



WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING

Progress Report
JAN-MARCH 2025

OVERVIEW OF QUARTER ONE (Q1) PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES






OVERVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY DYNAMICS IN WEST AFRICA

During the first quarter of 2025, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) National Early Warning System (NEWS) recorded **2,076** human security-related incidents across West Africa, resulting in **2,229** fatalities. The report identified key trends across four thematic areas: Organised Crime and Violent Extremism; Democracy and Governance; Gender, Peace and Security; and Environmental Security.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Democracy and governance across the region continued to reflect a complex interplay of progress, controversy, and persistent systemic challenges. Despite efforts by national authorities to improve citizens' welfare, issues such as inadequate public service delivery, endemic corruption, police brutality, insecurity, economic hardship, shrinking civic space, and political intolerance remain widespread. These challenges significantly hinder socio-economic development and prosperity.

Between 1 January and 31 March 2025, 222 demonstrations were recorded across the region. Notably, 17 of these turned violent, taking place in Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal, and Ghana. These incidents resulted in at least 20 fatalities, 63 injuries, and 196 arrests or detentions following interventions by security forces.

-  In **Nigeria**, multiple protests occurred across various states. In Ogun State, the Nigeria Automobile Technicians Association (NATA) protested a fatal road accident.
-  In **Mali**, two peaceful protests took place in response to terrorist attacks in the Bandiagara region.
-  In **Senegal**, the government initiated a media registration platform aimed at streamlining the media landscape. Initially, 112 outlets were approved; after 307 appeals, the list grew to 258 by 6 February 2025. However, arrests of political opponents and journalists, the dismissal of the Vice-President of the National Assembly, and the removal of Dakar's mayor without explanation have raised fears of democratic regression. In response, a new opposition coalition, the Front for the Defence of Democracy and the Republic (FDR), comprising political and civil society actors, was formed to resist what is perceived as authoritarian drift.
-  In **Côte d'Ivoire**, President Ouattara pledged inclusive elections in October 2025, though opposition parties have criticised the process as lacking transparency. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) opened a provisional electoral list dispute process from 22 March to 5 April 2025. Key opposition figures, including former President Laurent Gbagbo, Charles Blé Goudé, and former Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, were excluded due to prior convictions and loss of civic rights.¹ These exclusions have been condemned by the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) as a strategic attempt by the ruling Rally of *Houphouëtists* for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) to marginalise opposition and undermine democratic competition. These developments have heightened concerns about the integrity of the 2025 electoral process and the risk of pre-election tensions and violence.
-  The **Alliance of Sahel States (AES)**—Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger—continued to attract attention following their formal withdrawal from ECOWAS on 29 January and from the Francophonie in March 2025, citing a desire to safeguard national sovereignty and reject foreign influence.² Their earlier suspensions due to military coups informed this decision.

¹ <https://fr.apanews.net/cote-divoire/rci-election-exclusion-politique-de-3-opposants-pdci/>

² <https://apnews.com/article/mali-niger-burkina-aes-withdrawal-francophonie-43d04a46d293f647d7eb69f6c17d1592>

- 🌍 In **Niger**, a national consultation in February led to the announcement of a five-year transition, the dissolution of political parties, and the adoption of a "Refoundation Charter". New institutions were established, including the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP), the Refoundation Government, and the Refoundation Advisory Council (CCR).³ General Abdourahamane Tiani was confirmed as president for the transition period. Notably, the Charter permits military leaders to contest future elections.⁴ Niger also withdrew from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and launched its regional security operation, "Nalewa Dole", marking a shift toward autonomous defence strategies.
- 🌍 In **Burkina Faso**, President Captain Ibrahim Traoré reiterated his anti-Western stance during a national tour, emphasising the country's pursuit of self-determination and asserting that foreign powers resist Africa's development to protect their interests.⁵ This reflects a broader regional trend of rejecting traditional alliances favouring national and economic sovereignty.
- 🌍 In **Mali**, political parties and opposition figures have urged the transitional authorities to provide clarity on the transition process and a clear electoral timeline. A joint statement issued in Bamako on 22 January 2025 called for a transparent and inclusive path back to constitutional order.⁶ The transitional government's repeated delays have exacerbated frustration and raised concerns about the indefinite nature of the transition.
- 🌍 In **Guinea**, the transitional charter set 31 December 2024 as the deadline for a return to civilian rule. This deadline was missed, prompting protests on 6 January 2025 by opposition groups sceptical of the military's intentions.⁷ The transitional president has since announced 21 September⁸ 2025 as the date for a constitutional referendum, which some see as a step toward restoring democracy. Nonetheless, opposition parties and civil society remain doubtful about the government's commitment to this timeline.
- 🌍 In **Guinea-Bissau**, political tensions have escalated over the end date of President Embaló's five-year term. While the opposition claims it ended on 27 February 2025, the Supreme Court ruled it concludes on 4 September 2025. Parliamentary elections, initially scheduled for November 2024, were postponed by the President to 30 November 2025. An ECOWAS mission sent to facilitate consensus on the electoral calendar departed in March 2025 following reported threats of expulsion by the President.⁹ These developments highlight growing instability and concerns over governance and political legitimacy.
- 🌍 In **Benin**, ahead of the 2026 presidential elections, President Patrice Talon reiterated he would not seek a third term. However, the matter of succession is drawing increasing attention. In January 2025, two close allies of the President—Olivier Boko and former Sports Minister Oswald Homéky—were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for "conspiracy against the state", raising suspicions of a broader effort to eliminate potential challengers and deepening political uncertainty.
- 🌍 In **Togo**, the ruling Union for the Republic (UNIR) party, led by President Faure Gnassingbé, secured 34 of 41 Senate seats in recent elections, completing a controversial transition to a parliamentary system. UNIR's dominance has strengthened its hold on power, while opposition backlash underscores the growing political divide and challenges to the legitimacy of recent constitutional reforms.

³ <https://fr.apanews.net/news/niger-les-resolutions-des-assises-nationales-entrent-en-vigueur-le-25-mars/>

⁴ <https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/report/niger/february-2025>

⁵ <https://fr.apanews.net/diplomacy/burkina-faso-nous-menons-une-guerre-dindependance-capitaine-traore/>

⁶ <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/mali-des-partis-politiques-demandent-la-fin-de-la-transition/3460167>

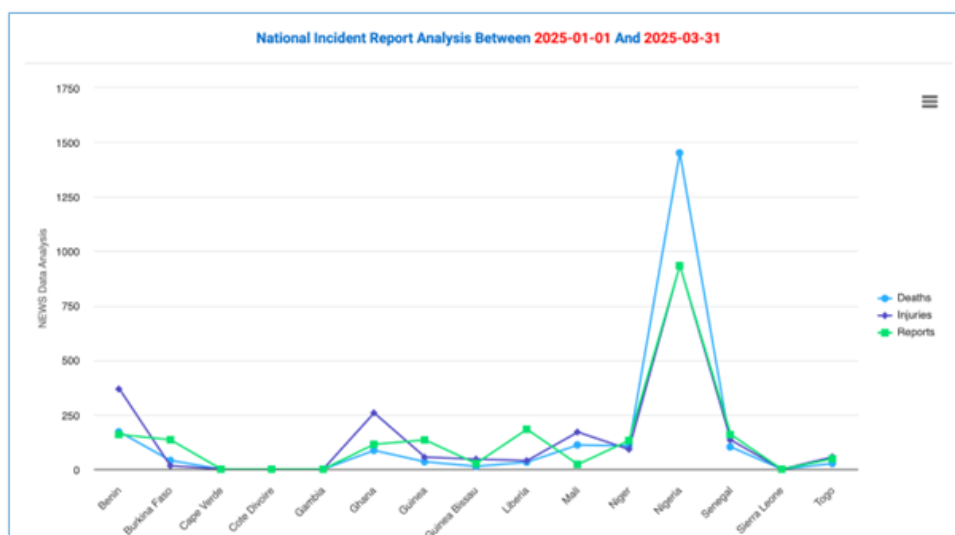
⁷ <https://wadr.org/guinea-protest-turns-fatal-as-demonstrations-intensify-against-ruling-junta/>

