



2025
ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	03
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	05
ABOUT THE ASSN	07
1. INTRODUCTION	11
2. PROJECTS	12
2.1. Just Future (JF)	12
2.2. Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO)	15
3. SUPPORT TO REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS	16
3.1. Work with the African Union	16
3.2. Interactions with the United Nations (UN)	17
3.3. People's Coalition for the Sahel	18
3.4. Engagement with the OIF on the Review of the OECD Handbook on SSR	18
4. ACTIVITIES OF ASSN'S REGIONAL/THEMATIC NODES	19
4.1. Centre for Maritime Law and Security (CEMLAWS) - Africa	19
4.2. Security Research Information Centre (SRIC)	20
4.3. African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF)	21
4.4. Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA)	22
5. LOOKING AHEAD	23
6. CONCLUSION	24

ABBREVIATION & ACRONYMS

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ADD	Aide Au Developpement Durable (Aid for Sustainable Development)
ALTERNAG	Associação Guineense de Estudos e Alternativas (Guinean Association for Studies and Alternatives)
APCOF	African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CCS	Security Consultative Committees
CEMLAWS	Centre for Maritime Law and Security
CNRSS	Conseil National de la Réforme du Secteur de la Sécurité (National Council for Security Sector Reform)
COPIGoG	Counter-Piracy Infrastructures in the Gulf of Guinea
CORDAID	Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid
CPC	Community Policing Committees
CPS	Civil Peace Services
CSO	Civil Service Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ExCo	Executive Committee
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HSGO	Hybrid Security Governance Observatory
ISIPSK	Creating Synergies between Indigenous Practices and Scientific Knowledge
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
JF	Just Future

JFA	Just Future Alliance
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
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)
NANHRI	Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGN	Operational Guidance Notes
OGS	Observatoire pour la Gouvernance du Secteur de la Sécurité (Observatory for Security Sector Governance)
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PCRCs	Police Community Relations Committees
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PRAWA	Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RENEDEP	Réseau National pour l'Eveil Démocratique et Patriotique (National Network for Democratic and Patriotic Awakening)
RM s	Regional Mechanisms
RRSSJ	Réseau pour la Réforme du Secteur de Sécurité et de Justice (Network for Security and Justice Sector Reform)
SICOP	Service d'Information et de Communication de la Police Nationale (Police Information and Communication Service)
SPAS	Sustainable Peace and Security
SRIC	Security Research Information Centre
SSLS	South Sudan Law Society
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSRG	Security Sector Reform and Governance
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



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

“

*...Placing people
at the centre of
security has never
been more important.*

”

In recent years, the principles underpinning Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) have come under increasing strain as political instability, democratic backsliding, and heightened geopolitical competition reshape the continent’s security landscape. At the same time, defence spending and security assistance have reached unprecedented levels, often without corresponding investments in accountability and democratic oversight.

Since 2020, Africa has experienced a resurgence of military coups alongside increasingly complex security challenges that transcend national borders. Violent extremism, transnational organised crime, communal conflicts, maritime insecurity, disinformation, cyber threats, irregular migration, and border insecurity continue to expose the limitations of traditional security responses and underscore the urgent need for inclusive, accountable and locally owned approaches to security governance.

Against this backdrop, the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) remained steadfast in its mission throughout 2025. Through the Just Future programme, we continued to work alongside civil society organisations, state institutions and communities in South

Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali and Niger to strengthen citizen participation, enhance accountability, and promote people-centred security governance despite operating in highly fragile and rapidly evolving contexts.

One of the year’s notable achievements was the continued expansion of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO). The inclusion of Ghana marked an important milestone, increasing the Observatory’s Anglophone coverage from one country to two and further strengthening its role as a trusted platform for evidence-based analysis of security governance trends across Africa. The Observatory continues to provide policymakers, practitioners and researchers with timely insights to support informed decision-making.

ASSN also deepened its engagement with regional and international partners, reinforcing our commitment to shaping policy and practice beyond national contexts. Our participation in the United Nations Annual Common Connections Week on Security Sector Reform, the second high-level advocacy mission to the United Nations Headquarters in support of the renewal of MONUSCO’s mandate, collaboration with

the African Union in convening the 4th Africa Forum on Security Sector Reform, APCOF's contribution to the development of the Operational Guidance Notes on Security Sector Oversight and Accountability, and my appointment by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) to the reference group overseeing the revision of the OECD Handbook on Security Sector Reform all reflect ASSN's growing influence in advancing global and continental policy dialogue on democratic security governance.

