Comprehensive Study

on Radicalization

and Violent Extremism

in Guinea-Bissau

Co-ordination and authorship

Hamadou Boiro





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As we defend gender as an intrinsic value of Human Rights, a gender-neutral language will be adopted as a way of ensuring respect for gender equality in writing.



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Comprehensive Study on Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Guinea-Bissau



TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Charts	7
Executive Summary	9
List of Acronyms	12
1. INTRODUCTION	13
1.1. Context and justification	13
1.2. Goals	17
1.2.1. Main goal	17
1.2.2. Specific goals	17
1.3. Methodology	18
1.3.1. Quantitative data collection	18
1.3.2. Qualitative data collection	19
2. RESULTS	20
2.1. Sociodemographic characteristics	20
2.1.1. Sex	20
2.1.2. Age	20
2.1.3. Ethnic groups	21
2.1.4. Type of residence	22
2.1.5. Religion	22
2.1.6. Status	23
2.2. Awareness of the radicalization	
and violent extremism phenomenon	24
2.2.1. Phenomenon awareness	24
2.2.2. Extremist groups	25
2.2.3. Perception of radicalism	30
2.2.4. Existence of Guinean groups	
with the same ideology as extremist groups	32
2.2.5. Perception of claims made by extremist groups	34
2.2.6. Mobilization of the youth by extremist groups	36
2.2.7. Government structures aimed at fighting against terrorism .	38
2.3. Understanding causes, actors and areas	
where signs of violent extremism appear	40
2.3.1. Preventive actions for radicalism in Guinea-Bissau	40
2.3.2. Sources of conflict	46
2.3.3. Comprehension of this phenomenon's gender dimension	47

2.4. Identification of possible resistance factors	
against violent extremism	54
2.4.1. Cultural values against violent extremism	54
2.4.2. Cultural diversity	54
2.4.3. Interfaith relations in Guinea-Bissau in the next 5 years	55
2.4.4. Tensions between traditional communities	
and churches or mosques	55
2.5. Exploitation of the funding of places of worship	56
2.5.1. Perception of the aid given by Arab countries	56
2.5.2. Perception of the funding and construction of mosques	56
2.5.3. Perception of the construction of schools and mosques	
by Arab countries	57
2.5.4. The most active countries in the construction of mosques $_{\dots}$	58
2.5.5. Aid given by Western, European and Latin American	
countries in the construction of schools and churches	59
2.5.6. State subsidy for pilgrimage	60
2.5.7. Actions by new chruches in Guinea-Bissau	
2.6 Suggestions made by the surveyed	63
2.6.1. Perceptions on the contributions of religions	
in the next 5 years	
2.6.2. How to prevent all forms of violent extremism	63
2.6.3. 2.6.3. The actors deemed as relevant in the fight	
against violent extremism	64
2.6.4. International Cooperation	65
3. DISCUSSIONS	66
4. CONCLUSION	75
5. RECOMENDATIONS	77
6. APPENDICESS	
APPENDIX I - THE REGIONAL VIEW ON RADICALIZATION	
AN VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA	81
APPENDIX II - OTHER RESOURCES	88
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

LIST OF CHARTS

- Chart 1: Distribution of the sample by sex
- Chart 2: Distribution by age
- Chart 3: Distribution by ethnic group
- Chart 4: Distribution by type of residence
- Chart 5: Distribution by religion
- Chart 6: Leadership Status
- Chart 7: Phenomenon awareness
- Chart 8: Awareness of the Ansar Dine
- Chart 9: Awareness of the Al-Qaeda in Maghreb
- Chart 10: Mouvement National de Libération de L'Azawad (MNLA) [National
- Movement for the Liberation of Azawad]
- Chart 11: Front National de Libération de L'Azawad (FLNA) [National Front
- for the Liberation of Azawad]
- Chart 12: Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
- Chart 13: Islamic State
- Chart 14: Boko Haram
- Chart 15: Other groups
- Chart 16: Existence of Guinean groups with the same ideology
- as extremist groups
- Chart 17: Perception of claims made by the extremist groups
- Chart 18: Mobilization of the youth by the extremist groups
- Chart 19: Government structures aimed at fighting against terrorism
- Chart 20: Perception of the origin of the uncertainty in the subregion
- Chart 21: Awareness of the existence of combating actions
- against violent extremism
- Chart 22: Existence of ideological differences between religious
- tendencies
- Chart 23: What is necessary to prevent violent extremism
- Chart 24: Priority regions for preventive actions
- Chart 25: Relations between ethnic groups
- Chart 26: Who should help radicalized youth
- Chart 27: Tensions between religions
- Chart 28: Men and women's rights

Chart 29: Gender equality in religion

Chart 30: Role of women in prevention

Chart 31: In which area the role of women will be most effective

Chart 32: Perception of women's actions in comparison

with men's

Chart 33: Perception of the fight against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Chart 34: Perception of violence against women

Chart 35: Factors which should condition women's clothing

Chart 36: Perception of the schooling of women

Chart 37: Existence of cultural values against extremism

Chart 38: Meaning of cultural diversity

Chart 39: Interfaith relations in the next 5 years

Chart 40: Existence of tensions between traditional communities

and churches or mosques

Chart 41: Perception of the construction of schools and/or mosques

by Arab countries

Chart 42: The most active countries in the construction of mosques

Chart 43: Perception of the aid given by European and Western countries

in the construction of schools and churches

Chart 44: Perception of the State subsidy for pilgrimage

Chart 45: People's opinion on the action of new churches

Chart 46: Contribution of different religions in the next 5 years

Chart 47: Measures to be taken in order to prevent violent extremism

Chart 48: The actors deemed as relevant in the fight against

violent extremism

Chart 49: International organizations with which the State

should collaborate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The problem of world's radicalism and violent extremism has been one of the main concerns of governments in the last decades in terms of security, particularly in the African continent. It is in that context that IMVF and LGDH commissioned this study. Its main goal is to identify the risks and the adequate responses to the emergence of radicalization and violent extremism in Guinea-Bissau, in order to contribute to the consolidation of social peace. Thus, this study focused on the comprehension of the population's knowledge, behavior, conduct, and practices as well as in the comprehension of the causes, actors and areas where the ways of radicalization manifest. It also researched the responses considered the most effective and adequate in fighting and preventing radicalization by those surveyed.

On the one hand, it was adopted a regional view on the progress of the radicalization phenomenon and the presentation of the specific context of Guinea-Bissau, followed by a methodology that benefited the situational analysis - composed by a cross-sectional study on knowledge, opinions, conducts, practices, and behaviors On the other hand, a qualitative research was used to aim at the main actors, leaders and key informants (general population, religious leaders, youth, women). With regards to the data collection, this study considered the geographic coverage: it took place in practically all of the country's regions including the islands. The community diversity was also taken into consideration having surveyed the majority of our ethnic groups, with particular attention to women (55% of the sample) and the youth.

This study reveals a considerable lack of knowledge of the population on the actions of extremist groups in Mali and in West Africa with 56% of the surveyed not knowing about the existence and growth of extremist groups in West Africa. A cross-cutting analysis of the ethnic variable with those who consider themselves aware of the phenomenon displays that three ethnic groups (Mandinka, Fula e Balanta) claim to be better informed on the extremism phenomenon than the other ethnic groups. Those who claim to know less about the phenomenon are the Bijago and the Felupe. In terms of religion, the Muslim are the religious group who seem to be more informed on this phenomenon. While the Animists claim to know less about extremism. In relation to gender, women claim to have less knowledge on the phenomenon of extremism. In addition, the phenomenon is more known in cities than in villages.

In contrast, in between the radical groups that act in West Africa, Boko Haram is the most known one, mentioned by more than 48% of the surveyed, followed by the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb with 40%, the Islamic State and the Islamic Group in the Greater Sahara with 29% and 27%, respectively.

The clash between the students coming from the Arab world and the advocates for traditional Islam is a source of clear concern by the surveyed, particularly the Muslim. The first attempt to implement Islam in its «pure» and authentic form, to the detriment of the supposedly «impure» and heterodox Islam practiced by their parents.

The issue of the *talibé* children, who are sent to Koranic schools to receive a religious education, but frequently become abuse victims, is deeply complex and presents itself as prone to speeding up different forms of radicalism. In fact, the weakening of the *Madiliss* (traditional Koran educational system) favors, without any doubt, the youth coming from universities in Arab countries that aim to change the Islamic religiosity patterns in Guinean society.

Although there is a gender disparity, the value of the role of women was widely recognized (by 89% of those surveyed), in both the prevention and the fight against radicalization in the country, especially in between the youth. In fact, women are considered to have an unquestionable added value in the field of family education. Accordingly to more than 21% of the surveyed, the spread of awareness to prevent radicalization should be led by women. Showing that any politic aimed at fighting against poverty, disintegration of families, violence, and radicalism should prioritize women.

In Guinea-Bissau, although no relevant violent incidents have taken place and the radicalization phenomenon has not yet achieved a significative proportion compared to other countries, this study revealed many concerns. These are justified by different reasons, First, there is the structural problem of the fragility of the institutions and of political instability, with a persistent economic crisis and absence of employment, especially for the youth. Additionally, the interethnic tensions that manifest in an inherent manner in an instrumentalization environment of the ethnic and religious affiliation, often times transported to the politic sphere, exacerbated with the return to the country of some youth educated in countries of the Middle East, where they got in touch with potentially radical ideologies. Finally, the low level of education of the Guinean population, in general, and the lack of knowledge and awareness on radicalism as well as on violent extremism are high risk factors in case these movements get established in the country. Guinea-Bissau's response capacity is limited, making prevention the principal approach for maintaining stability and social peace. The regional situation, deeply influenced by the transnationality of religious actors and the ideological movements in a context of regionalization of threats, requires a mixed approach: a prevention policy along with an clear holistic approach, keeping in mind the necessity of managing security urgencies, particularly in border areas.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AQIM Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

IUGB Imam's Union of Guinea-Bissau

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

NIC National Islamic Council

SIC Supreme Islamic Council

FLNA National Front for the Liberation of Azawad

AIG Armed Islamic Group

GSIM Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims

GSPC Selafist Group for Preaching and Combat

LGDH Guinean League of Human Rights

IMVF Instituto Marques de Valle Flôr

FGM Female Genital Mutilation

N/A No Answer

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

RVE Radicalism and Violent Extremism

UNESCO Organização das Nações Unidas para Educação, Ciência

e Cultura

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context and justification

The problem of world's radicalism and violent extremism has been one of the main concerns of governments in the last decades in terms of security, particularly in the African continent.

Guinea-Bissau has a population of around 1.9 million inhabitants and is characterized for its cultural richness, which stems from a significant ethnic and religious diversity. This cultural diversity represents both an advantage as well as an disadvantage for the socioeconomic development of the country. Creole, a language which does not belong to any specific ethnic group, contributes to a approximation of the diverse communities from a ethnic and religious point of view. After the 1974 independence, Guinea-Bissau dived into a chronic political instability, worsened by the complicity between the drug cartels and the Guinean political class (Chabal & Green, 2016). The problem of the *talibés* (1) has a tendency to worsen the relations between *Madiliss* (traditional Koranic education) and *Madrasa* (school that teaches the Koran as well as other subjects in Arabic) and raises suspicions regarding the Fula from Guinea-Bissau, who are considered to be responsible for this phenomenon (Boiro Einarsdóttir, 2020; Einarsdóttir et al., 2010; Einarsdóttir & Boiro, 2014, 2016),

In that context of poverty, political instability and rising interethnic conflicts, frequently instrumentalized in terms of ethno-religious identity, Guinea-Bissau served as a back office for extremists linked to jihadists movements in 2016. The arrest of Saleck Ould Sheik, near Bafatá, in 2016, after his escape from a imprisonment in Mauritania, proves that he was able to profit from the existing complicity in Guinea-Bissau to hide. At that time, the presence of clandestine jihadist actors had been reported by different means of communication, and the main Muslim associations had expressed their preoccupation to national authorities on the risks that the gateway for a lot of Muslim extremists (CNI, NIC, IUGB) could pose to the country.

¹The *talibés* are children sent to Koranic schools by their families where they live in a boarding-school regime. Cases of abuse and exploitation are frequent, as well as their trafficking to the neighboring countries of Senegal and Gambia. Many of these children live in poor conditions and are forced to beg or work to survive. (https://www.unicef.org/guineabissau/child-protection)

The growing poverty that affects the younger layer of the populations, the limited employment horizons and professional achievement, as well as with the swift spread of radical legal and religious ideologies in the African continent, particularly in the Sahel region, pose significant challenges to the defense and security plan of the countries. In the last two decades, of 2000 and 2022, different radical Islamic jihadist groups emerged in Africa, with very different approaches and interpretations of legal and traditional religious schools in West African countries, including Guinea-Bissau.

The terminology related to violent extremism is complex and still controversial, mainly because many of the terms used in this field do not have a universally accepted definition. As highlighted on the United Nation's Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the «terrorism» and «violent extremism» phenomena do not have a clear definition. The Member States are in charge of defining them, while respecting their obligations under international law, and human rights (UNESCO, 2017).

So, although radicalism will be talked about in different senses, some authors define radicalization as a process in which individuals develop, adopt and adhere to political behaviors and conducts differ in part of totally from institutions, behaviors and values legitimized and established in politics, society, economy, and religion, as well as the behaviors that exist in a certain society (HOGAN apud ARES, 2015).

Radicalization and extremism are both very controversial terms, especially when used in the context of violent extremism. It is feared that the use of the term «radicalization» will be simply to justify a potential restriction on the freedom of expression. The main idea here is that radicalization is an individual and a changing process. If we refer to the process by which someone becomes a violent extremist, the term «radicalization that leads to violence» will be more appropriate than «violent extremism», which refers mainly to the use of violence justified by ideological reasons (UNESCO, 2017).

In addition, radicalization is often understood as a process in which groups or individuals go though a psychological transformation that leads them to set traditions aside, and to support extreme political, social, and religious ideologies (El Said, 2012). Or it may lead them to adopt a system of extremist values that go against the current order, with the goal of causing change in the social order, which may include the desire to use, support or facilitate the use of violence (Gonçalves, 2014).

Pedro M. Martins Ares (2015) argues that there is a difference between radicalism and violent extremism, basing this on the definition of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: violent extremism is a set of ideological beliefs with a personal, religious, or political nature that encourages or uses violence as a way of making a statement.