⁸ <https://information.tv5monde.com/afrique/video/guinee-le-referendum-fixe-au-21-septembre-2025-2768936>

⁹ <https://www.africanews.com/2025/03/03/ecowas-team-leaves-guinea-bissau-after-threat-of-expulsion/>

ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The region continued to face significant security threats linked to organised crime and violent extremism. During the reporting period, **943 incidents** resulted in **1,278 fatalities** and **635 injuries**. These incidents included terrorist attacks, armed robbery, cult and gang violence, kidnapping, homicide, human trafficking, and various forms of illicit trafficking.



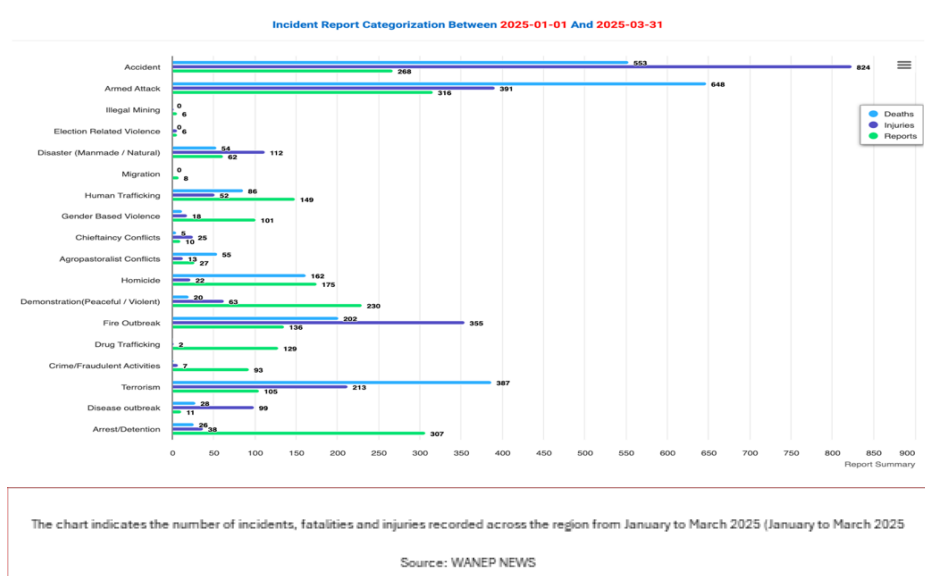
The chart indicates the number of incidents, fatalities and injuries recorded across the region from January to March 2025

NEWS recorded **316 cases of armed attacks** involving robbery and gang activity. There were 175 homicide incidents and 105 terrorist-related attacks across Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria. Human trafficking and abductions were also prevalent, with 149 cases reported in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, and Senegal. Nigeria alone accounted for 13 trafficking cases involving women and children, and 126 abduction incidents.

Transnational organised crime persisted, with **129 drug-related cases** reported in Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. Law enforcement agencies seized substantial quantities of illicit substances, including Indian hemp, opioids, codeine, cocaine, and heroin. Notably, a 40-foot container of opioids en route to Niger was intercepted at Tema Port in Ghana, while over five tonnes of drugs were confiscated in Nigeria. Additionally, fake and expired pharmaceutical products were seized in Guinea and Nigeria, posing serious public health risks.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a major threat to peace and security in West Africa. Their widespread availability fuels organised crime, weakens state authority and impedes peacebuilding and community reconciliation efforts.

Communal conflicts, particularly from chieftaincy disputes and agro-pastoral tensions, also persisted. **Thirty-seven** such incidents were reported in Togo, Senegal, Ghana, Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Nigeria, further exacerbating the region's fragile human security landscape.





ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY


Environmental security across West Africa continues to be undermined by both anthropogenic and natural hazards. During the reporting period, WANEP NEWS documented a range of incidents, including rainstorms, landslides, fire outbreaks, disease outbreaks (Lassa Fever and Mpox), electrical faults, arson, and accidents involving flammable substances. These events resulted in numerous fatalities, injuries, and significant property damage.

Fifteen rainstorm incidents were reported, causing five deaths and five injuries. Similarly, 15 incidents of landslides and mine collapses resulted in 96 deaths and 74 injuries across Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Ghana.

Fire-related incidents—including those caused by petroleum product inflammations, wildfires, arson, and electrical malfunctions—were recorded in Benin, Nigeria, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Togo, Guinea-Bissau, and Ghana. A total of 133 such incidents occurred, leading to 201 deaths, 1,054 injuries, and extensive property damage valued in the millions.

-  In **The Gambia**, a major bushfire erupted in Chamen, North Bank Region, threatening farmland and jeopardising livelihoods and food security.
-  In **Sierra Leone**, a fire on 6 February 2025 destroyed the Freetown Innovation Lab at Fourah Bay College. Another blaze on 19 February on Sibthorpe Street left hundreds homeless and damaged four buildings. As of 10 February 2025, the country reported 72 confirmed cases of Mpox (21 female and 51 male), with one death, 22 recoveries, and 48 active cases.
-  In **Nigeria**, public health emergencies were reported, including outbreaks of Lassa Fever, Diphtheria, and Avian Influenza. Between 3 and 28 February 2025, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) recorded 1,180 suspected Lassa Fever cases across 30 states, with 175 confirmed and 30 fatalities. Additionally, 35 suspected cases of Diphtheria were reported in two states, with 19 confirmed. An outbreak of Avian Influenza in Plateau State resulted in the death of over 280 birds. These outbreaks underscore the need for sustained public health vigilance and proactive disease prevention measures.
-  In **Guinea**, environmental risks were exacerbated by recurring landslides in artisanal mining sites, particularly in Siguiri and Mandiana prefectures. Six such incidents were recorded,

resulting in 19 deaths and four injuries. The most severe occurred in Bourré Boucaria district (Siguiri), where seven children aged between one and six years lost their lives.