Our impact also continued to grow through the work of ASSN's Regional and Thematic Nodes, whose expertise broadened our reach across the continent. Their contributions advanced critical areas including policing and civilian oversight, corrections and justice, human security, conflict and security dynamics, and maritime security, demonstrating the strength of ASSN's collaborative network and multidisciplinary approach.

As we reflect on the year's achievements, we also pause to honour the memory of our dear colleague, Adelino Handem of ALTERNAG in Guinea-Bissau, who served quite briefly as a member of ASSN's Executive Committee and Coordinator for Lusophone

Africa. His unwavering commitment to democratic security governance and regional cooperation leaves an enduring legacy within our network. We remain deeply grateful for his service and friendship.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the commitment of our partners. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Cordaid, the Open Society Foundations (OSF), Crisis Action, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden for their confidence in ASSN and their continued investment in our work. Their partnership has enabled us to deliver meaningful, locally driven initiatives that strengthen accountable and people-centred security governance across Africa. We also look forward to building new partnerships with organisations that share our vision of peaceful, democratic and secure societies.

As you read this Annual Report, I invite you to reflect not only on what ASSN has achieved over the past year, but also on the opportunities that lie ahead. In a rapidly changing security environment, our collective commitment to strengthening democratic governance, promoting accountability, and placing people at the centre of security has never been more important. ■

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/>)

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.rrssjrdc.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 & 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)



**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 recognizes and appreciates the following partners, whose support was instrumental in delivering its work over the past year.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**



Government Offices of Sweden
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Crisis Action

1. INTRODUCTION

In a context marked by uncertainty and evolving challenges as evidenced in the African security landscape, the ASSN remained steadfast in its commitment to promoting effective, accountable and democratically governed security sectors. Throughout 2025, the Network continued to learn, adapt and respond to changing realities, reinforcing its people-centred approach to Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) while supporting locally driven solutions to emerging security challenges.

The reporting year marked the final phase of the five-year Just Future (JF) programme in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali and Niger. Building on the achievements of previous years, ASSN and its partners advanced bottom-up approaches to security governance by strengthening the capacity of local civil society organisations to engage constructively with security institutions and public authorities. Despite increasingly constrained civic space in project countries, partner organisations demonstrated remarkable resilience, sustained evidence-based advocacy, and promoted greater accountability and citizen participation in security governance.

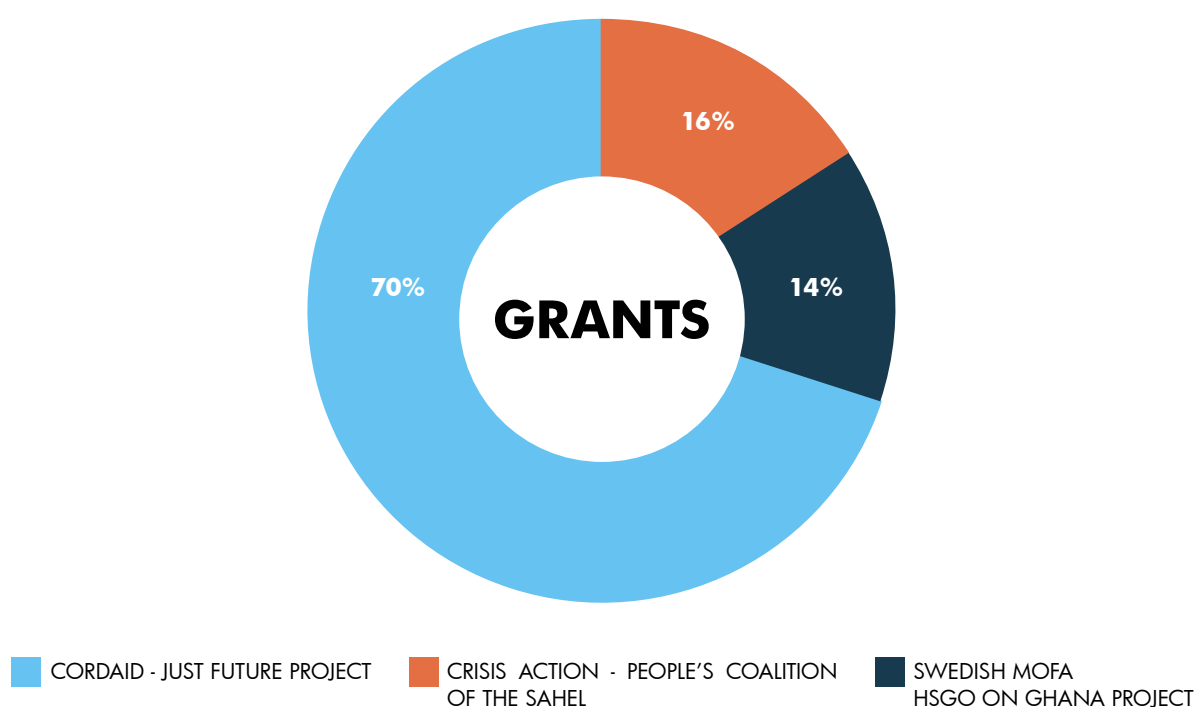
ASSN also successfully concluded its partnership with Crisis Action under the People's Coalition for the Sahel project, supporting impactful advocacy

