

WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING

JANUARY-MARCH 2021

PROGRESS REPORT

OVERVIEW OF QUARTER ONE PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

The impact of COVID- 19 continued to linger in West Africa during the first quarter of 2021. Several peacebuilding organisations, including WANEP, had to navigate the health and economic environment shifts and also try to meet the needs of their stakeholders. This report highlights key peace and security issues facing West African Countries and progress made thus far by WANEP in its peacebuilding efforts during the period under review.

OVERVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA- JANUARY TO MARCH 2021

In the quarter under review, the WANEP-National Early Warning System (NEWS) reports received from its 550 community monitors across West Africa, 2,111 reports relating to human security incidents. The incidents reported indicate a total of 3,216 deaths and 46,428 injuries across the 15 ECOWAS Member States.

Organised Crimes and Violent Extremism:

The WANEP NEWS reports indicate that countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria continued to suffer from armed attacks, intercommunal violence, abduction/kidnapping, assassinations, suicide bombing, mine explosion and other criminal activities perpetuated by terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region.

In Mali for instance, WANEP NEWS reported **34** terrorist related attacks in the quarter under review. The attacks led to the death of **85** people and **59** others sustained injuries. These attacks were perpetuated against the Malian Defence and Security Forces, the UN Peacekeeping Mission, State authorities and civilians. Most of the attacks happened in Kidal, Gao, Mopti, Segou Asongo (Tessit), Koulikoro with few attacks in Bamako. Another cause of concern in Mali is that terrorist attacks continue to spread to the south. Bamako and Koulikoro are now experiencing increased criminal activities including armed attacks against Banks, mobile money vendors and ordinary civilians.

Meanwhile in Niger, the number of terrorist related attacks in the quarter as reported in the NEWS, was **27** incidents. Of these incidents, **427** people were killed, mostly civilians, and **126** others were injured by armed groups (Boko Haram and affiliates) operating in the region. The last terrorist attack happened at Tellia in the Tahoua region that left **137** civilians dead and **10** others injured. Another cause of concern in Niger is the continued spread of terrorist attacks to other regions in the country. Five (Tillaberi, Diffa, Tahoua, Maradi and Dosso) out of the eight regions of Niger, experienced increased terrorist attacks in the quarter under review.

In Burkina Faso, The Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP) continued to carry out attacks in the country. During the reporting period, there were **23** terrorist related attacks reported by our monitors across the country. As a result of these attacks, **78** civilians were killed and **36** were injured. These incidents took place in Ourosabou, Kelbo, Mansila, Koumbri, Deou, Bobodioulassou and Ouagadougou.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram and its affiliates and other criminal networks remained active despite the efforts by the Federal Government to fight crime in the country. During the period under review, there were **88** reported incidents of human trafficking/abduction across Nigeria. **Eight (8)** out of these reported incidents were related to terrorist groups. Human trafficking/abduction led to the death of **28** people and **20** injuries. In addition, **20** cases of gun violence by gangs / cults as reported in the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) by the WANEP monitors led to the death of **33** people and with 11 injuries. Majority of these incidents occurred in Osun, Lagos, Ogun and Taraba States. Concerning terrorist-related armed attacks, **14** incidents were recorded which led to the death of **73** civilians and **70** others were injured. There were also **three (3)** reported cases of suicide bombing in Nigeria. These incidents happened in Borno (Guzamala, Maiduguri and Marte), and Yobe States. With respect to murder/homicide, **16** incidents were reported by the monitors across the country.

Women, Peace and security:

Despite the modest achievements made in the global campaign through the UNSCR 1325 and its related instruments, the phenomenon of Gender- Based Violence (GBV) persists and women and girls continue to experience impediments to their quality of life in communities across the region. In the quarter under review, a total number of **100** GBV incidents including rape, physical assault, forced abortion, beating, ritual killing, among others, were reported in the NEWS. Out of the **100** GBV incidents reported, **70** were rape cases which led to **51** injured girls and women and the death of four **(4)** others. In Nigeria, **19** rape cases with **seven (7)** injured victims were reported in the NEWS. Meanwhile, in Liberia, **15** rape cases were reported in the NEWS with **13** victims injured. In Guinea, **13** rape cases with **12** victims injured and **one (1)** death were reported. In Ghana, **nine (9)** rape cases with **two (2)** injured victims and **one (1)** death were reported. In Sierra Leone, **nine (9)** rape cases with **nine (9)** victims injured were reported. While in Togo, **four (4)** rape cases with **two (2)** victims and **two (2)** deaths were also reported. In Senegal, **five (5)** women were also reported raped in the quarter under review.

Democracy and Governance:

The democratic and governance landscape in West Africa in the first quarter of 2021 was largely dominated by a series of socio-political events that threatened peace and stability in the region.

Specifically, events that had the potential to undermine democracy in the region included the following: i) the contestation of results of the second round of the presidential elections in Niger, ii) the introduction of the “sponsorship” [requiring that candidates receive the nomination of 10% of the total Members of Parliament (MP) and mayors (about 16 sponsors)], as a prerequisite for contesting Benin’s presidential elections in April 2021 iii) the arrest and incarceration of opposition political party leaders and their supporters in Benin, Guinea, Senegal and Niger.

