

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 local civilian oversight committees on GBV monitoring

From 27 to 29 May, the Research-Action Group on Human Security (GRASH) and the Centre for Law and Justice (CQDJ), in partnership with DCAF, organised training for local civilian oversight committees, which are formed by representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and act as focal points for GRASH and CQDJ in local communities. The training focused on the mechanisms for monitoring and reporting cases of gender-based violence (GBV) including the legal framework and complaints mechanisms and procedures. A total of 29 people, including nine women, from the Boucle de Mouhoun committee benefited from the training and are now able to support victims of GBV by providing support and orienting them towards the most adapted mechanisms in their situation. At the same time, the participants have also improved their knowledge of the mechanisms for filing complaints and appeals with the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH). Following similar training provided by DCAF in two other regions, three committees now have members who act as resource persons for their communities, informing them about the mechanisms and procedures available to them.

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### **Training on freedom of expression and social cohesion**

In partnership with DCAF, the Higher Authority on Communication (CSC) and the General Directorate of Communication and Media (DGCM) organised a training session on freedom of expression and social cohesion from 28 to 30 May. The workshop was delivered to seven civil society organisations present in the media sphere and active in the promotion of dialogue and communication. The 22 participants, including seven women, received capacity-building training on the legal framework for online and offline freedom of expression, and on the role of each actor in preserving social cohesion and living together, especially in the burkinabè context. The participants seized the opportunity to make recommendations to the Higher Authority on Communication and the General Directorate of Communication and Media, calling in particular for greater autonomy for the public service media, greater protection for the editorial independence of the media, and the organisation of awareness-raising campaigns on disinformation, hate speech and the use of social networks.

## **MALI**



### **Training community relays of the CNDH**

From 21 to 23 May, the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH), in partnership with DCAF, organised training on human rights and the conduct of investigations for community relays in the Koulikoro region. The CNDH opened a regional office in April 2024 in Koulikoro to fulfil its mandate of protecting and promoting human rights in the region. To support its mission, it has identified 25 community relays who will serve as resource



persons. The relays were selected because they deeply understand the local context, are valued members of the community, and participate in the defence of human rights. The community focal points organise awareness-raising activities and relay allegations of human rights abuse to the CNDH, which will then decide to conduct the appropriate investigations. To fulfil this mission, 25 participants, including 11 women, received training in human rights and techniques for investigating and documenting abuses in accordance with the CNDH's quality standards. The various sessions covered a wide range of subjects, including the role of the focal points, the functioning of the CNDH, the protection of victims and witnesses, the rights of detainees, visits of detention centres, and the conduct and monitoring of investigations. Thanks to this training, members of the communities now have resource persons capable of supporting and guiding them when they report complaints, but also capable of collecting investigative material in order to facilitate the work of the CNDH in case of investigation. The participants expressed a need for specific training in processing and conducting gender-based violence cases and related investigations in order to respond to this phenomenon, which is particularly prevalent in the region.

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### **Communal CCS meetings in the District of Bamako**

Following the creation of the communal Consultative Security Committees (CCS) in December 2023, five communes in the district of Bamako organised, with the support of DCAF, the first meeting of their respective communal committees in May. Numerous segments of society are represented at these meetings, including political authorities, police representatives, civil society representatives such as neighbourhood chiefs, the media, youth and women's organisations, hunters and traditional communicators. During the meetings, representatives of the security forces presented the security situation in the communes. Participants were then invited to ask questions and, through exchanges, to identify their security priorities. The concerns raised at the various meetings were specific to each commune, although some overlapped. In particular, the participants noted organised crime, drug use, incivilities leading to traffic accidents, the phenomenon of talibé children, the illegal construction of entertainment premises close to schools and places of worship, and the difficulties of cooperation between the police and the local population. Finally, each commune made recommendations to the authorities and security forces to address their problems. At future meetings, the implementation of these recommendations will be monitored to ensure that accountability to the public will be upheld. CCS meetings provide an essential forum for civil society to express its security needs on a regular basis, thereby placing human security at the heart of government and security forces action.

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### **Leadership training for female members of the Police Nationale**

In partnership with DCAF, the National Police organised two training courses in May on leadership, risk management, gender and gender-based violence (GBV) for female officers and non-commissioned officers from the Bamako district and the Sikasso region. The training courses strengthened the capacity of 150 policewomen to deal with the specific challenges they are likely to face in the course of their careers, particularly in their managerial roles. During the five-day training, participants addressed a wide range of subjects, including gender equality, GBV and national mechanisms against GBV, leadership, public speaking, resistance to change and personal risk management for female staff. At the end of the training session, the participants made a number of recommendations, including forming a network of female police managers to provide mutual support and strengthen collaboration between policewomen. The leadership training for women is part of the implementation of the National Police's gender action plan (2024-2027), which aims to alleviate obstacles to the recruitment, promotion and working conditions of female personnel within the Malian National Police.

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**NIGER**





### Meeting with the Association of the Scouts of Niger

On Wednesday 29 May, an exchange meeting took place between DCAF and the Association des Scouts du Niger. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the prospects for a partnership and to reflect further on the areas of support that DCAF could provide to the Association des Scouts du Niger. Through its network of 7,000 volunteers spread across all eight regions of Niger, the Scouts are willing to be trained and also to support the implementation of training courses on the role of young people in the Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSGR), thus wishing to acquire the skills and knowledge to play an active role in this field. They also wish to be involved in mobilisation and awareness-raising campaigns concerning the Prevention of Violent Extremism. The fight against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is another priority for Scouts, who want to take concrete action in this area. In addition, the Scouts would like to encourage their colleagues to meet with DCAF teams in Ouagadougou and Bamako in order to strengthen the dynamic and broaden collaborative initiatives. The meeting marks an important step towards fruitful collaboration between DCAF and the Association des Scouts du Niger, paving the way for future joint projects that will benefit young people and the population of Niger.

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INTERNATIONAL



### Panel on rethinking SSR in coup-affected environments

At the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development organised by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) from 6 to 8 May, DCAF and Research and Action for Peace Network (RecAP) brought together a panel of experts to draw lessons from the Sahel's experience on the implications of military transitions for Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes. Under Ornella Moderan (DCAF) and Virginie Baudais (SIPRI)'s moderation, experts Niagalé Bagayoko (African Security Studies Network), Jocelyne Nahimana (African Union), Soumaila Lah (Citizen's Alliance for SSR, Mali) and Vianney Bisimwa (Center for Civilians in Conflict) highlighted the failures of past processes, largely due to insufficient consideration of the realities of local political economies. They also stressed the importance of remaining committed despite coups d'état, adopting modest, people-centred interventions, and seizing the opportunities for reform sometimes offered by military regimes.

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