



Border community security Mano River Union region

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Foreword

The way in which ethnic, cultural and social relationships extend across national boundaries is part of the richness of the Mano River region, but it has also contributed to the complex and conflict-ridden experience of the region over the past two decades. Linkages across state borders create what can be seen as conflict systems, featuring shared political, economic and social insecurity, and these demand common and cooperative responses from a range of actors.

Conciliation Resources is a London-based peacebuilding organisation that has been working with partners in the countries of the Mano River region for over fifteen years. Our goal has been to support people at the heart of the region's conflicts who are striving to find solutions. We work with them to deepen our collective understanding of the conflicts, bring together divided communities and create opportunities for them to resolve their differences peacefully.

We have sought to support civil society and government efforts to address threats to peace by promoting good governance, peaceful elections and community security in the region. Our work is founded on the belief that concerted and strategic civil society engagement, based on solid analysis, can generate sustained policy dialogue between civil society and governments, which in turn can influence policy makers to address bad governance and corruption as factors influencing poverty and insecurity in the Mano River Union (MRU) countries.

We have used a variety of means to support such processes, for instance by supporting research into the way governance operates at community levels as well as through the production of films and subsequent outreach programmes. We pay particular attention to border communities, cross-border dynamics and the way in which border insecurity has acted as a critical driver of local conflicts. In partnership with local NGOs and border communities we promote awareness of the problems, to enable the voices of people in these communities to be heard and to facilitate engagement between communities and the

authorities; working together they can shape more constructive policies for the future.

This publication seeks to contribute to this process by raising awareness on issues related to border community insecurity and options for policy improvement. Conciliation Resources and civil society partners spent three months in 2011 working with and learning from border communities in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea through a participatory survey process. Our civil society partners in this initiative were Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI), ABC for Development Guinea and the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA). Each of these organisations conducted surveys using participatory tools to identify security, human rights, gender and governance concerns and how they impact on conflict issues in the MRU. A consultant, Maureen Poole, then worked together with our West Africa Programme Director Janet Adama Mohammed to write the MRU Border Community Security Situation report.

Working in marginalised communities has been a profound learning experience for Conciliation Resources and our partners. The participatory and inclusive nature of the research that was undertaken provided a dynamic stimulus to engage in dialogue with policy actors. Most importantly the exchange that this work facilitated between the communities, the civil society organisations and the policy actors was a constructive step in changing attitudes and developing mutual awareness.

Our intention is that this research provides information on border communities and that the practical recommendations influence change. Such endeavours need to have continuity if they are to have impact. Communities, civil society organisations (local, national and international) and policy makers need to find ways to maintain the conversations that come out of research such as this.

Conciliation Resources will continue to engage with border communities and civil society networks in the MRU to promote voice and enable policy changes for effective security and development in the region.

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the people in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, both officials and border community members, who assisted Conciliation Resources and our civil society partners' survey teams – including ABC Development Guinea, Liberia Democratic Institute and the Sierra Leone Action on Small Arms Network – to provide the facts and background evidence in support of the validity of the research material presented in this report.

Research commenced in 2011 and, with Conciliation Resources' local partners and members of the VOICE Network, underwent a period of discussion in 2012. Published 2013.

Executive summary

The Mano River basin countries are closely linked not only by their common borders and ethnic groups but also by their history and conflicts. Efforts to avoid a relapse into conflict and to consolidate sustainable peace must take this dimension into consideration particularly because of the key role borders played in starting the conflicts and in recruiting the fighters in past wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone and unrest in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

Since 2007, Conciliation Resources has been working with partner non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Mano River basin countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea to facilitate dialogue between communities in the border regions and their governments. It is hoped that dialogue will contribute to improved governance, accountability and transparency with a focus on border areas. This work highlighted that many of the challenges that had historically characterised the relationship between security forces and civilians remain present, despite seemingly successful security sector reforms in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Having facilitated the initial process for the communities to identify their specific areas of concern, Conciliation Resources' partner organisations decided to deepen this kind of participatory cross-border research and generate a baseline survey. The two main goals were:

- a) To identify common challenges in border communities of the MRU countries; and
- b) To generate a baseline survey outlining the main challenges in the selected locations.

This evidence should enable Conciliation Resources and partners to commence a policy dialogue with the relevant national government authorities and regional bodies to ensure: firstly, that border security and border communities' challenges become a priority in the sub-regional agenda for economic and social development and the strengthening of peace; secondly, that conflict triggers, once identified, are addressed from local to sub-regional basis; and finally that cross border participation and collaboration at the local and sub-regional levels increases.

The survey was carried out in selected border communities of three of the four Mano River sub-region countries: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In order to elicit as much information as possible from those who live in the border communities,

the research methods were designed to involve participants in defining the challenges they face and identifying priorities for action. The survey was conducted in the chosen locations by Conciliation Resources' partner organisations in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the surveys.

Key findings

The findings from the selected border locations reveal that very similar challenges confront border communities across the sub-region. The majority of the border communities feel they are affected by bad governance and political, social and economic exclusion, which accentuate their marginalisation and further entrench vulnerability and poverty. As in the past, this leads to potential insecurity and instability hotspots with impact across borders.

Further challenges facing border communities include the lack of harmonisation and enforcement or implementation of agreed principles, protocols and conventions by member nations, harassment and extortion by security personnel, weak government accountability, poor infrastructure, the absence of public service delivery, youth marginalisation and organised crime. In each country, the following challenges were identified as main concerns:

Liberia

- Lack of comprehensive response to the youth situation
- Lack of gender empowerment and human rights protection
- Weak policies for cross border security management and enforcement mechanisms
- Weak government accountability and poor responsiveness to communities' basic social needs.

Guinea

- Lack of harmonisation and domestication of various MRU and ECOWAS conventions
- Lack of implementation of regional policies
- Weak government accountability
- Insecurity of the people and vulnerability of women
- Lack of policies on unclear state boundaries
- Lack of capacity of border officials.

Sierra Leone

- Weak government accountability and poor responsiveness to community concerns
- Absence and weak policies in the cross border security management
- Lack of a comprehensive response to youth unemployment situation
- Gender issues and abuses of human rights.

Recommendations

Below are the key recommendations for shared and country specific strategies made by participants during the surveys. While not all of these are actionable, the combination of findings and recommendations offer a significant pool of knowledge from which specific policy recommendations can be extracted in order to promote the improvement of security and economic and social development in border communities.

To the MRU states, with leadership and support from the MRU Secretariat:

- As a matter of urgency, the 15th Protocol should be turned into domestic law to enable the enforcement of its provisions in each individual state.
- Revive diplomatic efforts aimed at an amicable resolution of the Yenga impasse.
- Individual heads of security agencies should take responsibility for addressing the widespread practice of security sector personnel obtaining money by extortion or sexual harassment from people crossing the borders.
- Undertake a civic education campaign to reduce the incidence of travellers crossing the borders without the necessary paperwork.
- Harmonise charges and levies imposed by member states for Emergency Travel Certificates and importation of goods.
- Bilateral co-operation between Sierra Leone and Guinean civil and security leaders should be strengthened and a cohesive policy developed for the MRU borders. District Security Committees (DISEC)¹, district council and the civil society should co-ordinate their initiatives and develop initiatives on peace and security to work with their Guinean counter-parts.

¹ Alongside the provincial Security Committees (PROSECs) the DISECs were introduced as part of Sierra Leone's security sector reform, to decentralise security coordination beyond Freetown thus helping prevent any rural-based insurgency or incursions from across the borders as it had happened during the war.

- Review and draft revised Standard Operating Procedures for better cross border co-ordination of procedures for crossing state borders in the sub-region.
- Take measures to improve the terms and conditions of employment for officers based at the borders.
- Collect information and intelligence relating to cross-border trafficking of drugs, arms and contraband goods, involving in the process state and non-state actors, relevant line Ministries in the governments of the MRU states, United Nations, donors, NGOs, CBOs and CSOs.
- Review procedures for joint investigation of cross border criminality and serious and organised crime. Review 'working together' procedures for joint patrols to deter smuggling activities and identify security breaches at unofficial border crossing points. Introduce a cohesive cross-border 'working together' policy especially for visible foot patrols.
- Assess current infrastructure regarding its suitability to handle the administrative processes. Ensure provision of gender sensitive searching areas, and neutral secure holding areas for storage of seized items and persons arrested for various cross border offences who await transportation to relevant area of jurisdiction.
- Assess the quality of border personnel management with emphasis on gender balance.
- The local government structures, with support from donor agencies and multilateral partners, should mobilise resources aimed at providing basic standard infrastructure (integrated border posts, office and residential accommodation, water, hygiene and sanitation facilities) for security personnel at border posts.
- Provide training and orientation over policy implementation relating to ECOWAS economic protocols on free movement of persons and goods, human rights and fundamental freedoms, with specific attention paid to the dignity of women, whereby women search women, and the principle of equality before the law.

To national stakeholders:

Guinea

Security sector authorities

- Improve officials' living conditions through setting up housing developments, providing them with appropriate work equipment and sleeping arrangements.

- Raise awareness amongst roadblock officials in observing the rights of citizens and respecting their goods.
- Improve means of communication (walkie-talkies, mobile phones).
- Support training and capacity building of the officials responsible for managing borders in border management skills and upholding citizen rights.
- Resume regular meetings between civilian and military authorities either side of the border for sharing and coordinating decisions.
- Strengthen security through visible foot patrols along the border.

Communities

- Maintain rural tracks.
- Create collective social projects (building classrooms, meeting venues for authorities, boreholes, public market development).
- Include young people and women through income-generating activities and setting up community projects.
- Support school kits for children.
- Supply health posts and centres with staff and essential medicines.
- Train community-based organisations, civilian and military authorities in peacemaking, good governance and decentralisation.

Liberia

- Assess the security state with a view to providing an capacity improvement to borders officials.
- To review and increase the number of security personnel at the borders.
- Improve the quality of the infrastructure at the borders and facilities for border management and the provision of basic social services.
- Develop a training strategy to improve the operational capacity of border personnel deployed at the state borders.

Sierra Leone

- Provide logistical support to security at the border to enhance effective and efficient border management, where possible, discussing arrangements for integrated facilities and shared working practices.
- Ensure that senior officers of the various security sector departments provide regular supervision of the junior ranks based at the borders.
- Monitor the temporary employment of immigration border personnel, many of whom are not paid, nor provided with uniform or identity cards.
- Provide regular training, including refresher courses, in order to enhance the professionalism of security personnel on the border including the police, military, immigration and customs.
- The Office of National Security (ONS) should review its gender balance and include more women and youth in the DISECs and Chiefdom Security Committees.
- Ensure that the decentralisation process provides governance structures in communities that are democratic, representative, transparent and accountable.
- All stakeholders in communities should mainstream transparency and accountability mechanisms.
- Civil society with support from GoSL and donors should promote and popularise the three Gender Acts in border communities.
- Engage in training young people in especially border regions in leadership skills and conflict transformation.
- The GoSL should as a matter of urgency address the feelings of vulnerability and marginalisation that prevail within the border communities. The MPs, local councillors and traditional leaders should place more emphasis on the value of maintaining regular contact with *all* their constituents.
- DISEC with leadership from ONS and GoSL should take seriously early warning threats to peace and security in border communities emanating from land disputes over ownership and disputes relating to nomadic herdsman, grazing rights and agricultural farming rights.
- The GoSL, and civil society actors should prioritise 'Access to Justice' for women and youth for in the rural communities.

Introduction

Conciliation Resources is an independent peacebuilding organisation registered as a charity in England and Wales. The NGO works with conflict-affected communities and local partners to provide advice, support and practical resources. In addition, they take what they learn in the course of their practical work to government decision-makers and others working to end violent conflict, to improve policies and practice worldwide. Funding for their work is sought from a variety of charitable causes, independent trusts, foundations and governments.

Conciliation Resources plays an active role in British, European and global peacebuilding networks. These include the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLLO), the Mediation Support Network, the Alliance for Peace-building (USA) and the BOND Conflict Policy Working Group (UK).

Since 2007, Conciliation Resources has been working with partner non-government organisations (NGOs) in the Mano River basin countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea to facilitate dialogue between communities in the border regions and their governments to achieve improved governance, accountability and transparency.

The Mano River basin has experienced violent conflict since the late 1980s. The conflicts have caused an estimated 300,000 deaths in Liberia and Sierra Leone, brought massive social dislocation, devastated the countries' infrastructure, eroded the social fabric and led to crippling economic hardship for the majority of the population. Sustainable peace in the region remains a challenge, as demonstrated by the military coup in Guinea in December 2008 and the violence surrounding the elections in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010.

Conflicts in West Africa are closely interwoven. The Mano River basin countries in particular are linked not only by their common borders and ethnic groups but also by their history and conflicts. Efforts to avoid a relapse into conflict and to consolidate sustainable peace must take into consideration this sub-regional dimension. This is particularly relevant because of the key role borders played in starting the conflicts and in recruiting the fighters. In Sierra Leone the war advanced from the Liberian border and was supported by Liberian fighters. In the second civil war in Liberia, Guinea was the main source of military and financial support to the rebel group LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) and ethnic alliances were crucial.

Historically, these cross border ties have prevailed as large parts of Sierra Leone's border areas were more connected to Liberia than to Sierra Leone proper even before the war in Sierra Leone. Paul Richards emphasises that lack of infrastructure and formal governance in these areas made for a social setup in which people felt marginalised by their own state.² A 2007 Swedish Defence Research Agency study also points out that a feature of the region has long been the virtual power vacuum or absence of state power in border areas – at times entire districts – in which informal trade and security networks are in control.³

Experience suggests that, due to the predominantly national focus of post-conflict and DDR interventions, the local dynamics of violence and the cross-border dimensions of West African wars are often neglected despite the fact that border communities remain among the most socially and economically marginalised.⁴

In addition to this border insecurity and marginalisation, the behaviour of security sector forces towards civilians in the sub-region has been historically characterised by violence and impunity. The security sectors in Sierra Leone and Liberia suffered from politicisation, erosion of professionalism and an undermining of civilian oversight as a result of decades of single party and military rule. This led to the breakdown of trust between civilians and the security sector in both countries that contributed significantly to the civil wars.

After the conflicts ended and by the time security sector reform processes (SSR) started in Sierra Leone and Liberia, relations between civil society and the security sector were based on fear, suspicion and outright mistrust. Not surprisingly, initial reactions to the SSR processes have been met with scepticism among the population. Despite progress made, the behaviour of security sector officials still poses significant challenges to stability in the region. Increased accountability and civilian oversight of security sector forces are crucial if security sector reforms are to create the conditions for sustained conflict reduction. Given

² Richards, P. (1996) *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone*, (London, James Currey). Also, FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency. 2007, *The Mano River Basin Area: formal and informal security providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone*.

³ FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency. 2007, *The Mano River Basin Area: formal and informal security providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone*, p.91.

⁴ FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency. 2007, *The Mano River Basin Area: formal and informal security providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone*.

the historic role that border areas and security sector forces have played in the region's instability and the fact that border communities are often marginalised from decision-making processes, well-managed borders with opportunities for civil society participation are a key element in consolidating peace.

The 2007 UN Secretary General's report on cross border issues in West Africa⁵ recognised the importance of security sector reform to the success of conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the region and highlighted the need to address cross border issues with increased efficiency. The report states that civil society has a vital role in those security sector reform processes, and that the establishment of sound civil-military relations is key to good governance in the region. It recommends linking civil society, social awareness and education in the fight against corruption in border areas.⁶

The analysis above and Conciliation Resources' experience show a clear need for a change process that addresses the cross border dimension of the root causes of conflict. This process is likely to include, inter alia, measures to reduce cross-border crimes, more effective sub-regional cooperation on border issues, tackling the marginalisation of border communities and addressing corruption.

Conciliation Resources' work aims at contributing to this process by focusing on:

- (a) improving the rights and needs of border communities facing human insecurity and unaddressed root causes of conflict by giving them a voice.
- (b) facilitating links between civilians and security forces in border communities to change attitudes and behaviour while building confidence and the public participation for good governance.

Conciliation Resources' current work builds on its track record of facilitating better civilian-security sector relations in Sierra Leone through a "Strengthening Citizens' Security" project, implemented throughout 2007 and 2008 with the aim of building better links between civil society and security forces and improving civilian oversight in Sierra Leone. In 2008, CR started working specifically on how to bridge the gap between

civilians and security sector forces in Sierra Leone in the context of the donor supported security sector reform (SSR) that was being rolled out in the country. It culminated in a two-day sub-regional conference in April 2008 that brought together security sector and civil society representatives from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. One of the key recommendations to emerge from the conference was the need for a joint approach to improve information dissemination as a tool to help address border security challenges and strengthen accountability.

This work highlighted that many of the challenges that had characterised the relationship between security forces and civilians remain present. Despite a seemingly successful SSR, decades of mistrust in the country's security forces have not been overturned and, overall, civilians lack trust in those whose job it is to protect them. As a result in 2009 Conciliation Resources conducted a survey in a number of Sierra Leone border communities neighbouring Guinea and Liberia, interviewing over 300 people among civilians, local authorities and security sector forces.

The findings were used to develop a docu-drama film, *Talking Borders*, which captured the views of civilians and security sector officials on challenges in border areas. Together with other civil society organisation (CSO) partners, Conciliation Resources conducted an outreach programme of film screenings in 12 border communities. This led to community theatre workshops in a further 12 border communities in the same six Sierra Leone administrative districts of Kambia, Kalahun, Koinadugu, Kenema, Pujehun and Kono. Border officials were also invited to attend the community sessions and their contribution enriched the community discussions.

The communities felt a sense of empowerment from being able to raise their own security concerns. In particular, this was the first time that women and male youth of the Sierra Leone borderland communities had been able to engage with security officials over their personal security. Women raised issues of extortion and sexual abuse and the youth raised the issues of extortion and corrupt practices by the security officials. This was a ground-breaking experience. Some of the youth were ex-combatants and had felt that previously no one had been interested in their views. Hearing this, the personnel from the Office of National Security pledged a review of the border security re-orientation to include a better understanding of gender, human rights and corrupt and unfair practices. They were also able to learn more about the border officials' own challenges.

⁵ *Report of the Secretary General on Cross Border Issues in West Africa*, Security Council, S/2007/143, 13 March 2007.

⁶ While Border management and security are state responsibilities, civil society involvement can increase local ownership, improve accountability and help reduce security risks. Angela Mackay. "Border Management and Gender." *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*. Eds. Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek. Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008.

During these sessions it was suggested that communities should be able to discuss security concerns with their neighbours across the borders. Since they live around the same border, they wanted to know if they had the same problems. This suggestion led to the first cross-border dialogue and the concept of highlighting mutual issues with national governments for discussion and resolution within the MRU sub-region.