In Benin, **14** demonstrations and **one (1)** riot were recorded in the country in the quarter under review. The demonstrations were organised by opposition political parties and Civil Society Organisations to denounce the law on “sponsorship” that is limiting space for political inclusivity in the country.

In Senegal, President Macky Sall was accused by opposition political parties and Civil Society Organisations of deliberately silencing opposition party leaders in the country. During the quarter, there were demonstrations across the country after Ousmane Sonko, a Member of the Senegalese Parliament and the main political opponent to President Macky, was arrested and detained in Dakar for allegedly raping a 20-year-old woman. These demonstrations also resulted in the death of **three (3)** civilians, destruction of public and private properties including banks, shopping malls and other retail centres across Senegal.

In Guinea, President Alpha Conde’s Government has been accused of many human rights violations including the excessive use of force by security forces on the population, the arrest and detention of political opponents and the abuse of office by some State authorities in the country. Between December 2020 and March 2021, at least **four (4)** political detainees have died in prison and many others remained in prison (Maison Centrale) in Conakry. For the quarter under review, **29** demonstrations were organised by Civil Society groups and political parties for more transparency and accountability of state authorities.

Following the runoff of the presidential election in Niger, held on 23 February 2021, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared Mohamed Bazoum the winner with 55.75% of the votes. The opposition parties contested the results on account of massive frauds during the election, plunging the country into violence. At least **two (2)** people were killed, and hundreds were arrested and detained, including Niger's opposition figure Hama Amadou who was later imprisoned for his alleged role in the unrest that followed the announcement of the results of the presidential election.

Environmental Security:

The environmental landscape of West Africa in the quarter under review has been mainly characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic and other epidemics (ebola, yellow fever), illegal mining, the pollution of water bodies, depletion of forest reserves, among others. Governments in the region have embarked on COVID-19 vaccinations to save lives by reducing the spread of the virus and in an effort to bring back some sense of normalcy in the region.

In the reporting period, there were outbreaks of Ebola and Yellow fever in Guinea. On 14 February 2021, the authorities in Guinea declared a new Ebola outbreak in the Southern part of the country. Following this outbreak, **21** people were infected and **eight (8)** people died. Fifty **(50)** people were infected with yellow fever out of which **14** died.

Illegal mining activities continue to have dire consequences on the ecosystem and the security of people affected by this practice across the region. The depletion of forest reserves and the pollution of water bodies as a result of mining activities have affected a lot of countries in West Africa. In Guinea, at least **10** people were killed, and **eight (8)** others injured following the collapse of mine pits in Siguiri and Mandiana in the Upper Guinea region.

In Ghana, despite the Government's efforts to fight illegal mining activities across the country, the practice persists. At least, 10 illegal mining-related incidents were reported in the NEWS. The reports mentioned depletion of forest reserves, pollution of water bodies and other criminal activities.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING ELECTORAL SUPPORT THROUGH NEWS

1.1. Within the framework of response actions against electoral violence under the Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) project financed by the European Union, ten missions were deployed throughout **Côte d'Ivoire**. The missions were themed "Acting for peaceful and violence-free legislative elections in Côte d'Ivoire". From 3 to 6 March 2021, WANEP Côte d'Ivoire visited the communities of Gagnoa, Béoumi, Bongouanou, Botro, Agboville, Daoukro, Divo, Kounfao, Lakota and Toumodi. Community leaders, candidates, youth leaders and women of these communities (792 men and 321 women) were sensitised on peaceful elections.

1.2. Under the GIZ-funded project "Strengthening multiparty responses to electoral violence", **WANEP Côte d'Ivoire** deployed three missions to the localities of Adzopé, Abengourou and Bondoukou from 18 to 19 March 2021. The purpose of these missions was to engage the youth and local authorities of these localities on causes of electoral violence and raise awareness as well as educate them on peace and non-violence.

1.3. With support from The International Republican Institute (IRI), **WANEP The Gambia** organised Community Town Hall Meetings from 5th -9th February 2021. The focus of the meetings was on Voter Education and the need for parliamentarians to revive the rejected Draft Constitution ahead of the Voter Registration exercise. Ultimately, the meetings raised the

awareness of citizens on the importance of voter registration and key constitutional provisions shared with the masses.

1.4. WANEP Benin spearheaded the following trainings geared towards enhancing efforts to mitigate electoral violence in the April Presidential polls:

With support from OSIWA, WANEP Benin trained 12 fact-checkers to fight “Fake News”, out of which seven (7) men and five (5) women on 11 and 12 February 2021.

From 17 to 18 February 2021, WANEP Benin provided training to 20 additional elections observers (of which 16 men and four (4) women) as well as two (2) male analysts and one (1) female analyst.

Training of members of the steering committee of the Benin CSO Electoral Platform, including 10 men and eight (8) women on conflict management. This activity was carried out from 25 to 26 February 2021 with support from the European Union under EMAM.

