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UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

UNOWAS

BUREAU DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST ET LE SAHEL

This seminar was co-organized in Dakar from June 27 to 28, 2016, by IPI, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). The participants, including experts, religious and traditional authorities, and representatives of civil society, the private sector, governments, and regional and international organizations, discussed the secretary-general's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, published in December 2016.

Arthur Boutellis, Olga Abilova, Delphine Mechoulan, and Lesley Connolly of IPI's Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations oversaw the substantive preparations for the seminar and the drafting of this report. This meeting note reflects the rapporteurs' interpretation of the discussions and does not necessarily reflect the views of all other participants.

IPI owes a debt of gratitude to the many donors to the programs of the Center for Peace Operations. In particular, IPI is grateful to the Swiss Confederation for making this seminar possible.

# Investing in Peace and the Prevention of Violence in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara: Conversations on the Secretary-General's Plan of Action

SEPTEMBER 2016

## Introduction

West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara region are faced with peace and security challenges that weaken states and affect state-citizen relations. The emergence and proliferation of violent extremist groups aggravate the climate of fear and insecurity, and the actions of these groups affect peace efforts, sustainable development, and human rights. Faced with this reality, policymakers have recognized that preventing violence requires a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach. This approach needs to address the underlying conditions that lead individuals to join violent extremist groups, as well as the need to reintegrate members of these groups who wish to return to their original environment.

In the course of the last decade, efforts to solve the problem of violent extremism have consisted primarily of a series of security measures largely inspired by strategies used to fight terrorism. But experience has shown that such strategies are inadequate and at times fuel further extremism. This experience has led international organizations and states to adopt more preventive approaches, such as those detailed in the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism issued by the UN secretary-general on December 24, 2015.<sup>1</sup> During the presentation of this plan, the secretary-general emphasized that “many years of experience have proven that short-sighted policies, failed leadership, heavy-handed approaches, a single-minded focus only on security measures and an utter disregard for human rights have often made things worse.” It is therefore urgent to identify more effective measures and sustainable policies to prevent violent extremism.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the International Peace Institute (IPI), and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs co-organized a regional seminar in Dakar, Senegal, on June 27 and 28, 2016, to explore alternative measures to address the violent extremism afflicting the region. This meeting brought together sixty participants from fourteen countries, including political leaders, members of civil society (men, women, and youth), and religious and traditional authorities, as well as representatives of the media (in their capacity as experts), the private sector, governments, and regional and international organizations.

The meeting first sought to better understand how states, citizens, and organizations in the region define and perceive the issue of violent extremism

<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General*, December 24, 2015, UN Doc. A/70/674.

<sup>2</sup> UN Secretary-General, “UN Secretary-General’s Remarks at General Assembly Presentation of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism,” January 15, 2016.

in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara. It then addressed the subregional dynamics and how they are affected by global responses to violent extremism. Participants also discussed prevention practices that have yielded positive results in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara. They concluded their deliberations by developing a regional perspective on how best to implement the UN secretary-general's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. These deliberations took into account challenges and opportunities specific to the region, as well as the transborder and transregional dimensions of violent extremism.

## Perceptions of Violent Extremism and Its Root Causes in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara

Addressing the topic of the prevention of violent extremism is essential for the future of the African continent. However, developing better policies to deal with this phenomenon requires better understanding its root causes and developing a shared diagnosis of the problem. The first part of the seminar thus focused on understanding the manifestations and local perceptions of violent extremism in the region.

In the region, violent extremism is generally perceived and described as an external threat to local communities. For some participants, jihadism represents a nihilistic rejection of society and must be distinguished from violent extremism. This distinction is essential because confusion between the two concepts risks stigmatizing certain religious groups and could lead to more violence.

Although the general perception is that this scourge threatens many countries in the region—though inconsistently and unpredictably—numerous zones of stability exist and can benefit from further examination. It is necessary to identify the factors that increase the capacity of some communities to separate themselves from and keep their members from joining violent extremist groups. One such factor could be a relationship of trust between the state and its citizens, which could account for collaborative

responses to addressing violent extremism in certain contexts. Further investigation of these factors associated with more peaceful societies could help devise more effective policies at the national and transnational levels.