Lessons learnt from this work confirmed that many of the underlying causes which led to conflicts in the countries of the Mano River sub-region (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) still present a number of serious challenges to the consolidation of peace in the sub-region. These include weak state governance, impunity among some security officials, abuse of people's rights, corruption, unfair distribution of resources and a lack of political and economic participation of ordinary citizens. Significantly, rural communities, especially those in the border communities, seem to continue to feel marginalised and excluded from any of the post conflict development processes.

Having facilitated the initial process for the communities to identify their specific areas of concern, Conciliation Resources partner organisations decided to deepen this kind of participatory cross-border research and generate a baseline survey. The main goal is to identify common challenges in border communities of the MRU countries. This evidence should then enable Conciliation Resources and partners to commence a policy dialogue with the relevant national government authorities and regional bodies to ensure that border security and border communities' challenges become a priority in the sub-region agenda for economic and social development and the strengthening of peace. This policy dialogue would also stress that conflict triggers, once identified, should be addressed from local to sub-region basis and that cross border participation at the local and sub regional levels should increase.

This survey was designed to enable civil society to develop an understanding of the situation in borderland communities of the MRU countries and to generate baseline information that will inform Conciliation Resources' work with civil society partners and the affected communities.

This report presents the research process, the findings and the recommendations made by the civil society organisations that conducted the research and the communities that participated in the process.

Methodology

The survey was carried out in selected border communities of three of the four Mano River sub-region countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In order to elicit as much information as possible from those who live in the border communities the participatory research methods aimed at involving community participants in defining their challenges and identifying priorities for action. Conciliation Resources' partner organisations from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone undertook the survey in the chosen locations : ABC Development from Guinea and District Dialogue Platforms in Forecariah and Macenta; Liberian Democratic Institute (LDI) and the Community Security Initiative (CSI) from Liberia; and Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) and Promoters of Peace and Justice (PPJ) from Sierra Leone.

Prior to the start of the research, a preparatory training workshop was held in Monrovia from 20 – 25 August 2011 to provide the survey teams with a range of data collection tools and guidelines for the survey and enable them to select the most suitable border communities to carry out the research. During the workshop the teams from the three partner organisations were able to select their locations, plan their research programme, identify their survey tools and produce a budget for the survey and field visit.

While in each location researchers adapted the tools to their needs, Table 1 below provides a summary of the types of tools that were used by them as they carried out the surveys in the different locations. Researchers used a combination of tools in each country, depending on the conditions in which the research was conducted. Unfortunately, owing to the large influx of refugees and displaced persons in the Liberia border area with Côte d'Ivoire, participatory research was not a viable option and therefore desk-based research was used to provide a picture of what was happening at that specific border area.

All three organisations chose to work with their local partners based in the border districts: ABC Development conducted the research with the District Platform for Dialogue from Forecariah; LDI and SLANSA chose to use the local community-based organisation Promoters of Peace and Justice (PPJ) in Kambia; and LDI chose to work with the Community Security Initiative (CSI) in Kailahun (Table 2 in Annex 2 provides information about the survey teams in each country). Pre-visit meetings took place within the selected locations to provide the communities with information about the survey and its aims. To begin with, the

Table 1: Use of Participatory Survey Tools

Tools	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone	
			Kailahun	Kambia
Desk-based research	•	•	•	•
Interview Guide	•	•	•	•
Semi Structured Interview	•		6	3
One to One interviews	•	41	20	16
Key Informants Interview	3	14		
Focus Group Interview	98	59	35	15
Consultations	45 Local Authorities & 25 security personnel	18 Local Authorities & 19 security personnel	Local Authorities and security personnel	Local Authorities and security personnel
Group Meetings	2 (1 in each locality)		1 DISEC	1 DISEC
Community Dialogue Meetings	Attendees		Meeting held	
	130	174	2	2
Photographs/video (Youtube, visual, etc)	•	•	22	22
Transect Mapping	Local Chief and youth Leaders	1 x Town Chief 1 x Youth Leader	2	2
Community Risk Mapping	•			

Table 2: Local Authorities in Research Locations

Local Authorities: Research Locations				
Country	Local Authority District 1	Border Community District 1	Local Authority District 2	Border Community District 2
Guinea	Kindia Region		N'Nzérékoré region	
	Forécariah Préfecture		Macenta Prefecture	
	Sub préfecture Famorea District	Pamelap District	Sub préfecture Daro	Daro Rural Development Unit
Sub préfecture Benty, Guinea	Morkanya Dakhagbé District	Badiaro		
Liberia	Mendicorma	Foya	Voinjama, Lofa County	Bolongoidu
			Foya, Boya, Lofa	Kondadu
Sierra Leone	Eastern Province, Kailahun District	Buedu and Dawa Sierra Leone	District Council Chairmen & Paramount Chiefs	Kissi Tongi Chiefdom
	Northern Province, Kambia District	Bubuya and Tambaia Sierra Leone	Morkanya Dakhagbé, Guinea	Samu Chiefdom

researchers engaged with most active civil society groups within the survey areas to learn about their causes for concern and proposed solutions to the border situations. These groups were also a useful resource to facilitate introductions and mobilise focus groups and community dialogue meetings. The researchers also observed customary traditions by paying their respects to village and community elders and decision-makers and introducing themselves to the local police and military and state personnel at the border crossing points; in response they received full co-operation. Tables 2 and 3 show, respectively, the local organisations and associations who work on various areas in the border communities and local authorities.

Research at selected border communities took place during the summer of 2011, involving teams of researchers from partner organisations based in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. ABC Development, Guinea, gathered evidence from two communities, Forecariah and Macenta; LDI and CSI from Liberia visited two locations in Lofa County, Voinjama and Foya districts; and Sierra Leone surveyed two districts, Kambia with its Guinea border and Kailahun with its Liberian border. Further details about the methodology used by each research team in each location will be given in the relevant sections below.

Setting the context in the Mano River sub-region, its countries and surveyed border locations

Map 1: Mano River Union Countries: Surveyed locations



This section aims to characterise the Mano River sub-region, its four countries and the surveyed border locations in order to explain how some of the challenges the region faces become even more acute in the historically marginalised and insecure border communities. Part of West Africa, the Mano River sub-region gains its name from the Mano River, which rises in the Guinea Highlands, flows through Sierra Leone and Liberia and down to the Atlantic Ocean. Lengthy and porous land borders separate the countries in the region. Guinea has the longest border, at 1,825 km; Liberia’s border amounts to 1,585 km and Sierra Leone has the shortest, 958 km. Both Liberia and Sierra Leone solely border other countries in the sub-region. Côte d’Ivoire, although the largest country within the sub-region, only shares 1,362 km of border with the other Mano River countries, while Ghana and Burkina Faso account for the remainder of Côte d’Ivoire’s land borders. Despite the fact that the border areas surveyed accounted for only relatively small subsections of the entire length of these countries’ international borders, the findings remain pertinent as they illustrate the vulnerability and critical nature of the border communities and the need for improvement.

The MRU sub-region is one of the least developed areas of West Africa despite vast mineral resources, fertile agricultural land and a sizeable offshore fishing industry. The population of Africa has grown rapidly over the past 60 years; this, combined with relatively low life expectancy exacerbated in some countries by a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, has led to large youth bulge. The population doubled between 1982 and 2009 and by 2011 it had already passed the one billion mark. The 2011 population of the four MRU countries is a little over 41 million with approximately 7 million living in their capital cities of Abijan, Conakry, Monrovia and Freetown. While Sub Saharan Africa has experienced dramatic population growth this has not been matched by economic growth, the region having on average a 2.2% per annum growth rate.

West Africa and the Mano River sub-region remain fragile. A special report by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) released in May 2011⁷ identified and analysed key emerging threats to peace and security. Significantly, it concluded that some of the new threats are of a criminal, rather than political, nature. In addition to recognising that elements of the old challenges to peace and security remain present, the report identified drugs trafficking, terrorism, piracy and challenges to democratic governance as new threats. Importantly, the report also emphasised the inter-linkages between these threats and the linkages between these and the region’s other security challenges. For example, it is not difficult to establish the connections between drugs trafficking as highlighted in the UNSC report and the challenges the region has had with border insecurity and high rates of youth unemployment and disenfranchisement.

On the surface the majority of the conflicts have come to an end. Sierra Leone’s political development has benefitted from three

⁷ Security Council Special Research Report, “Emerging Security Threats in West Africa”, May 2011, No1.

Table 3: Length of Shared State Borders Matrix

Country	Côte d’Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Côte d’Ivoire	-	610 km.	716 km	-
Guinea	610 km	-	563 km	652 km
Liberia	716 km	563 km	-	306 km
Sierra Leone	-	652 km	306 km	-
Total	1,362 km	1,825 km	1,585 km	958 km

Presidential elections, 2002, 2007 and 2012 but political tensions are already affecting the nominations for the Presidential candidates for their 2012 elections. In the run-up to the 2011 Liberian's Presidential elections violence generated through bi-partisan allegiance led to one of the candidates refusing to take part in the run-off and the result was that the incumbent President, Madam Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, was returned unopposed to office, with less than the 50 per cent of the qualifying vote. This relatively weak mandate may pose a challenge to processes of reform. Conflict drivers are therefore still present in society and need to be addressed.

The two MRU Franco-phone countries of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea fared no better. The elections in Côte d'Ivoire were complicated by both Presidential candidates, Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara, maintaining that they were the legitimate President. They both took the Presidential Oath of Office and it took four months' of civil hostilities and external intervention Alassane Ouattara, was allowed to accede to the Presidency. Gbagbo was subsequently indicted to appear before the International Criminal Court on charges relating to war crimes.

Guinea's tenuous peace has only been sustained through a presidential allegiance with the military since its independence, only finally arriving at democratic elections in 2011 when Alpha Condé acceded to the Presidency.

The Mano River Union was founded in 1973 by Sierra Leone and Liberia, formalising an earlier non-aggression pact between the two countries. It was hoped that its principle aim of harmonisation of cross-border trade would ease some of the local tensions. Although at the time Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea were already parties to a Non-aggression Pact and Good Neighbourliness Treaty, Guinea only became a formal partner of the MRU treaty in 1980. However, the sub-regional body never managed to function to its full capacity and by 1975 the MRU was subsumed into the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the main regional body that brings together the sixteen countries of West Africa. With the change, the focus went from concerns over local cross-border trade with its close ethnic and social kinship links to an international trading conglomerate concerned with economic, financial, social and cultural matters. In addition the sub-region plunged into brutal conflict from the early 1990s, eroding any opportunities for the MRU to mature. In 1993, the ECOWAS treaty was revised to include 'preventing and settling regional conflict', giving the organisation an explicit security and conflict function.

With the end of the wars in Sierra Leone and in Liberia in 2002 and 2003 respectively, the MRU was revised on 20 May 2004 and subsequently in 2008 Côte d'Ivoire was invited to join. The 15th Protocol to the Mano River Declaration, signed in 2000, called on the MRU to work for the maintenance of peace, security and stability in its three member states. It incorporated a mechanism to monitor the common borders, with the aim of preventing, controlling, discouraging, forestalling and averting security related problems. It has since been politically re-affirmed, with the Heads of State of all four countries once more pledging their commitment to the philosophy of the MRU and a coordinated approach to security, trade and development.

The MRU's 15th Protocol acknowledged the gaps in the original Aims and Objectives for the Settlement of Cross-Border Disputes, and added two more principles to tackle border management and sub-regional security:

1. Establishment of a framework to create an effective mechanism to monitor and ensure the security of common borders with the aim of preventing, controlling, discouraging, forestalling and averting security related problems in the border regions; and
2. To create an institutional framework for Defence, Security and Internal Affairs⁸

The 15th Protocol, despite being signed by the relevant Heads of State and including articles that clearly list its functions and divisions of responsibility, has not been incorporated into local or state legislation. An implementation policy is needed to complete the process.

As mentioned in the Introduction, borders have historically been marginalised in terms of political, economic and social development and have provided power vacuums in which insecurity has taken root. The next sections identify a number of issues that affect or characterise border areas in particular. While these issues are not exclusive to these areas they have the potential to impact on border communities more significantly, be it in a positive or negative way.

Decentralisation

The decentralisation of power through the creation of local government authorities is relatively new to the Mano River sub region. It has been rolled out during post conflict reconstruction in Liberia and Sierra Leone, creating a local tier of democratic governance and bringing decision making closer to

⁸ Please see Annex 4 for the Protocol and the details of the mechanism.

the people. Good governance enables the people to have a say in their community's development. It also gives them space to exercise their rights and provides a forum for local communities to air their grievances. The objective of the local government is to make central government more effective by bringing it closer to the people. By doing so it creates opportunities for participatory democracy and brings with it a mechanism for the dissemination of information relating to national and local issues.

The nature of the voluntary participatory process enables the people to discuss the issues that affect their locality as well as national issues such as transport routes, local health centres and schools. Through the local representational system the electorate have greater control of the elected representatives, which in turn improves accountability of elected officials. The presence of elected officials at the district level provides the local people with greater control over their resources through involving them in mobilisation, allocation and utilisation of funds and measures that seek to increase safety and security in their locality.

The three countries of the MRU have different levels of decentralisation. Sierra Leone has the most developed system and Liberia has only just begun to implement its decentralisation policy. There is a decentralisation policy in Guinea but few functions of central government or the country's economy are decentralised.

Guinea is mainly run by presidentially appointed officials at the centre; agriculture is the only area that has been decentralised, although it remains under the control of the Minister of Agriculture. With the free market policies citizens have since 1985 advocated for state-owned plantations and government-owned agricultural products be decentralised in favour of private smallholders owned by Guinean citizens.

Local government reform in Liberia was re-introduced in 2010 but many of the functions are still managed by central government. The Governance Commission has drafted a National Decentralisation Policy of Local Government (2010) for the devolution of political, fiscal and administrative powers. The policy document requires that two of the Government of Liberia's Ministries, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs and Ministry of Internal Affairs, work together to promote a system of semi-autonomous counties. Liberia's decentralisation policy aims to provide an effective local government system within each of the existing 15 counties and 68 districts with plans to achieve democratic self-

governance and fiscal development. Each of the 15 counties will continue to be administered by a County Superintendent who is appointed by the President.

The local government framework is designed to address the different levels of under-development and deprivation throughout 15 counties and 68 districts. This two-pronged Ministerial approach is intended to provide the cohesion necessary for efficient self-governance. One ministry is responsible for the drafting of the policy to co-ordinate the economic and developmental needs of the communities while the other will take responsibility for the implementation of the local activities with adjudication powers where necessary.

The intensity of the Ministry of Interior's supervisory direction and oversight of the activities would vary according to the level of the mandate set for each of the local political units. The local political units would, however, act as final arbiters of local disputes through their management of the tribal authorities and their power to adjudicate in tribal law.

There has been some successes in decentralisation of some powers and resources to provide basic amenities. However, these do not appear to take into account the socio-economic variations between each of the counties such as the variations in the size of the population, access to local resources or level of devastation caused by violent conflict. For example, Bong and Lofa counties have attracted huge investment opportunities in mining and agriculture but there has been very little evidence of other economic strategies to benefit the rural poor or the hard-to-reach communities in the borderlands. Social and economic indicators are relatively good in the urban areas of Gbarnga (Bong), and Voinjama (Lofa) but do not reflect corresponding indicators in rural communities.

After 32 years of a lapsed local government system, decentralisation was reintroduced in 2004 in Sierra Leone as a post-conflict measure. The local government of Sierra Leone operates through local councils, which are the highest political body in the locality. Councils are expected to work with the communities they represent to understand their problems, needs and expectations. They must assess what resources they have and devise appropriate plans of action, which should include the community in development programmes that seek to improve the local social, political and economic environment.

The administrative system of the country is divided up into the Western Area, which contains Freetown,

the capital city, eight urban wards and one rural ward; three regions, Northern, Southern and Eastern, each with a provincial capital; and 12 districts in the provinces. Including the Western area, there are 394 Wards in the decentralisation system in Sierra Leone. Each ward contains elected councillors who sit on the local council and represent the interests of their electorate. There is also another level of local government as each of the districts of Sierra Leone are divided into Chiefdoms. The Northern Province contains 53 Chiefdoms; Southern Province has 52 Chiefdoms and Eastern Province has 44 Chiefdoms. In total there are 149 (2007).

For decentralisation to provide the greatest benefit to the population it needs maximum community participation in all aspects of programming. This will help ensure community ownership of decision-making in the development process, especially for donor-led poverty alleviation programmes. Sierra Leone and Liberia have taken positive measures to ensure that the participation of women's organisations and empowerment of women are also integral to the decentralisation and development process. While Guinea's decentralised agricultural policy appears to benefit women more than men, this is due to the majority of the non-State agricultural workers and market traders being women rather than it being a result of an explicitly gender-aware policy.

In the borderlands of the Mano River Union, where the security state is often said to be fragile and cross-border issues can affect the safety of the borderland communities, decentralisation structures need voluntary participation to strengthen peace on either side of the borders. Good governance agendas not only affect the communities who originate in the borderlands but also affect the state security sector personnel who are required to protect the borders and allow free passage of people, goods and services while restricting the unlawful importation of contraband goods, drugs, arms and illegal immigrants.

Security Sector Reform and Border Management

Historically, states and their security forces in West Africa have not only failed to protect their own citizens but also have been at the centre of insecurity and state oppression. In the aftermath of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia a donor-backed security sector reform (SSR) process was implemented in both countries. A legacy of widespread mistrust among citizens and corruption among the security sector forces in both countries, combined with the destruction of much of the

security apparatus during the conflicts, has made the security sector reforms challenging. The UK-backed reform in Sierra Leone that started in the late 1990s has been hailed as a best practice case. In neighbouring Liberia, SSR was funded by the US and the UN and took a different trajectory.

This process has not been without criticism given the controversial involvement of the private sector. While the reform of a country's security sector in the aftermath of a decade-long war cannot be achieved in a short period of time, many of the old behaviours as well as logistical deficiencies persist today and remain a concern particularly in remote areas such as border communities.

The professional and logistical challenges that security personnel based at the borders face and the remoteness of border crossing posts in relation to the decision-making capitals has contributed to a number of serious challenges that impact both upon the travellers crossing the borders and upon the residents who live and work in the border communities. A summary of the main problems at the MRU borders include:

- Lack oversight of border officials by capitals.
- Inadequate terms and conditions of service; where such terms and conditions exist they are often not implemented or ignored.
- Unacceptable attitudes and behaviour of border officials (which include unprofessional actions such as corruption, extortion and harassment).
- Despite SSR in the case of Sierra Leone and Liberia, officials demonstrate poor knowledge of rules and regulations.

Most West African countries who have gone through war and political violence, including Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, adopted strategies for Security Sector Reforms as part of the post conflict restructuring and state building agenda. However, these strategies do not seem to address the human security needs of the people, especially those in border districts. In addition, insecurity continues to spread to neighbouring countries – Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. It is therefore often argued that West Africa needs a regional SSR strategy. While some of the challenges mentioned above are of national nature, a regional approach would no doubt help address emerging threats such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and challenges such as mercenaries crossing borders unchecked, refugees' movements and illegal trafficking of people and goods.