initiatives in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso that amplified civil society voices on peace, security and governance issues. At the continental and international levels, collaboration with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) continued to deepen, enabling ASSN to contribute to policy dialogue and advance democratic approaches to security sector governance.

A significant development during the year was the continued expansion of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO). The addition of Ghana broadened the Observatory's geographical coverage, while new interactive features enhanced its functionality as a dynamic platform for monitoring, analysing and disseminating evidence on security governance trends across Africa.

This report presents the key achievements, lessons and impact of ASSN's work during 2025. It also showcases the diverse contributions of the Network's Regional and Thematic Nodes, whose specialised expertise continues to strengthen ASSN's reach and influence across the continent in advancing accountable, inclusive and people-centred security governance.

The diagram below depicts the ASSN's funding base for the period under reporting:



2. PROJECTS

2.1. Just Future (JF)

Over the last five years, ASSN's works in South Sudan, the DRC, Mali and Niger as well as the regional level under the Just Future (JF) Project focused on Outcome 1: Security providers are more responsive, accountable, and people-centred, and take action enabling the most excluded constituencies to enjoy safety, protection and enforcement of the law.

In concluding the JF project, the ASSN recorded remarkable L&A outcomes both at the country, regional and international levels.

2.1.1. SOUTH SUDAN

Strengthening people-centred security and inclusive security remained a priority in South Sudan in the final year of the project as the country continued to face political instability, constrained civic space, and limited resources for Security Sector Reform (SSR). Within this fragile environment, the project, led by the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) and the Security Research Information Centre (SRIC), consolidated the role of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) as a credible national platform for advocacy on security matters. Building on this momentum, stakeholders developed a clear sustainability action plan, addressing governance, financing, data management, and stakeholder engagement.

Through targeted consultative dialogues, civil society organizations, community-based groups, women, and youth shaped bottom-up priorities for SSR. These engagements ensured that reform discussions reflected local realities and the needs of groups most affected by insecurity, strengthening the legitimacy and relevance of SSR processes. Similarly, the project reinforced linkages between Police Community Relations Committees (PCRCs), police leadership, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. Coordination meetings in Juba improved information-sharing and joint problem-solving around community security concerns and contributed to more responsive policing practices. By reinforcing multi-sectoral dialogue, empowering civil society, and strengthening police-community collaboration, the project contributes to more accountable, inclusive, and people-centred security governance in South Sudan—laying foundations for longer-term stability in a highly fragile context. The continued engagement of civil society partners in security and election related campaigns in the face of a deteriorating security environment means that CSO partners can survive and operate in extreme adversity.



2.1.2. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

At the beginning of 2025, police reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) faced a familiar risk: strong commitments on paper, but slow political and financial follow-through, even as the country's security situation continued to deteriorate. This situation definitely demanded urgency and persistence. As Parliament prepared to reopen its March 2025 session, ASSN's local partner, RRSSJ, moved decisively, convening a national press conference, in partnership with the Police Information and Communication Service (SICOP), to take stock of the police reform process. The message was direct and evidence-based: police officers continue to work in degrading conditions, remuneration and retirement systems remain weak, personnel shortages persist nationwide, and training gaps undermine professionalism. Without reform, public trust and security would remain fragile.

