



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 for inspectors on reporting alleged mismanagement cases

From 29 January to 3 February, the Higher Authority on State Oversight and the Fight against Corruption (ASCELC), in partnership with DCAF, organised training on techniques for formulating allegations of mismanagement for the technical inspectorates of the ministries in charge of defence and security and the Court of Audit. During the session, which brought together 19 inspectors, including two women, the participants strengthened their report-writing skills. Indeed, for the courts to be able to use the documents transmitted by the investigators, they must use precise and adequate language, particularly about the identification, qualification and process of presumptive facts and of mismanagement in the execution of public budgets, and the drafting of conclusions.

The workshop also enabled participants to familiarise themselves with the procedures at the Court of Audit and the methodology for drafting conclusions. The inspectors feel better equipped to carry out their duties, as one participant put it: "We can expect more precise identification of management problems, clearer and more persuasive reports, and this could foster an organisational culture focused on continuous improvement by highlighting areas requiring particular attention". Participants will use the newly acquired knowledge soon after the training, particularly during the audit and control period in February and March.



Training female ISF staff on preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism

Held in Kaya in the Centre-Nord region from 21 to 23 February 2024, this training course brought together 28 women and four men. The participants came from seven institutions, including the national police, the gendarmerie, the water and forestry service, the municipal police, the customs service and the fire brigade, from four regions: Centre-Nord, Nord, Plateau-Central and Sahel. Thanks to the course, the female members of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) enhanced their knowledge and skills in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism, as well as in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) also participated in the training to present its missions and complaints mechanisms in order to enhance its visibility and accessibility and thus facilitate recourse to its services for women in uniform. At the end of the course, the participants expressed the wish to see this training extended to all the regions, but above all to invite men to participate as well.



Training women community leaders in mediation and conflict management

From 27 to 29 February 2024 in Kaya, the Permanent Secretariat of the National Observatory for the Prevention and Management of Community Conflicts (SP-ONAPREGECC), in collaboration with DCAF, organised a training session for 40 female community leaders to improve their knowledge and skills in conflict identification, mediation and management, not only through theory but also through practical exercises. The training aims to boost their confidence to encourage them to become even more involved in mediation and peaceful conflict management. Over three days, the female leaders from different localities in the Centre-Nord region actively engaged during the training course. Throughout, the discussions, some of them highlighted gender-specific difficulties they faced

and complicated their position as mediators. "There are some conflicts that are more difficult for us women to manage. For example, a conflict between two communities over a wife issue", explained one participant. At the end of the course, all the participants agreed that the training had provided them with new knowledge that would enable them to conduct mediations more effectively. They promised to carry out awareness-raising and educational activities in their respective communities to prevent conflict and promote social cohesion.

MALI



4th meeting of the Bamako District Consultative Security Committee

After a year without a meeting, the Consultative Security Committee (CCS) for the District of Bamako convened for its fourth meeting on 1 February. A total of 78 people, including 23 women, from the Defence and Security Forces (DSF), political authorities and civil society participated in the meeting. In his opening speech, the District Governor recalled that "Security Sector Reform is a prerequisite for peace and sustainable development, as it encompasses all the dimensions of human security while respecting human rights". The participants took stock of the implementation of the recommendations from the previous meeting, which was held in December 2022. Only one out of three recommendations has been fully implemented, namely the creation and launch of the district's communal consultative security committees, which happened in December 2023. DCAF also reported on security concerns that emerged from discussions between members of the communal CCSs and women's and youth civil society organisations (CSOs). Among the concerns reported were the lack of footbridges on internal roads, the recurrence of violence in schools and universities and the uncontrolled building of houses on water crossings causing flooding. Discussions then focused on the district's security situation, with presentations from the police, civil protection and gendarmerie, followed by questions and comments from the other actors. Finally, the participants made several new recommendations, including the regular holding of communal and regional CCSs and the shortening of DSF toll-free numbers, as well as posting them in public spaces.



