



Photo of gold miners in a gold mining in Mandiana.

CONFLICT SCAN

Project: Preventing Election and Community Violence through Early Warning and Early Response in Guinea

Financed by the United States Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations
Republic of Guinea, Region of Kankan, prefectures of Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguir

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1. Executive summary

Once known as one of the most peaceful regions, the region of Upper Guinea has become an area of tension for several years, degenerating repeatedly into serious violence. Such violence regularly has disastrous consequences for the people and communities. This report presents the results obtained from the conflict scan conducted in this region. This work is part of the project. «**Prevention of election and community violence through a system of early warnings and rapid responses in Guinea**» financed by CSO

A method was used to collect data in the field. This is the *qualitative approach* including Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Focus (FGD). The results of this conflict scan focus on: 1) the main conflicts; 2) the main causes of these conflicts; 3) the actors involved in these conflicts; and 4) opportunities and solutions to manage these conflicts.

In the localities of Siguri, Mandiana, Kouroussa and Kankan, covered by this Conflict scan, *the main conflicts* are:

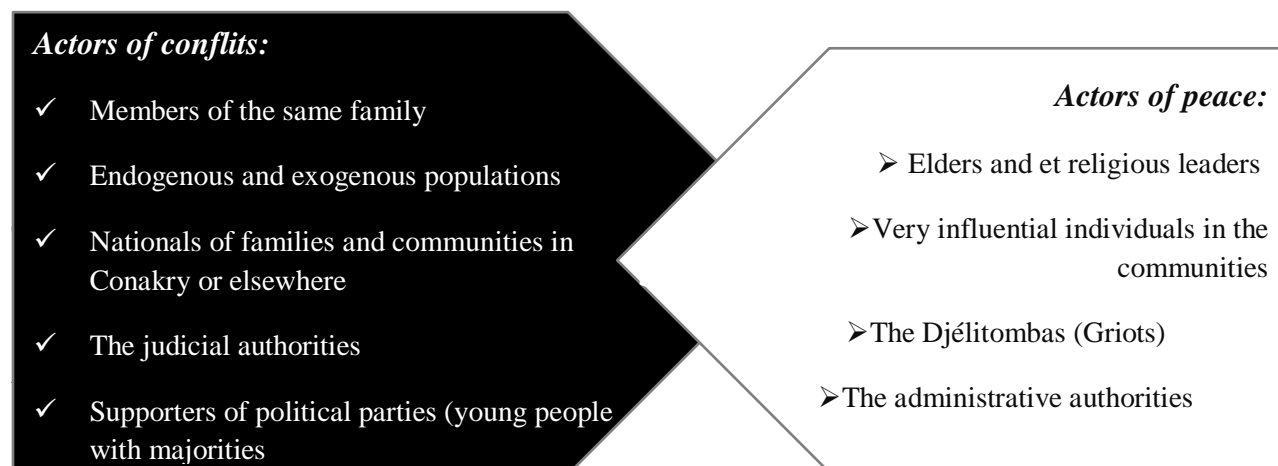
- ✓ Conflicts related to the artisanal exploitation of gold
- ✓ Conflicts over access to land for cashew cultivation
- ✓ Political conflicts
- ✓ Conflicts related to women's issues
- ✓ Religious conflicts
- ✓ Agropastoral conflicts

Among the listed forms of conflict, the two most common in the subject localities are *land conflicts* related to **(1) artisanal gold mining** and **(2) land conflicts related to agriculture**. The manifestations of these conflicts, as well as the frequencies may differ from one locality to another, but these conflicts have been noted by the majority of respondents (75%). Incidents of these conflicts have increased over the past 12 months, especially land conflicts related to agriculture, because of the growing cashew nut cultivation in the communities.