According to the grid developed by the Timbuktu Institute, based in various studies carried out in the region, the areas of radicalization are often found at the intersection of three elements: the low capacity of socio-economic and political inclusion of the States, the sociopolitical and economic complaints that result of injustices and frustrations, and the capacity of the extremist groups in the instrumentalization off all of these elements. There are also processes of individual radicalization, which are sometimes more complex to analyze. In between those processes, there is a way of radicalization known as «behavioral turn». In this setting, the individual considered a radical place his ideology in opposition to the values of his society. It is this phase that makes the idea of «violent extremism» active. The individual then introduces a transition process to the use of violence against their own community or others considered different or oppositional. It is at this stage that there is a high risk of transition to acts of violence, such as terrorism and attacks against all those identified as enemies or adversaries because of different ideologies or behaviors.

These radical ideologies in Africa were expressed by various religious organizations, like Salafism and Wahhabism, and were embodied by means of armed violence or others as a way of reaching their politic, legal, religious, and social goals. The most widely-known organizations are groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Al Shabaab in Somalia, the Ansar Dine and the Jamatul Tawhid Wal Jihas in Mali, as well as the AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), groups supported by global jihadism represented by radical Islamic groups like the Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (for more information check Attachment 1).

In Guinea-Bissau, the only exploratory study on violent extremism shows that the country runs the risk of becoming a place of violent religious extremism because of the political instrumentalization of ethno-religious differences. Islamic movements are slowly and steadily infiltrating the country's Muslim and Animist communities and, to a certain extent, among Christians, namely the newly arrived Evangelicals. The international community, in its fight against the Talibés phenomenon, has unconsciously allied itself with Muslim associations affiliated with Salafism, which seek to weaken the supporters of traditional Islam to implement the vision of a «true» Islam, destroying any local opposition. In contrast, the frustration of the traditional Marabouts is used to polarize the Muslim and Christian communities against each other. Thus, the main recommendation of this study is not only to deepen the research, but also to implement a short-term program to prevent ethno-religious extremism and an observatory on violent extremism in Guinea-Bissau (Boiro, 2018). The current study attends to that recommendation.

1.2. Goals

1.2.1. Main goal

Identify the risks and the adequate responses to the emergence of radicalization and violent extremism (RVE) in Guinea-Bissau, in order to contribute to the consolidation of peace.

1.2.2. Specific goals

- Examine the knowledge, behaviors and practices of the populations regarding RVE in Guinea-Bissau.
- Understand the causes, the actors and the areas in Guinea-Bissau where the signs of the RVE are manifesting themselves.
- Identify trends and possible connections with international extremist groups, particularly those operating in the ECOWAS and Sahel space.
- Understand the gender dimension of the phenomenon, in particular the role that women can play in prevention, considering the existence of a culture of *matchundadi* (an expression of hegemonic masculinity used) both in personal and family (private) spheres, as well as in community and political (public) spheres.
- Identify possible resistance factors to violent extremism.
- Define recommendations of intervention for preventing violent extremism, including the identification of relevant actors in the fight against RVE.

1.3. Methodology

The study was conducted through two different and complementary research approaches (situational analysis and ethnographic research). The situational analysis involved a cross-sectional study on knowledge, opinions, attitudes, practices and behaviors, as well as qualitative research that focused on the main actors, leaders and key informants (general population, religious leaders, youth, and women). The ethnographic research explored questions related to the culture and human contexts where RVE can occur. It also aimed to deepen the analysis of gender relations and possible factors of resistance to violent extremism, using anthropological methods of observation and qualitative surveys.

1.3.1. Quantitative data collection

Table 1: Location, sample and number of interviewers

Region	Inhabitants	(km²)	%	Minimum	Maximum	Applicants
Bissau	492004	78	30%	149	150	6
Oio	226846	5403	14%	69	75	3
Bafatá	225516	5981	14%	68	75	3
Gabu	219811	9150	13%	67	70	3
Cacheu	192508	5175	12%	58	60	2
Biombo	99947	839	6%	30	40	2
Tombali	94939	3737	6%	29	30	1
Quinara	64278	3138	4%	19	25	1
Bolama-Bijagós	34563	2624	2%	10	20	1
Total	1650412	36125	100%	500	545	22

In total, between 500 and 545 people were to be surveyed across the country. In total, 546 people were surveyed in all administrative regions of the country. Twenty-two interviewers administered the surveys over five days. The answers were collected via KoboCollect.

1.3.2. Qualitative data collection

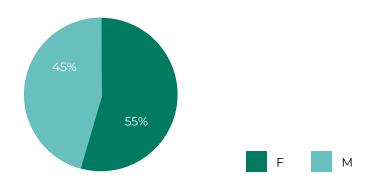
The qualitative data collection was based on semi-structured and open surveys, supplemented with discussion groups. The target groups included the Imam from the main mosques of the study area, Koran teachers, pastors, students of various koranic schools, *Madrasas*, youth and women. In total, 10 groups of discussion were organized in the cities of Bissau, Bafata, Gabu, Quebo, Francunda e Nhacra. Based on the results of the quantitative study, the ethnic groups that claimed to have more information on terrorist groups (Mandingo, Fula, and Balanta) were prioritized in the qualitative study. Thus, the surveyed were divided into two groups, the Arab youth (in other words, those who studied in Arab countries, in particular Saudi Arabia) and the traditional Islam representatives.

2. RESULTS

2.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

2.1.1. Sex

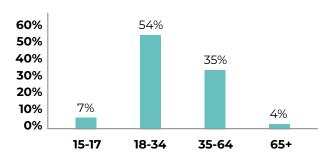
Chart 1: Distribution of the sample by sex



The chart above shows the sample distribution based in sex, with women representing 55%, which reflects on the overall distribution of the population, in which the sex ratio favors women.

2.1.2. Age

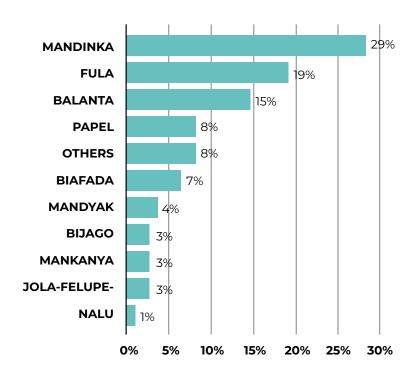
Chart 2: Distribution by age



The age of the surveyed varies from 15 to 65 or more years. The largest number of the surveyed is in the 18 to 34 age group, which accounts for 54% of the sample, followed by the 35 to 64 age group with 35%, and the two extremes, with 7% in the 15 to 17 age group and 4% aged over 65, respectively.

2.1.3. Ethnic groups

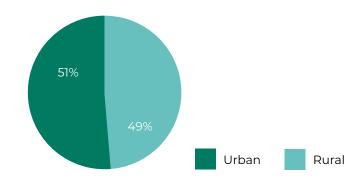
Chart 3: Distribution by ethnic group



As shown in the chart above, the country's main ethnic groups are represented, as well as the majority groups that follow, representing more than 50% of the sample. The Mandinka group (29%) has the highest percentage, which does not reflect the ethnic distribution of the country, where the Fula and Balanta are the majority, representing more than 50% of the country's total population. The larger representation of the Mandinka is justified by the fact that the mostly Mandinka villages in the Oio, Bafatá, and Gabu regions were chosen to better reflect the diversity between the traditional Islam representatives, better known as the *Madiliss*, and the Arabized or *Madrasas*.

2.1.4. Type of residence

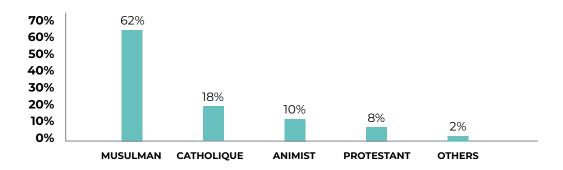
Chart 4: Distribution by type of residence



The sample by type of residence distribution shows a division between urban and rural regions. This ratio is slightly different from the national level distribution, where the rural inhabitants are more than the urban inhabitants, according to the general population census.

2.1.5. Religion

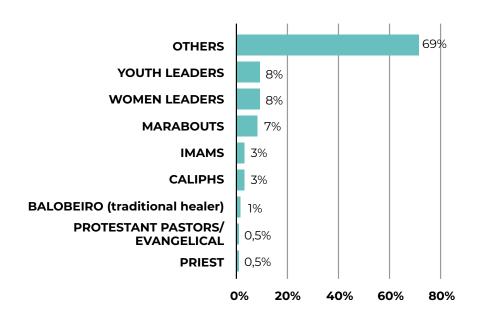
Chart 5: Distribution by religion



The sample by type of residence distribution shows a division between urban and rural regions. This ratio is slightly different from the national level distribution, where the rural inhabitants are more than the urban inhabitants, according to the general population census.

2.1.6. Status

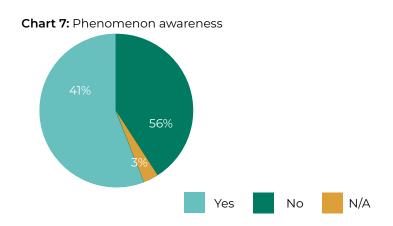
Chart 6: Leadership Status



Regarding the status of the surveyed, «Others» represents a group of people with no leadership status in communities, making up 69%, followed by youth leaders with 8%, women leaders with 8% as well, and Marabouts with 7% of the surveyed. There are other groups with relevant status in the communities, in particular about radicalism and violent religious extremism matters, like the Imams with 3% and the Caliphs with 3%. The evangelical and protestant church pastors represent 1% of the surveyed, as can be seen in the chart above.

2.2. Awareness of the radicalization and violent extremism phenomenon

2.2.1. Awareness of the phenomenon



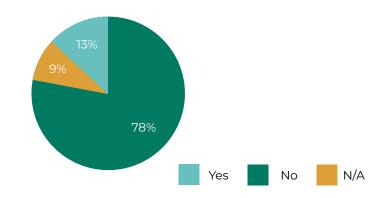
Regarding people's awareness of the actions of extremist groups in Mali and the West African region, 56% of the surveyed said they were not aware of the actions of these groups, while 41% said they were aware of the actions of groups in the region. Moreover, 3% did not know or simply did not want to answer the question.

The cross-cutting analysis of the ethnic variable with those who consider themselves aware of the phenomenon displays that three ethnic groups (Mandinga, Fula e Balanta) claim to be better informed on the extremism phenomenon, compared to other ethnic groups. Those who claim to have less knowledge on the phenomenon are the Bijago and the Jola-Felupe. Regarding religion, the Muslim are the ones who claim to know more about the phenomenon. In terms of gender, women claim to have less knowledge on the phenomenon of extremism. claim to know less about extremism. In addition, the phenomenon is more known in cities than in villages. (See chart 2, 3, 4, 5 attached)

2.2.2. Extremist groups

2.2.2.1. Ansar Dine

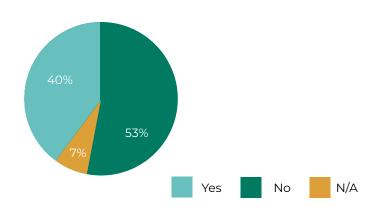
Chart 8: Awareness of the Ansar Dine



With regard to knowledge of any specific group operating in the sub-region, namely Ansar Dine, the overwhelming majority of the surveyed (78%) revealed total ignorance of this group, with only 13% saying they had knowledge of it, while 9% did not want to or did not know how to answer.

2.2.2.2. Awareness of the Al-Qaeda in Maghreb

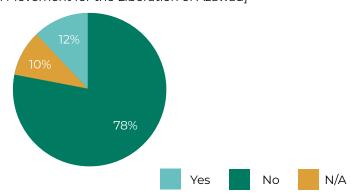
Chart 9: Awareness of the Al-Qaeda in Maghreb



The opinions are divided regarding the Awareness of the existence of the Al-qaeda in Maghreb. Around 53% of the people surveyed claim to have never heard of this organization, while 40% have. The other 7% do not know about it or do not want to answer.

2.2.2.3. Mouvement National de Libération de L'Azawad (MNLA) [National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad]

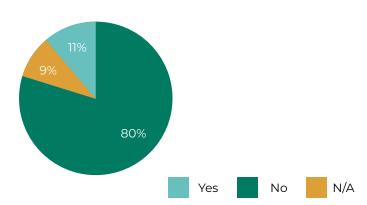
Chart 10: Mouvement National de Libération de L'Azawad (MNLA) [National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad]



Regarding the extremist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), 78% of the surveyed declare they do not have knowledge of the existence of this extremist group, as opposed to the 12% who have heard of it. Almost 10% gave no answer as shown in the chart above.

2.2.2.4. Front National de Libération de L'Azawad (FLNA) [National Front for the Liberation of Azawad]

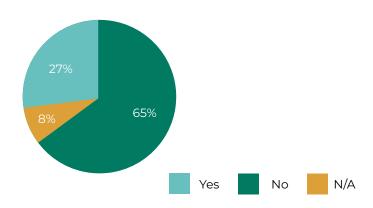
Chart 11: Front National de Libération de L'Azawad (FLNA) [National Front for the Liberation of Azawad]



The situation observed in the MNLA repeats itself in the case of the National Front for the Liberation of Azawad (FLNA). In other words, 80% of the inhabitants surveyed reveals complete ignorance on this movement, with only 11% knowing of it, and 9% that did not know or did not wish to answer.

2.2.2.5. Islamic State in the Greater Sahara

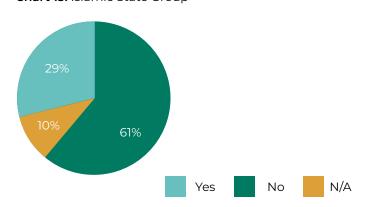
Chart 12: Islamic State in the Greater Sahara



The situation observed in the two previous matters is repeated with regard to the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. Almost 27% of the surveyed claim to know about the organization, 8% did not answer or did not know, while the great majority (65%) reveal total ignorance of its existence.