Seminar on collaboration mechanisms between the inspection services of the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection (MSPC)

In 2023, members of the Inspectorate of the Security Services and Civil Protection (ISSPC) met their Senegalese counterparts to exchange experiences and share good practices. Among the recommendations made on their return was the promotion of collaboration between the various MSPC inspection services. Following up on this recommendation, the ISSPC, with the support of DCAF and EUCAP Sahel Mali, organised a seminar on collaboration mechanisms between the inspection services of the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection on 6 and 7 March. The seminar, which was attended by 25 inspectors, including one woman, provided a forum for the various MSPC inspection bodies to exchange experiences on working processes and the challenges they face, and to develop a framework for collaboration to address the issues identified. The discussions covered a wide range of subjects, including the mandates, working methods and results of each of the department's inspectorates, and the definition of the different types of inspection. Aiming to enhance their performance, the inspectors discussed how to improve the distribution of tasks, decentralise the functions of the inspectorates and strengthen the legal and operational framework for collaboration between the various inspectorates.



Training for trainee officers of the National Gendarmerie

From 15 January to 2 February, the General Directorate of the Gendarmerie, with the support of DCAF, organised the first cycle of the higher course of the Gendarmerie. This training cycle aimed to equip officers with the legal knowledge and practical decision-making skills they will need to command investigation and intervention units in order to ensure strict respect for human rights and the fight against gender-based violence. In addition to the technical support provided throughout the preparation of the course, DCAF facilitated sessions on security sector governance (SSG), and the links between SSG, human rights, gender and human security. The 36 participants, including three women, report that the training helped to improve their understanding of leadership and management and how to apply them effectively and efficiently in their day-to-day activities. The participants contributed to the training by linking the training and their own experience. They appreciated the newly acquired knowledge and the direct link to their everyday work and ensured their commitment to follow these principles.



Training community relays in monitoring and collecting data on human rights abuses and violations

As part of its collaboration with the Youth Movement for Development and Civic Education (MOJEDEC), DCAF organised training for 64 community relays in the Tahoua region on international standards for documenting human rights violations and procedures for installing and using the electronic data collection and reporting platform, as well as the fundamentals of Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSGR), human rights and gender. Two training sessions were organised. The first was held from 18 to 19 January for the communes of Affala, Bambeye, Takanamatt and Tébaram. The second took place from 20 to 21 January in the communes of Tillia, Tassara, Tchintabaraden and Kaou. This training significantly improves the capacity of these actors to effectively monitor, document and report human rights abuses and violations, thereby contributing to the protection and defence of the rights of individuals in their communities.



Introductory training for CSOs in the fundamentals of SSG/R and advocacy

After carrying out a mapping of civil society organisations (CSOs) and a needs analysis with DCAF's partner CSOs in Niger, DCAF set up a training group with 13 CSOs working in the field of Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R). The training was split into two phases to ensure better assimilation of the lessons learned. From 14 to 16 February and 4 to 6 March, 30 participants, including 13 women, enhanced their knowledge and strengthened their skills. The first phase focused on improving CSOs' understanding of independent, inclusive and effective oversight of the security sector in Niger. The second phase of the training, which focused on practical application, strengthened skills in advocacy techniques and approaches in the current context of political and institutional instability in Niger. The participants targeted for this training were mainly executives involved in strategic management and programme managers likely to be involved in lobbying the authorities. Advocacy is particularly important in the Niger context, as one participant explained: "We have a challenge to meet, and DCAF is supporting CSOs to do so. Our role in the current context must be to fill the gaps while reminding the institutions of their missions".



Creation of the working group on transparency and budgetary control

As part of the collaboration between Alternative-Espaces Citoyens (AEC) and DCAF, the creation of a working group on transparency and budgetary control was supported through the organisation of training for the members of this working group. The working group is made up of nine civil society organisations (CSOs) specialising in external control, with a particular focus on budgetary control. Organised from 29 February to 9 March for 10 participants, the training covered democratic control of the defence and security sector, budget transparency, Nigerien legislation, budget analysis and monitoring, and public procurement management, and included presentations, debates, group work and practical sessions on budget analysis and monitoring.

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