The Causes of the main conflicts are:

- ✓ The rarity of gold mines:
- ✓ The growing number of gold washers in the communities
- ✓ Insufficient arable land

The Actors :



Formally, ***Peace Committees established by the administrative authorities were the only*** local mechanisms of conflict management in the communities of Sigui, Mandiana; Kouroussa and Kankan. Set up at the initiative of the local authorities these committees, are sometimes supported by representatives of the National Council of Civil Society Organizations (CNOSC). Unfortunately, these local mechanisms are overwhelmed by the extent of tensions and violence in the communities. Councils of wise that were once very influential with the residents of local communities, are more recently disavowed by the youth. According to the respondents, the only group that is still heeded for their wisdom and counsel is the Djelitombas (griots).

Respondents in the target locations have expressed the ***lack of inclusive and participatory space for dialogue in their communities***. Despite the efforts of traditional councils of the wise to stymie conflict, they are no longer esteemed by a large section of the population. For this reason their independent interventions to manage conflict often fail. Young people are often very feared by their elders (men and women). The decision-based mode of conflict management is seen as inappropriate by young people, who immediately refute these decisions and bring disputes to judiciary court.

The main recommendations

To platform members:

1. Identify resource people in the grassroots communities to act as a relay to the platforms, to avoid response delays, given the time it takes for platform members to arrive on the scene.
2. Involve more djélitombas (griots) in rapid response actions. Their contributions would make it possible to better convey the messages of peace in the communities by an even more inclusive approach because of their resonance with the residents.

To SFCG :

3. Encourage early warning and rapid response platforms to be more proactive in proposing and implementing responses to escalated alerts. For this, it is imperative that platform members have a good grasp of conflict prevention concepts in order to better educate target community members.
4. Produce a special program for the Kankan region, similar to "Nimba" in the forest region, in order to recall the culture-patrimonial pacts of non-aggression and peaceful cohabitation signed between communities.
5. Promote the establishment of inclusive and participatory spaces of exchange and dialogue (exchange sessions) in communities to emulate and restore confidence in indigenous structures of conflict management, especially for young people.
6. Support local structures, civil society organizations to advocate with the state to implement the decision made by the head of state to unite gold miners and give them plots of gold mines.
7. Create simplified texts / messages that popularize the land code.
8. To foster stakeholder understanding of the cashew cultivation conflicts and conflicts related to artisanal gold mining. For this, radio, and TV comedies, participatory theaters and / or

picture boxes would be appropriate.

9. Conduct a sensitization campaign with local residents of Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguiiri living in Conakry on the consequences of taking sides in conflicts. This would make it possible to engage their agency in the management of conflicts in their communities, to bring the populations in these communities to respect the decisions of justice, and finally to reinforce confidence in the councils of wise men and their contribution to peaceful coexistence in the communities..

2. Context

The Conflict Scan is part of a 32.5-month project entitled "***Prevention of Election and Community Violence through a System of Early Warnings and Rapid Responses in Guinea***" funded by the US Department of State through the Office of Operations. Conflict and Stabilization (CSO). This project is implemented by SFCG in Conakry and in the prefectures of Labé, Pita, Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana, Siguiiri, Beyla, Gueckedou, Lola and N'zerekore. The aim of the project is to minimize the risks of electoral and community violence in Guinea.

Objective of the Conflict Scan. :

SFCG uses the Conflict Scan to carry out concise, pragmatic and regular analysis. These analyses are focused on the actions for creating an environment of peace that benefits all.

The objectives of this Conflict Scan are:

- ✓ Systematically collect the perceptions of different conflict actors residents in the target communities on the evolution of conflicts in their localities
- ✓ Make objective and concrete recommendations for actions adapted to the current context: including radio programs, intervention zones for early warning platforms;
- ✓ provide information to keep the project relevant to the context of conflict in the communities;
- ✓ To measure conflict dynamics in the Upper Guinea region, with a view to strengthening local platforms for rapid and regular response to alerts.

The secondary objective of this scan conflict is to inform CSO, NGO partners, CSOs and PFTs about the current conflict dynamics in the Haute-Guinée region based on local perceptions..

