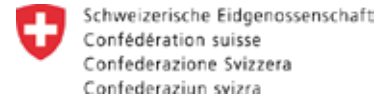




REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL



FOURTH REGIONAL SEMINAR

THE ROLE OF THE DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES (DSF) IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) IN AFRICA: COMMITMENT FRAMEWORKS

May 23, 24 and 25, 2022, Dakar, Senegal

FINAL REPORT

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Summary

It was in Dakar, Senegal, that the fourth regional seminar was held on May 23, 24 and 25, 2022 on « ***The role of the Defense and Security Forces (DSF) in the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) in Africa: the commitment frameworks*** », organized jointly by the Center for Advanced Defense and Security Studies (CHEDS) of Senegal and the Division of Peace and Human Rights (DPHR) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland.

This 4th seminar marks the maturation of the process initiated since 2017, with the objective of promoting the concrete involvement of the DSF in the PVE in West and Central Africa. It was specifically:

- to further structure the PVE for the DSF;
- to refine the differentiation between terrorism and VE, as well as its understanding by the DSF;
- to shed new light on the way of approaching the PVE for the different entities of the DSF, by studying their missions and operating methods, as well as the respective needs for adaptation of the frameworks allowing them to strengthen their role in the PVE.

Sustained by the three (03) previous seminars devoted to PVE dialogue with the DSF, enriched by the preliminary results of the comparative study conducted by the Swiss FDFA and the Center for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), in collaboration with the CHEDS, examining the existing commitment frameworks in seven (07) West African countries¹, this fourth edition therefore essentially addressed “how” the PVE role of the DSF could be strengthened in West and Central Africa. As a prelude, discussions took stock of the analysis of

the threat and its causes. The conclusions made it possible to establish a schematic approach and plans for action with a view to strengthening the PVE role of the DSF in practice.

The exchanges during the workshops and the plenary discussions made it possible to identify ways of adapting the curricular frameworks, to propose areas for strengthening the capacities of the DSF for better consideration of the PVE, to make proposals intended to be the expression of the multiple experiences of relations between civilians and the military into a formal framework; finally, they also made it possible to identify the prospects for the next stages of the PVE Program of the CHEDS-FDFA in favor of the commitment of the DSF in the PVE.

These elements, presented in detail in Chapter III of this report, recommend action on six (06) interdependent and complementary levels:

■ **at the policy level.** Action at this level aims to include in a renewed vision of security, the human security approach and that of protection based on the prevention of violence. This vision is essential for an effective integration of the role of the PVE by the DSF;

■ **at the structural level.** Here, it is a question of integrating the PVE in the philosophy and the operability of the DSF through its foothold in the structural devices of the various bodies;

■ **at the operational level.** The objective of the action at the operational level is the expression into practice of the new vision of the role of the DSF in the PVE;

¹Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

■ **at the resources level.** It is a question of acting at the level of human resources and their capacities to approach this new approach of the PVE in their respective functions. There is also a need for determined action in terms of financial resources devoted to the PVE;;

■ **at transversal level.** The action must be based on a common base: the “how to” based on the tools of inclusion and dialogue, which alone make it possible to achieve the objectives of “security for everything and by everyone” and the prevention of violence;

■ **at regional level.** Action at the regional level is necessary to strengthen common frameworks in terms of the PVE, for the effectiveness of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on public policies in the field of the PVE and the role of the DSF, for the exchange of good practices and for the DSF awareness of the PVE.

At the end of this fourth regional seminar, in order to speed up the implementation of its recommendations, the participants recommended the following measures: : that on their return, they share the achievements

at the national level; each of the countries present at the seminar launches a national workshop for the inclusive sharing of the conclusions; high-level exchanges take place within the framework of regional seminars and interdepartmental meetings, particularly within the framework of ECOWAS², the holding of which would be the guarantee of the expression of a common political will to integrate the PVE into national and regional policies. The seminar hosted nearly eighty (80) representatives from ten (10) countries in West and Central Africa, political leaders, from the Defense and Security Forces (DSF), the Defense and Security Commissions of the National Assemblies, researchers, academics and members of civil society.

The violence of extremist armed groups has been a concern for nearly two decades, all governments, particularly those of West and Central Africa. To limit this violence, the response has always been multiple, although marked by a strong security focus with Defense and Security Forces (DSF) engaged everywhere. However, these efforts have shown their limits since the violence, far from disappearing, has on the contrary spread and amplified

²Economic Community of West African States.

1.Introduction

The option of Prevention has become more and more established and this is how the Secretary General of the United Nations proposed, in 2015, an Action Plan for the Prevention of Extreme Violence (PVE), asking the governments of all the States concerned, to adopt national PVE plans and, above all, to actively mobilize alongside all the nation's driving forces for their implementation.

The Center for Advanced Defense and Security Studies of Senegal and the PVE program of the Division of Peace and Human Rights (DPHR) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland have been in dialogue with the DSF since 2017; this resulted in the organization of three regional seminars (2017, 2018 and 2019) on the theme:

« *Defense and Security Forces in the prevention of violent extremism in Africa* »³.

These seminars are also part of the broader cycle of various regional meetings led by the PVE program of the Swiss FDFA and its various partners since 2016 ⁴. They made possible in-depth exchanges on the meaning of prevention, the importance of research on the causes of violence, the understanding of the civil as well as the military scope of the PVE, the use of specific approaches and tools to reduce this

violence. They also made it possible to underline the central role of dialogue as an instrument allowing, on one hand, the expression of the frustrations of those who are attracted by extreme violence and the search for solutions to put an end to it, and on the other hand, as a tool for harmonious governance of security with the citizens.

It became quite clear during the debates that the institutional frameworks that surround the life of the DSF (doctrines, constitutional and legislative texts, budgets, internal regulations of the various bodies, operational orders, training curricula, for example) were decisive in the role that the latter can play in the PVE.

It is with this perspective and previous work, and also relaunching a dynamic, interrupted for nearly two (02) and a half year due to the pandemic, that the fourth regional seminar was held in Dakar, Senegal, on May 23, 24 and 25, 2022 on

«The role of the defense and security forces (DSF) in the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) in Africa: commitment frameworks», organized jointly by the CHEDS of Senegal and the Swiss FDFA.

Placed under the high responsibility of the Chief of staff of the Minister of Armed Forces of Senegal, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for West Africa and the

³The Dakar regional seminars "Defense and Security Forces in the prevention of violent extremism in Africa" focused:

- on civil-military cooperation for the first
-Report:<http://www.cheds.gouv.sn/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RAPPORT-SEMINAIRE-REGIONAL-2017.pdf> (October 2017);
- on strengthening the army/nation link for the second
-Report:<https://www.cheds.gouv.sn/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RAPPORT-2018.pdf> (October 2018);
- on the synergies and operationalization mechanisms of the preventive approach of the FDS for the third
-Report:<https://www.cheds.gouv.sn/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BAT-Rapport-3ieme-sem.pdf> (October 2019).

