

**The jihadist threat in northern Ghana  
and Togo:**

## **Stocktaking and prospects for containing the expansion**

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THE JIHADIST THREAT IN  
NORTHERN GHANA AND  
TOGO:

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# Executive Summary

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This study is the second in a series of surveys and assessments of the security situation in the Gulf of Guinea countries conducted by Promediation programs with the support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Following a study on northern Benin, western Burkina Faso, and northeastern Côte d'Ivoire entitled Northern Gulf of Guinea Countries, the New Frontier for Jihadist Groups?<sup>1</sup> this new component focuses on the dynamics and developments in northern Ghana and Togo (see "Methodology" below).

The study provides several important lessons about the security situation in Ghana and Togo in the Sahel-Gulf of Guinea region. First, the exposure of both countries to the jihadist threat confirms that the deteriorating security situation in Burkina Faso and Mali has made the north of the coastal countries the new front line against armed groups operating in the Sahel.

However, while Ghana and Togo face similar threats, the extent to which armed groups are established on their soil is very different. Ghana appears particularly exposed because of its proximity to the Cascades region of Burkina Faso and northern Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, the growing presence of katibas - in particular the GSIM-JNIM - in the Cascades region during 2021, as well as the intensification of a strategy of attacks and settlements against neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, make northern Ghana an ideal cross-border withdrawal and control zone for armed groups. This is especially true since these areas, which are plagued by a high level of banditry, offer access to very attractive illegal resources, such as cattle rustling and clandestine gold panning.

The study shows that the establishment of armed groups in northern Ghana has also allowed them to implement an active recruitment strategy. It is estimated that 200 to 300 young people have been integrated into the various GSIM-JNIM and EIGS katibas. After undergoing training in training camps in the Sahel, these young recruits were sent back to their villages of origin, in particular to engage in religious proselytizing.

However, Ghana is one of the few countries in the region that has not experienced jihadist attacks. Having become aware of the threat very early on, the authorities have put in place a multi-pronged strategy: reorganization and administrative and military redrawing of the northern provinces to strengthen the network and control of the area;

a special economic program for the north of the country; and the beginning of support for the pastoralist sector, which has been weakened by the jihadist phenomenon (restructuring of the sector, strengthening dialogue with pastoralist communities, particularly the Peul people). At the regional level, Ghana advocates a comprehensive, coordinated and supportive approach among states to combat terrorism and phenomena related to violent extremism. This is why in 2017 the authorities of this country were behind the creation of the Accra Initiative, which today brings together seven countries (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso) and whose secretariat based in Accra will be fully operational from January 2022.

Togo is also facing the desire of armed groups to turn the north of the country into a gray area, or even a settlement zone. The attack on a border post with Burkina Faso during the night of November 9-10, 2021, is a concrete example of this threat. However, while northern Togo is a major transit area that is difficult to control, particularly for cross-border traffic and transhumance from the Sahel, the presence of armed groups appears to be weaker than in northern Ghana.

Since 2018, Togo has developed a strategy based on reorganizing its security presence and economic development in these long-neglected northern areas. In addition, the creation of an inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Violent Extremism (CIPLEV) with local branches responsible for identifying weak signals of the groups' progression and coordinating civilian responses has strengthened the state's mesh and presence in the northern regions.

The implementation of coordinated policies has certainly contributed to limiting conflicts that are conducive to the establishment of armed groups. However, as in Ghana, these potential conflicts - linked to land tenure, inter-community social cohesion, and above all to the high level of activity of criminal networks linked to arms, drugs, consumer products, and cattle rustling - are still fertile ground for the instrumentalization of populations, according to a strategy that has already been tried and tested by armed groups in the Sahel.

Faced with a precarious situation in their northern regions, Ghana and Togo are developing a common approach based on anticipation and prevention

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to avoid at all costs having to pay the human, political, and military price of open conflict with armed groups established on national territory. This strong desire on the part of the authorities of the two coastal countries not to adopt an "all-security" strategy that has failed everywhere else is limited by the difficulty of managing problems and

conflicts that often pre-existed the jihadist threat and the limited financial capacities of these states. But far from waiting for external assistance, Ghana and Togo continue to mobilize strategies at the national, regional, and international levels - notably the Accra Initiative - to avoid tipping into a war where they know they have everything to lose.





# Methodology

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This study is the second in a series of surveys and assessments of the security situation in the Gulf of Guinea countries. It focuses on the dynamics and developments in northern Ghana and Togo and completes the first part which focused on northern Benin, western Burkina Faso and northeastern Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>2</sup>

This survey is the result of several field missions conducted by Promediation's local teams and consultants as part of its programs in the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea. Three missions were conducted in northern Ghana in January 2020, May 2021 and October 2021 and two in Togo in July and September 2021. During these different missions, more than a hundred interviews were conducted with local elected officials, administrative authorities, security and intelligence officials, traditional leaders, civil society actors and NGOs. This work was supplemented upstream and downstream by interviews in Lomé and Accra with elected officials, ministers, diplomats, political and administrative

officials, and university researchers. This study also drew on academic literature and numerous reports and documents from institutions and non governmental organizations on security issues in the Sahel-Guinean region.

Finally, a draft version of the study was presented at a restricted seminar on the security situation in the Gulf of Guinea on November 18 and 19, 2021 in Lomé.<sup>3</sup> The document benefited from the important contributions of a panel of security officials from Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire who were invited to this meeting.

This study was conducted with the financial support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Regional Program Political Dialogue in West Africa, Abidjan. The opinions expressed in this study are those of Promediation and do not necessarily reflect the views of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Regional Program Political Dialogue in West Africa, Abidjan.





# Introduction

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## *GHANA AND TOGO FACE ARMED JIHADIST GROUPS: COMMON THREATS, DIFFERENT PROGRESSIONS*

In 2016, the attack perpetrated by a suicide bomber in the Ivorian seaside resort of Grand-Bassam seemed to sound the alarm for the coastal countries. The Ghanaian National Security Council immediately estimated in an internal report that "Ghana and Togo [were] the next targets after the attacks in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire".<sup>4</sup>

While Ghana has been spared for the moment, the attack on November the 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 in the town of Sanloaga in Togo<sup>5</sup> seems to confirm that the north of the Gulf of Guinea countries is becoming the new front line in the fight against terrorism in West Africa. The porous nature of the borders and the existence of a cultural but also economic continuum with the Sahelian countries reinforces the fear of the installation of jihadist groups in the northern parts of Ghana and Togo. In any case, the presence of fighters from the Gulf of Guinea especially Ghanaians - in the training camps of the Malian and Nigerian Gourmas could suggest that the armed groups have influence and logistical capacities in the coastal countries.

### ***Ghana and Togo, the same threat but to different degrees***

However, Ghana and Togo do not appear to be equally exposed to the expansion of Sahelian jihadist groups on their territories. According to the information collected and analysis produced by Promediation, their footprint is much larger in Ghana. Although the armed groups do not appear to be on the offensive, their efforts to recruit locally could eventually lead to a sustainable foothold in remote and peripheral areas in the north.

Their involvement in parallel economic circuits and control of illicit trafficking zones such as the Bawku area in the northeast of the country or the gold<sup>6</sup> panning sites along the border with Côte d'Ivoire could have encouraged the installation of foreign groups affiliated with the Groupe de Soutien à l'Islam et aux Musulmans (JNIM/GSIM). Clandestine gold mining sites are used as sources of direct or indirect funding (through the levying of taxes or *Zakat*), but also as places for preaching and recruiting young people in need of prospects.

In general, there are indications that the young recruits have returned to their villages of origin where they proselytize after having adopted a radical faith in Burkina Faso or Mali.

At first glance, the situation in Togo appears less precarious, due in part to its relatively narrow northern borders, which are easier to monitor than those of Ghana. However, the November 9 attack was taken very seriously by Togo security officials, who are sometimes tempted to see it as a "warning". Moreover, the proximity of the northern Savannah region to areas of neighboring countries most vulnerable to jihadist violence - the *East* and *Center-East* regions of Burkina Faso, the *Atakora* and *Alibori* departments of Benin, and the *Northern region* and *Upper West/East* of Ghana reinforces the fear of penetration by armed groups. However, even some authorities admit that, while dormant cells probably exist, there is no evidence of any lasting, structured presence of katibas in northern Togo.

Similarly, the progression of religious radicalism is not noticeable, including in Muslim-majority cities such as Sokodé (central region). The only exception is certain neighborhoods in Cinkassé, which, like Bawku, a few dozen kilometers away, have been practicing rigorous Islam for several years. As a result, although the three northern regions of Togo - Savanes, Kara, and Centrale - are now considered "vulnerable to violent extremism", it would appear that they are more interesting to armed groups from a "business" perspective than from a "jihad" perspective.

### ***Control of the grey economy, the engine of progress for jihadist groups***

However, as in Ghana and neighboring countries, there is no clear dividing line between the jihadist and criminal worlds in Togo, but rather a continuous interweaving of spheres of activity and zones of influence, where certain nodes - such as commercial crossroads or natural<sup>7</sup> parks - are always likely to encourage the establishment of clandestine cells. This is particularly true of the town of Cinkassé and other localities bordering Ghana as far as Bawku,

which could attract the covetousness of armed groups, particularly the JNIM-GSIM, which is firmly established in eastern Burkina Faso. Separated from the town of the same name in Burkina Faso by a single bridge, Cinkassé is a major hub for illegal trafficking in the sub-region, stretching from northern Ghana to Benin. Its position as a border crossroads makes it a transit point for small arms and drugs to and from Burkina Faso.

In the east, grey economy networks passing through the remote wooded area of Mandouri benefit from the proximity of Koualou, a disputed locality between Benin and Burkina Faso and another trafficking hub in the region. Ultimately, whether they originate in the east or west, these networks converge on jihadist-influenced areas in eastern Burkina Faso and then move up into Niger.

Thus, the development of banditry and illicit trafficking as a palliative to underemployment and the socio-economic marginalization of cross-border areas today represents a major political and security challenge for Ghana and Togo, as it does for all the states in the subregion. Indeed, control of the grey economy in the Sahel-Guinean area has become one of the driving forces behind the progression of Sahelian jihadist and criminal groups towards the south. The other two major factors are the resentment of the population towards the central authorities and the community conflicts that armed groups use to their advantage.

#### ***Strengthening of the defense and security apparatus and preventive approach***

Faced with the continuing deterioration of the security situation in their northern regions, Ghana and Togo have undertaken a number of administrative and defense reforms in recent years. Thus, the Ghanaian security system has benefited greatly from a thorough decentralization (administrative redrawing of the northern regions in particular), allowing for the establishment of a tighter territorial network. At the same time, new counter-terrorism and special forces units have been redeployed to the northern border areas. Togo, on the other hand, has adopted a two-pronged strategy: a military one through the launch of operation Koundjouaré<sup>8</sup> in the north of the country and the redeployment of its northern units; and a civilian one through the establishment of an inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV)<sup>9</sup> with local branches in the three northern provinces. The CIPLEV's mandate includes supporting the strengthening of cooperation between the FDS

(Force de Defense et de Sécurité ) [Defence and Security Force] and the population and the implementation of socio-economic resilience projects in marginalized areas. This renewed security strategy has gone hand in hand with a "relaxation" of the modalities for controlling the movement of border populations. In fact, Ghanaians, Togolese, Beninese and Burkinabes, who are used to moving around without constraints to fulfill their economic or social obligations, did not take kindly to the sometimes "excessive" pressure exerted on them by Koudjouaré forces.

This preventive approach to Togo's anti-terrorism strategy echoes the attention both countries have paid to strengthening their intelligence apparatus. For example, Ghana has brought together several security services - the police, the Criminal Investigation Bureau, the National Investigation Bureau, and National Security operators throughout the country - in a "Joint Intelligence Community". The Togolese authorities have set up alert and reporting protocols in the main markets and city centers and, more broadly, through the CIPLEV, aim to promote an "intelligence culture" among the population.

#### ***Strengthened integration into sub-regional security mechanisms***

The strengthening of national capacities has been accompanied in both Ghana and Togo by a reinforced commitment to regional security cooperation mechanisms such as the Accra Initiative.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the joint operations Koudalgou I and II, which simultaneously mobilized several thousand elements in the border areas of Burkina Faso with its neighbors in the Gulf of Guinea, made it possible to disorganize a number of armed groups' logistical networks and prevent probable attempts to establish themselves.

In addition to military engagement, the Accra Initiative aims to strengthen the surveillance of the borders shared by member countries. This is especially true given that cross-border population movements fleeing areas under the control of jihadist groups are increasing instability in the host areas. Thus, the control of refugee and migratory movements has become a matter of concern for the Ghanaian and Togolese authorities, and the installation of refugee camps - mostly Fulani - between the Upper West and Upper East regions in Ghana and in the localities of Cinkassé and Mango (Savannah region) in Togo now represents a humanitarian and security issue for these states. The implementation of measures to regulate and

identify migrants and refugees is an important part of the security strategy of the states concerned, since jihadist elements could take advantage of these population movements to establish themselves in these localities.

***Promote development and good local governance***

In addition to the military challenge of fighting armed groups, the Togolese and Ghanaian authorities are also facing structural problems that are likely to fuel insecurity. Like all countries in the subregion, Ghanaian and Togolese societies are riven by persistent community tensions, fueled by economic and territorial inequalities and inequalities in access to political space and decision-making. The invocation and instrumentalization of community divisions and grievances is now one of the rhetorical repertoires of Sahelian jihadist groups.

In this respect, the peaceful management of transhumant pastoralism has become a crucial issue for Ghana and Togo as well as for neighboring countries. Subject to strong pressures, this traditional livestock breeding method is gradually being questioned by the governments of coastal countries, which see it as a major catalyst for community conflicts and today as a potential vector for terrorism and its avatars (trafficking, instability, crime). In fact, the permanent adaptability required by herders to cope with the scarcity of natural resources and the threat of armed groups often leads them to reorient their routes away from the marked trails, which have often been cut back by the extension of crops or the change of destination of these private plots. The concentration of livestock in certain areas increases the risk of conflicts over land

and access to resources with resident sedentary communities. In response, coastal states such as Togo and Benin seemed to be moving towards strict regulation, or even the closure of their borders to cross-border transhumance, particularly through measures taken against COVID-19.<sup>11</sup> In reality, the authorities have to manage transhumance campaigns every year, which often circumvent border control rules by taking circuitous routes or corruption with the support of local intermediaries. But by neglecting the importance of transhumant pastoralism in the vitality of local economies, these restrictive measures could encourage the transhumant communities - the majority of which are Peul to withdraw into themselves. This image of a "dangerous social group" could be used to serve the rhetoric of jihadist recruitment in Ghana and Togo.

At a deeper level, the conflicts between "indigenous" and "nomadic" farming populations illustrate above all the difficulties of local and central authorities in developing peripheral rural regions marked by a multitude of ills: mass unemployment and historical underinvestment in infrastructure and land use planning; resentment towards security forces considered predatory and corrupt; remoteness from central power and a feeling of marginalization of rural populations in relation to urban elites... The Sahelian examples have shown over the past decade that the unmet expectations of the population with respect to development and the promotion of good governance are not only deleterious to community cohesion and the effectiveness of the security apparatus as a whole, but that they are now mortgaging the very existence of certain constituted states.



## **GHANA**

# **The "jihad returnees", a threat to the stability of the north**

## **PART I**

## **I. An increase in insecurity in the northern zones**

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Because of its porous borders with Burkina Faso and, to a lesser extent, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana has been facing growing insecurity in its northern regions for several months. In addition to the phenomena of banditry or fraud linked to trafficking, the country is now also facing the growing threat of jihadist groups from the Sahel who are seeking to take root among the local population.

