

# Preventing violent extremism in Senegal

## Threats linked to gold mining

Paulin Maurice Toupane, Adja Khadidiatou Faye, Aïssatou Kanté, Mouhamadou Kane, Moussa Ndour, Cherif Sow, Bachir Ndaw, Tabara Cissokho and Younoussa Ba



As security incidents occur sporadically on both sides of the Senegal-Mali border, there is growing concern that the threat from violent extremist groups may be expanding to gold-rich south-eastern Senegal, which borders Mali. This report analyses the risks associated with gold mining in the Kédougou and Tambacounda regions of Senegal and how they could contribute to the expansion of violent extremist groups into West African littoral states.

## Key findings

- ▶ Gold mining is a source of funding for violent extremist groups in the Sahel. Kédougou and Tambacounda are gold producing areas that are vulnerable to being exploited by these groups as part of their strategy to control areas and marketing chains in the Sahel zone.
- ▶ The obscurity of the origins of resources being used to finance artisanal and small-scale gold mining activities and those accruing from the sale of gold increases the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing.
- ▶ The gap between the economic potential and the level of poverty, combined with weak social infrastructure, fuels frustration and a sense of exclusion among the population, making them vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups.
- ▶ Against the backdrop of tensions over access to resources, the large migratory and financial flows resulting from artisanal and small-scale gold mining disrupt social relations and lead to conflicts. These massive and uncontrolled flows increase the risk of implanting extremist elements in vulnerable communities.
- ▶ Illicit cross-border trafficking of all kinds is creating a criminal economy that may enable violent extremist groups to procure supplies and build circumstantial alliances with operators who seek to evade state control.
- ▶ The environmental and health impacts of gold mining, which are already evident in the research area, are likely to exacerbate the vulnerabilities identified, mainly by reducing income-generating activities and affecting people's health.

## Recommendations

- ▶ The expansion of violent extremism into south-eastern Senegal not only poses risks in terms of potential attacks. Senegalese territory could also be used for financing, procurement and recruitment purposes. National authorities would benefit from taking a multifaceted preventive approach.
- ▶ There's an urgent need to accelerate formalising artisanal and small-scale mining to reduce illegal mining and strengthen control of the gold marketing chain. This would reduce the risk of financing terrorism and address the multiple vulnerabilities linked to gold mining that plague the regions of Kédougou and Tambacounda.
- ▶ The implementation of state development programmes in the two regions should be fast-tracked while ensuring effectiveness and consistency to reduce socio-economic disparities that generate frustration, particularly in border areas.
- ▶ State interventions, sometimes misunderstood and resented by artisanal gold miners, must be crafted and implemented on a consultative basis with specific attention to and awareness-raising so as to reduce tensions.
- ▶ Enhanced security arrangements that consider the various types of trafficking are key to addressing challenges related to border management, surveillance and control at the national and regional levels.

## Introduction

The security situation in West Africa is characterised by the growing threat of violent extremist groups expanding towards the littoral states, and their confirmed interest in gold mining areas.<sup>1</sup> In this context, insecurity in the south-east of Senegal, bordering Mali, is a matter of national and international concern.<sup>2</sup>

With their high concentration of gold mining activities, both industrial and artisanal, the Kédougou and Tambacounda regions share a combination of vulnerabilities that could facilitate these groups' establishment, and their access to human, financial and operational resources. This report, divided into three sections, analyses risk factors associated with gold mining in south-eastern Senegal.

### Kédougou and Tambacounda share similar vulnerabilities that could facilitate the establishment of extremist groups

The first section briefly presents the research methodology. The second provides an overview of the regional security context, which is characterised by the expansion of violent extremist groups and their attraction to the gold mining areas. It details the strategies groups used to establish themselves in the Sahel. Based on this analytical framework, the third section highlights the vulnerabilities linked to gold mining in the Kédougou and Tambacounda regions that could be exploited by these groups.

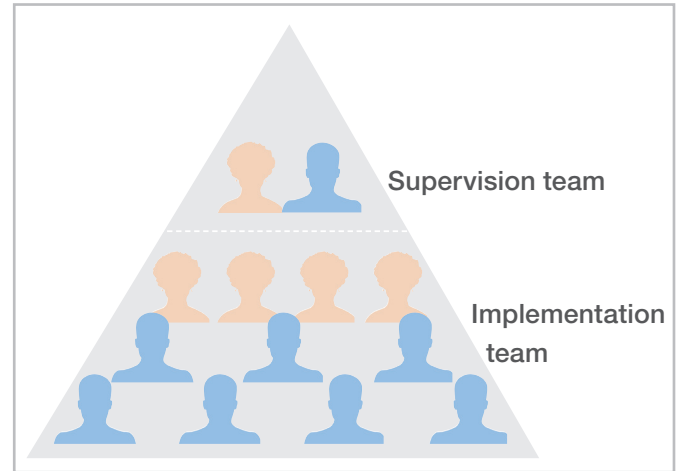
Following the description of each vulnerability, boxes are used to present recommendations on potential ways Senegal could improve preventive action in these regions.

## Methodology

The aim of this joint study by the Centre des Hautes Études de Défense et de Sécurité (Centre for Advanced Studies on Defence and Security – CHEDS) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) is to document the threats to human security associated with gold mining in the regions of Kédougou and Tambacounda.