Youth and Unemployment

The MRU sub-region is a particularly acute example of the dangers of high unemployment and under-employment, which in turn have become intimately linked to insecurity in these countries. The four countries comprise one of the world's youngest and poorest populations, where about 72 per cent of the population are under the age of 30. Female youth require particular attention as they account for half of all youth but are regularly overlooked or even ignored.

At around 70 per cent, youth unemployment runs high in the sub region but the lack of opportunities for productive employment is only part of the problem. In the MRU countries, when young people do find a job, it is either in the informal economy, in low-paid, low-skilled and short-lived jobs; or they resort to criminal activities within the alternative economy, or the 'Devil's Workshop' as it is known locally.

West African countries and MRU countries in particular have known varying degrees of political unrest in the last two decades, in which youth played a central role both as victims and perpetrators of violence. Marginalised youths are often seen as one of the main security challenges. Around election time, idle youths are instrumentalised by political elites for political violence, mostly in return for some economic reward.

At the regional level the availability of small arms and the vast numbers of disaffected young people ready to pick up arms again, often for economic reasons, provide fodder for conflicts. During the 14-year period of conflict in the Mano River basin, young people formed 90 per cent of the fighters and were recycled across the borders between the three countries.⁹ This was the case during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone and more recently there is evidence that former combatants in Sierra Leone's border regions were being contacted to join the uprising in Guinea in 2010 and in the Liberian border region to join the violence in Côte d'Ivoire.

A combination of inadequate policies and the lack of commitment by governments to engage the youth has led to an increase in youth exclusion and vulnerability in West Africa. Youth lack representation and influence in formal decision-making processes and policies that shape their lives and as a result they sometimes turn to alternative power structures that offer a sense of identity, opportunities for participation and access to resources.

Border communities in the sub-region are have particularly high numbers of former combatants, who make the majority of young people living in border areas. Many are heavily involved in perpetuating serious and organised crime; trafficking in arms, drugs, people and contraband goods; money laundering and foreign currency exchange all of which provide them with an income. They are also involved in using and sale of alcohol and non-prescription drugs. They control unofficial border posts and the backlash from inter-gang conflicts affects the communities and causes tension between themselves, the village elders and paramount chiefs.¹⁰

The male youth who are engaged in the alternative economy are as vulnerable as the women, not in terms of physical strength, but owing to the life threatening and controlling tactics of 'gang masters'. Not many of the youth are sole operators and illicit trading operates no differently from the highly controlled inner city crime rings. These young people form part of the international trafficking network transporting drugs, arms, contraband goods and people through unofficial border posts.

The cumbersome nature of crossing state border posts almost encourages the male traders, as well as the women traders, to use the unofficial posts. They still have to pay the 'un-Officials' and that practice is diverting the collection of legitimate fees out of the national economy. This is only one of the practices that causes conflict between the youth and the tribal elders. According to the research, gang activities have often been linked to rape of the vulnerable, sexual abuse of children and the use of ritualistic homicide to reinforce the traditional system of local control.

Market Women

Many of the rural women in the MRU borderlands are actively engaged in informal cross border market trade. Unemployment levels at the borders are above the national average. A high percentage of the young women are buying and selling goods in the market towns on both sides of the borders. It is an enterprise not without its dangers. The markets are held in different towns on different days and transportation from the remote villages is limited. Limited public and local forms of transport exist in the larger areas but their reliability is affected by badly maintained footpaths, poor roads, a lack of fuel, and roads and tracks that are prone to flooding in the rainy season. They are often exposed

⁹ "Echoes of Youth Voices and Concerns from the Mano River Border Zones, Borderlines, January 2008, Edition 1.

¹⁰ Conciliation Resources' Policy document on Sierra Leone's Border Community Security Situation. November 2011.

to harassment, extortion and crime from itinerant people, unemployed youth and officials at the border crossing points.

According to an early WIDTECH information bulletin (2001) the cross border traders are not one homogenous group but instead they are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds over-laid with cultural variables. The common denominator, however, is that regardless of their personal circumstances trading is a necessity. The majority of the market traders are engaged in either the retail or wholesale trade, or a bit of both. Trading requires little working capital and it is sufficiently flexible to fit in with women's domestic duties.

UN Women (2011) surveyed cross-border traders in a number of West African countries, including

Liberia, and found that a high proportion of the women said that their profit was the only source of income for the family. Although the majority of the women traded in seasonal agricultural goods, UN Women's research confirmed an earlier ILO (2004) study where they found that self-employed women of Sub-Saharan Africa provided 60 per cent of non-agricultural goods for the retail markets. Once the women had repaid their micro-finance loans, UN Women's survey said the remainder of their income was spent buying food for the table, school fees and paying for health care. In addition to economically supporting their own families the women traders often are either financially supporting members of their extended families through the provision of their basic needs; or reinvesting the profit to buy more goods, pay for transport or rent storage warehouses in the vicinity of their regular markets.

There were a number of key messages from UN Women's research, in particular the contribution the market women made to the economy: 'They keep the African markets going.' By using local transport to and from their markets they are supporting the formal economy. Private transport, such as, cars, vans and animal drawn carts are also used, and the WIDTECH report made the point that a lack of adequate transport disproportionately affects women who trade in small volumes with insufficient quantities for businesses to deliver direct to their market premises.

UN Women's donor-led sustainable livelihood programmes have increased the opportunities women have for obtaining loans and by doing so they have cushioned the effects of the financial and food crises in the MRU. One of the UN Women's research observations was that the women 'are neglected by mainstream trade policies and institutions, thus undermining the profitability and visibility of their activities' and therefore the least that should be provided is a safe passage to and from their markets as a token of appreciation for their contribution to the economy of the region.

One of the issues affecting market traders is the quality of the roads. Apart from plans for a trans-West African highway, good quality roads have not been a priority. Guinea does not appear to have a major reform policy, Liberia's road planning is in its infancy and Sierra Leone's road system is improving. However, in a bid to aid local infrastructure and the provision of basic services, all MRU countries need to firstly improve the condition of feeder roads and transport communications in the borderlands

Table 4: Some Tribal/Ethnicity Groups by State

Tribal/Ethnicity Groups by State			
Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone
			Temne
Mende	Mandéyi		Mende
Mandinka	Malinké	Mandinka	Mandingo
	Kissi	Kissi	Kissi
	Limbanyi		Limba
	Soussou		Susu
Krous		Kru	Kroo
Fula	Peulh (Fula/ Fullah)		Fullahs
Peulh		Kpelle	Kono
	Guerzé	Lorma	Krio
		Bassa	
Akan		Grebo	
Voltaïques		Gio	
		Gola	
	Dialonka		
	Toma/Tomamania		

In the **2011 Human Development Index**, Guinea was ranked 178th out of 182 countries in terms of poverty levels, life expectancy, infant mortality rate, literacy rates and per capita income. Having suffered recurring economic difficulties despite its strong potential (particularly with regard to fishing and agricultural resources), the country is in the grip of a crisis which has been getting worse since 2004, characterised by galloping inflation (over 30% per year). In 2011 around 40% of its population was below the absolute poverty threshold of \$300 (US) per capita and per year and 13% below the extreme poverty threshold.

After the death of long-standing president Comte, Guinea President Alpha Condé has served as Head of State since 21st December 2010. Legislative elections have not been held since 2002. However, the President has appointed his Prime Minister as Head of a Transition Government assisted by a Council of Ministers, also appointed by the

President. The National Transition Council is made up of 155 members and performs the role of the legislature. The Guinea's administration is divided into one Special Zone that contains the state capital of Conakry, 7 regions and 5 urban communes; 33 Préfectures and 303 sub-Préfectures, which are also known as Communes.

When President Condé came to power the country's debt was estimated at 65% of its GDP (\$4 billion). Since then some of the long awaited economic reforms have started to take place. Now, the IMF economic forecast is 4% GDP for 2012. Also, a recent EU mission (November 2011) indicated that once the legislative elections are timetabled there would be a disbursement of some of the \$310 million earmarked for aid; the remainder will be withheld until after the legislative elections originally scheduled for 8 July 2012. In May 2012 they were postponed indefinitely. If this happens then Guinea will qualify for 67% HIPC donor relief on its \$4 billion debt.

border communities and secondly recognise these border communities are isolated and vulnerable and need to be treated differently as part of their development mandate.

Cross border family ties and social groupings

In the border villages and communities there are a range of people with different ancestral origins and tribes. Some of the residents were either born there, married into the village, or came as family visitors or trading partners and remained. Table 8, below, lists the different tribes found in the MRU and seeks to demonstrate how the names of the tribes change according to their native language or their trading/business language. In the borderlands of Guinea the people belonging to the Fullah tribe are known as Peulh in the dominant language used in cross-border trading.

Guinea

Surveyed Locations in Guinea

Forécariah Préfecture

Forécariah préfecture is one of Guinea's 33 préfectures and is part of the administrative region of Kindia. It shares a 104 km length of border with Sierra Leone. Forécariah shares a border with the Kambia district of Sierra Leone. It has a surface area of 4,250 km² and its total population is 201,193, of which 104,614 are women. It is made up of nine Rural Development Communities (RDC), four of which border Sierra Leone (Sikhourou, Moussayah,

Farmoriah and Benty). The capital of the district is Forécariah.

Dakhagbé is a small border community situated in Morkanya sub-district in the sub-prefecture of Benty and shares a boundary in the south with Sierra Leone near to Sekia in the Samu Chiefdom; in east by the sub-district of N'compan and in the west by the sub-district of Siramodia. The rural village was created in 1700 as a farming community that supplied the urban market with rice, cassava, fish, palm oil, sweet potatoes and vegetables. The majority of people of Dakhagbé belong to the ethnic groups of Sousou, Fullah, Temne, and the Malinke/Mandingo. The population of Dakhagbé is 2,115 men and 1,322 women.

Dakhagbé has a large weekly market where the communities from either side of the border meet to sell their produce and goods (such as vegetable oil, grain and root vegetables). Dakhagbé has three market days a week and people from Sierra Leone and other places in Guinea attend this market.

“ We women usually go buy goods in Conakry to this weekly market so that they can exchange with those from Sierra Leone. But since the government has forbidden some products to go outside the country we are suffering because the military services are using that to harass us with the number of check points where you are obliged to pay to any check points and if you do not have your ID cards that becomes another problem”.

Dakhagbé village is only two kilometres from Sierra Leone and people from either side of the border used to have a healthy relationship. They organised friendly football matches and other social activities and joined in family ceremonies and celebrations. Tensions at the border region increased during Sierra Leone's civil war when Dakhagbé had a large refugee camp. This was in place until 2000 -2001 when Guinea suffered from its own the rebel attacks along its borders.

Between September 2000 and the end of 2002 periodic rebel incursions from Sierra Leone entered Guinea via this village. In doing so they destroyed buildings and structures and much of the social fabric of the community. In response, the Guinean government installed a fully staffed security post made up of the gendarmerie, military, customs and the police. Dakhagbé now has a secondary official border post very close to Pamelap, the state border post with Sierra Leone. In the aftermath of the civil war the cross-border relationship has begun to resume and people are now sharing clinical services and schools.

Macenta Préfecture

Macenta is another of the 33 districts of Guinea. It is situated in the administrative region of Nzérékoré in the Forest of Guinea and has a population 378, 580 of which 199,300 are women. Macenta shares a border with the Lofa Country of Liberia. In 1999 it hosted a population of Liberian refugees but a rebel incursion in 2000 caused huge human and material losses.

The study was carried out in the urban community of Daro sub-préfecture at Daro Rural Development

Community (RDC). There are nine RDCs within the sub-préfecture.

In this RDC, the research team were able to meet with officials from the sub-préfecture authorities, the police, customs, and the gendarmerie, before working with the community itself (local councillors, men, women and male and female youth groups).

Daro is one of the 15 préfectures that make up Macenta préfecture. It is bordered to the east by the Macenta urban commune, to the west by the Liberia (along approximately 48 km of border area), to the north by Balizia rural commune and to the south by Oremai rural commune. It has a surface of 320 km² and a population of 21,417. It comprises 11 districts and 35 sectors.

The population is mostly made up of Mania (founders), Toma, Guèrzé, Peulh (and Dialonké. The main spoken language is Mania, followed by Toma, Guèrzé and Peulh. Agriculture and petty trade are the main economic activities of the area.

Badiaro is a small border community situated in the sub-préfecture of Daro and 400 metres from the Liberian border. The village was created in 1800 as a farming community that supplied the urban market with rice, cassava, banana, palm oil and cola nuts. The people of Badiaro belong to about seven ethnic groups include Toma, Tomamania, Guèrze, Kissi, Malinke/Mandingo, Fullah and Dialonka. The population is 2, 818 of which 1,629 are women.

Badiaro has two market days per week and people from Liberia and neighbouring communities in Guinea attend this market. Before the war, the people from either side of the border used to meet to jointly celebrate social events, such as weddings,

In the **2011 Human Development Index, Liberia** was ranked 182 out of 182 in terms of poverty levels, life expectancy, infant mortality rate, literacy rates and per capita income. The 15 years of civil war left approximately 250,000 people dead and destroyed almost three generations of education for school age children. The result is that in 2008 only around 58% of the population were literate with very little human capacity for development purposes.

According to 2010 economic indicators in Liberia, poverty remains a significant problem despite significant gains made by the Government of Liberia in addressing governance challenges and a level of debt and trading deficit the government inherited. The depth of poverty is often exacerbated by inadequate social and economic services; weak public accountability, corruption and

limited opportunities for the people, especially those in the rural and hard to reach communities, to influence public policy decisions.

The Republic of Liberia has an elected President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who since 7 November 2011 is in her second and final term of office. The President of Liberia is both Head of State and Head of Government. The cabinet is made up of a Council of Ministers appointed by the President. Members of the cabinet are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The House of Representatives has 73 members and represents the 15 Counties.

In 2008 Liberia was declared eligible for HIPC \$4.5 billion in debt relief. In the same year, Liberia experienced an estimated GDP growth of 6.1% primarily from its export/import sector.

naming ceremonies and funerals. Nowadays, the scope of cross-border sharing has developed to include children from cross border communities sharing schools on one side while families share clinical services on the other.

Liberia

Surveyed Locations in Liberia

Voinjama District

Voinjama District is the provincial capital of Lofa County, which is one of the 15 counties of Liberia. The district is divided into two sub-districts (Quardu-Gboni and Voinjama). Quardu-Gboni district is predominantly made up of the Mandingo ethnic group whereas the Voinjama district is comprised entirely of the Lorma ethnic group. At one time, Voinjama was a unitary district but owing to the civil conflict (1989 – 2003) where the Mandingo and Lorma fought on separate sides it split into the two sub-districts of Voinjama and Quardu-Gboni.

Quardu-Gboni has an estimated population of 17,000 and the research focused on two of its northern border communities of Bolongoidu and Kondadu. Both communities are from the Mandingo ethnic tribe and they are Muslim. During the civil conflict these two communities were the centres of some of the most intense fighting between the LURD and NPFL.

Farming forms the main economic livelihood of the two communities. Most of the farming population is engaged in rice, cocoa and coffee production. The two communities have only two working hand pumps, one in each of the community. Infrastructure in the two communities is largely non-existent and both communities lack a source of safe drinking water. Neither community has a clinic or a hospital but they do have primary schools.

Cross-border ties have enabled the students from the border towns of Gbagialo, Moijalor, Baladu and Dalor in Guinea to cross the border each day to attend Liberian schools in Bolongoidu and Kondadu. Conversely, Liberian market traders from those two towns cross into Guinea to trade their coffee and cocoa in the Gbagialo market.

Despite their limited infrastructure and lack of local markets, the two communities of Bolongoidu and Kondadu do have the potential to become the economic hub of the district given their massive rice, coffee and cocoa farms. One of the obvious effects of close relationship the Liberians have with their Guinean neighbours are the number of unofficial crossing points and the limited presence of security

personnel in the area. The security personnel based in Bolongoidu built their own office with mud and roofed it with thatch. According to them, they were located there without resources to operate! At the time of the research, none of the Immigration personnel in Bolongoidu or Kondadu had uniforms or access to office equipment or transport for work. This could inform the way they try to extort monies from travellers and run the post based on their own set rules, infringing upon the rights of people.

Foya District

Foya district in Liberia shares border with Guinea to the northwest and Serra Leone to the west. The district has a population of 71,000. The main ethnic group in the district are the Kissi.

Mendicorma

Mendicorma is the main recognised border community of the district and it also shares a common border with the Kailahun district in Serra Leone. Owing to the location of the Kailahun District, both Liberia and Guinea are able to use unofficial border entry points into Sierra Leone.

Even though the Mendicorma border generates thousands of US dollars in monthly revenue for the Liberian government, the community is highly impoverished and lacks many basic social amenities including a developed infrastructure, safe drinking water, schools and health centres. The inhabitants of the community are mainly engaged in subsistence-level farming. Mendicorma has an estimated population of 1,400 and belong to the Kissi ethnic group. Like Bolongoidu and Kondadu, it was also heavily affected by the civil war. The NPFL rebels of former Liberian President Charles Taylor used the community as their military base. For that reason, the town was ravaged when the LURD forces attacked Charles Taylor and his followers.

Sierra Leone

Surveyed Locations in Sierra Leone

Kailahun district

Kailahun is one of the three districts in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone and has 14 chiefdoms. Seven of the 14 chiefdoms share borders with Guinea and Liberia – Kissi Kama, Kissi Teng, Kissi Tongi, Luawa, Upper Bambara, Dea, and Malema. Kissi is the local language of the Kailahun district and the three Kissi chiefdoms are collectively known as Kissi Bendu. Population figures were the criteria used for the selection of the two survey areas of

In the **2011 Human Development Index, Sierra Leone** was ranked 180th out of 182 countries according to poverty, life expectancy, infant mortality rate, literacy rates and per capita income. The 11 year long civil war left approximately 70,000 people dead and 27,000 amputees. The war destroyed much of the infrastructure throughout Sierra Leone, including the main business centre of Freetown. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2002 and the 2011 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper focused economic, social and political rebuilding with emphasis upon the basis of the principles of good governance and the rule of law. In the same year the decentralisation process was introduced to strengthen local government in the rural communities.

The Sierra Leone government is divided into three branches: the executive, legislative and judicial. The seat of government of Sierra Leone is in the capital Freetown. The government of Sierra Leone takes place in a framework of a presidential representative democratic republic, where the President of Sierra Leone is both head of state and head of government. Executive power is exercised by the president. Legislative power is vested in the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

In 2011, Sierra Leone's youth unemployment rate was 40%. However, the combination of Sierra Leone's

substantial mineral wealth, its agriculture and its fisheries mean that there should be sufficient employment for the population. The nation is rife with inequality and access to education, health and adequate housing is in short supply. The public sector infrastructure has not yet fully focused on many of the areas outside the Freetown city centre, or extended beyond the provincial headquarter towns of Bo, Kenema or Makeni.

