

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON SECURITY CONCERNS AMONG MALIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

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I. Introduction

That ‘there is no development without security, and no security without development’ has become a recurring sentiment in discussions on strategic planning in Mali.¹ Numerous studies indicate that the insecurity currently affecting the country, in its many shapes and forms, has its roots in poverty, the perceived marginalization of some groups and the inability to provide basic services to the population.² Some of the most notable investments in Mali by the Malian state and the international community since the crisis of 2012, however, have been in the shape of security interventions. From the French military’s Operation Serval to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the regional French Operation Barkhane, the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) or the European Union capacity-building mission in Sahel Mali (EUCAP), these programmes have sought to restore stability by supporting the security sector, and have been more visible than investments in economic development, however real or significant these may also have been. Despite this fact, or perhaps because of it, at each recurrence of crisis there are renewed calls for integrated approaches to tackle the root causes of the conflict and pave the way for long-term development and peacebuilding.

The strategies that underpin the dual efforts at economic development and security tend to link long-term development and peacebuilding. The various entities now active in the region have produced 17 international strategies on the Sahel, but it is becoming increasingly obvious that the strategic linking of long-term development programmes and security interventions has not brought about the anticipated stability. A key factor in these shortcomings has been that security means different things to different people. Priorities for different actors range from fighting the threat of separatism to curbing the global menace of violent extremism or limiting illegal migration. Others insist on the need to ensure that women and men from every region of Mali

¹ See e.g. Gaulme, F., ‘Sécurité et développement au Mali: leçons et promesses d’une approche globale’ [Security and development in Mali: lessons and promises of a global approach], Communication au 14e Forum de Bamako de M. François Gaulme, Département de la Recherche, AFD, 23 Feb. 2014, <<http://www.forumdebamako.com/securite-et-developpement-au-mali-lecons-et-promesses-dune-approche-globale/>>.

² Institute of Action Research for Peace (IMRAP), *Self-Portrait of Mali: On the Obstacles to Peace* (IMRAP: Bamako, Mar. 2015).

SUMMARY

● Two years after the signing of a peace agreement in Algiers, and five years after the beginning of the latest security crisis in Mali, the factors of insecurity in Mali keep evolving. The responses of national and international actors have to adapt to these changing realities as well as take into account the wide range of expectations of the Malian population—expectations which are diverse, sometimes competing, and affected in different ways by insecurity.

This SIPRI Insights Paper presents the preliminary findings of a research project, conducted by SIPRI and the Malian National Coalition of Civil Society for Peace and the Fight Against the Proliferation of Light Weapons (CONASCIPAL), on the perceptions of insecurity of 105 Malian civil society actors. It is based on the responses provided by these actors to questionnaires disseminated in October 2016 on human security in Mali.

The paper describes how Malian civil society actors define security and looks at their perceptions of the range of responses to date—local, national and international.



Figure 1. The locations of the 35 Monitoring Groups for Peace and Security in Mali

have access to the services they need to build a sustainable future for themselves and their families. The multiple perceptions of what constitutes security have yet to be unpacked in the strategies that aim to address these problems.

It is, therefore, crucial to better understand the drivers of insecurity primarily from the perspectives of the communities directly affected, and how security and development interventions can have a concrete effect on these drivers.

A better understanding of the perceptions of security held by the actors directly concerned with the turmoil affecting Mali can help decision makers adapt their policies to needs. It can highlight the differences in priorities between men and women

and help to inform the design of more inclusive policies. It can also help key actors understand how different strands of the population might have different, and sometimes opposing, views on the same issue. Finally, it can help explain why some policies benefit from the support of the population while some, perhaps those less in line with their priorities, might be resisted.

This SIPRI Insights Paper summarizes the main points that emerged from research conducted as part of a project led by SIPRI and the Malian National Coalition of Civil Society for Peace and the Fight Against the Proliferation of Light Weapons (CONASCIPAL). Following a brief explanation of the methodology used, it presents the key points that emerged from a consultation with Malian civil society actors on their views of what constitute the drivers of insecurity in Mali, and the effectiveness of the responses to date.

II. Methodology

The SIPRI and CONASCIPAL project, ‘Building a sustainable peace in Mali: civil society contributions to security policies’, seeks to identify the concerns of Malian civil society actors with regard to human security and the options open to civil society to support policies in this area.³ The research

³ Human security is understood in a broader way than simply protection from physical violence. It is defined in the 1994 United Nations Human Development Report as ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’. UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan noted that human security ‘must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law’. Annan, K., ‘Towards a culture of peace’, eds F. Mayor in collaboration with R-P. Droit, *Letters to Future Generations* (UNESCO: Paris, 1999), <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001185/118573E.pdf>>.



methodology of the project is based on the involvement of a national network of civil society actors.