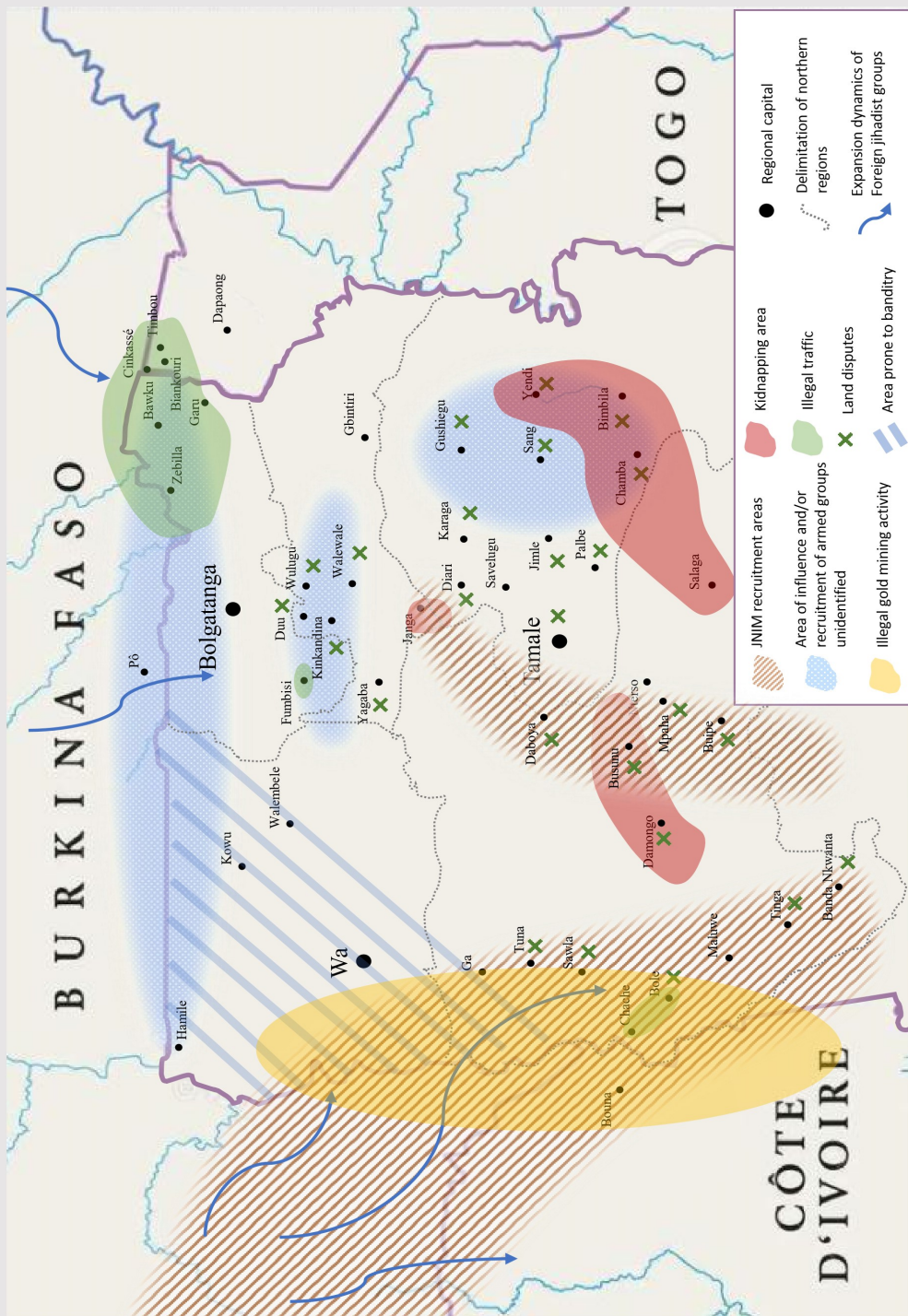
This rise in insecurity highlights the difficulties authorities have in effectively controlling these borders. For example, according to figures from the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), in 2019 there were 44 official migration entry points in Ghana. However, in reality, there were more than 189 unofficial entry points on the border with Burkina Faso alone.

The authorities have recognized this and taken a series of measures to address the deficiencies of their internal security apparatus in the north of the country and at the borders. On April 25, 2021, a joint operation in Bolgatanga between immigration, police, and national security resulted in the arrest of 507 illegal migrants 494 Nigerians and 13 Burkinabes who had gradually entered the country over the past year. More recently, in September

2021, Upper West Immigration Services arrested 38 Burkinabé migrants in the Nadowli-Kaleo area, while two other Burkinabé migrants were detained by Northern Region services after trying to buy their freedom for 20 million CFA francs. Ghanaian authorities also reiterated their concern that growing instability in Burkina Faso could spread to Ghana through uncontrolled population movements. Several Fulani encampments from Burkina Faso have reportedly already settled in the areas halfway between the Upper East and Upper West.

In general, the expansion of armed groups, and in particular armed jihadist groups linked to GSIM-JNIM, from the Sahel countries to the Gulf of Guinea could have an impact on the management of illicit trafficking zones. These cells would be established from rear bases set up in illicit trafficking zones - Bawku, Cinkassé, gold mining sites - which armed groups have gradually taken control of. On the other hand, this dynamic of expansion would have facilitated a progressive anchoring of jihadist groups in several localities in the five regions that make up northern Ghana (Upper West, Upper East, North East, Northern, Savannah).





Map 1: Northern Ghana: An area under the influence of armed groups  
 © Promediation 2021.

## **1. Areas of trafficking and banditry: potential breeding ground for jihadist establishment**

The Upper East Region faces significant insecurity problems, fueled in part by high levels of poverty and a weak state presence, as is the case throughout the northern regions. According to testimonies from security officials in the region, the Upper East Region towns of Bawku, Garu, and Zebilla are the main transit points for illicit trade in arms, heroin, and cocaine from the Sahel into the interior of Ghana and parts of the sub-region.

The recurrence of communal land conflicts (Mamprusi VS Kusasi; Doba VS Kandiga, Bongo vs Nabdam, as well as in the locality of Kologo) has contributed, according to the public authorities, to the multiplication of the number of weapons of war in circulation and, more broadly, to the spread of a “gun culture” in the Upper East Region. As one Mamprusi from Bawku explained, “In our country, if you want to please someone, you give him a gun, and with it you guarantee him the protection of his family”. To a lesser degree, the Upper East also experiences significant trafficking in Indian hemp, produced locally and sold through various channels in neighboring regions and countries. In addition, the commune of Fumbisi has been reported by security sources as a trafficking zone operated by jihadist groups.

The situation in the Upper West region is marked by a high level of banditry, and this context is said to be conducive to, or even a breeding ground for, the establishment of various armed groups, as gold panning develops in this region. The Ghana-Ivorian cross-border area has also become a relative lawless zone due to the continuing administrative blurring of the exact borderline. Thus, the gold mining sites near the villages of Chache and Bole, which are home to populations from all over the sub-region, are currently home to armed groups affiliated with jihadist movements. According to a battalion commander, these sites, apparently run by Burkinabé gold miners, have become the scene of regular arms trafficking and robberies. They have also become a place for preaching and recruiting young people who are looking for prospects. However, these attempts, which are sometimes poorly accepted by the gold miners, have led to clashes with radical preachers.

Already, in the border locality of Hamile, 2019, WANEP had identified “self-defense groups” linked to arms trafficking that had reportedly been contacted by Burkinabé groups offering to train them, provided “there are no Christians in the

group.” Further evidence of the infiltration of these groups into Ghana, two suspected terrorists had been arrested in Hamile in June 2019.

For the Ghanaian authorities, regaining control of these trafficking zones has become a “priority” objective, particularly because of the exploitation of these areas by armed jihadist groups as fallback zones and even as a pool of potential recruits. At the risk of reinforcing the influence of armed groups who claim to want to return “their goods to the people”.

## **2. Stocktaking of the jihadist threat in northern Ghana**

Promediation’s latest field studies suggest the potential development of jihadist cells in the northern fire regions of Ghana, particularly the Savannah and Upper East. Exploiting these marginalized areas where trafficking of all kinds thrives, particularly in the Upper West zone, jihadist groups are increasing their ability to penetrate the north. While these elements are not likely to be on the offensive at this time, their ability to recruit locally could ultimately lead to the jihadist groups taking root in certain northern locations.

The presence of jihadist cells in northern Ghana is the result of the influence and expansion of foreign groups affiliated with GSIM-JNIM. In general, locally recruited Ghanaian youth who have been sensitized to their ideology return to their home territory after training abroad, most often in Burkina Faso and Mali. As one marabout known in Ghana for his affiliation with young jihadists and arrested by the authorities notes, “the spectre of terrorism spreading to the Gulf of Guinea haunts West Africa. The rapid expansion of armed jihadist groups in Burkina Faso has greatly increased this concern. Burkina Faso is centrally located, linking the Sahel to coastal countries and sharing borders with four of them: Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Togo”. Indeed, the ambition of the groups to extend their activities to the West African coast appears repeatedly in the discourse of leaders, including Hamadou Koufa, leader of the GSIM-JNIM-affiliated Katiba Macina, who called on the Fulani to mobilize for the cause of jihad in a video of November the 8<sup>th</sup> 2018.

Already in April 2019, in Burkina Faso, Oumarou Diallo, the commander of a local jihadist group present in Fada, had been questioned by ANR agents in possession of a list of contacts in Benin, Togo and Ghana, demonstrating links with jihadists present in these countries. Many

analysts interpreted this collaboration as a sign of a concerted plan to collapse Burkina Faso and then reach Togo, Benin, Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire. With the Sahel in a state of heightened crisis and offering fewer opportunities for armed groups in terms of financing, the latter would seek to export their jihad to coastal countries, or at least to set up logistical bases and training and rest centers there, less targeted than those they have in the Sahel. Their desire to establish a presence is clearly demonstrated by the presence of young fighters from coastal countries in the ranks of armed jihadist groups in the Sahel.

At a consultation meeting in Accra in September, 2019, Promediation team noted that Ghana, like its Gulf of Guinea neighbors, was already considered "a potential target for radical armed groups". Incursions by groups and individuals from Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Nigeria were already regularly observed and illustrated to Ghanaian authorities and intelligence services the potential for radicalization in their country. These incursions already gave the authorities "every reason to believe that sleeper cells [were] present in the country, including in Accra". According to Promediation's sources in the Sahel, it was also known in 2020 that training camps in the Gourma region of Mali and Niger were hosting young fighters from coastal countries - not only Ghanaian, but also Beninese, Togolese, Ivorian, Guinean and Gambian. The objective of the jihadist groups seemed to be to be able to redeploy these fighters to their countries of origin, which they seem to have done since then.

According to some sources, elements originally linked to the EIGS were the first to infiltrate Ghana. In 2019, a small group of five fighters from communities living near the border area established themselves in the area as the group advanced into the eastern regions of Burkina Faso. According to the information gathered, these non-peulh fighters who were trained in the Gourma region of Mali (Tessit) and sent as a logistical vanguard to carry out intelligence, logistical organization and recruitment missions. Two of the five members of this original cell were later killed during French air strikes near Tin-Akof (Burkina Faso-Mali border). This vanguard is said to have initiated 2019, recruitment activities in Ghana under the impetus of Abu Hamza, whose real name is Mahamane Oumar Youssoufou, a young Nigerien fighter. The latter is said to have visited several localities in northern Ghana to carry out recruitments and to have facilitated the sending of new recruits to Abdoul Hakim and Abou Mamoudou so that they could be trained in the handling of weapons and explosives in the Gourma region of Mali. About thirty Ghanaians were thus

able to undergo military training under the direction of Abou Houreira, a member of Ansarul Islam, a Burkinabe group affiliated with the GSIM-JNIM, at a time when this group was still cooperating with the EIGS. Among these recruits is Abou Doujana, nicknamed Jounou, a young Ghanaian from Karaga, who carried out the suicide attack on the Barkhane force on June the 21<sup>st</sup> 2021 in Mali.

However, the generally accepted interpretation among jihadist analysts and intelligence services in the region is that the elements in Ghana are all members of GSIM-JNIM affiliated groups. It is therefore possible that elements originally from EIGS networks may have switched allegiance, probably during the course of 2020, as a result of GSIM-JNIM tactical victories, particularly in Burkina Faso.

In 2021, GSIM-JNIM expanded rapidly toward the Ghanaian borders due to the activism of Ansarul Islam on the Burkina Faso border, but also due to the presence of elements of the Katiba Macina (Mali) in the gold zones adjacent to the Upper West Region. The presence of mining explosives manufactured in Ghana and found in jihadist camps in Burkina Faso would support the hypothesis that elements of the Katiba Macina are involved in gold mining networks located in the west and northwest of Ghana as well as in the northeast of Côte d'Ivoire. Security sources confirm their influence on the gold mining sites of Bole and Chache, in western Ghana on the border with Côte d'Ivoire, citing the presence of preachers at these sites. The Macina Katiba operates along the borders of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana from the area of the Dida classified forest (south of Banfora in Burkina Faso) where a group called the Ali Dougou Katiba, currently led by Ismael Sawadogo, aka Abou Housseini - brother of Aboubacar Sawadogo who died in the attack on the headquarters in Ouagadougou - is based. In the cross-border area from Sikasso (Mali) to Banfora (Burkina Faso), via Kafolo (Côte d'Ivoire) and as far as Ghana, the Macina Katiba is also present through the elements of the group led by Sidi Konate - alias Joubeirou. The Ansar group affiliated with Ansarul Islam and led by Said Shekou - is also present in the region, with its main base in the Kafolo area. This group has reportedly received support from the unit of Oumarou Diallo alias Farouk - of the Katiba Serma. The latter is also said to have moved to the northeast of Côte d'Ivoire to consolidate their presence.

All of these groups operate under the command of Sam Oun (from the Katiba Macina), who is believed to be the leader of the GSIM-JNIM for the Mali-Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire border area. One of the

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objectives of this gradual establishment would be to establish or reinforce the units present in the Diefoula forest, located on the border between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, in order to secure GSIM-JNIM access to Ghanaian territory.

EIGS spokesman Sidi Amar and the head of Ansarul Islam's foreign fighting unit, Saifoulah, estimate that there are 200 young Ghanaians in the ranks of the jihadist groups. The majority of them are believed to be in the ranks of GSIM-JNIM and abroad, according to the following breakdown:



Fig 1: Dispatch of the 200 Ghanaian recruits to their armed jihadist groups (GAT)  
 © Promediation, October 2021 – data collected in 2021.

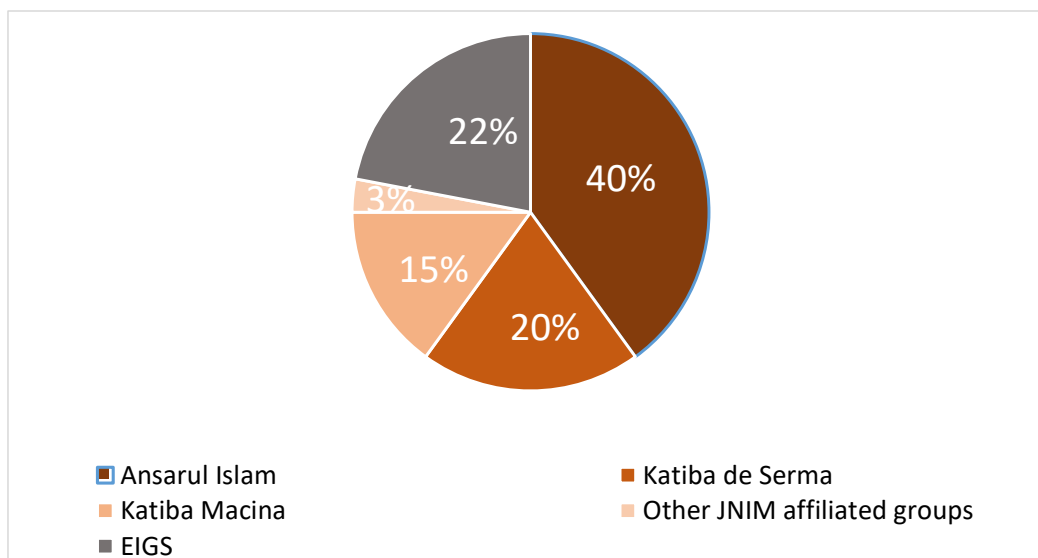


Fig 2: Dispatch of the 200 Ghanaian recruits to their armed jihadist groups (GAT)

Following several field missions and dozens of interviews, Promediation was able to note departures and returns of young Ghanaians operating in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger in the Upper East, Savannah, Eastern, and Northern Regions. In the Upper West, which is also an area of high levels of banditry, Promediation was not able to collect significant data on the movement of jihadists to and from the region. However,

specialized services consider this area to be a high-risk area in which the establishment of jihadist groups is highly likely. Some recruits return to their home towns after six months of training in the Fada area, or in the Gourma region of Niger and Mali, with the aim of preaching the cause but also of forcing their parents to buy weapons to equip them.

## II. The pastoral issue: a catalyst for community

The invocation and instrumentalization of community divisions and grievances has become a rhetorical repertoire of Sahelian jihadist groups. Local jihadist figures have thus been able to encourage certain communities to join the fight against injustice and discrimination. Like all countries in the Sahel-Guinean region, Ghanaian society is marked by persistent community tensions, fueled by economic and territorial inequalities and inequalities in access to political space and decision-making. This feeling of marginalization is particularly prevalent among the Fulani community, which is important in Ghana and, as in other countries in the subregion, is considered to be the main pastoralist community.

The Fulani community in Ghana enjoys relative legitimacy because of its presence throughout the country and its structure. Nevertheless, it

has difficulty uniting and raising its demands to a political level because of the rivalries that run through it. The Fulani population of Ghana is made up of Fulani from Fouta Djallon (Guinea), Macina (Mali), northern Burkina Faso (Dori), the Tillberi and Say regions (Niger), and Nigeria (Borno State). It suffers from a lack of cohesion. Rivalries between local chieftainships over land management, leadership, and the holding of titles and legitimacy necessary to claim to be able to represent the community hinder the formation of a united block that would allow them to speak with one voice to the central authorities. In addition, the so-called "Hausa-Fulani" Fulani, who originate from Nigeria, are perceived by other Fulani as troublemakers and are further dividing the community.