Methodology:

The methodology used for this "Conflict Scan" was exclusively qualitative methodology insofar as data collection and analysis is concerned. This methodology has thus allowed us to collect the perceptions of the target groups in relation to the evolution of the context of the conflict. It was based on two data collection tools: Key informant interviews, using an interview guide, and focus groups with a discussion guide.

Through these two collection tools, we conducted **12 groups of discussion (focus group)** out of 12 initially planned, engaging with 120 people in the 4 target locations of the conflict scan. Forty-four

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44 individuals from local and administrative authorities, community leaders, leaders of youth and women's associations, political leaders, journalists and civil society organizations were interviewed.

In total, this conflict scan engaged with 164 people.

The data collection team.:

For data collection, the DME Coordinator was assisted by the Kankan Region Field Officer to organize meetings in each locality. Two more agents were recruited in each locality to organize and facilitate the discussion groups, keep contact with the targets of the Conflict Scan, organize the scheduled appointments, and the translate into the local languages..

Period of data collection:

The data collection activity took place from August 19 to 30, 2017. The analysis, write up and operation phases of the report took place within two weeks of the data collection period, from 04 to September 15, 2017.

Data collection areas :

The data collection for this conflict scan took place in the prefectures of Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguiiri, as shown on the capture of the map.



These choice of localities was based on the highest frequency of conflicts alerts, tensions and violence recorded by the local platforms.

3. Results

This report focuses primarily on the local context and conflict dynamics since 2016 in the prefectures of

Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguiiri.

This report provides the overall conflict context, a detailed presentation of the causes and consequences of conflicts, the main actors involved in these conflicts, as well as the local resolution mechanisms used by the parties affected by the various conflicts. Finally, it makes recommendations for refining early warning response activities for more direct impact in communities.

Local context and recent developments:

Baseline study has not been conducted for this project. And therefore there is a lack of comparative data on the current conflict context. For several decades artisanal gold mining has always been the context in the target prefectures. This exploitation combined with the growing interest of the residents for the cultivation of cashews gives a context generally dominated by conflicts over economic stakes.

As always, the artisanal gold mining has attracted many people (mostly young people) to the localities, in search of a well-being that has become difficult to achieve. The quest for profit combined with a situation of increased poverty generates situations of tumultuous cohabitation between the populations in the communities in Upper Guinea.

“These tensions have decreased since the beginning of 2017, but the conflicts related to the exploitation of gold still exist and have been transported in the communities. In addition, another form of conflict emerges in these localities to provide a tense and explosive context in communities.”

Through this reflection, the analysis of the current context of conflicts then becomes easier. For several years now, artisanal mining and access to land have regularly led to open conflicts in the Haute-Guinée more than elsewhere in the country. Over the past two years these conflicts have resulted in violent clashes between the residents and the mining companies in Siguiri and Kouroussa. These tensions have decreased since the beginning of 2017, but the conflicts related

to the exploitation of gold still exist and have been engendered within the communities. The table below describes the resident perceptions of the context in each locality visited:

Table N°1 : Evolution of the context of conflicts in the localities of Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguiri

Level of the context of the conflict	Percentage per Prefecture (N=166 in total)			
	Kankan (N=41)	Kouroussa (N=41)	Mandiana (N=41)	Siguiri (N=41)
The context has improved since January	14,63%	7,32%	9,76%	12,19%
The context is the same since January	7,32%	4,87%	7,32%	2,43%
The context has deteriorated since January	78,05%	87,81%	82,92%	85,38%

In all the locations visited, the percentage of respondents who feel that the context of conflict has deteriorated for a year is literally very high. These percentages reflect the current reality of conflict perceptions in these localities. Although many actions have been or are being implemented (notably by SFCG) to achieve a more stable context, it seems that this is not yet fruitful. In the opinion of the respondents, conflicts are frequent and their manifestation creates a context of instability and insecurity in the communities. According to the respondents, this has increased due to the increasing popularity of cashew cultivation.