⁴See in particular the Regional PVE discussions of Dakar (June 2016), N'Djamena (June 2017) and Algiers (June 2018):

- Algiers 2018
report:https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/1809_Algiers-Meeting-Note-French.pdf
- N'Djamena Report
2017:<https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IPI-E-RPT-Chad-Meeting-NoteEnglish.pdf>
- Dakar Report
2016:https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/1609_Investing-in-Peace-ENGLISH.pdf

Sahel (UNOWAS), the Ambassador of Switzerland in Senegal and the Director General of the CHEDS, this fourth regional seminar was intended to examine the role of the DSF in the PVE with the ambition, to identify the mechanisms and tangible actions to strengthen this commitment and continue to popularize and consolidate the culture of prevention among these key actors that are the DSF.

Thus, based on the observation made previously of the limit of the exclusive military and security approach as a strategy for dealing with extreme violence, and also, on the observation of the central place of the DSF which are in the front line in the face of the threat but also, in contact with the population, the seminar proposed to examine concretely, the ways and means of strengthening this new posture; an approach which imposes a readjustment of the traditional missions of the DSF with prevention and the strengthening of the Army-Nation link

The seminar was able to benefit from a significant resource, in this case, the preliminary results of the comparative study carried out between 2020-2021, by the PVE program of the Swiss FDFA and the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), in collaboration with the CHEDS, and consisting in identifying and systematically analyzing the political, legislative, doctrinal and operational frameworks governing the intervention of the DSF for the PVE in seven (07) from West African countries⁵.

This stage of the dialogue with the DSF of West and Central Africa therefore aimed to focus on the intrinsic elements of the DSF (mission, training, cultural and institutional doctrines, operational capacities, relations between the different forces, etc.), in order to better understand the framework of their intervention in favor of the PVE and to bring

out the needs of their countries, as well as the ways of responding to them.

The main objective of this 4th Regional Seminar was therefore to promote the concrete and effective involvement of the DSF in the PVE in West and Central Africa. Beyond the examination of the commitment frameworks allowing the DSF to get involved in the PVE, this meeting should make it possible to identify tangible ways for their adaptation. It was therefore essentially a question of examining “**how**” the PVE role of the DSF could be strengthened in West and Central Africa. To this end, the work took stock of an analysis of the threat and its causes, which led to a schematic approach and plans for action with a view to strengthening the PVE role of the DSF in practice.

Participants were thus called upon to:

- rely on the lessons of the aforementioned comparative study as well as on the Guidelines identified during the 3rd Regional Seminar in 2019;
- identify and examine the means of strengthening the political, legislative, doctrinal and operational frameworks of the DSF in connection with the PVE;
- identify and examine the means of strengthening the mechanisms allowing the commitment of the DSF in the PVE and the reinforcement at all levels of the PVE culture;
- identify and examine the means of strengthening the frameworks for general training and technical training of the DSF in terms of PVE (curricula and other capacity building);
- exchange on the avenues offered by the good practices of the culture of the DSF and experiences of civil-mili-

⁵Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

tary relations such as the Army-Nation concept of Senegal, the local police, the Ivorian educational kit, the programs for the reintegration of the repentant criminals of Niger, the Joint Security Councils, etc., bearers of lessons for aligning the policies and concepts of Defense and Security with the requirements of the PVE.

I.Prevention of violent extremism: situational analysis in 2022, concepts and policies

Violent extremism has grown in several forms in recent years. Terrorism, a specific form, today constitutes a transnational threat that spares no region of the world. The phenomenon has made Africa a space of geopolitical and geostrategic shocks. The Sahel has become the epicentre of its demonstrations, making Liptako-Gourma and the Lake Tchad basin areas where multifaceted attacks and human rights violations punctuate the daily life of the populations.

The range of root causes crystallizes around the state and what can be considered as its failings. Political instability, the weakness of the DSF and the porosity of the borders maintain latent conflicts and various cycles of violence which are often linked to identitarianism and social injustice. We thus observe a multiplication of extremist groups, an extension of the areas affected and an increase in lethality, as well as a continuous change in the modes of action which vary according to allegiance. Today, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Somalia are among the top 10 countries affected by VE in the world.

The Armed Terrorist Groups (ATG) seek, through their actions, to weaken the central power of the target countries and to delegitimize the State there. By replacing it, they aim to have effective control over criminal economic activities which find in insecurity a favorable context for development. This

criminal economy is, alongside community tensions, a factor favorable to the expansion of ATGs towards coastal countries. The place of ideology in the VE, in particular of religion, is to be reconsidered and above all, not to be overestimated even if it remains one of the factors to be taken into account.

At the regional level, there is a proliferation of initiatives which contributes to the lack of coordination. There are 18 in the Sahel, including the G5-Sahel and further south, the Accra Initiative.

In 2013, ECOWAS adopted the Political Declaration and Common Position in the fight against terrorism, which suggests the establishment of de-radicalization programs. It then adopted, in 2014, a Sahel Strategy which aims to stabilize and develop Sahelian states through infrastructure, pastoralism and education. The regional organization has defined a Counterterrorism Strategy, articulated around three (03) essential pillars which are: prevention, prosecution and compensation, before adopting the 2020-2024 Emergency Action Plan to eradicate terrorism in the ECOWAS region. This plan, in its component 7, emphasizes the PVE, communication and inter-community dialogue.

Beyond the Mali-Burkina-Niger trio, there are concerns shared by the Gulf of Guinea countries. Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State in the Great Sahara (EIGS) extend their influence to coastal countries. While Senegal and Ghana have not experienced attacks on their territories, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Togo have experienced numerous terrorist incursions, particularly from 2020. The different countries are working on PVE strategies, suggested by ECOWAS since 2013, with similar axes (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Response and Social Cohesion). Senegal, Burkina and Togo are in the design phase of their national PVE strategies.

Togo's strategy is based on three (03) orientations. The operational orientation is based on a re-establishment of the DSF, operations in the northern border areas and adherence to the Accra Initiative. The legal and institutional orientation is based on the adoption of the military programming law, an adaptation of the penal code, laws on internal security and cyber, as well as a financial struggle. Finally, the guidance on soft measures concerns the establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV: a holistic and integrated committee), civil-military dialogue, community-based policing, a special program for exposed regions and development projects.

We note in various countries, a weakness of the political will and a problem of appropriation by the various governmental entities which delay the adoption of the national strategies as a main fighting means

The notion of prevention gradually appeared with the proposal of the Action Plan A/70/674 of the SG/UN of 12/24/2015. Prevention is based on the double reference of the 2006 counter-terrorism strategy, which takes a look at International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the United Nations Charter (CNU), which has prescribed since 1946 the supreme agenda for the prevention of violence and extremism. The Action Plan urges to seek the root causes, linked to various forms of exclusion, to provide holistic solutions to VE. Dialogue, a political tool, plays a central role in this quest for inclusion to co-construct living together. The DSF, which have an important role in building peace, must be oriented globally towards human security.

The problems of governance, the weak capacities of prevention and reaction of the various States, the limits of the G5-Sahel and the Accra Initiative add to the obvious difficulty of providing a regional response to

the threat. A redefinition of policies and strategies has gradually become necessary in view of the inability of existing military responses to curb the phenomenon.

Responding to the UN's call, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland adopted in 2016, a Program for the prevention of violent extremism in Africa with various partners including the CHEDS. Prevention is based on the strengthening of good governance and the rule of law, the involvement of populations, the mobilization of young people and women, support for education and job creation, as well as strategic communication for the various stakeholders.