2.2.2.6. Islamic State Group

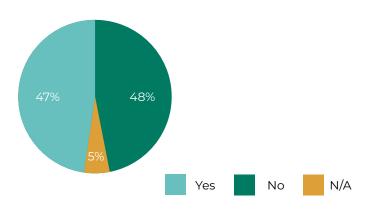
Chart 13: Islamic State Group



The Islamic State Group does not differ substantially from the others. That is to say that 61% of the people surveyed claim to never have heard of this group, 10% do not know or had no answer, while only 29% of the inhabitants surveyed claim to know about the existence of this group.

2.2.2.7. Boko Haram

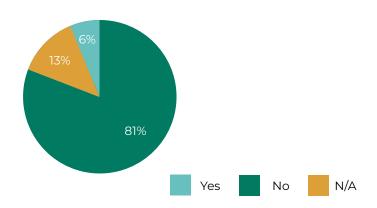
Graphique 14: Boko Haram



In the case of Boko Haram, however, the situation changes: 47% of the surveyed have heard of this group, while 48% say they do not know it, and only 5% did not answer.

2.2.2.8. Others

Graphique 15: Others groups



Regarding the knowledge of groups other than those mentioned above, an overwhelming majority (81%) say they have no knowledge of any other extremist organization, 13% say they have some knowledge, and 6% did not answer.

The qualitative research, which approached opinions of different ethnic groups that claimed to have more knowledge on the extremism phenomenon, like the Mandinka, the Fula, and the Balanta, supports the results of the quantitative research. In fact, when questioned on whether they had heard about extremist groups in Mali and in the sub-region or not, all of the surveyed claimed to have heard of them. They mostly mentioned groups like the Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram. The main sources of information are religious meetings, as said by one of the surveyed: «We hear about them from people who have lived in those areas and now live here with us. Usually, those people go on vacation to those countries, such as Niger, for example. Others are classmates that sometimes go to Senegal to go to a Ziara or to visit family, or even many young people studying in Senegal and then come back in vacation, share news about these groups».

Straying away from the goal of this study, one of the surveyed stated that the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), which fights for the independence of Casamance, a region on the south of Senegal, can be considered as a radical group when compared to other organizations referenced in this study. In their opinion, they use the same action methods. And added: «I was a witness to an attack to travelers made by this movement, during my trip from Ziguinchor to Bissau: suddenly they appeared wearing masks, so that they could not be identified, attacked people and stole all of their belongings, leaving them in shock».

Another group of the surveyed said they had heard about radicalism on radio and in television. Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda are the most mentioned groups.

Others, particularly those from the Gabu region, claimed to have first heard of these groups through local radio stations in their awareness programs, where it was said that «these groups are terrorists that intend on creating problems in communities, and on disturbing our peaceful way of living in harmony together and of practicing our religious beliefs. We must be especially attentive and no allow ourselves to be influenced by anyone who wants to create confusion in our communities».

2.2.3. Perception of radicalism

Regarding the perception of radicalism, various situations were identified. There are those who condemn all forms of radicalism, particularly those related to religion. This group defends that a Muslim should not be radical or kill another Muslim or anyone else in the name of religion or Allah and adds: «In no circumstance should one use a weapon to impose their own views on certain things, much less on religion».

Another one of the surveyed agrees with this statement, adding *«although we do not know what their goals are, it is sad to see people praying and then someone shows up with a bomb to kill those innocents, in the name of their religion. I do not thing it is good for society, nor for religion in general, even less for Islam, no it is not because of Islam»*, they concluded, visibly shocked, Adults P3 FG Gabu.

Radicalism is also considered a means of slandering Muslims and the Muslim religion. Another surveyed states: «Everything that is being discussed here is because of someone, Osama Bin Laden, who was behind the 11th September attacks, and, above all, because he was Muslim. There is ETA However, in Osama Bin Laden's case, he will forever be associated with Islam», they said.

Radicalism is not exclusive to any religion, as extremists exist in all religions and societies, argues another: «In all societies there are extremists, but that does not stop them from being part of the group to which they belong. However, when a Muslim commits a terrorist act, what is always manifested is not the individual itself, but the fact that they are Muslim. Nowadays, when we talk about terrorism, we automatically connect it to Islam. But terrorism dates back to centuries ago, every time a group demanded their rights using terror as a weapon», Adults P8 FG Bissau.

For others, extremism is nothing more than a group of people revolting against State policies. This perception is particularly clear among the surveyed in the Nhacra region:

«I think they are people who rebel against the government, for example. It could be someone unemployed, who easily accepts being mobilized to destroy something, according to the wishes of the funders», exemplifies a participant of the focal group of the Adults P4 FG Nhacra.

However, for others of the surveyed from the same locality, extremism is considered a phenomenon that could hardly occur in Guinea-Bissau, because it is a country where most people are connected. «There are people in the world that would be capable of killing even their siblings, but here in Guinea-Bissau, it is not easy. Here, if I set off a bomb, someone from my family could die, it can be my uncle, my nephew, my brother. Because we are all family, The people that fight to enforce their religion are not thinking of Allah, they do not worship Allah, they fight for their own interests», highlighted a participant of the Adults P6 FG Nhacra.

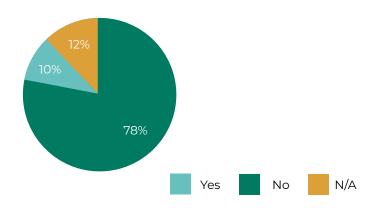
Extremism is also considered a banditry matter. «In general, the extremists, the terrorists, and the fundamentalists are guided by someone to achieve a certain goal. They hire criminals to disrupt the countries», said another surveyed from P6 FG Nhacra.

In that same sense, some of the surveyed mentioned drug trafficking: «There was an incident in Ensalma's quarry when a taxi arrived and opened the trunk, which had someone to execute», said someone from the Adults P3 FG Nhacra group. It is worth mentioning that the quarries in the Nhacra region are considered to be breeding grounds for violence and organized crime, as one of the surveyed attests, «in the same place, next to that quarry was recently found a corpse. In reality, situations like this are common, as in this area, the soil is relatively soft and is easy to dig», Adults P3 FG Nhacra.

Still in the Nhacra region, some of the surveyed believe that extremism does not exist in Guinea-Bissau, but they draw attention to the tensions that exist between some religious movements, particularly between Shiites and Wahhabis. «It was revealed that certain religious groups exist that, in other parts of the world, cannot coexist without causing problems, the Shiites and the Wahhabis, in particular We hear about the war in Yemen, the war in Syria and other parts of the world, which have in common the rivalry between these two religious groups», stated one of the surveyed from Adults P3 FG Nhacra.

2.2.4. Existence of Guinean groups with the same ideology as extremist groups

Chart 16: Existence of Guinean groups with the same ideology as extremist groups



Almost everywhere in the world, extremist organizations, whether religious or not, share ideologies and doctrines that they believe to be universal and have transnational organizational structures, developing actions with a high degree of coordination and complexity that organizations that are limited to a national level could not carry out. Thus, when questioned if they were aware of the existence of Guinean organizations that share the same ideologies as the violent extremist organizations in the Sahel, 78% of the surveyed answered «no», against 10% who answered «yes» to the fact that there are national organizations that share these ideologies, and 12% did not answer this question, as can be seen in the chart above.

In the qualitative research, the surveyed were unanimous in claiming that Islam as a religion has no connection to extremists. For them, all those who carry out extremist acts are not complying with the recommendations of Islam. One of the surveyed who lives in the capital stated that *«terrorism has nothing to do with Islam, although a religious person can carry out acts that could constitute terrorism. In the past, they talked about Islamic fundamentalism, Islamic terrorism, but it seems that nowadays they are trying to tone down the language, using terms like violent extremism, which is a good start. Especially because, when the league called us, we warned them that we would not take part in a conversation where such language was used». This reveals the necessity to review the use of some terms that may be offensive to people.*

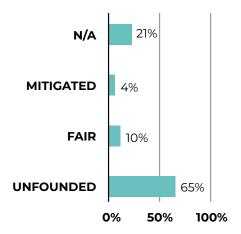
In addition, this tendency to confuse terrorism and the Muslim religion creates frustrations in some religious leaders, who claim that they can even fuel the extremists' demands by facilitating the recruitment of young people who, in order to save their religion, join the ranks of terrorist groups. «If we comprehend that terror is not part of Islam, because the prophet said not to violate the rights of others and not to allow their rights to be violated, so if I don't violate and the other doesn't violate my rights, we won't have any problems.», said one of the surveyed.

However, even if the surveyed recognize that currently there are no groups in the country that share the same ideas as extremists, it is clear that they draw attention to the existence of factors that are favorable to the development of extremist ideas in the country. This includes poverty and, above all, students from some Muslim countries. As for the influence of poverty on the adoption of extremist ideas, the surveyed said that *«in Guinea-Bissau, given the high poverty and illiteracy rate observed in the country, this can lead to the development of these ideologies»*, warned one of the surveyed from the city of Bissau.

As for the role of students in the adoption of extremist ideas, this quote explains it: «Yes, I know, but when we focus on the issue in terms of organization, we don't have any (group), but we have many of our compatriots who studied in countries where these ideas are prevalent and who have therefore become radicalized. Guinea-Bissau, being a country with a high level of illiteracy, is a favorable place for the spread of these ideologies, especially for those who claim to preserve culture and religion However, it is not easy to spread violent extremism in our country, because the communities are ethnically and religiously connected».

2.2.5. Perception of claims made by extremist groups

Chart 17: Perception des revendications des groupes extrémistes



Regarding the perception of claims made by the extremist groups, 65% of the surveyed say they are unfounded, against 10% who say they are fair and 4% who think these claims are ambiguous. A significant number (21%) chose not to answer this question.

The qualitative research reveals the existence of two opposite points of view in the perception of claims made by extremist groups: one group supports that they are not related to Islam. This perception is generally defended by the surveyed as being based on personal interests which, in reality, have no connection to Islam: «The arguments put forward by them are illogical, unfounded and simply based on personal interests», said one of the surveyed from Bissau.

Another of the surveyed from Bissau agrees, pointing out that those groups try to convince people that they are fighting for themselves A fight that is, first and foremost, directed against Americans, because they are considered to fight for Islam, but in reality, *«it's no more than what you said: they claim nothing but their personal interests, because I left here for Nhala, in Darfur, in the Republic of Sudan, and came to Ndjamena, near Darfur, where I was arrested by a group calling itself <i>«Islamic Freedom Fighting».*

I asked them what was the reason for the creation of this organization and they told me that they thought the the Americans supported non-Muslims to prevent the Islam's progress, and that's why they are fighting for the freedom of Muslims.»

In the same vein, another surveyed said that Islam should not be associated with the claims of extremist groups, since Islam is considered to be the origin of democracy, explained a citizen of Bissau: «In fact, what happened in Mali after the coup d'état against President Amadu Tumane Ture, was that these radicals entered the cemetery in Tombuctu, blew up everything, destroyed everything in the name of Sharia. However, these actions are contrary to Islamic law, which does not allow anyone to come to power through a coup d'état.» And to justify their opinion, they added: «Islam was one of the first to organize democratic elections to allow someone to come to power. The second Khalifa, Omar ibn Al-Khattab, was shot directly while praying in the mosque. Realizing that he would not survive his injuries, he ordered a vote for his succession in the event of his death. He chose 6 people, in addition to his son, giving him, however, the indication that he could only practice his right to vote in the case of a tie between the first 6 voters.».

For the second group, the extremists' demands are justified by the frustrations of Muslims. One of the surveyed says that there is a conspiracy against the Muslim religion, and it is the extremists who are fighting these conspiracies, and a Nhacra researcher adds: «We, as Muslims, know that there is an invisible hand fighting Islam and taking advantage of unemployed young people to do so. On the other hand, it is also possible that the government discriminates against part of the population because of their religion or sect, which can lead to revolts».

2.2.6. Mobilization of the youth by extremist groups

42% 45% 40% 35% **30**% 23% 25% 18% 18% 20% 15% 10% 5% 0% No Do not Maybe Yes know

Chart 18: Mobilization of the youth by extremist groups

When asked to answer to the possibility of extremist groups mobilizing the youth for their cause in Guinea-Bissau, opinions are divided. A majority of 42% believe so and a significant percentage of people (18%) admit this possibility. Only 23% firmly reject it. However, there is a high percentage (18%) of those who don't know.

According to the results of the qualitative research, the surveyed say that Guinea is fertile ground for mobilizing young people; all it takes is for terrorist groups to want to invest there so that they can recruit many young people, as this surveyed states: «In case that extremist groups invest in Guinea-Bissau with financial resources, materials and flags in the name of Islam, they will certainly recruit millions of young people in the country» (P6 FG Gabu, in the east of the country).

The precarious socioeconomic conditions of the population in general, and particularly of young people, make it easier for them to be recruited for all kinds of activities, even those considered illegal and dangerous. «I say that poverty can lead people to join or accept the mobilization of these groups, because they cannot afford to survive. And since these groups have means that they are willing to invest, it will not be difficult to mobilize the youth of the country. Money is a demon and it is difficult to find strong and upright people, especially when it comes to money» said P5 FG Gabu, one of the surveyed from the region of Gabu.

In addition, in the Gabu region, the surveyed claim to have already tested how young people can be recruited to join extremist groups. According to this surveyed, Adults P1 FG Gabu, «They mobilize the youth. Here's an example of a young man who was mobilized to burn down the president's house in Mauritania; he is still in prison today. He's from Gabu, and he's part of our family. He was carrying a grenade. They were trained here in Gabu and, during these periods, if they captured someone, only the police could free them from their hands. They taught them how to kill. Today, this person has regretted it and, according to reports, is the prison imam and has even got married.»

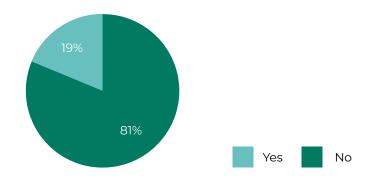
In the same city, another surveyed went further, saying that the signs of recruitment and mobilization of young people by extremist groups are clear: «Regarding this matter, I believe that the signs of threat of young people who join in supporting extremist groups in Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Conakry are notorious. I say that because, in our society, there are a lot of defenders of those criminals, and, in our religion, we saw a huge divergence between the Shiites and the Ahmadiyya, in the last few years. I also believe that the presence of these strands is increasing, as well as the divergences in communities», P7 FG Gabu.

There are also those who accuse governments of being responsible for young people joining terrorist groups, by not investing in education: «African leaders should focus more on local education in Arabic, Portuguese, French and English; only in this way will they be able to keep their citizens away from extremism and radicalization», Adults P8 FG Gabu.