1.5. Production and Dissemination of Early Warning Outputs: A total of 38 Early Warning outputs were produced and disseminated across West Africa and beyond in the review quarter as shown in the table below:

S/N	TITLE	QUANTITY
1	POLICY BRIEF	1
2	NEWS SITUATIONAL TRACKING	3
3	WEST AFRICA EARLY WARNING OUTLOOK	1
4	MONTHLY BULLETIN	32
5	NEWS QUICK UPDATE	1
	TOTAL	38

2. PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

2.1. Utilising Research results for Advocacy: WANEP undertook a research with the main objective of assessing the gaps in the multilateral, regional and national responses to the peace and security challenges in the Sahel and Côte d’Ivoire, especially as they affect women and young girls in order to proffer evidence-based policy recommendations to address the threats. The research, conducted from November 2020 to January 2021, is part of WANEP, UNDP (Regional Bureau Africa) and ECOWAS project on “Building an Inclusive Post COVID-19 Recovery, Crises Transitions and Governance Reforms in the Sahel and Côte d’Ivoire”. The findings of the research were widely disseminated at a Research Findings and Lessons Learnt Workshop in Accra, Ghana on February 13 and 14, 2021. An abridged version of the comprehensive research, a policy brief,

with the title: The Limits and Pitfalls of Multilateral, Regional and National responses to the Peace and Security Challenges in the Sahel Region and Côte d'Ivoire was produced in English and French and published online.

2.2. Under the Responsive Engagement and Collective Learning Approaches to Inform Mercury Substitution in ASGM, Ghana (RECLAIMS ASGM Ghana) Activity, **WANEP-Ghana** facilitated a two-day stakeholders' engagement in Bibiani district in Western North region and Talensi district in the Upper East region to discuss alternative livelihood and understanding conflict resolution. A key result of this activity is the establishment of four Village Savings and Loans Associations, an initiative by participants to mobilise funds to set up alternative livelihoods ventures. Two out of the four associations were formed in the Gbani community, and the other two in Datoko and Sefwi Nkatieeso communities.

2.3. On January 2021, **WANEP Togo** formalised its partnership with IRES-DREC (l'Institut régional d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche en développement culturel et l'Institut supérieur de management et de développement) at a ceremony held under the chairmanship of the Minister of Culture and Tourism and attended by several actors from academia. The focus of the partnership is within the field of research particularly in documenting Peace related work. The two organisations will combine their skills and expertise in carrying out joint research work.

2.4. Diagnostic workshop on the causes of violence during elections in Togo: On February 1, **WANEP Togo** in partnership with National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the US Embassy convened a meeting with three national experts to examine the framework for the organisation of elections in Togo and to identify causes of electoral violence. At the end of the meeting, a document was produced on causes, but also proposals for action that would help guide future electoral processes in the country. Six (6) people participated in this meeting, including two (2) women

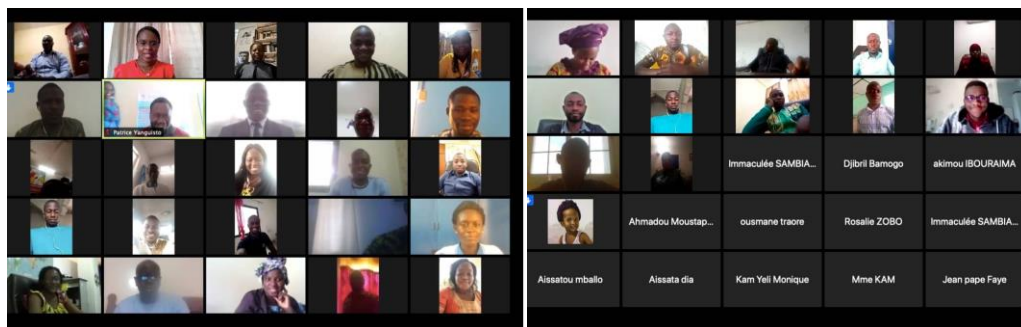
3. TO BROADEN THE PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND SUPPORT YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND VOICE IN ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY

3.1. Promoting inter-generational dialogue and experience sharing to foster youth political participation

Youth Perspectives Series: The 2021 parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire as well as local elections in Burkina and Senegal, presented an opportunity for an increased participation of youth in elective positions. In this regard, the 3rd edition of youth Perspectives, held on 26 February 2021, focused on the topic: **Youth participation in political governance in West Africa**

and gathered about 83 participants. The aim of the webinar was to promote youth leadership in political governance; identify factors impeding youth participation in political governance; and maximise their chance of being elected by learning from the experiences of their peers and elders.

A key outcome of the session was the avenue created for an inter-generational dialogue and experience sharing between youth leaders, youth aspirants and some parliamentarians on tips to successfully win an election.



Cross- section of the participants at the webinar

3.2. Building capacity of students to Prevent Violent Extremism: The first quarter of the year marked the end of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Project in the Sahel and Nigeria, implemented from February 2020 to January 2021. A teaching manual was designed for pupils and school stakeholders with the aim of training future resilient citizens who are:

- Aware of the challenges, causes and consequences of violent extremism and are able to make responsible and informed decisions;
- Capable of developing appropriate strategies for tackling violence extremism in their environment.

About twenty (20) schools, sixty (60) teachers and thousand two hundred (1200) pupils benefitted from the project, despite challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on schools. The use of the manual contributed to deepening the knowledge of the students on causes and consequences of violent extremism and brought about an improvement in their way of dealing with emotions to prevent violent conflict. The students were able to share their knowledge with their schoolmates during break times, and with family members who they sensitise on non-violence.