II. Observation of the expansion of the threat, understanding of the causes of violent extremism and responses

■ Threat to coastal countries

The recent attacks by VE groups in the west and south of Burkina Faso, in the north of Benin and Togo, on the border with Ghana and that of Ivory Coast are increasingly worrying. Following the example of the authorities of Burkina Faso, three or even four years ago, those of these countries say they are surprised by the **speed of this advance**, the scale and the expansion of this violence, despite the national measures taken in each of them for a few years.

The lack of consultation (dialogue, always!), national particularities, linguistic differences (distant relations between French-speaking and English-speaking countries), the multiplication of regional processes-alliances, impede true regional cooperation. States are «proud of their borders», it was repeated, and the right of pursuit, a principle which is still very sensitive. The exchange of information remains insufficient and the information services are not yet really cooperative, despite the common border problems.

A sub-regional dynamic is taking shape, however, with the **Accra initiative**, which is based on local responses and does not rely on external support, as was the case for the G5-Sahel; even if the initiative is constituted for the time being, essentially by the mobilization of military and information resources, it offers a framework that could also address the concrete needs of the populations. **The coastal countries have a common political and social history in their northern part.** These regions are much poorer than those on the coast and therefore more susceptible to extremist temptations. Moreover, the conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary people seem to be exacerbated there, to the benefit of the VE who blow on these embers, even more where the stabilization measures of the pastoralists are added to the already strong pre-existing tensions.

■ Causes of violent extremism

The root causes of VE are beginning to be perceived quite clearly by the authorities in sub-Saharan Africa, thanks to the research carried out in recent years and to the experiences they have had. By listing these causes in turn, the participants gave a fairly clear picture of the weaknesses of the State, in particular, with regard to justice (imprecise or badly applied), the fight against exclusion, unfair taxation, the unequal sharing of resources, trafficking (drugs, weapons, migration), obstacles to cross-border relations or the lack of investment in disadvantaged areas.

We also note that the appeal of armed groups is far from being global: a modern national discourse can therefore contradict the delegitimization of the state and the multiple ethnic and communal causes exacerbated by these groups. With an argument that turns out to be mainly financially oriented, the lack of solidarity, the rallies are very often the expression of a need rather than a conviction. "The effort must therefore come from us". It is the absence of the state that legitimizes the groups. This

is how, for example, the groups primarily attack religious and community leaders because they represent continuity and «they have always been there when the State was absent».

■ Current responses

State's response to this situation remains hesitant. The security reaction continues to be predominant affecting strong political measures that can give people affected by VE hope to reintegrate into national, social and political life. Faced with these facts, the question that has therefore arisen concerns the PVE: if the evolution of threats is still surprising, despite what we know about the causes of VE, does the awareness of the importance of the PVE by the authorities of sub-Saharan Africa follow the same obscure and slow course?

It is time to take in hand rapid and comprehensive preventive measures that meet the needs of the populations and to concretize the role of the DSF in this dynamic.

III. Challenges of the PVE role of the DSF and how to respond to them

■ DSF and need for PVE

There are good practices of the DSF in various African countries even if it should, all the same, be noted that they also constitute causes of radicalization pushing the populations towards extremist groups. The VE phenomenon is multi-causal and requires concerted action by different actors to contain it. Lessons learned from the fight against terrorism show that essentially military responses are insufficient and do not address the root causes. The place of the DSF remains, however, central in the overall approach of the PVE since they are often the only representatives of the State in certain parts of their country. The role of the DSF must be refocused, so that they can meet the challenges posed by the extremists.

Dialogue thus becomes a tool for inclusion. It requires introspection at the DSF level so that people feel comfortable using their services. If the dialogue supposes mutual concessions, it is important to wonder about what one can concede to the extremists. This is why SSR processes must be concerned with the ability of armies to fully play their role.

This is the whole point of the course of the DSF-PVE dialogue led by the CHEDS of Senegal and the PVE program of the Swiss FDFA. It was based on the Regional Discussions and is articulated around two (02) pillars which are the regional seminars and the round tables. The Regional Discussions (2016, 2017 and 2018) constituted a first framework for popularizing the PVE, involving various satellite targets (women, young people, etc.). The regional seminars (2017, 2018, 2019 and 2022) made it possible to address the political and institutional frameworks, as well as the operational synergies necessary for the implementation of the PVE. The round tables (2017, 2018, 2019), a natural extension of the seminars and organized on the sidelines of the editions of the International Forum on Peace and Security in Dakar, mainly focused on the mandate of the DSF and peace alliances.

These different activities opened up regional perspectives for the implementation of the SGUN's PVE Action Plan, addressed the central role of the public authorities, and initiated a debate on a new doctrine for the use of the DSF. They made it possible to better contextualize the PVE approach, to suggest a multiplication of DSF-population dialogue interfaces, to provide the bases for advocacy for the integration of the PVE into the SSR processes and to propose ways of operationalizing the PVE by the DSF.

The PVE also appears in other initiatives of the CHEDS, which has published four (04) briefing papers on the issue. In parallel with

supporting the survey on the various frameworks, the CHEDS led several workshops with local authorities and the media in the creation of exchange platforms between the DSF and other actors.

The background of the CHEDS-FDFA dialogue has made it possible to lay the foundations for an appropriation of the PVE issue at different levels. However, the political world and the private sector are not yet sufficiently impregnated. In another vein, traditional authorities and young people should be more involved in order to build relationships of trust. Finally, it is necessary to continue advocacy for the PVE at the national level, at the level of ECOWAS and then to support the implementation of national programs.

During the 4th regional seminar, beyond the general responses that States can provide to these challenges, the specific question of the relevance for the DSF of developing PVE programs was at the center of the work. Although in a strong minority contrary to what we experienced a few years ago at the very beginning of this work, the proponents of a strict separation between political decision-makers and the DSF, between a narrow and sovereign interpretation of the mandate of the DSF and dynamic visions of the role they must play in the co-construction of the Nation, made their point of view heard.

But most of the participants, including very senior officers, strongly pleaded for a profound reform of the missions of the DSF. The conditions on the ground, the limited budgets, the isolation in which they sometimes feel confined, force them to take the bull by the horns. *The enemy is no longer outside. He's there.*

The reform must extend to the structures of the DSF, to the cooperation between the services, to the professionalization of the agents at all levels and to the modern evaluation of the deployments. It must be guided by a **different and modern vision**

of the role of the DSF: that of embodying a useful State, at the service of the populations and which protects them. Which would quite simply amount to participating in the prevention of violence, by not nurturing the causes that can lead to violence but, on the contrary, by nurturing the needs for respect, peace and protection.

■ New vision, reforms and training

The acknowledgment of a new vision of the role of the DSF and of a profound reform which must extend to the structures of the DSF, to the cooperation between the services, to the professionalization of the agents at all levels, to the modern evaluation of the deployments were therefore set.

So, what is the responsibility of political actors in this new configuration? What is the relationship between them and the DSF?

