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ANNUAL
REPORT

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▶ ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AMDH	Association Malienne des Droits de l'Homme (Malian Association for Human Rights)
APCOF	African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BATUK	British Army Training Unit Kenya
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CCS	Security Consultative Committees
CEMLAWS	Centre for Maritime Law and Security
CEPO	Community Empowerment For Progress Organization
CHR	Centre for Human Rights
CLEPH	Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health
CLPAs	Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils
CNT	Conseil National de Transition
COPIGoG	Counter-Piracy Infrastructures in the Gulf of Guinea
COPIL	Comité de Pilotage
CORDAID	Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid
CPC	Community Policing Committees
CPS	Civil Peace Services
CSO	Civil Service Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DWFFV	Distant Water Fishing Vessels
FDS	Forces de Défense et de Sécurité
FENAGIE PECHE	La Fédération Nationale des Groupements d'Intérêt Économique de Pêche (National Federation of Economic Interest Groups in Fishing)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCTF	Global Counter-Terrorism Forum
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HSGO	Hybrid Security Governance Observatory
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILF	International Legal Foundation
IPID	Independent Police Investigative Directorate
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
JF	Just Future

JFA	Just Future Alliance
KNFP	Kenya National Focal Point
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
LEAs	Law Enforcement Agencies
LEPH	Law Enforcement and Public Health
MCS	Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MONUSCO	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
NCTFC	National Counter Terrorism Framework Council
NGAOs	National Government Administrative Officers
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIMS	National Integrated Maritime Strategy
NPM	National Preventive Mechanisms
NSS	National Security Service
OGN	Operational Guidance Notes
OGS	Observatoire pour la Gouvernance du Secteur de la Sécurité (Observatory for Security Sector Governance)
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PRAWA	Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RENEDEP	Réseau National pour l'Eveil Démocratique et Patriotique (National Network for Democratic and Patriotic Awakening)
RRSSJ	Réseau pour la Réforme du Secteur de Sécurité et de Justice (Network for Security and Justice Sector Reform)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SARPCCO	Southern African Police Commissioners Co-Operation Organisation
SEPCIM-AEM	Secrétariat Permanent du Comité Interministériel de l'Action de l'État en Mer (The Permanent Secretariat of the Interministerial Committee for State Action at Sea)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRIC	Security Research Information Centre
SSLS	South Sudan Law Society
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSRG	Security Sector Reform and Governance
UCPH	University of Copenhagen
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPF	Uganda Police Force
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

▶ ABOUT THE ASSN

The African Security Sector Network (ASSN) is a pan-African expert network which supports African regional organizations, national governments, and civil society as well as international partners with policy advice, research and advocacy as well as training and capacity-building on Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSR/G) issues. Founded in 2003, the network is headquartered in Accra, Ghana, with regional nodes in East, West, Southern Africa and Central Africa.

VISION

The vision of ASSN is that of an African owned security sector that is democratically governed people-centred, rights compliant, well managed, and accountable as well as effective in supporting and sustaining human security.

MISSION

The ASSN is committed to facilitating progress towards the achievement of effective and democratically governed security sectors across Africa. While the majority of African think tanks focus on research and expertise dealing with conflicts and insecurity, the ASSN is the only African organisation exclusively and specifically focused on promoting democratic governance of the security sector in a way that makes African people more safe and secure.

ASSN owes its uniqueness to its:

- Pan-African coverage, as the largest Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) specialist organisation of its kind; exchanging and synthesizing experiences and lessons from different traditions of security organisation and practice (Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone);
- African-centred character, building and disseminating African principles, expertise and best practices;
- Multidisciplinary and cross-cutting membership – of researchers, analysts, civil society activists, parliamentarians and (active and retired) security practitioners– able to pool expertise, thus permitting the network to deal with a wide range of security sector issues in an integrated manner; and
- Multinational networking, which facilitates south-south sharing of experiences and lessons.



▶ ASSN REGIONAL/THEMATIC NODES

The ASSN has Regional/Thematic nodes, based on the geopolitical and linguistic regions of Sub-Saharan Africa as well as thematic focus. In each Regional/Thematic node, one/two member organisation(s) form the centrepiece of the ASSN's activities. These regional/thematic nodes are:

• West Africa

Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Association (PRAWA) headquartered in Enugu State, Nigeria (<http://www.prawa.org/>) and the Fondation pour la Sécurité du Citoyen (FOSEC) based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (<http://www.fosecburkina.org/>)

• Southern Africa

The African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) based in Cape Town, South Africa (<http://apcof.org/>)

• East Africa

Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) based in Nairobi, Kenya (<http://www.srickenya.org/>)

• Central Africa

Le Réseau pour la Réforme du Secteur de Sécurité et de Justice (RRSSJ) based in Kishasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (<https://www.rssjrdc.org/>)

• Maritime Security

The Centre for Maritime Law and Security (CEMLAWS)–Africa based in Accra, Ghana, serves as the ASSN's thematic node for Maritime Security issues (<https://cemlawsafrica.org/>)

• Lusophone Node

ALTERNAG is the ASSN's Lusophone node and is based in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau.

▶ ASSN GOVERNANCE

The ASSN is governed by an Executive Committee (ExCo), including a Chair, a Vice-Chair and an Executive Secretary who heads the Secretariat. The Executive Committee provides strategic leadership and oversight for the ASSN and currently comprises the following:



**Dr Niagalé
Bagayoko-Penone**
Chair



Lt Col Jeremiah Kitiku (rtd)
Vice-Chair
Regional Coordinator
East Africa and the Great Lakes



**Prof Eboe
Hutchful**
Executive Secretary



Prof Medhane Tadesse
Regional Coordinator
(Horn of Africa)



Dr Uju Agomoh
Regional Coordinator
(West Africa)



Mr Sean Tait
Regional Coordinator
(Southern Africa)



**Mr Emmanuel
Kabengele Kalonji**
New Member/
Regional Coordinator
(Central Africa)



**Mr Adelino
Handem**
New Member/Coordinator
(ASSN Lusophone Node)



**Dr Emile
Ouedraogo**
Member



**Prof Kossi
Mawuli Agokla**
Member

To view the profile of the members of the Executive Committee, please click the link below:
<https://www.africansecuritynetwork.org/assn/governance/>

▶ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARTNERS

The ASSN appreciates the support of the following partners through whose support, its work over the past year was made possible:



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

Crisis Action



UNITED NATIONS

▶ MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Niagale Bagayoko (PhD)
Chair
African Security Sector
Network (ASSN)

ASSN's resilience in the pursuit of its mission over the years strongly accentuates the need for Africans to harness their knowledge, skills and capabilities to address the security challenges confronting the continent and retarding its growth and development. Indeed, external actors cannot understand the context of African security better than Africans themselves. Consequently, it is time for Africa to look inwardly to harness the existing potentials to address the ever-evolving security issues, particularly in conflict-affected and fragile states while instituting appropriate peacebuilding measures for prevention.