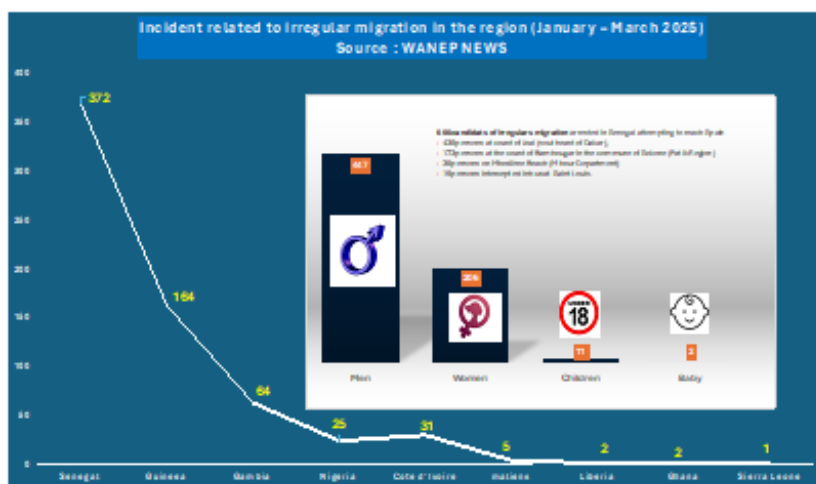
-  **Mali** also faced serious environmental incidents. On 15 February 2025, the collapse of an illegal gold mine in Bilalikoto, Kayes Region, caused at least 50 deaths and 70 injuries. A similar collapse on 29 January in Kokoyo, Koulikoro Region, killed 20 people, including 14 women.

GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

During the first quarter of 2025, the WANEP NEWS system recorded **150 incidents of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)**. Despite ongoing efforts to address these issues, persistent sociocultural barriers continue to hinder progress across West Africa.

Notable cases recorded during the period include 56 incidents of rape (in Nigeria, Senegal, and Liberia), 12 cases of child sexual abuse (in Guinea, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso), and 9 instances of harassment (in Senegal, Liberia, and Nigeria).

With the support of security forces, 66 minors—ranging in age from three weeks to 19 years—were rescued from traffickers in Nigeria (52) and Burkina Faso (14). Of approximately 20 individuals arrested in connection with these cases, at least 17 were women, representing 80% of those detained.



Between 14 February and 20 March 2025, authorities in **Senegal** arrested 666 individuals attempting irregular migration to Spain. The group comprised 447 men and boys, 206 women and girls, 11 children, and 2 infants. Arrests were made in five operations by the national gendarmerie, including 436 individuals intercepted off the coast of Joal (southeast of Dakar), 173 at Bambougar (Sokone commune, Fatick Region), 36 at Mbodiène Beach (Mbour Department), and 16 in a bus in Saint-Louis. Despite the high risk of shipwrecks, irregular migration remains prevalent, with individuals continuing to invest heavily in dangerous journeys facilitated by smugglers.

In March 2025, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) announced the suspension of emergency food and nutrition assistance to two million people due to funding shortfalls. This includes Malian refugees in Mauritania, and displaced and food-insecure populations in **Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria**. The WFP projects a worsening food crisis by June 2025, with over 33 million people expected to face severe food shortages in northeast Nigeria. Of these, approximately 4.8 million

people in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states are forecasted to experience acute hunger, up from 4.3 million in 2023.¹⁰

A significant milestone in gender representation was achieved in **Ghana**, where **Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang**, former Minister of Education (2013–2017), assumed office as Vice President on 7 January 2025—becoming the first woman to hold this position in the country’s history.¹¹

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. TO ENHANCE THE USE OF EARLY WARNING IN SUPPORT OF RESPONSE INITIATIVES

1.1 WANEP, with support from GIZ and the African Union, organised a three-day training in Botswana and Uganda for CSO coalition focal points in Eastern and Southern Africa. Conducted in collaboration with SAPPC and ECONet under the Multistakeholder Conflict Prevention Architectures in Africa project, the training aimed to strengthen early warning and response linkages through a new CSO-led Regional Early Warning System. WANEP facilitated sessions on administrative management, conflict monitoring, data collection, analysis, and reporting. The event also enabled experience-sharing with IGAD, COMESA, and EAC representatives to enhance regional coordination in EWER.

1.2 WANEP participated in a UNITAR Training of Trainers workshop on the Human Rights-Based Approach to Early Warning, aimed at enhancing CSO capacity to integrate human rights principles into conflict prevention.

1.3 At the 6th Harmattan Forum in Lomé (19–21 February 2025), **WANEP**, represented by eight national secretariats and through its Regional Analyst – Women, Youth, Peace and Security (RA-WYPS), delivered a presentation on “Free Movement of People, Security Risks, and the Fight against Violent Extremism.” The session drew on NEWS data and underscored the need for greater collaboration to address migration-related fatalities in West Africa.

1.4 WANEP provided continued technical support to the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace and Conflict Prevention in Central Africa's (COPAC) National Early Warning and Response System (NEWRS) focal point and community monitors across seven Central African countries. This included guidance on quality data submission for the 2024 Peace and Security Report and support in appointing a new Regional Coordinator, effective April 2025.

1.5 WANEP, through its AU Liaison Coordinator, produced monthly early warning analyses and reports on Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Togo. These were submitted to the Director of the Conflict Management Directorate (CMD) and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) to inform Peace and Security Council (PSC) interventions and AU Commission actions.

1.6. On 29 January 2025, **WANEP-Togo** held a press conference to present the 2023–2024 biannual security report, based on data from the National Early Warning System. The event brought together 59 participants, including 19 women, representing government ministries, international organisations, civil society, and the media to discuss security challenges and outlooks for Togo. Key recommendations included: i) Strengthen the National Strategy for Preventing and Combatting Violent Extremism, with greater involvement of local communities, women, and youth; ii) Enhance the capacity of defence and security forces, particularly in equipment and logistics. iii) Expand community awareness campaigns on conflict resolution, resource management, sexual and gender-based




¹⁰ UN WFP, information published on 7th March 2025, <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2025/03/1153736>

¹¹ Ghana Embassy website, <https://ghanaembassydc.org/vice-president-of-ghana/>

violence, and inclusive governance and iv) Pool resources and strengthen synergies among stakeholders to ensure a rapid and coordinated security response.

1.2. The Electoral Violence, Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (E-MAM)

1.2.1. As part of the ongoing implementation of the E-MAM 2023–2026 project, WANEP continued to support electoral conflict prevention across seven West African countries. During the reporting period (January–March 2025), interventions focused on post-electoral contexts in Liberia, Senegal, and Ghana, and pre-electoral preparedness in Côte d'Ivoire (presidential election, October 2025), Guinea (referendum, September 2025), Guinea-Bissau (presidential and legislative elections, November 2025), and Benin (legislative elections, January 2026). In light of the project's relevance, the EU Delegation in The Gambia requested its extension to support the country's December 2026 presidential election.