Finally, many of the surveyed claim that it is easier to mobilize the youth in cities than in villages. In villages, people know each other, and when a foreigner arrives, everyone is informed: «So, in villages, the risk is relatively low. The higher risk is in cities, without any doubt, especially in the capital where many people have an unknow origin», said one of the surveyed in Nhacra.

2.2.7. Government structures aimed at fighting against terrorism

Chart 19: Government structures aimed at fighting against terrorism



Regarding the population's knowledge of structures for combating violent extremism and terrorism, 81% said they did not know of any State structure for this purpose, in contrast to 19% who said they were aware of these structures, as shown in the chart above.

The qualitative research supports the quantitative data, as almost all of the surveyed claim to not know about government structures aimed and fighting against extremism in the country. Only the criminal police was mentioned as a State structure that fights against extremism. «The criminal police is responsible for combating human trafficking, but we don't know if there is a structure dedicated to fighting against violent extremism» (P1 FG Nhacra).

The authorities are considered incapable of combating terrorism. In addition, one of the surveyed from Gabu states that the authorities are unable of controlling even the prisons, from which prisoners often escape, explaining: «Our authorities are unable solve the problems. In the prisons, the prisoners escape after a few days of detention. It's not uncommon to find a murderer caught red-handed, walking down the street a few days after his arrest» (P4 FG Gabu).

For some, no State is able to fight against extremism, not even the most powerful countries can control terrorism. The countries that claim to fight against terrorism are also suspected of being the source of terrorism, as said by this surveyed: «Overall, the institutions created to fight terrorism are the first committing terrorist acts, because it is these countries and these people who sell weapons to terrorist groups. Consequently, the primary promoter of terrorism is the United States, which «made» Bin Laden. The United States know that terrorism will only end when there are no weapon sales» (P2 FG Bissau).

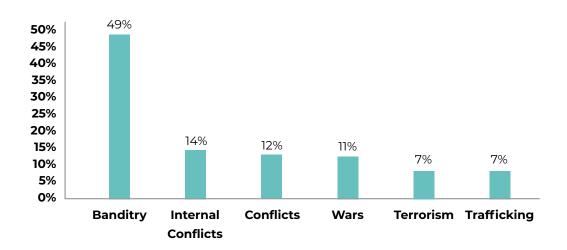
A young man from Gabu claims to know of States or organizations fighting against terrorism and violent extremism: «Yes, I know, because there are several organizations and personalities involved in the fight against the terrorism and extremism, with or without the support of the Guinea-Bissau authorities. An example of this are the Koranic schools, which are in the front line in the fight against this phenomenon, because it's easier for someone with fluency in Arabic and Portuguese to fight extremism than someone who only knows Portuguese» (P6 FG Gabu).

2.3. Understanding the causes, the actors and the areas where signals of violent extremism emerge

2.3.1. Preventive actions for radicalism in Guinea-Bissau

2.3.1.1. Perception of the origin of the uncertainty in the subregion

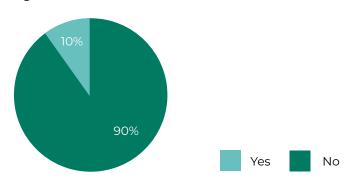
Chart 20: Perception of the origin of the uncertainty in the subregion



As for the origin of the insecurity in the sub-region, almost half of the surveyed (49%) refer to banditry as the main cause of insecurity in the sub-region. Internal conflicts were considered by 14% as the cause of insecurity. Other unspecified conflicts and wars are mentioned by 12% and 11%, respectively. Terrorism and trafficking were mentioned by 7% each.

2.3.1.2. Measures to fight against violent extremism

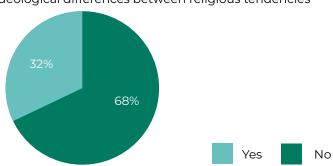
Chart 21: Awareness of the existence of combating actions against violent extremism



Regarding the existence of visible actions to combat violent extremism in the country, 90% of the surveyed say they are not aware of their existence, while the remaining 10% say they are, although they cannot specify what they are.

2.3.1.3. Ideological differences in between religious tendencies

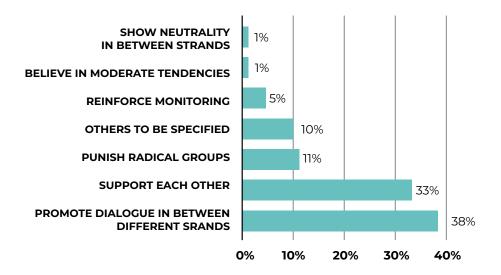
Chart 22: Existence of ideological differences between religious tendencies



When asked whether ideological differences between religious trends are a source of violent extremism, 68% answered no, while 32% believe that these differences can be one of the sources of violent extremism, as the chart above shows.

2.3.1.4. What is necessary to prevent violent extremism

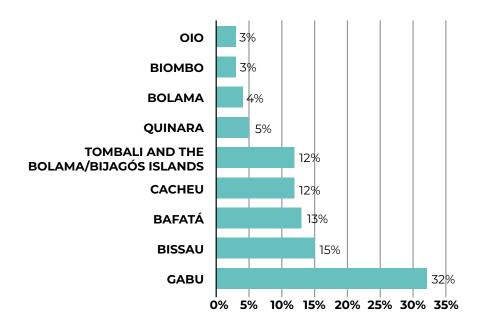
Chart 23: What is necessary to prevent violent extremism



As for the concrete measures to be taken to effectively combat radicalization, opinions are divided as follows: around 38% of those surveyed believe that the most appropriate measure is to promote dialogue between different religious streams. More than a third (33%) advocates for mutual support between different tendencies. Punishment of radical groups is advocated by more than 11%, while around 10% advocate other measures, although without specifying them. Around 5% believe that strengthening the monitoring of the activities of the different tendencies is a necessary measure. Finally, 1% of the people surveyed advocate or trust moderate tendencies, or advocate neutrality between different streams.

2.3.1.5. Regions that must raise focus on preventive actions

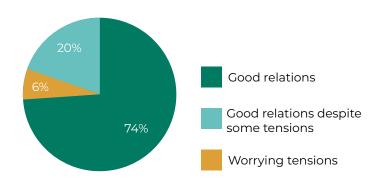
Chart 24: Priority regions for preventive actions



When asked which regions should receive a more of actions to prevent radicalization in Guinea-Bissau, around a third of the answers indicate the Gabu region (32%), followed by the capital Bissau and the Bafatá region, in second and third place, with 15% and 13% respectively. The region of Cacheu, Tombali and the islands of Bolama/Bijagós each account for 12%. The region of Quinara receives the concern of 5% of the surveyed, while Biombo and Oio do not go over 3%.

2.3.1.6. Relations between ethnic groups

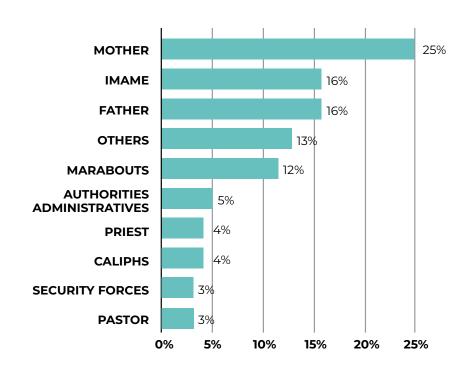
Chart 25: Relations between ethnic groups



Regarding the classification of relations between different ethnic groups, 74% answered that there are good relations between different ethnic groups, followed by 20% who believe that there are good relations despite some tensions, and 6% who answered that relations between ethnic groups reveal worrying tensions, as can be seen in the chart above.

2.3.1.7. Who should help radicalized youth

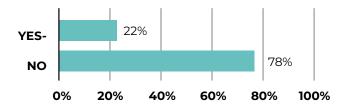
Chart 26: Who should help radicalized youth



In response to the question: «Who should a radicalized young person turn to for help», the answers vary significantly. A small majority (25%) mention the mother, followed by the father and the imam (with 16% each). Other unspecified entities are trusted by 13% of the surveyed, followed by marabouts with 12%. Administrative authorities accounted for only 5% of the surveyed's answers. Priests and khalifas occupy sixth place with 4% of favorable opinions, while security forces and pastors do not receive more than 3% of those surveyed's answers.

2.3.1.8. Tensions between religions

Chart 27: Tensions between religions



Regarding the tensions between different religious communities in Guinea-Bissau, 78% of the people surveyed replied that they had not noticed any clashes or tensions between religious groups, in contrast to the 22% who replied that yes, there are clashes and tensions in relations between different religious denominations, as can be seen in the chart above.

2.3.2. Sources of conflict

The qualitative research reveals that the sources of conflict identified by the surveyed are diverse. The behavior of certain communities towards others is identified as one of the potential sources of conflict. For example, the Balanta, who recently converted to Islam, report the behavior of some members Fula community of the Guinea-Conakry in Guinea-Bissau. «There is a risk in the case of our brothers and sisters in Guinea who suffer discrimination, even people from the same region and locality. Someone calls their brother Baledjo (black) simply because he is lighter in color or because he thinks he is rich, which can aggravate conflicts. The use of the term Baledjo in Fula is somehow synonymous with inferiority or even slavery» (P4 FG Nhacra).

The land issue is also considered a significant source of conflict in the country. For the surveyed, land related conflicts are more likely to happen than ethnic and religious conflicts. «In fact, it's hard to ethnic and religious conflicts between communities. The most frequent is the existence of land ownership related conflicts (cashew tree cultivation) », justifies an inhabitant of Nhacra.

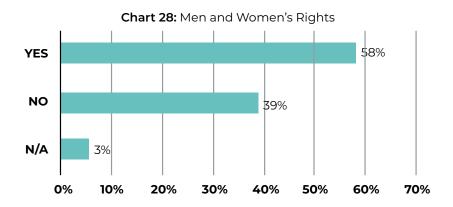
Another source of conflict is the distribution of donations. Some of the surveyed complained that the government favors Muslim communities over others. For example, the people who answered this question criticized the criteria used in the distribution of meat offered by Saudi Arabia after the sacrifices of rams during the pilgrimage. In support of this criticism, a Nhacra inhabitant states: *«The carcasses of rams are often sold, which should be forbidden. And to make matters worse, new converts to Islam are forgotten. This situation must stop.»* To give another example: *«Look at the people who work in the republic presidency, they once had the right to seven bulls during the Tabaski festival.»*

Some of the people surveyed say that the non-Muslim communities are starting to complain that the Muslims are being favored. «I saw a person complaining about the government helping Muslims and not helping Christians during Christmas.»

Finally, a lack of respect for the cultures of other groups is also perceived as a source of conflict, as pointed out by one of the surveyed: «We should respect everyone's culture. Just because someone is Muslim, which doesn't give them the right to tell someone else that they can't perform ceremonies» (P3FG Nhacra Adults).

2.3.3. Comprehension of the gender dimension of the phenomenon

2.3.3.1. Men and Women's Rights

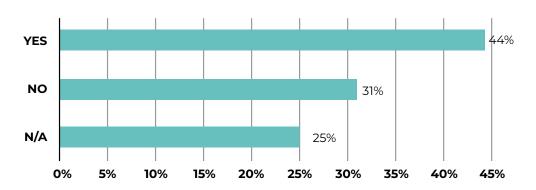


N/A = does not know or does not answer

When asked about the idea that men and women enjoy the same rights, according to religion, more than half (58%) of the surveyed answered in the affirmative. However, 39% disagreed with this idea. Only 3% of those surveyed did not want to or did not know how to answer.

2.3.3.2. Equality between Men and Women in Religion

Chart 29: Gender equality in religion



N/A = does not know or does not answer

Regarding equal rights for men and women in religion, a large majority (44%) believes that men and women have equal rights, while 30% disagree with this idea. Around 25% of people do not know or do not want to answer.

Men and women are considered to be different. According to the qualitative results, this difference is seen as something that came from Allah. In fact, the people that were surveyed emphasize that there are natural differences in between men and women, for example the ability to become pregnant: «There are areas where we can be equal and areas where we can't, because Allah has said that we are different, but in mutual respect, we can live together while respecting each other» (PI FG Bissau).

For some of the surveyed, Islam is misunderstood regarding gender equality. It is seen, first of all, as a religion that defends men's rights. Claiming that men and women are the same is considered to be unfair for both, as that would be ignoring the natural differences in between both sexes: *«Everyone is paid according to their job, regardless of someone's dissatisfaction, that is Allah's will»*, argues an inhabitant of the capital. He adds: *«If we gathered all of the men in the world to become pregnant and conceive a child, it would be unsuccessful, as Allah did not give us that capacity.* This means that those who speak of gender equality are seen as supporters of injustice against women (P2 FG).

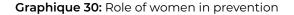
This difference between the sexes is perceived differently by some young people. For them, there is no difference between the sexes: «In our religion, I say that men and women are equal as human beings, and only a woman can conceive a child, while a man cannot», adds a young man from Gabu (P1 FG).

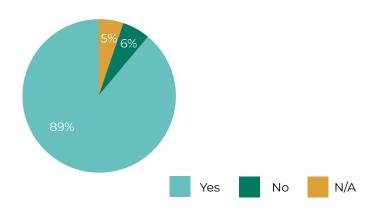
However, a substantial proportion of the adults surveyed support the idea that men are superior to women: «Equality between men and women has never existed, because the world has been like this since the time of Adam and Eve. First, Allah created men, and only then created women from his body, according to the Holy Scriptures. In the home, the man is the head, and he must have the voice, otherwise we would be facing anarchy», he states. And adds: «In society, a marriage where the man and the woman have equal power is a fragile marriage, very fragile, especially if they have the same salary and the same economic power». According to him, «the woman must submit to the man, because it has been this way since the creation of the first human beings» (P1 FG Nhacra).

In that perspective, those who defend gender equality are seen as those who fuel the conflicts within the household because men are superior to women. Christian believers are believed to influence African governments to promote gender equality. According from another surveyed from Nhacra: «Our parliamentarians say that among Christians there is equality between men and women, having the same rights; but Islam does not say that woman must submit to the man because the man is the head» (P4 FG Nhacra). However, when asked to provide a supporting text, he was unable to do so. For him, «nowadays, there is talk of gender equality, because the man works and so does the woman, and she often receives a higher salary than the man, which leads to a loss of authority, which is against Islamic law», he insists, although he does not put forward any arguments (P4 FG).

