

SAHEL NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our newsletter highlighting DCAF's latest activities in the Sahel region. Dive into this edition to stay informed on our projects supporting a more accountable and effective security sector.

BURKINA FASO



Training in techniques for investigating human rights violations

In partnership with DCAF, the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) conducted a training workshop for CNDH commissioners and staff in Ziniaré from 28 February to 1 March. The training enabled participants to strengthen their capacity to conduct investigations on human rights violations. The 23 participants, six of whom were women, covered a wide range of topics during the training, including guidelines for investigating violations of international humanitarian law, best practices for secure, ethical and professional documentation, techniques for analyzing and drafting reports, and the basic principles and precautionary rules to be observed during investigative missions. At the end of the course, the participants expressed their satisfaction, while expressing the wish to be temporarily mentored during their investigations, in order to ensure an evaluation of the implementation of what they had learned in real-life situations.



Raising awareness of women's organizations on SALW management and IED risk education

In collaboration with DCAF, the Permanent Secretariat of the National Commission on Arms Control (SP/CNCA) organized an awareness-raising session on the management of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and education on the risks of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) for women's organizations from the Centre-Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Sud-Ouest, Centre-Est, Est, Centre-Ouest and Hauts-Bassins regions, from 26 to 28 April in Bobo-Dioulasso. This workshop, which brought together 30 women, responds to the recommendation for greater involvement of women in the prevention of the proliferation of SALW, made in the study on the status of legal and operational frameworks relating to SALW. Thanks to the awareness-raising session, the participants learnt more about the SP/CNCA, and in particular its missions, the risks associated with the illegal possession of SALW and the use of IEDs. The rest of the session highlighted the role of women in the prevention of the proliferation of SALW and the use of IEDs. In addition, it provided an opportunity to strengthened their capacities on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The training, which combined theory and practice, in particular the IED detection exercises and the simulation of good practices to be observed, was much appreciated by the women. The women also expressed their wish to participate in a training of trainers to become relays in their respective communities.

MALI



Second meeting of the Consultative Security Committee of San

The second meeting of the regional Consultative Security Committee of San (CCS) was held on 20 February, bringing together a total of 63 participants, including six women, representatives of the Defence and Security Forces (DSF), religious and customary authorities, and civil society organizations. The monitoring of the recommendations of the first meeting highlighted, among other things, the need to better define responsibilities for implementation, the need for recommendations to be achievable at a regional level, and the need for improved monitoring. Following the presentation of the security situation, the committee agreed on new

recommendations, such as the improvement of warning systems and the reinforcement of the Civil Protection presence during popular events.

In parallel, from 21 to 22 February, the second wave of CCS members received training in inclusive security governance. Bringing together 28 participants, including five women, from technical and security services, as well as civil society organizations, this training addressed the notion of security, and community policing and presented the SSR process in Mali, so that all participants built a common knowledge enabling them to participate actively in the CSS.



"World Café" on the role of women in the crisis in Mali

To mark International Women's Day, DCAF, in partnership with EUCAP Sahel Mali, organized a "World Café" on Thursday 7 March, on the role of women in the crisis in Mali. The meeting created a space for the sixty women from the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) present to exchange views on their role in the crisis situation in Mali. Participants from the police, gendarmerie and civil protection forces discussed the challenges of violence and insecurity, the integration and retention of women in the DSF, and the role of women's representation in the DSF. The half-day session began with contributions from the gender focal points of the police, gendarmerie and civil protection forces before all the participants contributed with their reflections. Despite the many challenges involved in taking gender into account within the DSF, the participants identified opportunities such as the organization of mentoring and capacity-building specifically aimed at women, as well as advocacy and awareness-raising among decision-makers and colleagues for the recognition of the importance of women's participation within the DSF.



Presentation of the report of the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the action plan (2022-2024) of the national SSR strategy in Mali

The presentation of the report on the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the National Strategy for Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Mali was held on 27 March. DCAF supported the Citizen's Alliance for Security Sector Reform (AC-RSS) throughout the conduct of this independent citizen evaluation. The activity provided an opportunity to present the strategy's monitoring and evaluation report, which highlights the actual level of implementation of the actions in its action plan. The study, which took place during the last quarter of 2023, shows that of the 40 actions in the 2022-2024 action plan, one has been fully implemented, twenty-eight are in progress and eleven have not begun. The report also highlights the existence of reforms not provided for in the action plan, but which nevertheless fall within the scope of SSR, such as the constitutionalization of the defence and security forces, and the militarization of the National Police and Civil Protection. To conclude the report, the authors put forward a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring effective implementation, including closer

collaboration between those involved in implementing the strategy, greater involvement of civil society and greater transparency in the strategy's implementation.

NIGER



Presentation of the budget analysis report for the defence and security sectors 2017-2022

On 30 March, Alternative Espaces Citoyens (AEC) organised a strategy meeting with the 10 members of the working group, of whom three were women, to present the report produced following the collaboration with DCAF. The session identified the key aspects that will serve as a basis for future projects in the areas of defence and security budget analysis and monitoring. The group planned to update the report on the defence and security budget for 2017-2024, audit tax exemptions for foreign forces in Niger in order to better negotiate future agreements, and review public procurement from 2015 to 2024, focusing on transparency and compliance with the rules. Following the retreat, the group passed a resolution to analyse the recent ordinance authorising deviations in public contracts, taxes and public accounting, in order to broaden civil society's commitment to transparency in the defence and security sectors. The group plans to expand to include organisations focusing on security sector governance and the fight against corruption. A meeting is scheduled for mid-April to draw up an action plan.



Capacity-building for women's CSOs on their role in implementing Niger's Women, Peace and Security Action Plan

From 25 to 26 March, the Coordination of Nigerien women NGOs and associations (CONGAFEN), in collaboration with DCAF, organised in Niamey a workshop which strengthened the capacity of women's NGOs in Niger to implement the Women, Peace and Security action plan. Bringing together 24 women and eight men from all regions of Niger, it provided a forum for discussing Resolution 1325, examining Niger's national action plans for women, peace and security, discussing the challenges facing women in crisis situations and defining concrete actions for integrating gender into peace and security processes. Discussions focused on the current status of the national action plan for Resolution 1325 and strategies for combating gender-based violence in difficult contexts. The results led to a better understanding of Resolution 1325, the sharing of experiences on crisis management and the identification of steps for NGOs to promote gender mainstreaming. The recommendations highlighted the need to increase women's participation in various sectors, to strengthen advocacy for their inclusion in peace negotiations, and to support their role in crisis prevention and response.



Dissemination of analyses and briefing notes to the relevant stakeholders

From 26 to 27 March, DCAF organised a dissemination workshop in Niamey presenting analytical notes on institutional developments in the areas of human rights, budget transparency and administrative complaints mechanisms. This event was part of an ongoing effort to inform stakeholders of the institutional changes underway and their implications for security sector governance, to foster constructive dialogue and to lay the foundations for advocacy in favour of institutional and political transformations aimed at strengthening accountability in the security sector. The methodology adopted for these sessions included the presentation of the three analytical notes, followed by question-and-answer sessions and open discussions on the implementation of the experts' recommendations, particularly in terms of programmatic adaptation and advocacy. The first session targeted DCAF's international donors and partners, with notable participation from the UK Embassy, the German Embassy, the Dutch Embassy, the Swiss Cooperation Office, UNODC, Search for Common Ground, ICRC, and OHCHR. The second session focused on national partners from civil society and the media, with 21 organisations present.

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