

FINAL REPORT

SUBREGIONAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOP FOR THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND ANALYSIS ON THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE CONSEIL DE L'ENTENTE COUNTRIES

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

24–25 May 2018



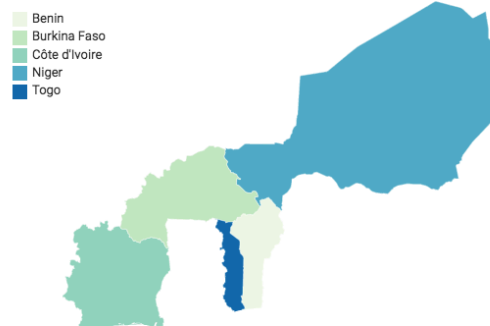
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Summary

From 24 to 25 May 2018, the Conseil de l'Entente, in partnership with the Dakar Office of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS Dakar) and the Human Security Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland, organised a workshop to share experiences of and analyses on the prevention of violent extremism in the Entente area, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

This meeting assembled around 40 government, security and civil society actors, experts and researchers from the five member countries of the Entente area – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Togo – who were joined by experts from the region. It allowed participants to share their experiences in preventing violent extremism (PVE) and to raise awareness of the need for more investment in this area. The diversity and quality of the actors, including national defence and security officials with direct experience in preventing the phenomenon encouraged open exchanges and a better understanding of this theme.

Conseil de l'Entente members states



The Conseil de l'Entente, the oldest intergovernmental organisation in West Africa, covers a geographical area straddling the Sahel and the West African coastal states – towards which violent extremist groups are currently advancing. Complementary analysis from Conseil de l'Entente member states and neighbouring countries gave depth and pertinence to this exercise. These two factors not only produced recommendations for the Conseil de l'Entente and its member States but also shed new light on this region.

Some observations ...

The exchanges highlighted the following elements:

- **No state in the Entente area is immune from extremist attacks.**
- Violent extremist groups most often settle in **liminal and border zones**, which often do not see effective state control, and where they find support largely owing to the local population's perception of having been abandoned.

- Faced with violent extremism (VE), political leaders often opt to deploy defence and security forces, which tend to be poorly equipped. These forces often ignore the realities of these regions, hardly speak the language and do not understand the culture.
- In these areas, **old, poorly managed conflicts resurge in other forms and graft onto other types of violence** (violent extremism, trafficking of all kinds, intra- and inter-community conflicts).
- **Cross-cutting security issues** highlight the limits of the state framework and call for the pooling of knowledge and resources in integrated approaches.
- Multiple and sometimes unprecedented forms of insecurity and violence in each of the five states (such as vagrants locally known as “microbes” and young people at commuter transport lots in Côte d’Ivoire, student circles and child beggars in Niger, political demonstrators in Togo, etc.) are **sources on which violent extremist groups** can rely to carry out their activities.
- The West African coast is a gateway for **products (drugs, weapons) that fuel trafficking** and fund armed groups (including extremist groups with cells or relays in the coastal countries). Links between coastal areas and Sahelian regions hard hit by violent extremism are quite close.
- **Research** on the root causes and evolution of violent extremism in the Entente area remains rare and largely unknown. In addition, the relationship between the research community and government institutions is weak and mistrustful, which seems to go hand in hand with a limited awareness on the part of political decision-makers of the seriousness of the risks.
- Finally, participants unanimously acknowledged the need to adopt a preventive approach, which is still embryonic in the few spaces where the authorities, especially local authorities, have established a dialogue with the population. It is therefore necessary to work to build **bridges between the various active forces** and to work for the **material and political inclusion** of affected populations.

Some recommendations ...

- The **Conseil de l’Entente**, given its geographical scope, which brings together both Sahelian and coastal countries, **must play a leading role in formulating an integrated response in areas of PVE**.
- The regional organisation must specifically contribute to the elaboration and adoption of **common policies in border areas**, as well as the promotion of **violence-prevention activities in these spaces**.
- **Defence and security forces** could and should play a leading role in PVE, by promoting national recruitment processes that are regionally and nationally balanced and non-ethnic; respecting the law and populations; interacting with communities on issues as well as the impacts of security responses; and supporting communities in addressing their immediate needs, such as health, education and infrastructure. This will help to dispel people’s perception of abandonment and build confidence in the state.
- The participants proposed several recommendations to improve preventive actions, within and between states:

- Restructuring the security system in the countries concerned
- Building the capacity of defence and security forces
- Establishing multi-stakeholder ethics committees, as in Côte d'Ivoire, to inform and sensitise defence and security forces
- Educating citizens in the culture of peace
- Establishing border control structures
- Better managing cross-border dynamics
- Ensuring the greater involvement of local authorities, given their proximity to communities
- Creating mechanisms to reduce the ideological scope of violent extremism
- Providing media training for better information management in order to promote violence prevention and coexistence
- Developing more inclusive research with results framed for stakeholders, particularly political decision-makers, in ways that ensure their operationalisation
- Establishing trusting collaboration between states for better intelligence sharing to identify threats and shape diplomatic responses
- Opening spaces for dialogue and exchange on practices aimed at promoting the political will and creativity of actors to prevent violent extremism.