The Monitoring Groups for Peace and Security (MGPS) are made up of selected civil society actors in 35 localities throughout 9 of the 10 regions of Mali as well as the capital district of Bamako (see figure 1). Each of the MGPS groups has three members: a representative of the local youth associations, a representative of the local women's association and a local community leader from that locality.⁴ During the preliminary research phase, each monitoring group member completed a questionnaire, designed by SIPRI and Malian academics, on civil society perceptions of security issues and attitudes to the various actors involved in these issues at the local, national and international levels. Additional data was collected through focus groups organized by the monitoring groups in their respective localities.

SIPRI analysed the responses to these questionnaires and the reports from the focus groups. The conclusions were presented to the MGPS at a validation meeting on 7–8 March 2017 and to Malian and international stakeholders at a national forum in Bamako on 11 March 2017, which discussed the main findings and explored them in more detail.

In October 2016, 105 questionnaires were completed by the MGPS members and sent to SIPRI. Of these, 93 questionnaires answered all the questions and were usable for analysis. Although this sample size is not large enough to perform a thorough quantitative analysis, the participants in the study were carefully selected to reflect the diversity of civil society in Mali, in terms of gender, geographical origin and ethnic background. The data was interrogated to identify interesting trends from among the respondents, and was then used as a basis for discussion at the validation meeting and the national forum, which gathered together all the civil society actors active in the project as well as donors, other civil society organizations and government representatives.

Respondents attended from 9 of the 10 regions of Mali.⁵ Respondents' identification data have been used to filter their responses by gender, age, geographical origin, level of education and economic situation. In order to highlight the regional dimensions of security and of existing disparities, and to allow a comparison of data given the sample size, three geographical zones were identified: North (the regions of Kidal, Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka); Central (Mopti and Ségou); and South (Koulikoro, Sikasso, Kayes and the district of Bamako). One-third of the respondents are women, and their responses differed on a number of points (see below).

In order to increase the amount of data available for the analysis, between December 2016 and February 2017 the MGPS organized 105 focus groups in the localities involving more than 2000 participants. These focus groups

⁴ At the beginning of the project, a consultation methodology allowed the project leads to identify 35 communes using a set of criteria to ensure that a wide diversity of situations was represented (rural and urban localities, ethnic representation etc.). Another round of consultation among civil society in these localities helped identify the MGPS members. For more background on the project see Tobie, A., 'Beyond the peace agreement: how can civil society contribute to peace in Mali?', SIPRI, Stockholm, 14 Nov. 2016, <<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2016/beyond-peace-agreement-mali>>.

⁵ A 36th MGPS was brought into the project in Mar. 2017, enabling the coverage to reach all 10 regions of Mali. The findings presented in this paper, however, do not include data collected from the Taoudeni region.



were designed to collect perceptions from the civil society actors and authorities involved in the design or implementation of security policies at the local level, as well as the MGPS members themselves. The reports were collated and used to augment the questionnaires.

III. Perceptions of security among civil society in Mali

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to answer questions on the drivers of insecurity, as perceived in their localities. Guided questions were provided for the focus groups, and these larger groups were able to express their views on the issues they felt most affected security, and how effective they felt the responses to these issues have been.

Perceptions of insecurity are closely related to the developmental and economic dimensions

The issue of physical violence was mentioned in the responses, especially in relation to the presence of armed groups and vigilantes, inter-community conflict and banditry, but respondents also highlighted the key role of unemployment, poverty and access to public services as factors in insecurity. Indeed, at the national level, unemployment, poverty, access to water and electricity, and the lack of infrastructure were cited as the main sources of insecurity (see figure 2).

Issues such as unemployment and poverty were seen as key security concerns in the North and Central zones. For example, 96 per cent of respondents from the Central zone considered unemployment to be a very important source of insecurity and 93 per cent considered the problem of poverty very important. The Central zone (Ségou and Mopti regions), however, is the least affected by unemployment according to official figures. According to the 2016–17 Modular Permanent Household Survey (Enquête Modulaire et Permanente Auprès des Ménages, EMOP survey), 7 per cent of the population is unemployed in Ségou and 9.5 per cent in Mopti.⁶ The most affected region is Gao, where 32.1 per cent of the population is unemployed. Unemployment disproportionately affects women. Over half (54 per cent) of all women of working age in Gao were unemployed in 2016–17, according to the EMOP survey.