Additionally, interviews conducted with some teachers in the project target countries, as well as other assessments conducted, revealed a positive change in the behaviour of students, especially, in those who used to be violent in their interactions with their peers.

One of such success stories is the "School government" concept at the "Francophonie school" in Niger. Teachers and students worked together to create this concept with 3 Ministerial roles, namely, Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Security Minister. Taking part in this role play activity helped train pupils to identify and solve issues among their peers. This role play approach has been very effective in reducing incidences of bullying and fighting among pupils, especially, during break times.

Furthermore, the PVE teaching sessions have contributed to the change of behaviour in one of the most 'notorious' students who was known for his violent character. The young boy now expresses his grievances in a non-violent manner by reporting them to the teacher. Students also developed life values and became more respectful, tolerant, and supportive of each other.

3.3. Youth, Women and Violent Extremism Course: WANEP's Youth & Peace Education Programme Officer took part in the Women, Youth and Violent Extremism (VE) course organised by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), from 9-12 March 2021. Some 15 participants comprising state and non-state actors attended the course which aimed at enhancing the knowledge of participants in women and youth involvement in VE and building their capacities in preventing and countering violent extremism. The training was interactive, participatory and practical, and created an opportunity for networking and experience sharing on good practices in preventing violent extremism across the continent and beyond. Main topics addressed included: Actors and drivers of violent extremism for women and youth, Strategies used in recruitment and radicalization of women and youth, Preventing violent extremism.



Left: Participants at the training, facilitators and Representatives of KAIPTC; Right: WANEP YPE Programme Officer receiving a certificate of completion

3.4. WANEP the Gambia organised a 10- day (12th-21st March 2021) Residential Youth Service Training on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, leadership and entrepreneurship with support

from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). A total of 25 youths (nine females & 16 males) had their leadership and entrepreneurial skills enhanced and would be able to take up community development initiatives.

3.5. 2nd Symposium on Peace Education in Schools and Universities: As part of its Education à la Paix, à la Non-Violence et à la Justice Sociale (EPNVJS) project, **WANEP-Togo** held a second symposium in Kpalime from 25 to 26 March 2021 in order to evaluate recommendations stemming from the first symposium.

The theme of the symposium was "Institutionalisation of peace education in schools and universities in Togo: assessment and prospects". The event, which received financial support from Brot für die Welt (BfdW), was attended by 59 participants including school stakeholders and peacebuilding CSOs. Participants brought to the fore their knowledge and experience in making short and medium-term recommendations on the methodology set up by the Government and WANEP-Togo within the framework of the teaching of the values of peace both in schools and universities in Togo.

3.6. WANEP Niger: With support from OXFAM Novib, WANEP Niger held three symposia for women and young girls' leaders in three main regions of the country. The symposia were held respectively from 14-15 February, March 5-6 and 6-7 March respectively in Diffa, Tillabery, and Tahoua. The conferences sought to build the knowledge of the participants in the role they can play in the prevention and management of conflicts in their various communities. The activities saw the participation of sixty (60) participants.

3.7. WANEP Niger also held practical training programmes on specific thematic areas such as Peace Education, Women leadership, Advocacy and Communications techniques. The trainings targeted fifty (50) women and young girls in Tillabery (9-10 March) and Tahoua (13-14 March).

3.8. In anticipation of a re-run of the presidential elections in Niger, **WANEP Niger** provided training for 100 young people and women across Niger's political parties on their involvement in the electoral process to ensure a peaceful election. This activity was undertaken with support from USAID.

4. ENHANCING GENDER AND WOMEN CAPACITY IN PEACEBUILDING

4.1. Promoting Women's Leadership and decision-making: Coordinated efforts to advance women's meaningful participation and inclusion in leadership

GenderTalk Series: The fourth edition of the GenderTalk Series was held virtually on March 5 for Anglophone audiences and March 8 for Francophone audiences as part of activities to mark the 2021 International Women’s Day (IWD). The discussions focused on women’s leadership potentials under the topic: ***Women in Leadership: Potentials and Challenges***. The topic is in tandem with the UN theme for the 2021 IWD - “Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.” This theme celebrates efforts from girls and women in creating a more equal future and COVID-19 pandemic recovery and resonates with the global IWD theme - #ChooseToChallenge.

The IWD theme sought to draw attention to challenges of gender biases and misconceptions, discriminations and other factors that continue to hinder women’s full leadership potential. Speakers for the discussion comprised experienced women leaders with expertise in gender and peacebuilding and drawn from civil society, community leaders, national and international institutions. The conversations addressed concerns on women’s leadership, its effectiveness and proffered actions to harness women’s leadership for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 towards the attainment of the women, peace and security agenda.

The virtual discussions were highly interactive and participatory and recorded over 70 participants in the two sessions. The GenderTalk Series provide the platform to advance women’s meaningful participation and inclusion in leadership, decision-making and peacebuilding. A key outcome of the forum was that it created opportunity for bridging the inter-generational gap as it featured youth speakers who connected with the older generation and committed to taking the relationship forward. Outcome of the discussions provided the resources for the WPS quarterly publication Gender Connect.