Way forward

At the end of this meeting, the following action points were developed:

- Co-organisers publish and widely disseminate a workshop summary report
- Make recommendations to strengthen the prevention of violent extremism available during the Conference of Ministers in charge of Security and the Interior of the Entente area
- Disseminate the conclusions of this workshop through a public roundtable on PVE, which will be organised in Abidjan in the last quarter of 2018 by the Conseil de l'Entente, the ISS Dakar Office and the FDFA of Switzerland, with the support of the Swiss Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire
- The Conseil de l'Entente Secretariat, with the support of its partners, continues efforts to adopt an integrated approach to PVE in the Entente area, both by member states and at the subregional level, particularly through providing a dedicated space for dialogue

1. Introduction

The Conseil de l'Entente, in partnership with the Dakar Office of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS Dakar) and the Human Security Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland, organised a workshop to share experiences of and analysis on the prevention of violent extremism (PEV) in the Entente area, on 24–25 May 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This workshop aimed to create a space for exchange to achieve a better understanding of the reality of violent extremism in this region, as well as a better understanding of the responses, including prevention. Opened by the Minister of the Interior and Security of Côte d'Ivoire, Sidiki Diakité, and by the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Conseil de l'Entente, Abdoulaye Mohamadou, the workshop assembled some 40 government, security and civil society actors, as well as experts and researchers from the five member states of the Entente area – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Togo. Experts from the region also participated in the workshop. This workshop enabled state representatives to gain greater awareness of the need to invest more in this area.

The diversity and quality of participants from national defence and security establishments, and their wealth of experience in working to prevent the phenomenon, fostered open exchange and a deep understanding of the state of PVE. In addition, limiting the analysis to the Conseil de l'Entente states and neighbouring countries raised the importance of this exercise: the Conseil de l'Entente, the oldest intergovernmental organisation in West Africa, uniquely covers a geographical space straddling the Sahel and the West African coast, a geographical complex within which violent extremist groups progressively seek to insert themselves. These two factors made it possible to formulate realistic and relevant recommendations for the Conseil de l'Entente and its member states, and to focus attention on the necessity for early warning in this region.

2. Violent extremism and Entente space: evolution and responses

Between 2013 and 2018 terrorist attacks, long limited to the Sahel-Sahara, multiplied and spread geographically. They first spread from northern Mali to other parts of the country before reaching Niger, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The groups responsible for these attacks, such as the Katiba Macina in central Mali or Ansarul Islam in Burkina Faso, have deepened the local connections of their leaders and fighters.

In March 2017 the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM) was born from the merger of Ansar Dine, Katiba Macina, Al-Mourabitoun and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In addition to signalling a willingness to join forces, this alliance has confirmed the existence of links between these groups. The Islamic State in the Great Sahara (ISGS) has also claimed responsibility for attacks in the Sahelian regions of Burkina Faso and Niger. Further east, in the Lake Chad Basin, West and Central African countries are also facing violent extremism (VE).

These groups' advance on coastal countries is manifested in attacks targeting both cities and military posts or state symbols, as well as attempts to establish safe havens in the border regions (for example, in the tri-border area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso or in the border areas of the W National Park straddling Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin). In these remote areas, where relationships between

the state and citizens are often eroded, violent extremist groups exploit communities' many frustrations to establish themselves and swell their ranks.

Increasing attention is being paid to the risks associated with the spread of violence towards the Gulf of Guinea countries. In this subregion, which has experienced several conflicts, particularly in the 1990s in Liberia and Sierra Leone and more recently in Côte d'Ivoire, many weapons are in circulation. Illegal artisanal weapon workshops can also be found in several West African countries. In addition, the mobility of combatants from one conflict to another maintains the dynamics of violence and strengthens the links between actors of insecurity in the subregion.

Throughout the subregion, old and poorly managed conflicts re-emerge in new forms and graft onto other types of violence (violent extremism, trafficking of all kinds, intra- and inter-community conflicts).

