was possible, with those who sympathised with armed groups or with reformed group members.

Lastly, national and international consultants were approached to produce case studies and conceptual analyses which were complementary.

The organisation of the research itself represented a substantial challenge. Problems arose from the recruitment of teams to administer the questionnaire (these were composed of teams of researchers and university personnel made up entirely of nationals from the countries concerned) as well as from the simultaneous initiation of research on the ground in all eight countries. Other issues were associated with the necessity to follow a protocol in relation to security; communication covering the entire group of researchers dispersed throughout the cross-border conflict zones; and the organisation of the transfer of the contact group of key respondents to the various capitals. Plans needed to be constantly revised to react to circumstances and various constraints. These included administrative considerations (permits and co-ordination with the authorities); political concerns (the post-election situation in Nigeria and the transition in Burkina Faso); security scares (Boko Haram attacks in the region of Lake Chad); financial difficulties (failed transfers, budget overruns); technical problems (electricity and internet failures); and even climatic and cultural obstructions (the rainy season and the onset of the month of Ramadan).
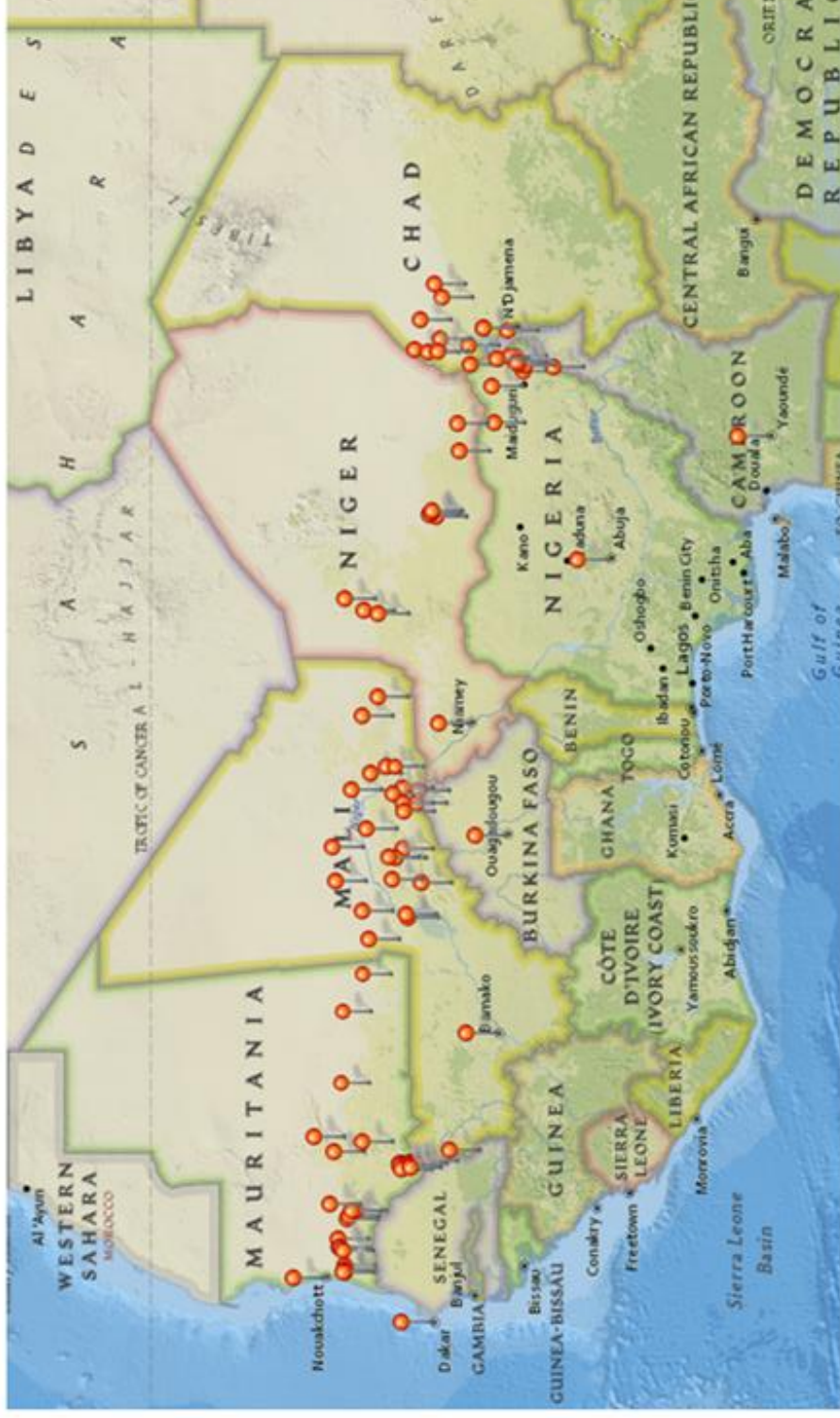
The decision to work with university researchers and interviewers of local nationality rather than with external consultants was a risk, but one which has paid off. The goal was to construct a team which had the most appropriate profile for a method of enquiry which was adapted to local realities; was able to suggest the best places to go: was able to select the most able interviewers; and, finally, was able to bring insight to the analysis of the results. The common methodology across the survey was the outcome of interactions with the eight national teams and thus emerged from a collective effort. The quality of the data and the analysis which has come out of the responses of the 800 Sahelian respondents is opening up a range of options for mitigating their vulnerability to violent extremism and enhancing the resilience of the populations concerned. The study has deliberately ignored the conventional taxonomy of the armed groups and the interpretation of religious motivation which is typical of political science approaches in order to concentrate on a conceptual framework which stays closer to the perceptions of the inhabitants of the cross-border regions themselves.

In the majority of the areas covered, however, the populations received the researchers favourably and opened up to them without any major problems throughout the entire critical phase: the research on the ground. In Mali, the locals were particularly appreciative of the courage of the researchers who had come to see them where they lived and had posed direct questions, going straight to the essential issues. In Nigeria, the teams were all the more favourably received because their respondents were conscious that no-one representing the authorities had ever seen fit to concern themselves with what the population had been suffering for years, since the beginning of the Boko Haram insurrection. It should be noted that, in certain sensitive cross-border areas, unusually, none of the teams were escorted by security forces or police during their work on the ground, despite the fact that the study had laid down no procedure on this issue. However, the teams were, themselves, supposed to announce their arrival and make contact with the public authorities and with the military command in the districts they proposed to visit. Both of these elements formed an important part of the approach since, in the view of those involved in the study it had an impact on the way the neutrality of the study was perceived by local inhabitants. Thankfully, no researcher was worried, even though they were at times in close proximity of security threats.

Amidst the observations, the results and the suggested avenues for further reflection, there are facts which might seem, at first sight, to be embarrassing, since it is evident that the perceptions of the

individual interviewed prioritise some striking truths which demand to be considered. However, within what the responders have to say and their ideas for change there is, above all, a demand for the reinforcement of the state, and a desire for normality and security indissociable from a citizenship which is in the course of formation. The stories of the respondents, though sometimes tragic, also have the merit of not permitting the future to be previewed in a too deeply apocalyptic a manner. Those involved in this study have refused to analyse the situation using fear as an explanatory principle (the heuristic of fear), although by the end of this research it had become clear that radicalization is a durable phenomenon to which people will have to adapt and respond. At the very moment when the international community finds itself entrenched in a second "war against terror" in the Middle East, the questions dealt with here are not merely of local concern.

Burkina Faso - 6 interviewers
1'500 km – 5 days

60 interviews
Villages around 6 towns
Languages: Fulfulde

Cameroon - 6 interviewers
1'500 km – 8 days

38 interviews
Villages around 6 towns
Languages: Mandara, Fulfulde, Chad Arabic, Kotoko, Kanuri, Gamargu, Podoko, Matal, Mafa &Kapsiki

Mali - 8 interviewers
8'000 km – 12 days

147 interviews
Villages around 15 towns
Languages: Fulfulde, Tamasheq, Hassaniya Arabic

Mauritania - 6 interviewers
2'500 km – 7 days

88 interviews
Villages around 16 towns
Languages: Pulaar, Hassaniya Arabic, Wolof

Niger - 9 interviewers
4'000 km – 6 days
100 interviews

Villages around 12 towns

Languages: Hausa, Tamasheq, Fulfulde

Nigeria - 9 interviewers
1'600 km – 7 days

120 interviews
Villages around 8 towns
Languages: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo

Senegal – 6 interviewers
2'800 km – 6 days

74 interviews
20 villages
Languages: Wolof, French

Chad - 9 interviewers
2'000 km – 6 days

71 interviews
Villages around towns
Languages: Chad Arabic, Kanembu, Buduma

8 capital cities
8 focus groups

80 community leaders

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Study areas
The collection of perceptions of people living on the border took place primarily in the provinces of Oudalan and Seno (at the Goudebou refugee camp). These provinces, in the extreme north of the country, are located in one of the thirteen administrative regions of Burkina Faso named "Sahel". With Dori as its capital, Burkina Faso's Sahel region had a population of over 1.1 million in 2012, compared with around 860,000 in 2003. These provinces are characterized by their diverse ethnicity (Tuareg, Fulani, Moors, Bela, Hausa, Mossi and Gurma all live here) and language (mainly Fula, Tamasheq, Songhai and French, with Hausa, Moorish, Mossi and Gurmanché also spoken in the region). This wide variety of cultures is further enriched by the influence of Malians, Nigerians, Algerians and Mauritanians who live in, or frequently visit, the region. In addition to these cultural aspects, security and economic issues are other reasons why these areas were chosen for the study. In general, people expressed satisfaction that such a study would take into account their perceptions.