Taking this to the next level, the ASSN as part of activities for the implementation of its Just Future (JF) Project, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) in October, 2024. The HSGO is a comprehensive electronic database on security governance in Africa, covering (a) African regional and multilateral security structures (the AU and RECs) as well as (b) state and non-state security structures and actors in Mali, Niger, the DRC and South Sudan. Work on additional countries and thematic areas including policing, parliamentary oversight, Corrections and Maritime Security is also underway. The HSGO is articulated around the concept of hybridity, which conceptualizes African security sectors as "characterized by the coexistence and interaction of multiple state and non-state providers of security, as the state shares authority, legitimacy and capacity with other actors, networks and institutions across the formal/informal divide". The HSGO is conceived as a tool to aid understanding of the complex (hybrid) security architecture and modes of security governance in the African region, targeting the data needs of regional and international organisations, national governments, policy-makers and legislators, as well as civil society, researchers, and media organisations. While much of the ASSN's work on the JF Project has focused on

strengthening the capacity of Civil Society Organisations to demand security and accountability from duty-bearers, the HSGO will remain as one of the visible legacies of the JF Project. The ASSN's JF project covers 4 countries – South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali and Niger.

Another key area where the ASSN's effort was evident was in its support to the People's Coalition for the Sahel. With funding from the Open Society Foundation (OSF), the ASSN and Crisis Action supported the research, training and advocacy initiatives of civil society members of the Coalition in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso to a lesser extent owing to the unfavourable security environment and the shrinking civic space. Though the third report of the Coalition was produced, its publication was withheld because of the exposés therein which might worsen the already shrinking political and civic space.

ASSN's collaboration and support to regional organisations also continued in the past year with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) being the main partners engaged. For both institutions, ASSN provided experts for different assignments.

Further afield is the work of our regional and thematic nodes expanding the work of the ASSN further in critical areas of security concerns including 'policing and policing oversight' – APCOF), 'Corrections, Human Rights and Justice' - PRAWA, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons Control, Community Policing and Peacebuilding' – SRIC as well as 'Maritime Security' – CEMLAWS-Africa.

The ASSN remains committed to facilitating progress towards the achievement of effective and democratically governed security sectors across Africa and continues to call on partners who share in its vision to support its work.

We invite you to explore the following details. ■

▶ 1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing fragility of Africa's security environment is a cause of grave concern and has necessitated pragmatic actions to curb the situation. A plethora of factors account for this worrisome development which threatens the future of African security. They include bad governance and its resultant proliferation of arms as well as the ever-evolving security threats at land and at sea.

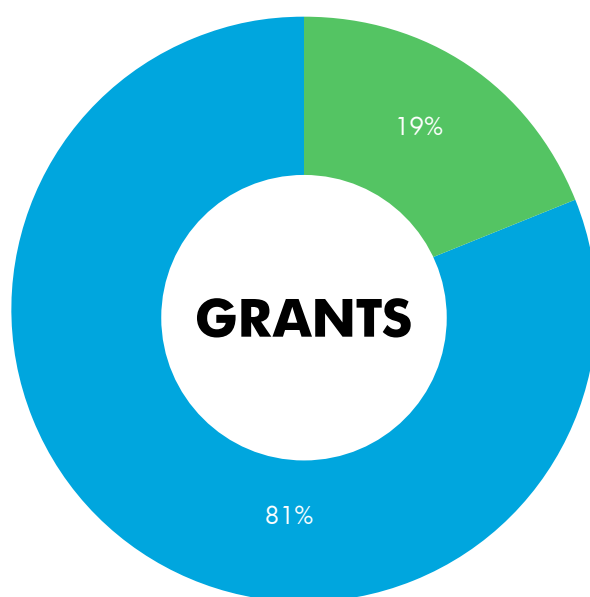
In the past year, ASSN's contribution to championing human security in the midst of these challenges was evident in the continuation of the Just Future Project in Mali, Niger, DRC and South Sudan where it is committed to strengthening civil society capacities to engage the security sector more efficiently and demand accountability from duty-bearers. This project has over the years, positioned ASSN's national civil society partners as key players in security governance in their respective countries. More than ever before, civil society is evincing resilience in the wake of the shrinking civic space to impress upon duty-bearers and negotiate with the relevant authorities the need for people-centred security which is the outcome area on which the ASSN's work in the Just Future Alliance hinges on.

Further, ASSN together with Crisis Action supported the civil society members of the People's Coalition for the Sahel in advancing human dignity in the region. With funding from the Open Society Foundation (OSF), the project focused on Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

Through the works of its regional and thematic nodes, the cause of the ASSN was advanced further in several thematic areas including Policing, Maritime Security, Corrections Human Rights and Justice, Arms Control and Community Policing.

Similarly, partnerships and support to regional organisations was sustained, particularly with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN).

Over the past year, ASSN was supported by Cordaid in the implementation of the Just Future Project and the Open Society Foundation/Crisis Action on the People's Coalition Project as depicted by the diagram below:



■ CORDAID - JUST FUTURE PROJECT ■ CRISIS ACTION - PEOPLE'S COALITION OF THE SAHEL PROJECT

► 2. PROJECTS

2.1. Just Future Project

ASSN continued the implementation of the Just Future Project in South Sudan, the DRC, Mali and Niger.

2.2.1. SOUTH SUDAN

In light of persistent indicators signalling the stalling of the security sector reform agenda, and potential setbacks from the postponement of the 2024 Elections and extension of the Transitional Period, ASSN's partners in South Sudan, the SSLS and CEPO supported by SRIC, embarked on a vigorous schedule of consultations, lobby meetings and strategic networking to sustain the momentum of reform. These included meetings and events to

- Develop strategies to enhance civilian disarmament efforts and strengthen the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process in South Sudan
- Call for amendment of the National Security Service (NSS) Act of 2014, specifically targeting the contentious provisions that grant National Security agents the authority to arrest and detain individuals without a warrant, and underscoring the need for urgent reforms to remove these controversial policing powers and ensure that national security measures do not infringe upon fundamental human rights;
- Influence the review of the National Security Strategy of South Sudan and the Defence White Paper to enhance security governance and ensure that national security policies align with democratic principles and human rights;
- Negotiate with security actors to expedite action on the graduation and deployment of the Unified Forces;
- Convene civil society to strategize on influencing the Tumaini Peace Initiative;
- Stakeholders' Dialogue on Security Arrangements and Reform Priorities for the Extended Transitional Period in South Sudan, the primary objective being to foster a collaborative environment for stakeholders to discuss and prioritize security sector reforms necessary for stabilizing South Sudan during its extended transitional period.

This energetic Lobby and Advocacy (L&A) campaign brought together a wide diversity of partners from the CSO and CBO community as well as the security sector, and cemented the role of SSLS, CEPO and the CSO sector in general as the focal point of SSRG activism in South Sudan. These L&A activities were combined with modest training activity, particularly, one on 'Enhancing Election Security Preparedness in Delayed Transitions and the East Africa Common Policing Standards' following the postponement of the general elections and extended transitional period. Indeed, South Sudan civil society has exhibited striking resilience over the years as the ASSN's capacity strengthening has equipped CSOs with the tools to engage the security sector and relevant government authorities more effectively.