→ A mother testifies that : « *We are living in a difficult time. Recurrent and very violent conflicts in communities...* ».

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- A joungeleader says more in Mandiana: « *The context is nowadays very tense. It does not happen one or two months without there being tensions in the communities. This is disturbing ».*
- The prefect of Kouroussas supports adds that : « *We are concerned about the proportion of the conflict environment in our communities. It is very worrying that people are clashing at almost every moment... ».*

These statements testify to the conflict situation in the communities in all the prefectures visited. They also highlight the concern of the people about the very tense antagonisms in their communities. It appears that the conflicts context in general has not improved in the Upper Guinea, with particular reference to the target locations. Although the conflicts between residents and the mining companies have decreased significantly, it did not have any impact on the level of conflict, because of persistent clashes over land use.

This lull in tensions linked to industrial exploitation can be explained to be the result of both the mediation work undertaken by the local conflict management mechanisms, and young miners' resort to artisanal mining.

Conflicts Identified During Conflict Scan

The main conflicts identified in the 4 target localities are:

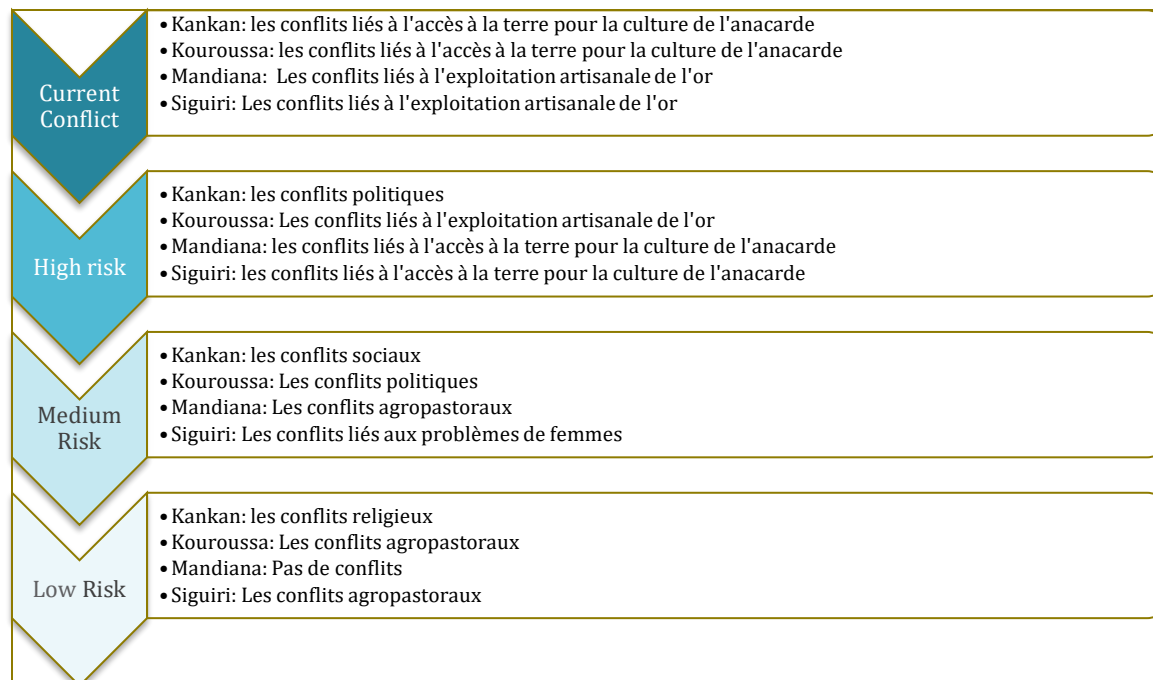
- ✓ Conflicts related to the artisanal exploitation of gold
- ✓ Conflicts over access to land for cashew cultivation
- ✓ Political conflicts
- ✓ Conflicts related to the problems of arranged marriages
- ✓ Religious conflicts
- ✓ Agropastoral conflicts

This table below highlights the types of conflict in each locality and the degree of prevalence. According to respondents, those conflicts related to the artisanal exploitation of gold and conflicts related to access to land for cashew cultivation are the most common and most volatile across all localities. It should be noted that conflicts related to women's issues and arranged marriages are mostly a concern for the populations in Siguiri.