In response, since the 2000s states have been preparing to deal with violent extremist groups. Although necessary, the essentially security-based responses put in place so far are not sufficient, because of the multiplicity of factors that create such fertile ground for the establishment of these groups and their recruitment strategies. These poorly scaled or poorly executed responses sometimes even worsen the situation. The political, historical, sociological, identity and economic dimensions of extreme violence must be better taken into account so that states' actions – particularly those of defence and security forces – are supported by the local population, and are coordinated as best possible with preventative initiatives taken by other actors. Moreover, crisis situations of a fundamentally political nature are progressively presented in terms of the so-called 'terrorist' threat, at the risk of introducing confusion and conflation that can fuel the cycle of violence.

Therefore, it is important to improve understanding of the nature and stakes of this transnational threat, as well as of the mutations of violence, and to find relevant articulations among the different actors in order to propose appropriate collective solutions at local, national, regional and cross-cutting levels. It is this type of approach that also makes it possible to invest in preventative work that addresses the causes of extreme violence.

This meeting is a continuation of a series of Regional Conversations for the Prevention of Violent Extremism on the theme '*Investing in peace and the prevention of violence in the Sahel-Sahara*', organised since the end of 2015 in different countries of sub-Saharan and North Africa by the FDFA of Switzerland, in partnership with several organisations.¹ It seeks to spur a dynamic that allows for a better understanding of violent extremism, to engage resolutely in action to transform the causes of violence and to propose solutions. According to participants, these meetings, which have taken place in Dakar, N'Djamena, Algiers and now Abidjan, have allowed the adoption of concrete preventative initiatives by encouraging the sharing of experiences on the subject.²

¹ Responding to the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations through his 'Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism', 24 December 2015, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674&referer=/english/&Lang=F

² See the end of the document for information on the main results of this initiative.

3. Methodology

The format of the seminar was twofold. On the one hand, panel discussions analysed the context of insecurity in relation to extreme violence and took stock of ongoing preventive initiatives. On the other hand, plenary sessions made participants aware of the preventive approach and encouraged dialogue among practitioners, researchers, academics and state representatives. Working groups facilitated in-depth discussions and experience sharing. They enabled a better understanding of the concepts, realities and specific responses of the different countries of the Entente space. This approach allowed learning based on experience sharing and individual and collective reflection.

4. Thematic content

The workshop was structured around the following themes: (i) the context of insecurity in the Entente space and the concept of prevention of violent extremism (VE); (ii) manifestations of VE and responses in the Entente space: what room for prevention?; (iii) a better appreciation of VE in the Entente space: between resilience and vulnerability; (iv) challenges and solutions in PVE in Conseil de l'Entente countries and the subregion; and (v) recommendations to strengthen the PVE approach for decision-makers in the Entente space (state representatives in the Council and its Executive Secretariat).

4.1. The context of insecurity in the Entente space and the concept of preventing violent extremism

Within the framework of this workshop, which brought together stakeholders from the Entente space, it was important to analyse the phenomenon based on empirical data and to trace its historical evolution, expansion and geographical implantation. Similarly, it was necessary to start off by returning to key concepts such as 'prevention', and to highlight the relevant parameters for action in this area.

- **Violent extremism in the Entente space:** The importance of tracing the evolution of VE from Mali in 2012 and the expansion of the threat to the countries of the Conseil de l'Entente was acknowledged. The violent extremist groups operating on the borders of the Entente space were then mapped. This showed AQIM and Ansardine in northern Mali; the ISGS of Abu Walid El Saharaoui and Katiba Macina in the Tri-Border Zone (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso), Ansarul Islam in northern Burkina Faso, and Boko Haram on the Niger–Nigeria border.
- **Results from research on VE in the Sahel:** Studies conducted or under way by the Institute for Security Studies contributed to the production of empirical data on the phenomenon. For example, the main findings of the study [Mali's 'young jihadists': fuelled by faith or circumstance?](#) conducted in 2016 contributed to an understanding of the logic of youth engagement in violent extremist groups. It turns out that: (i) the religious interpretive trap must be avoided because the recruitment of young people is not always the culmination of a process of religious indoctrination; (ii) the relationship between the state and citizens is at the heart of the problem of VE – thoughts on the state's place, role and practices seem at least as urgent as the security response deployed by these same states; and (iii) the search for solutions to VE involves understanding the phenomenon in all its complexity so as not to give in to the temptation to generalise or apply cookie-cutter responses in differing contexts.

- **It is thus important to ask the right questions in order to arrive at the appropriate answers. We must not only understand but also act on the causes of violence to break the negative cycle.** This advocacy is at the heart of ‘Regional Conversations for the Prevention of Violent Extremism’ (see section 2).
- Finally, **to guide relevant preventive action**, participants proposed: (i) the restructuring of the security system in the countries concerned; (ii) capacity building of the defence and security forces; (iii) the education of citizens in the culture of peace; (iv) the establishment of border control structures; (v) better management of cross-border dynamics; (vi) the creation of mechanisms to reduce the ideological scope of VE; and (vii) media training for better information management to promote violence prevention and coexistence.