State and citizenship, religion and identity
Previously known for its stability and as a mediator and actor in sub-regional security, Burkina Faso now finds itself caught up in instability. Political transition has revealed the latent divisions of the Compaoré era. The country must now face the history behind these social crises and tensions. Their origins are structural: Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world and it has an active and engaged civil society including young people. The challenge now is to act on the 'push factors' that make the country vulnerable to insecurity. The secular state's commitment to managing the peaceful coexistence of religions has so far been successful and it should continue these efforts.

Inter-communal and cross-border relations
Unequal access to basic social services makes the Sahel region a place that is still isolated and in search of a development model. The media could be a relevant tool for increasing that access. The border offers opportunities for trade and transhumance, but this can result in two types of trafficking: ordinary trafficking, which is vital for people, and hidden trafficking, with adverse effects on security. Beyond the pride in being Burkinabé, the idea of the border is relativized by the ties between people on both sides, outside formal citizenship and according to opportunity. The security situation in the border region is precarious. In addition to illegal trafficking and the crisis in Mali, resulting in the controversial presence of refugees, there is a perception that other factors cause insecurity: poor management of natural resources (including panning for gold), tensions around pastoral activity, delinquency, diet and health.

Radicalization: clues and process
Respondents believe that violent extremism is a phenomenon coming from outside the country and is essentially motivated by material needs, not by religious beliefs. No case of extreme violence was identified. Yet, if the survey area were to become an area of action for jihadist groups, they would find structural conditions which facilitate the recruitment of sympathizers. Education and economic development are the basis for prevention against radicalization and violent extremism. They must be complemented by awareness raising programmes for young people, in partnership with the media, schools and civil society organisations. The state should take advantage of the people's strong sense of trust in the army to ensure their safety by developing frameworks for dialogue with them.

The role of women and young people
Vulnerable and ignored, teachers and counsellors, women see their role in the prevention of, and the fight against, insecurity as underused. The establishment of specific talks including women could lead to progress. The issue of the place and role of young people in preventing insecurity and violent

extremism is crucial in Burkina Faso. The focus must be on inter-generational dialogue to address the demands, and the need, for recognition of young people. Religious and community leaders can be an asset in this way. The state must renew trust with young people through a convincing development plan for Oudalan and the greater Sahel region. The effects of unemployment and poverty are exacerbated by the feeling of marginalization. They form the basis for youth recruitment by criminal groups and, potentially, jihadists.

Avenues for reflection

Based on the perceptions collected during the study and observation in the field, as well as the analyses of, and discussions with, various relevant stakeholders, the following avenues for further reflection emerge:

- o Facilitate the development, and opening up, of the Sahel Region of Burkina Faso, in collaboration with neighbouring countries;
- o Initiate dialogue to facilitate the prevention/management of insecurity and violent extremism;
- o Work with the media to increase the focus on development and the prevention of insecurity.

INTRODUCTION

Departing from Ouagadougou, six interviewers travelled over five days – a 1,500km roundtrip – and conducted 60 interviews in villages located around six different towns (Markoye, Tin-Akoff, Oursi, Mamassi, Deou and Goudebou) on the borders with Mali and Niger. Ten of the sources identified during this survey were then invited to Ouagadougou to meet and exchange perceptions of insecurity and violent extremism in their respective border areas. The analysis of the results presented in this report has been substantiated by information gathered in Ouagadougou and from contributions by national experts on the subject.

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From a security point of view, the porous nature of the border, its length and the limited presence of national authorities, are all challenges characteristic of the Sahel region. The Malian crisis in 2012 has increased the level of insecurity. Cross-border traffic, which is difficult to control, exposes the area to other forms of insecurity. In April 2015, the attack on the mine in Tambao (with the kidnapping of the Romanian mineworker) illustrated the inadequate control of security in the territory. The phenomenon is of growing concern to the state, local people, and everyone involved in the region's development.

In addition, Burkina Faso has taken in over 30,000 refugees who were displaced by the conflict in Mali. Still present, the refugees are now grouped in two camps in the Sahel region – Goudebou in Seno province and Mentao in Soum province. The presence of these refugees worries a segment of the population of Burkina Faso.

In terms of economic issues, Burkina Faso's Sahel region offers many opportunities for trade between the people of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Most of the people make a living from farming and crafts. Before the crisis in Mali, the Sahel region was a celebrated tourist area. This enabled people and businesses to attract foreign currency and create jobs. Mining is also a relatively important economic activity in the region.

At the national level, Burkina Faso's economy is mainly based on agriculture, livestock and, in recent years, mining. This has allowed the country to obtain an average annual growth of 6.1% over the past ten years (2004-2013). The country's economic performance has been strengthened by its relative social harmony over the years, although it remains one of the world's poorest countries.

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[1] INSD, Statistical yearbook, 2012.

In general, people expressed satisfaction that such a study would take into account their perceptions. Although Burkina Faso is not the first Sahel country one thinks of in terms of violent extremism and insecurity, it is important to consider the structural conditions which might generate 'push factors' which are capable of changing the profile of the survey area.

The survey's target population consists of farmers (19%), livestock-raisers (14%), students (10%), traders (18%), housewives (8%), civil servants (11%), contract workers (6%) and other professional occupations (14%). Forty percent of the target population is made up of young people (aged 18-35). The other people who were interviewed fall almost equally between the age group 36-45 and those over 46. In addition, the target population is composed of 72% men and 28% women. More than half of respondents (52%) have attended primary school or secondary school or university and 28% have no education. The rest of the target population has a minimum level of literacy (9%) or some Quranic schooling (11%).

The analysis of this unprecedented collection of perceptions from the population in the frontier zones of the Sahel who are most vulnerable to, and most concerned with, security is structured around four considerations which are indicative of the complexity of the subject of the study. In this report, the perceptions are first placed in the context of the state and citizenship, religion and identity (Section I), before being examined in relation to inter-communal relations and cross-border issues (Section II). These two initial stages contribute to the understanding of the process of radicalisation and its measurement (Section III), before the report puts into perspective the part played by women and young people (Section IV). The report concludes with avenues for further reflection. While this report is based on the results and observations in the eight national reports within the international study, it is not to be regarded as a substitute for them.

STATE AND CITIZENSHIP, RELIGION AND IDENTITY

Points to remember:

- Previously known for its stability and as a mediator and actor in sub-regional security, Burkina Faso now finds itself caught up in instability. Political transition has revealed the latent divisions of the Compaoré era.
- The country must now face the history behind these social crises and tensions. Their origins are structural: Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world and it has an active and engaged civil society including young people. The challenge now is to act on the 'push factors' that make the country vulnerable to insecurity.
- The secular state's commitment to managing the peaceful coexistence of religions has so far been successful and it should continue these efforts.

1. From stability to the historic political transition

> *"Burkina Faso has experienced neither civil war nor armed conflict nor terrorism... The fact that Burkina Faso has managed to avoid violence and prolonged armed conflict is quite remarkable... The most serious threat to peace and stability in Burkina Faso does not come from violent extremism, but from the inability to manage the political transition".* [2]

An overview of political history and the Compaoré era

Abroad, Burkina Faso enjoys a reputation as a 'land of peace', but grave tensions inside the country are now shaking this image. These tensions have grown from a political history comprised of three essential steps:

o   The post-independence period, 1960-1983, was an essential phase in the political life of Burkina Faso. The country had several political regimes, but the most significant one was the popular uprising of January 1966 in response to union demands. This uprising led to the resignation of the first President, Maurice Yameogo, and the army's coming to power under General Sangoulé Lamizana. Since then, and until 2014, the army always held power, regardless of the 4th Republic proclaimed in 1991.

o   The revolution period, 1983-1987, is Burkina Faso's best-known political phase. Led by Captain Thomas Sankara – a young man with a vision for all of Africa, who was considered the Father of the Burkinabé Revolution – this period was marked by great reforms in the country's socio-political, cultural and economic life. The country's name changed from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso. The revolution, through the charismatic President Thomas Sankara, gave much hope for development in Burkina Faso and throughout Africa. These hopes were snuffed out with the end of the revolution in 1987 which followed the tragic death of President Sankara.

o   The democratic period, with the beginning of the 4th Republic, is the era of the regime of Blaise Compaoré. Accused of masterminding the assassination of his friend Thomas Sankara, Blaise Compaoré took power in 1987. His Presidency has been blamed for many things: the assassination of the emblematic figures of the revolution; the murder of journalist Norbert

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[2] Augustin Loada and Peter Romaniuk, *Preventing Violent Extremism in Burkina Faso: Toward National Resilience Amid Regional Insecurity*, (Global Center on Cooperative Security, June 2014), p.3.

Zongo; impunity in relation to crimes; endemic corruption; the high cost of living; as well as the degradation of the economic, social, educational and cultural life of the people. Despite these accusations, some observers believe that Blaise Compaoré put the country on track for development. In October 2014, the system came to a halt following a popular uprising led by young people, political parties and civil society in order to block 'patrimonialization' (i.e. a system of inherited power) which would take power away from the people. These protests should not conceal the positive record of Blaise Campaoré, as it is highlighted by others. This includes development progress in both the social and economic spheres, as well as economic diversification and growth as it was observed in the last decade in particular.

In short, from independence until today, the country has gone through moments of crisis without ever falling into civil war or being under the threat of armed groups. A few crises have shaken this stability: the wars between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1973 and 1985; several coups which occurred from 1979 to 1983; the crisis following the assassination of President Thomas Sankara in 1987; the social crisis following the assassination of Norbert Zongo in 1998; and the military-social crisis of 2011 before the popular uprising in 2014.

It should also be noted that civil society organisations in Burkina Faso are increasingly involved in monitoring public policy, both at the national and regional level. The Sahel region of Burkina Faso is no exception: a number of associations, NGOs and other groups are particularly active in the field of development (health, education, nutrition, livestock, agriculture, etc.). Among them, some used to be part of the monitoring instruments of the country's development strategy (named SCADD).