Nevertheless, South Sudan civil society has not been lulled into a sense of complacency; in their own view, despite numerous efforts to promote dialogue and collaboration between civil society and security actors, significant gaps persist. Consequently, one of these "reflection meetings" was dedicated to reviewing the strategies used by civil society to engage with security actors and to document lessons and best practices in the process. Participants highlighted limited access to decision-makers, lack of trust between civil society organizations and security actors, limited resources available for engagement activities, insufficient under-

standing of security issues among civil society members, and limited capacity within civil society organizations as some of the key issues affecting their effective engagement with security actors.



Even so, the major innovation and crowning event of 2024 was the launching of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) and the inauguration of its corresponding oversight body, the “HSGO Reference Group”. This is a local innovation that puts the stamp of local ownership on this particular Observatory. Recommendations made by the Reference Group included enhancing interactive features for better engagement with users and ensuring that local languages are incorporated into content delivery.

Additionally, ongoing work to sustain the established PCRCs (Police Community Relations Committees) continued in our bid to make them independent to survive and expand coverage beyond the Just Future Project. Facilitated by SRIC, there were trainings targeting PCRC members who had missed out on the initial community policing training which highlighted a shift in policing, from the traditional reactive and incident-based approach, to a problem solving oriented one that is proactive with the community at the center of policing objectives. In collaboration with the Directorate of Community Policing, a number of PCRC meetings were also conducted with emphasis on raising awareness on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Community Policing to strengthen adherence to the dictates of the procedures. These meetings also discussed emerging security issues and agreed on prioritizing interventions.

South Sudan concluded the past year with the launching of two projects: first, a research project on “Security Governance Development in South Sudan (2011-2024)”, aimed at documenting the evolution of security governance in South Sudan from independence in 2011 to present, to be positioned on the HSGO to provide stakeholders with insights into historical trends, current challenges, and potential future directions for security governance in South Sudan; second, to document success stories from the Just Future Project, highlighting achievements, challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the programme as it approached its final year.

2.2.2. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)



For the DRC, the extraordinary national and international lobby campaign conducted by the RRSSJ and partners to influence the decision-making on the future of MONUSCO was undoubtedly the major highlight of the past year. This comprised the publication of the commissioned research on *"MONUSCO's Planned Withdrawal from the DRC: Issues and Prospects"*, and the intensive public consultations with the populations of Kinshasa, Bukavu, Bunia and Goma, followed by extended presentations to the diplomatic community in the DRC. These series of national level events culminated in the CORDAID-led mission to the UN in October, 2024 to brief UN diplomatic missions and members of the General Assembly, on the activities and outcomes of the JF project in the DRC.

RRSSJ sustained its pressure campaign to promote Police Reform and specifically improved conditions of service for Congolese National Police officers. A working lunch with members of Parliament was hosted by the RRSSJ to secure their support for this agenda, to increase Parliament's commitment to security governance—in particular persuade the Defence and Security Committee to tackle security governance issues head-on, most urgently the reform of the police and army—and strengthen collaboration with Civil Society Organizations.

This activity went in tandem with advancing earlier work on Prisons in the DRC, with validation of the (2023) survey on 'Prisoners' perception of the Kinshasa Penitentiary and Rehabilitation Centre'. The policy note emanating from this study was forwarded to the relevant authorities and disseminated widely in the national media.

RRSSJ also strengthened national level advocacy by participating in a pre-budget conference consultation for 2025, under the supervision of the Minister of Budget, advocating for inclusion of the three JF outcome areas in the budget, namely Security Governance, Justice Reform; Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and Resolution 2250 (Youth, Peace and Security). RRSSJ delegates were positioned to work on the budget analysis covering Security Sector Reform, specifically the Military Programming Law; the National Police Reform Programming Law; with barracks, health and remuneration for military and police personnel among the priorities of the reform; and allocation of a substantial budget for the acquisition of equipment for the Police and the Army.

Here, as well, the launching of the HSGO was one of the highlights of 2024, with the added expectation that the HSGO would contribute to bridging the gap left by MONUSCO after its departure, in terms of providing a database on security sector reform. Relatedly, an exchange workshop for JF partners on the sustainability of CSO actions in Security Governance, Community Policing doctrine and Justice was held. The interactive exchanges during the workshop enabled the CSO partners of the Just Future Project to validate in detail the Technical and Financial Sheet for the operationalization of the HSGO.

To conclude year 4 activity implementation, RRSSJ conducted a workshop in Kinshasa for JF implementing partners to discuss the sustainability of the Just Future programme, tabling for review a draft assessment report on the main achievements and challenges in the field of security and justice sector reform in the implementation of the programme in the DRC. The report highlights the main achievements of Just Future while proposing practical perspectives on sustainability.

2.2.3. NIGER

For year 4 of Just Future, Niger had three key objectives for Outcome One:

Objective 1: the institutions in charge of security collaborate with CSOs working in the field of security.

ASSN's contribution to this endeavour focused on:

- Regular data collection to produce and publish three reports (5th, 6th and 7th) of the *Observatoire pour la Gouvernance du Secteur de la Sécurité (OGS)*;
- Production of twenty-three (23) analysis notes on the evolution of the political situation produced and shared;
- Expanding and updating the Niger section of the HSGO (Hybrid Security Governance Observatory). The HSGO site is a space that is both a source of information and a laboratory of ideas for all actors interested in security governance: citizens, NGOs/CSOs, journalists, researchers, decision-makers.

These various results attest to an acceptable level of collaboration between institutions/CSOs which has resulted in both the sharing of information and the implementation of capacity building activities for the Forces de Défense et de Sécurité (FDS) in collaboration with the Ministry in charge of public security.

Objective 2: The Ministries in charge of security are committed to initiating a law on the protection of civilians in conflict zones.

The deliverable for the ASSN is the production of the 3rd monitoring report on the indicators of the Citizen Coalition (or Peoples Coalition) for the Sahel.

Below are some highlights/outcomes:

- Discussions were initiated for the formalization of a permanent State/CSO consultation framework in the field of security for the protection of civilians in conflict zones;
- CSOs were able to use data from the OGS and other studies to raise awareness among authorities about human rights violations and security challenges;
- 30 cases of rights violations documented through testimonies collected in these studies have made it possible to identify trends and propose appropriate reforms;
- Major conflicts have been resolved through local mediation, with formalized agreements between the parties concerned; and
- Inclusive practices have been adopted by local authorities to integrate women, young people and people living with disabilities into decision-making processes to strengthen social cohesion.

These results indicate how the reduction of human rights violations, the improvement of local conflict management mechanisms, and the strengthening of social cohesion in the municipalities, have been realised through the conduct of field studies, the collection of data relating to security on the ground, and information and consultation sessions with local populations. On the other hand, however, while there has been subsequent dialogue around the commitment of ministries to initiate a law on the protection of civilians in conflict zones, the anticipated formalization of a permanent consultation framework between the State and CSOs remains unfulfilled, apparently in part because some State institutions are still reluctant to fully recognize the role of CSOs in the field of security, added to the fact that the absence of a legislative body (since the suspension of the National Assembly in 2023 as a result of the coup d'état of July 26) has made a progress on this issue difficult.