4.2. Employing gender-informed peacebuilding and conflict prevention interventions at all levels

Gender Advisor Course:

The WANEP Regional Coordinator, Women, Peace and Security participated in a week-long Gender Advisor Course organised by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, KAIPTC with support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA). The course, which was the first of its kind to be held outside the Academy in Sweden, brought together gender focused participants from the East, West and Southern Africa. It was held both virtually and physically

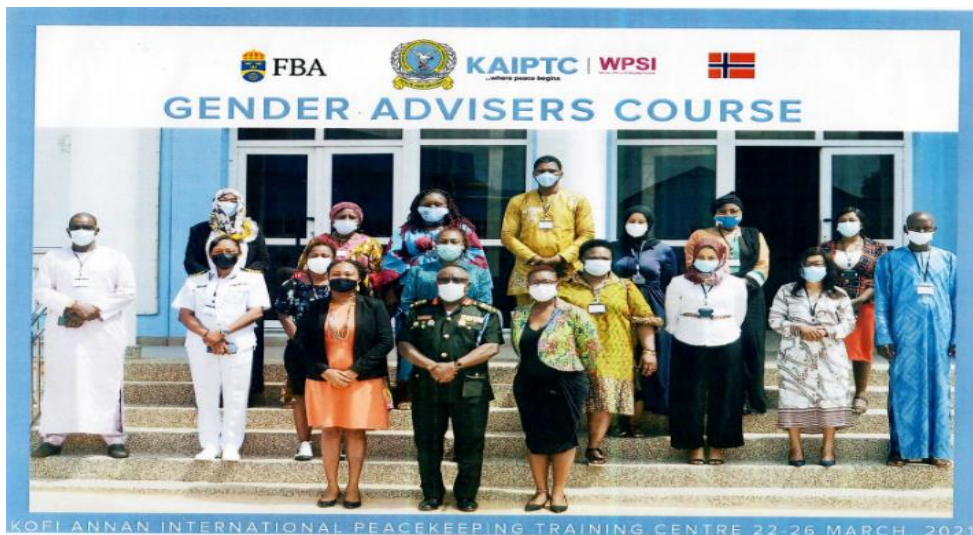


Participants from Sierra Leone, Malawi and Ghana

with facilitators located in Accra and Sweden. The course was aimed at strengthening participants' skills for accountability towards gender equality and the WPS agenda, help them to identify gender gaps in their work and develop gender-responsive activities among others. With the requisite skills acquired, participants should be able to re-align their respective programs to better respond to different needs and capacities of men, women, boys and girls.

Some of the key areas covered included gender marker, theory of change, gender analysis, communicating gender, policy and normative frameworks for gender action etc. The Course was an opportunity for networking, collaboration and experience sharing going by the calibre and quality of participants targeted.

The Mali National Network Coordinator (NNC) also took part in the training and envisage to support gender mainstreaming across the national network with the skills and knowledge acquired.



Gender advisors Course participants with the Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC, Air Commodore George Kweku Arko-Dadzie

4.3. With support from the WELLSPRING US Foundation, under the “Strengthening a Gender Sensitive Early Warning and Response Mechanism for West and Central Africa” project, **WANEP** organised a consultative workshop on Gender Sensitive Early Warning Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting in West and Central Africa, from 25 to 26 February 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The workshop, organised in partnership with the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate the Peace and Security Directorate, the Gender Directorate of Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Continental Early Warning System Department of the African Union and the United Nations Office in Central Africa (UNOCA), recorded the participation of twenty-seven key stakeholders who joined either virtually or physically. Participants include the 11 focal points of the Central African CSO Coalition on Peace and Conflict Prevention (COPAC), and members of the five (5) National Coordination Centres of the Early Warning Response Mechanism in West Africa (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Burkina Faso). This activity was geared towards supporting ECCAS in building a strong partnership with civil society organisations in Central Africa in order to strengthen its Early Warning Mechanism in Central Africa (MARAC).

4.4. WANEP-Burkina, in partnership with the TASSAGTH BFRP, and with financial support from USAID Burkina Faso, enhanced the knowledge of some forty (40) women in Violent extremism and non-violent conflict management. The community dialogue workshop was held under the theme “Women's Contributions to the Fight Against Violent Extremism in the Gorom-Gorom commune”.

4.5. WANEP Burkina spearheaded the Production and broadcasting of a programme on gender and security with women from the women's expertise pool for inclusive governance of security in the Sahel, with support from the Danish Demining Group (DDG) and the European Union (EU) under the Women Leadership Programme Leadership (PLF) project. The programme was broadcast from 10 to 15 February 2021 on OMEGA radio which has a wide coverage.

4.6. Under the Women Leadership Programme (PLF), **WANEP Mali** convened a training from 25 to 29 January for members of the women's expertise pool for inclusive governance of security in the Sahel from the three project target countries. The key capacity areas included conflict management, positive conflict transformation. Twenty-five (25) women, ten (10) of whom are from Mali, are now able to contribute to prevention and/or management of conflicts in their communities.



Participants at the training

4.7. Between 26 February and March 2021, the trainings (under the PLF) were replicated in Mali in the Mopti, Ségou, Koulikoro, Timbuktu and Bamako communities. One hundred and ten (110) people, including 82 women and 28 men benefitted from the sharing of capacity-building experiences by members of the Mali Pool of experts.