In Ghana, the issue of access to political and economic space for Fulani communities and the

issue of supervision of transhumant pastoralism are intertwined and fuel several conflicts, particularly in the north of the country. Indeed, despite its importance to the vitality of local economies, trans-border pastoralism faces major security challenges. On the one hand, the pressure on natural resources and the expansion of insecure areas are leading pastoralists to reorient their transhumance routes. The concentration of livestock in certain areas increases the risk of clashes with resident communities over land issues and damage caused by field damage. In addition, the resurgence of banditry - in particular cattle rustling and kidnapping - and illicit trafficking have increased insecurity in cross-border areas where mafia and terrorist groups thrive.

### **1. Pressure on natural and land resources fuels the risk of conflict**

Transhumance has been associated with many types of conflict between resident (sedentary) local communities and transhumant pastoralists competing for natural resources, specifically water and grazing areas. Although Ghanaian pastoralists mostly practice internal transhumance, their routes regularly cross with the residential and cultivation areas of sedentary populations, as well as with transborder transhumance corridors, thereby increasing pressure on water and forage resources. As a result, the area reserved for grazing tends to shrink, exacerbating competition for control and mobilization of land resources.

In general, the issue of land tenure is highly contentious in Ghana and remains very much linked to the organization of traditional chieftaincy. According to Ashanti custom, which has spread throughout the country, 80% of the land belongs to the traditional chiefs who are the "guardians" of the land on behalf of the community. In addition to the fact that the resources derived from land use are most often captured for the sole benefit of the family and the personal interests of the chiefs, this specificity also generates numerous conflicts. In most cases, local populations deny the legitimacy of transhumant herders who have received prior governmental authorization - the Ministry of Animal Resources and Forestry - to settle on a piece of land, under the pretext that the land belongs to the village chief. In this case, the villagers organize themselves into militias and kill the herders' animals or poison the water points, legitimizing their actions by invoking land rights and tradition. In addition, some transhumant herders sometimes attack villagers or destroy their fields before leaving the region.

This is not the case for the other two groups of people, who are also involved in land conflicts. In some cases, when a transhumant pastoralist arrives in a new locality to identify areas suitable for livestock rearing, he contacts an intermediary usually a butcher or trader - who will take him to a traditional leader. The objective is that the customary leader - most often living in a precarious situation - accepts the installation of his animals in the targeted area in exchange for the gift of one or two bulls. This process poses two major problems that fuel conflict over resources. On the one hand, transhumant herders do not communicate the real size of their herd and tend not to really respect the delimited and unmarked space. In addition, local chiefs generally do not inform other members of the community of the authorization they give to a particular herder, which may lead to hostile actions against them by local people who see them as intruders.

According to some Fulani traditional leaders interviewed in May 2021, more than 80% of transhumant herders do not present themselves to the herders' leaders when they arrive, and 70% of the conflicts related to the exploitation of natural resources are due to the anarchic installation of transhumant herders. Also, according to the Rougas association, the average fine for a herder for damage to a field is about 500,000 francs CFA [1,000 USD] in the northern region.

According to estimates from pastoralist organizations interviewed, conflicts over land and resources in northern Ghana resulted in the death of more than 400 cattle and the disappearance of more than 1000 between January and May 2021. One of the most significant incidents was a conflict between a Fulani herder and a Konkomba farmer's son in Bimbila. The son reportedly told his community that a brawl between them and Fulani had resulted in the death of two Konkomba. In response, the Konkomba organized themselves and attacked any Fulani within a radius of 80 km, destroying their property and killing several of their animals. During the same period in Magourgou, 18 herders' concessions were reportedly burned after an ox damaged a rice field. More recently, in May 2021, deadly incidents occurred over a land dispute between the Nankpantib and Nafiba in the Tingbaln locality of the Saboba District of the Northern Region. In the Savannah Region, conflicts between transhumant Fulani and sedentary communities - Konkomba and Bators - are reported to have increased, with 200 cattle killed and 600 missing between January and May 2021.

## **2. Kidnapping for ransom: a growing modus operandi in Fulani communities**

In addition to the theft of livestock, which can often reach several hundred head, particularly in the Upper West region, Ghana is experiencing a disturbing phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom which can range from 250,000 to 1,000,000 Ghanaian cedis (the equivalent of 35,000 to 140,000 euros) - within the Fulani community. This type of banditry, which originated in northern Nigeria and is mainly practiced by Nigerian herders, has been spreading throughout the coastal states since then, and 2016 particularly in Ghana since 2018.

Between February and May 2021, twelve abductions were reported between Tintampo, Paray, and Yeji. Four people were reportedly killed, including a military officer and a community leader from Tintampo, Aladji Bounti, who was murdered on his way back from a meeting aimed specifically at curbing the phenomenon of Fulani kidnappings. The suspects were reportedly from Tintampo, Yeji, Paray, Goupé, and Kowou.

There are two main modus operandi. On the one hand, Nigerian bandits may approach young people from Fulani families with a meager inheritance and offer to kidnap a wealthy relative, often because they own a large herd. This activity flourishes particularly in the localities of Bimbila, Yandi, Salga, Yeji, Goupé, Tatchima, Damongo, and Janga, and sometimes involves the complicity of certain local, traditional, and state authorities. There is another modus operandi: kidnappers may first call the victim to demand money. If the victim does not pay, he kidnaps her and asks her family for the money. If the family does not pay, the victim is executed (at

least six victims have been identified). If the victim agrees to pay, another group will call the victim back later to demand the equivalent of a ransom. Several groups of kidnappers reportedly exist in the region. The security authorities are informed of these new practices and sometimes the victims give them the numbers of their attackers.

Four Fulani kidnappers were shot dead in Busunu in the municipality of West Gonja. They were four of five armed men who had kidnapped a young Fulani girl in Kidendilenpa, a suburb of the Busunu Savannah region.

For the moment, it is mainly, if not exclusively, Fulani leaders who are victims of this phenomenon from Nigeria, although six people from other communities have also been called and summoned to pay a ransom or risk being kidnapped. The bandits speak Ashanti but are careful to specify that they are Fulani. More than one hundred victims of this form of racketeering have already been identified in northern Ghana, of whom about forty are from the Bororo community, a Fulani community living in Nigeria. The other indigenous communities have threatened the entire Fulani community with reprisals if this phenomenon becomes widespread. However, unlike the Beninese government, which reacted because of the astronomical sums of money involved, the Ghanaian authorities do not seem to have really taken the measure of the phenomenon, which they often consider to be an internal problem of the Fulani community. The fact that victims rarely turn to the police also often leads to the community being blamed for the situation.

## **III. Ghana's response: between military mobilization and regional coordination**

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### **1. At the national level: a reorganization of the security architecture and a redeployment of the FDS in the north of the country**

Promediation's interviews with Ghanaian authorities during the 2019 mission to Accra showed that Ghana's counterterrorism strategy was articulated in four components: prevention, anticipation, protection and response. Beyond the strictly security aspect, government and security officials

emphasized reducing vulnerabilities, improving governance, protecting human rights, and training state and administrative actors, particularly at the local level.

Nevertheless, the military authorities had already been preparing for some time to deal with the threat of radical groups by deploying counter-terrorism units ("Special anti-terrorist Squad") and special forces trained by British and American experts to the borders. An operation called "Conquest Fist"



began in July 2019, when additional 600 to 800 military, police and border officials were deployed to the north of the country. More recently, in May 2021, the “Eagle Claws” exercise conducted in the north of the country aimed to strengthen the capacities of the Ghanaian armed forces in the fight against terrorism. As part of their security partnership, the United Kingdom announced in September 2021 an additional £250,000 in funding to support the Ghanaian government in the implementation of four security-stabilization projects. This new funding complements a £1 million grant already allocated to support the country’s counterterrorism policy.

Ghana has also relied heavily on intelligence by bringing together several security services police, criminal investigation bureau, national investigation bureau, and National Security operators throughout the country - in a “Joint Intelligence Community” in a complementary manner. Also, to curb illegal gold mining, a military operation, “Vanguard Backup,” was put in place in 2017 and a law was passed authorizing police forces to arrest and incarcerate foreigners caught in the act of illegal gold panning.

Above all, the relative success in securing the territory can probably be attributed to a very decentralized<sup>4</sup> security architecture that allows for a fairly tight territorial network:

- The National Security Council at the national level.
- The Regional Security Council at the regional level, in the 16 regions.
- The District Security Council at the district level, in the 260 districts across the country.

Indeed, the Ghanaian authorities initiated a territorial redrawing in 2018 taking Ghana from 10 to 16 regions. The huge Northern Region was divided into three new regions: the Northern Region with Tamale as its capital, the Savannah Region and the North-East Region. Together with the Upper West Region and the Upper East Region, the northern part of Ghana now has 5 regions. Until 2018, then, the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion had sole responsibility for security in the north of the country in coordination with the northern Airborne Force, both of which were based in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana. According to a former colonel of the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion, the area to be covered, which included the three northern regions of the country Northern Region, Upper East, Upper West - was far too large for the limited resources at their disposal.

As of October 2020, the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Tamale now covers only the Northern Region and the Savannah Region - the two largest regions in Ghana - still in collaboration with the Tamale Airborne Force. The Upper West Region and Upper East Region are now covered by two new battalions the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, based in Wa (capital of the Upper West) and Bawku [the regional capital of the Upper East is Bolgatanga] respectively. Unlike the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion, the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> battalions are “mechanized” units equipped with war vehicles that will allow them to cover the borders with Burkina Faso and, in part, Togo. This mission of securing the borders is carried out in the context of the aforementioned “Conquest Fist” operation, conducted in collaboration with the police and water and forestry services. The soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> battalions also assist the police units when they are overwhelmed through the “Calm Life” operation.

This organization promotes better coordination and information sharing between the local and national levels, as well as strengthening cross-border collaboration at the level of regional security committees. This bottom-up approach to regional cooperation is complemented by Ghana’s strong activism in strengthening institutional mechanisms and regional initiatives in the area of security, notably at the ECOWAS level and through the Accra Initiative.

## **2. At the regional level: strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms through the Accra Initiative**

The Accra Initiative was created in September by 2017 Ghana, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, and Côte d’Ivoire with the objective of preventing the spread of violent extremism from the Sahel and combating transnational organized crime in border areas. Since 2018, Mali and Niger were admitted as observers because of their proximity to the coastal states and their experience in fighting violent extremism. Security actors in Guinea are particularly concerned about the evolution of the jihadist threat on the northern borders of all the coastal countries. In 2019, the kidnapping of two French tourists and the murder of their Beninese guide in the Pendjari National Park and the subsequent clashes between Beninese forces and GSIM-JNIM units in 2021 confirmed the risk of jihadist cells establishing themselves in the north of these countries.

The Accra Initiative is a cooperative and collaborative security mechanism that is based on three pillars: information and intelligence

sharing, training of security and intelligence personnel, and the conduct of joint cross-border military operations. The Accra initiative has several advantages. First, it is directly led by the Presidents and does not rely on a cumbersome administrative structure. Operationally, it relies on focal points in each member country and a central coordinator in Ghana's National Security Secretariat. This approach reduces administrative delays and facilitates communication and collaboration among members. Second, the Initiative is self-financed by member states, limiting dependence on external funding.

Several joint operations to combat insecurity in border areas have already been conducted under the Initiative. In May 2018, operation Koudalgou I allowed for a pooling of efforts, but also identified imperfections in the liaison efforts between the forces of these countries. It resulted in the arrest of "52 individuals in Burkina Faso, 42 in Benin, 95 in Togo and 13 in Ghana," according to the head of operations, Colonel Blaise Ouédraogo of the Burkina Faso army, during a debriefing at the Cinkassé border post on Burkina Faso territory.

Operation Koudalgou I was unanimously welcomed by the Ministers of Security of all member countries. Three major recommendations were made at the end of the operation: to define a clear legal framework for future operations, to plan two such operations per year, and to facilitate the interoperability of communication means. This operation was followed by a second component - Koudalgou II conducted in November 2018 by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. This operation reportedly disrupted the logistical support of groups present in the region. Abu Hamza's group (see above), then allegedly affiliated with the EIGS, would have been particularly impacted by this operation on the Burkina Faso side. Air strikes combined with a ground operation by Burkina Faso forces neutralized 16 elements of the group and arrested 8 others. Following this operation, the group was reportedly tasked with reinforcing jihadist positions along the border between Burkina Faso, Togo, and Ghana.

Although the results of the Accra Initiative remain largely unknown for the time being, despite the efforts made by the coastal states, the testimonies gathered during the field missions demonstrate the importance of this type of regional and cross-border cooperation, particularly in the fight against insecurity. The strengthening of national capacities seems to be accompanied by a strengthening of regional cooperation mechanisms at the security

level, in particular with Burkina Faso because of its central geographical position and the instability generated on its borders by the movements of populations fleeing areas under the control of jihadist groups.

The comments of the pastoral organizations are particularly enlightening because they raise one of the difficulties encountered by the states in stabilizing transboundary areas, namely the requirement for security and respect for the transhumant way of life. As a Nigerien herder points out, "Because of the presence of armed terrorist groups in the park, we are obliged to bypass the park, whereas a few years ago this area was the grazing area par excellence for us, and we made a long stopover in this area before entering Benin or Togo. From now on, for us transhumants who leave Niger to go to Ghana or Togo, we are obliged to make a tour in hostile villages Gourmantchés, because of the presence of armed terrorist groups. This new context constitutes a major handicap for us transhumants, because we are taxed both by these groups in the W Park and by the Gourmantchés, who, having founded their militias, also plunder us. Not to mention that since the beginning of the crisis situation between the communities, we can no longer go to the border post to get our papers for fear of being treated as terrorists. Even in Ghana, Togo or Benin, where the situation is less difficult than in other countries such as Niger and Burkina, we are obliged to subcontract with butchers to whom we pay a lot of money so that they go and negotiate for us the establishment of the papers and in particular the vaccination of the animals and the authorization to enter these countries. Since the beginning of this crisis in the Sahel, the coastal countries have reinforced security measures and have never been particularly supportive of the Sahel countries, nor have they helped them solve their problems. Each country is only tightening the entry measures year after year and this situation only increases our vulnerability to these armed terrorist groups."

### **3. Current limitations of Ghana's security response and recommendations of local actors for regulating transhumance**

Although certain weaknesses persist in the counterterrorism system in terms of ISR technical intelligence, the reorganization of Ghana's security apparatus has allowed for more effective networking in sensitive areas. Nevertheless, the ease of access to content conducive to online radicalization makes the work of the security forces even more complex and justifies the particular

attention paid to the preventive aspect of the fight against terrorism.

In addition to economic challenges such as the lack of equipment for the FDS, the Ghanaian authorities are also facing structural problems that fuel insecurity, in particular the community issue and the management of transhumant pastoralism. Indeed, the relationship between the various indigenous communities and the Fulani community remains delicate and subject to stigmatization. The Secretary General of Tabital Pulaaku Ghana, one of the country's main community-based NGOs, noted that 2019 "the lack of education and training for pastoralists led them to create a certain amount of tension, which the media fanned by encouraging prejudice". The authorities were apparently aware of this and declared that they were committed to fighting against discrimination, the potential consequences of which they seemed to measure. Indeed, the marginalization and stigmatization of Fulani and pastoral populations on the basis of their identity are two levers regularly used by foreign radical groups to recruit them and thus strengthen their local base. However, members of the Fulani community cite an intimidatory approach by Ghanaian security forces and fear indiscriminate repression if individuals from their community threaten state security.

The assassination of a Fulani chief in Nkawnkaw on January the 24<sup>th</sup> 2021, when he was returning from a meeting aimed at curbing the phenomenon of kidnappings, highlighted the importance of the Fulani question and pastoralism in the management of security issues for the Ghanaian authorities. This attack was taken seriously by the

Minister of Security, who set up a Fulani committee, the National Committee Forum for Pastoralists and Fulbe Development, which was tasked with drafting an exhaustive report on insecurity related to Fulani and pastoral issues, followed by recommendations. This report could eventually lead to the enactment of a law to regulate pastoralism. According to Deputy James Agalga, a member of the Parliamentary Commission on Defense and Interior, interviewed by Promediation in 2019, "pastoralism poses a major security problem". James Agalga did not advocate stopping the arrival of transhumants from abroad, but rather "finding solutions for better management of the phenomenon". At the end of its field missions, the Promediation team was able to identify various recommendations made by the community leaders it met in terms of transhumance management. Among them, the following stand out

- To ensure a better census of herders through improved communication between transhumant herders, locality chiefs, and sedentary populations, in order to negotiate acceptable and sustainable conditions of access to pastures; some suggest imposing a work contract on each herder or creating zones that allow herders to settle down;
- Organize consultation frameworks between the chiefs of the different communities, representatives of pastoral organizations, and the technical services of the State (security, defense, agriculture, livestock, environment);
- Organize consultations between Fulani leaders and the authorities in order to define an educational strategy and promote the schooling of the sons of herders.