The IMF has helped to stabilise economic growth and reduce inflation. In 2010 it introduced a \$45 million programme over three years that should support political stability through to 2013. The continuation of international donor aid is essential to the maintenance of peace in the run-up to the Presidential and legislative elections.

Political stability depends upon financial stability. The second round of Presidential elections since the cessation of hostilities in 2002 will take place in 2012. President Ernest Bai Koroma has intimated that he will be standing for a second term of office. During his term he has supported and overseen the revival of mining (bauxite and rutile); this, combined with the newly discovered off-shore oil reserves, suggest there are signs of lasting economic recovery.

Buedu and Dawa. Buedu, with its population of more than 33,000, is the largest of the chiefdom headquarter towns; and Dawa, the gateway community to Liberia, is the smallest community with approximately 300 inhabitants.

Buedu is the headquarters of Kissi Tongi chiefdom and is strategically located 14 kilometres from Liberia and 32 kilometres from Guinea. The population is predominantly Christian, with agriculture and trade being their main economic activities. Due to its location Buedu tends to be a socially deprived area. Although it is part of the greater Kissi Bendu Chiefdom, it has been economically disadvantaged by the closure of Koindu international market and its connection to the RUF when Buedu was the location of its main headquarters. The area now has an above average number of unemployed young people, comprising of men, some of whom are former combatants, and women.

Dawa is the main gateway to Sierra Leone from Liberia's Foya and Boya axis. There are very few police and immigration officials stationed in Dawa and only one soldier. However, the community has nurtured good relations with the security sector and has provided a makeshift shelter in the absence of adequate accommodation for security sector personnel. The people in Dawa are predominantly farmers and a few are engaged in cross-border

trade. As with most border communities there are strong cross-border connections, fostered by inter-marriages, a shared ethnicity (Kissi) and a tendency to participate in governance (elections) processes in both Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Kambia District

Kambia is one of five districts and capital of both its district and Sierra Leone's Northern Province. It has an approximate population of 280,000. There are seven chiefdoms in Kambia District, one of which is Samu. Samu, with a population of approximately 58,000, is the second largest chiefdom and it has 12 sections, one of which is Bubuya. The Susu people who live there are predominantly Muslim and have a strong historical relationship with their Guinean counterparts. They share cross-border livelihoods and the Sierra Leonean children attend schools in Guinea. Many of the adults possess dual citizenship and they vote in both countries, cultivate farmland on either side of the border and trade in each other's markets, with scant regard for immigration papers.

Bubuya is one of the Samu chiefdom's twelve sections and comprises largely of a cluster of communities dotted a short distance from one another. Bubuya has an estimated population of 500 inhabitants, most of whom are Muslim. The people are predominantly Susu speaking with

strong historical, social-economic, cultural and linguistic ties with the Guinea Susu who are also engaged in farming and trade. As a result, periodic markets (Luma) are held between the communities in the border area, with Dakhagbé in Guinea on Wednesday and Bubuya Junction in Sierra Leone on Thursdays. These markets attract large numbers of people from all over the Samu chiefdom and from Forécariah and Dakhagbé in Guinea.

This is a path to Sierra Leone. Here for a distance of three kilometres people from Sierra Leone used to pass by this road to come in Guinea. But since the rebel incursions in 2000 and 2001 these people are no longer using this road to come for the weekly market but it shows the porosity of our borders because people use this road all the day for family affairs or other businesses’.

Sierra Leonean team researcher

Tambaia is also a section of the Susu chiefdom; and as with Bubuya, the inhabitants are Susu and interact more with people in Guinea than in Sierra Leone. Tambaia used to be the route through which truckloads of goods from Guinea crossed into Sierra Leone. During the height of the conflict they would by-pass the border crossing points at Pamlap and Gbalamuya to evade customs and ECOWAS

sanctions. Nowadays, Tambaia is the main gateway to Dakhagbé and Conakry, and the Guinea military checkpoint is approximately five hundred kilometers inside the border crossing.

The majority of the cross border community members speak the same language (Susu), hold dual citizenship and share various socio-cultural and economic interests. Bubuya and Tambaia have the additional benefit of an influx of police (OSD) and military students attending training courses at the Sierra Leone Police Advanced Public Order Training School (APOTS) and the RSLAF 11th Battalion Forward Patrol Base in Yumkella.

The SLP Local Police Partnership Board (LPPB)¹¹ extends its support to the resolution of policing and cross-border issues for a range of stakeholders from district and local levels. Membership of this particular partnership board comprises of traditional leaders, representatives from the majority of women’s groups, youth groups, local prisons, police and military, ONS DISEC and Chiefdom Security Committee (CHISEC¹²). The prevailing safety and security synergy generated by the active police partnership board has made Tambaia one of the safest of cross-border communities.

¹¹ The LPPBs were created as part of the security sector reform in Sierra Leone, to establish community policing to respond to local policing needs and to involve the community.

¹² Created to further decentralise the security apparatus in Sierra Leone and initially established in the border areas.

Findings of a participatory research in selected border communities in the Mano River Union

Introduction

Each team produced a report compiling their survey findings, highlighting key issues from the range of cross-border tensions identified by respondents as causes for concern. This section presents the findings for each country as well as the recommendations made by the participants and the survey teams. The teams’ findings tended to be organised by themes, which have been replicated here. However, there are slight differences in the way each team organised the information, which explains why the thematic titles heading the findings for each country are not necessarily the same. One can also infer that there are different ways in which the themes are perceived in the different countries. Also the governance systems are at different stages of implementation and structures and systems are

set reflecting different government systems in the West- Britain for Sierra Leone, France for Guinea and United State for Liberia.

Findings were presented per each separate location surveyed. However, to simplify this report, the findings and subsequent recommendations, information for all locations surveyed has been combined per each country. It is worth clarifying some terminology that can be used with different meanings. The expression “porous borders” tends to be used very loosely and was often used by the teams to both describe official and unofficial border crossing points. For the purposes of this report, border-crossing points are the official state border posts. The miles of unmade tracks, paths and roads that form part of the ‘porous’ borders are unofficial crossing points.

Flows of illicit drugs across state borders can either be part of international organised crime routes or a low-level income generation initiative between local growers, suppliers and users. All references to the illicit trade in drugs will be termed as trafficking.

Where there is no comparable English language translation the French spelling is used in the research findings. The native language is used for all place names and names of organisations.

The three survey teams targeted the communities at the lowest administrative level. However, as one of the three MRU countries surveyed is Francophone, for consistency the English words are used to describe the different types of community. They are either be regions, districts or sub-districts. Nevertheless the relevant tables do acknowledge the existence of the names of the designated local authority areas: Guinea has its 33 Préfectures, Liberia has 15 Counties and Sierra Leone has 12 districts and Freetown's Western Area.

A diverse range of personnel perform various functions at the state borders, some in uniform, some without (usually owing to a lack of logistics). The term security sector in this context refers

to those people on both sides of the border who are representing the military, police, immigration and customs.

During the research, members of tribal and customary authorities, faith based organisations and similar influential members of local associations gave their views. They all willingly participated in the research and supported the project and the researchers. The term non-state actors, has been used for these specific groups of people. Non-state actors in this context are those people to whom the community members turn to help them with their problems. They are members of CBOs and CSOs, and as perceived representatives of the community they are the ones the community members put their trust in to resolve some of their day-to-day problems that regularly arise through living and working at the borders.

Findings: Guinea

As mentioned before, ABC Development selected the Forécariah préfecture along its border with Sierra Leone and Macenta préfecture with its Liberian border. In addition to speaking to community



Map 2: Sub-préfecture of Farmoréah (Pamelap): Community Risk Map

leaders and residents, the team also spoke to the representatives of the CBOs based in each of the préfectures to find out the extent of the support they provided for their stakeholders (civilians, authorities, local councillors, defence and security forces) and what affected the security of the people in those specific parts of the Mano River basin.

The first evidence collection phase was from 6 to 15 September 2011 in the Forécariah préfecture, mostly in the border sub- préfectures of Farmoréah (Pamelap district) and Benty (Morkanya Dakhagbé district); and the second phase from 23 September to 3 October 2011, in the Macenta préfecture, mostly in the Daro sub- préfecture (Badiaro district).

The team worked with the sub- préfecture authorities, local councillors, women's focus groups, youth focus groups, police, gendarmerie, customs and the defence service, as well as transport trade unions (vehicles and motorcycle-taxis). Regrettably, ABC was only able to work with the local authorities and security officials at the local level. They were unable to get senior officials to respond because of the bureaucracy involved in the Guinean security sector. To overcome this setback the team prioritised focus groups and community dialogue meetings and proceeded as follows:

- Identified a community-based organisation in each préfecture to support the research: *the Association pour la Solidarité et le Développement Durable* (ASDD) in Forécariah préfecture and *the Centre Catholique d'Appui à l'Autopromotion Socio-Economique* (CECAAPSE) in Macenta préfecture.
- Carried out desk research in the préfectures' archives.
- Gathered information from administration authorities, local councillors, women and young people in border communities through focus groups and one-to-one interviews.
- Gathered information from military authorities (army and *gendarmerie*) and paramilitary bodies (police and customs) involved in border management.

The survey team used the following tools:

- Interview guide
- Interview
- One-to-one interviews
- Group discussions
- Community risk mapping
- Focus groups
- Transect mapping
- Force-Field Analysis

SECURITY

The proliferation of small arms in Guinea has long been a security concern and effective arms control is one of the weaknesses the state. Two main contributory factors are that in recent times, owing to rebel incursions and political unrest, more young people have learnt how to handle weapons and looting of armouries held at police stations and gendarmeries during various rebellions has regularly taken place, increasing the number of weapons in circulation. On top of this many of the ex-combatants from the Sierra Leone and Liberian civil wars sought refuge in Guinea, mainly Macenta, N'Nzérékoré and Guéckédou, and there is a sizeable blacksmiths' industry turning out craft weapons.

According to respondents, the volunteer youth brigades handed in approximately 9,000 weapons at the end of hostilities. The only weapons left behind by the rebel incursions were handed in and returned to the military defence forces.

In terms of border security the 104 km border between the préfecture and Sierra Leone is completely open, with numerous unofficial crossing points. Moreover, not only is there an inadequate number of security and defence staff deployed in these areas but there are also insufficient border management facilities, vehicles, motorcycles, communications equipment and stationery material. Security sector personnel lack professional training. It is known that drugs and human trafficking exist but participants highlighted that officials at the border posts seem to have difficulty searching people and vehicles to either recover stolen property or disrupt drugs and human trafficking activities as they prefer to extort monies.

According to the survey, security and defence forces on both sides of the border do know each other but neither have a 'working together' strategy or are able to take joint working decisions. Each adheres to their own government's policies.

As far as communities are concerned, they often meet on one side of the border to celebrate special family occasions, such as christenings and weddings, or to resolve disagreements. The border separates communities but they carry on with their family activities regardless.

Participants indicated that the communities are afraid of a possible resumption of the conflict in Sierra Leone and the attacks in Guinea in 2000. And so the reluctance to build quality homes or make significant investment in their own communities. The governments are also not paying attention to the needs in these border communities.

Dakhabgé shares a land border with Sierra Leone and for over two years it has suffered from land disputes between the villages of Kayenguissa on the Sierra Leone side and Rogbanè on the Guinea side. Community meetings have been convened, but no solution has been found so far. This is what encouraged Morkaniah district, on the orders of the sub-préfecture's authorities, to create a surveillance committee made up of young people from all of the district's sectors. The young people's mission is to control the length of the border that separates the surrounding Sierra Leonean villages from Guinea. These young people are loyalist of the government and are often given allowances.

As Dakhabgé is very close to the border (2 km), there are at least seven access routes from Sierra Leone, five of which are controlled by security and defence forces through roadblocks and checkpoints. According to available information, the only illegal trafficking intercepted by officials at these roadblocks are those export goods that are forbidden by the Guinean government (such as oil, onions and rice).

A number of one-to-one interviews revealed a considerable presence of drug trafficking (Indian hemp), which sometimes occurs as at Farmoréah with the collusion of the security and defence officials along the border.

Since 2000, Badiaro district has witnessed one rebel incursion, which caused material and human damage. Nowadays, with a relatively calm security situation within and between Guinea and Liberia, the district is relatively stable.

The security services and a district-monitoring brigade made up of young people from the village tend to maintain the security in their borderlands. These youth services were highly visible to the survey teams as they passed through the borders on their way to their meeting the security and defence officials at the border posts.

In addition to the Badiaro district located on the main road, there are many other villages (sectors) along the border. From Badiaro several paths lead to Liberia. Those paths are outside the control of security officials, whose numbers are inadequate (there are only two policemen for the whole sub-préfecture) and who are poorly equipped, with insufficient means of communication, transport and housing.

Although Badiaro district used to be a significant transit centre, nowadays the lack of traffic and the damaged roads has reduced the number of cross-border travellers. At one time villagers on either side of the border used to farm the land and sell

their crops. Thus, with the limited passing trade, the number of people engaged in agriculture has diminished.

GOVERNANCE

The wider border community poorly understands decentralisation, as their elected representative at the higher levels in the cities always makes decisions. Locally elected officials did not appear to involve the communities in decisions taken at grassroots level. If they were consulted, their views were never taken into consideration. According to the participants, this is why there is still a problem with the procurement of schools, good roads, health and the infrastructure for the public markets.

According to participants in Dakhabgé, this community is not familiar with decentralisation *per se*. Decisions are occasionally made in conjunction with the local traditional authorities and the officers from central government, but the community are never actually consulted via their formal representatives, or promises of future action followed up.

“ We have the largest weekly market in the area, but never benefit from any of the returns. We have asked the authorities to give us one week a month to try and solve our district's (economic and social development) problems, but they have never agreed to it.”

District's President

The researchers found similar accounts among the communities in Badiaro, who felt that their ideas were often not taken into account. The only source of income for the district comes from their local market, which is controlled by the sub-préfecture's authorities. People are largely uneducated and not aware of concepts of citizenship rights and duties. Decentralisation does not truly exist, as the separation of powers within communities is formally controlled and administered from the centre.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The research team observed petty fiddles and corrupt practices at every level. The people interviewed in the communities did complain of regularly being stopped at roadblocks, the physical and sexual abuse of women, and the extent of the extortion from security and defence forces over paying fines for their goods. “Vingt Mille” or “Cinq mille” the officials would demand from each

passenger. Some respondents seemed to justify that this practice is because of border officials' low wages, poor living standards and unsatisfactory working conditions. The Research Team also found that the majority of the border officials were illiterate and lacked a working knowledge of the law, rules and regulations which may be another reason to justify their inefficiency and why they resort to petty fiddles to get by.

In addition to the five roadblocks located on the small paths that lead to Sierra Leone which are controlled by officials, there are another six roadblocks on the main road between Pamelap and Benty, which is approximately 50 km long. On this stretch of road, people complain of the abuse that they suffer at the hands of the army personnel manning the roadblocks when travelling with their goods.

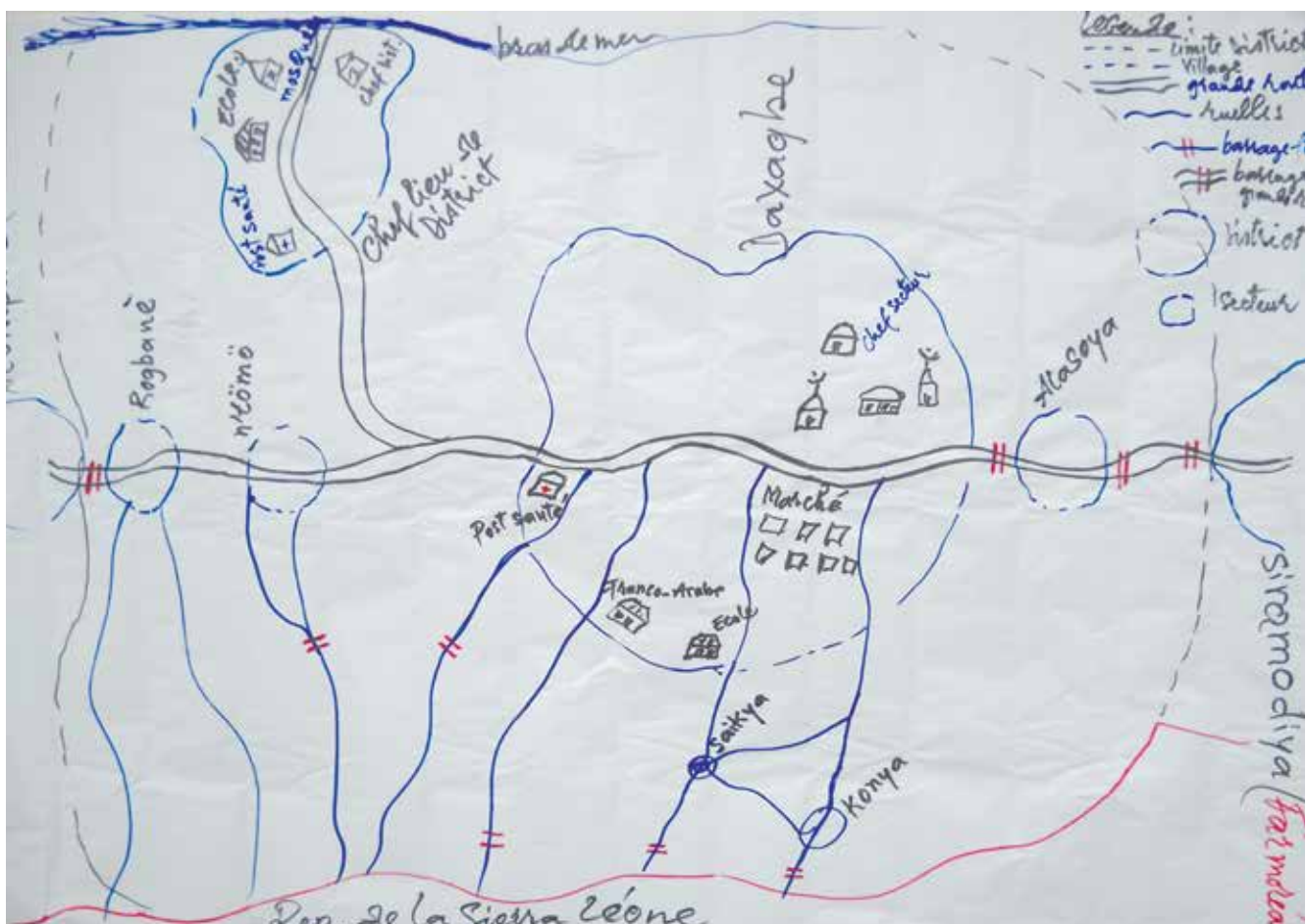
According to the evidence from the respondents, the defence and security forces are not there to protect citizens, but rather to harm them by confiscating their goods or preventing the free movement of goods over their own territory.