The historic political transition: the challenge of strategic management

The political transition in Burkina Faso, which began in October 2014, is a very important step in the democratic development of the country and the sub-region. It was born out of the will of the Burkinabé people – and especially its young people – to oppose the stubbornness of one man, claim freedom and implement real democracy and the rule of law in Burkina Faso. The trigger for the uprising was the intention of Blaise Compaoré to amend the Constitution in order to seek re-election in 2015. The protest also sent a strong signal to other African leaders whose personal interests often take precedence over the public good. This historic event was preceded by various claims:

o From the socio-political point of view, poor governance (endemic corruption, confusion of authority, impunity of the elite) was the greatest motivating factor.
o From an economic standpoint, inflation, the high cost of living, the lack of jobs and the low per capita income were all charges associated with the poor distribution of wealth in the country which incited revolt. With a Human Poverty Index of 46.7% and an absolute poverty threshold (in 2009) estimated at 130.735 FCFA (262 USD) per person per year, Burkina Faso ranks among the least developed countries.
o From a social perspective, youth unemployment and deteriorating living standards led to various social demands. These were marked by protests, strikes and other manifestations which exacerbated social tensions. One example is the social crisis of 2011, which began with demands expressed at different social and professional levels and eventually reached the military barracks, thus making the outcome uncertain.

Managing the political transition is a security issue for the country. As a result of its relative stability, Burkina Faso has received less attention than its neighbours in international and regional discussions. Today, this transition period must be secured to ensure a future of peace and stability, for the impact will be sub-regional. Indeed, the coming Presidential, Legislative and Municipal elections all have elements capable of increasing insecurity.

This period of protest – demanding the departure of the President – allowed certain groups to disrupt the people's tranquility through armed robberies, kidnappings and other threats of a moral and symbolic nature. Some believe that the increased activity of armed groups, especially in the Sahel, is due to the absence of President Compaoré who had influence with the armed movements in northern Mali. It is certain that the situation is favourable for instilling chaos and fear among the population, while the government focuses primarily on the organisation of elections.

2. A state committed to security and arbitration

> *"Civil society must work for peace alongside the state. Religious and traditional leaders, given their influence over the local peoples, should be used wisely to prevent insecurity and violence".* (Comment by a 30-year-old teacher and member of the Oudalan Youth Association, 9 June 2015)

A mediator state

Until 2014, Burkina Faso had always managed to reduce the risks of conflict through various methods of conciliation, calling on traditional and religious leaders to help lower tensions. Burkina Faso had built an international reputation through its involvement in crisis resolution in Africa, with Blaise Compaoré participating in the resolution of crises in Togo, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Mali. UN Special Rapporteur Ben Emmerson, visiting Ouagadougou in 2013, said that he *"recognises the fact that the country has so far demonstrated its resolute commitment to peace negotiations and peaceful coexistence in a sub-region torn by conflicts in its neighbouring countries, Ivory Coast, Mali and Niger. Burkina Faso has played the role of chief negotiator for peace in many of the major conflicts of the region. The Special Rapporteur notes with satisfaction that (Burkina Faso's mediation) is due, in large part, to a long tradition deeply rooted in religious and ethnic tolerance, dialogue and cooperation among its population."* [3]

Mediations by President Compaoré have been interpreted in various ways. Some protagonists accuse him of fanning the fire of these crises in order to come back and extinguish them through his mediation. For example, Burkina Faso has been involved in mediating the crisis in Mali since 2012. The fact that Burkina Faso sheltered several citizens from northern Mali in Ouagadougou, including leaders of armed groups (notably, the MNLA), affected this mediation. Burkina Faso has also been criticized for sheltering the Ivorian rebellion in Ouagadougou, thus allowing it to prepare and plan their operations from there.

Exposure to insecurity

Burkina Faso is vulnerable to the threats of terrorism, armed conflict and radicalization that have already hit some Sahelian countries, for the following reasons:

o Political transition in itself brings with it the most serious threat of insecurity. Thus, managing this transition is a strategic issue;
o Burkina Faso's geographical proximity to the Malian conflict, as well as the length and insecurity of its borders with Mali and Niger. The border with Mali, which covers 1200km, is marked by no natural or artificial physical demarcation. For nearly half of its length, the

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[3] The UN Special Rapporteur made this comment during a co-ordination meeting organised by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) as part of its Initiative for Integrated Assistance in Countering Terrorism (I-ACT) in Ouagadougou. The goal of this meeting was to help strengthen methods of co-ordination and prevention in Burkina Faso's fight against terrorism.

border is in direct contact with the zone of conflict in northern Mali. The whole border is extremely porous and difficult to secure with the limited human and material resources available;

o Structural conditions, or 'push factors', such as economic instability, lack of natural resources, or social and political tensions. This context particularly affects young people who are most vulnerable to unemployment in a population living below the poverty line;

o Increasing tensions between farmers and herders, traditional miners and mining companies, local communities and mining companies, and conflicts over land tenure, etc. From the perspective of security, with specific relevance to the context of the Sahel region, kidnappings, cattle theft and robbery add to the list of factors which can foster instability.

These threats have already affected the border region of the Sahel Region of Burkina Faso. Many development actors, including NGOs and associations, have decreased activities in this part of the country. This entails a number of social and economic consequences.

Legal and structural mechanisms to prevent insecurity and violent extremism

Burkina Faso benefits from the dynamism of NGOs and associations which promote self-expression among civil society groups and help to sustain a balanced society. This is complemented by the role of traditional and religious leaders. At the national level, the country's Constitution affirms its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international economic, political, social and cultural agreements. The Constitution is the guide for the conduct of democracy. Since November 2014, the Constitution has been supplemented by the Charter for Transition, which also refers to the instruments which protect citizens' rights.

In a complementary way, a number of texts, commitments and decisions testify to Burkina Faso's commitment to fighting insecurity, especially terrorism. The first examples are Laws No.60 and 61-2009/AN of 17 December 2009, which concern, respectively, the suppression of acts of terrorism and the fight against terrorist financing. To counter external threats on its borders, the Government of Burkina Faso has also created a special anti-terrorist force, a national committee to fight terrorism (responsible for co-ordinating all planning, initiatives and anti-terrorist actions), and a national centre against terrorism (responsible for the fight against terrorism in the country at the operational level).

Moreover, Burkina Faso is one of the first three partnering member states of the Initiative for Integrated Assistance in Countering Terrorism (I-ACT) of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) established by the UN Secretary-General in 2005. It is also one of the four member countries involved in the Sahel Judicial Platform, a regional judicial platform for the Sahel countries. Founded in 2010 with support from the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime, this platform facilitates judicial co-operation between Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. It particularly facilitates extradition procedures and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters relating to terrorism.

To succeed in its mission to fight insecurity, Burkina Faso also makes use of the expertise of foreign armed forces, including the United States of America and France. These forces support the state in the training of men and the provision of military equipment. This presence receives mixed reviews: some oppose it while others see the contribution of expertise as crucial in the prevention of, and fight against, insecurity and violent extremism.

3. Representation and religion in Burkina Faso: the terms of the debate

> *"Religious cohabitation requires equal treatment of the different religious denominations, particularly in terms of socio-professional integration".* (Comment by a religious leader, Ouagadougou, 30 June 2015)

Islam, animism and Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism) essentially make up the national religious scene. Statistics on religious practices in Burkina Faso are not homogeneous and are considered sensitive. According to the general population census, conducted in 2006, "*61% of the population practices Islam (mainly, the Sunni branch), 19% is Roman Catholic, 15% adheres exclusively to indigenous beliefs and 4% adheres to various Protestant denominations*"[4]. However, while the website Planète Burkina Faso[5] gives Christians the same order of magnitude (15-20%), it evaluates the Muslim population at 30-40% and traditional religion (animism) at 40-55%.

Although these statistics are not homogeneous, Islam seems to be the most prevalent religion within the population. While Christians are the majority in the centre of the country, the border regions in the north, east and west of the country are home to the largest concentrations of Muslims. Animism, the ancestral religion, is practiced throughout the country, particularly in rural areas.

Among Muslims, there are various schools of thought and brotherhoods. Most come from the Sunni tradition and are primarily brotherhoods. Wahhabism is also represented, although this group is still a minority. Gaining importance through such forms of expression as sectarian isolation, clothing styles or manner of prayer, Wahhabism is widespread in some urban and rural areas of Burkina Faso.

The main brotherhoods in Burkina Faso include the Qadiriyya and Tijaniya (from the holy city of Ramatoullaye).These groups have established their mosques, madrasas and influential marabouts in the north of the country and in Ouagadougou.

Respect for religious freedom or political exhibitionism?

The Burkinabé government is secular, as guaranteed by the Constitution since 1st June 1991. Freedom of religion is the right of every citizen of Burkina Faso and the state tries to enforce it without interference through various laws and measures. Like political parties and associations, any religious organisation must register with the Ministry of Territorial Administration. This registration leads to official recognition for the practice of the religion. In a complementary way, the state grants licenses for radio and television stations run by religious denominations – of which, nearly a dozen operate in the country. Although these media outlets are subject to the same regulation as any others, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the High Council for Communication (i.e. the government body responsible for regulating the media) to enforce the specifications and control the content of the programmes, particularly in the context of religious sermons. The issue is important, for it concerns how to control messages that incite hatred and violence.

At the institutional level, the state tries to encourage interfaith dialogue to promote conciliation. It multiplies the avenues of consultation between religious groups through the organisation of seminars or the establishment of formal channels of exchange. In 2014, it created a directorate for religious dialogue in the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

In terms of education, Franco-Arab and Christian schools are recognised by the state, which encourages the alignment of their curricula to conventional programmes. This is most obvious in the

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[4] INSD, National Census (Recensement général de la population), 2006.
[5] From the website consulted on 8 September 2015 (http://www.planete-burkina.com/religions_burkina.php).