According to the participants, the media play an important role in shaping the perception of violent extremism through their portrayal of events related to actions of violent extremism. The international community and international media tend to focus on certain violent extremist groups, such as ISIS and al-Qaida. Other extremist groups receiving more support from local communities, such as Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) in Mali in 2012, or Boko Haram (initially), seem to attract less media attention and do not benefit from nuanced analysis. These groups often emerge in response to deficits in governance, such as lack of basic services, education, and health, and tend to fill security vacuums left by the absence of the state.

Definitions and perceptions of violent extremism therefore vary depending on the context. The national discourse on violent extremism in conflict-affected or post-conflict countries tends to focus on the degree of inclusivity in peace negotiations and political dialogue (i.e., the degree of participation and broader inclusion of extremist groups in these processes), as well as the emergence and spread of transnational violent groups. Research on the perceptions of local populations, however, has highlighted the lack of socioeconomic opportunities and the absence of the state—and thus the deficit in interactions between the state and its citizens—as additional drivers of violent extremism.

Indeed, socioeconomic inequality and lack of opportunities influence the ability of a community to prevent the appeal of violent extremist groups and their rhetoric, especially among youth. Youth have often already lost their confidence in state institutions and their leaders. According to one of the participants, “Al-Qaida has now become the largest employer of youth in the region.” A mapping of resilience factors among communities in southern Libya revealed that the priority of the local population was neither the reconciliation agreement sponsored by the United Nations nor ISIS, but access to the economy and to money.<sup>3</sup>

3 See Interpeace, “Libya,” available at [www.interpeace.org/programme/libya/](http://www.interpeace.org/programme/libya/).

Other studies conducted in Niger showed that local communities consider the lack of livelihoods, rather than terrorism, as the main cause of insecurity.<sup>4</sup>

The rise of violent extremism is often associated with a breakdown in state-society relations, and participants noted that this breakdown in the region is often due to violence—physical or structural—exercised by states themselves. This violence is one of the root causes of the alienation of certain individuals who turn to violence. It is therefore important to ensure that the focus on violent extremist groups and their propaganda does not render invisible other forms of violence in societies, especially those resulting from state action.

Finally, the issue of corruption often came up during the seminar. Corrupt elites not only monopolize political spaces and economic resources but also express indifference and contempt toward the rest of the population. The consequences impede socioeconomic development and undermine the confidence of citizens in their institutions—exacerbating two of the main concerns of populations at risk of violent extremism. These concerns are especially strong in rural areas, where people are often victim to growing disparities between urban centers and the peripheries. These same people are those who turn first to armed groups to ensure their safety, especially when national security forces are absent, predatory, or perceived as unreliable.

Participants stressed the importance of including youth and women as key players in the prevention of violent extremism. This inclusion can be done both through consultations to better inform policy and more directly by involving them in efforts to raise awareness of the negative effects of violent extremism. Participants also suggested strengthening strategic partnerships between governments and the private sector to generate jobs for youth. Youth entrepreneurship should be stimulated through closer cooperation with banks, which should be encouraged to give young people loans at low interest rates. Participants emphasized the

importance of not limiting engagement with youth to recreation projects but of also boosting their political and civic engagement. Several youth participants shared initiatives they had undertaken in this respect (e.g., in Tunisia), calling for young people not to be considered as beneficiaries but as responsible for their own destiny.

Discussions among the participants brought forward a diagnosis of violent extremism and its causes that was much more nuanced than the typical calls for robust responses to violence. They also confirmed that violent extremism feeds on political exclusion, lack of socioeconomic opportunity, absence of the state, and harmful breakdown in relations between citizens and the state. The discussions highlighted the need to invest in actions collectively undertaken by institutions, citizens, and communities to provide positive solutions to such deficits, disabling the attraction of violence as a means to an end. Such initiatives already exist, participants stressed, and it is important that they be valued and supported.

## Subregional Dynamics and the Impact of the Global Trends of Violent Extremism

Participants stressed that, while acting locally, it is important to understand the dynamics of violent extremism at the regional level, as well as the impact of global trends, and to consider how local action can be complemented by regional preventive actions. Indeed, global remedies have been limited—both conceptually and programmatically—to security measures, whether multilateral or national. Such approaches aim to contain violence but often do not allow any space to address its causes. Moreover, they do not involve the whole population and often overlook the gender dimension of the issue. The transnational nature of violent extremism also calls for reflection on how to ensure that preventive actions at different levels result in a coherent whole rather than in dispersed and overlapping responses, as is too often the case.