The debates clearly showed that a new wind was blowing. **The DSF demand better political decisions, more dialogue and more listening**

What can be done so that they receive clear guidelines corresponding to the urgency of the situation? In a word, what dialogue between **DSF and political decision-makers**?

These questions also concern the PVE (and not only the security response). **How can the notion of global, human security penetrate into the armed forces if the politicians do not understand the issues?** How to train them in the new dimensions of the Defense of the Nation, including the PVE?

But it was also said that the DSF have their own active role to play. For this, it is first essential that they deeply integrate this notion within them, which is far from certain. According to many, **«resistance to change is inherent in the military»**. It's a group culture that needs to be shaken up. In addition, questions of the financial sha-

ring of budgets often come encumber the decisions».

It was thus proposed by several participants, members of the DSF, concrete reforms of the functioning within the institutions of defense and security, in order to integrate the PVE in the philosophy and the operability of their life. **The idea of creating PVE cells at different levels of the military hierarchy, including flying cells, is gaining ground.** It was well received.

Another idea, already expressed but very useful in helping to limit stigmatization: that of the importance of **local recruitment** of armed men in the regions where they operate, which, in addition to the advantage of knowing the field and the culture.

It was also underlined that the action of the DSF in favor of the PVE should not be seen as a monopoly. It must **fit into all the concrete actions carried out by the other actors** (see below). It happens, however, that the DSF are often the only representatives of the State in areas of insecurity. Their behavior and their initiatives must, in these cases, not only be exemplary, but useful and meet the needs of the populations.

Finally, it was recognized that this is a long-term job, "a painstaking job". It will have to continue alongside the urgent training of soldiers and their leaders, within the framework of explicit legal and operational texts ("they must be assigned") which allow the DSF to change the way they look at their profession and make them real PVE agents.

■ DSF with other actors of the PVE

The persistence of the extremist peril has required an exploration of root causes and increasingly inclusive approaches between a variety of actors.

Faced with the development of VE in its area, the Conseil de l'Entente (CE), made

up of Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo, has favored prevention with partners such as DCAF. It has also established cooperation with ECOWAS in a logic of complementarity. The organization has held several workshops on the PVE and holds an annual Council of Ministers on the subject. The CE emphasizes the sharing of information for decisive actions, development initiatives, dialogue around social components, concerted management of border areas and cross-border cooperation. In the logic of the organization, it is essential to invest in the training of the DSF for a good dynamic of the PVE.

It is the role of civil society to act as an interface between populations, the DSF and other administrations to facilitate the necessary dialogue. This is the relevance of the organization of Community Forum on Security in Solenzo and Nouna (Burkina).

Thus, in the context of exclusions in matters of justice, some universities (Burkina, Mali, Niger) are making great awareness-raising efforts to support the populations. Civil society contributes to capacity building on human rights and IHL issues for the benefit of the DSF in the various countries, even if there is a crisis of confidence between these actors in the conflict zones.

Civil society action is encouraged at the regional level. Article 38 of the ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (2016) and Article 74 of the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (2013) support the participation of civil society in the design and execution of public R/SSG policies.

An important component of civil society, women's organizations also contribute to the PVE in a context where traditions do not allow great visibility for these actors. The observation is that young people involved in extremist groups maintain rela-

tionships, sometimes close, with women, mothers or wives, who retain the ability to listen despite violent events. This lever has allowed, in Cameroon, the return of many extremists in families with the initiatives of MediaWomen4Peace, an organization which has been able to rely on public authorities and traditional authorities. It is a success that suggests the idea of a consultation framework between the DSF women and the women actors of civil society.

Local elected representatives are other actors in the PVE whose prerogatives of administrative policing and proximity to local realities accentuate the potential for warning. Indeed, the materialization of violent extremism is often preceded by complaints through various channels. The symbiosis between the local elected representative and the populations, facilitated by his legitimacy, allows the feedback of information on security issues. It is this legitimacy that also allows him to address the phenomena of social exclusion and the bad practices of the administrations and services that are sources of radicalization. All things that make the credibility of local elected representatives be encouraged to maintain useful contact with the populations. This is the whole point of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development (of the AU, 2014), whose ratification by the States would be a decisive contribution to the PVE.

During this 4th seminar, it was immediately recognized that the institutional culture of the DSF has fundamental difficulty in adapting to the new realities on the ground. Admittedly, the pressure of the VE obliges everyone to seek immediate or longer-term solutions, but this adaptation is difficult.

The idea of taking a close interest in the needs of the populations is gaining ground within the DSF, but the violence of the VE still challenges the soldier when it comes to understanding what motivates

people to question the social and political order of the Nation and to commit the horrors they witness almost daily. Revenge seems to be the soldier's first reaction.

This Army-Nation relationship is still shaken and it is not surprising to see how much dialogue between populations and the DSF is still limited, or still seen above all as useful for collection of information. In reality, relations between the populations and the DSF remain very tense, even if the police and gendarmes, like the soldiers, are in constant contact with the population. *"They are the ones who create the problems, who beat up, who extort, who carry out extra-judicial executions"*.

Between the DSF and the populations, a certainty (still quite theoretical, it is true) runs through the debates: the DSF must first respond to the calls and needs of the populations and not apply a program established without them ("**nothing about us, and for us, without us**").

This approach is urgent because more and more people are leaving their places of residence, either to go to protected places or to join armed groups. The DSF must therefore invest **in the real needs of the populations** and useful infrastructure, without, however, replacing the private sector which creates jobs.

The presence of the DSF in sensitive areas also affects the issue of dialogue with armed groups.

How should you go about it? Are the DSF equipped for this, do they have the authorization?

The response was, surprisingly, generally positive (with still some reluctance because of the sovereign role of the DSF and the supremacy of politics) because everyone knows that the groups have close ties with the inhabitants of the localities: "They are our dads, moms, husbands, brothers or cousins". But with caveats: a dialogue with

religious, community and opinion leaders must first be established upstream.

"What does the PVE mean for the neighborhood leader, the police commissioner, the mayor or the commandant? ".

The DSF must clearly understand the stakes of a possible negotiation and support the local populations rather than carrying out such a dialogue themselves. This dialogue must be part of all the contacts, training and activities that they undertake with and for the populations.

The PVE must be at the center of these approaches since it is global and based on dialogue.

For the dissemination of the PVE within the populations, it was recommended, on several occasions, to resort to retired (veterans) of the **DSF and volunteers**. It is a question of using the national reserve and thus creating a pool of trainers by setting up a national body of reservists.

It was also proposed to generalize military service and use national civil service for the PVE.

IV. Norms and standards of the PVE, national processes for developing a PVE framework and the contribution of political actors and civil and research society

There are a number of documents which, at the international and regional levels, frame the PVE. From the UN to the AU, via regional economic communities and peace and defense alliances, the production of standards testifies to an interest in the issue. However, these standards and mechanisms are not sufficiently implemented. These texts do not fit with certain contexts and do not address how the DSF should operate. The result is a lack of synergies, implementation difficulties and weak suitability. As part of the operationali-

zation process, States must be encouraged to invest in border areas to create jobs and improve living conditions; to put the population at the center of the PVE; to promote community services by the DSF and, finally, to strengthen financial support for PVE mechanisms.