Security issues in the narrower sense of the term were a shared concern of all categories of respondents. There was a solid consensus on the importance of the ‘insecurity generated by the situation in the north of the country’. This was seen throughout the country as the primary source of insecurity. For example, all the respondents from the Central zone considered this issue to be either ‘important’ or ‘very important’ (15.38 per cent and 84.62 per cent respectively).

Interestingly, land conflicts came relatively low down the list of priorities as a source of insecurity. This contradicts the general discourse on the importance of land as a major source of conflict among communities. Reports from the focus groups organized by the MGPS, however, found

⁶ Malian National Institute for Statistics (INSTAT), *Modular Permanent Household Survey* (INSTAT: Bamako, Aug. 2016), <<http://www.instat-mali.org/contenu/eq/rana16pas1-eq.pdf>>.



frequent instances of conflict over land, without necessarily specifying their gravity. There are a number of possible explanations for this. First, the wording of the questionnaire may have been too restrictive. (The proposed entry, ‘conflicts liés aux ressources naturelles’, or conflicts over natural resources, can more easily be interpreted as being about wider natural resource issues, and not referring directly to conflicts over land access or ownership.) Second, it could be that while conflict over land is common, as noted in the reports from the MGPS focus groups, it is perceived as low-intensity in comparison with events in the north of the country. Finally, MGPS members were asked to discuss this finding during the validation meeting in Bamako in March 2017. Participants explained that while land conflicts were indeed important in explaining insecurity in Mali, the Central and the North zones specifically were affected by other, more pressing security concerns. In this sense, other sources of insecurity took precedence in the respondents’ priorities.

Finally, it is worrying to note that a majority of respondents across all three geographical zones perceived a deterioration in the security situation in the period October 2015 to October 2016: 92.5 per cent of respondents in the North zone, 48 per cent in the Central zone and 60 per cent in the South zone agreed that ‘the level of violence has increased since a year ago’.

Regional differences and an expansion of the crisis zone from the North to the Centre

Some regional differences emerged in the perceptions of civil society actors. In particular, actors from the North and Central zones tended to respond in a similar way to questions related to insecurity (see figures 3 and 4). Priority was given to basic needs and direct threats to physical security, such as unemployment, poverty and the presence of armed groups. In contrast, respondents from the South tended to focus on developmental needs such as infrastructure, education, health care, water and electricity (see figure 5). The similarity of the priorities expressed in the North and Central