For respondents in all localities, the first two conflicts cited are the most worrying because of their frequency and escalation. The following testimonies explain the prevalent situation:

- An elder in Mandiana testifies : « *Here, the only real conflicts are the conflicts around the artisanal exploitation of gold and the conflicts around the cultivating the cashew nut. These two conflicts are very tiring for us and we do not know what to do ... ».*
- A journalist in Kouroussa testifies : « *Conflicts over cashew farming have taken over mining conflicts. But both are quite common ... ».*
- A member of the civil society in Siguiri testifies : « *Before, there were only conflicts related to the exploitation of gold. But the cashew farming causes a lot of conflict. So there are as many conflicts for mining as there are over cashew nut farming ... ».*

Table 2 : Distribution of conflicts according to the level of risk in each prefecture:



Two of the most common forms of conflict are related to land access in these communities. The dispute is always either over a mining plot or a plot arable land; and it is always between either two communities, two people from the same family, or people from different families within the same community.

However, in Kankan the second most common and most violent conflict is political conflict. As a youth in a Kankan explained during a focus group: « *We face two types of conflicts. First there are the conflicts related to the culture of cashew nuts and after, the political conflicts. The first type of conflict is very common and takes on very disturbing proportions. Political conflicts are less frequent, but it is also very violent*».

The political conflicts in question are clashes between supporters of major political parties such as: RPG, UFDG, PEDN. In the run-up to the elections, provocations and mockeries are commonplace among each group of supporters to destabilize the other side and prove its popularity in the city of Kankan. This is because Kankan is a strong and cosmopolitan city where the main ethnic groups are strongly represented.

Another type of conflict that is emerging in Siguiiri according to respondents is conflict over women's issues and the arrangement and cancellation of marriages for monetary and family gains. to say the least, deserves the attention of all peace-loving social actors in this prefecture. According to the respondents in this prefecture, this type of conflict often has disastrous consequences for the accused families. The causes of this type of conflict, detailed below, will provide a better understanding of the nature of the conflict and the actors involved.

The causes of the two main conflicts :

Conflicts related to the artisanal mining of gold:

The scarcity of gold mines, which itself is due to the growing number of people who are involved in artisanal mining as their main activity (for 52% of respondents) and the lack of employment for youth who cannot find any occupation other than mining (for 39% of respondents). As stated by a woman in the focus groups of women in Siguiri: «*The mining conflicts are due to the lack of land to exploit because there are many people who are in the artisanal mining. All the young people who do not have work in Siguiri are in the mines. This makes the land scarce.*»

Conflicts related to cashew nut far :

For all respondents, the main cause of these conflicts is the difficult access to arable land due to the growing interest of residents in this sector. As the price of cashew nuts on the market is rising, the number of interested parties outweighs the cashew fields in the localities. Faced with this situation, poor indigenous residents have a hard time seeing settlers or endogenous residents – who arrived in the localities in the recent past – exploit the land that was handed to them over ages by their parents. A form of jealousy is taking hold among these indigenous residents. And this leads to calls of land reclamation through the eviction of the recently settled residents. In the face of the refusal by the latter, the indigenous residents sometimes use violence. A religious authority in Mandiana testifies «*Before, there was only one locality in which we grew cashews. But for nearly two years this industry has spread throughout the prefecture because everyone knows that it is a plant that brings a lot of money. So you find plantations everywhere. As the land becomes scarce, there are members of some families who attack other families to say that they have grown on their land and that they do not recognize the titles that these families own because land grant was made by their parents or grandparents*». In the opinion of the respondents, the cause of the two main conflicts identified is the lack of land, which is the same for disputes over plots artisanal exploitation of the gold.