-  In Côte d'Ivoire, **WANEP** supported several activities to inform early response and strengthen national preparedness:
 - A national hotspot mapping exercise was completed in March, identifying 18 (3.4%) very high-risk, 25 (4.8%) high-risk, 207 (40%) medium-risk, and 268 (52%) low-risk sub-prefectures. The mapping will be updated in July 2025. An internal assessment of 26 risk factors identified 14 (54%) as high risk and 8 (31%) as medium risk. A stakeholder matrix was developed, outlining the roles, influence, and challenges of key electoral actors, and is being used as a working tool by project partners.
 - Ten civil society organisations were assessed using WANEP's Organisational Development Index (WODI) and now form part of the National Election Response Group (NERG), alongside national institutions. A sub-grant management training for 20 CSO staff (including 9 women) was held on 27 February, enabling them to lead response activities guided by NERG recommendations.
 - From 25 to 26 February, 25 community observers (8 women) were trained in Abidjan on the CI-Elects early warning system and data collection. They have since been deployed in identified hotspots to monitor electoral risks.
 - A two-day pre-validation meeting was held on 19–20 February to review the findings of the mapping, risk analysis, and stakeholder assessments. Ten key stakeholders participated, including four women. On 20 March, WANEP officially launched the NERG in Abidjan, with 43 participants including electoral authorities, security agencies, and regional partners (ECOWAS, UNOWAS, and ECONEC). The NERG held its first meeting following the launch.
 - A regional working group briefing on the pre-electoral context was held on 21 March, bringing together 18 participants—including 7 women—and representatives of ECOWAS, UNOWAS, and ECONEC. The meeting resulted in a consolidated analysis and recommendations to support a peaceful election in October 2025.
-  National Election Response Groups (NERGs) convened four meetings: one in Ghana (7 March), two in Guinea-Bissau (11 February and 14 March), and one in Senegal (12 February). These meetings produced key recommendations that informed response actions subsequently implemented in the respective countries.
-  Sub-grants totalling EUR 64,306 were awarded to four civil society organisations—two in Guinea-Bissau (EUR 4,622), one in Senegal (EUR 1,959), and one in Liberia (EUR 57,725). The grants supported political dialogue on Guinea-Bissau's electoral calendar, voter registration awareness in Senegal, and by-election monitoring in Nimba County, Liberia.

- ✿ Additionally, WANEP finalised a Compendium of Recommendations from its Election Observation Missions for Senegal's 2024 presidential and legislative elections. The document consolidates 330 recommendations to inform post-election monitoring and reform efforts. A similar process has commenced for Ghana's 2024 general elections, held on 7 December 2024.

1.2.2. In Côte d'Ivoire, as part of the electoral process and the E-MAM project,




- ✿ **WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire** participated in the official launch of the electoral package on 13 March 2025. During the event, the Network delivered a presentation on the electoral context in Côte d'Ivoire, including a risk mapping of hotspot areas based on indicators from its NEWS. The event brought together a broad range of stakeholders, including diplomats, political party representatives, religious leaders, and civil society organisations.
- ✿ Earlier, on 10 March 2025, the Network facilitated the launch of the National Electoral Response Group (GNRE). The opening ceremony underscored the value of strategic partnerships and the involvement of regional and international organisations in promoting peaceful elections. The meeting convened 26 participants, including representatives from WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS, UNOWAS, and the European Union.
- ✿ Additionally, **WANEP- Côte d'Ivoire** organised a briefing session for the Regional Working Group focused on the E-MAM project. Nine participants took part in the session, which involved mapping electoral challenges by zone and proposing recommendations for enhanced transparency, including the establishment of a citizen observatory. The discussion reaffirmed the importance of inclusive participation and raised awareness of the media's role in managing electoral crises. Recommendations from the meeting also emphasised increasing citizen sensitisation, establishing a dialogue platform, and promoting greater engagement of youth and women in pre-electoral activities.
- ✿ From 25 to 26 February 2025, WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire organised a training session for 25 community monitors (18 men and 7 women) with the objective of enhancing their capacity to identify electoral violence indicators and reporting through the CI-ELECTS online platform. By the end of the training, participants had strengthened their understanding of the indicators and were equipped to submit both incident and situational reports. All trained monitors are now fully operational across Côte d'Ivoire in support of electoral risk mitigation efforts.
- ✿ Furthermore, on 27 February 2025, WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire facilitated a training session for ten civil society organisations that are part of the National Response Group to Electoral Violence. Each organisation was represented by a project coordinator and an accountant. The training enhanced participants' understanding of the procedures and tools for accessing and managing sub-grants, as well as the requirements for valid narrative and financial reporting. Following this session, the sub-grant component under the "Response" pillar of the E-MAM 2023–2026 project became operational.

1.2.3. WANEP-Liberia played a key role in enhancing the implementation of Election Observation Mission (EOM) recommendations through its active participation in an EU-organised workshop that reviewed past election observations in Liberia and contributed to the development of a strategic roadmap for the upcoming Nimba County by-elections. In collaboration with the Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) and the Liberia Elections Observation Network (LEON), WANEP-Liberia will support EU-funded activities under the EMAM Project, including the training of 101 election observers and the facilitation of community dialogues involving 150 stakeholders to promote transparency and citizen engagement in the electoral process.


2. TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN AND GIRLS' CAPACITY FOR POLICY-INFLUENCING

2.1 WPS Coordination¹² Meeting: The first quarterly coordination meeting of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) focal points was held on 14 February 2025, bringing together representatives from all 15 of WANEP's National Networks. The meeting served as a strategic platform to reflect on the previous year's achievements, identify gaps, and outline key priority actions for 2025. An action plan was developed to capture focus areas for each country, providing guidance for WPS programming throughout the year.

2.2. GenderTalk¹³ Series:

-  The 16th edition of the Gender Talk Series, held in line with International Women's Day 2025, focused on the theme "Accelerate Action for Inclusive Participation of All Women and Girls in Decision-making and Peace Processes in West Africa." It provided a platform for sharing good practices on women's participation, highlighting Senegal's gender parity law which mandates political parties to present balanced candidate lists—non-compliance results in disqualification by the Constitutional Court. Political will was also identified as key to Senegal's high ranking in women's parliamentary representation. The session further examined the roles of women in political transitions in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. A total of 72 participants from civil society, state institutions, development partners, and international stakeholders, including from Rwanda, took part.
-  On 11 March 2025, **WANEP-Nigeria** hosted the 5th National GenderTalk Series, themed "*Beijing +30 Perspectives: Women and Armed Conflict: Re-Assessing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Nigeria.*" The virtual event, aligned with International Women's Day and the Beijing +30 framework, engaged 52 participants via Zoom and reached 134 viewers on Facebook Live. It assessed Nigeria's progress on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, discussed the impact of armed conflict on women, and highlighted challenges such as low awareness of UNSCR 1325, cultural barriers, and weak policy implementation. The session culminated in practical recommendations for enhancing gender-inclusive peace processes at national and regional levels.
-  In March 2025, **WANEP-Nigeria** also ran a month-long social media campaign to raise awareness of gender equality and the WPS agenda, featuring advocacy messages and infographics. The campaign, which reached a wide audience across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, emphasized progress such as the adoption of National Action Plans and the role of women in peacebuilding while addressing persisting challenges. This initiative reinforced the objectives of the GenderTalk Series and contributed to strengthening public advocacy and capacity development for gender-inclusive peace processes.







2.3. In commemoration of International Women's Day (IWD) 2025,

-  **WANEP-Niger** organised a sensitisation visit and support initiative for women affected by obstetric fistula. This solidarity action aimed to improve the understanding of obstetric

¹² The quarterly coordination meeting provides a platform for programme updates across National Networks and facilitates mutual learning through experience sharing.

¹³ **GenderTalk**, launched by WANEP in June 2020, is a digital platform for discussing peace and security issues with a focus on the concerns of women and girls. It also facilitates experience sharing among stakeholders on the progress, challenges, and prospects of advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in the region.

fistula's causes, consequences, and solutions among hospitalised women. Additionally, food and hygiene kits were distributed to enhance their quality of life, while also strengthening the sense of solidarity and social inclusion. The initiative improved hygiene conditions, reducing the risk of post-treatment infections.