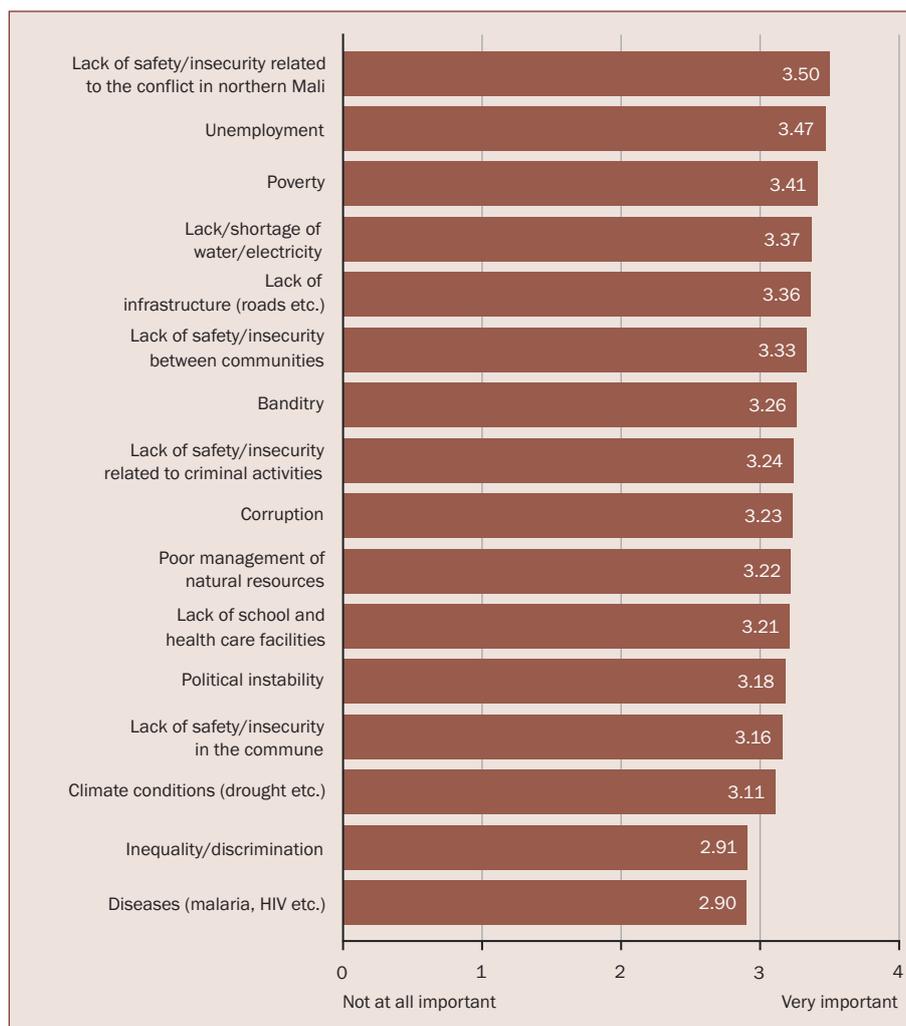


Figure 2. Average ranking of the responses to the question seeking to assess the factors with the most impact on security at the national level in Mali

Note: The factors are ranked on a scale of importance with 4 being very important.

zones suggests a shift in the extent of the crisis zone, which was previously in the North, towards the Centre of Mali.⁷

Respondents in the North and Central zones also had different views on security issues in the narrower sense of the term from those in the South. They agreed that violent threats to security had a major impact on their lives and considered the four factors of insecurity most linked to violent incidents—banditry, criminal/illegal activities, community insecurity and political instability—to be the most important.

In a clear indication of the level of insecurity in the centre of Mali, the entire panel of civil society actors from the Ségou and Mopti regions considered ‘insecurity between communities’ to be either an important (22 per cent) or a very important (78 per cent) problem. These regions have witnessed an increase in the level of violence since 2015. Groups such as the Macina Liberation Front (*Front de Liberation du Macina*) have often used intra- or inter-community tensions to establish local bases and seek to legitimize their actions. Focus group reports from the regions in the Central and North zones frequently mentioned threats to the physical security of individuals. People seen as collaborating with the authorities have been killed and attacks on other communities have gone unpunished, while direct threats and attacks from jihadist groups were also mentioned.

Insecurity linked to illicit trafficking, banditry and political instability was seen as less of a priority in the regions in the South zone (scores of 2.80, 2.78 and 2.75 respectively on a scale of 1 to 4) than other factors of insecurity. For example, 30 per cent of respondents in the Koulikoro, Sikasso and Kayes regions and Bamako district gave banditry a score of 1 (‘not important’).

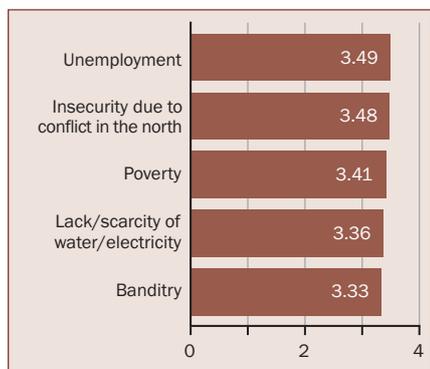


Figure 3. The five main issues identified in northern Mali

Note: The issues are ranked on a scale of importance with 4 being very important.

Differentiated perceptions of insecurity by gender and area of origin

The analysis of the questionnaires reveals differentiated perceptions of insecurity. In particular, women and men responded in different ways to a number of questions. In response to the statement ‘I feel safe when I go about my daily tasks’, women were more negative about their safety in everyday life.⁸ They also tended to feel insecure in a more localized context than men; for example, they had a greater sense of concern about conflict-related insecurity within the community than men.⁹

Women discussed being a victim of community violence more often than men. They also tended to agree more strongly with the statement ‘My community affiliation can make me a victim of violence and insecurity’ than men.¹⁰ This could be a consequence of women’s social position in society, and

⁷ Indeed, in recent months, a number of armed groups have emerged or become more active in the central regions. In Mar. 2017 a video statement announced the merger of a number of jihadist groups in Mali into the Jama’at Nusrat ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen, which translates as Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM). This new group includes jihadist groups based in the northern regions, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al mourabitoune or Ansar Dine, but also, strikingly, representatives of groups from the central regions, such as the Macina Liberation Front (also known as Katiba Macina).

⁸ An average ranking of 2.69 on a scale of 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), compared to 2.87 for men.