Christian schools which have, in addition to conventional programmes, only limited religious education. The situation is quite different in madrasa and koranic schools, where the teaching is mostly in Arabic with substantial teaching of the Quran. As a result, diplomas from these schools are not recognised, which complicates professional integration into the private and public sectors.

> *"Burkina Faso has a majority of Muslims, yet their degrees are not recognised. Religious cohabitation requires equal treatment of different religious denominations, particularly in terms of socio-professional integration".* (Comment by a resident, Ouagadougou, 18 June 2015)

The state, in its actions in the field of religion, is often criticized. It is accused of mismanagement and of creating frustrations. As much as Muslims blame the state for not supporting the employment of graduates from the so-called Franco-Arab schools, so the Christians accuse the state of insufficiently supporting the promotion of their own activities. For example, the state supports the organisation of the pilgrimage to Mecca for the Muslim faithful, but the same support is not offered for pilgrimages related to other religions.

While the state is already committed to religious equality, it must still clarify certain positions and promote religious representation equally and at all levels of the country's political and social life in order to avoid any form of frustration. The challenge is to monitor and stop frustration at the source before it can escalate into more worrisome crises.

INTER-COMMUNAL AND CROSS-BORDER DYNAMICS

Points to remember:
- Unequal access to basic social services makes the Sahel region a place that is still isolated and in search of a development model. The media could be a relevant tool for increasing that access.
- The border offers opportunities for trade and transhumance, but this can result in two types of trafficking: ordinary trafficking, which is vital for people, and hidden trafficking, with adverse effects on security.
- Beyond the pride in being Burkinabé, the idea of the border is relativized by the ties between people on both sides, outside formal citizenship and according to opportunity.
- The security situation in the border region is precarious. In addition to illegal trafficking and the crisis in Mali, resulting in the controversial presence of refugees, there is a perception that other factors cause insecurity: poor management of natural resources (including panning for gold), tensions around pastoral activity, delinquency, diet and health.

1. The Sahel Region of Burkina Faso: cohabitation and tension in an isolated region

1.1 Towards what form of development?

> *"You drink bottled water because you cannot drink the water that we drink here. This is outrageous. Problems can arise from this".* (Comment by a young man aged 25, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

In the province of Oudalan, the state is present in the form of various basic social services: education, health, administrative services, water, electricity, security and transportation. While most services are represented, their level varies from one locality to another. Services are concentrated in the urban municipality, patchy in the villages. Some 93% of respondents say they have basic social services, with education being the most accessible. Health comes second. Other basic services are assessed in different ways. As limited as they are, they do exist in some remote corners of the region.

Recognising the existence of basic social services is one thing, yet having access to them is another. If distances to get to school are not very long, it is different for electricity, health and the others, both in terms of distance and cost. A resident of Tin-Akoff would have to travel 10-20km to access certain services. In general, very few villages have electricity.

> *"Here, we have electricity only seven hours out of twenty-four".* (Comment by a respondent, Gorom-Gorom, 11 June 2015)

Other than the roads between cities and towns, transportation, too, is poorly developed. Better roads and transportation service for isolated regions was one of the common demands made by respondents. Even between neighbouring villages, the poor quality of the roads limits access.

Although the presence of basic social services is satisfactory according to respondents *("Yes, here in Gorom we have TV and radio, the gendarmerie and the police, as well as the decentralized services of the state ... We have electricity and water, even if everyone does not have access to it"* – Comment by a civil service official, 12 June 2015), it does not appear to guarantee development in the medium term. Indeed, discussions with respondents showed a clear demand for increased basic social services in all localities. Another factor necessary for development is economic activity. This theme

fed the discussions, with respondents calling for the creation of jobs, especially for young people. In their view, job creation should happen with community involvement that could help identify local needs, and through the promotion of tourism as well as the implementation of development projects and income-generating activities. Civil society organisations can provide valuable resources to limit isolation and marginalization in some communities. In the Sahel, these organisations can assist the authorities in providing certain services, and work with communities and leaders to address issues and concerns, including the promotion of political and civic involvement.

Activities at the border and subsistence traffic

The border is seen as an area offering significant economic opportunities. More than half of the respondents (53%) agreed with this claim and emphasised the ease of trade. The potential for grazing was cited as an advantage by 25% of respondents who considered the border to offer advantages for the development of this activity. The ease of mobility related to the opening of the borders – including inter-country trade and transhumance – was perceived as an advantage of living near the borders by 15% of respondents. Socio-cultural benefits were not left out: 7% of respondents mentioned the sharing of a common culture.

> *"We can cross the border to seek treatment, we can also seek employment in other countries, and we can hope to marry a Malian without any problem".* (Comment by a 30-year-old man, Tokabangou, 10 June 2015)

Due to the weak customs regulations, trafficking across the border is a common phenomenon: this is the banal trafficking of subsistence. Many staples are mentioned as part of regular trafficking, such as livestock, clothes, rice, salt, flour, fuel, tea, tobacco, cigarettes, dates, oil and sugar.

> *"Yes, I know there is trafficking, but it is normal trafficking. I've known the traffickers all my life and they are harmless"-* (Comment by a respondent, Tambao)

Since the customs office was set up in Markoye, so-called regular trafficking has been affected (see box below). According to local people, the customs office may well be necessary for the state, but it is a handicap for the area's economy.

THE CUSTOMS OFFICE OF MARKOYE

Markoye is located in the province of Oudalan. This town of about 6,000 inhabitants is located at the centre of about 27 villages. Markoye's geographical position (60 km from the Mali border to the north, 15 km from the Niger border to the east) makes the town a border crossroads. It has long been a hub for traders (Algerian, Moor, Malian, Nigerien, Senegalese, Nigerian and Burkinabé from the center of the country). Markoye's market, held officially every Monday, has become important in the Sahel region.

The success of Markoye's market is due mainly to livestock as a result of the variety of cattle, sheep and goats which are sold at it. Buyers (from the Mossi plateau, the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Niger), sellers (from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso's Sahel region) and brokers mix together, discuss prices and make deals. At the end of the day, after accounts have been settled, these traders go to the main market (selling cereals, spices and other essential goods) to purchase their family needs.

Before a customs office was installed in Markoye, the market was very successful. The lack of border controls fostered the exchange of goods of all kinds and from everywhere. In addition to spices and other common products which could be found elsewhere, the market offered cheap dates from Algeria, fine multi-coloured fabrics, handicrafts, silver and gold coins. Markoye's fame attracted such crowds that some foreign traders eventually took up residence, thus creating Fulani, Hausa and Moorish neighbourhoods.

The arrival of customs officers in Markoye in 1980 completely destroyed the local and regional economy. Traders, essentially smugglers, stopped frequenting the market and it was reduced by more than half. Gradually, the Hausa and Moorish immigrants abandoned the village, leaving entire neighbourhoods in ruins. In such an environment of economic crisis, more and more families found themselves in poverty. Integrity was replaced by scams. Many bankrupt traders attempted suicide.

Community media and development

State media (trusted by 45% of respondents) provides a relatively low degree of coverage, including by the National Radio of Burkina Faso, which broadcasts from Dori as well as Gorom-Gorom and Djibo. As the average radius of coverage for an FM station is 60km, it is clear that many places do not receive it. The Sahel region has about seven radio stations and one television station for four provinces[6]. Audiovisual media, then, has very limited penetration: 57% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with media coverage in their region.

Nevertheless, the media in the Sahel region plays a role in terms of information, public awareness and education. Socio-economic development is the main preoccupation, as reflected in the analysis of programming content. Some associations also make an effort to produce information in local languages. Furthermore, 88% of respondents believe that the media can help prevent violence.

Additional measures, then, can only be beneficial. Young people, for example, would like content with which they identify. The evolution of the media has shown that social networks are playing an increasingly important role in Africa, but the use of these tools is still limited (less than a quarter of the respondents). In any event, these tools require a reliable Internet connection and electricity.

1.2 The concept of border limits

> *"I am proud to be Burkinabé but part of me is also Malian like my half-brothers".*
> (Comment by a 45-year-old man, Gorom-Gorom, 8 June 2015)

The Sahel region is composed of various communities (Tuareg, Fulani, Moor, Hausa, Mossi and Gourmantché) who have lived, until now, mainly in harmony. The study has shown that 98% of respondents call themselves Burkinabé – and are proud to be so – although some of them recognise family members in Mali. These communities, whether on the Burkina Faso, Mali or Niger side of the border, share more or less the same culture, the same language and the same social practices. Although almost all the respondents claim membership of a state, some say they feel both Burkinabé and Malian or Nigerien, mainly because of family they may have on the other side of these borders.

Is it appropriate, then, to speak of single – or multiple – citizenship? On the border areas with Mali and Niger, holding several citizenships is an historical fact. From 1932 to 1947, Burkina Faso was divided between Mali and Niger so people who lived there were either Sudanese (Malian) or Nigerien. After the restoration of Upper Volta in 1947, many people continued to have certain rights on the Burkinabé side, but also on the other side of the border.

Conflict between Burkina Faso and Mali, as well as issues of border demarcation, subsequently put this dual citizenship into question. However, it is not uncommon for this uncertain national membership to cause management problems for villages on the border, as illustrated in the case of the village of Kel Tafadès.

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[6] Oudalan: Radio Walde EJEF (Gorom); Seno: RTB, Radio du Grand Nord (Dori); Soum: RLCD, Walfadjiri, Radio la voix du Soum (Djibo); Yagha: Radio M'Ballo Anndal (Tangangari), Radio de la commune de Sebba.