“The causes of the two main conflicts identified are the lack of land. This is as much for the artisanal exploitation of the gold as for the culture of the cashew”.

The causes of the conflicts related to women's problems are due to the fact that in the villages in Siguiri, the parents of the girls promise their daughters in marriage to young men and then they do not fulfill this pledge. A woman leader who was interviewed in Siguiri explains that: «*In the villages and even in the urban commune, parents have made it a habit to promise their daughters to a young man because of his bravery, his family line or his seriousness. This is very common here. Once the pact is sealed, the young boys take care of their future wives and their families for all that concerns vital needs (food, money and clothing). But as soon as someone more affluent asks for the girl's hand, the parents of this one yield without worrying that they had promised to give his daughter in marriage to someone already. This situation leads young people who have been betrayed by the parents of their pledged wives into very dangerous actions, to even killing the (promised) girl and killing themselves.*». Perceived treason and dishonour are the primary causes of this form of conflict and the violent or crime scenes that associated to them.

People involved in conflicts:

As in any conflict, there are people who are working to solve it others who intensify it; some are involved directly and others indirectly involved. The figure below gives a breakdown of the main actors of the recorded conflicts.

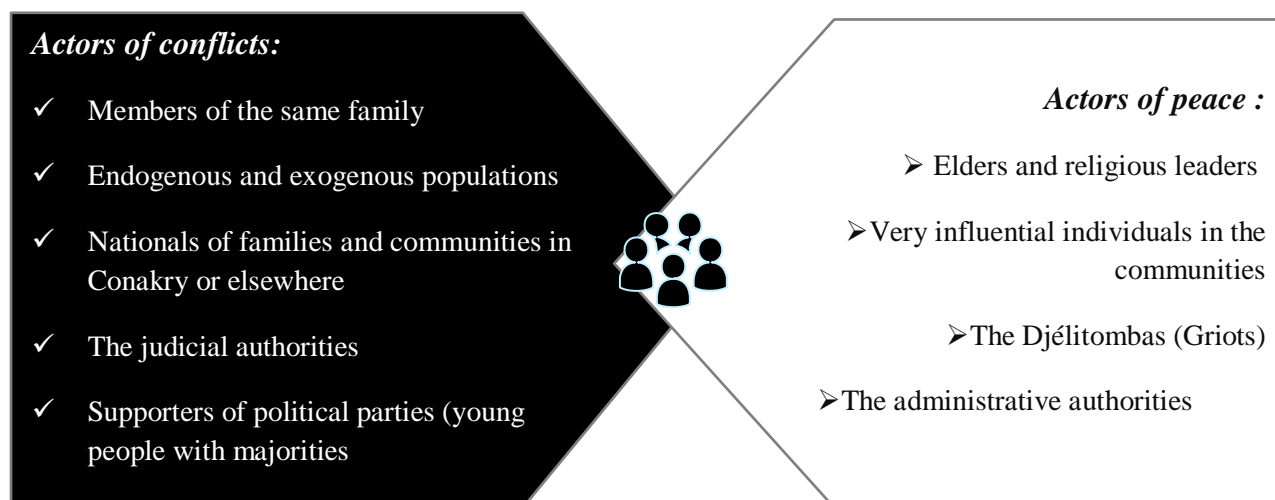


Table 3 :actors involved in conflicts depending on the type of conflict.