At the same time, RRSSJ intensified discreet, targeted advocacy within Parliament. Experts from the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) engaged members of the Defence, Security, and Finance Committees, pushing for two critical outcomes: the inclusion of the Police Reform Programming Law on the parliamentary agenda and the allocation of adequate financial resources to make reform credible. These efforts quickly generated political momentum compelling the Minister of the Interior to publicly commit to defending the Police Reform Programming Bill before Parliament. Days later, the President of the Republic appointed three women to senior leadership positions within the National Police, reflecting long-standing policy recommendations consistently advanced by RRSSJ on gender and inclusive leadership. The advocacy effort was reinforced by solid evidence as RRSSJ finalized a major study on the Second M23 War, demonstrating that sustainable peace in the DRC is inseparable from comprehensive security sector reform—beginning with the police. Parallel research documented civil society's contribution to reform, ensuring that lessons learned would inform future action.

The turning point came in July 2025, when the President promulgated Law No. 25/047, establishing a binding framework for police reform implementation from 2026 to 2030, backed by a USD 2.55 billion budget. The law provides for the construction of more than 1,000 police stations, the opening of six police academies, the training of 10,000 officers, and the strengthening of community-based policing nationwide—marking the most concrete step toward professionalizing the Congolese National Police in decades. In advancing the advocacy further, public statements were issued to encourage the government and demand accountability, mobilized civil society actors, and called for strong parliamentary oversight to ensure that funds are allocated appropriately and reforms duly implemented.

Significant challenges however remain, particularly the integration of the law into the 2026 Finance Act, effective disbursement of resources, and sustained monitoring. Yet 2025 marked a decisive shift—from advocacy to action. The JF project has helped transform years of reform dialogue into binding legislation with real resources to back it. The next phase will determine whether this historic opportunity delivers people-centred security for safer communities, a professional police force, and renewed public trust across the DRC.

2.1.3. NIGER

ForThe JF programme in Niger made advances in security sector governance, evidence-based advocacy, and community-centred peace initiatives. The programme consolidated the Security Governance Observatory (OGS) as a credible and influential monitoring mechanism. The Seventh, Eighth and Ninth OGS Monitoring Reports were finalized, published, and disseminated, providing in-depth analysis of security trends, service delivery, coordination among security actors, and respect for human rights across the three Just Future intervention regions. Drawing on OGS monitoring, ACLED data, and national security bulletins, these reports strengthened the quality and legitimacy of civil society evidence used in policy dialogue. The OGS ensures continuity of independent monitoring and sustained engagement with decision-makers. Findings from OGS reports were shared with authorities and institutions, strengthening the policy influence of civil society and advancing accountability for civilian insecurity.

The Niger section of the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) website was systematically updated with research outputs, policy and strategy documents, legal and regulatory texts, and analytical articles. This strengthened public access to authoritative information on security governance and increased the visibility and usability of programme-supported research.

The programme supported inclusive national dialogue through the National Forum on the Effective Implementation of Law No. 2018-74 on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons, held in February 2025. The forum convened state institutions, civil society organizations, technical and financial partners, and representatives of affected communities, resulting in concrete recommendations to improve implementation, coordination, and protection outcomes for internally displaced persons.

Normative change was supported through a conference-debate on endogenous values and mechanisms of respect for human dignity, broadcast from Radio-Télévision Labari in Niamey and featuring academics, civil society, and women leaders. This was complemented by the production of a multilingual digital campaign (11 infographics and 3 videos in Hausa, Zarma, and French), designed to expand outreach through influencers and digital platforms. Sustained advocacy engagements with key stakeholders supported the State's initiative to adopt an ordinance on compensation for civilian victims of armed conflict.

2.1.4. MALI

The JF programme in Mali sustained the operationalization of the Consultative Security Committees (CCS) in Gouzoureye and Bourem, where committees held regular monthly meetings under the leadership of local mayors, reinforcing dialogue between communities, local authorities, and security forces. In addition, two new CCS were successfully established in Gabéro and N'Tillite, accompanied by targeted training workshops to build members' capacities in security governance and coordination.

Progress was also made in knowledge generation and advocacy for Security Sector Reform (SSR). The Women and Youth Perception Survey on SSR in the Gao Region was finalized and published in June 2025, alongside a broader SSR study published in May 2025. These publications provide evidence-based insights to inform national and local SSR processes and will feed into regional and international reporting frameworks.

At the strategic level, ASSN and partners (Consortium-ADD and RENEDEP) conducted high-level advocacy with the National Council for SSR (CNRSS). A formal request to contribute to the evaluation of Mali's National SSR Strategy (2020–2024) resulted in a strategic meeting to explore civil society collaboration in the design, implementation, and evaluation of a new SSR action plan—representing a critical step toward more inclusive reform processes.