4 See Search for Common Ground, “Analyse des déterminants de conflits dans les communes de Tchintabaraden et Tassara,” March 2014, available at [www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NIG\\_RR\\_Jan14\\_Rapport-Dynamique-des-conflits-et-Medias-au-Niger-et-Tahoua1.pdf](http://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NIG_RR_Jan14_Rapport-Dynamique-des-conflits-et-Medias-au-Niger-et-Tahoua1.pdf); and UNDP, “Analyse des facteurs de conflits au Niger,” available at [www.ne.undp.org/content/dam/niger/docs/Publications/UNDP-NE-Analyse%20des%20facteurs%20des%20conflits.pdf?download](http://www.ne.undp.org/content/dam/niger/docs/Publications/UNDP-NE-Analyse%20des%20facteurs%20des%20conflits.pdf?download).

Due to the complexity of the phenomenon, it is clear that there is no simple and consistent approach to preventing violent extremism—by definition an issue that must be thought of in the long term. At the same time, many countries in the region share a number of structural factors, such as poverty and a deficit in cultural education, including about Islam, that make some individuals more vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups. The failure of the state to provide basic services, including safety and security, is also an important factor in rural, remote, and marginalized areas, where the cross-border influence of violent extremism may exert a stronger pull than the central state. It is therefore essential to develop responses that are rooted in the specificities of local communities and their relationship with the state while also taking into account the increasingly transnational nature of violent extremism, from West Africa to the Sahel to North Africa, Central Africa, and beyond.

The difficulty of implementing global policies at the local level is not new. For example, both the secretary-general's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the EU's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel face the same pitfalls. Existing regional frameworks should better take into account and integrate local and transnational dynamics related to violence in West Africa and the Sahel-Saharan region in order to develop more effective policies. These frameworks should also build on lessons learned from positive experiences in the region. Moreover, it is important to review the assumptions underlying current prevention policies by basing them on analysis of regional actors' perceptions of why violent extremism is so prevalent. Political commitments must also be accompanied by funding, including for community and regional initiatives.

## Prevention Initiatives Offering Alternatives to Violence

The discussion on prevention initiatives in West Africa and the Sahel-Saharan was conducted in three parallel thematic groups that addressed, respec-

tively: (1) political participation, state-citizen relations, and inclusive dialogue; (2) independent and responsible media coverage in a world where competition for information is the main incentive; and (3) subregional approaches to prevention beyond borders.

In all groups, the discussions focused on the need to go beyond a securitized approach and to focus on prevention by concentrating on local communities that can provide a basis for promoting violent extremism and often themselves are the main victims of violent extremist groups. A central message of the meeting was that the international community, regional organizations, and states should work more closely and in a participatory manner with local communities—from youth to elders—when developing programs to prevent violent extremism. This recognition of shared responsibility is one of the most important characteristics of an effective approach to prevention, as identity and social cohesion play a major role in the ability of local communities to fight violent extremism.

The discussions also highlighted that maintaining a strong link between older and younger members of the same community was central. The results of research conducted in southern Libya and presented at the meeting showed that constant communication and mutual respect between young people and their elders played a role in reducing the infiltration of violent extremism in these communities.<sup>5</sup> It is particularly important to involve local authorities and traditional and religious leaders and to support intra-cultural and intra-religious dialogue in order to promote tolerance.

Finally, a common assessment of the current policies aimed at managing terrorist threats is necessary. Such an assessment could help shed light on the existing mistrust between states and civil society organizations, as well as between some local stakeholders and international organizations. For many participants, only a change in the practices and vocabulary used is likely to build the necessary confidence that would lead to integrated and concerted actions.

The media have a major influence on how violent

5 See Interpeace, "Libya," available at [www.interpeace.org/programme/libya/](http://www.interpeace.org/programme/libya/).

extremism is perceived and how the responses to it are conceptualized. They also influence the perception of the effectiveness of prevention policies, even if they seldom talk about prevention initiatives. Some journalists participating in the discussions maintained that their primary role remained to inform, not to perform an educational function or be agents for promoting the prevention of violent extremism. This is particularly important since the independence and neutrality of journalists are essential to allowing them to do their work safely. Others, while acknowledging this journalistic role, believed that “the media, if they do not educate us, shape our views,” and often negatively so. Nonetheless, there are still examples of the positive role the media can play, for example that of radio stations broadcasting programs of peace education.