4.8. WANEP Liberia convened a Social Cohesion (SC) training on the 3Bs and 4Ds methodology¹ for thirty-eight (38) participants in January 2021. The beneficiaries consisting of 31 “Zogoes” or disadvantaged young men and seven (7) “Zogees” or disadvantaged young women acquired an enhanced knowledge in self-identity and social cohesion for peaceful coexistence.

4.9. Dissemination of the National Action Plans (NAP) booklets on UNSCR 1325: As part of activities aimed at popularising the UNSCR 1325 NAPs, booklets were designed during the workshop of women mediators organised last year (September 2020 in celebration of the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325) by WANEP Togo. In January 2021, **WANEP Togo** distributed the document to various Civil Society Organisations in the country. 23 booklets on NAP 1325 were distributed to 11 CSOs.

4.10. Commemoration of International Women’s Day (March 8) in Togo: WANEP-Togo celebrated the 8th of March with its women mediators. To this effect, a webinar animated by the Chair of the Board of WANEP-Togo, the Deputy Chair and the National Network Coordinator was organised with the women mediators on the theme: "Peace and security in communities: what room is there for women leadership? The objective of this celebration was to increase the commitment of women mediators of WANEP-Togo in their daily struggle to meet the challenges of development and peace. 23 women mediators took part in the meeting. Discussions centred on activities carried out by the women mediators as well as various aspects of leadership were discussed by the panellists.

4.11. Commemoration of International Women’s Day (March 8) in Mali: With financial support from the European Union in Mali, **WANEP Mali** in partnership with Danish Demining Group (DDG/DRC) convened an intergenerational conference-debate on March 8. Sixty participants including representatives of the National Women's Coalition, of Civil Society Organisations, women and youth umbrella associations. The conference was themed “The Impact of COVID-19 on the Economy of Women and Girls in Mali: Resilience Factors and Lessons to be Learned”.

¹ The 3Bs 4Ds methodology is a combination of the Catholic Relief Service’ 3Bs (Binding, Bonding and Bridging”) peacebuilding methodology and 4Ds (“Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver”) of Appreciative Inquiry that helps to strengthen vertical and horizontal social cohesion.

4.12. In commemoration of the International Women’s Day, on March 8, **WANEP Côte d’Ivoire** conducted a street interview to get the view of passers-by on the significance of the Day. Out of the 73 people interviewed (24 men and 49 women) only 30% provided relevant answers.

4.13. From 10 to 20 January 2021, **WANEP-Guinea** proceeded to setting up the database of women mentors and mentees under the Cultural Cohesion for Peace and Prosperity (2C2P) Project. The database will inform the development of a mentoring programme and planning of a series of experience-sharing meetings.

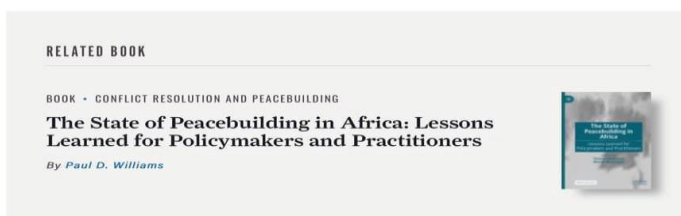
5. COLLABORATIONS AND EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

5.1. WANEP and the ECOWAS Directorate of Political Affairs held a joint Thematic Briefing Session with ECOWAS Members States’ Ambassadors on 15th February 2021 via videoconference. The event was also attended by AU officials. The meeting provided an avenue for participants to engage on key peace and security concerns to consider for the ECOWAS 2050 prospective Vision. The bi-annual meeting is an integral part of WANEP’s continued collaboration with ECOWAS on issues related to regional peace and security. Dr. Chukwuemeka Eze, Executive Director of WANEP, the lead presenter at the event spoke to the theme: **“Post-ECOWAS Vision 2020: Reflections on Peace & Security Trajectory.”** Dr Eze provided an assessment of the peace and security situation in West Africa and highlighted existing gaps between early warning systems and early response. He also made recommendations on how ECOWAS could be more effective in responding to the threats in the years ahead.

5.2. WANEP contributed to the study titled:” **Civil Society Participation in Peace-Making and Mediation Support in the African Peace & Security Architecture: Insights on the AU, ECOWAS and SADC**”. The report, which was produced by The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in partnership with the German Corporation for Development Cooperation (GIZ), was successfully launched at an online event on March 1. WANEP featured prominently in the report as a well-capacitated and expert peacebuilding NGO, for its role in the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), in conflict prevention and transformation, and capacity building just to cite a few.

5.3. WANEP authored a chapter of The Wilson Centre’s book **“The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners.”** The book featured key lessons learned, best practices, and innovative new solutions across a range of aspects of peacebuilding, including conflict prevention, mediation, management, and post-conflict reconstruction-complemented by six country and regional case studies. At the book launch held virtually on

Tuesday, March 16, 2021, WANEP spoke on the chapter “Contributions of Early Warning to the African Peace and Security Architecture: The experience of West Africa Network Peacebuilding (WANEP)”.



Dr Chukwuemeka Eze, WANEP ED speaking at the Book launch.