-  **WANEP-Niger** also facilitated a validation workshop for the mapping and database of women's organisations working on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. This workshop brought together technical and financial partners, state institutions, and women's organisations to review a comprehensive study. As a result, Niger now has a reliable, updated digital platform serving as a reference for decision-makers, partners, and civil society actors.
-  **WANEP-Mali** organised an Intergenerational Dialogue on Women's Rights that brought together 125 participants (including 110 women, 80% youth) to discuss rights, equality, and empowerment. The session enhanced understanding of international frameworks and highlighted the voices of often marginalised women.
-  Over 800 women united in Liberia to advocate for the acceleration of efforts against gender-based violence (GBV) and the achievement of gender equality. Through its WIPNET programme, **WANEP-Liberia** also participated in the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Day observance, as Liberia placed a one-year moratorium on FGM to prioritise formal education.
-  In collaboration with ECOWAS and The Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (TANGO), **WANEP-The Gambia** co-organised a Twitter Space and a brainstorming, addressing barriers to women's political participation and leadership, and formulating key recommendations to strengthen democratic governance.
-  On 15 March 2025, as part of International Women's Rights Day, **WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire** organised a workshop in Abidjan titled "*Women with Disabilities Speak Through Colour.*" The event brought together 20 female students with disabilities, association leaders, and professionals. Participants shared personal experiences during an interactive session, followed by an art workshop led by local artists. Through their drawings, the women expressed aspirations related to rights, inclusion, and the fight against discrimination. The activity also served to update the situation of women with disabilities in Côte d'Ivoire, build their confidence, and produce advocacy tools for awareness-raising.
-  **WANEP-Benin** commemorated IWD 2025 through a digital campaign titled "Women Peacebuilders in Benin", which ran from 8 to 30 March 2025 on the organisation's official Facebook page. As part of this initiative, 13 messages highlighting the voices and contributions of 13 women peacebuilders were published, showcasing their roles in promoting peace and social cohesion in Benin.



2.3. On 12 March 2025, **WANEP**, in collaboration with the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) and the UNOWAS Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security – Ghana Chapter, organised an intergenerational dialogue with students of Ghana Technology University. Themed "Empowering Young Women: Accelerating Action for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in West Africa," the event aimed to mobilise young women and men as advocates for gender equality and the WPS agenda. It also provided opportunities for mentorship and career orientation in the peace and security sector. Approximately 200 participants—including youth, CSO representatives, and state institutions—attended the forum.

2. 4. On 13 March 2025, **WANEP** participated in a stakeholder validation meeting on the Monitoring Report for Ghana's Second National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (GHANAP II). The report assessed implementation progress, highlighting achievements in policy development, security sector reforms, and increased women's representation. Challenges included limited funding, weak inter-agency coordination, and persistent socio-cultural barriers. Recommendations for GHANAP III included

aligning assessment indicators with the AU Continental Results Framework on WPS and securing adequate funding for effective implementation.

2.5. From 25–27 February 2025, **WANEP** took part in a continental conference in Abidjan, organised by the Strategic Research Institute (IRS) of the International Academy for the Fight against Terrorism (AIICT), in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The conference aimed to strengthen the role of women in preventing and combating violent extremism. Discussions focused on women's dual roles in extremist movements, enhancing their inclusion in counter-terrorism strategies, and identifying research, training, and cooperation needs. WANEP shared good practices and lessons learned from its work promoting women's and youth engagement in preventing violent extremism. Participants emphasised the importance of women's involvement in intelligence and early warning and called for stronger collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and civil society for a more coordinated response.

2.6 In response to the exclusion of 43 male students in the Plateaux region for impregnating several schoolgirls, **WANEP-Togo** organised two key activities:


-  A staff discussion café on early pregnancies and the exclusion of male students involved. The session, attended by 23 participants (14 men, 9 women), explored the impact of the decision on education, root causes of early pregnancies, and possible preventive and educational alternatives.
-  A webinar, in collaboration with the Josiane Collective, on the same issue. Approximately 30 participants discussed strategies to address school-related gender-based violence, including early pregnancy, and formulated recommendations for action.

The Network also organised a radio broadcast on “*The Silence of Women in the Face of Child Marriage*” and “*Women’s Promotion Policies in Togo: Are They Truly Beneficial?*” The programme raised awareness of the harmful effects of child marriage and informed listeners about existing policies. It also called on authorities to accelerate efforts towards achieving gender equality across all sectors.





2.7. With support from World Vision Sierra Leone under the Women, Peace and Security project, **WANEP-Sierra Leone** conducted two training sessions in Makeni (11–13 February) and Bo (16–18 February 2025) for One Stop Centre Leaders and Rainbo Initiative staff. A total of 90 participants were trained on counselling, psychosocial support, and medical services for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), enhancing their capacity to provide effective survivor-centred care.

2.8. On 17 March 2025, **WANEP-Senegal** was invited by the Women’s Committee of the Senegalese Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities, to contribute to a session on legal protections and support mechanisms for women and girls with disabilities. The event, held in Dakar, gathered key stakeholders, including UN Women and the Ministry of Family and Solidarity. Recognised for its commitment to inclusive peacebuilding and gender advocacy, WANEP-Senegal played a key role in advancing the dialogue on these critical issues.

2.9 During the quarter, **WANEP-Mali** implemented a series of impactful initiatives to strengthen women's leadership in peace, security, and governance:

-  Training on Mediation and Security Governance (25–26 February, Bamako): 50 women leaders from civil society were trained in security governance, mediation techniques, and inclusive advocacy. As a result, 85% gained practical tools, a network of women mediators was

established, and collective action plans were drafted to promote women's participation in local security structures.

-  Strategic Advocacy Planning Workshop (21–22 February): 20 women activists enhanced their skills in strategic advocacy, negotiation, and campaign development. Structured campaigns focused on increasing women's representation in Security Advisory Committees (CCS), engaging local authorities, and tracking the implementation of UNSCR 1325.
-  Establishment of a Women's Local Task Force (4–5 March): 21 women leaders from Bamako's six communes formed a task force with a clear mission, structure, and action plan to support women's inclusion in local security governance. A central coordination body and six local focal points were activated.
-  Promotion of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda (March): Through print, radio, and digital campaigns—run in collaboration with the Association of Bloggers of Mali (ABM)—WANEP-Mali raised awareness of the WPS Agenda, reaching over 15,000 people and boosting youth and women's engagement online.
-  Institutional Engagement: The WIPNET Programme Officer represented WANEP-Mali in 10 partner-led advocacy and training activities, contributing technical expertise that advanced women's leadership and political engagement.

2.10. WANEP–The Gambia played an active role in advancing gender inclusion during the quarter through participation in the Gender Thematic Working Group, contributing to the development of the 2025 workplan and reviewing the draft gender policy for TANGO.

2.11. In preparation for the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, **WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire** took part in a session convened by UNOWAS to share best practices on Women, Peace and Security. The initiative offered safe spaces, legal and psychosocial assistance, training in women's rights and peacebuilding, and support for economic empowerment. The Network highlighted the integration of gender-based violence indicators within its national early warning system, contributing to the prevention and monitoring of violence against women in Côte d'Ivoire.