4.2. Manifestations of violent extremism and responses in the Entente space: what room for prevention?

- **What preventive role for the defence and security forces?** Defence and security forces can promote preventive action, particularly by building or renewing trusting relationships with citizens and by ensuring their actions are in line with those of political leaders. The prevention of violent extremism must be comprehensive and multidimensional. In this context, the participants recommend: (i) reviewing the recruitment process within defence and security forces to promote a truly representative army; (ii) addressing perceptions of abandonment among communities owing to a lack of (or sometimes abusive) relations between defence and security forces and communities; (iii) continuing the fight against poverty and human rights violations; (iv) setting up security studies centres, such as the Senegalese Center for Advanced Studies in Defense and Security (CHEDS), to combat lack of awareness through consultative processes. The prevention of violent extremism requires the development of more accountable states. In connection with this, the role and effectiveness of the G5 Sahel Joint Force was also questioned, highlighting the risks associated with the misbehaviour of some elements and the effects of military pressure, which could shift the threat to the south.
- **What does research say about the effects of responses to VE and the place of prevention?** It is interesting to ask whether research could have helped prevent the spread of VE in Mali, whose central region is now seen as the epicentre of new insecurities, as well as in neighbouring countries. To a certain extent, research has been able to promote understanding of phenomena and the development of better responses by states. Beyond simplistic discourses that place the religious factor at the heart of explanations, empirical research analyses: (i) the real implications of essentially security-focused responses; (ii) organised crime characterised by the circulation of and trade in arms and ammunition; (iii) external political influences that fuel the phenomenon; and (iv) links between the challenges of development and state consolidation and the establishment of violent extremist groups. These observations reflect the gap between research and policy formulation on the one hand, and national research and intelligence on the other. Greater synergy would have allowed research to play its early warning role in full and contributed to empirically informed decision-making.

- **What challenges do political leaders face in responding to violent extremism?** Violent extremism mainly affects borders and cross-border spaces. The groups settle most often in distant border zones, ineffectively controlled by the state, where they find fertile grounds by exploiting the local population's sense of abandonment. Faced with this phenomenon, political leaders often have as their only response the deployment of defence and security forces, which tend to ignore the realities of these regions, do not necessarily speak the language and do not always understand the culture. A strict interpretation of state sovereignty is often an obstacle to cooperation, both at borders and between capitals. As summarised by one participant: 'Our states have paid a heavy price for looking inwards on themselves; it is time to accelerate the process of integration.' The lack of an effective mechanism for managing cross-border cooperation (for example, juxtaposed border posts do not work), the isolation of states, the weak collaboration of their intelligence services and porous borders facilitate the growth of trafficking and the spread of violent groups. The lack of common policies for managing border areas contrasts with the collaboration between communities, as well as between armed groups, and the resulting growth of (mostly informal) economies and local social dynamics. To these realities is added the question of nomadism, whose link with insecurity is frequently mentioned (whether proven or not). The Conseil de l'Entente could (i) contribute to raising the awareness of decision-makers on the need to implement integrated policies for the joint management of border areas, and (ii) undertake socio-economic activities to prevent violence in these border spaces.
- **What contribution can civil society make in the prevention of violent extremism?** Reflection on this issue firstly sought to understand the factor(s) that predispose communities to violence (or not). A number of vulnerabilities and resilience factors linked to poor governance and developmental challenges were listed. Based on this analysis, participants concluded that civil society organisations (CSOs) or communities themselves should support initiatives that redefine societal expectations. CSOs in the Entente space should equip themselves with early warning tools to help transform the societal response to violent extremism. This recommendation can be operationalised by strengthening trust between the state and populations, among populations themselves and between the defence and security forces and populations. The challenge lies in the steps taken to achieve these goals. However, there are initiatives with local communities that lead the way, including cross-border initiatives.

4.3. A better understanding of violent extremism in the Entente space: between resilience and vulnerability

The objectives were to identify: (i) threats related to violent extremism in the Entente space and their evolutions; (ii) the actors involved; (iii) vulnerability and resilience factors; and (iv) proposals to refine understanding of the phenomenon.

Threats linked to violent extremism in the Entente space and their evolutions

During the workshop, participants observed that VE is a mutating phenomenon. This necessitates taking into account the specificities of each country to better understand the relationship between citizens and the state, particularly through the security and intelligence system. In addition, the transnational nature of VE undermines the logic of the state construct.

VE, which has spread rapidly with the collapse of Libya, also has a regional dimension. According to the participants, in the Entente space the threat comes from the Sahel and from the probable presence of dormant cells in most member states. However, each country has endogenous factors that can fuel violent extremism and that need to be the focus of preventive action.