5.4. Global Launch of the Just Future Alliance Project: WANEP participated in the global launch of the Just Future Alliance Programme held online from 9-11 February 2021. Ultimately, the Just Future Alliance’s vision is of a world in which all security and justice seekers benefit from changes that bring about more inclusive, constructive and legitimate power relations. The end result of those changes will drive more accessible, responsive, and accountable security and justice institutions and more inclusive arrangements for political decision-making and peace-making, ensuring that no one is left behind in achievement of SDG16+. Subsequently, WANEP will play an active role in the five-year programme, specifically in Niger and Mali as these countries were identified as having fragile contexts and fit for benefitting from the programme.

5.5. On January 23, 2021, **WANEP Guinea Bissau** co-hosted a dissemination event of the common civil society agenda with the Federation of Disabled People in the Biombo region. The aim of this workshop was to ensure greater and better participation of Civil Society Organisations in the consolidation of peace and the democratic rule of law at community and regional levels.

5.6. On Wednesday 31 March 2021, **WANEP Mali** took part in an exchange meeting between state actors and Non-Governmental Organisations. The purpose of the meeting was to deliberate on the establishment of a platform working on the following themes: the fight against crime and cross-border crime; cybercrime; migration; trafficking in human beings; drugs; arms and weapons.

At the meeting organised by the Centre National d'Alerte Précoce (CNAP) with the support of the UEMOA, the Mali NNC shared WANEP's experience in early warning and its architecture, emphasising the strategic partnership with CNAP, particularly in terms of advocacy in providing rapid responses to community alerts.

5.7. In an effort to complement the efforts of the Malian Government in addressing socio-security challenges, the NNC met with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Security and Civil Protection bilaterally in January 2021. Discussions were primarily about Early Warning Alerts, key analyses and recommendations that would enable the Government to make informed decisions.

6. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1. Partners' Forum: On February 9, 2021, The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) convened, for the first time, a virtual Partners' Forum owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was attended by eighty-six (86) participants including WANEP staff and member organisations, strategic partners, and key stakeholders. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador William Awinador, Former Ghana's Ambassador to Africa Union and ECOWAS, while the Vice President of ECOWAS Commission, H.E Finda E.M KOROMA, delivered the keynote address themed "ECOWAS Vision 2020 in Retrospect: Reflections on ECOWAS – CSO Partnerships". The forum, aimed to reflect on past successes, interrogate trends, gaps, and explore prospects for peacebuilding in the region with the view to broadening WANEP's influence and partners support for peace and security in West Africa. More importantly, the platform was meant to present WANEP's new Strategic Plan covering the period 2021-2025, foster relationships and confirm the commitment of partners in the implementation of the new priority areas. Additionally, the forum provided the opportunity to discuss alternative sources of funding and deepen collaboration between WANEP, AU and ECOWAS and its member states.

6.2. Emergency General Assembly: Following the Partners' Forum, WANEP held an Emergency Virtual General Assembly (GA) on February 11, 2021. Nearly 100 participants logged onto the virtual meeting from all the fifteen national networks of WANEP, including personnel of National Secretariats, members of National Networks and National Boards. The objective of the meeting was to discuss time-sensitive issues and relevant priorities. Key outcomes include i) the approval of WANEP new 's strategic plan (2021-2025) with the overall goal to build the capacity of citizens, civil society, citizen groups, research institutions, ECOWAS, AU, and all relevant stakeholders towards ensuring: "An enhanced citizens and state capacity for sustainable peace" ii) a newly elected Board with the Chair being Prof Oumar Ndongu.

6.3. WANEP Regional undertook monitoring visits to three of its National Network Secretariats to address gaps identified by WANEP Organisational Development Index (WODI)² and other assessments. The visits include WANEP Niger (February 23rd, 2021), WANEP Burkina-Faso (March 18th, 2021) and WANEP Guinea-Bissau (April 23, 2021). Some of the challenges addressed during those visits include financial and coordination, institutional and organisational challenges. The aim of these monitoring visits is to strengthen the institutional capacity of WANEP's member organizations to deliver effectively on their mandate.

6.4. WANEP Regional personnel who support the NEWS participated in a capacity building programme from 28 January to February 3, 2021, on the use of the Geographic Information System (GIS), an application integrated into the WANEP NEWS (National Early Warning System) to support graphic analysis of Early Warning reports to make informed decisions on electoral violent threats in target countries. The training was part of "Strengthening Multi-stakeholder Response to Election Violence in West Africa" programme, an initiative supported by the GIZ under the European Union (EU)-ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations (ESPAO).

The training sought to consolidate the development and production of data and analysed reports relevant for the successful implementation of EMAM (Election Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation) in Benin and The Gambia Presidential Elections. Furthermore, it was to sustain the operational credibility of the broader WANEP NEWS in the region.

6.5. WANEP Guinea: Guinea convened its General Assembly from 15 to 16 January 2021. The event was attended by thirty-three (33) people eight (8) of whom were women and saw a new Management Board elected.

6.6. WANEP Guinea Bissau convened its General Assembly (GA) on March 20, 2021. Key narrative and financial reports were validated at the GA and the network's Board of Directors was renewed for the period 2021-2024.