During interviews, it was revealed that at every roadblock the officials ask for 2000 GNF (Guinea Franc) if national ID is shown or 5000 GNF for

non-ID/laissez passé holders, and they seize any of the contraband food and goods travellers are found carrying.

In Badiaro, a vulnerable rural and border community, several problems in relation to underdevelopment and marginalisation were identified as follows:

- Lack of access to resources: people do not have the opportunity to set up any projects to improve income generation or standards of living
- High levels of illiteracy
- Lack of food due to poor management of crops
- Lack of health care. The village has one health post, but not one single health care worker. The one volunteer worker who helps out is not employed by the State
- Lack of school classrooms and of training, with two teachers for three classrooms
- Insufficient access to drinking water, with one borehole in good condition out of three for the whole village
- Difficult access due to damaged roads.



Map 3: Benty Village Risk map

GENDER

When gathering information in Farmoréah, the research team saw that the women were particularly quiet and kept themselves to themselves, almost satisfied at being allowed to observe. They felt that this was in part due to their poor living conditions and religious and cultural expectations that women would 'be seen and not heard.' Many of the women, young and old alike, tended to be illiterate in both French and English. They had not been to school and their lives are restricted to village matters, from collecting water as children to childcare and back yard gardening as adults. However, the researchers felt that the women were aware of the problems in their own communities but the challenge was trying to elicit solutions to those problems.

As with Farmoréah, women in Benty take no part whatsoever in decision-making and they are 99 per cent are illiterate. According to the respondents' views, they must be submissive as required by tradition. They do launch some initiatives, such as setting up soap making and market gardening groups, but they lack the financial acumen to develop these activities into profitable market trading.

In Badiaro, in the area of equality of opportunity and participation in community decision-making, the researchers noticed that the women lacked capacity and exhibited a significant degree of vulnerability. Although they are not involved in decision-making, the women bear the brunt of the heaviest tasks in household management. They are required to work in the fields, prepare meals, and look after their children and husbands. Women's activity groups are constrained by a lack of financial resources, limited administrative support and a lack of training and confidence.

Recommendations: Guinea

For security sector services

- Improve officials' living conditions through setting up housing developments and providing them with appropriate work equipment and sleeping arrangements
- Raise awareness amongst roadblock officials of the need to observe the rights of citizens and respect their goods
- Support communication, by means of providing equipment such as walkie-talkies and mobile phones
- Support training and capacity building for the border security sector personnel in border management skills and upholding citizen rights

- Resume regular meetings between civilian and military authorities either side of the border for sharing and coordinating decisions
- Strengthen security through visible foot patrols along the border.

For communities

- Support maintenance of rural tracks
- Improve inclusion of young people and women through income-generating activities and setting up community projects
- Engage in community capacity-building on community safety
- Train community-based organisations, civilian and military authorities in peace-making, good governance and decentralisation.

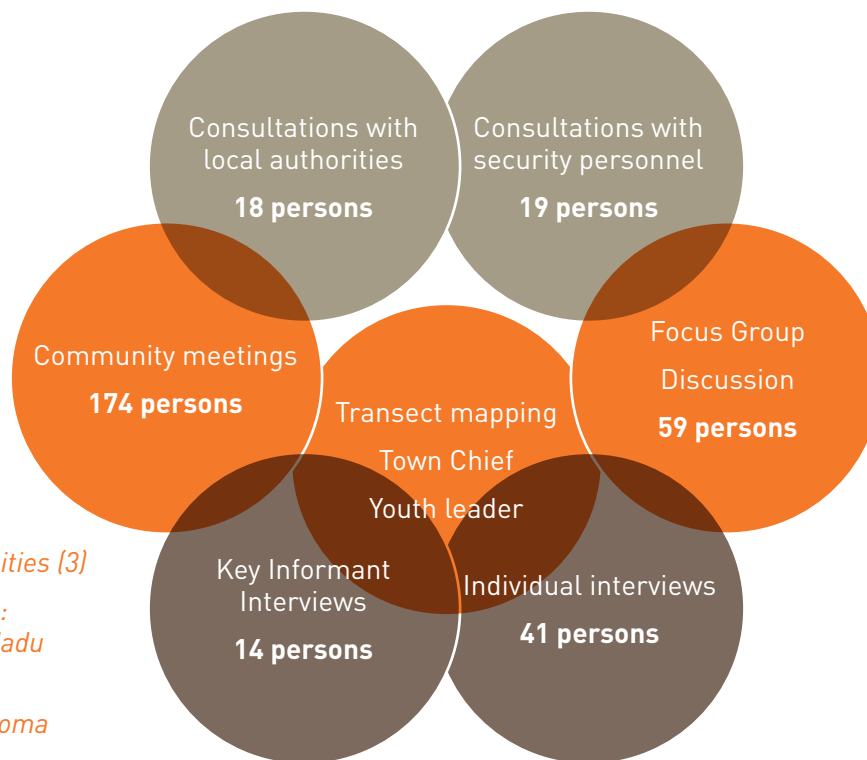
Findings: Liberia

As described, the Liberia Democratic Institute research took place in two border districts of Voinjama and Foya, Lofa County. The survey teams arrived when the 2011 presidential elections were just eight weeks' away. The focus of the research was to find out from the individuals and CBOs what was going on in the border areas and to get a better understanding of cross border security challenges between Liberia and Sierra Leone (Voinjama) and Liberia and Guinea (Foya). The survey teams were also interested to find out what the community felt was wrong with their relationship with state officials and their local representatives.

The research team embraced the participatory approach to research to the full by remaining within the three Mendicorma, Bolongoidu and Kondadu communities for the full duration of their month-long research period. The approaches used to generate the information included focus group discussions, group meetings and consultations, individual and key informant interviews and transect mapping. The total number of participants in the research in all three communities was 324. This included security personnel, local government authorities and community members. Out of this number 148 constituted women and 176 men. As noted before, the focus was on areas bordering on Sierra Leone and Liberia. While Liberia also borders Côte d'Ivoire the volatile security state of that country in 2011 precluded participatory research along its borders.

SECURITY

A number of community members at Mendicorma expressed a degree of insecurity as a result of



Districts (2) Communities (3)

*Quardu-Gboni District:
Bolongoidu and Kondadu
Communities*

*Foya District: Mendicoma
Community*

LDI: Survey tools and number of respondents

weak security presence at the borders. Community members would have liked the security personnel to be armed when they are on duty as they felt it would reassure the local people. The town chief of Mendicorma, Hon. Fallah Mobaka said that the absence of armed security personnel makes state borders very vulnerable. He noted that right across the other side of the border the Sierra Leonean and Guinean security personnel are armed with guns and this felt intimidating even though it could be reassurance as well as protection for the local communities across.

Similarly, community members at Bolongoidu expressed the same fear of insecurity given that there are only four unarmed security personnel posted at the border. Mr. Varlee S. Kamara asserted that a few months' ago-armed men from Guinea crossed the border and robbed most of the community people of their property. This he said could never have happened if the security personnel at the border post were armed. At night the security personnel posted at the border are said to retire to bed simply because there is no electricity, they are unarmed and therefore cannot keep watch overnight.

During the period of research the survey team identified weak infrastructure for border management as a major challenge that hindered the professionalism of border administration. At

all three of the border communities, Bolongoidu, Kondadu and Mendicorma where the Liberian research team worked they found poor quality infrastructure such as offices and insufficient logistics, systems and processes for the smooth running of state functions. They also noted that an absence of a regulatory framework or policies defining border management were among the underlying factors hindering border administration. Crossing over the Sierra Leonean and Guinean borders, the research team found better quality infrastructure and better logistics. The research team met Abdulai Sama (Immigration officer), Mustapha Kamara (Military Police), Amara Fortune and Mohamed Dukulay (Customs Officers) who were posted at the Kailahun border post in Sierra Leone in an effort to understand some of the cross border challenges. The team found that the Sierra Leonean border had far better infrastructure such as housing and an office complex for the security personnel, which was well equipped with computers and other office supplies.

Unfortunately, on the Liberian side of the border the situation was quite the opposite. Infrastructure was non-existent and none of the security posts in Kondadu and Mendicorma had a functioning computer or generator with or without fuel. The Customs Officers at the Bolongoidu border post, however, had radios and/or computers to assist with the discharge of their duties. Mr. Stephen J. Bengu,

Chief Cashier for Customs, Bolongoidu border post, did however intimate that most of the policies and conventions relating to cross-border issues that are signed by governments within the MRU are not followed up. Once signed, they just lie on the file whilst things remain the same. Implementation of national guidelines may cause problems at the borders. He cited a specific instance where the Immigration Department received a directive from the Ministry of Commerce telling them not to allow any rice and gasoline to leave the country. The directive was fully implemented but as a result Guinea, a partner MRU country, also stopped any rice and gasoline from leaving their country, as well as restricting all other goods from leaving their country for Liberia. Even though he claimed both governments have resolved the situation this is an example of some of the challenges that border communities face over a lack of coherence within MRU policies and the absence of a co-ordinated implementation plan.

Drug trafficking and illicit trade through unofficial cross border entry points into Guinea and Sierra Leone are said to be one of the major challenges confronting communities living in the borderlands and the security personnel posted at the borders. The porosity of borders, according to both security agencies and communities alike, is only part of the problem. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) supported this by revealing that at the Bolongoidu and Kondadu borders, in addition to over 13 unofficial crossing points, they were aware of illicit drugs, including cigarettes, being trafficked across their borders. However, they felt there was very little they could do. They did not have enough personnel and only had two motorcycles, one based at Zozor and the other at Voinjama. Both locations were too far to walk from the borders. The security personnel regularly went on foot patrol along the borders, but these were insufficient for tracking criminal gangs. The tactics used by the criminal gangs were getting more sophisticated and the DEA were failing to keep up. UNICEF had donated a drug detecting toolkit for use in the DEA Voinjama office, but they are still in need analytical kits at the border posts to detect the substances seized at border and to disprove legitimate possession by the carriers, who are the people under arrest. Other key informants and other community residents at Mendicorma, Bolongoidu and Kondadu also confirmed these assertions.

In a show of frustration over the cross-border drug trafficking, Mr. Amara M. Kamara, a resident of Bolongoidu, asserted that this is an issue that worries the community, but sometimes they do not want to say anything.

Every night we go to bed we hear the motorbike moving up and down, nobody knows what they are passing through with and nobody is checking them because the security people are sleeping. I don't blame the security because they are only human, they need to protect themselves and they have nothing to go out into the dark with, no lights, no arms, no nothing'.
Amara M. Kamara

During consultation with the joint security personnel at the Mendicorma border post between Liberia and Sierra Leone, the security personnel neither admitted nor confirmed the prevalence of drugs, trafficking and illicit trade at any of the border posts or at unofficial entry points within the larger group discussions. They did, however, agree that this did take place during informal one-to-one discussions at local wine and hatye¹³ bases.

Travellers and community members who pass through the MRU borders without their papers are said to face some form of harassment from both the border management and security personnel. Lack of travel documents is the main reason why travellers are stopped at the borders. This was supported by evidence generated at all types of meetings. The security officers at the different locations all said this was one of the critical problems that they dealt with on a daily basis.

On the other hand, community members and residents living around the borders tend to find it difficult to understand why they need the formal documentation when they are only visiting their friends and relatives or attending funerals or other family celebrations. According to them security personnel request fees for a border pass to either enter or leave Guinea and Sierra Leone from Liberia. It is this kind of behaviour that is said to fuel tensions and conflict between community residents and the border security personnel.

We are often confronted by multiplicity of challenges, including logistics, housing, and poor working conditions. But the crunch of this challenge is the fact that we cannot speak about these issues in the public for fear of losing our jobs. We've complained to our superiors and UNMIL personnel who often come here during patrols but to no avail'.

Justine T. Smith, Chief of Operations

¹³ A hatye joint is a local tea centre where communities drink and discuss different topical issues.

Jallah Kelleh, a teacher in Kondadu town, told the researchers that community members who cross from Liberia into Guinea are made to pay between L\$10 to L\$100 or even L\$200 dependent whether it is a simple 'gate drop' or if they are female traders the gate pass can be as high as L\$200 each way. Receipts or any other official form of documentation are never issued.

Even though security personnel spoken to during focus group discussions or one-to-one interviews dismissed what the community members had to say over 'gate drops' as unfounded allegations, one of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation personnel at the Bolongoidu border post said laughing during an informal discussion, "Where you tie a goat is where the goat eats." This phrase means that if you have no money you are likely to make use of the only person who comes along as they are the difference between whether or not you and your family eat that day.

There also appears to be a 'tit for tat' syndrome being practised at the borders. On several occasions there have been instances when Liberians crossing into Guinea have faced extreme harassment, intimidation or extortions because the Guinean border guards believe that is what the Guinean people face when they enter Liberia.

People from the Liberian border community also complained that the Guinean security personnel close the border gates for extended periods, often two or more days, without any justification.

Language barriers have been said to be the cause of the problem. The research team found that the Liberian and Sierra Leoneans seemed to experience more problems when they entered Guinea than when they crossed between Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, they also found that the Guineans did not appear to have any problems commuting between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Consultations with security personnel posted at Mendicorma, Kondadu and Bolongoidu border posts and Police Commanders at Voinjama and Foya districts revealed that security personnel posted at these border posts lack the necessary human resources and logistics to effectively perform their task. Major Wolobah of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) informed the research team that the absence of housing facilities and poor working conditions are two of the main reasons why assignments at the MRU border posts are considered undesirable by most security personnel. Sharing a personal experience, Col. Smith, commander at the Bolongoidu border post, gave the research team a tour around his office. He explained that his security personnel had constructed the mud-built office,

roofed with palm thatch, from materials found in the vicinity. Col. Smith's assertion that the roof leaked in the rain was proved true to the research team as a sudden downpour struck, soaking the dilapidated office. According to the security personnel interview formal requests for a better office and basic equipment seemed to fall on 'deaf ears'.

As I speak to you I will soon be going on retirement and am thinking about my benefit, I don't want to say anything that will cause me to lose my job. I have my family to take care of. At my age where will I find another job when they put me down?
Immigration commander Bolongoidu border post

At the Foya district security post, the state security personnel of a total of 35 unofficial border crossings between Liberia and Sierra Leone and 21 between Liberia and Guinea. These facts came out during an exploratory discussion to find out why they did not go on foot patrol to apprehend the travellers using the unofficial border crossing points. It emerged that despite the lack of transport (cars, motor bikes or pedal cycles) they go on patrol two or three times a week, covering distances of anything from five miles up to 15 miles.

In addition to the lack of transport at the Foya border post, Foya district does not have a health clinic. This means that when the border guards are unwell they need to spend duty time travelling long distances to obtain medical treatment. The lack of easily accessible healthcare not only affects security sector personnel at Foya but elsewhere as well. The researchers discovered that one of the Immigration Officers based at Mendicorma lost his life due to the lack of healthcare facilities in Mendicorma.

While the state security personnel spoke freely to the researchers, they were worried about saying too much or being critical of their bosses in case they lost their jobs.

Those security personnel that were critical only voiced their concerns to the researchers during one-to-one interviews. The main grievance concerned their working conditions. They accepted that the wages were low, but expected the tools to be able to do their job properly. The poor working conditions have also hampered attempts at cross-border collaboration. It was reported that Guinean security sector personnel were now refusing to attend Joint Border Security meetings because of the poor infrastructure, lack of a conference room to provide the business-like environment for a meeting, and lack of chairs for them to sit on when they attended meetings.

Through our meetings, consultations, transect mapping sessions and individual interviews with both security personnel and community members our research team was able to confirm the human and logistical constraints confronting security personnel posted at the border. These constraints posed an enormous challenge to border management at the Bolongoidu, Mendicorma and Kondadu border posts.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

The lack of basic social services such as hand pumps, toilet facilities, good quality infrastructure and health centres have been identified as crosscutting issues throughout the Liberian research process. During a meeting with women's groups at Mendicorma border community the women expressed that there has been several instances where pregnant women had delivered on the road while travelling to Foya hospital. The researchers found that last year the Ministry of Health had requested the community leaders to recommend two women from each community to be trained in midwifery, an initiative designed to reduce the maternal mortality rate (Millennium Development Goal Number Five) in Liberia.

According to the women, after the midwives were trained the Ministry of Health gave another directive informing all pregnant women that their full-term babies must be delivered in hospitals, thus banning home deliveries. This decision was assumed to have been made in the hope of achieving the Millennium Development Goal within its timeframe. However, to comply with that directive the pregnant women had to make their own arrangements to get to the hospital. The lack of public transport means that it is an arduous 7 hours' walk from Mendicorma to Foya hospital. The women of the community found this very troubling, particularly when there were now two unemployed midwives living in their community.

Because of inter-tribal relationship across the borders it is difficult to perform our immigration tasks. For example, if you arrest a Mandingo man from Guinea, the very Liberian will come to talk for him and say he is our relative.'

Lt. Nathaniel Charlie, BIN Commander

Furthermore, the women also said because the Ministry of Health said they must have their babies in hospital, those who gave birth at the side of the road were fined some arbitrary amount in the region of L\$1000 to L\$1,500. The women were profoundly

disturbed by this phenomenon as they felt they were being blamed for the state or district's inability to provide an efficient transport service to overcome the absence of clinic at the town. It would appear that once more the effects of decision-making at the political centre are not being considered at the local level, nor is the centre considering the disproportionate effects of nationwide directives upon the people in the rural areas.

On the issue of limited water and sanitation facilities, the women of Mendicorma stressed that they only had one hand pump serving an entire community with a population of over 500. When asked whether they had made an official complaint to their local authority such as town chief or district representative, most of the women respondents said they had done it but nothing had been forthcoming. They were less than satisfied with their local government authorities as an international donor, Peace Winds Japan, had constructed the only community hand pump. Similarly, the Chairlady of Bolongoidu provided evidence of the difficulties associated with access to clean, safe drinking water. Bolongoidu's population of approximately 1000 is twice that of Mendicorma but they still only have one hand pump for their entire community.

Bolongoidu has a school but no teachers, and is a farming area without a market. Plan-Liberia built a school for the community but the Ministry of Education or Local Authority have never provided any qualified teachers to teach the children. Agriculture is the main livelihood of the village. The farmers grow cocoa, coffee and rice but they have no markets in their immediate vicinity to sell their produce and need to travel to Guinea to sell their produce in Macenta. The journey is over poor quality roads with a non-existent transport system. Even though they find it more convenient to trade in Guinea than in Liberia, the women find that they lose out as the Guineans take advantage of the lack of markets in Liberia by paying unrealistic prices for their produce. They also stated that in addition to the bad road conditions there is no readily available market at Voinjama.