Capacity strengthening remained a priority and facilitated the hosting of a resource mobilization workshop for CCS members. This addressed a key operational gap by equipping local committees with skills to identify, plan, and mobilize resources from public authorities, partners, the private sector, and the diaspora, thereby enhancing the sustainability of CCS action plans.

Institutionally, progress was noted in improving information flow and coordination, notably through the transmission of minutes of the Bourem CCS meetings to the CRSS Chief of Staff—an important practice for informed decision-making that now requires stronger collaboration between local, regional, and national authorities.

Finally, Consortium ADD supported the creation of a civil society resource mobilization network, open to national and international actors, further strengthening civil society's collective capacity to sustain peace and security initiatives.

Overall, the establishment and effective functioning of the CCS in Gao represents a major advancement in local security governance. Through inclusive consultation mechanisms, the project has contributed to conflict prevention, strengthened civil–security dialogue, and reinforced peacebuilding efforts, even amid an increasingly complex national context.

2.2. Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO)

The JF project made substantial progress in consolidating and expanding the Hybrid Security Governance Observatory (HSGO) as a leading research and dissemination platform on security governance in Africa.

A major milestone was the launch of the upgraded HSGO website (<https://africansecuritynetwork.org/HSGO4/>), which harmonised content across country sections and introduced new interactive features, including political news infographics, dedicated pages on police and armed groups, and a Weekly Media Updates section drawing from ASSN's systematic news monitoring. Continuous technical and analytical updates strengthened the platform's methodological rigour and accessibility, with major restructurings completed for South Sudan and significant updates advanced for Mali, Niger, and the DRC. Dissemination activities intensified through the rollout of innovative visual and audiovisual formats. The Armed Groups series was launched, alongside thematic infographic cycles on Somalia, South Sudan, Islamist armed political groups in the Sahel, and informal security actors. The HSGO also introduced a documentary series on conflict dynamics in the DRC. Collectively, these outputs reinforced the HSGO's dual identity as both a research hub and a public-facing knowledge platform.

To attain a more balanced linguistic character, a new section on Ghana was developed under the auspices of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This increased the number of Anglophone countries covered to two (South Sudan and Ghana).

3. SUPPORT TO REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

3.1. Work with the African Union



Work with the African Union (AU) continued as ASSN participated in the High-Level Training on the Operational Guidance Notes (OGN) on Security Sector Oversight and Accountability, led by ASSN's regional node for Southern Africa, APCOF (African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum). Prior to this, advocacy efforts at the AU resulted in the opportunity for CSOs to present the recommendations of the November 2023 AU SSR Conference at the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Meeting in May 2025. The findings of the research that accompanied the Conference highlighted the following:

- Many SSR initiatives remain externally driven and partially disconnected from local realities;
- National ownership is dominated by a few state actors rather than inclusive participation which undermines the legitimacy and sustainability of reforms;
- Only a few member states integrate SSR into development plans or conduct sector specific expenditure reviews; national development banks and the private sector largely remain untapped;
- At the continental level, the AU's ability to support SSR is challenged by financial/human resource constraints.

The recommendations presented by African civil society called on the PSC to champion the full operationalisation of AU instruments that promote democratic oversight, the rule of law and human rights within security institutions.

Member States should adopt a security sector governance approach in law and practice to domesticate AU norms and strengthen civilian oversight. The PSC should encourage States, with REC support, to implement inclusive national SSR strategies integrated into development plans and budgets, while RECs and RMEs appoint SSR focal points and develop regional SSR strategies.

To conclude regional activities for the year, ASSN partnered the AU to host the 4th Africa Forum on SSR, ensuring inclusive participation and gender balance within the JF delegation. The thematic focus of the Forum was ‘linking top-down and bottom-up approaches focusing on the needs of the people to create an optimal impact on conflict prevention and sustaining peace and security on the African continent’.