That superiority of men reflects itself even in inheritance, where according to the surveyed: «In the Muslim religion there is no equality between men and women, not even when it comes to inheritance. If my dad dies and me and my sisters are still alive, Allah advises that men should receive two-thirds and women one-third».

2.3.3.3. Role of women in prevention





Regarding the role that women should play in the prevention of radicalization, a vast majority (89%) of the people surveyed agrees that they have a important and relevant role in the prevention of radicalization. Only 6% disagree with this idea and 5% chose not to answer.

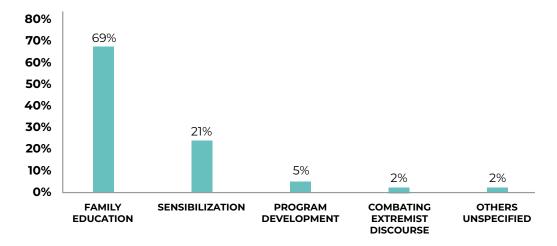
In the qualitative research, everyone surveyed agreed that the main role of women is taking care of education and of the household. «Women have the role of educating the children, and often, when a child is ill-mannered, the man blames the woman», claimed one of the surveyed (Adults P1 FG Bissau). In this sense, the key role of men is to feed the household, while the women's role is to take care of it. «In my opinion, a clear example is that the man is responsible for finding means of subsistence for the family, and the woman should respect the man, and vice-versa. Additionally, they should never fight in a way that their voices are heard by others», explained a Gabu resident (P7 FG Gabu).

The surveyed also stressed that women should play a preventive role in communities, as they should advise their husbands to avoid problems in the family and in the community. «Women know a lot more before the husband and understand signs before men do, because, often, men do not know what is going on in their own households, and it is women who call them to tell. Only women can know things before men and the role that the can play before things progress is to warn men», argued a surveyed (Adults P1 FG Nhacra).

The people surveyed recognize that women are more suitable to fight terrorism. The fight against terrorism must be a role taken on by women, as they are the ones who are better informed in the community. They are the first to know what children are doing, as said by one of the surveyed: «Women are able to find out what the child is doing earlier, and it was Allah who gave them that ability», (Adults P2 FG Bissau). Another surveyed agrees: «The most prepared people to fight against radicalism as women; women are better at mobilizing others. In reality, no man is strong before a woman, so, any question related to awareness should be done by women», (Adults P3 FG Bissau). To highlight the leading role of women in prevention, a surveyed from Gabu supports the following: «Women can play an important role in the prevention of radicalization. I say that because, in terms of numbers, they are the majority in the world, and we are educated by them; They have a better capacity of finding out immediately about someone's radicalization and, at the same time, of raising awareness of the change of mentality of the radicalized. That is why we should invest in the education and empowerment of women» (P6 FG Gabu).

2.3.3.4. In which area of prevention is the role of women most effective

Chart 31: In which area the role of women will be most effective



When asked how the role of women in prevention would be most effective, the vast majority of the surveyed (69%) mentioned family education as the intervention in which the role of women would be most effective. For 21%, the spread of awareness is the area in which the role of women would be most relevant, followed by program development, accounting for 5% of the responses. The fight against extremist discourses and others unspecified accounted for 2% of the surveyed.

2.3.3.5. Perception of Women's actions in comparison to Men's

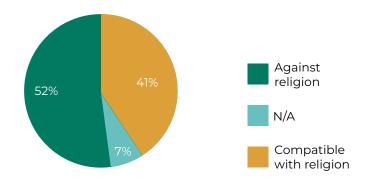
51% 60% 50% 40% 31% 30% 20% 16% 10% 2% 0% N/A **EQUALLY** MORE **LESS EFFECTIVE EFFECTIVE EFFECTIVE**

Chart 32: Perception of women's actions in comparison to men's

About the perception of effectiveness of women's actions compared to men's, more than half of the surveyed (51%) believe that women's actions would be more effective than men's. On the other hand, 31% believe they would be equally effective, while 16% of the people surveyed believe they would be less effective. People with no opinion or who prefer not to answer account for 2%.

2.3.3.6. Perception of the Fight Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)





When asked how they would classify the fight against Female Genital Mutilation, more than half of the surveyed (52%) believe that FGM is contrary to religion, while 41% believe that it is compatible with religion. And only 7% did not comment on this question.

Regarding FGM, qualitative research identifies two main opinions: those who support it and those who do not.

Those who support FGM have the following reasons: the woman who is not circumcised is impure. This impurity does not allow them to practice Islam correctly: «The female genital mutilation is a synonym of hygiene for Muslims. The people that defend that women should not be subjected to excision should know that a woman who is not circumcised is impure», argued one of the surveyed from the capital.

A woman who has been circumcised is seen as more faithful to her husband, while one who has not been circumcised has more probability to commit adultery. «You know how women where created; the prophet recommends that excision should be done on the superficial part, because by not doing so, the woman will have more pleasure and will have a tendency to seek more men», explained one of the people surveyed from the Gabu region.

Those who go against Female Genital Mutilation believe that its prohibition is a positive measure. For this group, there is no passage in the Koran that defends the practice of FGM. «I don't agree with those who defend FGM. And in the Islamic religion everything is clear-cut, that is why I say that it is not written in the Islamic religion, because I studied in Saudi Arabia, where Islam was born, but even there exist people who don't practice Female Genital Mutilation. As with everything, there are some communities that continue with this practice If FGM was advised, or, in other words, an obligation in Islam, it would never be a discussion theme in any Islamic society; we would simply accept it, as we do with all the other obligations of Islam», stated one of the surveyed (P6 FG Gabu).

Another surveyed supports the argument of this past one, saying: «For me, FGM is a crime, because Allah did not instruct no one to cut a part of a woman's body, because Allah is perfect and haven't seen any mistakes in His creation. It's not men who can perfect what Allah has created» (P2 FG Nhacra).

There is also those who accept the prohibition of FGM because the law as already approved by the parliament, as stated by this surveyed: «Since it has already been voted on and approved by our parliament, there is no other way» (P1 FG Gabu).

2.3.3.7. Perception of Violence against Women

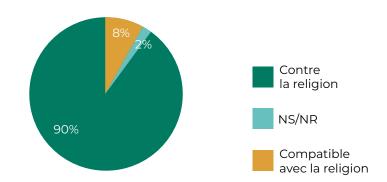


Chart 34: Perception of Violence against Women

The same logic is applied to the matter of violence against women. The answers do not leave space for any doubts. Almost 90% of the people surveyed claim that violence against women is a practice that goes against religion. Only 9% of the people surveyed believe that it is compatible with religion, and 2% do not know or do not want to answer.

When it comes to the question of what they think of the men who beat their wives, the qualitative research answers are divided in two groups. One of them believes that, according to the recommendations of Islam, a man should not beat his wife. *«The people who beat their wives and adopted that practice as part of their culture, even though it is not permitted in our religion»* P3 FG Gabu).

For others, the reason that explains why a man cannot beat a woman are the laws that prohibit any violent act against women. Some laws are considered by some men as excess of freedom for women and therefore weaken men in front of their wives. «You know that, currently, the State has given women a lot of freedom, freedom of having the same rights as men, and this conversation proves it. Without those rights, this debate wouldn't take place in this context. So, it is the natural evolution of things, that is to say, one who holds power can also lose it. In our societies, men have been the holder of power and women have to submit. Fortunately, things are starting to change», stated another surveyed in the city of Gabu.

The other group are those who believe that men should beat their wives in certain circumstances. «Most times, when we speak with women, they do not follow our orders, so we are forced to beat them. Others insult their husbands, and they end up reacting» (P3 FG Nhacra), explained a man from Nhacra.

For others of the surveyed, men should beat their wives in case of infidelity. «What drives a man to beat a woman is the lack of manners, in other words, the way that she should behave in a marriage. In the past, we would only beat a woman in case of Zinah (adultery)» (P5 FG Nhacra), reported a man from Nhacra.

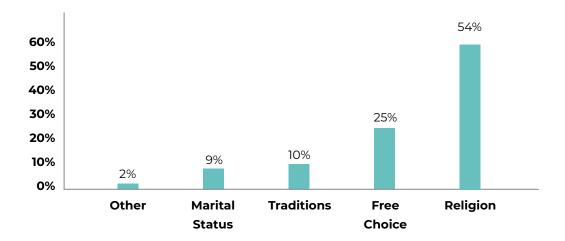
When a woman refuses to follow the advice of their husband, particularly when she refuses to have sexual relations with him, he has the right to beat her, according to the recommendations of Islam. *«Our religions allows to beat a woman, but never in an abusive way. That is forbidden»*, said another surveyed in Gabu.

Another participant in the survey believes that the high dowries paid, lead some husbands to think that they have all the rights over their wives. To avoid this type of brutality, it would be important to debate the dowry question. And added: «People abuse because they spend large sums of money to marry someone's daughter, so, if she does not obey his orders, he has to force her to do it» (P5 FG Gabu).

Finally, others said that it should not be forgotten that nowadays there are women who beat their husbands, just as there are husbands who beat their wives. Recently, in Guinea-Bissau, there have been cases of violence against men, in particular by women who cut off their husbands' genitals while they were asleep.

2.3.3.8. Perception of women's clothing

Chart 35: Factors which should condition women's clothing

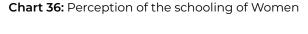


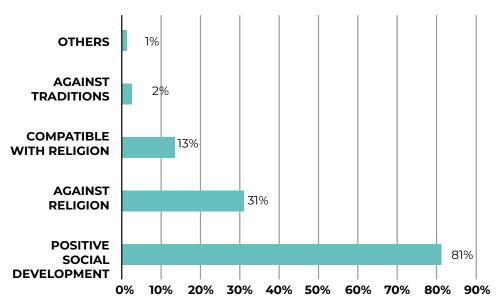
With regard to the factors that should influence women's clothing, more than half of them believe that the religious factor should influence the way women dress; a quarter of the people surveyed (25%) believe that the use of clothing should be a woman's free choice. Traditional community factors and women's marital status are other factors mentioned by 10% and 9% of the surveyed, respectively. Approximately 2% of people do not have an opinion on the matter.

In general, all those that were surveyed in the qualitative research agree that a woman should dress in such a way that her shape is not visible. The only part that should be visible are the feet, paraphrasing one of the surveyed. They also add that there is a difference between clothing and culture. And explain that this is because the four doctrines of Islamic interpretation, namely Hanifism, Salafism, Malekism and Hanbalism, have agreed that the only parts that should be shown are the face and the palm of the hands (P3, FG Adults). Another surveyed in Gabu says that above all, women must ensure that their clothing does not attract men, and that Allah ordained women to hide the sensible parts or anything that can attract men.

To another surveyed from Nhacra, women should cover themselves well, regardless of their religion: «Even if it isn't related to Isam, people should wear clothing that cover their private parts», he said. Observing how people dress serves as a warning because «the prophet said that one of the signs of the end of the world is when the time comes that people dress as if they were naked», he added. «That's exactly what we're seeing. I'd like to see people, not only women, but also men dress decently, like what you can see in the streets of Gambia, not only Muslim women, but also people of other religious denominations. People there dress really well» (P1 FG Nhacra), illustrates this surveyed from Nhacra.

2.3.3.9. Perception of the schooling of Women



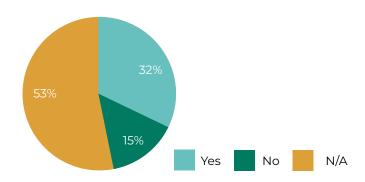


Regarding the schooling of girls/women, 81% answered that it is a positive factor for social development. However, 31% said that it is contrary to religion, while only 13% answered that it is compatible. And only 2% answered that it is contrary to traditions, as can be seen in the chart above.

2.4. Identification of possible resilience factors against violent extremism

2.4.1. Cultural values against violent extremism

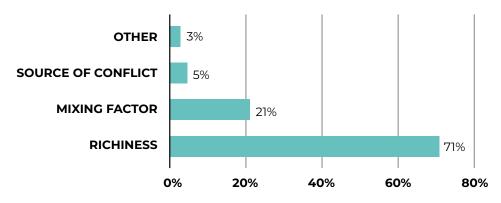
Chart 37: Existence of cultural values against extremism



Regarding the existence of cultural values in Guinea-Bissau that serve as elements of protection against violent extremism, the majority of the surveyed (53%) say that they are not aware of the presumed existence of such elements. Around a third of the people surveyed (32%) believe that such elements exist, and 15% believe that there is no element capable of stopping violent extremism.

2.4.2. Cultural diversity

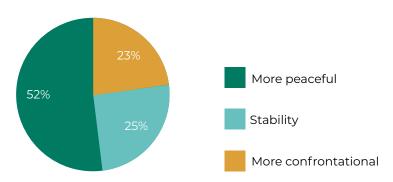
Chart 38: Meaning of cultural diversity



When asked about the meaning of cultural diversity in Guinea-Bissau, a large majority (71%) consider it to be enriching to the country. While 21% believe it is a factor of miscegenation between the country's communities. However, it is important to note that 5% of people see it as a source of conflict, and those who answered «other» represent 3%.

2.4.3. Interfaith relations in Guinea-Bissau in the next 5 years

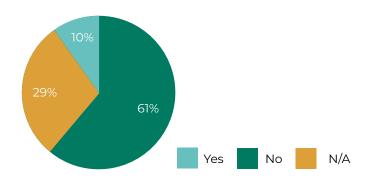
Chart 39: Relations interconfessionnelles dans 5 ans



When asked to imagine what interfaith relations will be like in Guinea-Bissau in five years' time, more than half (52%) of the people who responded to the survey expect the country to be at peace, while 23% believe the country will face more conflicts. A quarter of those surveyed (25%) believe the country will be stable.

2.4.4. Tensions between traditional communities and churches or mosques

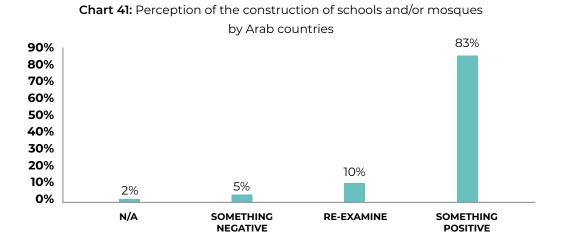
Chart 40: Existence of tensions between traditional communities and churches or mosques



When questioned if they are aware of the existence of tensions between traditional communities and churches or mosques, the vast majority of the people surveyed (over 60%) say they are not aware of the existence of tensions or conflicts, as opposed to 10% who are. While 29% say they do not know how to answer this question.