Types of conflicts	Actors involved in the conflicts	Actors involved in conflict resolution.
conflicts related to the artisanal mining of gold.	Members of the same family, endogenous and exogenous, populations of two villages, nationals of communities living in Conakry or elsewhere.	Local authorities, djélitombas (griots), figures of customary and religious authorities, individuals (people of good will) justice.e.
conflicts related to the growing of cashew	members of the same family, the endogenous and the exogenous, the populations of two villages, the citizens of the communities living in Conakry or elsewhere	Local authorities, djélitombas (griots), figures of customary authorities, religious and individuals (people of good will), justice.e.
Politicalconflict	supporters of political parties (mostly young people), ethnic communities (Kankan, Kouroussa and Siguiriri), the police.	CSOs, figures of customary and religious authorities and djelitombas.
Agro-pastoral conflicts	Animal breeders and farmers, judicial and administrative authorities, communities.	CSOs, figures of customary and religious authorities, law enforcement and djelitombas.
Conflicts related to arranged marriages (identified only in Siguiriri)	Girls' families, young boys and girls.	justice.
Religious conflicts (mainly cited in Kankan)	Muslims and Christians.	figures of customary and religious authorities, administrative authorities and djélitombas

This table shows that in addition to having the same causes, the conflicts related to the artisanal exploitation of gold and those related to the cashew culture have the same actors from every point of view .

It is also illustrated that at the level of the actors in favor of the peace, the djélitombas and the figures of customary and religious authorities are quoted for all the conflicts. Although this suggests that they are the two most effective actors in conflict management in different conflict-prone communities, this is not necessarily a fact. According to the respondents, djélitombas seem to have more resonance than wise men and religious leaders. It seems that even though they are often labeled as advocates in conflict management, their methods are increasingly discredited by the youth as non-inclusive. The djélitombas enjoy their stronghold in the history of Mandingo communities. By their skills and subtleties in recalling the history of the peoples of Mandingo, they manage to temper the protagonists in a conflict; they have the gift of calming a conflict situation. The peace they forge does not last, because after their interventions, there is no follow-up by other structures with more competence in conflict management. Given the lack of trust in customary and religious authority figures, the most appealing voice to those involved in conflicts is justice.

However, this justice is also weakened by the interference of the citizens of communities living in Conakry. There was one particular case in the Upper Guinea whereby a community or family has a son or daughter well placed in the central government. As a civil servant, instead of contributing to the easing of tensions in the communities, the young person would take advantage of their positions in the upper echelons of the state in favour of their parents' claim in a conflict, and discourage the parents from trusting local, customary and religious authorities. As explained by the quotes below:

- A member of the Prefectural Council of CSOs in Kankan says: *« people like to go to justice for conflict management. Besides, we have several cases of conflicts pending judgment. But it's difficult because the judges are not free».*
- A journalist met in Siguiri declares that: *« When judgments are rendered and it turns out that this is against the parents or family of a high-placed person, this judgment is invalid. The latter encourages his parents not to submit to judgment. This is very serious because it weakens justice».*

Opportunities for peace

Opportunities to ease tensions and promote peacebuilding exist despite the tense context. For respondents, the existence of SFCG platforms and peace committees set up by local authorities is an

« The elders have lost the confidence of the younger ones because they are impartial in the management of conflicts. It is true that the djélitombas are well listened to, but they do not manage the conflicts, they calm the tensions by the recall of the history. But justice is the only way to manage conflict here.».

opportunity to promote peace and peaceful coexistence. In the case of conflicts related to the artisanal mining of gold, the decision of the head of state to unite gold miners for a better distribution of plots raises great hope among the population, who see in this decision, an end of the conflicts in this sector. According to the respondents, another opportunity is that djélitombas are very popular with people in all communities.

Given the conflicts identified and the current context in each of the prefectures visited, we believe that these opportunities can be harnessed to ease tensions in the communities.

Platforms for dialogue :

For the communities of Upper Guinea more than elsewhere in Guinea, the council of wise is a real space for dialogue. But from the results of this conflict scan, their methods are increasingly unaccepted. While the older members of the community still have confidence in their judgments, the youth are reluctant to trust these councils due to the repeatedly non-inclusive, non-participatory, and biased conflict management. Thus these councils are no longer unanimously revered in the communities. Civil society organizations are considered too politicized and unsuited to local realities; so there is no space universally acceptable dialogue that works for everyone in the community. The only areas mentioned to have a wide resonance across the board by the respondents are the early warning and rapid response platforms set up by SFCG. In addition, we found that each social group (youth, women and men) has its own space to discuss issues of each social group. But these spaces are exclusive even though they are spaces for discussing conflicts in communities. For this reason the conflicts continue and escalate because there are no spaces where all social actors can meet to discuss solutions to the problems facing the communities.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