⁹ An average ranking of 3.36 on a scale of 1 (not important) to 4 (very important), compared to 3.07 for men.

¹⁰ An average score of 3 for women and 2.59 for men on the scale of 1 to 4.



their role as ‘perpetual social juniors’. This area would benefit from further study in order to better grasp the dynamics of violence and insecurity linked to gender and community affiliation.¹¹

Finally, some regional dimensions also emerged. The populations in the North, and men in particular, tended to feel more insecure when moving around, and in particular when passing through areas affected by insecurity. Residents in the North strongly agreed (89 per cent) with the proposition: ‘There are certain routes and certain areas that I avoid using because I think they are dangerous’. The median response was 3.84 in the North and 3.19 in the Central zone, but only 2.57 in the South.

This spatial dimension of insecurity, which is localized to the district or village level for women and concerns wider movement for the male population in the North, also requires further exploration as it is likely to have consequences for the future design and implementation of security policies. A spatial dimension to insecurity differentiated by gender and socio-economic factors will have an impact on the economic and social activities of the populations concerned. Focus group participants frequently discussed how access to weekly markets, access to the fields and investments in economic infrastructure were significantly curtailed by insecurity. Many MGPS focus group reports highlighted the strong demand for the security forces to be more mobile, instead of focusing on specific strategic geographical areas. An approach based on geographical ‘safe havens’ does not correspond with either the expectations of the population or the economic realities.

These gender and regional differences make a strong case for differentiated approaches to security policy, and for a localized approach to both strategic and operational mechanisms for improving the security situation. Men and women in different regions have specific expectations and requirements of a security presence.

IV. Security actors and their responses to insecurity

The need to bring about security and stability in Mali leads on to questions about the legitimacy and perceived efficiency of the actors tasked with this endeavour. To be sustainable and promote local ownership, international approaches to fragile states emphasize statebuilding and put the state firmly in the driving seat.¹² Reinforcing the authority of the state is recognized as a key priority in Mali. The 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement provides for strong support to state institutions and calls for a greater degree of local decision making to adapt policies to local realities.¹³

¹¹ *Cadets sociaux* (social juniors) as defined in Bayart, J. F., *L’Etat au Cameroun* [The state in Cameroon] (Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques: Paris, 1979). Social juniors are kept at the bottom of the social ladder. While some degree of social mobility is possible in Malian society, it is often out of reach for women. Sow, N. et al., *Société et culture au Mali: Problématiques du changement* [Society and culture in Mali: Drivers of change] (International Alert: London, 2014).

¹² See e.g. International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Stockholm Declaration, <<https://www.pbsdialogue.org/en/>>.

¹³ The Algiers Peace Agreement of 2015 stipulates that ‘the final settlement of the conflict requires a governance system that takes local realities into account’, and plans, among other measures, for the establishment of a ‘police territoriale’, or local police forces responsible to newly created regional authorities. The exact remit and definition of this ‘police territoriale’ are yet to be determined.

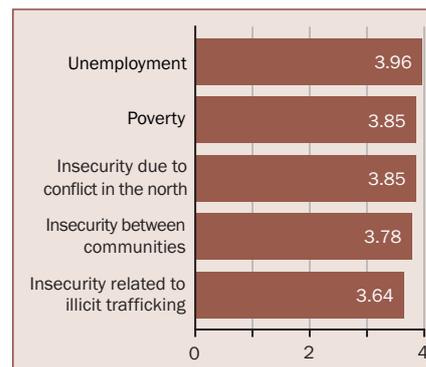


Figure 4. The five main issues identified in central Mali

Note: The issues are ranked on a scale of importance with 4 being very important.

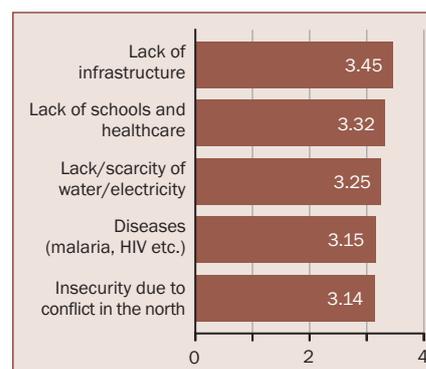


Figure 5. The five main issues identified in southern Mali

Note: The issues are ranked on a scale of importance with 4 being very important.