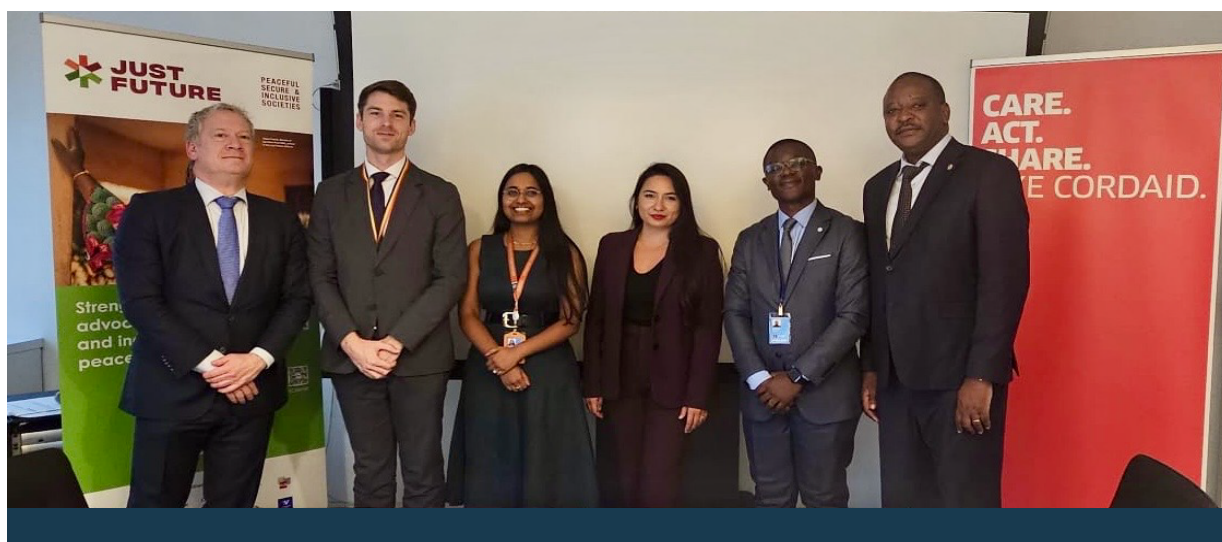
JF partners were granted the exceptional opportunity of sharing their country experiences and proffer recommendations to advancing people-centred security.

3.2. Interactions with the United Nations (UN)

At the invitation of the UN, ASSN participated in the Annual Common Connections Week on Security Sector Reform (SSR) at the UN Headquarters in New York in June, 2025. Undoubtedly, most of the discussions on the governance of security and specifically SSR lacked critical interrogation and fresh insights. Moreover, African experiences and lessons learned were neglected. The ASSN consequently brought these to light, compelling the Chief of the UN SSR Unit to direct his team to ensure that people-centred security features prominently in the new strategy on SSR for 2026-2030.

In November 2025, ASSN’s local partner in the DRC, RRSSJ in collaboration with Cordaid undertook a second high-level advocacy mission to the United Nations Headquarters in support of the renewal of MONUSCO’s mandate, engaging Security Council member states and key partners to influence deliberations on the mission’s future in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During a roundtable convened by the Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Security Council alongside partners including Just Future, RRSSJ presented ASSN’s analysis note outlining options for ending, renewing, reconfiguring, or strengthening MONUSCO’s mandate, complemented by targeted bilateral meetings to advance practical recommendations.

Discussions demonstrated broad support for MONUSCO’s continued presence while underscoring the need for a reconfigured and strengthened mandate aligned with evolving realities, with particular emphasis on prioritizing civilian protection, introducing ceasefire monitoring as an urgent responsibility, and deepening community engagement in peace implementation. The mission strategically reinforced international consensus that meaningful mandate adaptation—rather than routine renewal—is essential to respond effectively to the gravity of the situation on the ground.



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.

In parallel, support to the People's Coalition for the Sahel was sustained through to the project's conclusion, enabling civil society organisations in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso to pursue advocacy initiatives promoting human dignity and people-centred security.

Launched in July 2020, **the People's Coalition for the Sahel** is a civil society response to the failure of Sahelian governments to place the protection of civilians at the heart of strategies aimed at resolving the security crisis in the region.

3.4. Engagement with the OIF on the Review of the OECD Handbook on SSR

The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) nominated the Chair of the ASSN to represent OIF on the prestigious reference group which will oversee the review of the OECD Handbook on SSR. The reference group will advise on the composition and messaging of the 2nd edition of the Handbook throughout the production cycle from December, 2025 to December 2027.

4. ACTIVITIES OF ASSN'S REGIONAL/ THEMATIC NODES

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

As ASSN's Thematic Node for maritime security, CEMLAWS Africa continued to advance effective ocean governance and maritime security through research, policy engagement, capacity-building and multi-stakeholder collaboration. During the year, it strengthened partnerships with government institutions and international organisations to promote evidence-based fisheries management and sustainable ocean governance across Africa.