## West Togoland, a secessionist region that worries the Ghanaian and Togolese authorities

Western Togoland is a territory of 550 km by 60 km extending along the Togolese border from Burkina Faso to the Gulf of Guinea. It has 4 million inhabitants. Initially part of the German protectorate over Togoland, it was attached to the British Gold Coast in 1916. After the Gold Coast gained independence in 1956, the people of western Togoland had to decide in a referendum whether they would remain attached to the new republic of Ghana or join Togo, still a French colony. By 2/3 of the votes, the population voted in favor of keeping Western Togoland within Ghana. But the results of the referendum never really reached a consensus.

In 2020, a secessionist movement in the Volta region - the Homeland Study Foundation - declared that it wanted to create an independent state in southeast Ghana, "Western Togoland". This movement also demands that the eastern fringe of the northern and eastern regions be attached to the Volta region as part of Western Togoland.

In the context of the jihadist threat to northern Ghana, the Ghanaian and Togolese authorities are now concerned about the creation of bridges between armed groups and independence fighters in Western Togoland. In any case, the Ghanaian authorities have made several waves of arrests of activists linked to the Homeland Study Foundation in recent years. The latest was the arrest of Georges Nyakpo, secretary of the movement, in the summer of 2021. A civil society umbrella organization, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation, of which the Homeland Study Foundation is a member, has denounced these arrests as arbitrary.<sup>12</sup>

The issue is not so much the legitimacy of these independence demands, which are stirring up many parts of the world, as the possibility of

instrumentalizing these rather minority aspirations in a context of destabilization of part of the



country. However, the national authorities seem to be taking the measure of such risks and seem to be considering some form of consultation with the populations concerned in order to strengthen their support for the national community and their resilience in the face of attempts by armed groups to exploit them.

**TOGO**

**Border areas with little armed violence but coveted by criminal groups and traffickers**

**PART II**

## I. Security situation: north togo, a highly militarized area with a fragile balance

### 1. General overview: one of the most important security systems in the sub-region

While visiting troops deployed along the Burkina Faso border, Faure Gnassingbé, campaigning for re-election, declared on February the 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, that “the [jihadist] threat is real and the pressure is very high” in the far north of Togo.<sup>13</sup> The attack of the 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 in the locality of Sanloaga, east of the Savannah region, by a group of “bandits”<sup>14</sup> from Burkina Faso seems to demonstrate the reality of the threat.<sup>15</sup> It also demonstrates that the proximity of the Savannah region to the eastern regions of Burkina Faso and the WAP (W-Arli-Pendjari) complex is now a high-risk area for authorities and local populations.

It was the 2016 attack by a heavily armed commando in the Ivorian resort of Grand-Bassam that seemed to sound the alarm for coastal countries, particularly Ghana and Togo. Thus, the Ghanaian National Security Council estimated in an internal report in spring 2016 that “Ghana and Togo [were] the next targets after the attacks in Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire.”<sup>16</sup> Over the following three years Togo will strengthen its anti-terrorism strategy and today it benefits from one of the most important security arrangements in the region.

In September 2017, Togo joined the Accra Initiative<sup>17</sup> and the military presence in the north of the country was strengthened. As part of the Initiative, Togo participated in May 2018 alongside Benin, Ghana, and Burkina Faso in Operation Koudalgou I, which engaged 2,000 FDS members in the border areas of the four countries. The operation resulted in 200 arrests, including two people suspected of being linked to jihadist<sup>18</sup> groups. In September 2018, Operation Koundjouaré, which aims to prevent the infiltration of terrorists into Togo, was launched in the Savannah region. A few months later, on February the 15<sup>th</sup> 2019, the threat became clearer with the attack on a mobile customs unit in the Burkinabe locality of Nohao on the Togolese border. This attack led to the death of four customs officers and the Spanish priest Antonio Fernandez who was on his way to Ouagadougou.

The strengthened presence of the Togolese Armed Forces (FAT) at the borders and good cooperation with the Burkinabe intelligence services led to the arrest and extradition in March 2019<sup>19</sup> of Oumaro

Diallo, alias Diawo Oumarou, as the Burkinabe jihadist leader attempted to take refuge in Togo. Relying heavily on intelligence, the Togolese government is also creating in May 2019 an inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV), whose mission is to strengthen cooperation between the population and the FDS in addition to the Koundjaré operation, but which tends to “develop a culture of intelligence”<sup>20</sup> among the population. Some analysts fear that this mixture of genres could undermine the relative confidence of the population in its armed forces in the fight against terrorism.<sup>21</sup> However, in the fight against terrorism, the Togolese population’s confidence in its armed and security forces remains higher than in other countries in the region.<sup>22</sup>

### 2. The Savannah: a region under tension and plagued by organized crime

The northern Savannah region, with a population of 860,000 in an area of 8,600 square kilometers, is home to many of the economic, social, and political problems on which criminal and jihadist armed groups have flourished in Sahelian countries: mass unemployment and chronic underinvestment in employment, infrastructure, and land use planning; remoteness from central power and a sense of marginalization of rural and northern populations from urban elites in the south<sup>23</sup>; stigmatization and underrepresentation of minority Fulani nomadic communities in local government.

The social frustrations experienced by the people of the Savannah region have recently erupted in demonstrations against local authorities, with the communes of Mango (Oti Prefecture), Mandouri (Kpendjal Prefecture) and Dapaong (Tone Prefecture and capital of the Savanes region)<sup>24</sup> being the epicenters.<sup>25</sup> Thus, during the months of February and March 2021, Mandouri saw major mobilizations of youth to demand the asphaltting of the only road linking the rural commune to Dapaong, capital of the Savannah region. In addition to the poor state of the road, which is responsible for the town’s isolation, the demonstrations were also intended to protest against the lack of infrastructure, which makes access to basic necessities such as water and electricity very difficult.<sup>26</sup> These demonstrations were violently repressed by the defense and security<sup>27</sup> forces,

primarily by units belonging to the Koundjouaré operation, which has raised suspicions among the population as to the objectives of this operation: to secure the borders or to maintain law and order?

As in the Sahel, tensions in the Savannah region are often expressed through the recurrence of community and land conflicts, often described by the actors as “traditional”. But these conflicts, whether they involve “indigenous” farmers (Mobas, Gangam, Tchokossi) among themselves or with sedentary or transhumant<sup>28</sup> “nomadic” Fulani populations, reveal first and foremost the difficulties of local and central authorities in developing a rural region subject to strong pressures on natural resources and the progression of crops.

Finally, the development of banditry and illicit trafficking - gasoline, drugs or small arms as a palliative to underemployment or as a “traditional” resource in cross-border areas represents a particular challenge in the Savannah region today. Indeed, control of the grey economy in the Sahel-Guinean area has become one of the driving forces behind the progression of Sahelian jihadist and criminal groups towards the South: Commercial crossroads conducive to business such as Cinkassé - conveniently shared between Togo and Burkina Faso - or “neglected” communes such as Mandouri - located a few kilometers from the areas of influence of criminal and jihadist groups in the Arly and Pendjari park areas - now represent probable or proven targets of armed groups. In any case, the regional gendarmerie headquarters in Dapaong does not rule out the presence of “sleeper cells” in the Savannah region.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the direct action of armed groups in the Savannah region, the apparently massive migration of unemployed youth in search of work or “adventures” in border countries, in the Sahel, and as far away as Libya can be a cause for concern because of the possibility of recruitment during their travels. This is particularly the case for those who attempt the adventure of the gold rush on illegal gold mining sites in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana or the Sahel. These sites are in many cases infiltrated by jihadist groups for whom they constitute a source of financing through the gold trade, a forum for preaching, and even a space for recruiting young people in need of guidance or money.<sup>30</sup>

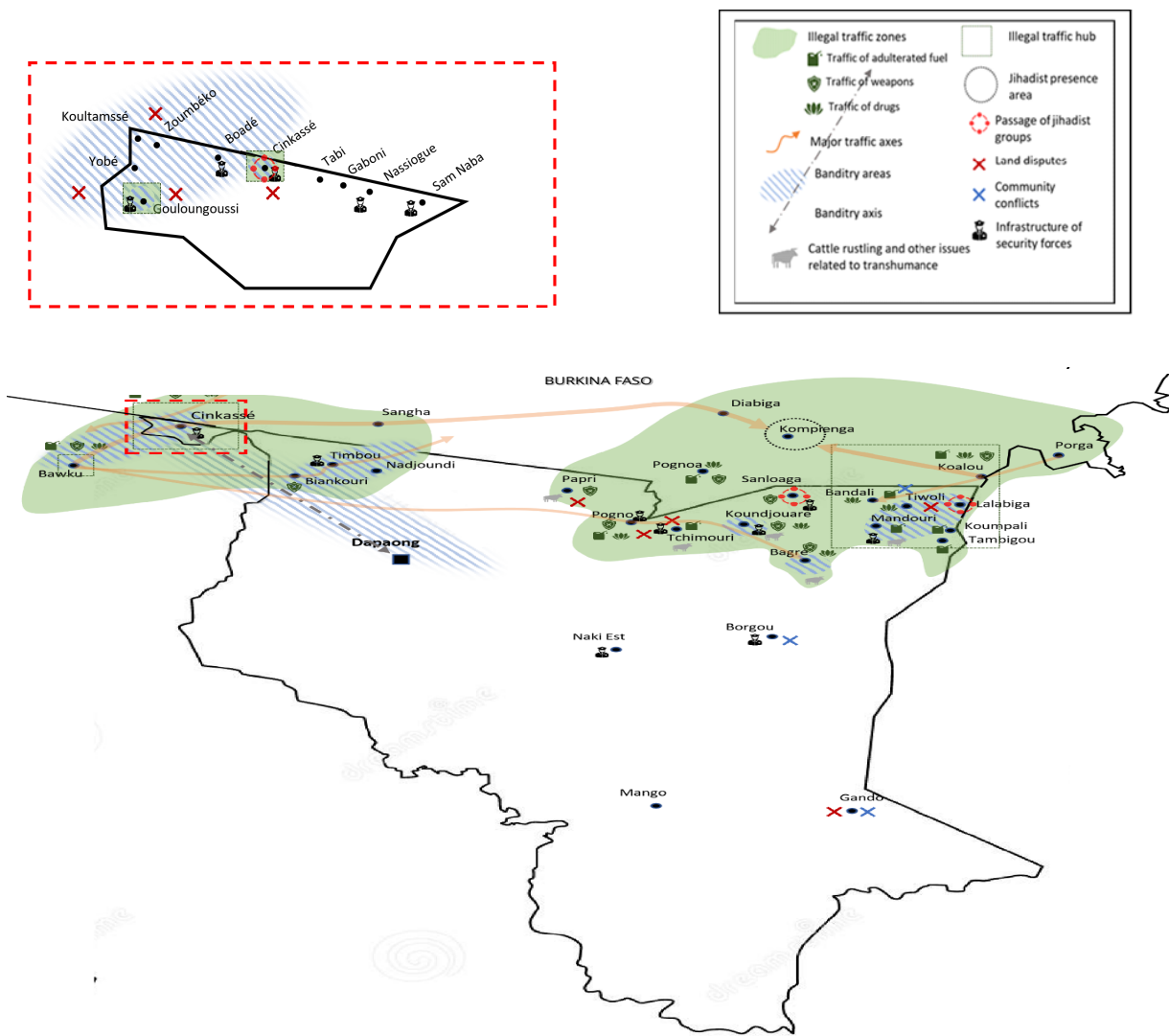
Thus, although Togo is not currently considered to be “in an alarming situation,<sup>31</sup>” the proximity of

the Savannah region to the areas of neighboring countries most exposed to jihadist violence - the eastern and central-eastern regions of Burkina Faso, and the departments of Atakora and Alibori in Benin - reinforces the fear that armed groups will take root in the Northern region and Upper west/east in Ghana - reinforces the fear that armed groups will take root, playing on the resentment of the population towards the government, inter-community tensions, and the desire to control illicit trafficking routes passing through Burkina Faso, Ghana and Benin. In any case, the various forms of violence at work in the Savannah region seem proportionally as deadly as in many vulnerable regions of Togo's neighbors: in a report published in 2021, the think tank Elva noted 78 deaths in 20 Togolese communes surveyed between March 2020 and May 2021, compared to, for example, 148 in 39 communes in northern Benin or 468 in 122 communes along the eastern/southern borders of Burkina Faso.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the Savannah region, the three northern regions of Togo - Savannah, Kara, and Centrale - are now considered “vulnerable to violent extremism” due to inter-community and political tensions and the development of a specific type of crime targeting nomadic populations or those living off livestock: cattle rustling and kidnapping for ransom. The practice, which emerged in Nigeria in 2016, is exclusive to the Fulani community and has spread to Ghana and as far as Côte d'Ivoire, crossing the Gulf of Guinea from east to west.

### **3. The prefectures of Cinkassé and Kpendjal, front lines against the jihadist threat**

Cinkassé Togo, the capital of the prefecture of the same name, is a small town of 10 to 15,000 inhabitants in the extreme northwest of Togo. It extends into Burkina Faso in the twin town of Cinkansé Burkina Faso with which it forms a cross-border urban complex of some 25,000 inhabitants.<sup>33</sup> As a dry port and historical commercial crossroads, Cinkassé derives a significant economic advantage from its status as a border post on the borders of Togo, Ghana and Burkina Faso. And if some surveys<sup>34</sup> are to be believed, the inhabitants seem to fear the repercussions of jihadism on the city's economic activity as much as on their own security.



Map 2: The north of Togo: Traffic routes to Burkina Faso © Promediation 2021.

### A thriving trafficking economy

In fact, Cinkassé and the neighboring localities of Goulougoussi appear to be the epicenters of a flourishing trafficking economy that irrigates the entire prefecture and could whet the appetites of the armed groups present on the other side of the border with Burkina Faso. From the simple smuggling of shea butter or fertilizer, through gasoline, pharmaceutical products or psychotropic drugs, to people or homemade weapons from the markets of northern Ghana, a considerable flow of more or less illicit goods passes through the prefecture of Cinkassé.<sup>35</sup> And beyond through the Savannah region, in the direction of Burkina Faso and Benin.<sup>36</sup> In the opposite direction, Togolese who have run afoul of the law willingly find refuge in Ghana.

According to testimonies collected in the surveys mentioned, the corruption of border security forces greatly facilitates the existence of this parallel trade. The security forces are all the more likely to turn a blind eye to trafficking, especially at night, since the unhealthy situation in Burkina Faso and the official closure of the border between the two countries since March 2020<sup>37</sup> have already caused a spike in food prices and anger among the population.<sup>38</sup>

In any case, the proliferation of motorcycle cabs near the bus stations of the two Cinkassés offering passage through the bush for 2,000 CFA francs [3 euros] shows that the border - at least for the passage of people - is very virtual.<sup>39</sup> This is especially true since the same communities, mostly Mossi, are found on both sides of the river that separates the two Cinkassés. In addition, Burkinabè travelers - and the defense and security forces - who want



to get to Ouagadougou from the Kompienga and the eastern region pass through Togo to avoid a dangerous journey. They enter the locality of Poni and leave via Cinkassé.<sup>40</sup> Here again, the communal identity of the populations on either side of the border makes controls particularly difficult.

### **Arrests of suspected jihadists since 2018-2019**

Despite the atmosphere of resourcefulness that still seems to prevail in Cinkassé, the population is worried because the echoes coming from the other side of the border from relatives, traders, and Burkinabe<sup>41</sup> refugees suggest the worst. This is especially true since there are increasing signs of activity by criminal or jihadist groups in the prefecture and in the Savannah region, suggesting that Cinkassé could already be a base for these groups, as some source<sup>42</sup> analyses indicate. The gendarmerie command in Cinkassé has so far limited itself to admitting that the border with Burkina Faso is a “red zone” because of population movements on both sides, and to reporting “information [concerning] suspicious movements in Cinkassé on the Burkinabe side”. However, banditry and robberies perpetrated by highway robbers, sometimes armed with assault rifles, are the primary cause of insecurity, particularly in the localities of Cinkassé, Djankouri, and Nadjoudi.<sup>43</sup>

Two facts have particularly attracted the attention of the authorities in recent years. On the one hand, there has been an increase in the number of robberies on the Dapaong-Cinkassé route, most of which have been attributed to young people from the Peuhl community, although the identity of the robbers has not always been proven. On the other hand, the increase in the number of arrests of alleged jihadists who originate from or have transited through Cinkassé and who also seem to belong to the Peuhl community as a result of the Koundjouaré operation since 2018 and 2019.<sup>44</sup>

In any case, as much as the violence against individuals, the almost systematic indexing of the Fulani community in acts of banditry or supposed jihadism is reminiscent of the mechanisms that led to the militarization of communities and to the situation of civil wars that Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso are experiencing today. In this regard, Fulani herders interviewed by Promediation are concerned about the “brainwashing that the youth of Cinkassé are beginning to undergo”.