At a town meeting at Kondadu, the women also expressed similar challenges particularly in relation to lavatory facilities and safe drinking water. They said that given their distance from Voinjama the local government seemed to have forgotten about them. They feel they have been left out of governmental development initiatives, as the only benefit they have seen to date was a school constructed by Plan-Liberia. Peace Winds Japan constructed a number of toilets for the community members but they are no longer in working order.

Both the provision of the school without teachers and the construction of toilets that required significant maintenance demonstrate that greater consultation by donors with local community representatives would be useful for finding out at the planning stage, what types of development would be most appropriate and durable and what support would be required beyond the initial construction.

GENDER

During the consultation process at Bolongoidu, sexual harassment and extortion was one of the most emotive issues that emerged. The market women complained of a continual cycle of abuse, harassment and extortion every time they crossed the state border en route to the Guinean market. Some of the market women felt they were being victimised because they were Mandingo, but this could not be corroborated during any of the researchers' open discussions and private meetings with the security personnel. In the past, children born of the market women who have been raped were often ostracised by their villages.

Our concern is the way our leaders treat us. They make us, the youth, feel as if we don't have rights.

It is important for us to participate in decision-making that concerns our development. And we should not be forced to work or pay a fine when we are unable to work'

The women claimed that the Voinjama City crossing point was just as bad. The Liberian police who harass them for money know that they are from Bolongoidu town (traditionally 'gate drop' is only paid on return from Guinea). The women face persistent threats to extort money from them, which they claim is as big a worry as getting raped. In a deteriorating economic climate, losing money is of great concern as the women face increasing costs of living, scarcity of staple foodstuffs such as rice and oil, and low profits on the sale of their produce.

YOUTH

At a youth meeting at Bolongoidu the young people expressed their dissatisfaction with their local leaders, especially the traditional authorities. The youth of the town claimed that they are often forced to undertake community projects when they have had no input in deciding whether or not they wanted them, needed them or if they were in the right place.

When asked why they did not want to participate in community projects they responded that their exclusion by the town chief and elders from the decision making process left them with little interest in supporting the community projects. The young people explained that even though they have grievances related to the decision making process, the male youth are often coerced into executing whatever decision the elders agreed upon.

The youth found a second issue of the community members being asked to make a contribution from their trading profit more troubling than being excluded from the decision-making process. The voluntary contributions were said to be for community development purposes, but the youth claimed that the leadership of the town never informed them how the money is spent or the benefits the community would be getting. The young people were also concerned that if any of them did refuse to participate in community work they would be fined. The town chief and the elders would fetch the police and they would be arrested by the police and jailed for two or three days until fee was paid.

Massa M. Kamara, a youth member of the community said that the youth did not like to refuse to engage with community initiatives, but they did it because they were dissatisfied by the way they were treated and the manner in which their rights are abused. He stated that the worst part was not being free to say no because if they did they would feel the wrath of the town chief in the form of a requirement to pay arbitrary fees or face arrest and jail until they paid up. This was without going through any formal or legal hearings or being given reasonable time to seek redress for their grievances. They claimed that while they continue to maintain their respect for their traditional authorities and elders the flagrant abuse of their human rights and fundamental freedoms is a major source of friction between them and the tribal authorities.

Amara Kamara and Duana A. Kamara, young people living in Bolongoidu, were aggrieved that the participation of youth in decision-making, particularly on community development issues, is very limited. When asked by the research team if they felt their limited participation had anything to do with the traditional, religious or cultural practices of the community they suggested that it was because of traditional practices that give little space to the youth. They stressed that awareness needs to be raised in order for their local leaders to understand that the youth have an important role to play in the development of their community. Therefore, young people must be given the opportunity for their views to be heard, especially on issues that directly affect the youth.

Recommendations: Liberia

- Increase the number of security personnel posted at the borders and consider arming trained security personnel in order to effectively protect the borders.
- Address the challenges of poor infrastructure, poor working conditions, inadequate training and lack of logistics to improve border management.
- Inform citizens about their rights as well as their duties to reduce the lack of awareness that contributes to people crossing the borders without the relevant documentation.
- Prioritisation by the government of the provision of basic social services for communities in the border areas.
- Implement measures to tackle drug trafficking, extortion and harassment (particularly of market women) at border crossing points.

Findings: Sierra Leone

As mentioned before, SLANSA selected two districts along Sierra Leone's Mano River Union borders: Kailahun District, which borders Guinea and Liberia; and Kambia District, which borders Guinea. The research in the Kailahun and Kambia Districts of Sierra Leone was conducted between 8 September and 8 October 2011.

A selection of qualitative research methods was used, involving:

- Community dialogue meetings
- Focus group discussions
- Key informant interviews
- Semi-structured interviews
- Transect walk
- Community mapping
- Personal observations
- Photography

The pre-visit to Kailahun lasted from 14 to 19 September 2011 and was geared towards information sharing and community preparation for the survey exercise. During their pre-visit the team mobilised 60 key stakeholders for the community dialogue meetings in Buedu and Dawa. To get a better understanding of what was taking place in their specific part of the MRU borders, community dialogue meetings were organised within each of the communities of Buedu and Dawa where the research team met chiefs, security personnel, Ward Committee members and representatives of the

market women, health workers, teachers, farmers, drivers, youth and bike riders.

The community dialogue meetings for both Bubuya and Tambaia were held on 5 October 2011. The research team met with chiefs, security personnel, and members of target communities, including women and youth, teachers, farmers and ward committee members from both communities. In Tambaia, a member of the Guinean police from the nearby border checkpoint was in attendance. Members of the authorities only infrequently participated in the community meetings organised for the surveys and sometimes women and youth were too timid to express their views openly.

Samu is the home to the Advanced Public Order Training School (APOTS), which is the main training base for the police Operational Support Division (OSD), and the Forward Patrol Base of the RSLAF's 11th Battalion at Yumkella. In the interests of security, interviews with political leaders and key security personnel from the two main survey locations were held at those two locations and a third round of interviews with security personnel and local politicians was conducted in Kambia.

SECURITY

“The project is timely in the Chiefdom, taking into consideration, governance and security challenges in the chiefdom, and bearing in mind the 2012 elections.”

Komeh, a security officer at Gendema

The borders of the region are porous and according to the SLP and the immigration officers there are only 10 police officers and eight immigration officers to cover the 20 border crossing points in Kissi Tongi chiefdom. Only Dawa, Kuado, Baidu and Nafadu have permanently based security personnel. They agreed they were only able to provide a skeleton presence, but even with that low number they were able to deter smugglers, traffickers and travellers without the pre-requisite documentation for themselves or vehicles.

The police and security personnel accepted that they have to manage the best they can without accommodation facilities, basic logistics, vehicles and communication equipment but stated that they do need more trained personnel. Out of the eight immigration officers in Kissi Tongi chiefdom, six are untrained and unpaid volunteers. The immigration volunteers do not have uniforms or identity cards to distinguish them from ordinary civilians in the border community and requests for them to be provided have been ignored.

In addition, security sector personnel deployed to work at the borders lack basic housing and office space. At Dawa, seven security officers sleep in two rooms in the local court 'barray' and the customs post is a makeshift structure made of mud and thatch.

The accommodation at the Forward Patrol Base in Buedu is almost derelict. Their office is a largely mud and thatch hut, lacking basic hygiene and access to safe drinking water. The sense of abandonment felt is compounded as security personnel at the border are rarely visited by their senior officers, either from the district or regional headquarters. They were, however, extremely appreciative of the survey team's visit, especially when researchers showed concern for their welfare and living conditions in the border.

Kissi Tongi has a Chiefdom Security Committee (CSC) comprising of local representatives from the community, chiefs, women, youth, and some of the security personnel. They meet every other Monday to discuss general community safety and security issues and make recommendations. The serious issues are passed up to the DISEC, which sits on Thursdays at the Kailahun district headquarters.

Cordial relations between the state officials and communities appear to have developed in Beudu and Dawa. This in turn has reinforced the quality of police and military co-operation and now the police and other security personnel join in with the rest of the community for the community cleaning and sanitation days. In return the community members often help the border officials by providing "tip-offs", a good example of collaboration with communities. A case in point is in Dawa where community members tipped off the police over the commercial motorbike riders who are riding without licences. Similar collaboration can be seen in the management of bush cows left behind by nomadic herdsman; the communities call on the OSD to slaughter the bush cows who have become wild and a nuisance, thus reducing damage to people and crops.

There are, however, other sources of tension. Territorial disputes over the settlement of Yenga¹⁴ were of high concern. The Kissis are a close-knit, cross-border ethnic group and are found on the banks of Nongoa in Guinea, Foya in Liberia

and Yenga in Sierra Leone. Yenga's longstanding sovereignty issue is probably the most high profile. Kailahun has other land disputes in Nyandesu, Bobodu and Welidu communities which are equally as important to the alleged owners of the land, but not quite so politically sensitive. Furthermore, the survey team found that the availability of food is now affecting cross-border cordiality between Sierra Leoneans and Guineans.

A further source of tension in Kissi Tongi is the high cost of crossing the borders. The fee for the Emergency Travelling Certificate (ETC) is apparently high for Sierra Leoneans, and varies significantly from that charged in Guinea and Liberia. Security personnel allegedly subject people, especially women, crossing into and from Sierra Leone to sexual harassment and financial extortion in blatant disregard for both the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of people goods and services and women's rights.

Cross cultural and traditional ties between border communities seem to compromise security at the border. To avoid paying charges to cross the border, many of the residents in Buedu and Dawa have dual identity cards and pay local tax in both countries. As such, they are eligible to vote in both countries. The researchers found that people often had all the necessary paperwork to vote in Liberia's 2011 presidential and legislative elections. This practice also seems to take place across the Sierra Leone-Guinea border, as people with the formal paperwork will vote when elections are held in Sierra Leone and Guinea respectively.

According to Lt. Turay, commander of the Forward Patrol Base at Yumkella, there are 36 unofficial crossing points in the Bubuya, Mafufuneh and Tambaia communities with insufficient infrastructure or border guards to protect and defend the borders. Local smugglers exploit the low staffing levels at the border to their advantage.

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) has a makeshift temporary building mud and thatch roofing at its forward base at Yumkella. It is in a deplorable state, lacking basic water and sanitation. The Advanced Public Order Training School help monitor the borderline from Mopotolor to Gbalamuya. They also share security updates with soldiers stationed at Mungor and Gbalamuya in Sierra Leone, and Dakhagbé in Guinea. The security personnel have a minimum presence in Bubuya, and a single officer in the Tambaia community. Neither Bubuya nor Tambaia have residential or office accommodation and they manage their security functions with limited equipment, supplies and logistics.

¹⁴ There is an ongoing dispute in the tri-border area of Kailahun in Sierra Leone, between this country and Guinea over a small village by the Makona river called Yenga, which was occupied during the war. The Guinean forces never left after the war ended. Sierra Leone has no de facto territorial sovereignty over Yenga. There have been numerous attempts to resolve the issue but none have been finalised one way or the other. Guinean security are now planting their own crops on Yenga land, which, as a practice, is effectively preventing the local Sierra Leonean farmers from planting their crops on their land. Others in Yenga have been pressurised into abandoning their land by Guineans.

Respondents disclosed that there are no resident state border officers in Bubuya and Tambaia. More often than not there is no one on duty at the borders, except on market days. Then, according to the women, their visits are like 'raids' and their only motivation is to extort money from traders. Sometimes the police are there for general policing duties, but most of the time they are doing the work on behalf of the customs and immigration officers, who are conspicuously absent apart from on market days.

GOVERNANCE

Interviewees especially women, expressed the view that government needs to review the traditional/customary laws to allow women, as well as men, to take key roles and representational positions within local governance and decision-making. Women's representation in the governance system in Buedu and Dawa is minimal. They were also concerned over their contribution to the work of the Ward Committees. In Sierra Leone, women make up 50% of all Ward Committees, yet women appointees on the Beudu and Dawa Ward Committees feel as if they are just tolerated because that is what the law says. They said, they were overshadowed by their male counterparts. In addition, the male councillors seldom visit their wards.

While these governance issues are not exclusive to border areas, or to Kissi Tongi in particular, they do have the potential to be particularly damaging in border areas, which are historically marginalised and where there is evidence to show that a power vacuum or mismanagement can lead to instability and violence.

In Kambia, the community respondents were unanimous that there was a cordial relationship between security personnel and civilians in Sierra Leone and the cross-border relationship with Guinean communities was said to be peaceful. There is a high degree of mutual understanding between Bubuya security and their Guinean counterparts. Within this environment any inter-community disputes between Sierra Leone and Guinea are settled amicably on the basis of mutual cooperation and collaboration by civil and security authorities on both sides.

The people in this part of the country feel marginalised and isolated from the mainstream of Sierra Leonean society. The town chief of Tambaia stated that the only time government officials visit them is when it is time to collect taxes or canvass for votes. He could not remember when a key security or government official last visited the community. The two communities voiced concern

that their representatives, Member of Parliament (Hon. Hassan Henneh Rada) and Councilor of Ward 136 (Councilor Gbateh), have not visited the people for a long time.

There are no schools in Tambaia, so children walk across the border into Guinea to go to Arabic school. In Bubuya there is only one primary school and a Junior Secondary School. The community sponsored the two schools. According to Momoh Abu Yilla, a teacher, the primary school has three classrooms for a total of 204 pupils who are taught by three teachers. Although Bubuya has a secondary school, it is in urgent need of a permanent building and most residents attend high school in Kychom or Kasire.

There is no hospital in either Bubuya or Tambaia. Residents travel 13 kilometres to access the nearest health centre. They blame this failure in service delivery on bad governance, malfeasance and marginalisation.

The Paramount Chief resides in Kychom, 26 miles from Bubuya section, and governs through a regent, Section Chief Fodie Sheku. At the time of the survey, we were told that there was a pending election for the position of a substantive section chief in October 2011. Only tribal authorities, a largely male-dominated group, are eligible to vote in this election.

Bubuya is in Ward 136 and they have a 12 seat Ward Committee made up of eight men and four women. The committee used to meet once a month but it has not met since the summer of 2011 because their sitting fees have dried up and transport is not provided.

There is no Local Court sitting in Bubuya Section, although they do sit elsewhere in Kambia District. The nearest court is in Kychom. Potential court users who reside in Bubuya generally feel hard done to because of the prospect of having to pay transport fares to access justice, which in itself is illusive. The general feeling of the respondents is that their needs are being ignored owing to the prevailing patriarchy, a lack of transparency and no concept of the principle of accountability towards their community residents.

HUMAN RIGHTS

There are regular reports of gross harassment of the people who cross the border. Female market traders complain of sexual harassment and extortion on the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea. There are no women officials at the majority of border posts and male officials performing security searches on women at the border posts

regularly compromise the dignity of women travellers. Women are forced to undergo body searches by male security officers despite women being highly uncomfortable with this.

Security personnel also allegedly extort money from traders who ply the borders. According to a female trader, security personnel on the border often coerce them to pay bribes or prevent them from crossing the border. The issue of harassment of people plying the common border is not unique to one country, and seems to be an accepted norm.

The right of 'free' passage across the borders for commercial motor drivers and bike riders is being abused in the form of wilful delays at the borders and seizure of allegedly banned items and foodstuffs. There is no policy for amount or type of goods that may cross the border, which gives rise to the imposition of discretionary fees for goods and services rendered. Special checking houses to monitor the import and export of contraband goods, minerals, rice and cooking oil are being used to extract higher rates of duty on the transportation of routine cargo in the form of exorbitant fines. By extension, these illegal levies are in turn transferred to consumers who have to pay higher prices for the goods.

The free health care service delivery is less than effective in the borderland communities. Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) are not trained and are not paid except for the customary 'shake-hand' from community people. The TBAs have threatened to quit and if this happened it would adversely affect the Dawa community, which only has one nurse in their Community Health post. Women travel long distances to receive health care on poor inaccessible roads and are often robbed during these travels.

Owing to the recognition of the use of amputation as a weapon of war, donors have provided sufficient numbers of prosthetics, wheelchairs and crutches. There are 91 disabled persons in Kissi Tongi who commonly face marginalisation. Disabled people are not provided with adequate health treatment owing to a so-called non-availability of appliances, a lack of care and support, coupled with stigma, discrimination and ridicule.

The high incidence of extortion at the borders has contributed to an increase in smuggling, the state losing revenue by the failure to collect legitimate dues and market traders facing economic ruin. Furthermore, those who use the unofficial crossing points are extremely vulnerable to being waylaid by thieves.

The criminal justice system is almost nonexistent in the MRU borderlands. There are very few places

where victims of criminal and unlawful activities are able to seek redress for their grievances such as being forced to pay exorbitant charges to cross the border. No formal courts sit in these communities and as a result numerous breaches of human rights go unpunished. The situation in the border district is critical, like other government services, there is little or no supervision on the work of border officials and officials of the courts of justice in these areas. Like in other areas, it was also observed that the local chiefs use the traditional oral justice system of arbitration, which, as an ancient patriarchal system, is discriminatory towards women and punitive towards male youth. The local court officials are largely untrained, whilst the chiefdom police lack basic uniforms and often go months without being paid by the chiefdom authorities. To eke out a living, officials need to rely on imposing fines on those people who have the money, women traders and the youth drivers and bike riders. School teachers employed by the Ministry of Education have also gone for months, even years, without pay except for remittances from the community.

Women traders report of extortion and seizure of their goods should they default on paying levies, fines or fees imposed by security officers in Sierra Leone and Guinea. By way of a coping mechanism the traders have acquired Sierra Leonean Identity Cards (not dual citizenship) to avoid harassment and intimidation, though they still have to part with money.

Residents feel the brunt of unfair and indiscriminate taxation levied by security personnel on both sides of the border, whose only motivation is personal financial aggrandizement with scant regard for security. Consequently, and coupled by the fact that there are many crossing points without security presence, traders resort to smuggling their goods in or out of their country. Either way, the state is deprived of significant revenue, which in turn is affecting the economic recovery of Sierra Leone. At the same time, citizens are exposing themselves to danger by going off the beaten track to avoid passing through the border posts.

The Tambaia community is abjectly poor. Residents are now resorting to subsistence farming growing groundnut, millet and cassava, which barely make a profit. Foday Turay, a farmer and key informant in Tambaia disclosed that some of the residents had begun to fell trees for charcoal burning and if the activity was not regulated it would lead to deforestation of the land. Foday Turay was bothered by the activity especially as the charcoal was fetching a good price in Conakry, Guinea, but the Tambaia farmers were earning a pittance on the deal. Their

Guinean partners were lending them the money to buy their seeds and fertilizer and even with the charcoal deal the farmers were not generating sufficient income from their crops to eke out a basic living and pay off the interest on their loans.