2.12. On 13 March 2025, **WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire** participated in a radio programme on women's rights to mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. Discussions focused on the proposal for a national day dedicated to women's rights, progress in women's education and entrepreneurship, and the role of civil society in promoting gender equality. The programme also addressed gender-based violence, highlighting the 9,607 cases recorded in 2024 and the ongoing challenges associated with reporting such incidents. Participants discussed sociocultural barriers and the importance of introducing gender equality education from an early age, concluding with a call to sustain these discussions through media platforms.




2.13. WANEP-Burkina Faso made significant contributions to strengthening the capacities of women's organisations and promoting women's empowerment through targeted coaching and capacity-building initiatives. The Network worked closely with three partner organisations, providing essential support to enhance their organisational skills and effectiveness in advocating for women's rights and development. These efforts are crucial in empowering women to take active roles in decision-making processes and promoting gender equality within their communities.

3. TO BROADEN THE PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMME AND SUPPORT YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND VOICE IN ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY



3.1. Support for the development of the National Actions Plan (NAP) on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) across West Africa: In partnership with UN DPPA, WANEP and its Liberia national secretariat supported the co-creation workshop for Liberia's Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) National Action Plan, held in Monrovia from 5–7 March 2025. Part of a year-long YPS project in Liberia and Benin (since April 2024), the workshop convened 66 stakeholders, including government representatives, youth networks, technical partners, and UN agencies (UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR).

3.2. Two Youth4Peace Senegal members participated in a training on climate security organised by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, Ghana, from 26–27 February 2025. The training enhanced participants' understanding of the nexus between climate change and security, equipping them with essential knowledge and tools to address related challenges.

3.3. WANEP-Nigeria Organised the following Capacity-Building and Advocacy Activities:

-  **Training on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Kwara State:** From 18–20 February 2025, WANEP-Nigeria organised a 3-day training workshop in Ilorin, Kwara State, aimed at building stakeholders' capacity on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and preventing violent extremism. The workshop engaged 28 participants from civil society, student unions, traditional leaders, women and youth groups, and the media. The sessions, led by seasoned experts, focused on conflict analysis, early warning systems, peacebuilding paradigms, and strategies for preventing violent extremism, equipping participants with practical tools to identify and address conflict.
-  **Advocacy on Safe School Declaration (SSD) Bill in Lagos State:** On 25 March 2025, WANEP-Nigeria's advocacy team, consisting of three women and two men, visited the Lagos State House of Assembly to discuss the Safe School Declaration (SSD) Bill with Hon. Mosunmola Songodara, Chairman of the House Committee on Education. The team was warmly received by Prof. Olajuwon Olaisebikan, Personal Assistant to the Speaker, who expressed support for the Bill and recommended a follow-up visit to engage further legislators for sponsorship.
-  **Financing Plan for SSD Implementation in Lagos State:** On 26–27 March 2025, WANEP-Nigeria, in collaboration with the Women Advocate Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) and supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), organised a 2-day meeting focused on the financing plan for the SSD implementation in Lagos State. The meeting aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the SSD and develop a draft costed plan for its implementation. With 36 participants, including security agencies, civil society, traditional leaders, and state agencies, the event fostered collaborative discussions and led to the development of actionable recommendations to improve the safety and security of schools.

3.4. WANEP-Niger

-  organised an information session on a new project titled *Youth Engagement for the Promotion of Digital Rights*. During this orientation, participants were briefed on the project's objectives, intervention areas, and opportunities, with a strong commitment from the youth to actively participate in its implementation.
-  Attended a meeting at the African Development Bank (AfDB) on the Integrated Youth Development and Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programme (PIDAJ), with 15 participants,

including 3 women. The meeting focused on current initiatives and future opportunities to support youth entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

- 🌱 Led advocacy efforts targeting local authorities and community leaders to promote the inclusion of youth and women in community-based conflict prevention and management structures (CCP and CCC). As a result, three mayors, three local elected officials, and three community councillors committed to supporting the participation of marginalised groups, who in turn expressed readiness to engage actively in these mechanisms.

3.5 WANEP-Mali actively contributed to a capacity-building workshop organised by *the Association des Jeunes pour la Citoyenneté Active et la Démocratie* (AJCAD) from 11 to 13 March 2025, which brought together 35 participants—predominantly youth (90%), including 22 women and 13 men. The workshop promoted intergroup collaboration by engaging young women, men, and individuals from vulnerable backgrounds, fostering inclusive, locally led peace initiatives. Key outcomes included i) Improved understanding of human security and conflict dynamics; ii) Strengthened youth commitment to community peacebuilding through practical dialogue and mediation tools; and iii) Emergence of informal peer networks to sustain engagement.

3.6. WANEP-Liberia

- 🌱 enhanced citizens' knowledge and skills for peaceful coexistence by training 128 beneficiaries (96 females and 32 males), including young women and men, in advocacy and community mobilisation across Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, and Lofa Counties. These participants are now applying and replicating the skills gained within their respective communities, contributing to locally driven peacebuilding efforts.
- 🌱 Has significantly contributed to advancing women and youth peace and security at the national level through strategic partnerships with the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the YMCA, and other stakeholders. This collaboration, supported by UNFPA, led to the development of the work plan for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Youth Peace and Security (NAP YPS).
- 🌱 Also played a pivotal role in advocating for the operational funding of the War and Economic Crimes Court in Liberia, which was subsequently supported by the government.

3.7. WANEP-Burkina Faso made significant strides in promoting youth peace and security, particularly through its engagement in the education and empowerment of young people.

- 🌱 A key achievement was the resolution of a conflict at Lycée Bruno Buchwieser, where peace club members played a critical role in resolving tensions between the student body and the administration. Their intervention helped prevent further escalation when students held an administrator hostage over a disagreement regarding the organisation of a school event.
- 🌱 In addition to this, WANEP-Burkina Faso facilitated the development of leadership and conflict management skills among young people. Six youth leaders from peace clubs and Youth4Peace trained 30 other youth from five new localities in non-violent conflict resolution.
- 🌱 The Network's collaboration with the Ministry of Education strengthened educational initiatives promoting peace, with peace clubs and Youth4Peace networks renewing their activities in seven schools.
- 🌱 The Network also promoted civic engagement through community days organised by young people from peace clubs and Youth4Peace in three schools. These events provided a platform for raising awareness on citizenship, non-violence, and road safety, with 155 youth, including 104 girls, participating in the sensitisation in Pabre.¹⁴ Furthermore, 123 young people, 38 of whom were girls, participated in a sensitisation event on ecocitizenship.

¹⁴ Pabre is a department or commune of Kadiogo Province in central Burkina Faso.

- 🌱 WANEP-Burkina Faso's leadership in youth networking was reinforced, and youth involved in the Mobile Journalism (MOJO) training produced five short videos on peace and cohesion. These activities highlight WANEP-Burkina Faso's growing role in building leadership capacities among young people and promoting peace through innovative platforms and collaboration with local authorities.

3.8. WANEP-Benin organised an online discussion titled "*Les Jeunes en parlent*¹⁵" on the theme "Respect for Others as a Value for Promoting Peace", held online on 29 January 2025. The session brought together 16 participants, including 8 women. Two speakers shared their perspectives through a structured dialogue, fostering reflection and exchange among young participants on the importance of mutual respect as a foundation for peaceful coexistence.