However, the Malian state also faces numerous challenges to establishing its authority and legitimacy. Local specificities and geographical differences in Mali make it very difficult to provide basic services to the entire population in ways that are adapted to the many different social and economic realities. Foreign interventions, to which the country is prone, given its level of interdependence with its neighbours and the number of international missions since the 2012 crisis, can also be seen as by-passing the state and undermining its sovereignty. Finally, the strength and resilience of traditional, local social governance mechanisms mean that people are often reliant on actors operating outside of formal state structures to meet their basic needs.

Perceptions of the effectiveness of security actors

The civil society actors involved in the study were asked to express their opinions on the contributions of a range of domestic and foreign security actors to peace and the security of various populations. On the exogenous security forces (MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane), there was a consensus among the three geographical zones and a majority of the opinions expressed about their contribution were positive. A majority of actors in the North, Central and South zones expressed a positive opinion of MINUSMA (61 per cent, 67 per cent and 81 per cent respectively) and of Operation Barkhane (64 per cent, 65 per cent and 65 per cent respectively). The same applied when they were asked about the police/gendarmerie or national guard (62 per cent, 65 per cent and 67 per cent positive respectively) and the work of the Malian armed forces (82 per cent, 71 per cent and 65 per cent respectively).

These positive views of the defence and security forces, in particular of the international forces, somewhat contradict the critical views regularly expressed in the Malian media.¹⁴ When asked to discuss these differences between the results of the questionnaires and the views generally held by most media organizations in Bamako, the civil society actors explained that while they shared a degree of frustration with the perceived inability of foreign forces to fulfil their mandate, they also benefitted directly from their presence. In particular, they mentioned the services rendered to the population, in connection with infrastructure and access to health care, or the fact that the presence of international forces creates jobs and new opportunities for the population, while also providing transport and access to urgent health care in military hospitals.

It is also interesting that the responses tend to indicate that negative opinions about the effectiveness of the defence and security forces (Operation Barkhane, Mali's armed forces, and the police, gendarmerie or national guard) are concentrated in the South (25 per cent, 20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively of respondents in the South zone expressed negative opinions). This could suggest that opinions about the security forces differ, depending on the proximity of the respondent to the theatre of operations. It was also argued that the Bamako-based population was more influenced by the national media, and by political actors who frequently criticize international

¹⁴ See e.g. Kouare, O., 'Barkhane sur le fil!' [Barkhane on the wire], Maliweb, 25 Aug. 2015, <<http://www.maliweb.net/contributions/barkhane-sur-le-fil-1750552.html>>.



actors, and had a more politicized view of the international presence than regional respondents.

Reports from the focus groups organized by the MGPS frequently cite the quality of the relationship between local populations and the security forces as a measure of security. There were some reports of functioning and mutually beneficial relationships, such as in the Koulikouro and Gao regions, where early warning systems have been put in place to inform security actors of potential risks. In the Gao region, for instance, there was mention of a free telephone number that people could call to report a security risk. In other places, however, the collaboration was seen in more negative terms, and the defence and security forces were perceived as responding poorly to the population's needs or even hostile. Across the regions, the MGPS identified a crucial role for civil society in informing the security authorities of the priorities of the population, and relaying information to a wider audience about the operation and mandate of the security forces. However, in the Central zone, and to a lesser extent in the North, there were numerous mentions of the risk of being seen as an informer, and the possible repercussions for individuals regarded as playing such a role.

A lack of confidence in formal and national institutions

The questionnaire also assessed the extent to which various formal and informal institutions were seen as trustworthy. Respondents placed more trust in informal or civil society institutions—non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious institutions and traditional authorities—than in formal and national institutions (political parties, the prefecture, the president or the Court of Justice). The contrast was stark (see figure 6).

Moreover, confidence in state institutions is strongest in the South and decreases the further away from Bamako respondents are located. For example, the government's effectiveness at resolving the conflict in northern Mali was ranked 2.63 in the South zone, 2.56 in the Central zone but only 2.00 in the North zone.

Overall, the results demonstrate the strong legitimacy of local service delivery among civil society entities and a general mistrust of many national institutions. These perceptions will need to be taken into account when drawing up operational plans for security policies. These results could indicate strong support for decentralized service delivery and a call for greater use of informal service providers such as civil society and traditional or private sector entities.