THE CONCEPT OF THE BORDER IN THE VILLAGE OF KEL-TAFADÈS

The boundaries left behind by colonization do not always reflect the sociological reality of a place. Drawn without any consideration of geography, economics, ethnicity or language, these boundaries divide entire families and foster endless conflict. Administrative, socio-economic and security issues related to the concept of borders are evident in the case of the Kel-Tafadès (known as Kassa).

Kel-Tafadès belongs to the municipality of Markoye in Oudalan province. Located east of the town and populated by the Bella ethnic group, it is the last village on the Niger-Burkina Faso border. Officially, its 600 residents enjoy the legal and administrative prerogatives accorded to any Burkinabé citizen: the village is represented in the municipal council by two of its members and villagers receive Burkinabé papers (birth certificate, identity card, Burkinabé family card). What remains confused, however, is that, in addition to submission to the Burkinabé authorities, Kel-Tafadès is also under supervision by the Nigerien Government, as many working sessions with the Nigerien administration have demonstrated.

In 2001, when an NGO wanted to help Kel-Tafadès drill its first well, the village chief and other notables were arrested and held in custody by the Nigerien authorities. The goal was to intimidate and remind the villagers of their dependence on the Nigerian authorities. The affair rose to the highest authorities of Burkina Faso, who decided that the NGO could complete the drilling. This was also a way to demonstrate Burkina Faso's authority over the village. Consultation between the local authorities of the two countries finally allowed common ground to be found which would enable the new well to benefit all, Nigeriens as well as Burkinabés.

In 2011, the same NGO conducted a geophysical survey in a few villages where it operates. Kel-Tafadès benefited from this study which concerned the drilling of irrigation wells. Four years later, when the NGO wished to start the drilling, it notified the local authorities who decided to suspend drilling in Kel-Tafadès, pending the establishment of new border limits between Burkina Faso and Niger.

The case of Kel-Tafadès shows how a border dispute between two countries may erupt. For, as in most border towns, the people of Kel-Tafadès are quite likely to play a double game with the governments of both states. The villager who believes that they hold dual Nigerian and Burkinabé nationality may, according to the opportunity presented, use whichever identity works in their best interests.

1.3 The risks of conflict: transhumance and farming

Despite cohabitation, inter-communal mistrust does exist. Indigenous peoples, including the Fulani and Songhai, are wary of the Tuareg. They accuse them of kidnappings and livestock theft in the region. In the long term, this phenomenon threatens the harmonious coexistence between communities. If trust is not established, this situation could escalate and create tensions which would be difficult to resolve.

Transhumance is also one of the characteristics of communities in the region. Raising livestock – the main activity – ensures the daily needs of the family. However, the lack of grazing land and water points is a major difficulty. This shortage aggravates tensions between herders, and between herders and farmers. To mitigate these tensions, the state has established grazing areas, but these are not always respected. Watering livestock is another problem in this dry land, where water points are rare and dry up very quickly. This issue unites all the three countries since the border is not a barrier, but a simple area of transit like any other.

THE "CHRISTINE" WELL : A WATERING POINT AS A FACTOR IN PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

For Burkina Faso, the Sahel region is the quintessential livestock-raising area. Unfortunately, it receives an annual rainfall of only 300-500mm. In 1972, drilling began on the "Christine" well in the town of Deou in Oudalan province, that is, a few kilometres from the border between Mali and Burkina Faso. The well is the point of convergence for animal breeders from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. According to technicians, it has a flow of 5000m^3 per hour and covers a total area of 30,000 hectares. With four watering basins, each located 2km to the north, south, east and west, "Christine" provides water – a scarce resource in the Sahel during the dry season – to several hundred animals. The installation includes a water tower with a storage capacity of 50m^3. The population of Deou and the surrounding communities obtain drinking water through two taps and a pump for themselves and various activities.

Managing this vital and strategic water point requires good governance, not only for the sustainability of the installation, but also for the peaceful coexistence of its users who come from different backgrounds. It is, then, a potential source of conflict. A project has been set up to promote good governance of the "Christine" well and peaceful management of natural resources in Burkina Faso's Sahel region. The stakeholders are the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MRAH), the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the Regional Council of the Sahel Unions (CRUS) and an association of livestock farmers (Association pour la promotion de l'élevage en savane et au Sahel – APESS).

During the last conflict between Burkina Faso and Mali in 1985, the "Christine" well was bombed. As in the case of mining sites, the well must be made secure without disrupting the regular activities of its users. Unfortunately, in May 2015, the generator and the pump broke down. The herds had to be taken to the Béli River, which was already overstretched by the pastoral communities of three countries. The situation has created tensions, caused the death of cattle from thirst and, to a lesser extent, human mortality. This incident reveals the sensitivity of water points in the Sahelian pastoral zone.

The respondents in the study repeatedly mentioned the need for frameworks for consultation to strengthen cohesion between communities and emphasised that these must be accompanied by greater trust between the Government and the people. The respondents expect the state to act for justice and fight against corruption. The survey showed that over 78% of respondents trust in national justice, compared to 8% for the religious courts and 7% for traditional methods of justice. This trust must be maintained through the effective implementation of laws. The Sahel region is the scene of recurring conflicts between herders, as well as between herders and farmers, so the need for impartial justice is essential.

2. Perceptions of insecurity

2.1 Survival, trafficking and the many forms of insecurity

The Sahel region concerns observers because of its turmoil in recent years, in particular with the crisis which has been ongoing in Mali since 2012. However, perceptions of insecurity should not be reduced to this one highly publicized issue. According to the Prefect of Markoye:

> *"Yes, we hear talk of insecurity. Because of the Malian rebellion, the Sahel zone is classified as an insecure 'red zone', but that is not what concerns us. Our insecurity is that of the man who has no food, who is unhealthy. Even our brothers working in the gold mines are not safe".* (Comment by a respondent, 9 June 2015)

Insecurity, then, is linked to survival: 52% of respondents feel they do not live in security in their region and 88% say that current or potential insecurity weakens the local economy. Several sources

of insecurity are cited: poverty (75%); unemployment (72%); the marginalization of young people (15%); the government's lack of interest (7%); as well as delinquancy/crime and the presence of radical religious groups/talk (3.3%, respectively). The qualitative exchanges as part of the study gave great importance to the fear of aggression (hold-ups, highway robbery, kidnapping, armed robbery, livestock theft, etc.), which is usually encountered on the main roads by travellers, especially traders.

> *"The situation of insecurity is critical here. Last month, buses were robbed on the road from Deou. Bandits have destroyed shops, taking 5-8 million CFA".* (Comment by a respondent, Deou, 11 June 2015)

> *"What made the bandits strong is weapons. As you know, we do not manufacture them..."* (Comment by a respondent, secondary school level of education, Gorom)

Indeed, the last major event in relation to insecurity which happened during the study – one which marked the entire area – was the kidnapping of the Romanian miner at the Tambao mine in April 2015[7]. Fear of bandits is also evident in relation to neighbouring countries.

> *"We do not feel safe because the border with Mali is not far from here. The danger is permanent. Malian bandits worry us".* (Comment by a respondent)

Trafficking as a source of concern

Although customs offices are not appreciated by the entire population, they are important in the fight against the trafficking of drugs and weapons. This is regularly cited by respondents and there is a fear that it is beyond the control of the state.

> *"This trafficking can cause many problems in our cities. We see them with their closed vehicles and have no idea what is inside. We often see them unloading boxes and they say it's cigarettes. They come with cargo trucks, with military vehicles".* (Comment by a respondent, Gorom-Gorom, 10 June 2015)

The situation in Mali where "weapons circulate like thorns" is a concern of the media. It used to dramatise the situation and ensure that prevention is rigorous. It is for the state to take steps to curb trafficking. The Markoye customs office could deter traffickers, but it lacks sufficient manpower and technical capacity to monitor the entire border. In addition, certain residents help the traffickers, which does not make the work of customs officials any easier. The state, through consultation frameworks, must work to raise awareness of the usefulness of the customs office and create trust.

THE CASE OF CIGARETTE SMUGGLING IN MARKOYE

Cigarette smuggling in Markoye began in 2000, with co-operation between Burkinabé and Malian businessmen and trafficking bands in the Malian desert. The former, close to the Burkinabé authorities, took advantage of the good relationship Burkina Faso had with Tuareg groups in Mali's desert to set up a cigarette smuggling ring. The choice of Markoye as a hub for this business is due to its favourable environment for this type of activity. Due to the history of its market, this Songhai village has empty shops, an Arab neighbourhood and a customs office able to legitimize the activity on the Burkinabé side.

The goods arrive at the port of Lomé and pass through the Burkinabé capital before reaching Markoye. During this journey, the cigarettes are apparently subject to all customs formalities. Once in Markoye, the cigarette cartons are stored in shops rented for the purpose. Transport between Ouagadougou and Markoye is made in

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[7] The Romanian hostage, Lulian Ghergut, is being held by the terrorist group Al-Mourabitoune.

convoys of 4 or 5 trailers. At the beginning of this business, management in Markoye was entrusted to an associate from Ouagadougou who accompanied the convoy. Over time, this role was transferred to a local Arab trader.

On the Mali side, armed bands based in the desert handle the trafficking. Trips to Markoye to pick up the cigarettes are made in off-road vehicles. When the different groups are all on site, there may be as many as 60-100 vehicles parked in the area. Due to the many fatal accidents caused by these vehicles, they are forbidden from circulating in the village. Once the cargo of cigarettes is picked up, the smuggling begins. The drivers, who drive extremely fast, have a good command of the land. They know where to cross to escape the control of the security forces. But the trip home is not always accomplished without death: gunshots sometimes erupt between rival groups.