It is therefore understandable that in this worrying context, the population welcomed the new deployment of Togolese FDS in the Cinkassé-

Gouloungoussi area in 2019<sup>45</sup> and willingly adhered to the alert and reporting protocol put in place in the main markets and town centers. The “militarization” of the prefecture thus contributes to a form of tranquilization of spirits, particularly for the NGOs that intervene in the area.<sup>46</sup> Other organizations, however, are concerned about the sudden enrichment of “young people going on adventures” and seeing “veiled women” wandering the streets. Some local program operators report a growing unease: “We feel insecure. There is something imminent”.<sup>47</sup>

### **Ferments of religious conflicts**

In parallel with the activism of armed groups and jihadists on the ground, and despite the surveillance of the authorities<sup>48</sup>, civil society actors have noted the spread of a fairly rigorous Islam in certain neighborhoods of the city of Cinkassé and in the surrounding villages. The neighborhood of Pogyogo seems to have been known for more than a decade as the home of Salafist communities, particularly Izala.<sup>49</sup> This movement appeared in Nigeria in the late 1970s and is claimed by the Sunni Group for Preaching and Jihad (Boko Haram).

In Cinkassé, as in some other places in Benin, its representatives regularly and quite violently mock the traditional Sunni practice in theological “debates” broadcast on the radio. While some of the people we spoke to admit to having some concerns about the possibility of “young people being recruited”, they also emphasize the “good relations between the communities in Cinkassé”.<sup>50</sup>

In the specific case of Pogyogo, for example, it would seem that the Izala communities are less closed in on themselves today than they used to be, largely due to the contraction of inter-community marriages.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, Muslim associations, and in particular the Muslim Union of Togo, have since 2016 initiated awareness campaigns among the Togolese faithful on the threats posed by religious sectarianism in a context of increasing armed jihadism in the sub-region. Some Muslim organizations also seem to be making the “culture of intelligence” dear to the Togolese authorities a moral obligation for their followers...<sup>52</sup>

In addition, the minority status of Islam in Togo<sup>53</sup> and the religious mix - including in the most “Islamized” regions such as the Savannah and the Central region - probably makes it more difficult for a jihadist movement to spread, capitalizing on religious and identity-based resources, as was the case in the Macina region of Mali, in the Sahelian

gourmas and in the East of Burkina Faso.<sup>54</sup> Pastoral actors interviewed by Promediation summarize this: “There is no real confidence in the state apparatus, but the jihadists do not have the same hold here as they do in the Sahel, in Liptako-Gourma. They don't have popular support.”

On the other hand, certain stigmatizing and outrageous speeches about Islam in Togolese Christian movements leave one wondering and could add fuel to the fire of inter-community tensions if the security situation in Togo were to deteriorate seriously.<sup>55</sup> In any case, there does not seem to be any evidence today of radicalization of the Muslim population in the Savannah region, of which the wearing of the veil, the submission of daily life activities to a new religious zeal, or the multiplication of radical preaching would constitute visible and obvious indicators.

### ***Prefectures of Kpendjal and West Kpendjal: the “7<sup>th</sup> continent”***

Mandouri, a rural commune of 10,000 inhabitants and chief town of the Kpendjal prefecture, occupies a symmetrical position to that of Cinkassé in the northeast of the Savannah. Consisting of an archipelago of villages lost in the bush on the borders of Burkina Faso and Benin<sup>56</sup>, it is known as “the 7<sup>ème</sup> continent” of Togo. It owes this evocative nickname largely to the near absence of practicable communication routes that isolate it from the rest of the Savannah and the country. Only a half asphalt road connects it to Dapaong, but it is not recommended to use it after dark, under penalty of being ambushed by road cutters. Added to this, massive unemployment, the crying lack of basic social services, the difficulties of access to water and the rationing of electricity to a few hours a day, all the ingredients are combined to make the area a social pot boiling.

### ***A youth in need of a future***

It was probably this deep malaise that led to major youth demonstrations in February-March 2021, officially motivated by the cessation of work to repair the Mandouri-Dapaong road. The authorities then chose to crack down by quickly mobilizing gendarmerie units belonging to the Koundjouaré anti-terrorist force. Four people were arrested, including one of the leaders of the movement. According to Amnesty International Togo<sup>57</sup>, which visited the scene, those arrested belonged to the Peuhl community and were forced to pay between 60,000 and 100,000 CFA francs [100-150 euros] for their release. According to Amnesty, this “heavy-

handed reaction” against the backdrop of what they perceive as anti-Peuhl discrimination is likely to raise tensions among local youth.<sup>58</sup> According to Amnesty, this “strong reaction” against the backdrop of what is perceived by them as anti-peuhl discrimination is likely to raise tensions among local youth, especially since it seems to be part of the usual system of petty profit and abuse of power by the security forces against the population: “Any soldier who has a checkpoint sets up a system to survive. The Fulani are especially targeted.”

In the case of anti-terrorist forces, this system of racketeering the population is all the more dangerous because it exposes the FDS to corrupt practices that undermine the security system as a whole, through a perverse pendulum effect. The Sahelian examples have shown abundantly over the past several years that armed groups have prospered in part on the small arrangements made with the FDS, particularly in cases of theft of livestock, sale of arms or military goods.

In Mandouri, almost the entire population lives from agriculture. Despite the difficulties of movement, traders come from Nigeria to buy the local production of rice, soybeans or shea butter: “They pay well,” says the permanent member of the cantonal development committee and representative of the youth in the prefecture of Kpendjal. However, population growth and the lack of available land, or its unequal distribution, is increasingly pushing young people to seek work by emigrating to the cocoa plantations of Côte d'Ivoire or to farms in Burkina Faso. The most courageous attempt the adventure to Libya or become gold miners on the clandestine gold panning sites in coastal or Sahelian countries. With all the dangers that this represents.

### ***Traffic routes, Jihad routes?***

But above all, as in Cinkassé, it is the “system D” that prevails. In Mandouri-ville and the surrounding villages, fuel is traded, particularly with neighboring Benin, for the benefit of the community, since the two prefectures of Kpendjal and Kpendjal-West have no gasoline pumps. Even the local gendarmerie brigade, which is part of the Koundjouaré operation, must officially stock up on fuel in Dapaong, some 60 km away. Half of this distance will have to be covered on a laterite track full of potholes. A few kilometers to the west, in Bagré, Ponio, or Koundjouaré - which gave its name to the anti-terrorist operation in the Savannah - things are getting a little more serious: it is drugs and/or weapons, mostly from Bawku (Ghana), that

constitute the traffickers' trade. In the east, grey economy networks "benefit" from the proximity of Koualou<sup>59</sup>, a disputed locality between Benin and Burkina Faso and a hub for trafficking in the region. Several villages cut off from Mandouri-ville by the Oti River and located in a sort of no-man's-land between Togo and Benin are also credited with trafficking activities, particularly in narcotics and adulterated gasoline: Koumpanli, Kpantanli, Tambigou and Tiwoli, which is also experiencing community tensions between Biali and Mossi from Burkina Faso who have settled in Togo.

In Togo, as in other countries of the subregion plagued by the extremist threat, the distinction between the criminal economy, banditry and jihadism is not easy.<sup>60</sup> In any case, traffic routes passing through the two major regional hubs of Cinkassé in the west and Mandouri/Koualou in the east converge on the jihadist-influenced<sup>61</sup> areas in eastern Burkina Faso: Kompienga, then Namounou - another hub for the exchange of goods from Benin - along or through the Arli Park, and from there up to Niger via Kolouaga and Garibonga.

It is notable that the Cinkassé-Kompienga traffic route along the Burkina Faso border via the localities of Sanga and Diabiga is now deserted by Burkinabe forces based in Kompienga. To get to Ouagadougou, they must transit through Togo for their own safety, where they enter at Ponio - a disputed locality between the two countries<sup>62</sup> - before exiting at Cinkassé. Since Ponio is also known to be a dangerous trafficking zone, the Ponio-Kompienga-Koualou-Mandouri quadrilateral is a particularly vulnerable area on both sides of the Togo-Burkina border.

Other localities where trafficking and jihadism intersect on the Togo-Burkina border, Lalabiga and especially Sanloaga<sup>63</sup>, experienced an incursion of armed men suspected of belonging to the jihadist movement in 2020. This was followed by settling of accounts, the causes of which remain unclear. During interviews by the Promediation mission with officials in the commune of Kpendjal<sup>64</sup>, Sanloaga was described as a "clandestine pocket". In the same vein, the small town of Gouloungoussi, which borders Cinkassé on the border with Burkina Faso, also experienced, according to local sources, "a passage of armed men" in August. This time there were no casualties. Finally, on the border with Benin, the small town of Tambingue is also reported to have experienced suspicious crossings, potentially by jihadist groups.

Phantasms or rumors, more or less well-founded, concerning a jihadist presence on Togolese soil, the fact remains that the trafficking routes which are real - that run from eastern Burkina to northern Ghana and Benin pass through the Savannah region and are always likely to favor the establishment of clandestine cells.

#### 4. The ICLEV, a civilian mechanism for the prevention of terrorism

Following the attack on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 on the Nouhao mobile post in Burkina Faso, the Togolese government supplemented its military counterterrorism apparatus with the creation of a civilian mechanism: the inter-ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV). The CIPLEV has two missions: "the eradication or significant reduction of violent extremism on Togolese territory" and "the strengthening of cooperation and collaboration between the administration, the defense and security forces, and civil society".<sup>65</sup>

The composition of the CIPLEV,<sup>66</sup> both at the central level and in its local branches, reflects the objective of coordination between the "living forces" of Togolese society and the administration. Thus, the central management body includes 18 representatives from several ministries, the general staff of the army, civil society and religious denominations. This central body reports to a monitoring committee composed of the ministers in charge of security, territorial administration, defense, finance, social action and grassroots development.

At the deconcentrated and decentralized levels, the CIPLEV has 19 prefectural committees - 7 in the Kara region, 7 in the Savannah region and 5 in the Central region - composed of 17 members - 6 representatives of the public administration, 4 representatives of the FDS, 3 representatives of civil society, 3 of religious denominations and 1 of the press. These prefectural committees are themselves federated with cantonal committees composed of local authorities and representatives of civil society. The local levels report periodically on their activities and information collected on the security situation to the prefectural committees, which in turn report to the national committee and the latter to the monitoring committee.

In addition to the Koundjouaré operation, which has a "civil action" component, the CIPLEV plays a role of "early warning, sensitization and contribution to better collaboration between the population and the security forces."<sup>67</sup>

At a deeper level, its mandate to prevent violent extremism has a strong social connotation, as its local committees must participate in “a better understanding and ownership of the challenges and needs of local communities, as well as the actions to be undertaken in order to strengthen the social contract between the state and the populations”.<sup>68</sup> This means providing answers to the lack of socio-economic prospects, marginalization and feelings of injustice or discrimination that can be used by jihadist or criminal groups. In this respect, Togo has learned from the mistakes of Sahelian strategies that have often favored a strictly security response or, on the contrary, have chosen the “laissez-faire” option on the grounds that the threat is primarily external and that “traditional sociability” is a sufficient barrier.

However, the Sahelian example has shown that joining an armed jihadist group is not simply a matter of the progression of imported radical religious currents, but is largely a response to a revolt against the poor governance of the powers that be<sup>69</sup>, the absence of basic social services, a need for protection, etc.

In practice, despite the support of international NGOs and UN agencies - West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Togo), IOM, UNDP - in the structuring, training and implementation of programs, the CIPLEV is not yet truly operational. WANEP believes that the structure is experiencing difficulties “in terms of animation” due to “a lack of personnel and resources”.<sup>70</sup> It is true that in the field, the CIPLEV agents who are supposed to be the first cogs in the early warning system are very limited in number, from 7 to 11 people per prefecture. For hundreds of localities to cover. Programs to promote the socio-economic resilience of populations co-piloted by the CIPLEV also appear to be in their infancy. They are still often pilot projects involving only a few dozen beneficiaries, such as the “Socio-economic resilience capacity building program for vulnerable youth and women” implemented in the Savannah region by two local<sup>71</sup> NGOs with the support of UNDP, IOM and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. This program, which is part of the “Support Program for the Prevention of Conflict and Violent Extremism in the Border Areas of Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo”, will involve a total of 36 beneficiaries identified in 5 of the 9 prefectures in the Savannah region.

However, the strongest criticism of the CIPLEV expressed by actors and observers concerns its political positioning, which vacillates between prevention and surveillance. Thus, according to the regional directorate of the gendarmerie in Dapaong, CIPLEV agents can collect information “on all sorts of problems that can fuel violent radicalism [...]. [This information will be the subject of reports that will be transmitted to the Ministry of Security.<sup>72</sup> In the end, the duties of the CIPLEV agents are rather vague, in line with their recruitment conditions and their “job profile”. They are often “young people between 18 and 35”, unemployed, sometimes recruited as civil servants and, secondarily and voluntarily, as agents of the local CIPLEV committee. For example, a young CIPLEV agent will be placed as a teacher or nurse in the school or health center of a locality in the prefecture in which he or she is to operate. Even when the official functions of young agents are made public, they are often perceived by the population as a cover for intelligence agents. Some local authorities do not hide the fact that they want to develop “a real culture of intelligence within the population”<sup>73</sup>. In the same way that the civilian-military component of Operation Koundjouré - also supported by NGOs such as WANEP - aims to get civilians to play a role in supporting the defense and security forces in the surveillance of high-risk border areas.

According to some observers, the consequence of this ambiguous positioning is that the CIPLEV creates a “somewhat stifling climate of policing [...] with the risk of drift”<sup>74</sup>, in particular of “personal vendettas”.<sup>75</sup> In any case, the “intelligence” orientation risks undermining prevention efforts, since local populations and actors are often reluctant to express themselves publicly especially on political issues - for fear of the consequences. As this observer abruptly summarizes: “There is always the fear that the meetings will be infiltrated by the CIPLEV”.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, the CIPLEV runs the risk of serving an instrumentalization of the fight against terrorism aimed at “producing legitimacy for power or attracting external funding” as experience has shown in the context of certain Sahelian strategies.<sup>77</sup>

## II. Cross-border transhumance, a breeding ground for community fractures?

### 1. Since 2020, a deceptive closing of the borders

On the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Togo's Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development, Antoine Lepka Gbebeni, announced in an official<sup>78</sup> communiqué that the transhumance campaign, traditionally scheduled from the 31<sup>st</sup> January to the 31<sup>st</sup> May of the current<sup>79</sup> year, would be postponed "to a later date". Although no reason was officially given, some pastoral organizations immediately justified this decision by the increase in cases of COVID-19 in the Savannah region and praised the authorities prudence<sup>80</sup>. Although this decision is consistent with the closure of land borders since March 2020, it is part of a policy to restrict cross-border transhumance from the Sahel that has been implemented since 2017 through a Transhumance Management Plan (TMP). The TMP provided for a limit of 50,000 cattle authorized to transhumance on Togolese soil "i.e., half the number of previous years".<sup>81</sup>

Note that the Togolese decision to close its border followed a similar decision by Benin in 2019<sup>82</sup>, again officially for health reasons.

However, not only has the closure of the Togolese border not been followed up, but according to the opinion of Sahelian and Togolese<sup>83</sup> pastoralists, Togo will have received more herds during the 2021 campaign than in previous years.<sup>84</sup>

Although these estimates<sup>85</sup> may be exaggerated, they are a good indication of the compromises that must be made in Togo with respect to the management of cross-border transhumance. Although the country is often considered a model of organization, it is nonetheless subject to strong security and climatic constraints on pastoral mobility in the Sahel-Guinean area. More than the administrative calendar, it is primarily "the needs of the animals" that determine the departure dates for transhumance of Malian, Nigerian or Burkinabe herders to the countries of the Gulf of Guinea.

Beyond the effects of the announcement, the complete and real closure of a border potentially condemning tens of thousands of head of cattle, their owners and families to a severe food crisis seems to be a difficult challenge to meet. In fact, this year, as in previous years, most of the Sahelian

herds had already crossed the Togolese border several months before the official opening of the transhumance campaign, which was cancelled two days before it took effect. As in neighboring Benin, local arrangements between herders and pastoral organizations, administrative and customary authorities, and security forces have belied national decisions. And it seems to have been successful, since the interviews conducted by the Promediation mission with herders' organizations and the security forces in the transhumance regions of northern Togo - Savannah, Kara and Centrale - indicate that the number of serious incidents has been fairly limited.<sup>86</sup>

### *More flexible management of transhumance*

Although in an informal manner, the management of the 2021 campaign by local authorities in Togo and Benin has been in line with a long-standing demand by some pastoral organizations in the subregion: that of relaxing the schedule and procedures for transhumance in coastal countries<sup>87</sup>, which are considered too rigid. The pastoral organizations are relying in particular on Decision A/DEC of 1998 on the free movement of goods and persons within ECOWAS to obtain recognition of what they consider to be an unassailable right against the regulations deemed authoritarian by the coastal states.