Objective 3: regional and departmental security councils capitalize on the actions of CSO members of the alliance in the field of security.

The two key findings/outcomes are as follows:

- Collaborative work capitalizing on CSO actions has been undertaken with regional and departmental security councils, strengthening recognition of their contribution;
- Awareness that human rights violations and population vulnerabilities are better taken into account through improved accountability and monitoring of human rights by sharing evidence from data generated by the OGS (supported by the ASSN) and the WANEP Niger early warning system.

By consolidating these results, Just Future contributes to sustainable structural change by strengthening citizen participation, transparency and the effectiveness of security and conflict prevention policies in the constituencies concerned.

Additionally, three good practices have been documented at the outcome level:

- Niger is a good example of progress on localization;
- Local authorities commit alongside the OGS for objective monitoring of security governance in their areas;
- The Citizen Coalition for the Sahel has carried out effective advocacy with local authorities for greater protection of civilians in conflict zones.

2.2.4. MALI

In spite of the persistent insecurity over the past year, partners in Mali continued to build strong cooperation with governmental authorities in the Gao region, particularly in the communes of Gounzoureye and Bourem as well as with the Governorate of the District of Bamako, the National Commission for SSR and the CNT. The National Steering Committee continues to offer a platform for exchange and sharing on project achievements, lessons learned and good practices. The major risk in Mali is the political and security situation over which no one seems to have control and could degenerate at any time. A key mid-term achievement was the significant improvement in the level of operation of the CCS and the completion of a survey on the perception of women and young people on the SSR process in the Gao Region.

The major activities implemented in Mali in year 4 included continuing to build CSO capacity to influence the security sector, in particular capacity building for CCS members and their effective operationalization in the Gao region; regional advocacy with the Governor of the Gao Region to take into account the security needs expressed by the CCS of Gounzoureye and Bourem; holding of a "Regional Round Table on the Status of the operationalisation of the Security Advisory Committees (CCS) in the Gao Region", and expansion and update of information on Mali section of the HSGO website.

As part of its L&A initiatives, local partners in Mali held meetings for the dissemination of the report on the "Regional round table on the operationalization of the Security Consultative Committees". A key outcome of the advocacy initiatives is the development of a local and national advocacy strategy involving;

- Advocacy to the National Transitional Council;
- Advocacy to the Security Sector Reform Commission;
- Advocacy to the Ministry of National Reconciliation (Chief of Cabinet) for the consideration of citizen security monitoring mechanisms in development plans, programs and projects.



Local partners also conducted a survey on “The perception of women and young people on the SSR process in the Gao region” and held a series of advocacy meetings on the outcomes of the survey. Additionally, they contributed to the drafting of a “Guide to the operation and coordination of the Security Consultative Committees (CCS)”. Mali registered continued support for citizen observatories for monitoring local security governance, decisions of the Municipal Councils of Gounzoureye and Bourem to expand to six (06) the number of young people (03) and women (03) sitting on the CCS.

2.2.5. HYBRID SECURITY GOVERNANCE OBSERVATORY

The formal launch of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) website in October, 2024 remains one of the significant outcomes of year 4 of the JF project. Starting with 4 JF countries (Mali, Niger, South Sudan and the DRC), the observatory will be expanded in the coming years to cover additional countries in the Africa region as well as broader thematic areas including Parliamentary Oversight; policing and policing oversight; Correction, human rights and justice; and Maritime Security among others.

The HSGO is designed as a comprehensive data platform on security governance –the only one in Africa at the moment– covering (a) African regional and multilateral security structures (the AU and RECs) as well as (b) state and non-state security structures and actors in the individual African countries.

The Observatory is structured around the concept of “hybrid security governance”, and seeks to provide (a) comprehensive mapping of hybrid security structures in African countries; (b) an integrated analysis of the different components of hybrid security governance in Africa; (c) analysis of the most salient public security and SSR challenges in each case; and (d) and capacity to respond to security needs of both states and populations. In this sense, the HSGO is conceived as a tool to aid understanding of the security architecture and modes of security governance in the African region, targeting the data



needs of regional and international organisations, national governments, policy-makers and legislators, civil society, researchers, and media organisations. Yet another source of potential demand for such a database stems from the growing interest in integrating “hybridity” into SSR programming among some of the multi-lateral organisations (such as the UNDP and DCAF), particularly as an avenue to enhance “people-centred security”. In these and other respects, the HSGO is intended to aid security policy and decision-making while at the same time promoting increased transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and confidence-building.

The HSGO should be viewed as both an end in itself (in other words, an “Outcome”), as well as serving broader policy and other purposes, such as tracking and analysing regional and national security dynamics and trends, monitoring member state compliance with AU and REC SSRG guidelines and good practices, and assisting security policy formulation and policy reviews, particularly by legislative bodies.

2.2.6. REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

The table below provides a list of reports and publications under the JF project for 2024:

Réforme et gouvernance de la sécurité au Sénégal	https://www.africansecuritynetwork.org/assn/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Reforme-et-gouvernance-de-la-securite-au-Senegal-B-Diouf-ASSN.pdf
Le pôle judiciaire en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme et la criminalité transnationale organisée	https://www.africansecuritynetwork.org/assn/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Le-pole-judiciaire-en-matiere-de-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-et-la-criminalite-transnationale-organisee-ASSN.pdf
Observatoire de la Gouvernance de Sécurité : Rapport de monitoring 5	https://bit.ly/ASSN57 Video: https://youtu.be/07v6aKwrVWU?si=E-5qF6pmaH5xOsX4A
Retour d'expérience du processus d'opérationnalisation de deux Comités Consultatifs de Sécurité (CCS) dans les communes de Gounzoureye et de Bourem (Région de Gao)	https://bit.ly/ASSN58
SSR's Most Daunting Detractors in Sudan	https://bit.ly/ASSN59
L'héritage de Samory Touré dans l'histoire militaire	https://bit.ly/ASSN60
Le retrait programmé de la MONUSCO de la République Démocratique du Congo : Enjeux et perspective	https://bit.ly/ASSN61 Video : https://youtu.be/OVQgJeq_uqU?si=kHk6-2ZdMJ3SHvNH
Le corpus doctrinal de l'armée française à l'épreuve de l'engagement dans la crise sahélienne	https://bit.ly/ASSN62
Online launch of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) / Lancement en ligne de l'Observatoire de la Gouvernance Hybride de la Sécurité (HSGO)	https://www.africansecuritynetwork.org/assn/press-relase-online-launch-of-the-hybrid-security-governance-observatory-hsgo-lancement-en-ligne-de-l-observatoire-de-la-gouvernance-hybride-de-la-securite-hsgo/
CONCEPT NOTE : Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO)	https://bit.ly/ASSN64
The Hybridisation of Security / L'hybridation de la sécurité	https://bit.ly/ASSN65
Observatoire de la Gouvernance de Sécurité : Rapport de monitoring 6	https://bit.ly/ASSN66

▶ 3. SUPPORT TO REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Over the past year, the ASSN continued its partnership with regional organisations and worked closely with the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) and the People's Coalition of the Sahel.