4. TO EXPAND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS TO PERFORM THEIR MANDATE EFFECTIVELY IN HUMAN SECURITY

4.1 WANEP, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) convened the third Research and Action for Peace Network (REcAP) Regional Conference in Dakar, Senegal, from 10–11 February 2025. The conference, themed "Regional Cooperation and Coordination on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Prevention of Violent Extremism," marked three years of project implementation. It provided a platform to reflect on key achievements and explore strategies to enhance regional collaboration. Expert presentations and round-table discussions with distinguished speakers from academia and civil society broadened insights on West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin and explored ways to sustain a dynamic regional network.

4.2. During the reporting period, eleven capacity-building sessions were conducted across five countries, focusing on conflict prevention and management, gender, advocacy, conflict sensitivity, land-related conflict, and the prevention of violent extremism. A total of 243 participants—including representatives of NGOs, CSOs, youth and women's groups, local and traditional authorities, and community members—benefited from the trainings. Sessions were facilitated by WANEP and DRC, with additional support from REcAP network members in their respective countries¹⁶. The use of participatory approaches and locally relevant case studies enhanced the effectiveness of the sessions and was widely appreciated by participants.

4.3 As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen community-based peace mechanisms, **WANEP-Togo** facilitated a capacity-building session for Community Peace and Response Structures (CRPS) from all six regions. Thirty participants, including 11 women, enhanced their knowledge of conflict analysis and management tools while exchanging insights on regional security challenges

4.4. During the first quarter of 2025, **WANEP- Togo** implemented several key activities under the Economic Resilience to Violent Extremism Project project:

- 🌱 **Project Planning Meetings** – Two inception meetings were held in Lomé (19 February) and Dapaong (25 February) to review achievements from Phase 1, introduce the continuation phase, and discuss the local security context. A total of 25 stakeholders participated in the meetings.

¹⁵ In English: Young People Speak out

¹⁶ The trainings took place in Ghana (Chereponi, Feilmuo, Kintampo, Jugboi, and Damongo), The Gambia (Bwiam), Nigeria (Ilorin), Côte d'Ivoire (Boukani and Gontougo Regions), and Benin (Cotonou).

- 🌱 **Field Visit to Djakpernak** – A project team visit to the Djakpernak vegetable farming cooperative facilitated an exchange on the project's context and objectives and allowed the team to gather member profiles, needs, and challenges.
- 🌱 **General Assemblies of Partner Cooperatives** – The project team attended annual general meetings of the SCOOPS in Toumonlogou, Mogou, and Warkambou (12 February, 7 & 18 March), where members reviewed past activities, renewed leadership, and outlined plans for the year.
- 🌱 **Community Engagement** – As part of project introduction efforts, the team held meetings with the Djakpernak cooperative (17 March) and the Mayor of Tône 2 (25 March) to present the project's goals and expected outcomes.
- 🌱 **Capacity Building on Interreligious Dialogue and Social Cohesion** – With financial support from GIGA, 10 training sessions reached 313 youths (102 women) across various religious backgrounds, enhancing their understanding of peaceful coexistence. The project also reached 1,049 people through research-related activities in 10 localities. Follow-up dialogues are ongoing in schools, churches, and communities.

4.5. As part of the project to combat cross-border cattle theft between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, the **WANEP-Senegal** team conducted a field visit to Témento Samba, Kolda Region, on 4–5 February 2025. Accompanied by the Mayor of Guiré Yéro Bocar, the team met with the Governor of Kolda, the Prefect of the Kolda Department, the Sub-Prefect of Dioulacolon, and the Regional Director of Livestock and Animal Production. Local communities at the community enclosure site were also engaged. Authorities expressed strong support for the initiative. The management agreement for the enclosure was reviewed, revised, and subsequently validated.

In parallel, a reference study on the situation of women affected by cattle theft in the project areas is underway, along with a mapping of potential women and youth beneficiaries of income-generating activities.




4.6. WANEP-Niger

- 🌱 led an awareness campaign on the law protecting and assisting IDPs. The activity involved 20 participants, including 2 women, who gained a deeper understanding of the law's provisions. Participants committed to supporting its dissemination and implementation at the community level.
- 🌱 Contributed to the establishment of a multi-stakeholder committee tasked with drafting a legislative proposal on the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas. The committee—comprising government representatives, civil society organisations, community leaders, and legal experts—developed a roadmap and initiated a consultative framework to ensure inclusive participation. Stakeholder commitment was strengthened around the need for a legal framework responsive to conflict realities.

4.7. On 19 March 2025, **WANEP-Mali** convened a stakeholder dialogue workshop in Djenné on local security governance and inclusive participation. The session brought together 30 participants, including 11 women and 75% youth representation. Key outcomes included i) Enhanced local capacities in community advocacy for CSO engagement in security governance; ii) Strengthened collaboration between local structures, aligning citizen initiatives with institutional responses; and iii) Renewed commitment from participants to promote inclusion and advocate for the active participation of women and youth in security decision-making spaces.

4.8. WANEP–The Gambia enhanced national efforts in peacebuilding and conflict prevention through a series of activities during the quarter. These included a stakeholder consultative meeting with civil society organisations, planning sessions for the launch of the Insider Mediation Project, and advanced training for Insider Mediators in Banjul, West Coast Region, and Kanifing Municipality. Key outcomes included i) strengthened capacities of CSOs, women, and youth groups in peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism, and ii) increased stakeholder understanding of the project.

4.9. In the context of the “*Fonds au Profit des Victimes*¹⁷” (FPV) project, **WANEP-Côte d'Ivoire**

-  remained actively involved throughout, coordinating with local authorities, ensuring the completion of therapeutic and community-building activities, and facilitating the installation of memorial works to promote healing and social cohesion.
-  Presented its progress, including the validation of the memorial site near Yao Séhi and Doukouré by local authorities. A roadmap for symbolic community rehabilitation was established, with key actions including the planning of memorial inaugurations, preparation for workshops, and the submission of the third fund disbursement request.
-  Also facilitated material support for four beneficiaries' livelihood activities, while memorial works were completed in Abobo. A request was made to Yopougon's local authorities for approval to begin construction at a victim-identified site.

5. UTILISING RESEARCH CAPACITY TO SUPPORT POLICY ADVOCACY AND LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS

5.1. During the reporting period, research activities continued for the main peer-reviewed publication titled “Local Madrasas, Middle East Foundations, and Salafism as Paths to Radicalisation in West Africa’s Coastal States.” Two working papers were completed, a third reached its final stage, and four policy briefs were finalised. An additional five policy briefs remained in progress. A call for applications was launched in February 2025 to support the research component of the RECAP project. Furthermore, a Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project was concluded in January 2025. It assessed the overall implementation of the project, focusing on whether interventions and expected outputs were on track. The evaluation identified key lessons and provided recommendations to enhance delivery during the remaining implementation period and within available financial resources. It also applied consistency criteria to assess the strategic relevance and coherence of the project’s interventions across the 18 target countries in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin.

5.2. On 3 February 2025, **WANEP-Mali** participated in a validation workshop organised under the *Engagement de la Jeunesse au Sahel Youth Europe Sahel*¹⁸(YES/ENJEU) project focused on the diagnostic study of youth networks and associations in Mali. The session convened 29 participants (26 men, and 3 women) to review findings from a participatory assessment conducted between November and December 2024. Key outcomes included: i) Collaborative review and enrichment of the draft report; ii) Concrete recommendations for improved coordination among youth networks, including pooling of initiatives and strengthening youth–local authority engagement; iii) Recognition of WANEP-Mali’s expertise in analysing youth sociopolitical dynamics in Mali.