Why do they not want it known what is inside these so-called cigarette cartons? Have not all those who tried to find out been threatened? Knowing that these "cigarette cartons" go to armed groups sometimes in war against their state, can it be ruled out that they contain weapons?

2.2 The impact of regional conflicts

Although Burkina Faso has, so far, escaped the spread of terrorist attacks and armed conflict, strong fears were expressed during the investigation, often in connection with the conflict in Mali.

> *"When you border with another country, if there is peace in that country, it is an advantage because trade will be very fluid. But when things are not going well in that country, it automatically affects you. Trade will be limited. Whatever is rare at home, they will come get from you, the neighbour. Those who feel threatened will seek refuge with you. And you are obliged to take them in and share the little you possess with them". (*Comment by the elderly Azoum Ag Djartin, Tin-Akoff, 9 June 2015)

According to 85% of the respondents, the conflict in Mali has had a negative impact on security in the north of Burkina Faso and, consequently, on the economic life of the population. The situation has led to a slowdown in core activities such as trade, tourism and transhumance. Foreign development partners have also reduced their support, unable to go there due to the insecurity.

> *"Currently, business is not as good as before. The tourism sector is flat because tourists no longer come here. So, many young people are unemployed. Our associations no longer earn funding from European investors whereas this funding is crucial for the survival of our associations".* (Comment by a young trader, Sidi Hamidou Maiga, Oursi, 11 June 2015)

Moreover, the year 2012 was marked by an influx of Malian refugees into the territory of Burkina Faso, at the beginning of the crisis in Mali. In the Sahel region of Burkina Faso, the refugees were initially sheltered in Ferrerio, However, this location did not meet international safety standards, namely a distance of 50km from the border. Currently, the Burkinabé government has grouped the refugees in camps in Goudebou and Mentao. Other refugees live outside the camps with the host community. Discussions with respondents quickly reveal mixed feelings about the refugees' presence:

> *"I am also going to talk about the Malian refugees. Since their arrival in the area of Deou and Tin-Akoff, the lives of the local populations, who were already suffering, have further deteriorated. There has been pressure on what scarce resources – land, water – were there. And the refugees came with their cattle. Also, when they arrived,*

> *some refused to be housed in the camps. They took houses in the neighbourhoods and they conduct their trafficking as if they were at home".* (Comment by a respondent, Gorom-Gorom)

> *"We live in insecurity here due to the presence of refugees. We do not know them. They came after a war, from one day to the next. We do not know what may happen".* (Comment by a young man, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

The freedom of these refugees to come and go, as well as limited capability to check identities, creates the risk of infiltration by armed groups that are difficult to control. This was expressed by this respondent:

> *"The movements of those in the camps are not controlled. They go out and come back whenever they want".* (Comment by a young man, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

The risk of confrontation and violence between the host community and the refugees is not to be overlooked although, in general, there is peaceful coexistence. Those involved in the study also met Malian refugees, some of whom feel they have no problems with the local people and say they are well integrated in the villages.

> *"The villagers gave us land to farm, our children go to school in the village, and we get along with everyone".* (Comment by a representative of the refugees camp, Goudebou)

It is notable that some respondents express their feelings about refugees with no real proof that the refugees play a role in the deterioration of security in the Sahel, and in ignorance of international law concerning civil protection and the status of refugees. Nor do the measures announced and implemented in relation to refugees seem to temper this mistrust. For example, the UN High Commission for Refugees, in co-operation with the Government of Burkina Faso, is using biometrics to register and identify all refugees. Also, the police guard the camps; no refugee should be able to travel within the country without a pass from CONAREF, the government structure which deals with refugees.

In summary, there is a malaise and mistrust between the Malian refugees and local people. Cases of robbery and killings in Déou and Oursi by men from northern Mali only amplify this mistrust.

RADICALIZATION: CLUES AND PROCESS

Points to remember:

- Respondents believe that violent extremism is a phenomenon coming from outside the country and is essentially motivated by material needs, not by religious beliefs.
- No case of extreme violence was identified. Yet, if the survey area were to become an area of action for jihadist groups, they would find structural conditions which facilitate the recruitment of sympathizers.
- Education and economic development are the basis for prevention against radicalization and violent extremism. They must be complemented by awareness raising programmes for young people, in partnership with the media, schools and civil society organisations.
- The state should take advantage of the people's strong sense of trust in the army to ensure their safety by developing frameworks for dialogue with them.

1. **Radicalization and violent extremism: which perceptions lead to its rejection?**

"Why pick on the people? Groups like Boko Haram even attack mosques – so go figure! Al Qaeda, Boko Haram and the others burn schools and kidnap women and children. It is their interests that they seek to satisfy, whereas Islam prohibits violence!" (Comment by a young Tuareg, Tin-Akhoff, 10 June 2015)

88% of respondents said they had heard of radicalism and violent extremism, while only 12% said they had never heard of it. The media (especially television and radio) and, in some villages, word of mouth, are the main channels of information making people aware of the phenomenon. This is facilitated by the proximity with Mali and Niger.

What does this study mean by violent extremism? *"There is violent extremism when there is loss of life!"* (Comment by an adult head of household, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015).

The following table expresses the diversity of perceptions about the phenomenon of extreme violence:

When is violence extreme/unbearable? (more than one answer could be given)		
	Number of respondents	**%**
Loss of life	24	40.0%
Kidnapping	4	6.7%
Use of weapons	8	13.3%
Forced displacement	7	11.7%
Assault and battery	10	16.7%
Threat to human life	16	26.7%
Don't know	2	3.3%
Total	71	

Added to the diversity of the perceptions mentioned above is the difficulty of translating concepts of violent extremism and radicalization into the languages of the respondents. For example, to translate

the notion of violent extremism (*durtagol* in Fulfulde) those involved in the study used several words concerning the absence of peace (*djam*), tranquility, neighbourhood/cohabitation (*hodiraagou*), (in)tolerance (*sawoura ngol*), acceptance of others (*tedine ngol*) and violence/fighting (*fitina /Massiba*).

In answer to another question, 60% of respondents described jihadist groups as "bandits" and 15% as "lunatic fanatics", while 6.7% spoke of "resistants" and "defenders" (note that 52 people out of 60 answered this question). For almost 82% of respondents, the jihadists belong to a terrorist organisation.

> *"You cannot force a person to practice a religion that they do not want. I think we should not call them Islamists: they are bandits. Nothing they do comes from religion. On the contrary, all religious people must instead fight this kind of phenomenon".* (A young man from Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015).

In a complementary way, almost 82% of respondents think that violent extremism and radicalization come from outside the country. The statements of the respondents encountered in the survey areas are explicit:

> *"This comes from Mali, Libya, Nigeria, and Rwanda".*
>
> *"It is the rebellion in Mali that brought the violence. These rebels are forced to move to the Sahel to steal because they find nothing at home".*
>
> *"In general, the extremists, even if they are from here, have spent time in countries where there are harsh branches of Islam. Then they come back and think that they are the true Muslims".*
>
> *"It doesn't even come from the Sahel. The people of the Sahel do not know this violence. The proof is that no national here belongs to one of these jihadist groups".*
>
> *"I know extremism only through television. We live in peace in Burkina Faso. This is an orchestration by the West".*
>
> (Comments by different people interviewed during the study)

A recent study of violent extremism in Burkina Faso holds that *"there is a negligible risk that extremism will take root in the short term"*[8]. However, this study suggested that the respondents are willing to defend the honour of their territory and to reaffirm their pride in being Fulani and Tuareg of the Sahel Region of Burkina Faso. This attitude is reminiscent of the message that the lack of development in Africa is the fault of the West, the former colonizer. The danger of such an attitude is the general inability to anticipate problems of violent extremism, although it can be relativized by other remarks:

> *"I will be part of those who lead activities for peacekeeping and reducing insecurity".* (Comment by a young man, Gorom-Gorom)

Several interviewees mentioned Wahhabi practices and foreign financing for the construction of mosques and Quranic schools. A young Wahhabi Mossi man said he had newly converted and found salvation, for *"every good Muslim who respects the 5 Pillars must be Wahhabi. [As for the others...] it is our duty to bring them back on track".*

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[8] Augustin Loada and Peter Romaniuk, *Preventing Violent Extremism in Burkina Faso: Toward National Resilience Amid Regional Insecurity*, Global Center on Cooperative Security, (June 2014). pp.4-5.

The use and misuse of religion

Islam, which was practiced by almost 97% of the respondents in the study (with less than 2% of Christian faith), is part of identity and can be a source of solidarity.

> *"Extremism [...] I define as political, religious or economic opinions whose actions run counter to social norms. It is much more on the religious level than the political. Yet, its origin is found in politics and people use religion to perpetuate this extremism. The origin of violent extremism is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We see the Palestinians stripped of their rights, with the blessing of organisations that claim to be the guarantors of security and peace. As a Muslim, if someone asked me to set up a cell to assist the Palestinians or Hamas so that they have their rights, I would not hesitate because it hurts. Every Muslim is concerned. Until we find a solution to the Palestinian problem, religious extremism will always continue, and become worse and worse".* (Comment by a respondent)

It is within this religious context that respondents spoke about radicalization and violent extremism. They unanimously affirmed that the motivation is not religious.

> *"They manipulate people and give them false religious theories. They change the laws in their favour. They do not properly do what Islam says".* (Comment by a young Tuareg leader from Seno, 11 June 2015)

> *"[How are we to understand that] people kill and mistreat other people in the name of religion, when the same religion teaches peace and prohibits crimes?"* (Comment by a young Tuareg leader from Seno, 11 June 2015)

This thought is widespread and 58% of respondents observe, in general, misuse of religion in their region. 80% see no difference between illegal, criminal activities, and religiously prohibited activities. 35% of respondents said they had experienced a situation of insecurity and/or violence. It is notable that the cases of extreme violence are rare in the survey area.