A positive view of the contributions and potential of civil society and non-state actors

Respondents expressed strong confidence in the work of NGOs and civil society more generally. International and national NGOs were greatly appreciated. Positive opinions about international NGOs were held by 95 per cent of respondents and participants in the North zone, 81 per cent in the Central zone and 91 per cent in the South zone. For national NGOs, the approval rate was 95 per cent in the North, 84 per cent in the Central zone and 87 per cent in the South. This could be linked to the relative absence of state services in

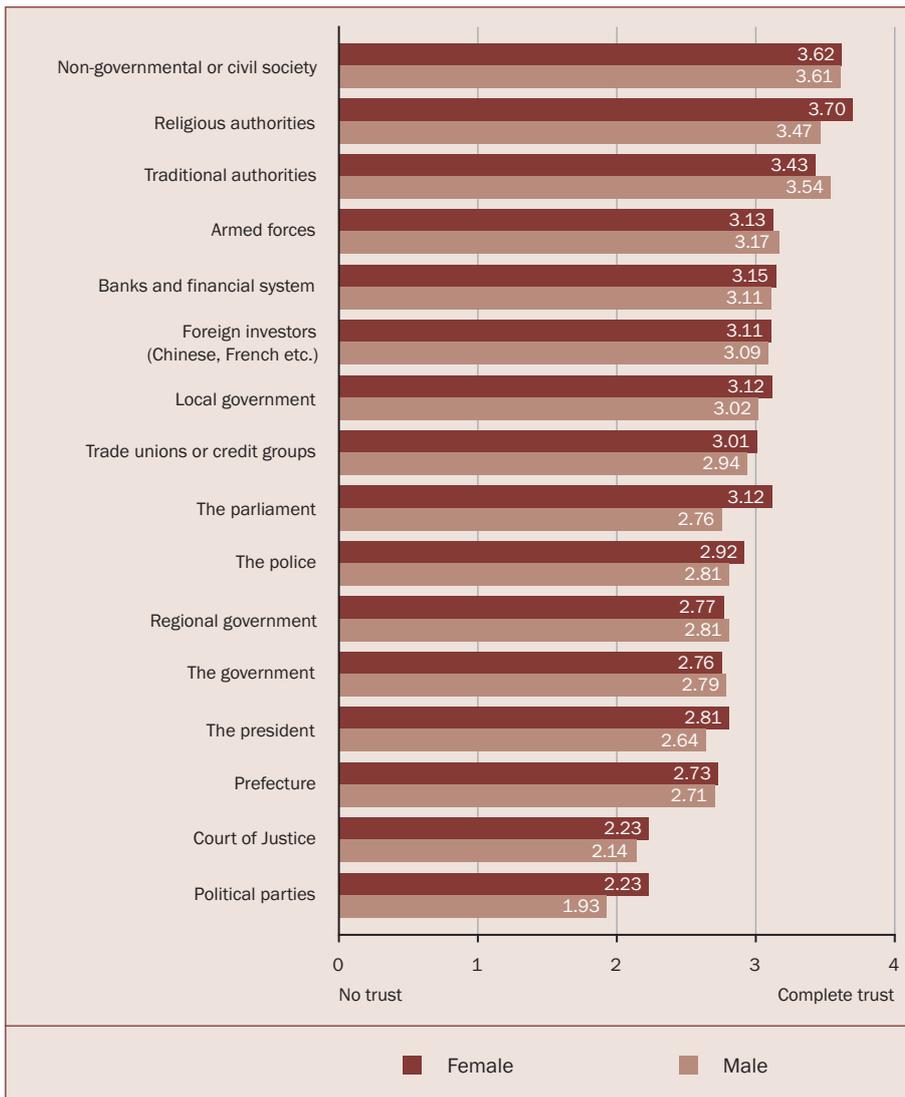


Figure 6. Average ranking in answer to the question ‘To what extent do you trust the following institutions in Mali?’

Note: Each institution is ranked on the level of trust that the respondent has in the institution with 4 representing complete trust.

the regions of Mali, beyond urban centres, which is mitigated by a strong presence of NGOs providing health care and education or supporting the local economy.

In addition, respondents expressed a strong demand for the increased involvement of civil society in matters of peace and security (98 per cent of responses). There was also overwhelming confidence in the ability of civil society to have a positive influence on local security policies (88 per cent). This is probably due to the fact that the respondents were themselves part of Malian civil society. Nonetheless, it is interesting that they see a role for themselves and their peers in improving the security of the population. In a country that contains so much geographical and social diversity, and where the state has a limited capacity to provide the necessary services, the use of local civil society in service delivery in a way that is adapted to local needs could be highly beneficial for the state.

On a more negative note, it is worrying that civil society in the two central regions demonstrated a comparative lack of confidence in the effectiveness of NGOs, both national and international

(12 per cent of questionnaire respondents held negative opinions of each).