In essence, herders and pastoral organizations believe that the authorized period for transhumance in coastal countries - roughly between January and May - does not take into account the actual availability of natural resources - water points, biomass.<sup>88</sup>

In Sahelian countries during the dry season. Nor does it take into account their limited accessibility in a context of competition and high political and security volatility. However, all of these factors have a profound effect on transhumance routes and flows, particularly along the "central corridor" that links Sahelian countries to those of the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>89</sup> For the past decade, transhumance has become an uncertain adventure, the success of which depends above all on the adaptability, speed of reaction and social network maintained by the herders throughout the journey.

However, if the decisions of Togo and Benin to close their borders to Sahelian transhumance had been applied to the letter, they would undoubtedly have worsened the situation of the 25,000 transhumant herders and 540,000 head of livestock stranded<sup>90</sup> at the beginning of 2021 in the regions of Dosso and Tillabéry (Niger), East and Center-East (Burkina Faso), and the Savannah region (Togo).<sup>91</sup> Already exposed to attacks by armed groups, pastoralists have also often found themselves caught in agro-pastoral conflicts due to increased competition for natural resources in their home communities. These conflicts may have pitted indigenous herders against transhumant herders or herders against farmers, particularly because of the damage to fields caused by unusual early, massive or late border crossings.<sup>92</sup>

The implementation of mechanisms for the management and negotiated resolution of conflicts involving pastoral organizations, administrative and customary authorities, and community leaders at various levels has helped to keep the number of deaths and forced displacements relatively low in the regions mentioned.<sup>93</sup> This is particularly true in Togo, a country that is considered to be at the forefront of transboundary transhumance management because of “regulations and facilities that guarantee a quality welcome<sup>94</sup>” to herders, even if it is outside the legal transhumance dates.

## **2. A country with a strong tradition of hospitality and business**

The cross-border area between the East and Center-East regions of Burkina Faso and the Savannah region of Togo has a long tradition of transhumant herding and pastoralism. Following the great droughts in the Sahelian countries<sup>95</sup> and the decrease in the number of areas where transhumant herders could settle in the south of Burkina Faso, Niger and, to a lesser extent, Benin, herders - mostly Fulani - settled in the north of Togo, where they created reception networks for transhumants arriving from their regions of origin.

The Savannah region is thus gradually developing a strategic position between the transhumance and livestock marketing routes of northern Ghana, eastern Burkina Faso and northern Benin.<sup>96</sup> Official Togolese statistics quoted in a study by the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)<sup>97</sup> counted between 2007 and 2014 an annual average of 20,000 cattle in transhumance to Burkina Faso<sup>98</sup>, with records of 35,000 and 42,000 in 2008 and 2013, placing Togo well ahead

of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and even Ghana.

Like many of its neighbors, in the 2010s Togo set up a national transhumance<sup>99</sup> committee that prepares the campaign each year “in consultation with its Burkinabe counterpart”.<sup>100</sup> However, this statement is qualified by the Burkinabe pastoral organizations, which believe that the Togolese authorities impose rather than negotiate the terms of transhumance on their soil.<sup>101</sup>

In particular, the Togolese government is accused of unilaterally setting the timing and level of the tax imposed on herders entering the country - 5,000 CFA francs [10 USD] /cattle and 500 CFA francs [1 USD] /small ruminant, according to the PGT scale.<sup>102</sup> This sum is to be used to fund a compensation fund for landowners in the event of damage to their fields.

While Colonel Agadazi, Minister of Livestock from 2012 to 2019<sup>103</sup>, welcomes the creation of this insurance policy for the benefit of owners, pastoral organizations consider the amount to be far too high. Especially since this tax is required for each move to a new prefecture.<sup>104</sup> In addition, there are other more or less legal fees that the herder must pay to the communal administrations or the security forces at the checkpoints that block the roads... A prefect of Kpendjal, who was recently dismissed, had apparently set up a veritable racket of transhumant herders with the complicity of certain Rougas, representatives of Sahelian herders in Togo.<sup>105</sup>

These deviations aside, pastoralism represents a non-negligible source of financing, which makes Sahelian pastoralists say that “Togo knows the value of transhumance and knows how to take advantage of it very well”. In fact, according to CIRAD, the levies collected by the prefectures and communes on annual or commercial transhumance contribute significantly to their empowerment<sup>106</sup>: the amount of transactions on the Koundjouré<sup>107</sup> livestock market in 2015 and 2016 amounted to some 1.5 billion CFA francs [2,280,000 euros], including 10 million [15,220 euros] in taxes for the local community of Kpendjal, or 16% of its budget.

Another important fact, according to CIRAD, is that “imports supply a meat market with a structural deficit [...] 55,000 cattle were slaughtered in 2016 but this national production is insufficient.” These figures seem to refute the relevance of the strategy of “nationalization” of livestock and promotion of agro-pastoralism pursued by Togo, like other coastal<sup>108</sup> countries. It should also be noted that the cancellation of the 2021 pastoral campaign seems to have significantly increased the price

of beef in the Savannah region: according to the farmers interviewed by Promediation, beef that used to sell for 350,000 CFA francs [532 euros] now sells for 500,000 CFA francs [760 euros] on the Koundjouaré market and for one million CFA francs on the secondary resale market in Cinkassé, the commercial gateway to Ghana.

### **Persistent difficulties**

Despite the spirit of seriousness and efficiency attributed to the Togolese<sup>109</sup> CNT and the implementation of the Transhumance<sup>110</sup> Management Plan in 2017, the Savannah region still faces significant difficulties: competition for resources between indigenous and transhumant herders due to the constant increase in livestock numbers associated with an advance of the agricultural front to the detriment of pastoral<sup>111</sup> areas; difficult access to water points (ponds, rivers, dams) on marked transhumance trails particularly on the marketing trails directed towards Ghana and in the Oti prefecture...<sup>112</sup>

For all that, there as in the rest of the country, the TMP taken in response to the “events” that marred the 2016 campaign - 219 devastations of fields, 38 unexplained “incidents” and 7 deaths, according to official statistics reported by CIRAD - seems to have borne fruit for three years. Thus, according to the same statistics the cases of devastation at the national level had fallen to around 80 in 2018 and 2019 and the number of deaths to... zero.

And the authorities emphasized the success of the TMP and the efforts made by Togo to “mark out the majority of transhumance corridors, develop reception and transit areas by building water points, boreholes, and overburdening ponds”.<sup>113</sup>

The situation turned around in November 2020. During a workshop in Kara, the authorities drew up a “disturbing” assessment of the pastoral campaign<sup>114</sup>: 130 cases of devastation, 12 deaths, 1,600 refugees and 10 million CFA francs [15,220 euros] in compensation to owners of damaged fields. And the Atlantic Infos information site, which covered the debates, listed the traditional reasons for the increase in conflicts between herders and farmers: the early entry and late departure of transhumant herders, the non-respect of entry points, night grazing, the complicity of sedentary people, and the displacement of transhumant herders outside of the corridors.... General Yark Damehane, Minister of Security, who co-chaired the workshop in Kara with the Minister of Agriculture Antoine Lepka Gbebeni, commented: “12 deaths is

too many for our country”.

According to the rest of the article, while recalling the importance of cross-border pastoralism, the recommendations made at the end of the workshop emphasized support for the development of sedentary agro-pastoralism.<sup>115</sup> Two months later, Togo cancelled the 2021 transhumance campaign after having allowed the majority of herders to cross the border without fanfare in November.

### **3. The security consequences of a double-edged strategy**

In this context, the potentially dangerous consequences of a double-edged strategy that promotes the development of sedentary agro pastoralism on the one hand, and benefits from the economic spin-offs of transhumance regulated in a relatively vague manner on the other, can be questioned.

In the first place, although the number of land conflicts related to transhumance appears to be lower in Togo than in many neighboring countries, the degree of tolerance of Togolese society towards them is in inverse proportion. This is evidenced by the indignant tone with which the media report the violence linked to transhumance, which often contrasts with the fatalism of their Sahelian counterparts. But above all, in Togo as elsewhere, land conflicts are always likely to ignite community tensions. The Fulani community appears to be particularly stigmatized today, while agro-pastoral conflicts, which are essentially socio-economic in nature, promote the insidious construction of the image of the “violent Fulani”.<sup>116</sup> The way in which the Minister of Security and Civil Protection analyzed the causes of the violent episodes of the 2020 pastoral campaign in an interview is quite eloquent: “When animals devastate the crops of a farmer, who thus sees his entire field disappear, this gives way to scenes of discontent that degenerate. Inversely, Fulani, sometimes even without cattle, sometimes attack farmers with machetes. The reaction of the people will also be violent”.<sup>117</sup> He continues: “The corridor designed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the passage of livestock is now occupied by houses and fields [...] which makes it difficult to control the transhumance”. This is one of the reasons why some actors recommend that the state should buy back the land constituting the transhumance corridors and guarantee their effectiveness in order to avoid conflicts.

The fact that the Minister of Security seemed powerless at the time explains in part the

vicious circle in which transhumant herders find themselves today: either they respect the formal rules of the PGT and the allocated corridors at the risk of not having access to the resources necessary for their livestock, or they take the side roads<sup>118</sup> and expose themselves to conflicts with the sedentary populations and, sometimes, to a form of racketeering by the authorities.

This is because land conflicts - which are not limited to transhumant and sedentary populations - have not so far led to the formation of community<sup>119</sup> self-defense militias. This is probably largely because conflict prevention and management mechanisms effectively<sup>120</sup> limit the severity of incidents between farmers and herders. This is the case of the agents of the Mandouri police station, who testify that the local transhumance committee is regularly informed by informants about the presence of transhumant herders in a given locality. As for the Rougas, the mayor of Kpendjal I believes that they are correctly carrying out their mission of sensitizing transhumant herders so that they return to the border when the rainy season arrives. This shows a certain fairness on the part of an elected official who does not mince his criticism of cross-border transhumance<sup>121</sup>...

In the case of the transhumant population, the conflict prevention and management mechanisms seem to be working well in terms of containing violence, but they are also likely to fuel resentment between the sedentary and transhumant populations. This is due to the fact that the authorities belong to sedentary communities, which transhumant people often consider to be unfavorable.

Thus, in the case of field damage, when the parties do not reach an amicable agreement, the commander of the gendarmerie brigade has an agricultural technician carry out an expertise, which determines the amount of compensation due according to the damage observed. However, according to several representatives of Togolese livestock breeders' organizations, it is common for the amount demanded to be as high as 100,000 CFA francs [152 euros]. According to a Rouga from the Savanes region, "the Mobas technicians evaluate the indemnities above a normal amount of 5 to 25,000 CFA francs [7 to 38 euros]". In addition, 25,000 CFA francs [38 euros] are added for the travel expenses of the gendarmerie and the agricultural technician<sup>122</sup>, which are also charged to the farmer... A farmer from Dapaong concludes: "The farmers pay all the way anyway". The possibility of setting high compensation is also based on

a system of collective responsibility that obliges herders transhumant near the site of a dispute to pay the repairs requested from an insolvent or runaway herder.

In the end, the often negative image associated with transhumance across the border ends up reflecting on all the communities of sedentary herders or those practicing small-scale transhumance in the interior of the country: "When the transhumants who are at fault are no longer there, we attack the sedentary Fulani".<sup>123</sup>

In a perverse effect, while sedentary Fulani herders are often quick to recognize the abusive behavior of some transhumant herders, they refrain from collaborating with the justice system or local transhumance committees for fear of reinforcing negative stereotypes: "Most often the locals know those who do damage. They know the herders who come. But since the Peuhl community is marginalized, there are no denunciations so as not to stigmatize them further".<sup>124</sup>

### ***The fight against terrorism, a breeding ground for community tensions?***

Beyond the resolution of land conflicts, the stigmatization of Fulani populations also has repercussions in the fight against jihadist and criminal groups in Togo. As in Sahelian countries, the strategy for containing extremist violence relies heavily on prevention and therefore on the collaboration of the populations - especially "nomads" - with the justice system and the defense and security forces.

However, far from strengthening national unity, the anti-terrorist measures, and in particular Operation Koundjouré, have tended to accentuate community divisions by felling suspicions that the Peul and transhumant populations are in collusion with jihadist and criminal groups. In addition to the systematic controls denounced by pastoralist organizations, Fulani populations throughout the country have been victims of serious rights violations, even outside the "terrorist" context.<sup>125</sup> In Anié, for example, in 2020, following a local conflict involving Nigerian pastoralists who crossed the central region "armed and with herds of up to 1,000 head," the authorities increased the number of arbitrary arrests of local Fulani herders.<sup>126</sup> More seriously, the interventions of Operation Koundjouré as part of joint operations with Burkina Faso in 2018-2019 led to the arrest of about 100 people "not all of them criminals," according to the admission of the Dapaong gendarmerie



leadership. As a result of this raid, the relative of a Togolese pastoral organization leader, whose main fault seemed to be that he was a Fulani of Malian nationality, was held in preventive detention for 19 months. He explained: "There were raids on the livestock markets of Kpendjal, Cinkassé, and Korbango. About sixty people were arrested, for one or two wanted persons. Without any prior sensitization. The military just said 'we want you to collaborate,' but collaboration with the army is difficult."

This image of the "foreign and radicalized" nomad is all the more distorted because a certain number of Fulani residing in the territory, although of Sahelian origin - particularly Burkinabe - and transhumant, are nonetheless Togolese and "indigenous," sometimes for several generations.<sup>127</sup> The Sahelian transhumant herders have often forged ties with local communities through long campaigns that have brought them back to the same villages each season for many years. Moreover, as some herders point out, "the natives also entrust their herds to Fulani herdsman" or conversely "some Sahelian herders sometimes leave their animals behind until the next transhumance".<sup>128</sup>

This is the very link with local communities that allows the herders' representatives, particularly the Rougas, to play their role as mediators between transhumant herders, administrative and customary authorities, and security forces in the event of conflict. This is precisely the local roots that should have enabled them to fulfill their information obligations within the framework of the CIPLEV and the Koundjouaré operation. The Rougas, like the village chiefs, are currently obliged to report to the authorities the passage of any unknown person in the localities.<sup>129</sup> And while it is true that cross-border transhumance routes particularly entry points in the Koundjouare, Mandouri and Ponio (Savanes), Madjatoum and Nadoba (Kara) areas<sup>130</sup> and livestock markets could potentially be used by jihadist groups to establish themselves clandestinely in Togo, "winning the hearts and minds" of herders should be a priority.<sup>131</sup>

However, as we have seen for several years in the Sahel, because of the multiple exactions suffered, the Peul and transhumant populations are not very inclined to collaborate with the security forces. This may have consequences for the fight against a new form of crime that affects this community: kidnapping<sup>132</sup> and, to a lesser extent, cattle rustling. The practice of kidnapping for ransom appeared in Nigeria in 2016 and has spread from east to west across the Gulf of Guinea in recent years. It often affects families with a reputation for affluence, and while Nigerian or Beninese<sup>133</sup> Fulani are frequently blamed for the kidnappings, in most cases the kidnappers have local support, including within the families of those kidnapped.

In Togo, the phenomenon seems to be more prevalent in the Central and Kara regions. According to the president of a pastoralist organization, there have been 10 abductions in 3 or 4 months in the Bassar/Bafilo area (Kara): "The large herders who have up to 400 or 500 herds are targeted by abductions. They are not convinced by sedentarization". Yet sedentarization reduces insecurity. As can be seen, this form of intra-community banditry also crystallizes the oppositions between "sedentary indigenous" and "transhumant foreign" herders. In the Central region, there have been seven kidnappings in one year on the Tchamba-Tchaoudj-Blitta road, for ransoms of up to 6 million CFA francs [9,000 euros].<sup>134</sup> The methods used seem to be becoming more and more violent: "If the ransom does not come quickly, now they kill."

In addition to kidnapping, herders - both sedentary and transhumant - are also victims of livestock theft in the three main transhumance regions - Savanes, Kara, and Centrale. While some thefts can involve up to 100 animals, they are often more modest, involving 5 to 10 cattle.<sup>135</sup> In order to protect returning herders from such abuses, the Mandouri Defense and Security Forces reportedly frequently spent "the night in the camps" at the end of the transhumance.<sup>136</sup>





## Conclusion

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There is now little doubt that Sahelian armed groups are expanding towards Ghana and Togo as well as other coastal countries. The presence of Ghanaian fighters in training camps in Mali and Niger and their “resettlement” in their villages of origin show that the armed “jihadist” organizations have well-established logistical networks in northern Ghana.

In Togo, the attack of the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, on the town of Sanloaga was a wake-up call, reminding the authorities that despite a substantial military presence deployed since 2018, the border areas with Burkina Faso remain permeable and subject to a fragile balance.

However, the political authorities and security officials of both countries<sup>137</sup> are acutely aware of the challenges posed by the terrorist threat, not only in terms of security but also in political and social terms. Thus, the fight against organized crime, whose networks intersect with those of radical armed groups, is clearly a priority.