5.3. Under the USAID Trust2Peace Activity, **WANEP-Ghana**, in collaboration with the Project Coordinating Unit, trained nine enumerators from 14–16 January 2025 to conduct the project’s midterm spot survey. The survey was administered across nine beneficiary districts, reaching a total of 308 respondents (140 males and 168 females). The data collected will inform ongoing implementation and decision-making.

¹⁷ In English: Victims' Trust Fund

¹⁸ In English: Youth Engagement in the Sahel – Youth Europe Sahel

6. TO STRENGTHEN WANEP'S INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND ITS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS TO DELIVER ON THEIR MANDATE

6.1. WANEP convened its 18th General Assembly from 26 to 28 March 2025 under the theme “*Changing Dynamics in Multilateralism and Regionalism – The Role and Prospects for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)*.” As WANEP’s highest decision-making body, the biennial General Assembly brought together representatives from its 15 member countries across West Africa, alongside staff from the Regional Secretariat and members of the Regional Board. The 2025 Assembly examined the evolving peace and security landscape, identifying both challenges and opportunities for CSOs. Deliberations informed WANEP’s strategic direction in responding to the needs of multiple stakeholders in peace, security, governance, and development. A keynote address on the theme was delivered by Dr Philip Attuquayefio, Senior Research Fellow at LECIAD.

6.2. The WANEP’s Organisational Development Index (WODI) 2024 assessment process commenced in June 2024. In coordination with the Regional WODI Committee, 14 National Networks participated in the various stages of the evaluation, which concluded in February 2025. The regional report was subsequently finalised and presented on 26 March 2025 during WANEP’s 18th General Assembly held in Accra, Ghana. The overall WANEP Index declined from 80.24% in 2023 to 79.18% in 2024. With a decrease of 1.06 percentage points, WANEP now falls under Category B (ranging from 65% to 79.99%), which is classified as ‘Good’. The top three performing networks—Togo (93.42%), Mali (90.96%), and Benin (90.14%)—were recognised with certificates and prizes. The highest-performing network, Togo, was additionally granted a special one-year award, to be passed on to the next best-performing network in the subsequent year.

6.3. On 14 February 2025, **WANEP-Sierra Leone** held its Bi-Annual General Meeting in Freetown. The meeting reviewed the Constitution and key policies, approved new board members, and received narrative and financial updates from the Secretariat. Stakeholders provided strategic recommendations for strengthening the network’s future direction.

6.4. WANEP-Niger participated in a two-day workshop on effective NGO communication and advocacy strategy planning, aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society actors to enhance their communication and advocacy impact. Organised by Event Communication and funded by Mannion Daniels/Power of Learning, the workshop engaged 25 participants, including 10 women.

6.5. WANEP-Guinea, in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and with funding from the CRS discretionary fund, co-organised a five-day SMILER workshop from 13 to 18 January 2025 in Conakry to establish the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the ALLRight project, in line with CRS M&E standards. Key project stakeholders reviewed and updated tools including the results framework, logical framework, and implementation plan, and developed data collection templates for the project’s MEAL operations manual. A draft manual was produced, and participants’ capacities were strengthened in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning.

6.6. WANEP-Benin participated in a training workshop on advocacy strategies related to Artificial Intelligence (AI), held on 13 and 14 March 2025 in Cotonou, Benin. The session was organised by the NGO *Association de Lutte Contre le Racisme l’Ethnocentrisme et le Régionalisme* ¹⁹(ALCRER) in collaboration with the Forum on Information and Democracy (FID) and aimed to strengthen participants’ capacities to engage in informed advocacy around the ethical and democratic implications of AI.

¹⁹ In English: Association for the Fight against Racism, Ethnocentrism and Regionalism

7. COLLABORATIONS AND EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

7.1 WANEP participated in the 3rd WADEMOS²⁰ Annual Regional Convening, held in Accra, Ghana, from 3 to 4 March 2025. The conference, themed “*Leveraging Solidarity Movements in Defence of Democracy across West Africa*,” brought together civil society organisations and civic groups from across the ECOWAS region, along with representatives from the ECOWAS Commission. Discussions centred on the state of democracy in West Africa, ECOWAS’ reform agenda, the evolving role of civil society, and the need to strengthen democratic resilience in the face of emerging threats. The convening reaffirmed the importance of regional solidarity and collaboration in safeguarding democratic values.

7.2. The Programme Director of the SIDA Regional Office in Addis Ababa visited the WANEP-AU Liaison Office to engage WANEP on the peace and security landscape in West Africa, including its peacebuilding interventions, impact, and related challenges.

7.3. WANEP-Togo contributed to the organisation of the 6th Harmattan Forum, held under the theme “Migration and Sustainable Development: Ensuring Human Dignity and the Inclusion of Youth and Women.” Co-organised with *Clinique d’Expertise Juridique* (CEJUS) and other partners, the forum provided a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue on migration-related challenges. WANEP Togo advocated for a collaborative and preventive approach to promote safer, rights-based migration. Programme Officers for Women, Peace and Security, Youth, Peace and Security, and the NEWS Manager from **WANEP-Senegal** also participated, deepening their knowledge of the thematic area.

7.4. On 30 January 2025, **WANEP-Sierra Leone** took part in the official launch of the Sierra Leone Police Strategic Development Plan (2025–2029) at the Foreign Service Academy in Freetown. The Plan aims to enhance professionalism, accountability, and community trust in policing. Key stakeholders present reaffirmed their commitment to supporting its effective implementation.

7.5. On 20 February, **WANEP-Senegal**, represented by the National Coordinator, participated in a workshop organised by *L’Internationale Francophone du Dialogue Social* under the theme: “*What Social Dialogue for Better Promotion of Youth Employment and Vocational Training in Francophone Africa?*” The event convened key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour, High Council for Social Dialogue, National Office for Vocational Training, employers’ associations, youth organisations, civil society, and technical experts. The workshop aimed to leverage social dialogue as a tool to address youth unemployment through skills development and professional integration. WANEP actively advocated for: i) Increased access to quality employment for inclusive growth; ii) Enhanced youth employability and professional qualifications; and iii) Alignment of vocational training with labour market demands.

7.6. WANEP-Côte d’Ivoire hosted a delegation from Tetra Tech at its headquarters to discuss the role of women in ensuring peaceful elections in Côte d’Ivoire, scheduled for 2025. During the meeting, the delegation presented its project on supporting women’s access to land ownership, which concluded in 2024. In light of the upcoming elections, Tetra Tech sought WANEP-Côte d’Ivoire’s expertise, particularly its experience in empowering women, promoting social justice, and facilitating their active participation in peacebuilding. WANEP-Côte d’Ivoire responded to the delegation’s inquiries, sharing insights into its work in these areas.

Additionally, WANEP-Côte d’Ivoire participated in a meeting organised by the Ministry of National Cohesion, Solidarity, and the Fight Against Poverty as part of its national social cohesion programme. During the meeting, the Ministry presented the priority activities for 2025 to its collaborative partners.

20 WADEMOS: West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network

The primary objective of these activities is to promote national cohesion and to ensure the organisation of peaceful, free, and transparent elections in 2025 and 2026.