Moreover, contrary to well-funded international media, local media are often underfunded, are little or poorly trained, and face increased pressure or risks. As a result, they often fail to provide impartial coverage, despite having better knowledge of local realities. A commonly expressed concern was the lack of control over some local community radio stations that are sometimes used to amplify voices that incite violence, whatever side they come from. As much as it is in the interest of state authorities to professionalize local media coverage of violent extremism, it is also important to make sure any regulations deemed necessary do not unduly restrict the ability of journalists to do their work in compliance with the ethics of their profession.

## Toward a Regional Perspective on the Plan of Action

The secretary-general's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism calls for the development of multisector and multidisciplinary regional and national plans to address the root causes of this phenomenon. In West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara, many existing regional organizations are already addressing this issue—including the G5, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), and African Union (AU)—in addition to several other international partners and organi-

zations (including the UN and EU). It is necessary to ensure consistency among these different regional frameworks and to capitalize on their comparative advantages. It is equally important to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing and supported by regional and international organizations and bilateral partners in a coordinated manner.

As for the United Nations, the dialogue between member states and the UN Secretariat on the implementation of the secretary-general's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism must continue, even in the absence of a definition of violent extremism. This dialogue should in particular better take into account perspectives and perceptions from the regional, subregional, national, and local levels; context, more than an agreed definition, should guide action.

UN engagement in the field should therefore be based on a thorough analysis of the constantly evolving local context, together with a more nuanced understanding of armed groups, the factors that have allowed them to emerge, and their evolution. This can be achieved through an active dialogue among member states, the UN Secretariat, and field missions. Such a dialogue should put more emphasis on the potential role of UN country teams and regional offices in promoting a preventive approach to violence. UN engagement on this issue may also require increased human and financial resources within the framework of UN peace operations.

However, it is important to keep in mind that UN action on preventing violent extremism risks undermining local actors' perception of the impartiality of its work, which is critical to the UN's role in fostering dialogue and preventing conflict. Other risks the UN faces include being perceived as supporting violent actions by states carrying out policies to “counter violent extremism” for partisan political reasons in a way that may stigmatize opposition groups.

As indicated above, the implementation of the UN secretary-general's Plan of Action at the regional level will require close collaboration with regional organizations already working in these areas (such as the G5, ECOWAS, UEMOA, and AU) and other multilateral or bilateral partners. The UN and regional organizations operate in a

common area and must therefore associate and enrich their thinking and their mutual actions by capitalizing on synergies. The UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) has a clear role to play in this regard by pooling resources and facilitating the coordination of regional actions to prevent violent extremism, while serving as a bridge to other relevant regional spaces in North and Central Africa in collaboration with UN offices in those regions.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The UN secretary-general has called for the development of “new regional or subregional plans of action to prevent violent extremism, facilitated by regional or subregional organizations and the United Nations, with a view to complementing and reinforcing [the] national plans.” In response to this call, participants stressed that policies to prevent violent extremism must be based on shared action involving institutions, citizens, and communities. This will help to bring out alternatives that in turn can provide innovative and positive responses. Participants also insisted that the different levels of action must be adapted to the specific local contexts and perceptions.

However, changing current approaches also implies taking stock of the limitations and failures of policies at various levels—international, regional, and national. It is also important to recognize that no technical approach can overcome or compensate for the need for good governance and inclusive dialogue that would lead to developing common responses from the outset. National and regional institutions often lack the tools to monitor the rise of violent extremism, especially at the local and transnational levels. Finally, the quasi-absence of national debates around these issues remains a challenge because effective policies cannot be implemented successfully without the involvement of citizens.