The respondents from Tambaia highlighted a land dispute with the nomadic cattle herders from Guinea whose cattle were destroying the growing crops. Grazing rights traditionally are conditional upon payment of compensation but they were refusing to compensate the farmers for their loss. It is not known why the Guinean cattle herders would not pay, but the farmers seemed to think it was either through pure defiance, or something to do with collusion between the cattle herders and the local authorities.

GENDER

Women are discriminated against in chieftaincy matters especially away in border districts, from the public eye. According to Mary Lamin and Mariama Lavalay of the Makona River Women's Association, women are prevented from holding 'high positions' such as Paramount Chieftaincy owing to the traditional system of patriarchy in Kailahun district. In local parlance, the men say 'a hen does not crow' as justification for excluding women from decision-making. Thus, women are unable to express their fears of insecurity in their communities. There are very few women representatives in the chieftom governance structure: only two women have become Paramount Chiefs in the whole of Sierra Leone. The few women in leadership are not found in border districts and do not speak out for the experiences of women from border communities.

Illiteracy and cultural traditions have led to high poverty rate among women. A large proportion of women in the border communities cannot read or write. Very few girls go to school and of those that do there is a high dropout rate owing to enforced early marriage and early pregnancy. As most of them are either single parents or are abandoned by their male partners at a later date, the women are often the sole breadwinners for their families. They are engaged in small-scale businesses and vegetable gardening funded through micro-finance and support provided to develop their business skills.

Women feel they are coerced into participating in programmes for the benefit of the community but they do not derive many specific benefits from these. None of the women in Beudu have directly benefitted from the fourteen million Leones paid annually by Airtel for the rent of their land for their communication mast.

The women traders expressed fear for their personal safety and security because as they cannot afford to pay bribes at the borders they take the risk of walking through thick forest into Guinea to bypass the border controls.

As the majority of market traders are women and the majority of money lenders are men, when the women apply for business loans they find themselves faced with unethical practices: their ability to repay the loan is not assessed on the trading ability but on their gender, whether they can read and write, who they are married to, and how many sons they have. In the end, women often end up paying high levels of interest on their loans. The traditional money-lenders are no longer adhering to centuries' old business practices because the majority of traders are now women.

In addition to being traders women are small-scale farmers and make use of two Identity Cards to cover the cost of regular travelling across the borders to their markets, without which they are continually harassed to pay a fee. Even with such ingenuity they are not entirely immune to paying the bribes or being victims of crime. Women traders from Bubuya are particularly afraid of the criminal gangs that target cross-border women traders and confiscate their goods and monies while they are travelling to and from Guinea. The benefit of having two identity cards is that they don't have to risk going through the unofficial crossing points to avoid paying the immigration fees every time they enter Guinea. In the past there have been reported cases of rape and physical violence, although recently there have not been any formal complaints. This may be because the women from both communities now have an active 'Limaniya' (meaning 'having a satisfied mind') through which they support each other in their business and farming activities.

The women in the borderlands generally have braved the many challenges to their security, safety and economic wellbeing by continuing cross border trade. They have also organised themselves into community-based organisations. Examples of these organisations include the Makona River Women's Association, MARWOPNET, BILAPI (which in Kissi means 'hold tight'), Kissy Tongi Women's Development Cooperative, Malaya Nyamandu, Kende Hale, and Jonpleh-Kisia (Kissi Women's United) at Dawa. These are interest groups that have the potential to transform themselves and change society if given the needed support and capacity.

YOUTH

The male youth in Bubuya and Tambaia are engaged in farming, trade and hired jobs. They lack

employable skills but are determined to develop their community. There is a quasi-youth group called 'the Bubuya Youth Committee' founded in 2004. This committee undertakes free community projects such as road rehabilitation. According to Sheku Suma (alias Agenda), a key member, the Kambia District Council promised to give them equipment to assist in road construction, but that promise remains unfulfilled.

Unemployment is very high amongst the male youth. Consequently the young males' main economic activity is commercial bike riding and charcoal production. Although this helps in augmenting their meagre income, charcoal production leads to massive deforestation and its attendant environmental hazards on the community. Youth especially in border communities are blamed for trafficking and robbery and most of the insecurities in the region. Yet bike riders mostly youth in these areas offer taxi services to the inaccessible parts of the border communities. There is a deep feeling of marginalisation and of frustration at being mobilised and then discarded by political leaders at the national and local level. One youth stated that, "When opportunities come, we are left out, when bad things happen, we are always mentioned," in lamentation of the "victim-perpetrator" (or abused-abusing syndrome) role of the youth. This feeling of neglect is often attributed to development actors, whom the youth accuse of complicity in their under-development. Past failures to meet expectations raised by the promise of project work have contributed to a breakdown in trust between authorities who control development activities and the youth.

Buedu has Youth Council and nine registered youth social groups. The Secretary-General and the Development Secretary of the Youth Council and representatives from the nine social groups attended a focus group discussion at the Ataya Base in Buedu. The Ataya Base is a popular meeting place for the youth and as the meeting progressed the Buedu Youth Council came under attack from other young people due to a perception that the council had failed to provide facilities or do anything for their development. There was a lack of transparency and accountability for the youth in Buedu. During the meeting the youth present felt that they were constantly at loggerheads with the chairman of the Youth Council. In addition issues relating to youth-oriented development, there was a constitutional stalemate between the social groups and the Youth Council regarding the term of office served by the chairman of the Buedu Youth Council.

The youth also accused each other of excessive violence disrupting their sports, discos and other

social events. Not all of the young people were ex-combatants, but those that were seemed to have a tendency to resort to violence and wanton disruption of the activities. Both parties accepted that mob violence had been their main stock-in-trade, and it seemed particularly bad during social events. This seeming division tends to vividly manifest itself during the run up to elections when the youth are mobilised by different political groups. The outcome is usually violence and the resultant deployment of the paramilitary OSD, also known as the Riot Police, whose response is usually laced with brutal force. It is in this vein that the youth said that during the last by-election in constituency 04 they felt intimidated by the huge presence of the OSD. The fallout from this election still lingers, and has dealt a serious blow to youth unity and solidarity in the Buedu community.

This culture of violence means that the youth of Buedu lack skills in conflict management and resolution; the chieftaincy tended to resolve their disputes through the imposition of heavy fines. The youth felt that it was unfair to continually impose heavy fines instead of employing different tactics within an alternative dispute mechanism. They felt that talking through their problems and listening to what both parties had to say would be a better way to resolve their disputes, rather than prolonging their anger and continually looking for opportunities to pick fights with each other. More significantly, the youth felt that had achieved something by being able to tell the elders why they felt marginalised, underrepresented and misrepresented in decision-making in the chieftaincy and that they wanted to be part of the solution. They also accepted that there was a lack of strong leadership and unity amongst many of youth groups in Buedu and they would have to reach some form of consensus with the other youth groups as well as the Youth Council.

The youth then asked for training in leadership and good governance, which they claim is the fundamental source of the current challenges they are being faced with. However, former youth leaders who were present blamed the youth for lacking vision and desire to improve their circumstances. Apparently efforts by NGOs like Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Foundation to provide the youth with life skills and livelihood support had been scoffed at because of they did not appreciate that the short-term benefits of working in coffee farms and selling the proceeds could lead to other things.

Many of the youth in Buedu (and other border communities) are former combatants who lack basic skills. The DDR programme offered them very short periods of skills training which were, on reflection, insufficient for them to acquire work-

based labouring skills. Consequently, they have no employable skills and still possess un-tapped capacities for work in permanent employment. Young men are engaged in variety of economic activities including commercial bike riding, sand mining, daily waged labour, as well as work in the informal economy dealing in the sale of narcotics and stealing of cocoa.

Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion (SNAP) has offered some skills training opportunities but the youth present did not appear to show much interest in their programme. This may be owing to the dependency syndrome acquired by the Buedu and Dawa youth during the time they spent in refugee camps in Guinea when they were totally dependent on donor aid and humanitarian supplies.

Institutions Working on Security and Development

The team made visits to key institutions outside the pilot community but whose activities have direct impact on the security and development of the people in the survey communities. The team visited the Advanced Public Order Training (APOTS) at Samu Training base where they met with senior members of staff and training instructors. They informed the team that the Samu base trained paramilitary forces in the use of weapons to quell riots. It was disclosed that since its rehabilitation on the 3 October 2010 their mandate has included human rights and public order. The coordinator, Assistant Superintendent Samuel M. Kargbo, stated that in addition to their training work, they share intelligence with security personnel at Mungor and Gbalamuya in Sierra Leone, and Dakagbe in Guinea. They also participate in the local Police Partnership Board meetings of communities within the vicinity of the training base. APOTS cooperates and collaborates with Guinean security on the border through exchange visits between commanders and troops. He said security alertness on the Guinean side was rigid unlike on the Sierra Leonean side. He informed that Joint Security Patrols are conducted on a weekly basis between Mapotolo and Gbalamuya along the Guinea/Sierra Leone border.

The survey team also visited the Forward Patrol Base of the 11th Battalion at Yumkella. The base is located on the main road to APOTS, Kayenkisa and Mapotolo communities, and en route to Kychom and Kaseri. The commander Lt. Mohamed Turay stated that civilians have land disputes across the border, borne out of cultural and traditional ties. Accordingly, Guineans and Sierra Leoneans lay farms on the border in closed communities where intermarriages have occurred. These tensions are normally

settled between the Sierra Leonean and Guinean security personnel in collaboration with the civilian authorities in the area. At Sekia, intermarriages have made boundary monitoring become less effective as people cross into and settle in Sierra Leone with scant regard for immigration laws. The researchers discovered that Sekia although shown on the map as being in Sierra Leone is regarded as part of Guinea by residents, with the presence of Guinean security. However, residents speak Krio and have relatives in Tambaia and Bubuya.

The team also met with immigration officials at the integrated customs post at Gbalamuya. Only 11 personnel are deployed in the entire Kambia district, including three recently posted to man the porous border areas. They said that the movement of the people is often determined by the dynamics of political events in both countries. For the period of 25 September to 1 October 2011, 465 people entered Sierra Leone and 453 left. However, there is no computerised data on this, and equipment in the office – computers and passport detectors – are not used, ostensibly as a result of lack of electricity.

The survey team also attended the District Security Committee meeting as observers. The ONS plays a coordinating role, whilst the primary security forces and relevant line ministries, departments and agencies attend, including traditional leaders and civil society. The Committee gives government early warning signals on building political and economic tensions.

Recommendations: Sierra Leone

To the Mano River Union Secretariat, ECOWAS, African Union

- Provide training for border security personnel on human rights and security issues, in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons and goods, and the MRU 15th Protocol of peace and security.
- Revive talks between the government, MRU, ECOWAS and other multilateral partners aimed at an amicable resolution of the Yenga impasse.

National Government

- Reduce the cost of the Emergency Travel Certificate to minimise the economic burden on people travelling across the border. The MRU on their part should seek to harmonise charges and levies imposed by member states.
- Mobilise resources aimed at providing basic standard infrastructure (housing, integrated border posts, water and hygiene facilities) for

security personnel at border posts with support from donor agencies and multilateral partners.

- Enhance effective and efficient border management by the relevant ministries, departments and agencies (police, army, immigration, customs, ONS) providing further logistical support to security at the border.
- Encourage the various security outfits to embark on regular monitoring and supervision of their officials on the border.
- Regularly provide training opportunities to police, military, immigration, customs and ONS officials at the border.
- Include more women and youth in the DISEC and Chiefdom Security Committees.
- Ensure use of proportionate force by police and encourage professionalism in the handling tensions, especially during election periods.
- Regularisation of the contracts of border guards that have been recruited on ad hoc basis, and provide uniforms and Identity Cards for these officers.
- Review the allocation process of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to ensure equipment suitable for policing remote communities and the border is provided.
- Ensure monitoring by the SLP of the removal and disposal of the weapons, ammunition, explosives and detonators surrendered during the Arms for Development initiatives, in Kailahun and other areas.
- Ensure that the decentralisation process satisfies the wishes and aspirations of communities, including women and youth. The governance structure in communities should be democratic, representative, transparent and accountable. The onus here is on the district councils, with pressure from civil society to ensure this reform process.
- Antiquated traditional laws and practices should be expunged from customary law and practice. In that regard, chiefs and elders should be sensitised on gender issues, including the rights of women and youth to participate in decision-making and share community resources. The responsibility lies with government to enact new laws and policies, and with civil society to campaign for change.
- The Ministry of Health should seriously consider giving stipend to Traditional Birth Attendants who act as ancillaries to the few nurses who are working in border communities.
- The Ministry of Education should verify and regularise the employment of teachers in

border communities, most of whom have taught for more than a decade without pay.

To the GoSL and civil society

- Civil society and governmental agencies should embark on the training of women and youth in leadership training and support to development confidence to take part in community management.
- Civil society organisations, with support from Government of Sierra Leone and donors, should embark on a campaign for violence-free elections in border communities.
- The Ministry of Health and civil society should monitor free health care service delivery in border communities, and sensitise women to the scheme.
- Civil society and health officials should sustain health education in border communities in a bid to raise the awareness of women and girls on maternal and child health care, use of drugs, teenage pregnancy and abortion.
- The government and NGOs should implement the Disability Act and mainstream disability issues in border communities.
- The GoSL and civil society should train and equip officials of local courts in border communities to enhance access to justice and promote the rule of law. This local justice institution should also be monitored by civil society.
- Women would benefit from mediation skills and conflict transformation approached by civil society.
- Civil society with support from GoSL and donors should promote and popularise the three Gender Acts in border communities.
- Youth would benefit from mediation skills and conflict transformation approached by civil society.

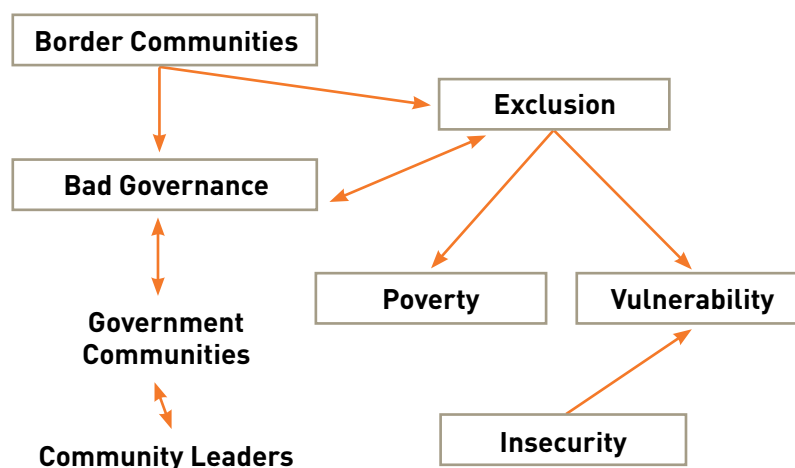
The recommendations for Buedu and Dawa can be replicated in Samu where the issues are identical, such as those related to enhancing the professionalism and efficiency of security personnel, and changing attitudes and perceptions towards women's and youth participation in community governance and development, and attitude change among the citizenry. However, the following specific recommendations were made:

- Members of the DISEC must improve their knowledge of the MRU 15th Protocol on peace and security, a viable mechanism for collaboration, cooperation and synergy on cross border issues.
- Bilateral co-operation with Guinean civil and security leaders should be strengthened

and a cohesive policy developed for the MRU borderlands. The DISEC, district council and the civil society should co-ordinate their initiatives and develop initiatives on peace and security.

- GoSL should as a matter of urgency address marginalisation of border communities and initiate direct contact with citizens in these areas to encourage them revive a feeling of positive nationalism based on the core values of integrity, patriotism, volunteerism, peace and unity. Here the MPs and councillors should be lobbied to ensure regular contacts with these communities.
- DISEC with leadership from ONS and GoSL should take seriously early warning threats
- to peace and security in border communities emanating from land disputes over ownership and disputes over nomadic herdsmen and grazing rights and agricultural farming rights.
- Tensions are developing over the distribution of development aid (and projects). Development aid to the district should not only be limited to Kambia town, but evenly distributed among communities, especially those in the hard to reach communities on the border.
- Gender, Youth and Access to Justice GoSL, and civil society actors should prioritize 'Access to Justice' for women and youth for in the rural communities.

CONCLUSION: Key issues affecting border communities



This project aimed at identifying common challenges in border communities of the MRU countries. The diagram above captures the key message arising from the findings: in the MRU countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone the majority of the border communities are affected by bad governance and political, social and economic exclusion which accentuate their marginalisation and further entrench vulnerability and poverty. As history has shown in the MRU, these conditions create potential insecurity and instability hotspots, with impact across borders. Border communities are excluded from decision-making by both central government and local government systems within the respective countries. As a result of ineffective governance, community members are rarely asked for their views on the best ways to transform out of poverty. Owing to the extent of their poverty, people in the border communities are also prone to risk taking. They may find work within the informal economy, mainly driving or bike riding for the youth or dealing in contraband goods for the female market traders. Taking risks

increases their vulnerability and contributes to their insecurity. The communities also become “training/ recruiting grounds” for mercenary activities. If capacities of border communities are developed, they can assist governments to improve security in sovereign territories as well as support to monitor security threats.

The findings also reveal a substantial number of specific issues faced by border communities, many of which are common to all visited communities. The list of challenges put forward by local research participants, and which are in turn presented in this report, effectively form a baseline of life in border communities.

While not all of the recommendations made by the people may be actionable, the combination of findings and recommendations offer a significant pool of knowledge from which specific policy recommendations can be extracted. Doing so can help to promote the improvement of security in the Mano River Union region, as well as economic and social development in border communities.