Tensions over mining disputes between mining companies and residents have diminished since the beginning of 2017. Nevertheless, those conflicts over plots for artisanal mining still exist in the communities. In addition, conflicts related to arranged marriages are emerging in these localities and creating tensions. The conflict context in the localities of Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguiri remains tense. While some conflicts (gold-mining conflict, political conflict, and agro pastoral conflict) are not new to these communities, cashew field conflict, arranged marriage conflicts and religious conflict are emerging in the localities.

The causes of the main conflicts are :

- ✓ The rarity of gold mines:
- ✓ The growing number of gold washers in the communities
- ✓ Insufficient arable land

The antagonists in the conflicts depend on the conflict issue. However, the conflicts related to the artisanal exploitation of gold and those related to cashew farming have the same actors; namely, relatives, endogenous and exogenous residents, residents from two villages, and natives of communities living in Conakry or elsewhere. It should be noted that the latter are seen as the true aggravators of all conflicts in the communities.

The existence of the platforms set up by SFCG together with the peace committees set up by the local authorities in each prefecture constitute an opportunity to promote peace and peaceful coexistence. In the case of conflicts related to the artisanal mining of gold, the decision of the head of state to federate gold miners for a better distribution of plots for gold mines has raised great hope among the people. The griots or djelitombas also present a good opportunity to build peace because of the resonance they have with community members.

The early warning and rapid response platforms set up by SFCG are the one form of framework or space for dialogue trusted by respondents. Other spaces such as wise councils, CSOs and peace committees are considered non-inclusive, non-participatory and biased by respondents. In the localities, each social group (youth, women and men) has its space for dialogue, but these spaces are not inclusive even though spaces for discussing conflicts in communities.

Recommandations :

To members of platforms :

1. Identify resource people in the grassroots communities to act as a relay to the platforms, so as to avoid response delays, given the time it takes for platform members to arrive on the scene.
2. Involve more djélitombas (griots) in rapid response actions. Their contributions would make it possible to better convey the messages of peace in the communities, by an even more inclusive approach because of the resonance they have with residents.

To SFCG :

3. Encourage early warning and rapid response platforms to be more proactive in proposing and implementing responses to escalated alerts. For this, it is imperative that platform members have a good grasp of conflict prevention concepts in order to better educate target community members.
4. Create a special program for the Kankan region, similar to "Nimba" in the forest region, with the aim of recalling the culture-patrimonial pacts of non-aggression and peaceful cohabitation signed between communities.
5. Promote the establishment of inclusive and participatory spaces of exchange and dialogue (exchange sessions) in communities to emulate and restore confidence in indigenous structures of conflict management, especially for young people.
6. Support local structures, civil society organizations to advocate with the state to implement the decision made by the head of state to unite gold miners and give them plots of gold mines.
7. Create simplified texts / messages that popularize the land code to promote stakeholder understanding of the cashew culture conflicts and conflicts related to artisanal gold mining. For this, media tools (radio, TV) can be used as comics, participatory theaters and / or picture boxes.
8. Create simplified texts / messages that popularize the land code.
9. Foster stakeholder understanding of the cashew cultivation conflicts and conflicts related to artisanal gold mining. For this, radio, and TV comedies, participatory theaters and / or picture boxes would be appropriate.
10. Conduct a sensitization campaign with local residents of Kankan, Kouroussa, Mandiana and Siguiri living in Conakry on the consequences of taking sides in conflicts. This would make it possible to engage their agency in the management of conflicts in their communities, to bring the populations in these communities to respect the decisions of justice, and finally to reinforce confidence in the councils of wise men and their contribution to peaceful coexistence in the communities.