Key achievements included the successful completion of the U.S. Department of State-funded project on addressing the destabilising impacts of foreign fishing vessels in the Gulf of Guinea and Mauritania. The seven-country initiative generated practical recommendations to strengthen local participation in industrial fisheries, enhance monitoring and enforcement against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and build the capacity of journalists, civil society organisations and community advocates.

CEMLAWS Africa also contributed to international policy dialogue by participating in a high-level panel hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, where it advocated stronger multilateral cooperation on maritime security and protection of the Blue Economy. At the national level, it supported the validation of the ISIPSK (SANKOFA) project, promoting the integration of indigenous knowledge with scientific approaches to strengthen sustainable fisheries governance. In addition, it delivered a public explainer series on the BBNJ Agreement to improve understanding of the new global treaty on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction and partnered with Ghana's Fisheries Commission to present findings from the country's first comprehensive artisanal and inshore fishing gear audit in nearly four decades, providing evidence to inform fisheries policy and regulatory reforms.

Visit www.cemlawsafrica.com for more information on CEMLAWS Africa.



4.2. Security Research Information Centre (SRIC)

As ASSN's Regional Node for East Africa and the Great Lakes, the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) continued to advance evidence-based security governance, peacebuilding, and community resilience through research, policy engagement, and community-centred interventions.

During the reporting period, SRIC provided technical leadership to Kenya's National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons in conducting rapid assessments in Lamu and Elgeyo-Marakwet Counties. The findings highlighted the drivers and impacts of illicit arms proliferation and informed recommendations on targeted disarmament, strengthened law enforcement, community peacebuilding, and regional cooperation.

With support from KOICA through UNDP-Kenya, SRIC also conducted a periodic assessment of violent extremism dynamics in Nairobi, Isiolo, Marsabit, and Kilifi Counties. The study identified key drivers of violent extremism, including youth unemployment, marginalisation, historical grievances, and online radicalisation, and informed county-level prevention strategies, early warning mechanisms, and resilience-building interventions.

SRIC further strengthened regional advocacy against illicit arms proliferation by convening faith-based organisations and civil society networks from Kenya and Uganda during the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence. Through expert dialogues, media engagement, peace campaigns, and youth-centred sporting activities, the initiative promoted coordinated action to reduce gun violence and enhance regional peace and security.



SRIC also continued implementing the KOICA/UNDP-funded Peacebuilding and Prevention of Violent Extremism Project across ten counties in Kenya, using sports, arts, and community dialogue to strengthen trust between youth and law enforcement agencies. In addition, SRIC launched implementation of the GIZ-supported Strengthening Partnership and Accountability for Sustainable Peace and Security (SPACS) Project in Baringo County to improve community policing, strengthen community-law enforcement partnerships, and address the drivers of intercommunal violence.

These interventions further strengthened SRIC's contribution to promoting people-centred security governance, preventing conflict and violent extremism, and fostering sustainable peace across East Africa and the Great Lakes region.

For more information on SRIC, please visit : <https://www.srickenya.org/>

4.3. African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF)

As As ASSN's Regional Node for Southern Africa, the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) continued to strengthen democratic policing, accountability, and people-centred security governance through research, policy engagement, capacity building, and strategic partnerships at national, regional, and continental levels.

During the reporting period, APCOF made significant contributions to strengthening security sector oversight by providing technical support to the African Union Commission in developing an Operational Guidance Note on Oversight and Accountability under the AU Security Sector Reform Policy Framework. APCOF also supported the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) in developing a scorecard to assess implementation of the Principles on the Decriminalisation of Petty Offences in Africa and collaborated with regional and international partners to advance reforms on the decriminalisation of poverty, civic space, and the protection of human rights defenders.

APCOF continued to promote accountable policing through research and policy development on effective non-coercive interviewing, pre-trial detention, public-space policing, anti-corruption, migration governance, and law enforcement's role in public health. It also strengthened oversight of places of detention by supporting South Africa's National Preventive Mechanism, contributing to torture prevention initiatives, and advocating for alternatives to detention and improved detention conditions.

At the continental level, APCOF remained an active contributor to the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), providing expert submissions on policing, migration, detention, gender, and the implementation of the Luanda Guidelines. In recognition of its longstanding contribution to advancing human rights-compliant policing, APCOF received the Med Kaggwa Award during the ACHPR's 81st Ordinary Session.