6.7. WANEP Côte d'Ivoire held its General Assembly (GA) on January 30. The GA was a hybrid event that recorded the participation of some 30 people (17 men and 13 women) comprising the network's Board of Directors, member organisation and personnel. Key highlights from the GA include i) the review of strategic documents, ii) renewal of the members of the Board of Directors, iii) review of activities led by member organisations and iv) discussions on challenges faced by the network and prospects to carry out its mandate effectively.

² The WANEP Organizational Development & Sustainability Index (WODI) is a tool for monitoring and evaluating the institutional progress and challenges of WANEP. Applied to the 15 national networks of WANEP, it aims to ensure compliance with the network's policies and procedures as well as the institutional reforms required

6.8. In an effort to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and to protect staff and their families at the National Secretariat, **WANEP Sierra Leone** organised a training for its staff, interns and volunteers on January 11.

6.9. A training on project report writing was also provided by **WANEP Sierra Leone** to staff and volunteers to enhance their writing skills.

6.10. From 14 to 15 January, a refresher training was organised for staff and monitors in Western area. Nine (9) Participants were trained on data gathering and inputting into the ECOWARN system.

In order to expand community resilience and build the capacity of institutions to perform their mandate effectively in human Security:

6.11. WANEP Côte d'Ivoire, with support from OSIWA organised eight (8) citizen debates and five (5) community meetings in the quarter under review. While the community meetings centred around “contributing to social cohesion and sustainable peace”, the citizen debates bordered on legislative elections, political transhumanism, law on women's representation in elected assemblies, among others. The eight (8) debates garnered about 16,767 viewers (via social media) whereas 115 took part in-person.

6.12. WANEP The Gambia in partnership with UNDP, the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the President held a Consultation in the regions of West Coast, Lower River, North Bank, Central River and Upper River. Through the consultation, a total of 205 stakeholders (60 Females, 145 Males, 50 Youth, four (4) Persons with Disabilities PWD)) were engaged on the need for the establishment of an infrastructure for Peace (I4P) in The Gambia.

As a follow-up activity from the consultation, a briefing session was held with the Technical Working Group (TGW) working on the I4P. A total of 18 stakeholders (5 Females, 13 males) were provided with a debrief of the trajectory of the TWG and a platform was created for the development of an operational peace infrastructure.

6.13. WANEP Togo Monitoring team proceeded with the Monitoring of media regulation of violence and sexually explicit material with support from Brot für die Welt (BfdW). The initiative aims at reducing violence among the project beneficiaries (EPNV-JS), especially children, adolescents and youth.

The project worked therefore to ensure that at least 15% of violent and erotic content broadcast on television channels are accompanied by short messages or warnings, and also broadcast after 10 pm. Four (4) television channels and four (4) radio stations were monitored during the month of January and observed a considerable decrease in the broadcast of physical and verbal violence on major TV channels and radios. The monitoring continued in February.

6.14. Training of local mediators in their role of supporting households and football clubs: With support from BfdW, WANEP Togo carried out this activity from 5 to 8 January, targeting 163 local mediators in project target areas (Kpalimé and Lomé). The mediators had their capacities enhanced in traditional conflict management mechanisms and acquired appropriate techniques for successful mediation in households and football clubs. The local mediators were made up of heads of school parents' associations, kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers and directors, school stakeholders, motorbike taxi drivers, and religious leaders. Following the training, newly trained local mediators embarked on their mission to support households in conflict situations within their communities. To this end, nine (9) educational talks and nine (9) contact meetings were held with households during the month of February 2021.

6.15. WANEP Nigeria with support from UNDP organized a three-day advocacy visit (15-17 March) to stakeholders in Nasarawa State on the Peace and Conflict Management Bill for the operationalisation of the Peacebuilding Agency in the said State. 12 key stakeholders were visited in the State. These include: the State Governor of Nasarawa State, Speaker, House of Assembly, amongst others aware of efforts to set up a Peace Building Agency in the State.

6.16. On January 23, 2021, **WANEP Guinea Bissau** in partnership with the Federation of People with Disabilities, undertook the dissemination of the common civil society agenda in the Biombo region. The aim of this workshop was to ensure greater and better participation of civil society organisations in the consolidation of peace and the rule of law at community and regional levels.

6.17. On January 20, 2021, **WANEP Senegal** in partnership with the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), provided training for its staff on the i) introductory module of Humanitarian Assistance, ii) the state of play on Humanitarian Assistance in Senegal and iii) Humanitarian Action. A total of eight (8) participants of whom five (5) women and three (3) men had their knowledge of principles of humanitarian assistance enhanced.

A follow-up training was conducted on January 27 on the civil-military coordination (CMCoord module) in humanitarian action. As a result of these two trainings, the staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to accompany the second phase of training and dissemination for humanitarian actors in the other regions of Senegal.

CONCLUSION

During the first quarter of the year 2021, the achievements of WANEP in the various programme areas were noteworthy despite the obvious challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. WANEP not only continued to foster strong partnerships both at the regional and national levels but also contributed significantly to peace and security knowledge production through cutting-edge research. In the next quarter, WANEP will continue to engage its partners at various levels in the continued effort to address peace and security challenges in the West African sub-region and beyond.