In most of the States addressed, the PVE process has been initiated, very often with the DSF. There is a participatory and inclusive approach. It should, however, be noted that national PVE strategies, at different rates of progress, do not always stem from a national security strategy. This poses a real problem of consistency. By way of illustration:

- Ghana, Niger and Mali have defined their national strategies and are at the funding stage;
- Benin has completed its national strategy and is awaiting implementation;
- Ivory Coast is at the level of the action plan;
- Cameroon, Senegal, Burkina and Togo are at the design stage. In Togo, the inclusive discussions went all the way down to the cantons.

PVE strategies are often accompanied by virtually unattainable budgetary requirements.

There is an external dependence for financing which limits the implementation and pushes the States to carry out the least costly activities: this raises the problem of coherence.

Political actors and CSO are globally involved in the diagnosis and development of PVE strategies. They have the advantage of having direct access to populations and contribute to the creation of databases.

The involvement of the world of research should be encouraged, in order to strengthen the place of the human sciences in the training of the DSF, as well as the technical dimension (professions) in the recruitment of personnel. The decisive involvement of political actors could be encouraged through steering mechanisms that allow effective participation of these actors.

■ Group work on PVE-related frameworks in West Africa

Beyond the elements resulting from the studies⁶ carried out in certain countries, group work on frameworks has provided additional working areas.

■ Development of policy frameworks requires a prerequisite, a strong political commitment to integrate the PVE into all DSF initiatives and a systemic conception of violent extremism at the national and regional level. It is a process that should be at the origin of the development of the strategy and spread out at all levels (ministry, international partners, CSO, etc.). While it is often suggested that the DSF take initiatives and help politicians to make informed decisions about the PVE, the verticality of the hierarchical relationships constitutes an objective limit to be considered.

■ Advocacy with regional organizations is an alternative for instilling momentum at the national level through the adoption of standards and the creation of integrated forces. The African Peer Review Mechanism could help to better assess the political will of States through the indicators of decision-making and resource mobilization

■ The legislative framework consists of a plurality of texts. It must be proactive in consolidating political will through texts. It is therefore necessary for the DSF to take ownership of the PVE, which can guide

⁶https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/PVE_Report_FR.pdf.

legislative initiatives. Raising the awareness of parliamentarians on the PVE can also go through the organization of seminars and workshops by structures such as the CHEDS. The counterpart of the texts of laws is justice. In the areas where the ATG operate, there are reports of long preventive detentions which become factors of radicalization. The judicialization of operations in Niger is a solution to be popularized.

■ The doctrinal framework is called upon to evolve. The nature of the threat has changed and requires a refocusing of DSF doctrine on the PVE. The Army-Nation aspect should be strengthened by a commitment of the armies to development, civic construction and a strong culture of dialogue.

■ The operational frameworks are based on the normative framework. The example of Niger is interesting in that it proposes to ease the factors of radicalization. It relies on local policing, military engineering actions for the benefit of populations, the place of the army in the provision of health care and the securing of humanitarian convoys..

■ Curricular frameworks appear to be marginalized. PVE training is struggling to exist in DSF training centers in different countries. The teaching of IHL is, however, a shared achievement to be consolidated. States can endorse the work of the African Center for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) for the training of the DSF.

■ The structural integration of the PVE in the various bodies of the DSF is a real challenge to its operationalization. It was proposed to set up PVE units based on what already exists, in particular the focal points with inclusive structures working on the issue.

■ Although the PVE concept is relatively new, there are many useful practices that would benefit the region if disseminated. These are mainly local security committees, which are important initiatives benefiting from a legal framework. With a plural composition, they carry out the security diagnosis and propose solutions. The same applies to the promotion of development and employment policies in high-risk areas, particularly cross-border areas (Example PUMA-PUDC in Senegal).

■ The forms and spaces of interaction and dialogue are of great importance to build the necessary trust between actors. National solidarity remains the anchor point. The formation of self-defense groups constitutes a framework for dialogue but entails many risks in relation to the deviations which can be sources of radicalization. National cohesion days offer opportunities and benefit from useful media coverage for raising awareness.

■ The resources allocated to the PVE are of various kinds. Symbolic resources are made up of solidarity actions, events and the tradition of dialogue. Human resources rely on language development and staff trained in this regard. Financial resources are as important as they are problematic. National mechanisms should be found to fund the implementation of PVE strategies before threats materialize.

V. Perspectives for the DSF in the PVE

Today, the DSF are fighting against an enemy that the old criteria of appreciation cannot grasp. This uncertainty plunges the DSF automatically and pragmatically into reaction. We must reposition ourselves by keeping the initiative in prevention. The human security paradigm makes people the object of security, not the state. It completes the classic orientation of national

security, the purpose of which was also aimed at the peace of mind of the citizen. Human security calls for participatory governance, decentralization, dialogue and inclusiveness.

In this context of expansion of the VE, it is necessary to reconcile the classic concept of national security with that of human security. This implies that human security derives from the national security orientation and strategy of States. It is, then, based on the centrality of law and human rights.

West African states face many threats. The challenges of sovereignty, national cohesion and stability, as well as governance deficits and the abusive use of force pose risks to peace and lead to challenges to the established order. Extremism can thus be understood as the rejection of the general acceptance of social beliefs, norms, way of life, legal and political frameworks. The anchors of the stability of the State are therefore justice and democracy which induce peace. They lead to development and security.

Links appear between the traditional missions of the DSF, which require the use of legitimate violence, and the PVE when they are carried out with respect for human rights. This respect makes it possible to avoid the resentment of populations and opponents that are sources of radicalization. The other missions of the DSF, in particular assistance to populations and collective security operations, have a direct link with the PVE in that they reinforce and anticipate the peace of mind of the populations.

The inclusion of the PVE in the various frameworks begins with awareness. The shift from the state-centric to the population-centric paradigm has implications that go beyond mere discourse. It is a question of including the paradigm of human security in the preambles of the texts framing the DSF, allowing them to carry out specific missions of the PVE. Then, the strategic

centers must advocate for this paradigm shift with the political and security authorities. Finally, it will be necessary to adapt the doctrines of employment to the PVE as well as the curricula of the DSF schools, in order to establish its spirit.

The prerequisite for proper application of the PVE in the DSF is to clearly assign them this role in public policies. They will therefore have to promote it in their areas of responsibility and organize their headquarters and units accordingly. PVE-DSF units could be made up of trained and qualified personnel to carry out diagnoses in their areas of responsibility, identify vulnerabilities, propose solutions and monitor implementation. The PVE-DSF should also target the DSF (active personnel) themselves who are exposed to radicalization and violent extremism. It should be specified that the PVE approach of the DSF is only a contribution, albeit a decisive one, alongside that of other actors. It should only be done when there is a real comparative advantage.

The 2019 seminar, which aimed to identify mechanisms for operationalizing the PVE among the DSF, made several observations. They concerned, in the first place, the feeling of abandonment created by the institutional and social absence of the State, the progression of VE in border areas and the imprecision of military and civil justice in connection with defense. Secondly, it was a question of pointing out the essential nature of the DSF in the process of the PVE, the need to understand its challenges and to appropriate the legal framework, the need to reduce the gap between the DSF and the populations, and, finally, the requirements of cooperation between these two actors in the design and implementation of the PVE.