The questionnaire also included a question generated by the community itself about non-state security actors: ‘Is there another security actor in your community?’ (a self-defence group, citizens’ committee or other). More than two-thirds of the questionnaires identified a local organization that plays such a role in one way or another. The replies mention the presence of armed groups, very often with community affiliations, vigilance committees or youth organizations. Security sector reform (SSR) is a concern for many actors in Mali, and plans for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants are seen by many as a way of recognizing and financially compensating formal and informal armed groups. In this context, the presence of so many informal security actors across the whole country could be problematic, and national SSR and DDR plans are likely to be hotly contested.



Responses to insecurity: a call for a developmental approach

The perceptions of the main drivers of insecurity described above demonstrate a link between economics, access to services and security issues. Respondents expressed their perceptions of insecurity largely on the basis of their ability to meet their economic, health, education and travel needs. This also partly explains the opinions expressed about the potential for development projects to improve security ('The ongoing development projects in my community reduce the potential for conflict in the future'). Respondents strongly agreed with this proposal (average response score of 3.31). Interestingly, this was particularly the case for women, who expressed noticeably greater agreement than men (3.50 against 3.22). This tends to reinforce the idea that women's insecurity is even more linked to access to services and conflicts at the local, community or inter-community levels, and that the appropriate responses to the issues they perceive as sources of insecurity are developmental in nature.

There are differences in the development priorities of women and men. Men see the lack of infrastructure such as roads as a major economic problem (3.46 compared to 3.15 for women), while women see 'climatic conditions' as a priority issue, most notably drought (3.38 versus 2.98 for men). Women are also more concerned about poverty (3.52 versus 3.36 for men) and disease (3.04 versus 2.84). The latter may be due to the fact that morbidity rates for women in the 15–59 age group are higher than for men (24.5 per cent compared to 17.5 per cent for men of the same age group, according to the July 2015 EMOP survey, published in September 2015).

V. Lessons from these initial findings

This survey of civil society actors in Mali identifies a number of issues about security in Mali. According to the actors involved in the project, security is as much a developmental question as an issue of exposure to violence. They make a strong case that developmental and political answers to insecurity should go hand in hand with the 'hard security' approach that is currently so visible in the country. Violence and the lack of resolution to the conflict in the North are concerns shared by most Malians. The current focus on tackling the presence of armed groups and the implementation of a peace process is of key importance. However, national and international actors will need to demonstrate that they consider the daily priorities of the populations most affected by insecurity in their security approaches.

The analysis presented above demonstrates how security is perceived differently by men and women, and in the different regions of Mali. A single national plan to restore stability and tackle insecurity would face great difficulties in addressing these diverging priorities and taking account of the needs of different strands of the population. In the light of current efforts to reform the security sector and the window of opportunity offered by the 2015 peace agreement, particular attention should be given to the expectations of the target populations. Men and women may not have the same needs, and the socio-economic conditions of different communities will require targeted attention when it comes to defining remits and the operationalization of



some of the provisions in the peace agreement, such as the ‘territorial police’, or the way that resources for development are allocated at the local level.

Finally, these initial research results show that civil society in Mali has not been passively waiting for governmental or international support. Many initiatives have been taken at the grassroots level, sometimes outside of state control, to tackle the impact of a lack of services and security. Youth have been mobilized to patrol the streets at night in some areas, and dialogues have been organized between local populations and the security authorities. During the crisis, civil society in Mali—however it is organized structurally, formally or informally—has been an important actor in reducing the effects of the state’s difficulties in delivering services. Some of the responses from civil society have resulted in positive outcomes for the population, in the perceived absence of the state. Some, too, may have had negative consequences, in that they avoid the democratic control of state institutions and take an approach to service delivery based on communitarianism. However, these initiatives have considerable potential that should be better documented and tapped into, in order to support the government’s efforts to bring about a return to stability, and development for all. SIPRI and CONASCIPAL will work together to explore some of these dimensions; and will continue to develop quantitative and qualitative studies to unpack further the local perceptions of security in Malian civil society.



Abbreviations

CONASCIPAL	Malian National Coalition of Civil Society for Peace and the Fight Against the Proliferation of Light Weapons
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
EMOP	Enquête Modulaire et Permanente Auprès des Ménages (Modular Permanent Household) survey
EUCAP	European Union capacity-building mission in Sahel Mali
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
MGPS	Monitoring Groups for Peace and Security
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
SSR	Security sector reform

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A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON SECURITY CONCERNS AMONG MALIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

AURÉLIEN TOBIE

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