2.5. Exploring the funding of places of worship

2.5.1. Perception of the aid given by Arab countries



Regarding the financing of the construction of schools and/or mosques by some Arab countries in Guinea-Bissau, the vast majority of the surveyed consider this to be something positive, while 5% think it is something negative. For 10%, the construction of mosques or schools by Arab countries should be re-examined. The remaining 2% had no opinion or chose not to answer.

2.5.2. Perception of the funding and construction of mosques

When asked who should finance the construction of mosques in the country, the responses of the people surveyed during the qualitative research were unanimous in the sense that the construction of places of worship in a secular country like Guinea-Bissau should be the responsibility of the communities. In other words, the community members should find means to finance their places of worship. «The community itself, as a Muslim can construct a mosque, if they have the means. It is not the role of State to construct mosques in a secular State», states one of the surveyed from the capital.

Others claim that, not only should the communities construct their worship places with their own means, but they should also avoid external funding that could impact the practices of the worshippers in the places of worship: «As we know that our country has a secular State, the construction of places of worship, either mosques or churches, should be of the local community's responsibility, using the contributions of their members, that way they will be avoiding the development of commitments and dependency with the outside», explains a young man from Gabu.

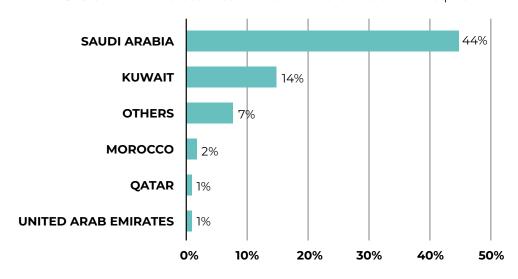
2.5.3. Perception of the construction of schools and mosques by Arab countries

The construction of schools and mosques by Arab countries is seen with good eyes by the surveyed. They believe that the Arab aid is in accordance with the recommendations of Islam, that instruct Muslims to give the Zakat, an obligatory donation to the needy, a tax that must be paid on one's possessions according to a set rate. «This is good thing because the people in Ara countries what to give Zakat and use those donations to build a school and a mosque», says a surveyed from Bissau. He also adds: «What led to this is the understanding of a hadith of the Prophet Mohammed, which says that anyone who builds a mosque for Allah will be rewarded by Him with the equivalent in Paradise». Therefore, «people build mosques, but the most important thing is to build a school where we can instruct many men, who could one day build several mosques. And the reward would certainly be greater», sates a surveyed from Gabu.

Other people surveyed believe that this aid is also a way of fighting against poverty and certain injustices for the Muslim community, as stated by one of them: «For me that is great. While the Inhabitants live in poverty, there will always be contributions made by other countries to build schools or mosques. Look at our current situation, for example, we have many mosques and schools built with cement bricks which have greatly contributed to reducing traditional DUDE schools, thus improving the quality of teaching practiced, as well as the lives of students and teachers», explains a young man from Gabu.

2.5.4. The most active countries in the construction of mosques

Chart 42: The most active countries in the construction of mosques



Among the possible Arab countries who fund the construction of mosques, which would be the most active? Saudi Arabia stands out by a large margin, accounting for around 44% of responses, followed by Kuwait with 14% and others unspecified with 7% of responses. Morocco ranks fourth with 2%, while Qatar and the United Arab Emirates share the last position with just 1% each.

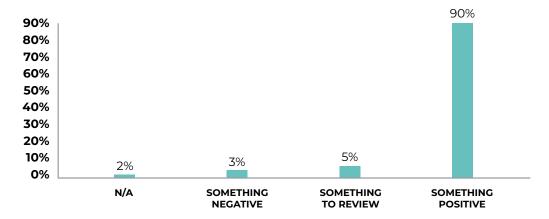
Hundreds of mosques are being built in all of the African continent, with funding by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran. However, in the perception of the people surveyed in the qualitative research, the most active countries in the construction of mosques and schools would be Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, Egypt, and India, as well as the diasporas living in countries such as England and Portugal. Some of the people surveyed were able to differentiate between building mosques and schools, saying that Saudi Arabia builds more mosques, while Kuwait and Egypt are more involved in building schools.

Guineans living in European countries are active in building schools. According to one of the people interviewed in the capital: «Lately, besides to the countries traditionally involved in the construction of mosques and schools mentioned above, there has been the presence of new actors, such as Turkey, particularly in the construction of schools. But also Guinean communities living in Portugal and England, who are also building infrastructures for their communities.»

A way that arised recently was the use of social capital and of personal relationships to obtain funding by some personalities. This was exemplified by a surveyed from the capital who mentioned a mosque near his home: «This mosque was built when our dad went to Portugal where he met some Indo-Pakistanis, to whom he presented his construction project of the mosque for the community in his neighborhood They were touched and provided the necessary means to make this idea into a reality», P5 GF Bissau.

2.5.5. Aid given by Western, European and Latin American countries in the construction of schools and churches

Chart 43: Perception of the aid given by Western, European and Latin American and Latin American countries in the construction of schools and churches



In line with the previous question, the people surveyed were asked to give their opinion on Western countries' help in funding Christian churches and schools in Guinea-Bissau. Once again, the answers are indisputable, around 90% believe it is a good thing, while only 3% say it is a bad thing and think it's something to be reviewed, Finally, 2% do not know or do not want to answer.

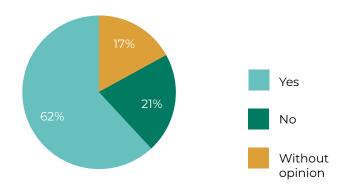
Regarding the building of churches by Western countries, the surveyed in the qualitative research consider that it is normal for Westerners to do so, for reasons of religious solidarity, as one of the people surveyed stated: «It's normal because they practice the same religion; each one gets aid from their religion. In Europe, the Christian religion predominates, and Muslims are a minority. Just as Muslims expect solidarity from Arab countries and other Muslim countries, the same solidarity can be expected from Western countries by the Christian churches», P2 FG Gabu.

In Guinea-Bissau, Catholic schools educate students from other religious denominations. «It's a good initiative because, in fact, as long as it benefits the population, it's naturally very good. There are Muslims studying in Catholic schools and universities, just as some Catholics and Evangelicals study in Arab schools, such as the Attadamum School Center in Bissau, and more recently in other places, such as here in Gabú.»

Some of the surveyed highlighted the important role played by Catholic schools in the education of Bissau-Guineans from different communities in the country, regardless of their ethnic or religious background: «We have doctors thanks to the missionaries' schools. People like Dr. Salvador Tchongo, Binhanco Nham, and others», explained one of the surveyed in Nhacra. In the case of the Balanta community, one surveyed noted that «it was in 1960 that the Portuguese started to have the first public schools, before that they were missionary church schools», P3 FG Nhacra.

2.5.6. State subsidy for pilgrimage

Chart 44: Perception of the State subsidy for pilgrimage



With regard to the possibility of the State subsidizing the pilgrimage, 62% of the surveyed believe that the State should subsidize the pilgrimage, while 21% disagree. A total of 17% have no opinion on the matter.

In the qualitative research, many opinions arised regarding the matter of the State subsidy for Muslim pilgrimage. The first perspective claims that the government should not subsidize the Muslim pilgrimage, given that the country is secular, and, in the Muslim religion, it is advisable for the individual to be able to pay for the pilgrimage with their own financial means. In other words, when other entity subsidized the pilgrimage

to Mecca, this pilgrimage is not well regarded: «The pilgrimage is conditioned to the financial means of the individual», explained one of the people surveyed in Bissau. Another surveyed in Nhacra added: «Each religion should be financed by its own community and, on the other hand, by the foreign brothers with the same faith, it does not matter if it is in Saudi Arabia or in Rome, because all religions collect Zakat or its equivalent, like the tithe in Christianity, which are donations made by the believers in churches.»

The second perspective is those who believe that the government should be fair and equitable. The subsidy should be given to all religions without discrimination. «The State should not subsidize the pilgrimage, but if it decides to do so, he should do so for all religions with no exception», added another surveyed from Bissau.

To the same effect, another surveyed in Gabu states the following: «We are all children of this country, so, all the State actions should be based in fairness and a sense of justice. One should not favor one community over others. This way, any discomfort can be avoided, and social peace can be ensured.»

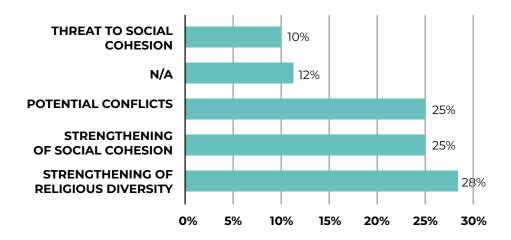
However, according to one surveyed from the capital, de subsidies have become a political instrument, that is to say *«the State or its represent-atives, when they subsidize the pilgrimage, it will be for political gain»*, accused another surveyed from Bissau. The issue of subsidies has also become a business, according to one surveyed in Nhacra, who added: *«Lately, people did not go on the Mecca pilgrimage because of corruption; as you can see, the pilgrimage grants have already been awarded, but the candidates have to buy them.»*

The third perspective is that government subsidization of pilgrimages is a standard of good governance: «Yes, to make the people of the country happy, as a Muslim or as a Christian, because if someone does that, they'll feel like they're governing to make the people feel happy. As we all know, without these subsidies, many people would never be able to realize this dream, that every believer has», adds a surveyed from Gabu.

Finally, some of the people surveyed claim that it is not the government who subsidizes the pilgrimages, but the pilgrimage grants offered by Saudi Arabia. However, all of the surveyed criticized unanimously the management of these pilgrimage subsidies by the State, claiming that they should be managed by Islamic organizations: «Usually, two types of grants come to Guinea-Bissau, those offered by the State of Saudi Arabia, because the king gives each country10 grants. Ours, unfortunately, are shared by political parties. They should be managed by Islamic organizations, but unfortunately, those who manage these grants are like the State, corrupt and dishonest», concluded another Nhacra surveyed.

2.5.7. Actions by new churches in Guinea-Bissau

Chart 45: People's opinion on the action of new churches

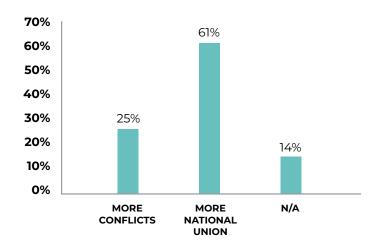


Regarding the population's opinions on the action of the new churches in Guinea-Bissau, 28% of the surveyed said that they believe that the new churches strengthen religious diversity, followed by 25% who believe that they strengthen social cohesion. In addition, 25% think that they represent a potential conflict factor in the country and 10% think that they represent a threat to national social cohesion. A significant proportion of the surveyed did not answer this question, as can be seen in the chart above.

2.6. Suggestions made by the surveyed

2.6.1 Perception on the contribution of religions in the next 5 years

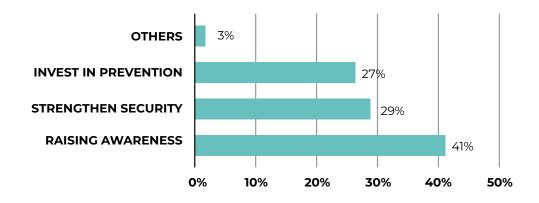
Chart 46: Contribution of different religions in the next 5 years



When asked about the contribution of the different religions over the next five years in Guinea-Bissau, more than 60% of the people surveyed believe that they could contribute to greater national union, while 25% fear that they could contribute to greater conflict in the country. Additionally, 14% did not express an opinion.

2.6.2. How to prevent all forms of violent extremism

Chart 47: Measures to be taken in order to prevent violent extremism

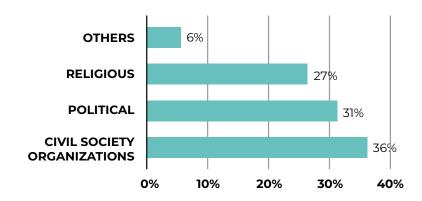


Regarding their opinions on the measures to be taken to prevent all forms of violent extremism in Guinea-Bissau, the development of awareness raising campaigns is mentioned by more than 40% of the surveyed. This is followed by strengthening security and investing in prevention, mentioned by 29% and 27% respectively. It is important to note that 3% of respondents mention other actions which were not specified.

2.6.3. Actors considered important in the fight against violent extremism

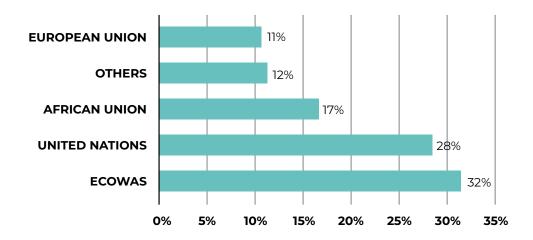
When asked to name the actors they consider important in the fight against violent extremism in Guinea-Bissau opinions are divided. Around 36% of the answers point to civil society organizations, followed by political and religious organizations with 31% and 27% respectively. And 6% of the surveyed prefer to mention other organizations.

Chart 48: The actors deemed as relevant in the fight against violent extremism



2.6.4. International cooperation

Chart 49: International organizations with which the State should collaborate



In the context of international cooperation, the opinion of the people surveyed is divided on which organizations the State should collaborate with to prevent violent extremism. Around a third (32%) of people prefer ECOWAS as a partner in this fight, followed by the United Nations, mentioned by 28% of respondents. The African Union and the European Union occupy third and fourth place, with 17% and 11% respectively. Other unspecified organizations are preferred by 12% of the people surveyed in the fight against violent extremism.