Contexts that could provide fertile grounds for embedding the threat in the Entente space are:

- Grey areas, neglected by the state or marked by its weak presence
- Rudderless democracy devoid of clear objectives
- Poverty and misery in communities, as well as unemployment
- The rudeness of the population
- Corruption
- Financing mechanisms (piracy, trafficking, cattle theft) that support criminal groups
- Lack of attention to claims made by civil social groups
- The state's withdrawal from social (health, education) and sovereign (security, political) sectors, as a consequence of structural adjustment programmes
- The increased imposition of religious practices in certain social circles (for example, academic institutions and administrations)
- The use of maritime and Sahelian areas for various forms of illicit trafficking
- Funding of political parties, sometimes from criminal networks
- Funds that are collected in mosques to fund violent extremist groups

The identified threats are:

- The incursion in member states of the Conseil de l'Entente of criminal groups that recruit from local populations
- The development of the criminal economy, an important factor in understanding the phenomenon of violent extremism and its evolution
- The existence of strong links between crime and violent extremism, making it easy for criminal groups with economic power to recruit youth
- The absence of structured religious organisation, in certain circumstances
- The existence of a plethora of Koranic schools whose teaching methods and content are not controlled by the state, combined with the absence or weakness of formal education systems
- The limited inclusion of graduates returning from the Arab states, who have little or no command of French, a language essential to access many jobs
- Regular incursions by jihadist groups in member states, particularly Niger and Burkina Faso

Analysis of the evolution of the threats shows that:

- The phenomenon of violent extremism feeds on societal fault lines
- Causes differ according to context and state. There is a need to build the capacity of state actors to understand the complexity of these threats (for example, the stratification of violent extremist groups and the diversity of factors)

- There is a logic to the repositioning of criminal groups, i.e. as adaptation mechanisms to the military responses put in place
- Intra- and inter-community conflicts are increasingly being instrumentalised by all actors (VE groups, militias and states)
- The simultaneously endogenous and transnational factors and actors of extreme violence pose particular challenges to states and make an integrated regional response all the more necessary

The actors involved

Two main types of actors are involved in violence: direct and indirect actors. The former are violent extremist groups while the latter are mainly sources of illicit financing and violent extremism propaganda groups. These included:

- Identified violent extremist groups
- Organised criminal actors
- Pirates in the Gulf of Guinea
- Nomadic groups (their involvement in illicit trafficking using livestock was mentioned in the debates as an aspect deserving more understanding)
- The political class, which uses ethnic cleavages or tensions (community militias, for example) and thus creates a favourable environment for the establishment and expansion of violent extremism
- Certain personnel of the defence and security forces
- Marginalised communities in border areas

Vulnerability and resilience factors

The vulnerability factors are:

- Lack of state responses to basic needs
- The absence of the state that translates into the limited availability of public management for populations
- Lack (or perception of lack) of protection
- Often, the negative presence of protective forces (defence and security forces)
- The circulation of weapons
- Lack of forward-looking policy analysis based on sound research
- The free movement of ammonium nitrate, a chemical fertilizer used as an explosive by violent extremist groups
- The absence of civil protective security reflexes (professional culture) among security agents
- The instrumentalisation of Islam for violent ends
- The return of ex-combatants from Libya (in the absence of a management structure for them)
- The possible consequences of the Hajj, especially pilgrims who remain in Saudi Arabia and can become supporters of violent Islam as a result of contact with Islamists

Resilience or resistance factors can be:

- Collaboration between the state and communities
- The integration of traditional chieftaincies into land management by local communities and the state
- The improvement of social service delivery in the areas of education and health, including free education and access to healthcare (as in Niger)
- The formation of mixed forces to prevent attacks and incursions (especially by Boko Haram)
- The development and implementation of civil–military activities in cooperation with communities
- The exercise of public power by an elite that represents the entire population
- The establishment of mechanisms and institutions such as the High Authority for Peace Consolidation and the Security Overwatch Cells in Niger
- Studies that contribute to understanding violent extremism and identifying solutions
- Inclusive spaces for dialogue

Proposals to better understand and act to prevent violent extremism in the Conseil de l'Entente countries

To sharpen understanding of and reinforce PVE, participants proposed to:

- Involve local authorities more closely because of their proximity to communities
- Conduct fair and transparent management of tax collection
- Cater to students returning from foreign universities such as that of Medina in Saudi Arabia
- Capitalise on community policing, which plays an important role and uses town halls in facilitating its work
- Set up ethics committees, such as in Côte d'Ivoire, to provide information and sensitise defence and security forces
- Effectively connect the territory to end the existence of grey areas
- Launch national forums on security through pre-forums in all regions and the participation of representatives designated by communities (see example of Niger)
- Improve cooperation between defence and security forces in border areas
- Develop dynamic management of cross-border spaces
- Adopt simple and concrete solutions and measures in response to the increasingly effective strategies of criminal groups
- Enhance the contribution of research to public policymaking, make research more inclusive and target its results at stakeholders, in particular political decision-makers, to promote its operationalisation
- Establish honest intelligence collaboration between states to identify threats and develop diplomatic responses

4.4. State of challenges and solutions in the prevention of violent extremism in the Conseil de l'Entente countries and the subregion

This session made it possible to take stock of the challenges that hinder the implementation of actions to prevent VE, as well as solutions already in progress, in the five Conseil de l'Entente member state.

Countries	Challenges	Solutions
Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poverty and misery in border areas - Insufficient budgetary allocations to local authorities - Challenges related to the intelligence process at the local level - Drug trafficking - Pockets of radicalisation - Corruption and racketeering - Absence of the state and its services in certain regions - Non-existent or poor public infrastructure 	<p>The actions carried out in Benin are part of a preventive approach. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The national intelligence law - The law to suppress terrorism and money laundering - The implementation of a border management policy - Reform of justice and security sectors in progress - Joint operations in border areas with Togolese, Ghanaian and Burkinabé defence and security forces - Identifying and securing risk areas close to Nigeria
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violent extremism - Organised crime - Community conflicts 	<p>The collective responses to violent extremism that concern Burkina Faso include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A joint operation with defence and security forces from three other countries (Benin and Togo in the Entente area, and Ghana) - Operations are also being planned with Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Mali - The creation of juxtaposed border control posts - Burkina Faso's participation in the G5 Sahel <p>Burkina Faso's actions at the national level include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The involvement of traditional and religious leaders and CSOs in raising awareness on preventing and combating violent extremism - The use of social media to raise awareness - The involvement of NGOs and technical and financial partners in the fight - A study on the management of border areas at national level - The implementation of a national border management strategy - The implementation of the Sahel Emergency Program (SEP)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The creation of a specialised judicial centre on issues of terrorism and money laundering - The establishment of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to pool information from all defence and security forces - The Communication Higher Council to regulate media activities
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The threat of violent extremism - The phenomenon of <i>gnangro</i> and young trade unionists in the urban transport sector - Drugs and drug trafficking - Human trafficking and cattle theft - The use of livestock to courier drugs - Links between violent extremism and trafficking 	<p>The proposed responses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of defence and security forces, including on human rights - Updating information and intelligence on violent extremism - The harmonisation of intelligence services and techniques to improve the quality of intelligence - Enmeshing the territory with the establishment of police services in all districts - The establishment of community police to enable defence and security forces to be closer to the population and thus facilitate intelligence gathering - The establishment of an ethics committee to facilitate and update intelligence gathering - The implementation of youth employment policies - The establishment of a legal framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing - Bilateral and multilateral cooperation at the subregional level - Operational synergies between structures such as GIABA, Interpol and others
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-border crime - Drug traffic - Dormant radicalisation - Control of religious preaching 	<p>The responses include strengthening security and improving development. Highlighted issues include:</p> <p>1. At the national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up structures such as the Association for Islamic Culture of Niger (AICN), the Directorate of Islamic Affairs at the Ministry of Interior, Decentralisation, Public Security, Customary and Religious Affairs, the Islamic Council of Niger and the High Authority for Peace Consolidation (HACP) - The creation by the President of the Republic of the National Center for Security and Strategic Studies (NCSSS),

		<p>which supports decision-making processes</p> <p>2. At the regional and local levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The valorisation of sultanates, chiefdoms and ethno-linguistic groups - The establishment of forums for inter- and intra-religious dialogue - The reorganisation and response to groups that claim indigenous rights to land - The revitalisation of religious and female associations - The development of legal frameworks for international NGOs and development partners <p>3. In the Diffa region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food distribution, livestock vaccination and primary healthcare campaigns for the local population <p>4. In the Tillabéry region :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiatives already undertaken and ongoing humanitarian and political initiatives, in addition to security arrangements, to resolve conflicts
Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maritime piracy - Cross-border organised crime - Challenges related to intelligence gathering at the local level - Drug trafficking - Pockets of radicalisation - Corruption and racketeering - Absence of the state and its services in certain regions 	<p>Togo has opted for the prevention of violent extremism through actions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation and implementation of the recommendations of the Council of Interior Ministers of the Entente Space - Coordination of the actions of defence and security forces - Implementation of agreements resulting from the Accra Peace Agreement - The implementation of agreements signed in the context of joint operations between Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Ghana - The establishment of dialogue on youth employment through the youth forum - Reform of the defence and security system - Linking up of the territory

4.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of previous sessions, recommendations to strengthen the PVE approach were made to the Permanent Secretariat of the Conseil de l'Entente, member states and research centres.