Annex 1 – Survey Teams

Survey Teams			
Location	NGO/CSO	Names	Dates
Guinea	ABC Development	Abdoulaye Fofana Labila Nianga Kourouma Saikou Sow Abou Soumah	6th – 15th September; and 23rd – 3rd October, 2011.
Liberia	LDI CSI	Harold Aidoo Vanessa Togba Musukula Sannoh Samuel Sannoh	4th September – 1st October, 2011
Sierra Leone (Kailahun)	SLANSA	Abu—Bakarr Sheriff	Pre-visit 14th – 19th September, 2011 Survey: 24th – 30th September, 2011
	SLANSA	Francis Mboma	
	PPJ	Andrew Sheku Coomber	
Sierra Leone (Kambia)	SLANSA	Abu—Bakarr Sheriff	Pre Visit 8 – 10th September, 2011 Survey: 3rd – 10th October, 2011
	SLANSA	Francis Mboma	
	WCSL/SSL	Rev Simah S. Dumbuya	
	PPJ	Andrew Sheku Coomber	

Annex 2 – Lists of People Interviewed

ATTENDANCE MEETING: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE MEETING, 4th OCTOBER, 2011

BUBUYA JUNCTION, SAMU CHIEFDOM, KAMBIA DISTRICT

	NAME	DESIGNATION
1	Ibrahim Suma	Farmer
2	Emma Samu	Trader
3	Alhaji Momoh Suma	Town Imam (Soria)
4	Abdulai Suma	Trader/Farmer
5	Alpha Kargbo PC 2127	SLP
6	Musa Suma	Farmer/Imam Bubuya
7	Lansana Turay	Regent Chief Bubuya
8	Sheka Suma (Agenda)	Youth Chairman
9	SaiduKamara	Town Chief Bubuya Junction
10	Alusine Fofana	Farmer
11	Momoh Abu Yillah	Teacher
12	Abdul R. Sesay	Teacher
13	Alie Sesay	Youth/Farmer
14	Foday M. Suma	Tailor
15	Memuna Suma	Business Woman
16	Pa Dikali Suma	Chief (Kargbo)
17	Momoh Kamara	Farmer
18	Hassan Suma	Trader/Farmer
19	Maseray Kebbay	Trader
20	Aminata Suma	Trader
21	EmmaTuray	House wife
22	Kadiatu Suma	Trader
23	Yari Fatmata Turay	Trader
24	Nana Suma	Trader
25	Pa Dauda Kamara	Farmer
26	Bangali Kamara	Farmer
27	Mabinty Sesay	Woman Trader
28	Foday M. Turay	Head Teacher
29	Mohamed Mansaray	RSLAF
30	Ibrahim S. Bangura	Youth

NO.	NAME
1	Pa Alie Soumah Regent Chief
2	Mohamed Kamara Elder
3	Nabie Mansaray Elder
4	Foday Bangura
5	Momoh Sillah
6	Abu Sankoh
7	Isatu Bangura
8	Malieu Suman
9	Mariama Somah
10	Isatu Turay
11	Mabikie Kamara
12	Maseray Kamara
13	Jeneba Soumah
14	Abdulai Soumah
15	Lamin Soumah
16	Kalifa Kamara
17	Kolia Soumah
18	Foday Turay
19	Abu Koray Soumah
20	Foday Turay II Farmer/Key Contact
21	Abdulai Bangura
22	Salifu Soumah
23	Morlai Soumah
24	Kokolo Soriba Soumah
25	Margodia Bangura
26	Fasineh Soumah
27	Abu Soumah Assistant Chief
28	Maseray Sillah
29	Fatmata Sillah
30	Fatu Bangura

Annex 3 – Chapters 1-3 of the 15th Protocol to the Mano River Union Declaration (June 2012)

CHAPTER 1: THE MANO RIVER UNION JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE (JSC)

Article 1: Establishment of the Joint Security Committee (JSC)

There shall be a Mano River Union Joint Security Committee, hereafter called 'Committee' which shall be subordinate to the Heads of State and Government of the Mano River Union:

Article 2: Composition

The Committee shall consist of the following under mentioned Ministers of each Member State:

- a) The Minister in charge of Defence
- b) The Minister in charge of Security/Justice wherever applicable
- c) The Minister of Foreign Affairs
- d) The Minister of Internal Affairs
- e) The Minister of Agriculture
- f) The Minister of Gender Affairs

Article 3: Functions

The Committee shall perform the following functions:

- a) Address border security issues
- b) Broaden the scope of its mandate to include other related issues that may arise from time to time
- c) Deal with policy issues, monitoring and oversight
- d) Direct the Technical Committee and ensure that its decisions and those taken by Heads of State and Government relating to border security and related issues are implemented
- e) Receive and review all reports arising from border security and related issues in Member states
- f) Initiate and develop training programmes;
- g) Draw up an Action Plan for the mobilization of financial resources through the Mano River Union for the implementation of its programmes and

- h) Perform any other function that may be deemed appropriate.

Article 4: Procedure

- a) The Committee shall elect a Chairperson by consensus from amongst its members on a rotational basis from the Member States for a period of two years
- b) The Committee shall meet every six months on a rotational basis in the four Member States
- c) In case of an emergency, the Committee may meet on the request of the Chairperson.

CHAPTER 2: TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Article 5: Establishment of the Technical Committee

There shall be a Technical Committee under the supervision of the Joint Security Committee.

Article 6: Composition

The Technical Committee shall comprise:

- a) A representative of the National Security Adviser
- b) Representatives of the Ministries for Security, Defence, Internal Affairs, Agriculture and Gender Affairs
- c) The Chief of Defence staff or his/her Representative
- d) The Inspector General of Police or his/her representative
- e) A representative of the Mano River Union Secretariat.

Article 7: Functions

The functions of the Technical Committee shall include the following:

- a) Review on a regular basis border and food security related issues, and gender mainstreaming in Member States
- b) Receive, investigate and analyze reports on border security and related issues
- c) Create a structure that would ensure that reports from the field which includes threats to women's

security, are submitted directly to the current Chairperson of the Joint Security Committee who shall make such reports available to his/her colleague committee members including their counterparts in the other Member States. A copy should also be directed to the Secretary General of the Mano River Union for information and necessary action

- d) Establish the Joint Border Security and Confidence Building Units whenever deemed necessary
- e) Facilitate the setting up and operation of the Peace and Security Unit within the Secretariat.
- f) Perform any other functions that may be deemed appropriate.

Article 8: Procedure

- a) The Technical Committee shall elect a Chairperson by consensus from amongst its members who will serve for a period of two years on a rotational basis
- b) The Technical Committee shall meet at least once every three months unless the Joint Security Committee decides otherwise.

CHAPTER 3: JOINT BORDER SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING UNITS (JBSCBU)

Article 9: Establishment

There shall be Joint Border Security and Confidence Building Units under the supervision of the Technical Committee.

Article 10: Composition

- a) District Officers of border districts in the case of Sierra Leone and Liberia, and 'Sous-prefets' in the case of Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire
- b) The Paramount Chiefs or their counterparts in the border areas
- c) The Senior Police and/or Immigration Officer at the border areas
- d) The Senior Customs Officer at the border post or his/her equivalent
- e) The Senior Border Guard at the border
- f) The Commanding Army officer at the border
- g) The Chief of Gendarmerie at the border or representative
- h) The youth representative at the border

- i) Two women representatives from the border community of each country
- j) Chairperson of the Rural Development Committee in Guinea or his/her representative
- k) Representative of civil society (faith-based organizations/market women association/community based organization)
- l) The Chief Agriculture Officer / the Forest Guard

Article 11: Functions

The units shall be non-political and shall perform the following functions:

- a) Organize and conduct joint patrols of the borders
- b) Develop, facilitate, foster and promote cordial relations between the peoples of the border regions through cultural, social and sporting activities
- c) Exchange information and investigate reports or observations with regards to all border security activities
- d) Submit reports to the Chairperson of the Technical Committee promptly
- e) Resolve minor cases of border security violations occurring in their own administrative areas
- f) Any other functions that may be delegated to them by the Technical Committee.

Annex 4 – Demographic, political, social and economic indicators¹⁵

Mano River Union Country Demographics				
Issue	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Government: Name and Type	Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (GoVI) Multi-party Presidential regime	Republic of Guinea (GoG) Republic	Republic of Liberia (GoL) Republic	Republic of Sierra Leone (RoSL) Constitutional Democracy
Military Branches	Army (FAFN), Navy, Air Force (2011)	Army, Navy Air Force	Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Combined, Army, Navy and Air	Republic of SL Armed Forces (RSLAF) Combined Maritime and Air wings
Expenditure % of GDP	1.5% (2009)	1.1% (2009)	1.3% (2006)	2.3% (2006)
Compulsory Age Voluntary	18 – 25 22 – 29 former rebels (2011)	18 – 25 with 18 months' conscription (2009)	18 years, voluntary, no conscription (2010)	17.5 years. Younger with consent. No conscription. HIV negative. (2009)
Age range & number available: Males	16-49: 5,247,522	16-49: 2,359,203	16-49: 815,826	16-49: 1,185,093
Age, etc. Females	16-49: 5,047,902	16-49: 2,329,764	16-49: 828,484	No data
Fit for service: Males	3,360,087	1,483,991	524,243	731,898
No. Fit, etc. Females	5,047,901 (2010)	1,535,418 (2010)	544,349	838,032 (2010)
No. Available for Annual replacement	247,011 242,958 (2010)	118,443 115,901 (2010)	36,585 38,516	54,212 57,154 (2010)
Population (Africa)	1 billion (2011)			
Population (ECOWAS)				
Population (MRU)	21,504,162 (7/2011.)	10,401,009 (High incidence of AIDS)	3,786,764	5,363,669 (7/2011)
Age Structure	39.8%	42.5%	44.3%	41.5%
0-14 years	Male- 4,312,133 Female 4,240,500	Male- 2,278,048 Female 2,229,602	Male- 4,312,133 Female 4,240,500	Male - 1:113,523 Female 1:130,112
15 – 64 years	57.2% Male – 6,262,802 Female – 6,039,458	54% Male – 2,860,845 Female – 2,806,004	Male – 989,623 Female – 1,007,577	54.5% Male – 1:401,907 Female 1:522,335
65 years and older	3% Male 320,396 Female 328,873 (2011)	3.5% Male - 164,051 Female - 208,459 (2011)	2.9% Male - 56,189 Female - 55,271 (2011)	3.7% Male -86,614 Female 109,173 (2011)
Median Age	19.6 years Male: 19.7 Female: 19.5 (2011)	18.6 years Male: 18.3 Female: 18.8 (2011)	18.3 years Male: 18.3 Female: 18.3 (2011)	19.1 years Male: 18.6 years Female: 19.5 years (2011)

¹⁵ The CIA World Factbook has been used the provision of adequate, comparable data with regard to national demographics affecting, style of government, population, economics health and education of the nation states. The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010 has been used for the specific data associated with MDG Goals 2, 3, 4, 5 (education, gender equality, child mortality and maternal health). The DCAF 2011 report provides comparable data relating to Gender in security sector. Data from the WHO has been used to fill in some of the gaps for data for specific diseases, etc. As the Austrian Development Association kindly funded the MRU for the 'As One' 2007 round table discussion, their findings have been used to provide the country data for the situation regarding the predominately male youth.

Mano River Union Country Demographics				
Issue	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Population Growth	2,078% (2011)	2,645%	2,663%	2.249% (2011)
Birth rate	30.95 births/1000 population (2011)	36.91 births/1000 population (2011)	37.25 births/1000 population (2011)	38.46 births/1000 population (2011)
Death rate	10.16/1,000 population (2011)	10.45/1,000 population (2011)	10.62/1,000 population (2011)	11.73/1,000 population (2011)
Major City population	Abijan 4,009,000 (2009)	Conakry 1,599,000 (2009)	Monrovia 882,000 (2009)	Freetown: 875,000 (2009)
Sex Ratio				
At birth	1.03 male/female	1.03 male/female	1.03 male/female	1.03 male/female
Under 15 years	1.02 male/female	1.02 male/female	1.01 male/female	0.98 male/female
15 – 64 years	1.04 male/female	1.00 male/female	0.96 male/female	0.92 male/female
65 and older	0.99 male/female	0.78 male/female	1.03 male/female	0.81 male/female
Total Population	1.03 male/female	1.00 male/female	1.00 male/female	0.94 male/female
Maternal Mortality	470 deaths/100,000 live births	680 deaths/100,000 live births	990 deaths/100,000 live births	970 deaths/100,000 live births
Infant Mortality	64.78 deaths/100,000	61.03 deaths/100,000	74.52 deaths/100,000	78.38 deaths/100,000
Life expectancy at birth	56.78 years Males 55.79% Females 57.61 (2011)	58.11 years Males 56.63 % Females 59.64% (2011)	5.7 years Males 55.44% Females 58.6% (2011)	56.15 years Male: 53.69% Female: 58.65% (2011)
Total fertility rate	3.92 children born/woman 2011)	5.1 children born/woman (2011)	5.13 children born/woman (2011)	4.94 children born/woman (2011)
Health Expenditure	5.1% of GDP (2009)	6.1% of GDP (2009)	3.9% of GDP (2009)	13.1% of GDP (2009)
Physician density	0.144 physicians/1000 population (2008)	0.1 physicians/1000 population (2005)	0.014 physicians/1000 population (2008)	0.016 physicians/1,000 population (2008).
Hospital bed density	0.4 beds/1,000 population (2006)	0.31 beds/1,000 population (2005)	0.7 beds/1,000 population (2056)	0.4 beds/1,000 population (2006)
Drinking Water access Improved: % of population	Urban 93% of pop. Rural 68% Total 80%	Urban 89% of pop. Rural 61% Total 71%	Urban 79% of pop. Rural 51% Total 68%	Urban 86% of pop. Rural 26% Total 49%
Unimproved: % of population	Urban 7% of pop. Rural 32% Total 20%	Urban 11% of pop. Rural 39% Total 29%	Urban 21% of pop. Rural 49% Total 32%	Urban 14% of pop. Rural 74% Total 51% %
Sanitation facility access Improved	Urban 36% population Rural 11% population Total 23% of pop.	Urban 34% population Rural 11% population Total 19% of pop.	Urban 25%population Rural 4% population Total 17% of pop.	Urban 24% population Rural 8% of population Total 13% of pop
Sanitation facility access Unimproved	Urban 64% Rural 89% Total 77% (2008)	Urban 66% Rural 89% Total 61%	Urban 75% Rural 96% Total 83%	Urban 76% Rural 94% Total 87% of pop
HIV/AIDS				
Adult prevalence	3.4% (2009)	1.3% (2009)	1.5% (2009)	1.6% (2009 est.)
People living with HIV/AIDS	490,000	79,000	37,000	49,000 (2009 est.)
Deaths	34,000	4,700	3,600	2,800 (2009 est.)

Mano River Union Country Demographics				
Issue	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Major Infectious Diseases	Degree of risk very high	Degree of risk very high	Degree of risk very high	Degree of risk: very high
Food or waterborne diseases:	Bacterial diarrhea, Hepatitis A and typhoid fever	Bacterial diarrhea Hepatitis A and typhoid fever	Bacterial diarrhea Hepatitis A and typhoid fever	Bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever;
Vectorborne diseases:	Schistosomiasis	Schistosomiasis	Schistosomiasis	Malaria and yellow fever;
Water contact disease:	Rabies	Rabies	Rabies	Schistosomiasis
Aerosolized dust or soil contact disease:				Lassa fever (2009)
Children under age of 5 years underweight	16.76% (2006)	20.8% (2006)	20.4% (2007)	21.3% (2008)
Education expenditure	4.6% GDP	2.4%	2.7%	4.3% of GDP (2008)
Literacy	Can read and write French	Can read and write French	Can read and write English	Can read and write English, Mende, Temne or Arabic
Age Definition	Age 15 and over	29.5%	57%	age 15 years and over
Total Population	48.7%	42.6%	7.3%	35.1%
Male	60.8%	18.1%	42.67% (2003)	46.9%
Female	38.5%			34.4% (2004 est)
School life expectancy (primary – tertiary)	6 years	9 years	11 years	12 years
Total	8 years	10 years	13 years	13 years
Male	5 years (2000)	7 years	9 years	11 years (2007)
Female (2007)				
Unemployment Age 15 – 24 years	No available data	No available data	4.7%	5.2%
Total	(May be 40.50% owing to civil war 2011)		5.7%	7.3%
Male			3.7% (2007)	3.5% (2004)
Female				
Labour Force	8,509 million 68% agriculture No data	4,392 million 76% agriculture 24% industry	1,372 million 70% agriculture 8% industry	2,207 million No data
% living below poverty	42% (2007)	47% (2006)	22% services	20.5% of GDP
Taxes (2010)	20% of GDP	16.2% of GDP	34.3% of GDP	

Source: 2011 CIA World Fact Book

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Glossary

ABC	<i>Association pour le Bien-être Communautaire et le Développement</i>
AfDB	African Development Bank
Agenda	Alias name of Sheku Suma, Youth Chairman, Kambia
APOTS	Advanced Public Order Training School
ASDD	<i>Association pour la Solidarité et le Développement Durable</i>
ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police
ATAYA BASE (Hatye)	Local gathering base for youth
BILAPI	Kissi tribal word for 'Hold Tight'
BIN	Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCSL	Council Churches of Sierra Leone
CECAAPSE	<i>Centre catholique d'appui à l'auto promotion socio-économique</i>
CENCAD	Centre for Capacity Building for Development
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
Col.	Colonel
CR	Conciliation Resources
CSC	Chiefdom Security Committee
CSI	Community Security Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DCAF	Democratic Control for Armed Forces
DCT	Dance for Conflict Transformation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation
DEA	Drugs Enforcement Agency
DISEC	District Security Committee
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States.
ETC	Emergency Travel Certificate
FEE	Administrative (tribal) charge for services rendered (unenforceable in State court)
FINES	Financial penalty punishable in court for non-payment
GNF	Guinean franc (<i>franc guinéen</i>)
GoL	Government of Liberia
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Hon.	Honourable
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Jonple-Kissia'	Women's group, Dawa
JONPLEH-KISIA	Kissi Women's United, Beudu (see KWU)
Km	Kilometre
KWU	Kissi Women's United (see JONPLEH-KISIA)

LDI	Liberian Democratic Institute
Limaniya	Women's informal union, meaning 'having a satisfied mind'
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services
Lt.	Lieutenant
Luma	Periodic Markets
LURD	Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy
Mammy Queen	Female head or nominated rep of a social group or network
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate (MDG Goal 5)
MRA	Makona River Association
MRU	Mano River Union
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPLA	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRA	National Revenue Authority
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD	Operational Support Division
ONS	Office of National Security
PPJ	Promoters of Peace and Justice
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDC	Rural Development Community
RoL	Republic of Liberia
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SEND	Social Enterprise Development Foundation
Shake Hand	Customary 'shake-hand' in lieu of formal payment
SLANSA	Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SNAP	Sustainable Nutrition Agriculture Promotion
SoP	Standard Operating Procedure
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendants
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
WCSL	Weslyan Church of Sierra Leone
WIDTECH	Women in Development Technical Assistance

The way in which ethnic, cultural and social relationships extend across national boundaries is part of the richness of the Mano River region, but it has also contributed to the complex and conflict-ridden experience of the region over the past two decades.

Linkages across state borders create what can be seen as conflict systems, featuring shared political, economic and social insecurity, and these demand common and cooperative responses from a range of actors.

This publication – the result of a research project undertaken by Conciliation Resources in partnership with the Liberia Democratic Institute (LDI), ABC for Development Guinea and the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) – seeks to contribute to this process by raising awareness on issues related to border community insecurity and options for policy improvement.

Conciliation Resources is a London-based peacebuilding organisation that has been working with partners in the countries of the Mano River region for over fifteen years. Our goal has been to support people at the heart of the region's conflicts who are striving to find solutions. We work with them to deepen our collective understanding of the conflicts, bring together divided communities and create opportunities for them to resolve their differences peacefully.

For more information about Conciliation Resources' support for cross-border peacebuilding efforts in the West Africa region, please visit: www.c-r.org/west-africa

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Cover image: Janet Adama Mohammed (*centre*) pictured discussing MRU border security with representatives from a Sierra Leonean community dialogue and advocacy group.
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