3. DISCUSSIONS

After the quantitative and qualitative research data analysis, it was revealed that most of the populations surveyed is not aware of the actions of terrorist groups in the sub-region. The two best-known groups, Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda, are mentioned by less than half of the people surveyed, and the rest does not exceed 30%. When it comes to understanding the causes, factors and areas where signs of violent extremism can emerge, around half of the surveyed say that the source of insecurity is due to banditry and land conflicts. This situation can worsen due to the demand of arable lands, particularly for the development of cashew plantations. In fact, the *talibé* crisis and the return of the marabouts to the villages pose new conflicts between pastors and farmers. Even so, most of the population (68%) does not consider the ideological differences between religions as a source of conflict, and 78% consider the relations between ethnic groups to be good.

The exception to these claims are students from Arab countries, who are generally seen as one of the main possible sources of violent extremism in Guinea. The conflicts between *Madiliss* and *Madrasas*, namely between students returning from Arab countries and the followers of classical Islam, occur between the Mandinka and the Fula. The Arab youth is determined to rupture with what they consider to be the «Islam of the ignorants practiced by their ancestors», This is a very strong tendency for some communities, namely between the Mandinka and the Fula. These students reproduce the divisions of the brotherhoods of Islam in the countries where they studied Arabic. The *Madrasa* system is a school that teaches other subjects in Arabic, while the *Madiliss* generally only teaches the Koran. Arab students tend to demand that their diplomas be recognized by the State in order to enter the civil service. The followers of *Madiliss* focus on spreading their religion within their community. This propagation involves a kind of syncretism with a blend of socio-cultural practices from ethnic groups. These two groups respond to different logics: Arabs are committed to a logic of social change, while classicists focus on their communities or sub-communities. The *Madiliss* followers are marabouts that claim to defend the interests of their communities

In the fight between the *Madiliss* and the *Madrasas*, it seems that the *Madrasas* are supplanting the *Madiliss*. In this case, the idea that the *Madrasas* create political parties and run for election is not excluded. The integration of Arab students into the civil service poses many challenges and excludes some of the Muslims youth from working in public administration. This group is one of the main reservoirs of recruitment for extremism

The weakening of the *talibé* phenomenon and the hegemony of the Arabizers could fuel extremism. This issue must be approached very intelligently, as it is a double-edged sword. Children's begging must stop and must not be supported in any way whatsoever. However, it responds to the logic of resilience and appropriation of Islam by local cultures. Their elimination favors the emergence of other cultures that could be the real start of radicalization. This radicalization can emerge from several directions. How long will the ban on the begging of *talibé* children in Guinea-Bissau last? It is clear that, in the short and medium term, the State cannot meet the needs of the Marabouts and their *talibés*. At this stage, conflicts can happen at any time.

The frustration of Balanta converts who discover that those who converted them are not behaving irreproachably makes them defenders of their country against certain groups they consider to be invaders, especially the Futa/Fulas. The latter are considered by Balanta converts to be people who use them to obtain money from Arab countries (Boiro, 2018). A Balanta Muslim association is emerging as a reformer, with the desire of proving that the new converts respect the precepts of Islam better than the ethnic groups that are traditionally considered as Muslim.

The instrumentalization of religion in politics fuels latent inter-ethnic confrontations, particularly within the Muslim community. Each group seeks to monopolize the distribution of donations offered by Arab countries to the government. This redistribution crystallizes conflicts and generates issues of injustice towards non-Muslim groups, as well as between Muslim groups. In addition, converts complain that they do not receive help like other Muslims. Even so, the results of the survey show that the percentage of the surveyed who consider other countries to be helpful in building places of worship is higher (83% have a good perception the construction of schools and/or mosques by Arab countries, and 90% consider the assistance of Western and European countries in building schools and churches to be good), in a sample with Muslim,

Christian, Animist, Protestant and other people surveyed, albeit with a Muslim majority (62%). This is very interesting as the predominance of positive perceptions about the construction of places of worship cannot be explained by religious affiliation alone.

The Muslim who were surveyed denounce the fact that extremism is usually associated with Islam, but at the same time they recommend giving priority to predominantly Muslim areas in actions to prevent extremism, especially in the areas of Gabu, Bafatá and the autonomous sector. This implies an implicit acceptance that Muslim areas are the most affected by issues related to violent extremism. Still, it is important to pay attention to the emerging conflicts between animist practices and the growing influence of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in the region, and to take an holistic and interfaith approach when we talk about the prevention of violent extremism.

Regarding the demographic distribution, the qualitative research shows that, in terms of prevention, priority should be given to urban areas, particularly Bissau, Bafatá and Gabu, as clandestine movements are easier to establish in these places than in rural areas, where everyone knows each other.

As far as gender is concerned, the majority of the people surveyed recognize the importance of women in the fight against violent extremism (89%), and indicate that the role of the mother is highly valued (25% believe that «the mother» is the most suitable to take care of a child in a situation of radicalization, ahead of the father and the imam, with 16% each). In our cultures, they are always considered the first owners of the child, and they are the first to be able to identify children who are becoming radicalized. A Wolof proverb says that the mother is just one, while the father is everyone's father. However, according to the quantitative research, women are less informed about the existence of terrorism and terrorist groups in the world and in the region. However, according to the quantitative research, women are less informed about the existence of terrorism and terrorism and terrorist groups in the world and in the region.

Women will be at the center of the fight against radicalism because they have a great influence over their husbands (Boiro, 2014). Therefore, the prevention of extremism in Guinea-Bissau must necessarily involve women, as they play an essential role in family balance and in mediation.

At the same time, the role of women in society continues to be confined to religious mandates, and the qualitative research shows that women are still considered inferior to men, and that any attempt to support gender equality would be unfair to women. Women must accept that they will never be equal to men. Work is divided by sex, and those who argue otherwise are seen as disruptors of the normal functioning of society. A woman can be beaten by her husband in certain circumstances: in cases of adultery, disobedience and especially when she refuses to have sexual relations with her husband.

Women's clothing is considered by more than 50% to be dependent on religious recommendations. While 25% of respondents believe that it is a personal matter and that each person should dress as they wish, regardless of their religion. The way women dress is considered to be very important. They should dress in a way that does not arouse sexual desire in the men they meet. This implies that women who wear short clothing will be partially responsible in the event of sexual assault.

Regarding girls' schooling, more than 31% of the surveyed agree that it goes against religion. The schooling of the youth continues to be a problem in some ethnic groups and well as in some religious denominations. However, stances are changing as girls attend school. The issue is the availability of schools: it is rare to find a school with a complete curriculum and teachers available in almost every rural community in the country. As a result, after the fourth grade, most girls are forced to drop out of school or go to the city. The choice of going to the city is very difficult, they become more vulnerable as they are far from their parents; these girls become servants and do not go to school.

4. CONCLUSION

The quantitative data shows that most of the people surveyed are unaware of the existence of terrorist groups, and that there are no visible government actions in this area. The possibility of the spread of violent extremism in the country may not be directly related to the high percentage of people who are unaware of its existence. This will depend on the type of people who believe in its existence and, above all, the level of influence of these people in the community. Ignorance of the existence of extremist groups also indicates a low level of awareness and of the existence structures of prevention and anticipation at government level. In this sense, Guinea-Bissau is moving slowly but surely towards violent extremism. Hence the relevance of this project, which involves a partnership between the IMVF and the LGDH in the fight against all forms of extremism. One of the solutions is the important role of women in the fight against all forms of radicalization. This means that women must be placed at the center of prevention in Guinea-Bissau.

The issue of the prevention of violent extremism must be taken seriously. With each passing day, the pieces of the puzzle fit together more and more. The weakening of traditional Islam, accompanied by the hegemony of students returning from Arab countries supported by emigrants living in European countries, particularly Portugal and England, foreshadows clashes between opposing ideologies. The political field is currently the main site for these confrontations. The proliferation of political parties or candidates who cater only to the community and religious logic cannot be ruled out.

However, there are still barriers to be preserved, especially interfaith dialogue and the mixture resulting from mixed marriages which, at the end of the day, make Guinea-Bissau a country where people often have family ties, even if everything seemingly separates them. These elements revealed by the quantitative research and qualitative data from the people surveyed show that there are initiatives that are being recommended to strengthen the resilience of communities through continuous and inclusive awareness-raising work, especially in border regions.

Thus, the fight against this growing extremism can only be achieved through prevention, along with the creation of jobs to serve communities that generally live in precarious conditions. It is clear that urgent responses to the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the youth are needed to protect them from radical propaganda that takes advantage of gaps and stigmas between communities.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau is reminiscent of that in other countries which are still far from the epicenter of extremist violence but must establish the necessary arrangements to implement a prevention policy while there is still time. The regionalization of the threat, as well as the transnationality of religious actors in a geographical area marked by porous borders and a criminal economy, are important elements to consider, despite the reassuring signs.

It is also important to work on strengthening the resilience of the communities, taking advantage of endogenous cultural resources and traditional and religious legitimacies so that they can facilitate the appropriation of prevention policies by local populations.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promoting communication about the risks and community involvement in the fight against radicalization and violent extremism, with a focus on the role of women. This communication will be directed at the community leaders of the country (religious leaders, women's leaders, youth leaders, traditional healers, etc.), especially in urban areas, where there is a greater prevalence of radicalization and violent extremism. This involves:
 - Identifying and training the heads of the main women's associations, including women in political parties, on preventing radicalization and extremism, holding meetings to exchange experiences on the best awareness-raising practices, considering local realities and specificities.
 - Establishing women's networks for the prevention and the fight against extremism in each region, involving the focal points and people active in the project.
 - Establishing networks of young people in each region to fight and prevent extremism, promoting a participatory approach that allows them to propose concrete and meaningful actions within their communities.
- Developing income-generating activities by strengthening local initiatives in agriculture, horticulture and livestock farming and the implementation of a participatory mechanism for closely monitoring the insertion of the economically vulnerable youth. This entails:
 - The implementation of community development projects in consultation with the beneficiary population, with priority programs for the youth and women as well as for the vulnerable population in isolated areas and border areas.
 - Involving the youth and women in programs to support entrepreneurship. Some programs integrated into sustainable development strategies can serve as incubators to get young people out of unemployment.
 - Directing the use of the Internet for activities that can generate income (start-ups), as well as financial and technical support for projects of intercity transportation companies, money transfer and mobile telephony, etc.

Develop early warning mechanisms:

- Creating community cells to monitor radicalization and violent extremism signals in neighborhoods and villages, as a way of preventing the creation of extremist groups or «local incubators».
- Strengthening the capacity of local population and organizations to activate traditional mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent conflicts related to land and difficult relations between shepherds and farmers in agricultural, forest and pastoral areas.
- Disseminating the mechanisms for preventing and combating radicalization and violent extremism defined and implemented by the State. It would be important to hold training of trainers workshops for young leaders on the new legal provisions adopted by States in the fight against terrorism.
 - Arranging workshops on issues of radicalization, violent extremism Islam and peace for the youth, Imams and administrative officials.
 - Reinforcing existing training on Islam, its practices and its different branches in order to reduce misunderstandings related to the misinterpretation of religious texts.
 - Carrying out awareness-raising campaigns on coexistence, respect for human rights and the peace culture to prevent any radicalization and/or violation of fundamental freedoms, including women's rights.
 - Involving religious and administrative authorities, youth and women in raising awareness of radicalization, using their usual activities to convey messages of peace. For example, taking advantage of sports or cultural events to address aspects of this issue, promoting dialogue and providing important guidance.
 - Developing radicalization prevention programs based on the socio-cultural realities of border areas.

• Elaboration of a national strategy to combat radicalization and extremism:

- Initiating and leading a national campaign together with the authorities to develop a national strategy to prevent radicalization and violent extremism
- Assisting in the construction of public schools in villages, as a way of limiting the phenomenon of *Talibé* children and as part of the actions of awareness-raising and collaboration between the authorities and religious organizations.
- Initiating a dialogue with religious leaders, Imams and Islamic associations for the collaborative management of the phenomenon of *Talibé* children and the modernization of religious education, as well as the establishment of structures for the modernization and harmonization of religious education in Guinea-Bissau.
- Implementing a traceability mechanism for operations financing religious works.
- Ensuring the qualification of Koranic masters and teachers at Franco-Arab schools (pedagogical training, certification of skills, etc. and revision/adaptation of curricula and training materials at Franco-Arab schools to adapt them to the Guinean reality in Islamic education.
- Reviewing regulations on the distribution and land sale to avoid land conflicts and to raise awareness among local populations of the need to collaborate with local authorities.



6. APPENDIX 1

THE REGIONAL VIEW ON RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA

For a long time, West Africa was considered to be on the margins of the general changes that led to the radicalization of religious discourse in the Muslim world. However, in recent decades, the context in West Africa has been the scene of profound socio-religious and political transformations. In fact, since the 1970s, Pan-Islamic ideology has gradually replaced the ideology of Third Worldism that emerged at the Bandung Conference in 1955. This change favored the spread of radical Islamic ideologies, mainly originating in Gulf countries, such as Salafism and Wahhabism. This evolution was also largely influenced by the emergence of charity or religious organizations funded by countries foreign to the region, which propagated a radical Islamism through preaching (da'wah) and assistance to the needy (*ighâtha*). Since the 1970s, these organizations have become vehicles for the transmission of various religious ideologies that encourage the challenging of traditional Islam as practiced in various regions of the Sahel (Sambe, 2005).

This phenomenon overlapped internationally with political decisions that significantly affected the development issue in the countries of the Sahel and West Africa, which led to these faith-based organizations establishing themselves as alternatives. In fact, the severe droughts that occurred in the 1970s in Sahel and in West Africa coincided with a severe economic crisis faced by the Western partners as a result of the oil crisis. During this period, when international partners withdrew from humanitarian aid in Africa, the oil-rich Gulf states launched a true ideological conquest. In this context, there was also the weakening of the Sahelian states by structural adjustment policies that undermined the status of the States when compared with the concurrent intervention of transnational religious actors in areas such as education, health, social assistance, etc.

Thus, the expansion of radical ideologies highlights the internationalization of a complex issue, involving geopolitical and ideological and political aspects, which must always be seen in a broader perspective.

As far as the African continent is concerned, it was necessary to wait for the aggregation of political circumstances that led to the progressive emergence of groups claiming jihad. Thus, with the start of the Algerian crisis in the 1990s, young Algerian fighters went to Afghanistan. The Algerian security forces exerted pressure on the Armed Islamic Group (AIG), which later gave rise to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). This group, founded in 1999, is the forerunner of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), initially acting as an Al-Qaeda «franchise» and then, from 2001, expanding its presence in the Sahelo-Saharan region, before making Mali its sanctuary in early 2003.