A young Malian refugee in Burkina Faso believes that violent extremism is *"really a wrongdoing. It degrades the name of Islam, because what they do* [armed extremists and radical groups] *is diametrically opposed to our religion"*. He cites as evidence the Machiavellian approach of the extremists:

> *"When they attacked northern Mali, predominantly Muslim, they went to Timbuktu. There, they said they wanted to apply sharia. But for me, as a Muslim, sharia is already applied. We apply it, depending on our epoch and time. That is Islam. Islam is flexible and very easy. This idea is that of people who start something and use religion for projects that have nothing to do with religion. This is the channel for all trafficking because there are many leaders in search of money, especially the drug traffickers".*

2. The Sahel Region of Burkina Faso: a potential area of action for extremists?

> *"Due to the lack of funding for educational and social facilities, some people agree to follow the religious branch of certain groups or sects".* (Comment by a 40-year-old man, Tin-Akhoff, 10 June 2015)

Although the survey revealed no evidence of armed groups, no one doubts that, if extremists do come into Burkina Faso, they could find it a conducive environment due to structural conditions and incentivizing factors. The reasons for engaging in violent extremism are multiple. According to the respondents in the survey, people join primarily for economic and financial reasons (58%), followed by motivations of social status and social recognition (30%) and, to a lesser extent, religion (7%). Unemployment and poverty[9] were the main reasons cited by the respondents for people joining the jihadist movements. Some respondents think young people have legitimate material needs which are unfulfilled. When they receive offers claiming to address these needs, they do not think about the consequences:

> *"This phenomenon is linked to poverty. When you are poor and want to buy nice things, especially when you're a girl, you're forced to do things that are not correct".* (Comment by a respondent, mother and member of an association, Gorom-Gorom)

> *"Personally, when I have no solution to my problems, I throw myself into the arms of the enemy. These people who are called extremists, whether Boko Haram, AQIM or Al Qaeda, are sometimes right... When nobody is willing to help me find a solution to my problem, I must defend myself in my own way. So, we return to the idea that the oppressed finally crack".* (Comment by a young man during a group interview with young people, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

After poverty and unemployment, the respondents consider the low level of schooling and literacy is "the bane of Africa". Education is not only a route into employment. It is also a way to forge a critical mind so as to more easily resist the material and financial seduction which radical groups use, in particular, to capture the attention of young people. The Sahel region has the lowest level of education and literacy in Burkina Faso: in 2009, the literacy rate of people aged 15 and over was 15.8%. The country's literacy rate as a whole – 28.2% - is, in itself, not encouraging and shows that the problem is a national one. The challenge of education and literacy deserves to be addressed to push back the boundaries of radicalization and violent extremism.

> *"[...] The lack of education here in West Africa means that many do not have enough to meet their basic needs, so they engage in such activities".* (A 50-year-old female resident, Goudebou, Seno, 11 June 2015)

During the investigation, those involved in the study met schoolteachers unable to staff the school in proportion to the number of school age children in the village. There appeared to be a combination of socio-cultural and other obstacles to the education of children and to adult literacy, including:

o The poor fit of the education system with the lifestyles of some communities, especially nomads. In-depth thinking is needed on this subject. One encouraging note: during the investigation, those involved in the study saw education projects which were trying to take Tuareg and Fulani culture into account;

o The persistence of the practice of early marriage: girls aged 9 to 12 are 'torn' from school by parents to marry them off. At the time of the investigation, which coincided with the start of the annual review of the primary study certificate, those involved in the study heard about a little girl who was taken from the examination rooms on the second day of tests in order to be married. Because of the law against forced marriage and child marriage, parents allow their daughters to go to school, but frequently do not let them take their first exam so they

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[9] According to some sources, youth unemployment is 80%. In 2009, 46% of the active population was living under the poverty threshold, according to a national study of the living conditions of households.

will not think of staying on in school. Those involved in the study also found projects in the field which were focusing on the education of girls;

o Child labour: during the investigation, those involved in the study saw many children under 15 years herding livestock. When asked, the children explained they had dropped out of school to care for the animals. Their parents consider them as labour, whether for pumping water, watering livestock, collecting fodder or working in the garden.

In some places, those involved in the study also observed an increase in the number of Islamic schools alongside the mainstream schools.

Besides the economic aspects related to education, widespread feelings of social exclusion and marginalization emerged from the study. These were due to the unequal distribution of wealth, as well as corruption and poor governance, as these three respondents remark:

> *"If there was equality, there would be no violent extremism in a country. Consider a region like the Sahel, the breadbasket of Burkina Faso, with livestock-raising, gold, manganese. These resources should enable every citizen of the Sahel to have a job, but this wealth is poorly redistributed".*

> *"Poor governance, corruption and injustice spread violent extremism".*

> *"Corruption also helps the spread of violent extremism. I say that if you take in strangers who you do not know and you do not reveal information after their passage, it is because they have done something for you..."*

In addition to feelings of exclusion, the remarks by some respondents also describe the irresponsibility of politicians with respect to fostering social harmony: *"Here in Oudalan, the political leaders should review their way of campaigning. They mix politics and ethnicity. This is what creates insecurity. So, they are the cause of this insecurity".*

3. The role of the state in prevention

> *"We must organise local security structures and involve local people, including the young".* (Comment by a resident, Markoye, 9 June 2015)

Respondents named three actions the state should undertake:

o Regulate the media and religious sermons: first, to avoid the trivialization and dissemination of violent messages, and second, to cultivate peace and multicultural, inter-religious tolerance;

o Develop outreach and civic education programmes for young people to prevent idleness, which leads to temptation;

o Encourage the work of associations and civil society organisations to cultivate tolerance and peace.

However, in Oudalan, the state is generally viewed positively, with a relatively high degree of confidence in its ability to ensure security in the area through the army. To strengthen this confidence, the state is called on by its citizens to take a number of measures, especially to increase the presence of security forces and their patrols along the border; to set up military bases in all towns; and to involve the people in securing the area.

It is notable that nearly 92% of respondents feel reassured by the army's presence. Since 2014, following the attack on the Tambao mine in the region, the state has tried to increase security and set up three military bases in Deou, Tin-Akhof and Markoye. Trust in the army is a result of the deterrent effect it may have on possible threats of insecurity.

> *"With the presence of the police, they [the bandits, armed groups] are afraid to come attack us. They stay back in the neighbouring villages".* (Comment by a 45-year-old male resident, Tin-Akhoff, 10 June 2015)

The Prefect of Markoye confirmed the recent strengthening in security:

> *"Since the kidnapping of the Romanian mineworker in Tambao, we have a military detachment 5km from here in addition to the police. As a result, this is a serene environment: there is no fear and that is the basis for the people's tranquility so that they can go about their daily activities."*

This trust in the national army is roughly the same for external security forces. Thus, 87% of respondents are favourable to the deployment of African security forces in case of conflict. It is the same for the deployment of Western security forces, with 78% in favour. The many and varied reasons for a possible deployment of African forces all concern strengthening security, as demonstrated by various interviewees:

> *"They will only support our forces".*

> *"We accept them as our brothers. Africans must help each other".*

> *"These troops know the African problem of borders".*

The reasons given for accepting the deployment of Western forces as reinforcement concern the accumulation of capability in experience and logistics, including:

> *"Westerners have techniques to resolve conflicts".*

> *"These strengths will help us logistically".*

> *"They have the means to support our own forces".*

> *"They are better trained militarily, compared to our troops. We are ready to welcome them".*

(Comments by different people interviewed during the study)

However, mistrust of external forces persists in a minority of the respondents because of the risk the foreign presence involves:

> *"In Mali, the country next door, many people complain about the foreign troops, as they do not often carry out their mission and even pillage the people".*

> *"The history of the Central African Republic shows that Westerners are not reliable".*

> *"They only have to give us the equipment, train us and let us manage, otherwise they take the opportunity to prospect our minerals to later control our wealth".*

> *"We need to try to empower ourselves. If every time there is a problem, we appeal to other people who, I say, have no knowledge of our realities, it will be extremely difficult. I take the case of Mali, or Azawad facing the Malian Government: every*

time, they call on France and other countries. You will agree with me that Azawad is known as an area extremely rich in natural gas and oil. So it is obvious that these countries support this rebellion to benefit afterwards".

(Comments by different people interviewed during the study)

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Points to remember:

- Vulnerable and ignored, teachers and counsellors, women see their role in the prevention of, and the fight against, insecurity as underused. The establishment of consultations including women could lead to progress.
- The issue of the place and role of young people in preventing insecurity and violent extremism is crucial in Burkina Faso. The focus must be on inter-generational dialogue to address the demands, and the need, for recognition of young people. Religious and community leaders can be an asset in this way.
- The state must renew trust with young people through a convincing development plan for Oudalan and the greater Sahel region. The effects of unemployment and poverty are exacerbated by the feeling of marginalization. They form the basis for youth recruitment by criminal groups and, potentially, jihadists.