Participants agreed on a number of recommendations with regards to how the UN and its partners could more effectively prevent violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara

subregions, in support of national governments and local authorities and communities and with the active participation of citizens:

- Political participation, improved relations between the state and its citizens or the governing and the governed, and inclusive dialogue should be the primary mechanisms for investing in peace and preventing violence, including violent extremism.
- Consultative structures including senior citizens, elders, women, youth, political parties, and the private sector must be created or strengthened to inform national, regional, and international policies on the prevention of violent extremism. This could also contribute to increased national ownership of prevention policies, as well as improved evaluation of their implementation.
- The media could publicize positive peace initiatives. Joint media programming at the regional level could be encouraged. The establishment of a network of women journalists should also be envisaged to ensure a gendered approach. Community radio stations have an important role in the education and awareness of citizens.
- Institutional initiatives to prevent violent extremism must build on existing initiatives (such as those undertaken by regional organizations like the G5, ECOWAS, UEMOA, and AU), bring coherence to the different strategies, and capitalize on their comparative advantages and good practices in a coordinated manner.
- States may have coordination structures allowing them to work together to strengthen policies aimed at preventing violent extremism, but spaces for networking and uniting citizen initiatives are lacking at the local and transnational levels. Support is needed to help citizens develop such structures and have a role in dialogue with regional and international authorities and organizations.
- The establishment of regional structures to exchange ideas and increase understanding and consideration of transnational dynamics between West Africa and the Sahel, North Africa, and Central Africa could also contribute to preventive approaches that are adapted to local realities

and carried out transnationally.

- It is essential to capitalize on, build on, and support local scientific research on the phenomenon of violent extremism and to help ensure its results are disseminated and taken into account in the development of national and regional policies.
- It is important to recognize the role and central responsibility of states in prevention, including through soundly managing public affairs and focusing on the management of diversity. This can be done by creating inclusive institutions, establishing a better balance between preventive approaches and exclusively security-oriented responses, and always taking into account and being respectful of the rule of law and human

rights. This also applies to policies each state is required to develop when faced with the return or repentance of those who participated in violent extremist movements.

It is obvious that all these recommendations cannot ignore the global context and institutions of global governance. They must also inform international policies and strategies for preventing violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara. To do this, the co-organizers of the meeting—UNOWAS, IPI, and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs—are committed to sharing the results of this meeting more widely. This will take the form of a policy roundtable they will organize in the fall in New York on the sidelines of the 2016 UN General Assembly.

## Agenda

Monday, June 27, 2016

8:30–9:00      **Arrival and Registration of Participants**

9:00–9:15      **Opening Speech**

Mohamed Ibn Chambas, *Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)*

Dagmar Schmidt, *Ambassador to Senegal, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland*  
Youssef Mahmoud, *International Peace Institute (IPI)*

9:15–9:25      **Launch of Work**

Coly Seck, *Chief of Staff of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Senegal*

9:25–9:45      **Keynote Address**

Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, *Centre 4s, Mauritania*

9:45–10:00    **Coffee Break**

10:00–11:30   **First Plenary Session**

**Perceptions and Manifestations of Violent Extremism in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara**

*This session will seek to understand how states, individuals, and organizations in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara perceive and define the issue of violent extremism in the region. A series of recent surveys and perception studies conducted in various countries of the region will serve as a starting point for this conversation.*

**Chair**

Carol Mottet, *Senior Adviser, Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland*

**Panelists**

Bouchra Benhida, *Director, Center of Executive Education, Al Akhawayn University, Casablanca, Morocco*

Ahmed Labnouj, *Researcher, Interpeace*

Mohamed Anacko, *President, Regional Council of Agadez, Niger*

Fabrice Boussalem, *Sahel Program Coordinator, UNDP, Senegal*

Reda Benkirane, *Researcher, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Switzerland*

11:30–1:00    **Second Plenary Session**

**Subregional Dynamics and the Impact of Global Trends of Violent Extremism on West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara**

*This session will focus on subregional dynamics and the impact of global trends of violent extremism on West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara.*

**Chair**

Moudjib Djinadou, *Political Director, UNOWAS, Senegal*

**Panelists**

Comfort Lamptey, *Regional Adviser on Peace and Security, UN Women, Senegal*

Dahane Ahmed Mahmoud, *Mauritanian Institute for Strategic Studies (IMES), Mauritania*

Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, *Deputy Director, West Africa Office, International Crisis Group, Senegal*

Salma Belaala, *Senior Expert in Societal Prevention of Violent Radicalization in the Sahel-Maghreb, EU*