APCOF further strengthened institutional capacity through specialised training programmes on police accountability and human rights and continued to influence policing policy through strategic partnerships with governments, oversight institutions, universities, regional police organisations, and civil society. Collectively, these interventions reinforced APCOF's leadership in promoting democratic policing, effective civilian oversight, and human rights-based security governance across Southern Africa and the African continent.

4.4. Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA)

In 2025, PRAWA (Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action) continued to advance criminal justice reform, corrections, and human rights across Nigeria through policy advocacy, institutional capacity building, and support for restorative justice initiatives. The organisation remained committed to promoting humane correctional systems and strengthening accountability within the justice sector.

PRAWA worked closely with correctional institutions, justice sector agencies, health professionals, and civil society partners to enhance the capacity of practitioners in offender rehabilitation, reintegration, and restorative justice. Its interventions supported the adoption of more rights-based and rehabilitative approaches to corrections while fostering collaboration among key justice sector stakeholders.

PRAWA also sustained its advocacy on the prevention of torture and the protection of the rights of persons deprived of liberty. The organisation engaged national and international human rights mechanisms, contributed to policy dialogue on custodial reforms, and implemented initiatives aimed at improving the welfare and dignity of incarcerated persons, including support for the health and menstrual hygiene needs of women and girls in custodial facilities.

In addition, PRAWA continued to champion children's rights by advocating for the abolition of corporal punishment and promoting legal and institutional reforms to safeguard vulnerable populations. Through these complementary interventions, the organisation reinforced its role as a leading civil society actor advancing corrections reform, access to justice, rehabilitation, and human rights in Nigeria.

PRAWA is the ASSN's Regional Node for West Africa: <https://prawa.org/>

5. LOOKING AHEAD

The operating environment throughout 2025 continued to present both significant challenges and important opportunities for advancing democratic security governance across Africa. Political instability, shrinking civic space, armed conflict, humanitarian crises, and the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government constrained the ability of civil society organisations and state institutions to engage consistently in reform processes. At the same time, evolving security threats—including violent extremism, organised crime, cyber insecurity, maritime insecurity and climate-related risks—reinforced the need for more adaptive, inclusive and people-centred approaches to security sector governance.

For ASSN and its partners, sustaining meaningful engagement in fragile contexts required flexibility, innovation and strong local partnerships. Despite these constraints, the Network demonstrated resilience by supporting evidence-based advocacy, strengthening dialogue between citizens and security institutions, and promoting locally driven solutions that responded to the realities of the communities served. The successful completion of the Just Future programme further highlighted the value of long-term investment in local civil society as a catalyst for accountable and responsive security governance.

These developments present new opportunities to expand ASSN's influence and deepen strategic partnerships. Looking ahead, ASSN recognises the importance of consolidating these gains while responding to an increasingly dynamic, volatile, uncertain and complex security environment. With continued support from partners, the Network will continue to invest in knowledge generation, strengthen partnerships across Africa and beyond, and support locally led initiatives that advance accountable, transparent and people-centred security governance. ■

6. CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates the ASSN's continued commitment to strengthening democratic security governance across Africa despite an increasingly complex operating environment. Through collaboration with civil society, state institutions, regional organisations and international partners, the Network contributed to policy dialogue, institutional strengthening, evidence generation and citizen engagement in ways that support more accountable and responsive security sectors.

The conclusion of the five-year Just Future programme marks an important milestone in ASSN's journey. The programme has generated valuable lessons on the importance of locally led action, sustained partnerships and adaptive programming in advancing meaningful reform in fragile and conflict-affected settings. These lessons will continue to inform the Network's future programming and strategic direction.

ASSN is grateful to its development partners, member organisations and Regional/Thematic Nodes for their continued trust, commitment and collaboration. Their support has been instrumental in enabling the Network to deliver impactful interventions across diverse contexts and to amplify African perspectives in regional and global discussions on security sector governance.

As the security landscape continues to evolve, ASSN remains firmly committed to promoting accountable, effective and people-centred security institutions that contribute to peace, democratic governance and sustainable development across the continent. Building on the foundations established over the past year, the Network looks forward to strengthening existing partnerships, forging new collaborations, and continuing to serve as a trusted platform for knowledge, dialogue and action on Security Sector Reform and Governance in Africa. ■



ANNUAL REPORT

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