Actors	Recommendations to strengthen a preventive approach	Actions for implementation of and follow-up on recommendations	Actors involved	Synergy with existing approaches	Coordination with other regional structures
State	Maintain efforts to prevent violent extremism and put more emphasis on actions involving communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOs - Media - Regional collectives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conseil de l'Entente (CE) - ECOWAS - WAEMU - Mano River Union - Niger Basin Authority (NBA) - Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA) - G5 Sahel - UNOWAS - Member states
	Fight against inequalities to curb the perception of abandonment and contribute to the implementation of development programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish or strengthen local policing - Valorise civil-military activities - Deliver basic social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Territorial collectives - CSOs (citizen watch groups) 	- Exchange of good practice between states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CE - Mano River Union - ALG - ABN - G5 Sahel
	Promote the effective management of border areas through the implementation of actions to promote them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of basic socio-economic infrastructures - Securing border areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Territorial collectives - CSOs - AU - ECOWAS - WAEMU - Technical and financial partners (PTFs) 	Synergies with ongoing programmes at AU, ECOWAS and Mano River Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CE - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
	Strengthen the role of local communities in prevention and collaboration between local and central levels in the security sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource allocation for local prevention - Community integration in national and regional security frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Territorial collectives - CSOs 	Exchange of best practice between states (example from Benin)	Council of Local Authorities of WAEMU
	Implement inclusive youth policies that value young people and provide concrete	- Implementation of youth employment programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Territorial collectives - CSOs 	Projects and programmes implemented by NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CE - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel

	responses to their vulnerabilities	- Training young people in the culture of peace			
	Create spaces for dialogue to reduce the distances between youth (including youth belonging to violent groups) and political administrative authorities	- Establishment and/or revitalisation of consultative frameworks	- CSOs - Youth umbrella organisations - Territorial collectives	Exchange of good practice between states (example of Niger)	- CE - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
	Reactivate traditional structures (chieftaincies, religious leaders) as part of PVE	- Strengthening the role of traditional and religious authorities through the allocation of adequate financial resources	- Territorial collectives	Exchange of best practice between States (example from Burkina Faso)	Council of Local Authorities of WAEMU
	Organise and supervise the construction of religious buildings	- Adopt and/or apply texts on religious organisation - Reinforce the means of control of national structures in charge of worship	- Supervisors and religious leaders	Exchange of best practice between states	- CE - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
	Foster interreligious, intercultural and intercommunity dialogue	- Establish and animate local and national frameworks for exchanges between religions, cultures and communities	- Religious leaders and leaders - Territorial collectives - Media	International Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in West Africa	- ECOWAS - CE - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
	Promote research for better public policy development	- Involvement of academic and research centres in the development of public policies - Taking into account the results of research when implementing public policies - Allocation of funds for research	- States - PTF - Media - CE	Experience sharing with academic and research centres in other countries	- ECOWAS - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
	Establish an observatory for the prevention of violent extremism within states to facilitate		- Territorial collectives - State		- ECOWAS - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel

	monitoring and decision-making				
	Include all actors (defence and security forces, CSOs, researchers, academics, local communities, etc.) in prevention actions		- State		- ECOWAS - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
	Develop a national strategy to prevent violent extremism and allocate the necessary resources for its implementation	- Sharing of national PVE strategies between CE member states	- Territorial collectives - - State		- ECOWAS - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA - G5 Sahel
Conseil de l'Entente	Take into account national specificities to develop recommendations adapted to particular challenges, either for the attention of the member states or at regional level		- Territorial collectives - State		- ECOWAS - Mano River Union - ALG - ABN - G5 Sahel
	Implement the recommendations of studies on 'the security situation of the member states of the Conseil de l'Entente' and on 'the diagnosis of the intelligence systems in member states'	- Establishment and operationalisation of the Intelligence Arrangement Mechanism - Development and implementation of a programme on the boundaries of the Entente space	- States - Technical and financial partners	Exchange of good practice between states	- ECOWAS - Mano River Union - ALG - ABN - G5 Sahel
	Make an inventory of all preventive actions implemented and play the role of coordinator and facilitator		- CE Secretariat - States - Other societal actors		
	Continue the efforts of the CE Secretariat, with the support of its partners, to adopt an integrated approach to the prevention of violent extremism in the Entente area, both by the member states and at the sub-		- CE Secretariat - Member states - Dakar ISS - Swiss FDFA - Other partners		