The underground economy - gold, drugs, arms, or fuel not only provides armed groups with financial resources, but also offers them the possibility of control over the areas crossed by the trafficking routes that stretch from Bawku (eastern Ghana) to Mandouri (eastern Togo), and from there converge on the jihadist stronghold of Kompienga (southeastern Burkina Faso) before continuing on to Benin or Niger through the W-Arly-Pendjari complex.

The control of cross-border areas is also a major issue for the peaceful management of the great transhumance by Togo and Ghana, whereas the theft or “taking” of livestock in payment of the zakat often leads to the transformation of certain traditional transhumance and livestock-raising areas into no-man’s-land as a result of the avoidance of high-risk corridors by herders.

This avoidance strategy symmetrically leads to increased pressure on natural resources in the areas of withdrawal, thus multiplying the risks of land and community conflicts between herders and sedentary people, “foreigners” and “natives,” which armed groups use to their advantage.

It seems, therefore, that the prevention of the terrorist threat depends first of all on a better political and social integration of the populations living in the “peripheral” zones in northern Ghana and Togo. While there is no deliberate policy of discrimination against any particular community especially nomadic or Peul - the feeling of marginalization appears to be a major driving force behind the involvement of young people in armed and criminal groups.

This is an adventurous opportunism or individual despair that feeds the insurgent expression of collective frustrations at a higher level.

Asserting the presence of the state in “disputed areas” by improving access to basic social services, carrying out structuring projects and strengthening dialogue between the security forces and the population appears to be one of the pillars of the counter-terrorism strategy, alongside the strictly security aspect.

In terms of security, in addition to the redeployment of military forces to their northern borders, already largely implemented by Togo and Ghana, strengthening collaboration between Sahelian and coastal countries in regional mechanisms such as the Accra Initiative appears to be another priority.

This includes strengthening the practical and functional nature of cooperation between the intelligence and security apparatuses of member countries in order to prevent the “physical establishment” of armed groups in “areas from which it would then be difficult to dislodge them,” according to the analysis of a security official.

The deepening of the strategy of cooperation between the countries of the Accra Initiative is aimed at joint military operations such as Koudalgou 1 and 2, as well as the exchange of intelligence and analysis to trace the movements and activities of armed groups or to detect weak signals of religious radicalization in high-risk areas.

At the same time, the expansion of the initiative to other countries in the subregion - first and foremost Guinea, which is probably already in the sights of armed groups - should make it possible

*The jihadist threat in northern Ghana and Togo:*

to counter the international jihadist movement. “If terrorist groups don’t have borders, we shouldn’t have borders either,” said another security official.



1 Northern Gulf of Guinea countries, the new frontier for jihadist groups, Promediation-KAS, March 2021.

2 *ibid*

3 Restricted Seminar: The Jihadist Threat in Northern Ghana and Togo: State of Play and Prospects, Promediation-KAS, Lomé, November 18-19, 2021.

4 Quoted in "Menace jihadiste - Les Etats du Golfe de Guinée au pied du mur", A. Tisseron, Thomas More Institute, March 2019.

5 The attack was carried out on November the 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 by "bandits" from Burkina Faso. <https://togobreakingnews.info/togo-attaque-terroriste-a-kpendjal-un-renfort-deploye/>

6 Banditry and radicalization are intertwined in the gold mining areas of northeast Côte d'Ivoire and northwest Ghana. For example, the gold mining sites near the villages of Chache and Bole, which are home to populations from all over the sub-region, could currently harbor armed groups affiliated with jihadist movements.

7 Jihadist elements are reportedly present in the W-Arly-Penjari park area between Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger, but also in the Diefoula forest and the Comoé park in Côte d'Ivoire to secure their access to Ghanaian territory. Indeed, the control of wooded areas appears to be an objective of primary importance for armed groups. First, the vegetation cover is of obvious military interest, as it allows them to establish protected rear bases and exploit local resources. Secondly, by exploiting the frustrations of local populations who are excluded from the exploitation of resources which they consider to be partly owned, armed groups strengthen their influence over these areas, which can thus be used as recruitment pools.

8 Launched in 2018, Operation Koundjouré is designed to combat banditry, cross-border crime and terrorism in northern Togo.

9 The CIPLEV has a central body composed of representatives of various civil and defense ministries, civil society and religious organizations. It has local branches in 19 prefectures of the 3 northern regions of Togo: Savannah, Kara and Centrale.

10 The Accra Initiative was established in September 2017 by Ghana, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire with the objective of preventing the spread of violent extremism from the Sahel and combating transnational organized crime in border areas. As of 2018, Mali and Niger have been admitted as observers due to their proximity to the coastal states and their

experience in countering violent extremism. The Accra Initiative is a cooperative and collaborative security mechanism that is based on three axes: information and intelligence sharing, training of security and intelligence personnel, and the conduct of joint cross-border military operations.

11 The pastoral campaign that was supposed to start on January the 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 in Togo was thus cancelled two days before its entry into force.

12 "Ghana, the Volta region demands independence," Deutsche Welle, 9/25/2020, <https://www.dw.com/fr/ghana-la-r%C3%A9gion-de-la-volta-exige-son-ind%C3%A9pendance/a-55058180> "Ghana tackles the separatist dream of Western Togoland", Le Monde, 5/14/2019, [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/05/14/le-ghana-s-attaque-au-reve-separatiste-du-togoland-occidental\\_5461871\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/05/14/le-ghana-s-attaque-au-reve-separatiste-du-togoland-occidental_5461871_3212.html) "UNPO calls for the release of Western Togoland leaders", UNPO, 17/08/2021 <https://unpo.org/article/22153>

13 *Le Monde*, February 18, 2020.

14 <https://togobreakingnews.info/togo-attaque-terroriste-a-kpendjal-un-renfort-deploye/>

15 This attack could in fact be the second in this locality. Indeed, there is still some doubt about the incursion of armed men near Sanloaga in the eastern Savannah region in November 2020, which Togolese authorities have offhandedly described as an attack on the defense and security forces.

16 Quoted in "Jihadist Threat - Gulf of Guinea States at the Wall", A. Tisseron, Thomas More Institute, March 2019.

17 The Accra Initiative launched in 2017 brings together Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin. It aims to prevent the terrorist threat in the Gulf of Guinea countries and fight against cross-border crime. It is a cooperation and collaboration mechanism bringing together political and security officials from member countries and is based on three pillars: intelligence sharing, joint security and intelligence training, and joint military operations in cross-border areas.

18 In "Menace jihadiste...", *op. cit.*

19 This arrest was preceded by the arrest of some "alleged terrorists" from Burkina Faso who were extradited to Burkina Faso.

20 Interview with the judicial authorities of the Savanes region.



21 In a June 2021 report, the think tank Elva estimated that despite tensions due to accusations of authoritarianism by the opposition, the Togolese population's confidence in its government and military forces with regard to counterterrorism was higher than in neighboring countries. The report covers the border areas of Niger, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin, and Togo: Tracking Violent Extremism Spillover from the Sahel to Littoral West Africa, Analytical Report, Elva, June 2021.

22 Ibid.

23 Although the north of Togo, in the broadest sense, can be considered the stronghold of the regime, since the Kara region is the homeland of the Gnassingbé dynasty. Within this group, which is supposedly rather favorable to the regime, the cities of Dapaong, Cinkassé (Savannah region - prefectures of Cinkassé and Tône) and Mandouri (prefecture of Kpendjal) appear to be "eager for change" (interview with a consultant from Elva Community Engagement, Lomé). According to some estimates, three-quarters of the leaders of the security forces come from the North and belong mainly to the Kabyè, the Gnassingbé community (in "Tracking Violent Extremism Spillover...", op. cit.).

24 <https://letempstg.com/2017/02/27/dapaong-police-disperse-manifestation-deleves-public/>

25 The localities of Gando and Faré (Oti prefectures) are also experiencing tensions between the population and the authorities.

26 The commune of Mandouri has a limited supply of electricity for a few hours a day, and in the absence of passable roads and hydraulic infrastructures, access to drinking water remains a challenge for the population.

27 These protest movements may also be an echo of the broader political crisis that has shaken Togo since 2017 when the opposition and civil society had risen up against the reform of the Constitution providing for the removal of the limit to the renewal of the presidential term. The country had then experienced in several cities major demonstrations for the restoration of the presidential term limit to a duration of 5 years renewable once. These movements led to violent and sometimes deadly repression, as in Sokodé on November 7, 2017. The situation now seems to have calmed down in the capital of the Central region, but "resentment remains" (interview with Amnesty International Togo, Lomé, 19/07/21). Demonstrations against the "authoritarian" government continued until the 2020 presidential elections, which Faure Gnassingbé won comfortably. In 2019, the Togolese parliament finally voted to reinstate the presidential term limit of five years, renewable once, but starting

in 2020. Faure Gnassingbé, who has been in power since 2005, will therefore theoretically be able to hold the supreme office until 2030. The Gnassingbe dynasty has ruled Togo since Gnassingbe Eyadema came to power in 1967.

28 The Gando area, in the southern Oti prefecture, is the scene of "historic" land conflicts between the Gangam and Tchokossi communities that took a serious turn in the 1990s. Despite the interposition of military forces, two deaths had occurred in the weeks preceding Promediation's mission and several cases were still pending before the courts. Still in South Oti, the cycle of communal revenge also pits the Mobas against the Tchokossis.

29 Interview, 7/23/21.

30 Interviews with security officials in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

31 Interview with Elva Community Engagement consultant, Lomé, 7/20/21.

32 "Tracking Violent Extremism Spillover..." op. cit. op. cit.

33 The border, a colonial legacy, is marked by a river cutting the city in two. You can cross from Togo to Burkina by taking a bridge.

34 "Tracking Violent Extremism Spillover..." op. cit.

35 The recourse to the grey economy seems all the more legitimate to the population as they feel" that they don't owe anything to the government because it is not the government that supports the people".

36 Because of its favorable geographical position, and in particular its proximity to the Ghanaian town of Bawku - a center for the manufacture of handmade weapons - Cinkassé is an important platform for illegal trafficking in the sub-region. For example, weapons produced in Bawku and marijuana cultivated in the Upper East Region of Ghana are trafficked via Cinkansé to Burkina Faso. Gasoline trafficking is also very important. The trafficking route passes directly into the city or nearby through the localities of Biankouri and Timbou. Biankouri is known as a transit point for arms trafficking. Another route runs from Burkina through Togo to Ghana via the towns of Koultamssé and Zoumbéko. In addition to geographical proximity, the organization of trafficking networks is probably based on community links between populations established on both sides of the borders: Mossi, Gourmantchés between Togo and Burkina, or Mobas between Togo and Ghana.

37 Officially because of COVID 19, but the extension



of the State of Health Emergency in Togo until today and the measures restricting gatherings indicate that it is more of a security measure.

38 A customs post was set on fire by an angry population because of the arrest of a young man trafficking in gasoline.

39 "COVID 19 et fermeture des frontières : me métier de passeur fait recette à Cinkansé", L'express du Faso, <https://www.lexpressdufaso-bf.com/COVID-19-et-fermeture-des-frontieres-le-metier-de-passeur-fait-recettes-a-cinkanse/>. Undated.

40 Interviews at the Savannah Regional Directorate of the Gendarmerie (Dapaong, 23/07/21).

41 According to testimonies gathered by the Promediation mission, nearly 200 Burkinabe Fulani refugees crossed the border to find refuge in Cinkassé. Mango (capital of the Oti prefecture), the second largest town in the Savannah region, has also had some 200 refugees for the past two years who "arrived with their oxen and were not declared" (interview with the focal point of a pastoral organization).

42 Resource persons, familiar with the Malian and Burkinabe terrain.

43 Interviews, Cinkassé, 24/07/21.

44 Operation Koundjouré is making a first net with the arrest of about thirty Bukinabè Fulani in the Savannah region in 2018/2019. The majority came from Cinkansé. More recently, two young Fulani from Cinkansé on their way to Benin were arrested with Amadou Koufa's preaching on their cell phones. This type of arrest has occurred in the past.

45 After the attack of Nohao (Burkina Faso) located at about thirty kilometers only from Gouloungoussi.

46 Interview with the Catholic Relief Service office (Lomé, 18/07/2021). CRS conducts school feeding and social cohesion programs in the prefecture of Cinkassé and the Kara region.

47 Interviews with a local NGO promoting women's rights and with the NGO 3AS, a CRS partner in Dapaong (Dapaong, July 25, 2021).

48 Preaching in mosques was monitored by police and gendarmerie forces. A radical Nigerian imam was extradited in July 2021 and a preacher in Mango who gave anti-Western sermons was chased away "by the youth" (interviews with the regional gendarmerie, Dapaong, 7/23/21). This does not prevent the dissemination of "radical" preaching in the public space, particularly by means of vehicles equipped

with megaphones that circulate in the streets of Cinkassé. However, this seems to remain in the realm of freedom of expression.

49 In French, "Société pour l'élimination de l'innovation et le rétablissement de la tradition". A whole program...

50 Interviews with Fulani herders (Cinkassé, 25/07/21).

51 Interview with the president of the Union Musulmane du Togo for the Savannah region (Dapaong, 7/27/21). The imam noted that inter-community marriages had become a necessity for the Izala because of the small size of the community and that this had led almost mechanically to a normalization of their relations with other Muslims.

52 This is the case of the Abdou Hassouna Foundation for Charity and Faith (interviews with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Dapaong, 24/07/2021).

53 Broadly speaking, Islam accounts for 20% of the population in Togo and is thus in third place behind Christianity (50%) and animism (30%). More than the regions or prefectures, it is the cities that concentrate Muslim majorities: Dapaong (Savannah) or Sokodé (Central region), in the latter case the Central region as a whole is described as "a melting pot".

54 Jihadist groups have played on a historical ethnic-religious identity in these regions: the Peul empire of Macina in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Liptako emirate founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the present-day Soum province.

55 Volunteers from the Episcopal Council for Justice and Peace of Togo in Dapaong who work on social cohesion programs readily analyze the situation in the Sahel in terms quite similar to a religious war. In addition four mosques had been burned in Lomé in July 2018, and sacred texts torn up. This act of vandalism likely had a political meaning: while the country was traversed by waves of major protests against the power, political leaders had accused the imams of wanting to Islamize Togo. Proof, however, that in Togo, as elsewhere, the religious argument is always susceptible to instrumentalization (see "Au Togo, les attaques contre les mosquées resserrent les liens", La Croix, 10/08/2018, <https://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Au-Togo-attaques-contre-mosquees-resserrent-liens-2018-08-10-1200961147>).

56 Mandouri-ville is located some 5 kilometers from Benin, from which it is practically separated only by the Oti River, and some 20 kilometers from Burkina Faso.

57 Interview with Amnesty International Togo, Lomé, 19/07/21.



58 This mixing of anti-terrorism and law and order is all the more damaging because the population of Mandouri, like that of Cinkassé, feels reassured by the presence of Operation Koundjouraré and is in favor of anti-terrorist "filtration" operations.

59 The locality attracts many young people of Mandouri in search of activity.

60 Most programs against violent extremism do not distinguish between these different types of threats. Sometimes with good reason, if one considers, for example, that the "zakat" collected by jihadist groups - like the "revolutionary tax" of European nationalist armed groups - is in reality a mafia-style extortion. Or that many Malian jihadist groups - such as MUJAO - were or remain notorious for their links to Saharan drug networks. At the same time, semantic confusion often contributes to masking the reality of political and social problems by equating common crimes with the expression of ideological and communal radicalism, thus contributing in the West African context to the stigmatization of the Fulani community by the "indigenous" populations according to an often simplistic equation: Fulani equals bandits equals jihadists.

61 Presumably linked to the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM/JNIM).

62 Burkinabe troops cannot enter Togolese territory without the approval of forces stationed at the border. The passage of troops without authorization in July 2021 created a diplomatic incident.

63 Togolese authorities described one of these incursions in November 2020 as an "attack". This would be the only known "jihadist" attack to date.

64 Mandouri and the localities of Sanloaga and Lalabiga depend on this commune. Although Mandouri is the capital of the prefecture of Kpendjal.

65 "Le Togo à l'épreuve de la menace terroriste", Institute for Security Studies, October 30, 2019: <https://issafrica.org/fr/iss-today/le-togo-a-lepreuve-de-la-menace-terroriste>.

66 "TOGO: What strategy for dealing with violent extremism?", West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), undated: <http://waneptogo.org/site/togo-quelle-strategie-pour-faire-face-a-lextremisme-violent/>.

67 ISS, op.cit.

68 Ibid.

69 "Jihadist threat...", op.cit.

70 Interview at the WANEP office in Lomé.

71 Recherche, Appui et Formation aux Initiatives d'auto-développement (RAFIA) and the Réseau Femmes et Développement des Savanes (REFED), both based in Dapaong.