3.1. African Union

ASSN's collaboration with the AU last year was evidenced in its work with the AU (DDR/SSR Division), principally in the development of two key Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs), on 'Security Sector Oversight and Accountability' and 'SSR and Mediation', led by its regional node for Southern Africa, the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF). Additionally, at the request of the AU, the ASSN designated an expert to participate in the Experts' Meeting to review and validate the two draft OGNs. It is envisioned that the HSGO will play a critical and vigorous role in the implementation of the OGN on Security Sector Oversight and Accountability. Participation in the Annual AU SSR Steering Committee Meeting also formed part of the engagement with the AU in the past year.

3.2. United Nations

In the spirit of the sustained partnership with the UN SSR Unit, ASSN positively responded to the UN's request for SSR technical support by seconding an expert to Sao Tome. The basis for this was the request by the government of Sao Tome to the UN for assistance in Security and Justice Sector Reforms. This assignment has been successfully implemented.

As noted previously, the national level advocacy and diplomacy on the planned withdrawal of MONUSCO from the DRC culminated in the Just Future Alliance joint advocacy mission to the UN Headquarters in New York (October 19-26, 2024) seeking to influence the MONUSCO withdrawal process. This initiative resulted in several favourable outcomes: the adoption by the Security Council of Resolution 2765 of a number of important recommendations of the ASSN/RRSJ study, such as renewal of MONUSCO's mandate for at least one year; support for a more flexible and gradual approach to MONUSCO's withdrawal, depending on local security conditions; and agreement that MONUSCO's disengagement should be accompanied by improved and simultaneous reinforcement of the State's capacities and authority in the DRC.

3.3. People's Coalition for the Sahel

The growing insecurity and governmental repression in the Sahel has had a severe (perhaps even crippling) effect on the work of the People's Coalition and its freedom to operate. Deliberations at the Steering Committee's meeting in Dakar in June 2024 paved way for a drastic reorientation in strategy, with a decision to break with previous practice and forego public launch and dissemination of the 3rd report, replacing these with a private launch and confidential advocacy strategy. This shift correspondingly moves the Peoples Coalition away from those elements of its previous "4 Pillars" considered openly critical of Sahelian regimes and thus more provocative. Perhaps not coincidentally, this advocacy aligns with and is echoed by regime declarations of "civilian protection" and "protection of vulnerable populations", although how far this is realized in practice remains debatable.

The efforts of the People's Coalition for the Sahel have generated some meaningful outcomes over the past year despite the peculiar security challenges threatening the survival of the Coalition. The Coalition's works included the renewal of the term of office of the Steering Committee (Copil) in June 2024; the establishment of the Copil office (Secretariat) with a one-year term with its terms of reference specifically setting out its

missions and prerogatives for Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The new terms of reference provided greater clarification of its mandate and accountability in taking local initiatives. A new member, RENEDEP, was appointed to the Copil to replace the AMDH while weekly meetings were held to promote exchanges between the Coordinator and the President of the Copil office. The Coalition was also active in remobilizing member organizations at country levels and renewing commitments to the values and principles that prevailed in the establishment of the Coalition. This created the opportunity for member countries to share their concerns, address challenges related to their mobilization, renew their commitment and affirm their adherence to the Coalition's charter.

An integrated advocacy strategy for national advocacy initiatives was developed and implemented in the 3 countries. This strategy enabled Coalition members to position themselves in the 3 countries as credible, informed and indispensable interlocutors on the stakes of civilian protection, humanitarian responses, governance and in proposing responses to the deep causes of the Sahel crisis, access to justice and combating impunity, through relevant findings and recommendations drawn from various Coalition reports and data.

The hostile context of the Sahel has facilitated the continued shrinking of civic space particularly, for human rights defenders. Consequently, the need to put in place warning, protection and security mechanisms of Coalition members. The appointment of a security focal point was helpful in providing on a monthly basis, an in-depth analysis of the security situation in the 3 countries and formulating recommendations for the Coalition. This contribution of the security focal point was of outstanding relevance to the Coalition as it offered a sharp diagnosis of each context and activity and avoided unnecessary risks.

The result is that our local CSO partners have been able to retain a surprising degree of influence/collaboration and optimism in the sensitive area of security and security governance, despite the growing restrictions on civic space, and –overall–deteriorating political conditions. Local partners in South Sudan and the DRC have likewise evolved their own confidence-building strategies that have allowed them to build and retain considerable influence in both public and official discussions of security matters, in particular becoming the focal point of SSR activism.

▶ 4. ACTIVITIES OF ASSN'S REGIONAL/ THEMATIC NODES

The Regional/Thematics Nodes form the centrepiece of the ASSN's regional/thematic activities which further expands the outreach of the ASSN.

4.1. Centre for Maritime Law and Security (CEMLAWS) Africa

CEMLAWS Africa works to promote effective national and regional policy responses to ocean governance issues and maritime security in Africa through policy analysis, expert-driven deliberations, capacitybuilding and research. In the past year, CEMLAWS made remarkable strides in its pursuit as highlighted below.

March 14, 2024, Ghana experienced a major internet outage due to damage to submarine cables off the coast of Côte d'Ivoire. In response, CEMLAWS released a policy brief titled **Submarine Cables: Strategic Assets, Vulnerabilities, and the Need to Ensure a Robust Protection and Resilience Framework for Ghana**. This brief highlighted the growing strategic importance of submarine cables to national connectivity, economic stability, and security. It emphasized that these cables remain highly vulnerable to both natural disruptions and human interference, particularly in West Africa, where legal protections and

surveillance systems are weak. The brief called on Ghana and its neighbours to urgently strengthen regulatory frameworks, invest in resilient infrastructure, improve surveillance, and enhance regional collaboration to ensure digital continuity.

On **June 12, 2024**, CEMPLAWS, through local partners FENAGIE PECHE, published a policy brief titled **Fisheries Governance and Inclusive Decision-Making: The Case of Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils in Senegal**. It examined the multifaceted threats to Senegal's fisheries sector, ranging from IUU fishing and youth migration to the impacts of oil exploration and fishmeal production. Central to the brief was the role of Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils (CLPAs), established under Article 23 of Senegal's *Maritime Fisheries Code*. While these councils represent a promising model of localized governance systems, the brief argued that CLPAs require greater empowerment, broader stakeholder inclusivity, and expanded financial support, beyond license fees, to manage marine resources sustainably. The publication was one of the outputs of the 4-joint country Bloomberg Philanthropies' Vibrant Oceans Initiative's *Transparency and Accountability in the Fisheries Sector* Project.