The operationalization process cannot therefore save efforts to understand the PVE, by addressing the root causes, nor the capacity building needs of the DSF. The avenues for commitment, at different

levels, depend on political will, the consistency of multi-actor dialogue frameworks and the inclusive nature of PVE public policy development frameworks. Finally, it will be a question at the regional and international levels, of harmonizing the standards and anticipating their coherence in the contexts of the African States exposed to the extremist danger.

In view of the findings and requirements, the issue of decentralization turns out to be an important level in the operationalization of the PVE. However, in this context of crisis, we observe a decline in decentralization with a strengthening of the powers of the central administration. The implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development (2014) would help leverage its positive externalities for the PVE in this context.

Culture of prevention, the link between traditional missions of the DSF and the PVE, and the implementation of the guidelines identified in 2019

The in-depth group discussions made it possible to address these various points.

The DSF have different missions which affect their culture of prevention. It is therefore important to communicate with the populations on the missions and mandates of the various DSF entities. Appreciation of their image depends on proximity and dialogue with the various components of society which are partners in the collection of human information. The DSF can rely on former DSF personnel for intermediation with the populations, particularly the youth component. They must carry out strategic communication and make room for digital technology in the process of operationalizing the PVE. The creative industries also offer good prospects for improving relations between the DSF and the population and building trust.

Lessons learned from conflict zones suggest exploring territorial recruitment for

better integration of the DSF in the areas of intervention and training of personnel on the cultures of the areas where they are called upon to act.

Prevention requires an integrated approach to development policies, taking into account the PVE from the design phase. This allows for consistency and facilitates resource mobilization. The implementation of the orientations identified in 2019 requires efforts of various kinds and at several levels.

- On a national level, the DSF should be fully involved in the development of PVE strategies and related action plans. The adoption of specific texts should facilitate the updating of training doctrines and curricula. The political will, desired at the national level, should combine mechanisms for internal funding and monitoring-evaluation of the operationalization of the PVE.

- At the regional level, the production of standards should consider the constants of national contexts in order to facilitate their integration. To overcome curricular limitations, the drafting of a handbook on the nature, causes, actors and tools to be deployed in the PVE would allow the implementation of the PVE in training and harmonization of practices within the framework of integrated forces or joint operations. The establishment of a monitoring-evaluation system at the regional level could constitute a motivation for the national dynamics and open a virtuous framework of competition.

- At the international level, actions guided by the UN Charter and the UNSG Action Plan on the PVE should allow a good quality in the management of violent extremism. The attention of international partners must be drawn to the need to include the DSF in strategies against VE and to contribute to the improvement of security governance through the depolitization of the DSF, equity and accountability.

VI. Recommendations

At the end of the three-day seminar, recommendations emerged for popularizing the culture of the PVE and strengthening the role of the DSF in the PVE

•At national level

■ Popularization of the PVE culture

Popularize the PVE culture by accelerating the validation of the process of developing an inclusive national PVE strategy. It would be necessary to ensure the integration of all actors, in particular DSF, women, parliamentarians, local elected representatives, religious and community leaders, as well as CSO.

■ Promoting inclusive dialogue

Promote dialogue and conflict prevention as a privileged political tool of governance by offering chances for forgiveness and reconciliation. It is therefore necessary to multiply and perpetuate the DSF-population dialogue interfaces. A PVE and population assistance office should be set up within each headquarters.

■ Strengthening advocacy for the PVE

The lack of suitability requires strengthening advocacy for the PVE with politicians and the private sector at the national and ECOWAS levels, as well as sensitizing parliamentarians on the PVE. Civil society and structures such as the CHEDS should play a leading role.

■ Implementation of the PVE by the DSF

It can be based on good practices shared during the work and on other avenues.

•A few illustrative good practices

Some interesting practices from the point of view of the PVE were presented during the work and, without ambition to be exhaustive but rather illustrative by the variety of examples cited, the following list invites everyone to draw inspiration from them and to popularize them. Not all of them explicitly state a role for the DSF, which are however most of the time involved in various ways⁷.

⁷ These practices will be systematically listed in the report, which will be published in the second half of 2022, presenting the results of the comparative study carried out in 2020-2021 by the PVE program of the Swiss FDFA and the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), in collaboration with the CHEDS, and consisting in identifying and systematically analyzing the political, legislative, doctrinal and operational frameworks governing the intervention of the DSF for the PVE in seven countries of the West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, Togo).

COUNTRY	GOOD PRACTICES
Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adoption of a National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism in 2021. - The merging of the police and the gendarmerie into a single body of Republican Police. - The establishment of DSF/Population and DSF/local elected representatives interfaces. - The creation of the Beninese Agency for the Integrated Management of Border Areas (ABéGIEF). - The creation of pasture management and security committees.
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adoption of a National Security Policy (PSN) implemented under the responsibility of the General Secretariat of National Defense. - The adoption in 2022 of a National PVE Strategy and a National Social Cohesion Strategy. - The contribution of civil society to capacity building in human rights and international humanitarian law, including for the DSF. - The existence of the National Center for Strategic Studies (CNES).
Cameroun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The participation of women in strengthening the visibility of peace initiatives and on security issues, including in interaction with the DSF. - Exploiting the link between young people involved in armed groups and their mothers and wives, with a view to their return to society, with the support of the FDS.
Ivory Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The establishment of Departmental Security Committees created by Ministerial Order, accompanied by civil-military cells composed of CSO and DSF. - Establishment of Ethics Advisory Committees in police stations. - Development of training modules on DSF and IHL in schools to raise students' awareness of the action of the DSF and IHL. - The establishment of a National Peace Council with the involvement of traditional chiefs for mediation. - Periodic public awareness of DSF operational units on IHL. - The design of the educational kit appealing to religious, researchers and intelligence services distributed in the various departments.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The concept of decentralization of security, starting from the National Security Council down to its branches at regional and district level. - Education handbook "Preventing Violent Extremism in Ghana" available to the Internal Security Forces.

Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The adoption of the National Framework for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Terrorism (NAFPCVET) (2019). - The establishment of a National Peace Council and its branches. - The development of a National PVE Strategy specifying the role of each actor and whose implementation is also planned at the decentralized level. - The responsibility of the local police assumed by local elected officials to facilitate the reporting of information on safety. - Legal assistance for suspects arrested in the context of the fight against terrorism to avoid long preventive detentions, sources of discontent. - The adoption of a law on the chiefdom involved in mediation. - The existence of the National Center for Strategic and Security Studies (CNESS)
Central African Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of a National PVE Strategy and establishment of an Implementation Committee, involving in particular the DSF. - The establishment of a consultation framework between women members of the DSF and women members of CSO.
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Army-Nation component as a privileged framework for civil-military coordination and the participation of the Armed Forces in national development. - The support of the Armed Forces Health Service and Garrison Medical Centers (CMG) to the supervising Ministry, to strengthen the health offer to the populations. - The establishment of an interdepartmental unit for the fight against terrorism (CICO) a national intelligence coordination structure (DGRN). - The establishment of a local police agency. - The existence of a civil society coordination framework. - The existence of the Centre des Hautes Etudes de Défense et de Sécurité (CHEDS). - The presence of women in the highest positions in the Ministries of Armed Forces and Foreign Affairs.
Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The appointment of a Mediator of the Republic. - The establishment of an interdepartmental Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV) and its branches. - The decentralization to cantonal level of the process of developing the National PVE Strategy, adopted in 2022. - The creation of the Peace keeping Center and the High Authority for Reconciliation. - The development of a Strategy for the fight against terrorism, carried out by a high national committee headed by the DSF leaders. - The establishment of a mechanism for engaging the DSF in the PVE.