72 Interview at the Savannah Regional Gendarmerie Headquarters, Dapaong.

73 Interview with judicial authorities in the Savanes region.

74 Interview with a consultant from the Think-Tank Elva, Lomé.

75 Interview with an NGO, Dapaong.

76 Interview with a consultant from the Think-Tank Elva, Lomé.

77 "Menace djihadiste...", op.cit. In addition, the risk of the ICLEV drifting into an instrument for capturing international funding is reminiscent of the example of the High Authority for Peacebuilding (HACP) in Niger, which is often harshly criticized by the population.

78 <https://www.republiquetogolaise.com/agro/2801-5090-report-de-la-campagne-de-transhumance-2021>.

79 Schematically, cross-border transhumance between Sahelian and Guinean countries comprises two movements: an outward movement downwards in the dry season (which lasts from October to May) and an upward return movement in the wet season (which lasts from June to September).

80 Interview with Alidou Alassani, president of the National Federation of Livestock and Meat Professionals of Togo (FENAPVIBVTO) on the Agri Digitale website, [https://agridigitale.net/art-campagne\\_de\\_transhumance\\_reporte\\_la\\_raison.html](https://agridigitale.net/art-campagne_de_transhumance_reporte_la_raison.html). Undated.

81 <https://www.republicoftogo.com/Toutes-les-rubriques/Societe/La-transhumance-dans-l-ordre-et-le-calme>. According to a study by the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD), published in 2020, some 160,000 cattle were exported to coastal countries from the eastern and central regions of Burkina Faso between 2006 and 2012. The herds, which may also come from Niger and Mali, are grouped together at the Togolese market in Koundjouraré and sent to Lomé, Lagos or Accra by truck or along the major transhumance routes such as the Cinkassé-Mango-Guerinkoula-Bassar-Sokodé-Atakpamé corridor. "Towards a





peaceful transhumance between Togo and Burkina Faso", Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD), Nov. 2020.

82 However, this decision was relaxed with the exception of Niger, which was negotiated for 50,000 head of cattle. These had already been on Beninese soil since October/November, two months before the official launch of the pastoral campaign. Niger tried to negotiate at the end of 2020 to renew the exception for the 2021 season. But the round of discussions involving pastoral organizations and technical livestock services in both countries under the aegis of ECOWAS ended in failure for the Nigerien side. This did not prevent transhumance from taking place, as in the case of Togo. The limit of 50,000 head of livestock set by Benin and Togo is interesting because, beyond the relevance of the threshold chosen, the similarity of the figure shows common political orientations.

83 Interviews with pastoralist organizations and herders in Togo and Burkina Faso as part of a strategy workshop conducted by Promediation in Ouagadougou on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

84 According to official estimates, Togo will have received 30,000 head of cattle in transhumance in 2020: <https://www.republiquetogolaise.com/agro/2601-5079-la-campagne-de-transhumance-2021-demarrera-le-31-janvier>. However, this figure represents only a drop in the bucket among the 800,000 or so cattle transhumant each year in West Africa.

85 According to other interviews conducted in Togo with representatives of the pastoralist world, however, the COVID measures would have limited the number of transhumant animals in 2021. The difficulties in assessing the real impact of border closures on transhumance clearly show, beyond the technical aspect of counting, the political content of the issue.

86 The 2021 pastoral campaign - which officially did not take place - has not yet been evaluated by the authorities. The limited number of transhumant herders - according to some organizations - would explain why the campaign was largely peaceful.

87 West African pastoral organizations represent thousands of members and form a well-structured network of national entities federated by several umbrella organizations, the best known of which are the Billital Maroobe Network and the Association for the Promotion of Livestock in the Sahel and Savannah (APESS). In addition to advocacy, they have an important expertise function and contribute to the pastoral monitoring systems implemented by

partners (ACF, CARE, GIZ, Swiss Cooperation, to name the most invested in pastoralism). Although they are fundamentally transnational, they are nonetheless often subject to their own local issues and interests. For example, with regard to the issue of cross-border transhumance, the coastal organizations readily admit that transhumance is a right guaranteed at the community level and a necessity for Sahelian herders, but maintain that it is in everyone's interest that it be regulated.

88 Biomass is a measure of forage availability. It represents the total production of plant material measured in kg of dry matter/ha. It is both the availability of water and the distribution of rainfall over time that will determine the annual plant production of a given region and thus the available biomass. Biomass assessment is one of the tools used by governments and technical partners in West African countries to monitor pastoral campaigns. The "biomass anomalies" reported on the maps make it possible to realize the disparity of situations on a scale of the order of a group of communes. See for example the bulletins on biomass production published by Action Against Hunger, <https://sigsahel.info/>.

89 See Transhumance Movement Tracking Matrix (TTT-DTM), Dashboard #1, IOM-RBM, March 2021: <https://reliefweb.int/report/benin/afrique-de-louest-et-du-centre-suivi-des-mouvements-de-transhumance-ttt-dtm-comptage>.

90 All populations combined: cattle, goats, sheep.

91 See the Bimonthly Bulletin on Information Watch and the impact of Covid-19 on pastoral and agro-pastoral households, RBM, February 2021. In the case of Togo, these are probably Sahelian herders already present in the country and blocked in their return movements to Burkina and Niger.

92 Ibid. According to RBM, in February 2021, 35% of the "events" recorded among the herders surveyed as part of the information watch concerned attacks by armed groups and nearly 30% concerned agro-pastoral conflicts. In addition, more than 90% of those surveyed felt that water and fodder resources were insufficient to meet the needs of both the agricultural and pastoral populations in their communities.

93 Ibid.

94 "Towards a peaceful transhumance between Togo and Burkina Faso", op.cit.

95 Schematically, in 1972-73, 1982-83 and 1990.

96 In "Vers une transhumance apaisée", op. cit



97 Op. cit. Cf. note 65.

98 Burkinabe or Sahelian herds transiting through Burkina to return to their original pastures in the wet season, and Togolese herds transhumant to the Sahel "to avoid agricultural areas under cultivation. The estimation of the number of herds received during a transhumance campaign is easier to carry out at the departure of the herds than at the arrival because of the many clandestine arrivals".

99 National transhumance committees were created in the livestock countries of West and Central Africa following the recommendations of the N'djamena colloquium on pastoral livestock in 2013. Placed under the authority of the Ministers of Livestock, they are composed of representatives of any entity interested in the issue of cross-border pastoral mobility: ministries and technical services of Livestock and Agriculture, Land Use Planning, Security, representatives of local communities, customary chiefs, pastoral organizations, etc. They have local branches placed under the administrative authority of the district to which they belong (region, prefecture, commune, etc.).

100 "Towards a peaceful transhumance...", op.cit

101 Promediation Strategic Workshop, Ouagadougou, October 12-13, 2021.

102 Thus, transhumant herders must pay large sums to cross the border. Interviews conducted by the mission indicated that the sums involved ranged from 300,000 to 1,800,000 CFA francs for large herds.

103 Interviews with Promediation.

104 One of the tricks is not to give herders a receipt for the tax collected. In addition, according to interviews conducted by Promediation with several pastoral organizations, the herders were all the more exposed to racketeering in 2021 because most did not know that the campaign was prohibited. By crossing the border in November, they would have proceeded as usual, hoping to regularize their situation later. But many of them were stopped on their way back.

105 The method consisted of sequestering the animals in a specially constructed enclosure until the herder paid the required sum (interviews with herders in the Savanes region). The Rouga office is a traditional function among the Fulani of Niger that has spread to Fulani communities in the sub-region. The Rouga networks are particularly responsible for the organization and smooth running of the transhumance. They collect, centralize and disseminate information that will allow herders to adapt their grazing lands to the hazards.

106 This is all the more important as Togo has been engaged for a decade in a process of administrative decentralization, notably under the impetus of GIZ.

107 The Koundjouraré market is one of the largest in Togo, along with the Cinkassé market, after the Lomé market. It is supplied by the Bukinabe markets of Fada Ngourma and Komienga via specially dedicated corridors. These markets handle several thousand animals per week, compared to a few hundred for Koundjouraré or Cinkassé. It is conceivable that a certain amount of stolen livestock is sold in Koundjouraré. The choice of initiating an anti-terrorist operation here is not insignificant, given that livestock theft has become one of the main sources of funding for jihadist groups. Given the staggering amount of money transacted at the Koundjouraré market, it is easy to understand the magnitude of this traffic. A new market was created in 2015 with funding from the European Union and the World Bank. It is equipped with a livestock park that can accommodate up to 3,000 head of cattle with the stated aim of improving "the retention and mobility of herds with a framework of flows, a reduction in violence related to the management of transhumance and an ease of transactions between different countries" (<https://www.savoirnews.net/inauguration-ce-vendredi-du-nouveau-marche-moderne-a-betail-de-koundjouare-nord/>). Other smaller markets line the transhumance routes as far as Atakpamé on the Cinkassé-Mango-Guérinkoula-Bassar-Sokodé axis.

108 Livestock parks based on the Koundjouraré model will be created in Cinkassé, in the Central, Kara and Plateaux regions, as well as in Lomé. This is a promotion of ranching, which represents the second pillar of a strategy of "nationalization" of livestock alongside the limitation of cross-border transhumance and the sedentarization of national livestock farmers. This strategy has been pursued by all coastal countries for several years, and the increased threat of jihadism on their doorsteps is giving it the wind in its sails. (<https://www.savoirnews.net/inauguration-ce-vendredi-du-nouveau-marche-moderne-a-betail-de-koundjouare-nord/>). The question remains whether this strategy is viable in countries with small areas, high population growth and advanced agricultural fronts such as Benin and Togo.

In Togo, the livestock component of the Agricultural Sector Support Program (PASA) has been promoting commercial livestock production since 2011. Funded by the World Bank, this program has helped increase production from 300,000 to 475,000 head of cattle between 2011 and 2017, according to the website *Entreprendre au Togo* (<https://www.togofirst.com/fr/agro/1902-4971-togo-les-progres-dans-la-promotion-des-elevages-commerciaux-sur-ces-dernieres-annees>).



109 A good point awarded by the ECOWAS "pastoralism" focal point: "Togo is the best pupil in the region, they are the only ones to have an effective CNT, with perhaps Benin", interviews with Promediation. In addition, the CNT includes a pastoral organization with a good reputation in the sub-region, the Plateforme associative des éleveurs et pasteurs du Togo. This platform represents livestock breeders within the larger organization of the National Federation of Meat Professionals of Togo, which includes three sectors: butchery, meat trade and livestock.

110 The PGT, which emphasizes peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders, provides, in addition to an entry tax of 5,000 CFA francs and a limit on the number of transhumant cattle, the wearing of an identification badge for herders, the updating of regional entry and exit corridors, and the obligation for transhumant herders to provide information to each actor in the transhumance process... <http://www.commodafrica.com/03-02-2017-le-togo-impose-des-regles-strictes-la-transhumance-pour-eviter-les-conflits>.

111 In 2018, there were 200,000 cattle, 300,000 sheep, 400,000 goats and 500,000 pigs. As for the agricultural front, apart from the prefectures of Kpendja and Kpendjal West, it covered almost the entire Savannah region between 1973 and 2013 to meet the food needs of the growing population.

112 "Towards a peaceful transhumance...", op.cit. The prefecture of Oti traditionally concentrates a large number of herds transhumant from the north because of its proximity to the Oti River, but the cultivation of the lowlands by the Mobas communities restricts the possibility of watering the animals and increases the number of cases of conflict (interview with a PO representative, Dapaong).

113 Reported by Sputnik France, "Bilan de la transhumance au Togo...", 26/11/2020. <https://fr.sputniknews.com/20201126/bilan-de-la-transhumance-au-togo-des-morts-des-refugies-et-des-champs-devastes-ministre-de-la-1044838227.html>.

114 <http://www.atlanticinfos.com/index.php/categories/economie/item/2508-togo-la-campagne-de-transhumance-de-2020-a-fait-12-pertes-en-vie-humaine-et-130-devastations-de-champs>

115 The measures recommended were: Commission an in-depth study on the extent of space, the availability of fodder, water, etc. for ranching; acquire land for the cattle production management zones (ZAPB) in accordance with the land code in force in Togo; mobilize resources to ensure the operation and sustainability of the project. The measures

recommended were: Commission a thorough study on the extent of space, availability of fodder, water, etc., for ranching; acquire the domains for the cattle production development zones (ZAPB) in accordance with the land tenure code in force in Togo; mobilize resources to ensure the operation and sustainability of pastoral facilities and agropastoral infrastructure on the territories; involve the interprofession in the management of transhumance; take into account agropastoral activity in the strategic documents (Development Plan) of the Communes for a better socio-economic development of the territories.

116 It should be noted, as one PO executive pointed out, that the figure of the jihadist Fulani has replaced that of the jihadist Tuareg, which emerged after the events of 2012 in Mali, over the past ten years. In the end, tensions always pit sedentary people against nomads.

117 Intw. to Sputnik France, op. cit.

118 For example, herders in the Kpendjal prefecture explain that because of the lack of fodder along the official corridors, they take another route that often passes near towns because of the ponds found there.

119 In the opinion of an executive of a Togolese pastoralist NGO, there is currently no Fulani self-defense group in Togo. In addition, although certain transhumance areas seem to regularly make the news, such as the prefectures of Mandouri (Savannah), Dankpen or Doulfegou (Kara), Tchamba and Bliitta (Central Region), there are also historical conflicts between sedentary communities, such as the Gangam and the Tchokossi, or between the Tchokossi and the Moba in the Oti prefecture. These conflicts, which took a serious turn in the 1990s, fortunately have few victims today and, like disputes related to transhumance, often end up before the courts.

120 Land disputes are settled at several levels: the first level consists of arbitration by traditional chiefs and by committees under the Ministry of Social Action with the gendarmerie and the technical agricultural services. In the event of failure or aggravated violence, cases are referred to the courts.

121 In unison with many "sedentary" authorities, the mayor of Kpendjal 1 is very critical of transborder transhumants: "There is no shortage of conflicts due to the scarcity of land. There is a corridor in the communes of Kpendjal 1 and 2, and the transhumant herders are a burden on our environment. They have the impression that once they have paid the entrance fee they can do whatever they want. They empty everything, our few water resources and our local transhumants have nothing. They are very aggressive. The taxes collected give a grazing right, cover the



maintenance of the corridors and the rights of the owners. In the end, the communes have nothing."He concludes: "We need meat, but we need to review the texts on transhumance. Only a few operators are getting rich, transhumant or local Fulani... there is no longer enough land for the families".

122 Interview at the Prefecture of Kozah.

123 Interview with WANEP, Lomé.

124 Interview with the president of a pastoral organization, Dapaong.

125 At the same time, opinions seem to be unanimous in recognizing that robberies have decreased considerably since the implementation of Operation Koundjouaré, which also reassures the Peul populations as well as other Togolese communities

126 Interviews with the president of a PO, Lomé.

127 The Fulani are a minority in Togo, and unlike in other coastal countries, there are few villages where the Fulani community - "indigenous" or Burkinabè- is over-represented compared to its neighbors. This would also indicate that the Fulani/Burkinabè community is generally well integrated into the Togolese social fabric.

128 Interviews, Kara.

129 In the prefecture of Kpendjal, the Rougas received an official letter from the prefect on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020, instructing them to report any transhumant who crossed the border at night.

130 The Savannah region receives the majority of herds entering Togo from Burkina Faso and Niger. The prefectures of Bassar and Dankpen in the Kara region, the final stage of the transhumance from the north, have one of the largest concentrations of animals, as they are joined by herds from Niger that have transited through Benin. For this reason, these areas are particularly closely monitored.

131 According to the representative of a pastoral organization interviewed by Promediation, "talking about this subject is like exposing your life".

132 According to various sources within the police and gendarmerie forces interviewed during the mission, abductions are reported by families. But there is no real possibility of confirming these assertions.

133 Identified "according to their language", interviews at the direction of the regional gendarmerie in Sokodé.

134 Interview with the National Directorate of the Gendarmerie.

135 Interviews with breeders.

136 Interviews at the police station of Mandouri.

137 This study was presented at a small seminar in Lomé on November 18 and 19, 2021. In the presence of the Ministers of Security of Togo and Ghana, some twenty security officials from Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso shared their analyses of the challenges facing their countries and the solutions required to prevent the worsening of the terrorist threat.

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Promediation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization (under the French law of 1901), led by professionals who combine high-level expertise in mediation and negotiation with extensive field experience in Africa. Involved in various processes since 2006, the team has been working since 2012 in support of peace processes and conflict prevention efforts in Africa, particularly in the Sahel and the Maghreb, but also in the Gulf of Guinea. Promediation can rely on trusted relationships and an extensive network of actors ranging from local leaders to governmental and international actors to implement mediation and dialogue facilitation

activities at the local and sub-regional level, and to contribute to a better understanding of local and regional dynamics and realities.

Since September 2020, Promediation has been implementing an action that aims to encourage and operationalize security collaborations between government officials of Accra Initiative countries and representatives of pastoral organizations in managing security challenges related to transhumant pastoralism.

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