1:00–2:00

**Lunch**

2:00–5:30

**Thematic Working Groups****Policy Options and Best Practices for Successful Prevention**

*These groups will discuss a new approach to the issue of prevention of violent extremism by looking at the factors associated with peaceful and resilient societies and offering alternatives to violence (rather than just the factors fueling and support violence) and identifying examples of how states or communities and organizations seek to prevent extreme violence through: (1) political participation, improvement of state-citizen relations, and inclusive dialogue; (2) independent and responsible media coverage in a world driven by competition for information; and (3) regional approaches to prevention beyond borders. The participants will discuss gaps in current policies and options to further address the challenges they face.*

**Group 1: Political Participation, State-Citizen Relations and Inclusive Dialogue****Chair**

Marie-Joëlle Zahar, *Professor of Political Science and Fellow, Centre for International Studies and Research, University of Montreal, Canada*

**Group 2: Independent and Responsible Media Coverage in a World Driven by Competition for Information****Chair**

Kouider Zerrouk, *Chief of Communications and Public Information, UNOWAS*

**Group 3: Subregional Approaches to Prevention beyond Borders****Chair**

Lori-Anne Thérroux-Bénoni, *Director, West Africa Office, Institute for Security Studies, Dakar*

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

9:30–11:00

**Third Plenary Session****Presentation of the Work of the Working Group Sessions****Moderator**

Youssef Mahmoud, *International Peace Institute (IPI)*

12:00–13:00    **Lunch**

1:00–2:45    **Fourth Plenary Session**

**Toward a Regional Perspective on the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism**

*Reviewing the findings of the three working groups, panelists will examine the capacity of the UN and its partners to effectively address the issue of prevention of violent extremism in support of national governments, local authorities, and communities through coordinated action at the subregional level in West Africa and the Sahel-Saharan. The session will seek to develop a regional perspective on the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, including the challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the plan in West Africa and the Sahel.*

**Chair**

Edem Bleke, *Head of the Liaison Cell, UNOWAS, Mauritania*

**Panelists**

El Hadj Mohamed Najim, *Permanent Secretariat, G5 Sahel, Mauritania*

Fatima Kyari Mohammed, *Special Adviser, ECOWAS, Nigeria*

Arthur Boutellis, *International Peace Institute (IPI)*

Gilles Yabi, *WATHI Citizen Think Tank of West Africa*

2:45–3:00    **Coffee Break**

3:00–3:45    **Conclusions and Closing Remarks**

Dagmar Schmidt, *Ambassador to Senegal, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland*

Youssef Mahmoud, *International Peace Institute (IPI)*

Mohamed Ibn Chambas, *Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS*

3:45–4:15    **Joint Communiqué (Switzerland/UN/IPI)**

## Participants

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Policy Analyst, IPI

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Centre 4s, Nouakchott, Mauritania

**Ms. Ngozi Amu**

Chief, Research and Analysis Unit, UNOWAS, Senegal

**Mr. Mohamed Anacko**

President, Regional Council of Agadez, Niger

**Mr. Abdoulaye Bâ**

Representative of the Sahel, Cordoba Foundation of Geneva, Switzerland

**Dr. Bouchra Benhida**

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Researcher, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Switzerland

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**Amb. Jean-Daniel Biéler**

Special Adviser for Central Africa, Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

**Mr. Edem Blege**

Head of the Liaison Cell, UNOWAS, Mauritania

**Mr. David Bouanchaud**

Regional Attaché in Charge of the Response to Crises in West Africa and the Great Lakes, EU Delegation to Senegal

**Mr. Fabrice Boussalem**

Sahel Program Coordinator, UNDP, Senegal

**Mr. Arthur Boutellis**

Director, Center for Peace Operations, IPI

**Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas**

Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS, Senegal

**Mr. Rémi Carayol**

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Political Director, UNOWAS, Senegal

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Human Rights Associate, Embassy in Senegal, Switzerland

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Programme Manager, Centre for Democracy and  
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**Mr. Jean-Hervé Jézéquel**

Deputy Director, West Africa Bureau,  
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**Ms. Zahra' Langhi**

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**Mr. Abdoulaye Maïga**

Alert and Prevention Analyst, African Centre for  
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African Union Commission, Algeria

**Mr. Youssef Mahmoud**

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**Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed**

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