The COPIGoG project (Counter-Piracy Infrastructures in the Gulf of Guinea), funded by DANIDA from April 2022 to September 2024, was a collaborative research initiative involving the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Stakeholder Democracy Network (Nigeria), and CEMPLAWS Africa. The project aimed to reconceptualize piracy and counter-piracy as interconnected infrastructures shaped by networks of actors, activities, and flows. While CEMPLAWS anchored regional engagement and implementation – hosting researchers, facilitating field access, and contributing to policy dialogues such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct 10-year reflection webinar – the broader international team led by UCPH provided the project's theoretical framing and coordinated academic outputs. Together, the team produced empirical insights, theoretical innovations, and policy contributions that advanced understanding of maritime security governance in West Africa.

On **September 19, 2024**, CEMPLAWS Africa and the Africa Centre of Excellence in Coastal Resilience (ACECoR) of the University of Cape Coast (Ghana) convened a **high-level stakeholder and policy engagement workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**, as part of the regional **Distant Water Fishing Vessels (DWFV) Project** funded by the U.S. Department of State. The meeting hosted in collaboration with Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Fisheries and SEPCIM-AEM, the workshop addressed the growing security risks posed by foreign industrial fishing fleets, particularly their involvement in IUU fishing and the erosion of State maritime control. The workshop emphasized the need to strengthen national Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) systems, improve inter-agency coordination, and institutionalize maritime enforcement mechanisms. Recommendations proposed in a communique to the government included enhancing regional information sharing of threats and illegalities, data-informed legal reforms, and the need to integrate traditional authorities into fisheries governance structures.



A similar engagement held in collaboration with the Project's Mauritanian partner, Mauritanie 2000, was preceded by a **validation workshop to promote local ownership of the industrial fisheries sector**. Funded by the U.S. Embassy in Accra, the DWFV Project workshop focused on highlighting the need for greater local control and ownership of Mauritania's industrial fisheries sector as a strategy to counter the destabilizing impacts of foreign-owned distant water vessels. Drawing on prior research, the workshop reviewed key findings on policy gaps, institutional capacity, and business models. It provided a multi-stakeholder platform, including policymakers, financial institutions, and industry actors, to validate the research and chart a path forward for a domestically owned and sustainably managed industrial fisheries sector.

Another development in Ghana was the **National Integrated Maritime Strategy (NIMS)**, officially signed by the then President H E Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo in late 2024. It is a big step forward for Ghana's efforts to keep its maritime domain safe and well-managed. With support from **CEMLAWS Africa** during its development, NIMS is a working document of key agencies like the Navy, Marine Police, and the Fisheries Commission. This is expected to reflect in inter-agency collaboration, clearer roles, and timely responses in dealing with issues of piracy, illegal fishing, and smuggling. It pivots Ghana's efforts and commitments under important international agreements such as the **UN Security Council Resolution 2634** and the **Yaoundé Code of Conduct**.

On **December 18, 2024**, CEMLAWS released a policy brief titled **MCS as a Tool for Effective Fisheries Enforcement: An Appraisal of Ghana**. The publication underscored the critical need to strengthen Ghana's MCS capacity considering escalating IUU fishing by foreign-owned DWFVs. The brief documented the adverse impacts on small pelagic fish stocks and coastal livelihoods and outlined systemic challenges such as limited patrol coverage, weak inter-agency coordination, and underfunding. It recommended enhanced investment in MCS systems, increased training, transparency in vessel monitoring data, regional collaboration, and stronger community involvement to ensure effective enforcement and long-term sustainability.

CEMLAWS contributed to an initiative aimed at addressing the intersection of education and national security through a seminar on **Education in National Security**, at the Alisa Hotel in Accra. The two-day event, organized in partnership with the **National Counter Terrorism Framework Council (NCTFC)** and the **University of Aberdeen (Scotland)**, highlighted the unique role of educators in building resilience to violent extremism. With expert contributions from Dr. Manu Lekunze and Professor Gearoid Millar of the University of Aberdeen, the seminar brought together teachers, school administrators, and policymakers to explore ways of inclusion to ensure values-based education in preventing radicalization and fostering peace. Through interactive presentations, case studies, and group discussions, participants were equipped to serve as resource persons in national peacebuilding and social cohesion efforts.

More information on CEMLAWS Africa is available at <https://cemlawsafrica.org/>



4.2. African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF)

The African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF), based in South Africa, is the ASSN's regional node for Southern Africa. APCOF works closely with oversight bodies, civil society, academia and the police themselves in promoting accountable, rights compliant policing in Africa. In order to achieve its strategic objectives, APCOF uses networking and partnership-building, advocacy and provides technical support by working directly with institutions responsible for police oversight with a view to assisting them to develop the appropriate policies, practices and skills to carry out their functions effectively.

The following captures APCOF's highlights in the year under review, 2024, relevant to its relationship with the ASSN.

4.2.1. Technical support to the African Union

APCOF provided technical support to the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, African Union Commission (AUC) developing an AU Operational Guidance Note on Oversight and Accountability for the Security Sector. This will be used as a learning tool to support the implementation of the 2013 AU Security Sector Reform Policy Framework. Draft two was validated on 30 September – 1 October 2024 and is now being prepared for wider dissemination.

APCOF also provided technical support to the ACHPR in conducting a study on migration and law enforcement. The study discusses the unique intersection between securitisation, the criminalisation of migration and the distinctive powers and responsibilities of law enforcement. It examines the role of the police and criminal justice systems in the policing of migration, analyses the overarching legal framework pertaining to the African region, and makes a range of observations on the human rights consequences of criminalising migration (including unlawful detention, use of force, pushbacks/expulsions, and torture and ill-treatment). The study was officially adopted by the African Commission during its March 2024 session.

4.2.2. Southern Africa

APCOF is working with Southern African Police organisations through the Southern African Police Commissioners Co-Operation Organisation (SARPCCO) to review current interview practice against the Mendez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering. A Seminar on the subject was facilitated with SARPCCO on July 1st and 2nd. The review is currently being considered by SADC.

APCOF participated as an expert during a conference convened by the Ministry of Justice in Malawi on Criminal Justice Reform from 7 – 9 October 2024. APCOF made a presentation during the plenary session of a plan of action developed 10 years ago with Malawian stakeholders to address pre-trial detention, and provided an update on the implementation of that plan, together with recommendations for further action.

4.2.3. International

In 2023 and 2024, APCOF had participated in the development of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum's (GCTF) Brussels Memorandum on effective oversight for security sector actors in countering terrorism and violent extremism. Following the finalisation of the memorandum, APCOF was invited to participate in a strategy workshop to discuss implementation strategies. Currently it chairs a working Group on law enforcement and oversight.

APCOF provides support to the Africa sub-grouping of the global coalition promoting the adoption of a torture-free trade treaty. Included in this work, APCOF provided technical support in drafting a position paper for the South African National Preventive Mechanisms (NPM) on a Torture Free Trade Treaty which was presented at a meeting of the African Forum of NPMs held in Cape Town on the 26 and 27 June 2024.