1. Beyond vulnerability: the role of education for women

> *"They are teachers, so they can lead the change in mentality".* (Comment by a woman, aged 45, leader of a women's association, living in Gorom-Gorom, 10 June 2015)

The majority of the respondents (88%) believe women are the group most exposed to insecurity, even if others (12%) think everyone, without exception, is a potential victim. The low autonomy of women, their low level of education and their lack of access to sources of information all expose them to insecurity. A woman, also a shopkeeper and housewife, testifies to this vulnerability:

> *"Yes, we are exposed. We cannot move freely for fear of being raped or robbed. In my own case, now I cannot even go to the neighbouring village to look for fish to sell".*

A man, head of a family and working in the private sector, gives his explanation:

> *"In my view, everyone is vulnerable, but women are even more so because they have less strength. They can escape only with difficulty and, very often, their priority is to protect their children".*

A Malian refugee woman says that women are on the front line as direct and collateral victims of violent extremism:

> *"Among the victims, there are women and, of course, the children who are with the women. I think everything always falls on women: insecurity and violence, destroyed households and property, broken homes. A man can always go elsewhere and remarry... It's always the woman who pays the heavy price. I think everything is based on women in terms of insecurity and violence, and this is strongly felt in the Sahel, whether in Niger, Mauritania, Algeria or Burkina Faso. There are times when the situation is too grave, and moments when we are afraid..."*

The study identified what women feel about their possible involvement in the fight against radicalization. A Malian refugee woman argues that:

> *"Women have a great role to play. This is a key element in violence and peace, but it is underestimated in Africa. Here, among the Tuaregs, the woman is a basic unit of society; there are women who give good advice, women who are listened to, women who could bring a lot to the peace process. If women are brought into the peace process, I think it would prove useful".*

If women were to receive training and conflict management tools, they would be the axis of a more effective struggle. Since it is women who most often raise the children, women have the opportunity to instill good societal values in their children:

> *"We can raise our children to the dangers that exist, tell them they have to be careful. In turn, they will educate their peers".* (Comment by a female respondent)

In the home, they also have the opportunity to influence the decisions of the head of the household:

> *"Women are very important to us. We see that it is women who can arrange things just as they can destroy them. Women can sensitize men to prevent violence".* (Comment by a female respondent)

However, not all women are convinced of their role, given the attitudes of men who see in them someone inferior and weak:

> *"I do not know! It's always the men who decide here in the village".* (Comment by a female respondent)

> *"I do not know if women can help reduce violence because the violence here now is due to selfish and personal interests".* (Comment by a respondent)

As for the men, although some are favourable to a role for women as educators and counsellors, others are adamant that women have no place in something which only concerns men. A 40-year-old male with secondary school education, living in Gorom-Gorom, expressed surprise: *"I do not see their role in this matter".* And the rest of his comment reflects the general feeling:

> *"It's difficult for them to play a role. They are not responsible, so they do not decide".*

In the Sahel, a man must make enormous sacrifices to have a wife. Once 'acquired', she is often abused and underestimated. In this situation, some female respondents are not aware of the role which could be theirs:

> *"I have never been part of a chat between women about this and I do not know what they can do".* (Comment by a female respondent)

2. The uncertain role of young people

> *"For us, it is idleness that exposes young people to those who put ideas in their head and lead them into bad activities. If young people had work and if we made them more aware, it would allow them to stay clear of these groups".* (Comment by a young man during a group interview with young people, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

The place and role of young people in preventing the development of insecurity and violent extremism is the main challenge in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso. Almost all young people encountered by those involved in the study, and even the old, recognise their potential role in prevention, provided they are integrated into society and processes to prevent conflict.

> *"Young people can play a big role if they receive training and work..."* (Comment by a 30-year-old male member of an association, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

38% of the respondents say that young people are not being heard. Listening to the young would allow the elders to take into account their needs and prevent them from being tempted to seek recognition elsewhere to the advantage of criminal groups and extremists. In such traditional societies, a framework for dialogue and listening must be found to more effectively address the challenges listed in this section.

> *"Young people must advise one another to deter those among them who are tempted or interested in jihad".*
>
> *"Elders must involve youth in all areas of decision-making and engage them in community activities".*
>
> *"There are young people who undertake such activities as tea-debates and awareness campaigns. We organized a concert for peace after the events of 2011. We lack the resources to undertake other activities".*
>
> (Comments made during a group interview with young people, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

The following comments sum up the whole issue of the link between poverty, unemployment and potential youth engagement with criminal groups or jihadists:

> *"Many unemployed young people leave. They manage to find mafia networks in order to live. Many of them get into these networks to support themselves. I think that is their main reason".* (Comment by a young man in a group interview with young people, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)
>
> *"A poor person is at the mercy of everyone. They [the jihadists in Mali] have given youth the means to survive. Finally, the young people who did not want to engage with them saw that their activities were profitable and joined also, not for jihad but out of necessity. They really wanted to support themselves. That is why they engage in such activities..."* (Comment by a young Malian refugee)

Women expressed the same thought during group interviews in Gorom-Gorom and Dori, as reflected by this comment:

> *"[...] When you are poor and you want to buy nice things and these people come and find you drinking tea, sitting around doing nothing... it is very easy for these young men to be pulled into misdeeds".*

To the question "What does a 20-year-old dream of here?" the answers invariably resemble those of these three young people:

> *"When we go to the village, outside modern life, the first concern is to get married and have an activity, like being a farmer or a shepherd. If one leaves the village for*

the city, you need school diplomas, if you have them. If not, you need to find work and then found a family".

"Besides marriage, we must look for a job, as a livestock-breeder or farmer. Otherwise, you must leave home to seek employment elsewhere and this can mean exodus or emigration. People generally leave for Côte d'Ivoire or Mali to pan for gold".

"Although it is a livestock-raising area, everything is expensive and nature is not as generous as before. So, we must try to support our parents to preserve the herd that is our heritage. Here, having livestock is our identity. It allows us to have a place in society".

These legitimate dreams of work and marriage, implying financial resources, are the source of frustration. This frustration is compounded by the feeling that the government marginalizes the Sahel Region of Burkina Faso, and that it does not do enough for the region's development. It is a strong, consistent feeling, resulting in a systematic distrust of the actions of the state. This is especially the case when the redistribution of resources seems unfair:

> *"There are many things that we do not have in Oudalan. Yet, our province is rich enough to offer what others have elsewhere, such as a road. When young people demand peacefully and do not get what they want, can we blame them for turning to violence to assert their rights?"* (A 25-year-old leader, Gorom-Gorom, 9 June 2015)

The most educated young people, struggling to get the type of jobs to which they feel entitled, often feel they deserve a better life. During the investigation, popular protests began against recruitment policies in the Essakane gold mine which do not favour young people from the region. It is worth mentioning that the government has developed a new growth area for the Sahel region based on the existence of mining and livestock farming activities. It is important that all efforts of this new growth area be supported.

Those involved in the study met a young leader in a camp for Malian refugees who gave his analysis of youth involvement in the prevention of violent extremism. He highlights the role to be played by religious and traditional leaders:

> *"I remember that at home in Mali – where I was a student teacher – we talked a lot about Martin Luther King and Gandhi who pacified their communities. We, too, can lead our revolution, change the mentality of people and defend our rights through peaceful means. I believe that we, the young, should take as an example the mentality of these extraordinary men. We really must educate ourselves in this sense. We must use every means, that is, we must involve everyone and religion too. Above all, we must speak a lot about Islam and educate the imams".*

It is notable that 93% of respondents said that religious leaders/local authorities/traditional chiefs take measures to fight against violent extremism.

Finally, the exchanges reveal frustrations which go beyond the national framework to denounce the global system, such as the following:

> *"We young Africans, we are now becoming aware and understanding that, for a long time, the West has exploited us and continues to do so. For example, Ivory Coast is the largest cocoa producer, but it has no factory to process cocoa and the price of cocoa is set in London... And in Guinea, when Captain Dadis Camara cancelled all*

mining contracts, he did not last long in power. We grow our cotton, but who sets its price and decides our percentage? This situation is impossible. No African company can go to Europe or to the United States to cultivate a corn field and impose conditions as is done here." (Comment by a young leader, Gorom-Gorom)

AVENUES FOR REFLECTION

Based on the perceptions of respondents collected during the study and observation in the field, as well as the analyses of, and discussions with, various relevant stakeholders, the following avenues for further reflection emerge:

Avenue for reflection 1: Facilitate the development, and opening up, of the Sahel Region of Burkina Faso, in collaboration with neighbouring countries

To counter the structural factors which facilitate the recruitment of supporters for criminal or extremist causes, the government must strengthen its development policies for the Sahel region. In the interest of prevention, various actions could be implemented:

o   Build paved roads to improve access to the region;
o   Develop large livestock-raising areas to support this sector and its coexistence with other economic activities;
o   Promote economic development to offer new job opportunities for young people;
o   Pursue policies for children's education;
o   Further strengthen a relationship of trust between populations and the state, with the state as security provider seeking to increase the number of military bases, police stations and gendarmerie on the border; address issues of trafficking; provide proper training for security forces to increase professionalism and rigour.

When conducting these actions, the true, relative nature of the border, as described by the respondents, must be taken into account. A co-operative approach to development with neighbouring countries could be useful.

Avenue for reflection 2: Initiate dialogue to facilitate the prevention/management of insecurity and violent extremism

Given the dynamism of civil society organisations and the significant influence religious and traditional leaders have with local people, joint work would strengthen inter-religious and community dialogue (for example, in relation to the management of pastoral resources and to foster inter-generational exchanges). In a complementary manner, the establishment of "talk and debate" evenings, focused on young people and organised by them, could be promoted.

This collaborative framework for action based on a preventive approach would also allow to call upon the state when it risks losing touch. Schools could also be supported in their role of civic education.

Avenue for reflection 3: Work with the media to increase the focus on development and the prevention of insecurity

In addition to the first two avenues for reflection, a framework for regular exchange between the state, the media and civil society organisations could facilitate the definition, and increase the impact, of common messages to encourage development, prevent insecurity and educate citizens. To make this relevant in the border areas, parallel work could be conducted to improve media coverage and increase capacity of media outlets. This investment would be all the more productive because the local media in the survey area appear to be very active and engaged at the community level. Finally, at the national level, regulation of media messages could be made more stringent to avoid

any risk of deviation from the agreed common messages which could be a source of division and violence.