In addition to these good practices, it is necessary to specify the mandate of the DSF in the ENP and to adapt the doctrine for the use of forces and curricula to the ENP, to integrate the PVE into the operational planning (judicialization) and the scenarios for annual exercises of the SDF, to empower the SDF through the training of dedicated personnel qualified to carry out diagnosis in their areas of responsibility, identify vulnerabilities, propose solutions and monitor implementation.

It would also be appropriate to build on what already exists by strengthening the link between the DSF and the population through their involvement in civic actions, the development of awareness-raising documents on the role of the DSF in the PVE for the attention of the communities and translating them into local languages.

This implementation involves developing local policing and ensuring the brand image of the DSF. The inclusion of ICTs in communication and the use of creative industries can facilitate the operationalization of the PVE.

More specifically with regard to training and communication, we can mention:

■ Training

The PVE is a difficult approach to pin down. Specific training is therefore required, in military schools and specialized units in particular. We need simple modules, useful at all levels of the hierarchies. Even if these texts should also serve the whole of civil society, it was clearly underlined that the DSF must begin by training themselves by relying on their own financial and human resources

A national or even regional agency responsible for structuring and promoting the PVE should be created, with different

levels of adaptation. This new task must be entrusted to the civilian services of the armies. It was pointed out that: "When concepts are not codified, they lack strength and value". It is a matter of integrating the PVE strategy into all military or civilian development programs. The security situation demands it.

A request was also made on this occasion for the DSF to have a guide on all the practices of the PVE. It should include modules concerning doctrine, training and the multiple actions and examples already identified; which would make it easier to understand what is required of the DSF. This guide would also serve to give ideas on the dialogue at the many levels of communication between the DSF and populations as well as the functioning of the DSF on social networks.

A reflection at the level of the headquarters was required for this purpose. It was mentioned on this occasion that the manual on the PVE, as well as the joint program of PVE courses undertaken by the African Center for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) of the African Union, with its Swiss partner, are available tools which provide a basic response to such needs.

■ Communication

"The army does not know how to communicate". It has neither the habit nor the experience. However, the PVE and the bringing closer of the DSF and the population will only be achieved when the latter understand the positive role of the FDS and that security is really everyone's business.

Debates, public exchanges and spaces of communication are therefore necessary so that the populations see what the State does for them.

Moreover, people are eager to know. “Now is a good time to infuse the values of the PVE. Everyone must be an actor of communication on peace”.

The DSF must also use social networks. To this end, they must be trained and also communicate on the sanctions applied to the offending soldiers: “the sanction is the debt that must be paid to society”.

The concept of PVE is broad and involves **multiple sectoral policies**. The examples of the application of UN Resolution 1325 on women and UNICEF's advocacy on child protection show how difficult it is to make global policies effective. Those in charge of PVE advocacy must learn from this.

■ A pattern that is emerging to concretize the commitment of the DSF in the PVE

Rich exchanges during the work specify ways to concretize the involvement of the DSF in the PVE.

The table below schematically presents the efforts that have been recommended to strengthen the commitment of the DSF in the PVE. They are at several levels, interdependent and complementary.

These efforts are to be undertaken by the DSF themselves, but also by other actors with political responsibilities or operational capacities essential to the implementation of the PVE.

ACTING AT THE LEVEL :

- The action aims to include in a renewed vision of security, the approach of human security and that of protection based on the prevention of violence. This vision is essential for an effective integration of the PVE role by the DSF: they only act for what they are assigned, and this mission is determined by the political executives.
 - Integrate the PVE into the definition of public Defense and Security policies.
 - Ensure (and speed up if necessary) the adoption of national inclusive PVE strategies, integrating all actors, including the DSF. Also ensure their implementation on a participatory basis and applied at national and local level.
- Public policies**
- Mobilize the headquarters of the various Defense and Security corps, so that they engage in an active dialogue with the political decision-makers on human security and the participation of the DSF in the prevention of violence.
 - Engage in dialogue with parliamentarians, and in particular the Defense and Security Committees of National Assemblies, for active participation in the development of the vision of Defense and Security policies promoting living together in peace and putting the citizen at the heart of security governance.
 - Involve women and young people in the development of public defense and security policies, particularly through CSO, in order to promote shared governance of security.

Structural

- The aim here is to integrate the PVE into the philosophy and operability of the DSF through its inclusion in the structural systems of the various bodies.
- Set up, within the various DSF corps, PVE units, located within the command headquarters; ensure that these PVE units are provided with dedicated and trained human resources capable of mobility, or supplemented by cells integrated into operations.
- Integrate the PVE into Security Sector Reforms (SSR), ensuring that these provide an inclusive platform of actors.
- Ensure women's access to strategic positions in Defense and Security structures.
- Use the DSF national reserve to promote the PVE within the Defense and Security corps and among the population; create a pool of resource persons by setting up a national corps of reservists.
- Rely on strategic public or university centers, in their advisory mission, to reinforce the integration of the PVE in the doctrines of the DSF.

Operational

- The objective is to translate into practice the new vision of the role of the DSF in the PVE.
- Adapt force employment doctrines to the PVE.
- Integrate the PVE into operational planning.
- Establish frameworks for dialogue between the DSF and the various actors in the field, for the promotion of peace and the prevention of violence, through formal and permanent dialogue frameworks, or through ad hoc dialogue processes.
- Establish a peace architecture in the States, at central and local level, including all the actors concerned, including the DSF, local elected representatives, women and young people.
- Consider the role of the DSF, and prepare them, for dialogue with armed groups.
- Develop local policing and ensure the brand image of the DSF.
- Strengthen the link between the DSF and the population through the involvement of the DSF in civic actions (civil-military relations).
- Ensure that the inspection bodies or similar act effectively on the respect by the DSF of their mandates and rules of commitment, in particular in their relations with the local populations.
- Ensure effective communication on the mandates of the DSF and collect concerns and solutions put forward by citizens.
- Develop public awareness documents on the role of the DSF in the PVE for the attention of the communities and translate them into local languages.

**Resources
(human, material
and financial)**

- Strengthening the action of the DSF in the PVE, acting at the level of human resources and their capacities to address this new approach to the PVE in their respective functions is essential. There is also a need for determined action in terms of financial resources devoted to the PVE.
- Ensure republican Defense and Security corps, based on professional recruitment, with attention to local recruitment in the regions where they operate.
- Ensure the integration of courses or modules on PVE and its tools, particularly on dialogue
- Make available and use the PVE Handbook developed by the African Union ACSRT and Switzerland. Complete it with modules specific to the commitment of the DSF in the PVE.
- Implement at the level of the States of the region, the joint PVE course program of the ACSRT of the African Union and Switzerland.
- Provide effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the integration of the PVE in Defense and Security policies and in the operability of the DSF.
- Mobilize the capacities of engineering and social or medical services of the DSF to serve the local populations.
- Advocate for the financing of the PVE from internal resources.
- Strengthen the consideration of the PVE by the national assemblies in their role of adoption and budgetary control.