APCOF is supporting a project led by the International Legal Foundation (ILF) to develop guidelines on non-discrimination in the criminal justice system. With partners from Penal Reform Initiative and Women Beyond Walls, APCOF has assisted with the planning of an expert group meeting, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 21 – 24 November 2024 to develop a zero draft of the guidelines. The project has a broader objective of informing the development of guidelines under the 2023 UN General Assembly resolution ‘Equal access to justice for all’.

APCOF worked with the Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health (CLEPH) and the School of Public Health at the University of Pretoria to host an African Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) conference on the 1 – 5 December 2024 in Pretoria.

APCOF continues its partnership with the ICRC and was invited to provide a lecture to an ICRC’s senior workshop on International Rules Governing Police Operations. The learning event held on 21-23 May was aimed at police and armed force delegates.

4.2.4. Learning and Knowledge building

APCOF continues to present the Advanced Human Rights Course, Accountable Policing: Oversight and the criminal justice system as a joint initiative with the Centre for Human Rights (CHR) at the University of Pretoria. This year’s course was held 3 – 7 June 2024 and drew forty participating students over the week.

Several pieces of reports were published in 2024.

- Leveraging the Maputo Protocol: Enhancing the police response to improve access to justice for women traverses the existing relevant legal framework (with a focus on the Maputo Protocol which signals a commitment to substantive gender equality by African States). Using a relational feminism lens, the paper examines how existing legal interpretive instruments intersect with gendered dynamics to structure relations that hinder access to justice. A relational feminist approach further considers how these norms can be transformed in order to structure more gender-sensitive criminal justice responses.

<https://apcof.org/wp-content/uploads/033-leveraging-the-maputo-protocol-enhancing-the-police-response-to-improve-access-to-justice-dr-tarryn-bannister-and-louise-edwards.pdf>

- Implementing the common standards of policing for eastern Africa a gendered analysis discusses the contextual risks and vulnerabilities undermining compliance with the Uganda Police Force (UPF’s) gendered commitments. It seeks to understand the underlying causes and drivers contributing to these risks and inform measures aimed at fostering gender equality within all levels of the UPF.

<https://apcof.org/wp-content/uploads/032-implementing-the-common-standards-of-policing-in-eastern-africa-a-gendered-analysis-dr-tarryn-bannister-1-2.pdf>

- Development financing for security sector reform: challenges and opportunities discusses the role of multilateral development banks (MDBs) in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Security Sector Reform (SSR) is a key part of this agenda, but MDBs have traditionally limited their assistance in this area due to non-political clauses in their articles of agreement. However, the role of MDBs has expanded over time, and there is now an opportunity to develop more people and citizen-centred engagement in SSR through MDB financing. The paper analyses the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank to trace the evolution of their support for SSR and to provide recommendations for the future.

- Promoting police reform in Kenya tracks developments following the 2007/2008 post-election violence, and the subsequent comprehensive police reforms. As part of supporting the ongoing police reform efforts in the country, this paper discusses two important variables for sustaining and advancing police reform efforts in Kenya. It observes that national ownership of, and active public participation in, the reform project is essential to its success. It also underscores that efforts to enhance operational efficiency and expand the institutional capacity of the NPS should go hand in hand with institutional reforms and changes.

<https://apcof.org/wp-content/uploads/031-promoting-police-reform-in-kenya-abdirahman-maailim-gossar.pdf>

- Shifting the narrative; upholding rights through effective interviewing in Kenya responds to the resolution adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2022 concerning the Mendez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering. The Commission's resolution encourages State Parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to utilise the Méndez Principles as a framework for reviewing their interview practices and preventing torture and other ill-treatment during hearings and interviews. It offers a comprehensive review of case files and relevant civil and criminal case law, providing an evidence-based analysis of how current police interview practices are reflected against regional and international standards.

<https://apcof.org/wp-content/uploads/effective-interviewing-in-kenya.pdf>

- Exploring the impact of the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) assesses the impact of IPID reflecting on alternative sources of information to the ones that IPID itself has used to measure performance. As such, it seeks to contribute to a wider reflection on how IPID's impact could be measured and maximised in the future.

<https://apcof.org/wp-content/uploads/exploring-the-impact-of-the-independent-police-investigative-directorate-ipid.pdf>

To read more about APCOF, please visit <https://apcof.org/>

4.3. Security Research Information Centre (SRIC)

As the regional node for East Africa and the Great Lakes region, the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) has continued to play a pivotal role in advancing peace, security, and community engagement across the region. Over the past year, SRIC implemented a series of strategic activities aimed at strengthening arms control initiatives, enhancing community policing, improving police-community relations, and addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in numerous parts of Kenya and South Sudan. These efforts have contributed significantly to stability and the promotion of inclusive security governance.

Strengthening Arms Control through Inclusion of Non-State Actors: SRIC actively participated in the development of Kenya's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan on the management of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). By ensuring that the voices of non-state actors are integrated into government priorities, SRIC believes this will foster a more comprehensive and participatory approach to arms control in Kenya. The collaboration with the Kenya National Focal Point on SALW (KNFP) underscores SRIC's commitment to inclusive policy formulation that addresses the complexities of illicit Small Arms proliferation in the region.

Advancing a New Agenda for Peacebuilding: SRIC played a crucial role in the comprehensive review of Kenya's Peacebuilding Architecture from March 2023 to December 2024. This review process culminated in the development of a new, unified agenda for peace that brings together various peacebuilding

actors to implement the recommended reforms. SRIC's involvement ensured that regional perspectives and local realities were reflected in this agenda, thereby strengthening the framework for sustainable peacebuilding initiatives across East Africa and the Great Lakes. In this important national initiative, SRIC not only provided leadership but was also part of the technical committee that provided expertise to the whole process.

Capacity Building for Police Officers on Crime and Violence Response (October 2024): In October 2024, SRIC conducted targeted training for 17 police officers from Nanyuki, Umande, and Ruai police stations in Laikipia County. The training focused on diverse community policing models, including traditional, intelligence-led, problem-oriented, and community-based approaches, equipping officers with practical skills to effectively respond to local crime and violence. The training emphasized the importance of joint sessions involving both law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and community members to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

Empowering Community Policing Structures: SRIC trained 45 Law enforcement agents (LEAs) drawn from Community Policing Committees (CPC), *Nyumba Kumi* (10-household security clusters), police, National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) in Laikipia East Sub-County. The training enhanced the LEA's understanding and application of community policing principles, enabling them to better mitigate crime and manage conflicts. This initiative fostered stronger collaboration between community-based peace and security structures and law enforcement, thereby improving service delivery and crime prevention.

Facilitating Police-Community Dialogue for Enhanced Security: to address strained police-community relations exacerbated by incidents such as the June 2024 youth protests in Laikipia County, SRIC organized a dialogue forum involving 60 participants, including community members, police officers, and National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs). The forum provided a platform to discuss pressing security challenges, such as resource-based conflicts, banditry, and cattle rustling, and to co-create sustainable solutions. This dialogue was instrumental in rebuilding trust, enhancing information sharing, and promoting collaborative responses to crime and violence.