	national and regional level, through the animation of a dedicated dialogue space.				
	Ensure a global vision of initiatives, taking into account Sahelian countries and those of the Gulf of Guinea		- States - PTF		
	Consider options for mobilising funds from member states for the implementation of preventive initiatives		- States		
	Create a subregional observatory on violent extremism		- States - PTF		- CEDEAO - Mano River Union - ALG - ABN - G5 Sahel
	Establish an inventory of each country's best practices on PVE to foster trade		- States		
	Accelerate the establishment of the Intelligence Arrangement Mechanism		- States - PTF		
University centres and research organisations	Make research more inclusive and reflect results according to the actors to better ensure their operationalisation	- Involvement of beneficiary structures in research processes - Accompany the beneficiary structures to implementation	- States - PTF - CE	Exchanges of experiences with other academic and research centres around the world	- CEDEAO - Mano River Union - LGA - NBA
	Create an interuniversity research network on PVE and radicalisation		- States - PTF - CE	Exchanges of experiences with academic and research centres in other countries	- ECOWAS

5. Way forward after the workshop

At the end of this meeting, the following action points were adopted:

1. The co-organisers to publish and widely disseminate a summary report of the workshop
2. Recommendations to strengthen the approach to the prevention of violent extremism shared at the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Security and the Interior of the Entente area
3. The conclusions of this workshop disseminated through a public roundtable for the prevention of violent extremism, which will be organised in Abidjan in the last quarter of 2018 by the Conseil de l'Entente, the ISS Dakar office and the Swiss FDFA, with the support of the Swiss Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire
4. The Conseil de l'Entente Executive Secretariat, with the support of its partners, continues its efforts to adopt an integrated approach to the prevention of violent extremism in the Entente area, as do member states at the subregional level, particularly through the facilitation of a dedicated dialogue space

About the Conseil de l'Entente

Created on 29 May 1959, the Conseil de l'Entente is the oldest intergovernmental organisation in West Africa and includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Togo. It covers an area of 2,033,065 km² with a population of 81 million in 2006, sharing the same working language, currency and agreements on business rights (OHADA) and accounting (SYSCOA). The objectives of the Conseil de l'Entente are to:

- Contribute to strengthening political relations between member states, with a view to maintaining between them and in the West African subregion a climate of peace, security, solidarity and mutual understanding necessary for sustainable economic and social development
- Promote closer and more dynamic political and cultural integration in terms of the agreement and in the West African subregion, notably by strengthening relations of fraternity, solidarity and cooperation
- Promote the economic development of member states through the implementation of joint projects and programmes that increase the well-being of the population

www.conseildelentente.org

About the Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

The ISS seeks to develop the knowledge and skills that will ensure Africa's future, with the goal of strengthening human security, building lasting peace and ensuring stability.

Founded in 1991, the ISS is an African non-profit organisation with offices in South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and Senegal. The Dakar office has decentralised its team and is present in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. The ISS covers many topics, such as transnational crime, migration, maritime security, development, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, crime prevention, criminal justice and conflict analysis and governance.

Using its networks and influence, the ISS provides authoritative analysis, hands-on training and technical assistance to regional organisations, governments and civil society. This promotes better policies and practices, and enables leaders to make informed decisions to face the challenges of human security in Africa.

www.issafrica.org

About the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Following the UN Secretary-General's presentation of his Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism in early 2016, the Swiss FDFA has made this theme a priority, and in April 2016 adopted the Swiss Foreign Policy [Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism](#). Since then, it has undertaken a range of advocacy activities for this preventive approach, focused on the causes of violence and possible alternatives, as well as activities with partners on the ground.

Among others, it launched, with several other partners, the “**Regional Conversations for the Prevention of Violent Extremism**” initiative, the first of which was held in Dakar in June 2016, the second in N'Djamena (Chad) in June 2017

and the third in Algiers in June 2018. These brought together nearly 500 stakeholders of various professional backgrounds from North, West and Central Africa – as well as external experts and regional or international organisations active in these regions. Of a deliberately informal nature, these exchanges have made it possible to address in a space and a climate of openness the sensitive and complex dimensions of this approach to the prevention of extreme violence (including its political nature). The aim is to provide a forum for exchange and dialogue on a preventive approach, to strengthen bridges between different actors and to highlight/reinforce positive initiatives representing concrete alternatives to EV carried by actors from these regions.
www.dfae.admin.ch

-> Summary of the Dakar meeting (2016):

https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/1609_Investing-in-Peace-ENGLISH.pdf

-> Summary of the N'Djamena meeting (2017):

<https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IPI-E-RPT-Chad-Meeting-NoteEnglish.pdf>

-> Summary of the Algiers meeting (2018):

https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/1809_Algers-Meeting-Note-English.pdf