Transversal

- Action at the political, structural, operational and resource levels must be based on a common base: the "how to", based on the tools of inclusion and dialogue, which alone can achieve the objectives of "security for all and by all" and the prevention of violence.
- Ensure that the processes for developing and implementing public defense and security policies are open to all public and civil society actors, while complying with their responsibilities.
- Ensure the establishment of formal frameworks or dialogue processes as tools for shared governance of peace and security.
- Ensure that members of the DSF, at all levels, are informed of the centrality of the tool of dialogue, to be systematically placed at the heart of their rules of commitment

Regional

- Action at the regional level is necessary to strengthen common frameworks in terms of the PVE, for the effectiveness of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on public policies in the field of the PVE and the role of the DSF, for the exchange of good practices and for the public awareness of the DSF to the PVE.
 - Promote a coherent global response through the establishment of common PVE policy frameworks at the regional level.
 - Engage in advocacy for the ratification by Member States of ECOWAS instruments relating or relevant to the PVE.
 - Promote regional consultation frameworks to strengthen the role of the DSF in prevention.
 - Strengthen the early warning and information sharing system by integrating a section dedicated to the PVE.
 - Use the opportunity of the fifth regional dialogue seminar PVE with the DSF, to consolidate the effective implementation of this plan of commitment and to encourage and measure progress.
-

VII. Setting up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism

It is indicated to put in place a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the PVE to ensure the inclusiveness of the design, the overall consistency and the effectiveness of the implementation. In addition to the national mechanisms, it should make it possible to monitor the dynamics of the States in the PVE and to identify convergence criteria for an overall movement in this new paradigm with the following courses of action at the regional level:

■ Stabilization of PVE documentation

The aim is to stabilize the concepts used in line with the partners and to resolve the problem of contextualizing the texts, to take into account the design of a reference document for the framework of the action of the DSF in the PVE and to draw up a

regional handbook on the nature, causes, actors and tools to be deployed for the PVE.

■ Quest for global complementarity

It is necessary to promote the coherence of the multiple initiatives to combat violent extremism to ensure a comprehensive response and to promote regional consultation frameworks, under the leadership of ECOWAS, to strengthen the role of the DSF in prevention.

■ Strengthening early warning

The early warning and information sharing system (West Africa Network for Peace) should be strengthened, with particular emphasis on a section dedicated to VE.

Conclusion

The 4th Regional Seminar organized by the Centre des Hautes Etudes de Défense et de Sécurité (CHEDS) of Senegal and the PVE Program of the Peace and Human Rights Division (DPDH) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland was held in Dakar on 23,24,25 May 2022.

It was attended by representatives of West and Central African countries, mainly from the defense sector, political leaders representing the defense and security committees of national assemblies, university researchers and active members of civil society.

The seminar focused on the role of the DSF in the prevention of violent extremism, with the aim of identifying mechanisms and concrete courses of action to ensure the involvement of the DSF in the PVE and the dissemination and strengthening of the culture of prevention.

Thus, on the basis of an uncompromising evaluation of the military and security approach as a strategy for combating violent extremism for over a decade, the seminar proposed a salutary paradigm shift consisting not of abandoning the kinetic approach, but of a return to tackling the root causes of violent extremism through anticipation and prevention.

The seminar identified the DSF, who are on the front line of the threat and sometimes the only representatives of the State in the area of operations, as decisive actors in the PVE.

Aware that this new posture imposes a re-articulation of the traditional missions of the DSF with Prevention and the strengthening of the Army-Nation link, the experts made recommendations and identified "good practices" which will have to be consolidated at national and regional level to strengthen the political, legislative, doctrinal and curricular frameworks in connection with the PVE.V.

The lessons learned from the seminar should be disseminated to national and regional actors and authorities to serve as a basis for integrating the PVE into the doctrines and practices of the DSF.

Finally, they will allow high-level exchanges within the framework of regional seminars and annual ECOWAS interdepartmental meetings on the PVE, the holding of which would be the guarantee of the expression of political will for the outcome and validation of the process of developing an inclusive national strategy in each of the countries of the community space

Index: prevention - violent extremism - defense and security forces

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About the co-organizers

The Center for Advanced Defense and Security Studies (CHEDS) of Senegal

The Center for Advanced Defense and Security Studies (CHEDS) of Senegal was created in January 2013. Its general mission is to meet the State's need for knowledge and expertise on strategic issues relating to security, foreign policy, science, technology and economic and social phenomena.

Issues related to the preservation of public peace, security and tranquility are based on a philosophy of action that emphasizes anticipation and prevention.

CHEDS has chaired and coordinated the Scientific Commission of the Dakar International Forum for Peace and Security since 2016.

CHEDS is a partner in the initiative "Regional Discussions" on the prevention of violent extremism since the first edition of Dakar.

Human security, the foundation of its actions, facilitates the search for synergies with actors such as politicians, civilians, in particular women, young people and the media.

As part of this initiative, in partnership with the Swiss FDFA, CHEDS is working more specifically to involve the Defense and Security Forces in the PVE through regional seminars and the national seminar.

website : www.cheds.gouv.sn

Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD), Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Following the UN Secretary-General's presentation of his Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism at the end of 2015, the Swiss FDFA made the issue a priority, and in April 2016 adopted a Foreign Policy Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism.

The Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD), which is the FDFA's center of competence for implementing Switzerland's political priorities in the fields of peace and human security, has since undertaken a whole series of advocacy activities in favor of this prevention approach focusing on the causes of violence and the alternatives that can be found, and has mobilized its experts to carry out prevention activities with its partners in the field.

In particular, together with several other partners, it launched the Regional Discussions for the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Sahel-Sahara initiative, the first edition of which was held in Dakar (Senegal) in June 2016, the second in N'Djamena (Tchad) in June 2017 and the third in Algiers in June 2018. Since its launch, this forum for dialogue has gone through some twenty stages and brought together more than 1,000 personalities from a variety of professional backgrounds in North, West and Central Africa - joined by a few external experts and regional or international organizations active in these regions. These deliberately informal exchanges provided an open forum for addressing the sensitive and complex dimensions of this approach to preventing extreme violence (including its political nature).

The aim is to provide a forum for exchange and dialogue on the prevention approach, to build bridges between different actors and to highlight and strengthen positive initiatives representing concrete alternatives to VE that are being taken by actors in these regions

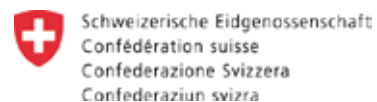
The FDFA's Competence Centre acts as the coordinator of this initiative and provides its expertise in leading the dialogue forums and conducting the various activities carried out under this initiative.



The series of regional seminars held by the Swiss FDFA and Senegal's CHEDS since 2017 illustrates this approach, with a particular focus in this case on involving the Defense and Security Forces in the violence prevention process.

website : www.dfae.admin.ch



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