Promoting Effective Management of Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

In raising awareness on the existence of the Policare Centre, a one-stop facility for GBV cases, developed by the Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism (REINVENT) Project, the National Police Service, and the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK), SRIC conducted an awareness meeting for 17 police officers manning gender desks across Ruai, Nanyuki, and Umande police stations. The session focused on gender desk guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for handling GBV incidents, aiming to improve officers' responsiveness and sensitivity. This initiative is a critical step toward catalyzing behaviour change in the management of GBV victims and survivors, thereby enhancing justice and support services.



Assessment of Peace and Conflict Dynamics in Baringo County: SRIC, with support from GIZ Civil Peace Services (CPS), conducted a rapid peace and conflict assessment in Baringo County to identify the root causes and dynamics of conflict, including the impact of climate change. The assessment revealed



that resource scarcity, banditry, and climate-induced stressors are major drivers of conflict, and highlighted the need to strengthen community peace structures and trust between law enforcement and local communities. The findings have informed practical recommendations to enhance peacebuilding, improve security coordination, and promote sustainable livelihoods in the county. The assessment informed a new project supported by GLZ aimed at addressing some of the issues identified and implementing the recommendations.

4.4. Prisoners Rehabilitation And Welfare Action (PRAWA)

The Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) is the ASSN's regional node for West Africa. During the past year, PRAWA commemorated its 30th anniversary which highlighted the fact that for three decades, PRAWA has been at the forefront of promoting justice, rehabilitation, and the reintegration of inmates, ex-inmates, torture victims, and youth at risk across Nigeria and beyond with a view to building a secure society.

The following narrative highlights some of the key activities of PRAWA over the past year:

In recognition of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, PRAWA launched a media campaign aimed at promoting the implementation of anti-torture laws in Nigeria. The organisation also hosted a regional webinar featuring human rights advocates and rehabilitation specialists, focusing on trauma-informed care, legal rights, and self-care for survivors.

Furthermore, PRAWA initiated a virtual advocacy series titled "Speak Out Now – Against Hate Speech and Ethnic Profiling," which will run weekly sessions from August to November 2024. This series aims at raising awareness and combat hate speech and segregation. As part of the 2024 Yellow Ribbon Campaign, themed "A Nation Beyond Second Chances," PRAWA conducted research on the challenges faced by ex-offenders in their reintegration. An online survey was developed to gather insights from non-custodial officers while ensuring confidentiality and promoting evidence-based advocacy. On April 30, 2025, PRAWA participated in the International Day to End Corporal Punishment, advocating for the protection of children's rights and the elimination of violent disciplinary practices, while calling for necessary legal, social, and institutional reforms.

PRAWA has demonstrated a strong commitment to advocacy and reform in the justice sector through various initiatives. A recent virtual session with the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) and participation in the CAT Nigeria Meeting highlight their efforts to engage globally. In a compassionate outreach initiative, PRAWA addressed menstrual hygiene needs for incarcerated women and girls in Nigeria by distributing sanitary pads. This initiative arose from urgent concerns expressed by individuals in custodial centres, with 105 women receiving support, symbolising dignity and care.

PRAWA also invests in capacity building through ongoing workshops for correctional officers, judiciary officials, health professionals, and others. These workshops foster effective strategies for addressing harm and supporting the reintegration of ex-offenders into society. PRAWA hosted a Restorative Justice Dialogue Workshop at the Kuje Correctional Centre in Abuja, aimed at promoting restorative justice principles within the Nigerian Correctional Service. Through these efforts, PRAWA advocates for systemic change, empowers vulnerable populations, and works toward creating a more just society focused on rehabilitation and reintegration.

For further information on PRAWA and its activities, please visit <https://prawa.org/>

► 5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Africa peace and security faces a lot of challenges that continue to be shaped by several interrelated, multifaceted and complex threats. These threats in constant evolution include but not limited, to violent conflicts related to power sharing, mineral resources, intra and inter community conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, transnational organised crime, cyber threats, maritime threats, pandemics and state fragility. It's worthy to note that terrorism and violent extremism remain the main threat to peace and security in Africa. According to data compiled and analysed by ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data), events linked to this scourge increased by 300% between 2013 and 2022, and doubled between 2019 and 2022.[Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, <http://acleddata.org>] In 2024, there were an estimated 18.900 fatalities linked to terrorism and extremist violence in Africa.[Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality, Feb 2025.]

These threats are exacerbated by mega trends such as demographic change, rapid urbanization, climate change, climate deregulation, and emerging technologies. This gloomy security landscape of the continent is accompanied by a severe governance deficit in some countries. Poor governance of the security sector coupled with tumultuous civil military relations have become a major concern on the continent, particularly in West, Central and Eastern Africa. Modification of constitutional provisions to remain on power and recent resurgences of military interventions in politics in some countries, undermine current SSRG processes and initiatives. It is also a wakeup call to peace and security actors that there is a gaping hole in efforts to sustainable peace which needs to be filled without delay. These developments further give credence to the need for political commitment and concerted efforts at attaining effective Security Sector Reform and Governance. Despite this gloomy situation, potential opportunities could be harnessed if African governments and security stake holders seize this opportunity to review their existing policies, capacities, and institutions to better respond holistically to these complex and interrelated threats and to build trust with citizens (particularly the youth), based on their inclusion in security sector governance processes and national security policy and strategy development and implementation. Correspondingly, the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO)¹ [According to ASSN, the aim of the HSGO is to provide an exhaustive mapping and analysis of the different components of hybrid security governance as well as to create an inclusive platform to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between the different actors involved in the field of African security.] in particular, promises to be a good advocacy tool for CSOs to highlight security concerns and influence leaders and decision-makers towards a more people-centred security. ■

¹ According to ASSN, the aim of the HSGO is to provide an exhaustive mapping and analysis of the different components of hybrid security governance as well as to create an inclusive platform to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between the different actors involved in the field of African security.

▶ 6. CONCLUSION

The increasing complexities of security challenges, worsened by globalisation and regional interdependence, make the ASSN's focus on Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSR/G) more critical than ever. Its vision of an accountable and transparent security sector that upholds human rights principles aligns perfectly with global objectives for peace, stability, and sustainable development.

Moving forward, it is crucial for the ASSN to continue expanding its partnerships and enhancing its capacity-building initiatives, especially in marginalised and conflict-affected regions. Investing in knowledge sharing, training programs, and collaborative research will empower communities and strengthen their resilience.

The organisation strives to empower nations to take ownership of their security governance, promoting a transformative movement aimed at creating a safer future for all. By empowering civil society to support governmental efforts, national civil society partners in countries where the ASSN works have been positioned as key players in security governance in their respective countries despite the challenging environments.

More worrisome however, is the increase in cases of violent extremism and its repercussions on youth development as well as future leadership. For future work, ASSN hopes to expand its thematic coverage further by working on countering violent extremism with a heavy focus on addressing the root causes of this phenomenon.

It is hoped that partners with a similar vision will support the ASSN to pursue its mission and expand both thematic and geographical coverage. ■



ANNUAL REPORT

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