When the Jihadist phenomenon emerged in Maghreb societies, especially in Algeria, it was to be expected that it would spread rapidly to south of the Sahara, particularly in West Africa. This foresight was lacking and could have prevented the crisis in Mali in 2011 from creating a shock, with the emergence of endogenous Jihadism.

I - The expansion of terrorist groups in the Sahel and West Africa

Political instability, coupled with the gradual deterioration of the security situation, has turned Mali into a vast breeding ground for violent extremist groups. However, there is real confusion about the nature of movements and groups, especially since the Operation Serval, whose legal framework in the Resolution 2085 still leads to confusion between «terrorist groups» and «armed groups». This confusion further highlights the appreciation that the actors have of the status of the proliferating groups, despite the international military presence, which the Jihadists themselves use to «justify» their actions.

Recent studies tend to neglect the ideological dimension in the radicalization processes that lead to extremist violence; they often focus only on questions of governance or political economy. The lack of consideration of the ideological variable is due to the limited analytical capacity to decode messages and signals on the part of experts who often come from the fields of political economy or development. These analysts have adopted a security or development approach to the study of the terrorist phenomenon. The ideological variable seems to be essential for a broader understanding of the spectrum of issues associated with terrorism and the covert tactics of its actors. When addressing the phenomenon of radicalization, as in the context of this study on Guinea-Bissau, it is important to remember the thesis of Karhard Kosrokhavar, who states that «there can be no radicalization without ideology».

In fact, radicalization is the result of an indoctrination strategy that aims to transform the individual's mental universe, making them change their perception of life over time. Terrorists always choose a combat object on which to focus their strategy and energy. This applies to Boko Haram's original name: «Jama'atu Ahlus Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad». The process of indoctrination, extensively studied by Bakary Sambe in his work on the movement, involves the recruitment and predisposition of individuals towards violent and deadly actions.

Current situation of the actors of extremist violence in West Africa

Following the spread of the Malian crisis from 2012 onwards, various terrorist groups have emerged in the Sahel and West Africa. One of the most important is Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which has undergone several restructurings since its creation, with different original groups who came together in 2017 to form the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM).

These groups mainly include:

- These groups mainly include: Former combatants GSPC (Selafist Group for Preaching and Combat), which are elements of Mokhtar Bel's al-Mourabitoune Mokhtar, replaced since his death by a Mauritanian Islamic judge in the so-called Abou Yahya Shinqiti, Ansar Dine, originally founded by Iyad Ag-Aly at the start of the crisis in Mali.
- Ansar Dine, originally founded by Iyad Ag-Aly at the start of the crisis in Mali. Currently, it is Ansar Dine that controls the areas of Kidal and Gao, with a war commander called Zeydan ben Hitta, who is the emir of Ansar Dine in this region of Mali. The wide geographical area between Gao, Tombouctou and a large part of the Mauritanian border is controlled by Abû Talha Al-Lîbî.
- Katiba Macina was founded in 2012 in Konna, central Mali, by the Malian preacher Muhammadun Saada Bari, also known as Muhammadun Koufa, who was born in 1961-23 and died in November 2018. As part of the regionalization of the Jihadist strategy in the Sahel, this Katiba is under the effective command of Iyad Ag Ghali, leader of Ansar Dine and head of GSIM. Since March 2015, Katiba Macina has been carrying out operations in central Mali against State symbols, deployed foreign forces and civilian populations. Muhammadun Koufa was reportedly killed in an operation conducted by the Barkhane force in November 2018, in an offensive against a Katiba camp in the vicinity of Mopti and Tenenkou (central Mali). This Katiba, which has a community dimension, seems to be the most structured, taking part in targeted attacks. Currently, Katiba Macina controls the entire central region of Mali up to the borders with Mauritania and the routes leading to the Senegalese border. The ethnocultural specificity of this Katiba should be highlighted, especially its focus on the Fula communities, to whom it offers protection against the States of the region.
- MOJWA (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa) is a dissidence of Al-Mourabitoune, which later became the EIGS, and remains very active in the so-called «three borders zone» between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

- The Katiba of Serma, commonly called AQIM South, remains active on the Sikasso axis (Mali) towards the Ivory Coast, as well as Guinea, in the vicinity of the Yanfolia forest and the Upper Niger Park in Guinea. It was founded in 2012 by AQIM. Its first commander was a Malian named Souleimane Keita, also known as Al-Bambary. Currently detained in Bamako, he was arrested in 2015and replaced by the Tuareg Mansur Al Ghassem, who was also killed in November 2018 in a French attack led by Barkhane. Together with these different groups that have joined forces, GSIM symbolizes the «big family» of Al-Qaeda in West Africa.

In this AQIM strategy, which involves the multiplication of local «jihads», the traditional wing of Ansarul Islam is concentrating on further expanding its presence in Burkina Faso, while the elements of Katiba Macina, and to a lesser extent than Katiba de Serma, have a strategic fixation in the tri-border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Cascades region in Ivory Coast.

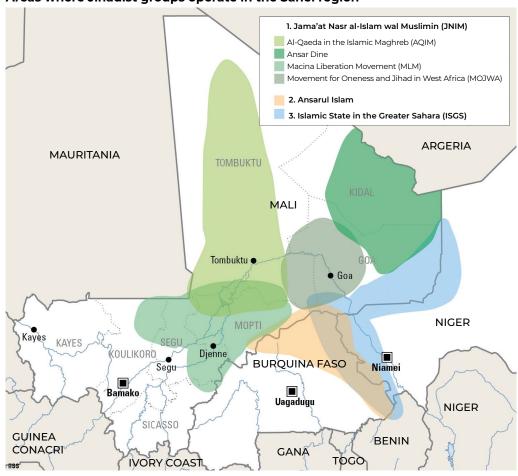
Expansion et création de zones d'instabilité

In the context of its expansion towards coastal regions, there are reports of intense activity by a Katiba called «Gourma». It is led by a Mauritanian called Abu Hamza and controls the three border areas of Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger. The area of operation of this Katiba will be in the vicinity of the forest that stretches from Niger, in the Tamou area, to the north of Benin, passing through eastern Burkina Faso. The combatants of this Katiba of Gourma, who are attracting more and more attention, will also be cooperating with the Katibas Macina (RF).

For some analysts, it is this combination that partly facilitates the areas of passage and sporadic attacks in northern Benin, Togo and even Ghana. In this strategy of expansion towards the coastal regions, some of the Katiba Macina precursors were given the mission by AQIM's central command to open gaps to prepare logistics by installing «Markaz». These «Markaz», which are multiplying in the north of Benin, are support bases to gather combatants, provide supplies in the areas and strategic routes of withdrawal, awaiting a more substantial rooting in the region.

In fact, AQIM's strategy in the region seems to revolve around the creation of zones of instability and the instrumentalization of cross-community conflicts, such as those related to grazing, taking advantage of the frustration of communities due to failures in the fight against terrorism and the unsuccessful operations of the national armed forces. Political instability allows AQIM to thrive, looking for areas favorable for alliances with «persecuted» communities, where they can find local incubation sites and present themselves as protectors of local populations in response to insecurity. Through JNIM, AQIM has become a major player in the sale of stolen cattle in West Africa, both during attacks and during military operations against the region's Fula communities. In fact, this new funding niche has become so lucrative that the Dogon militiamen are already selling these cattle stolen (or taken by force) from nomadic populations, increasingly towards the Ivory Coast and even Senegal. These recent developments represent a significant risk for countries where the issue of grazing is at the heart of conflicts and tensions between nomadic communities and those involved in agriculture.

Areas where Jihadist groups operate in the Sahel region



Fonte: https://www.iiss.org/events/2019/06/mali-conflict-briefing

Today, in West Africa, countries face different security situations due to their internal specificities or their geographical location in relation to the epicenter of the most prominent transnational threat: terrorism. In fact, it would be difficult to classify them according to a political-security framework that reflected a fixed and coherent reality.

The evolution of the security situation, the uncertainties and the unpredictability of a multifaceted phenomenon that is susceptible to apprehension do not make it possible to create an objective classification. Without advancing with a definition of a grid for constant analysis of the security situation in the Sahel and West Africa, we could, however, conceive of dynamic typology ranging from States that are already hard hit by terrorism (Mali, Nigeria) to those that still offer the possibility of a preventive and prospective approach (Senegal, Guinea and other coastal countries). Following the same typology, other countries such as Niger and Chad may be among those under high security pressure. In this configuration, where the unexpected happens every day, even for some countries that believed they were far from the epicenter of Jihadism, foresight as an instrument of security governance even fell into the realm of the absurd, with the unexpected attack in Grand Bassam (in the Ivory Coast), which sounded as a warning to coastal Africa.

It is within this preventive perspective that this exploratory study in Guinea-Bissau takes place. The study adopts a holistic approach, seeking to investigate the possible factors of radicalization, the slight signs and possible vulnerabilities that should be corrected in order to support prevention policies and strengthen resilience in this country.

APPENDIX II

OTHER RESOURCES' FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- 1. <u>Observatório da paz</u>, website of the project Observatório da Paz Nô Cudji Paz observatoriodapaz.org/
- 2. Report on the human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau 2020-2022: Resistir ao autoritarismo, reviver Cabral, by the Guinean League of Human Rights e a ACEP drive.google.com/file/d/ld_2Llk8SEgGL37HmzKdc0UezERVg7ya8/view
- **3.** <u>Convenção para a Prevenção e Combate ao Terrorismo from UAO</u> in 1999, ratified by Guinea-Bissau in 2008

eur-lex.europa.eu/PT/legal-content/summary/convention-on-the-prevention-of-terrorism.html

- **4.** <u>Estratégia e Plano de Implementação de Luta Contra o Terrorismo</u> from ECOWAS www.ecowas.int/luta-contra-terrorismo/?lang=pt-pt
- **5.** <u>Plano de Ação da ONU para Prevenção do Extremismo Violento (</u>2016),), invitation from the European Union for proposals to support the creation of a national strategy for PREV unric.org/pt/ban-apresenta-plano-de-acao-para-prevenir-o-extremismo-violento/
- **6.** <u>Journey to extremism in Africa: Pathways to recruitment and disengagement</u>, study by UNDP, published in 2023

www.undp.org/publications/journey-extremism-africa-pathways-recruitment-and-disengagement

- 7. <u>Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education</u>, UNESCO MGIEP mgiep.unesco.org/pve
- **8.** <u>Guia para professores sobre a prevenção do extremismo violento</u> by UNESCO www.unesco.org/pt/articles/guia-para-professores-sobre-prevenção-do-extremismo-violento
- 9. Coleção de recursos: Prevenir o Extremismo Violento

inee.org/pt/colecoes/prevenir-o-extremismo-violento

10. <u>Preventing Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Delivery</u> document made available by the UK government, which provides an overview of the strategy for preventing violent extremism, including policies and intervention programs

researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04766/SN04766.pdf

11. The Role of Education in Preventing Radicalization to Violence: A Review of the Literature article published by the Institute of Education Sciences in the United States, which analyzes the academic literature on the role of education in preventing radicalization and violent extremism

home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files_en?file=2020-09/role_education_preventing_radicalisation_12122016_en.pdf

12. <u>Community Policing and Violent Extremism: Lessons from Nigeria</u>, report made available by the United States Institute of Peace which analyzes the effectiveness of community policing strategies in preventing violent extremism based on case studies from Nigeria www.researchgate.net/publication/318528740_Community_policing_in_Nigeria_A_critical_analysis_of_current_deve-

www.researchgate.net/publication/318528740_Community_policing_in_Nigeria_A_critical_analysis_ot_current_developments

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 1}$ All resources were available in February 2024.

- **13.** "Countering Online Radicalization: A Strategy for Action", this article, published by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, examines strategies to combat online radicalization and the dissemination of extremist content on the Internet icsr.info/2009/03/16/countering-online-radicalisation-a-strategy-for-action/
- **14.** <u>África e as ameaças à sua segurança</u>, article by Francisco Proença Garcia seer.ufrqs.br/austral/article/download/84807/54816/0
- **15.** European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2023, from Europol www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/European%20Union%20Terrorism%20Situation%20 and%20Trend%20report%202023.pdf

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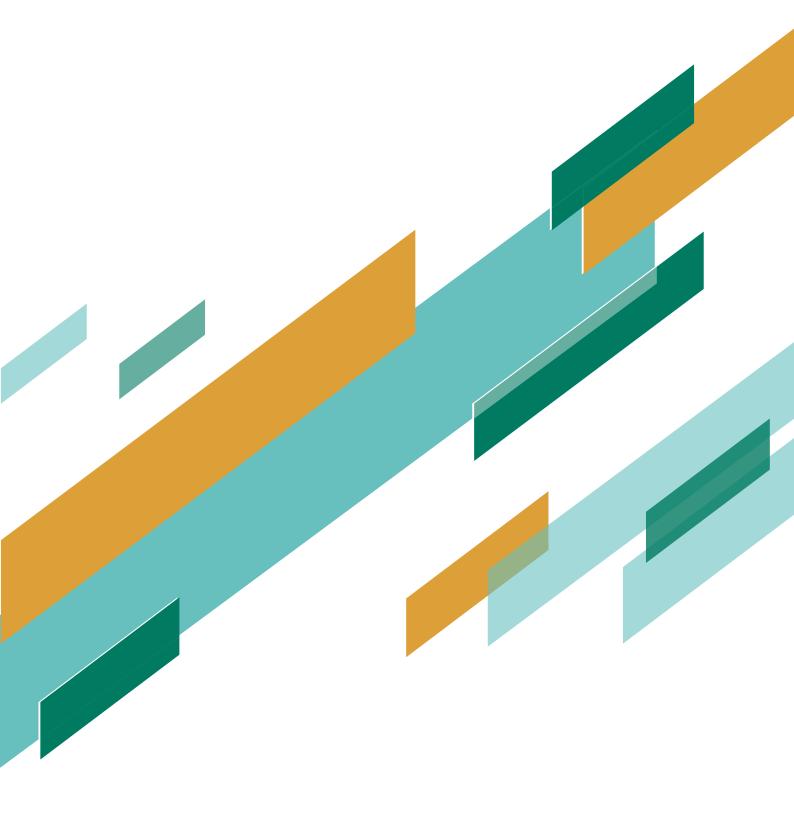
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