Its objective is to support the development and implementation of appropriate responses, or the

Chart 1: Composition of the project team



improvement of existing measures, to address these threats. The study was designed and conducted between September 2019 and October 2021 by a team of 12 individuals, including five women.

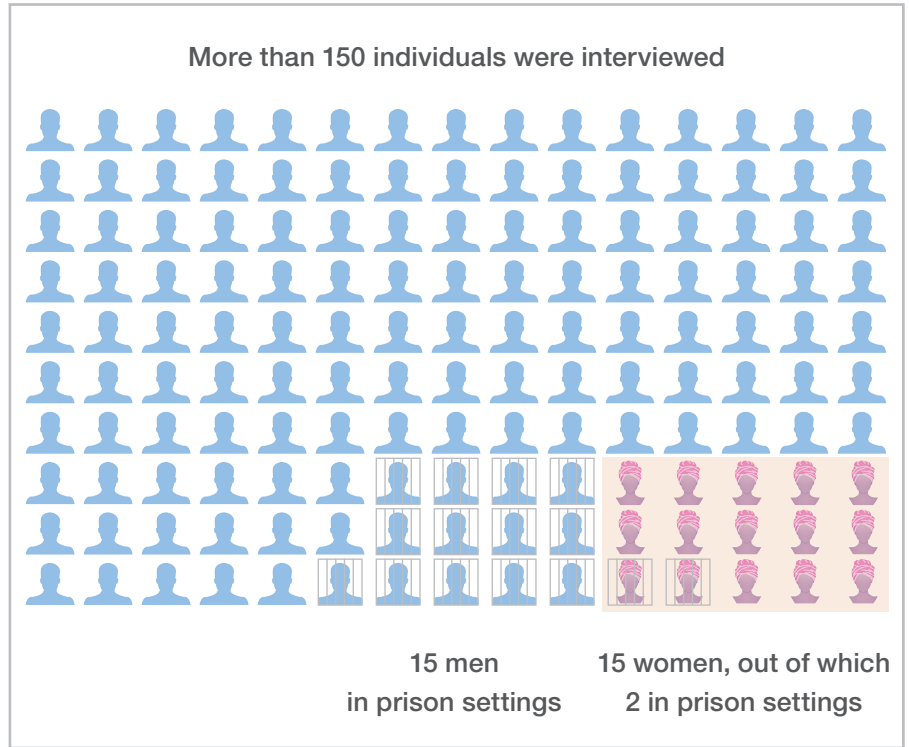
The theoretical framework for the research project revolves around the concepts of artisanal gold mining and violent extremism. This work relies on the same definition of artisanal gold mining as that which is used in regulatory texts in Senegal under the term 'artisanal and small-scale mining' (ASM) of gold. This refers to the activity of artisanal or semi-mechanised exploration and mining<sup>3</sup> for gold by an individual, group of individuals or companies with limited investment and production.

Violent extremism is considered in terms of the risk, in the research area, of the infiltration or establishment of armed groups that have carried out acts declared as terrorist. These groups adopt a rhetoric marked by Islamic references, in particular concerning jihad.

The attacks designated as terrorist in Mali's Kayes region, which borders the Senegalese regions covered in this study, were claimed by or attributed to the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin – JNIM). This group is a coalition that includes al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine and Katiba Macina.

The research team analysed legal and administrative documents and reviewed the literature on gold mining in Senegal and its social, economic, environmental and health impacts. The review also covered regional

Chart 2: Research respondents



trends related to the roles played by violent extremist groups in artisanal gold mining and trading, as documented by various research centres.

Data was collected in the field in several stages<sup>4</sup> between September 2019 and June 2021, in Dakar and at 36 sites in the Kédougou and Tambacounda regions.<sup>5</sup> Using a adaptable interview guide, open-ended and semi-structured interviews were conducted with over 150 individuals and 15 focus groups. Priority was given to those who were directly involved in or affected by the issues covered by the research, or who had important information to share.

The team interviewed Senegalese and foreign gold miners and traders, as well as local authorities in the areas covered by the research. Interviews were conducted in a detention centre in Kédougou, with 15 people involved in illicit activities related to gold mining.

The study also involved interviews with representatives of government and regional mining and environmental departments, defence and security forces, the judiciary, territorial administration, trade, health, tax and property departments, the education system, the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations, and mining companies.

In the Kédougou region, which accounts for 98% of the gold mining sites identified in Senegal,<sup>6</sup> research was conducted in the communes of Bandafassi, Kédougou, Khossanto, Médina Baffé, Missirah Sirimana, Saraya and Tomboronkoto. In the Tambacounda region, which hosts the remaining 2% of gold mining sites,<sup>7</sup> research was carried out in the Sadatou district



15 FOCUS GROUPS WERE CONDUCTED

(Bakel department), specifically at the gold mining sites of Diabougou and Sounkounkoun.

The data collected underlined the regional dimensions of the gold mining related challenges, due to the border position of the research area, the porosity of the borders and the significant movements of goods and people. This represents a limitation of the study, and shows the need for a regional project to better understand the cross-border dynamics at work in the gold sector and to encourage an approach that includes notably Guinea, Mali and Senegal.

### Strategies extremists use to establish themselves

Since 2020, sporadic security incidents have been recorded on both sides of the Senegal-Mali border, where there is intensive gold mining activity, much of it clandestine. To understand the risks involved, there is a need to analyse known strategies for the expansion

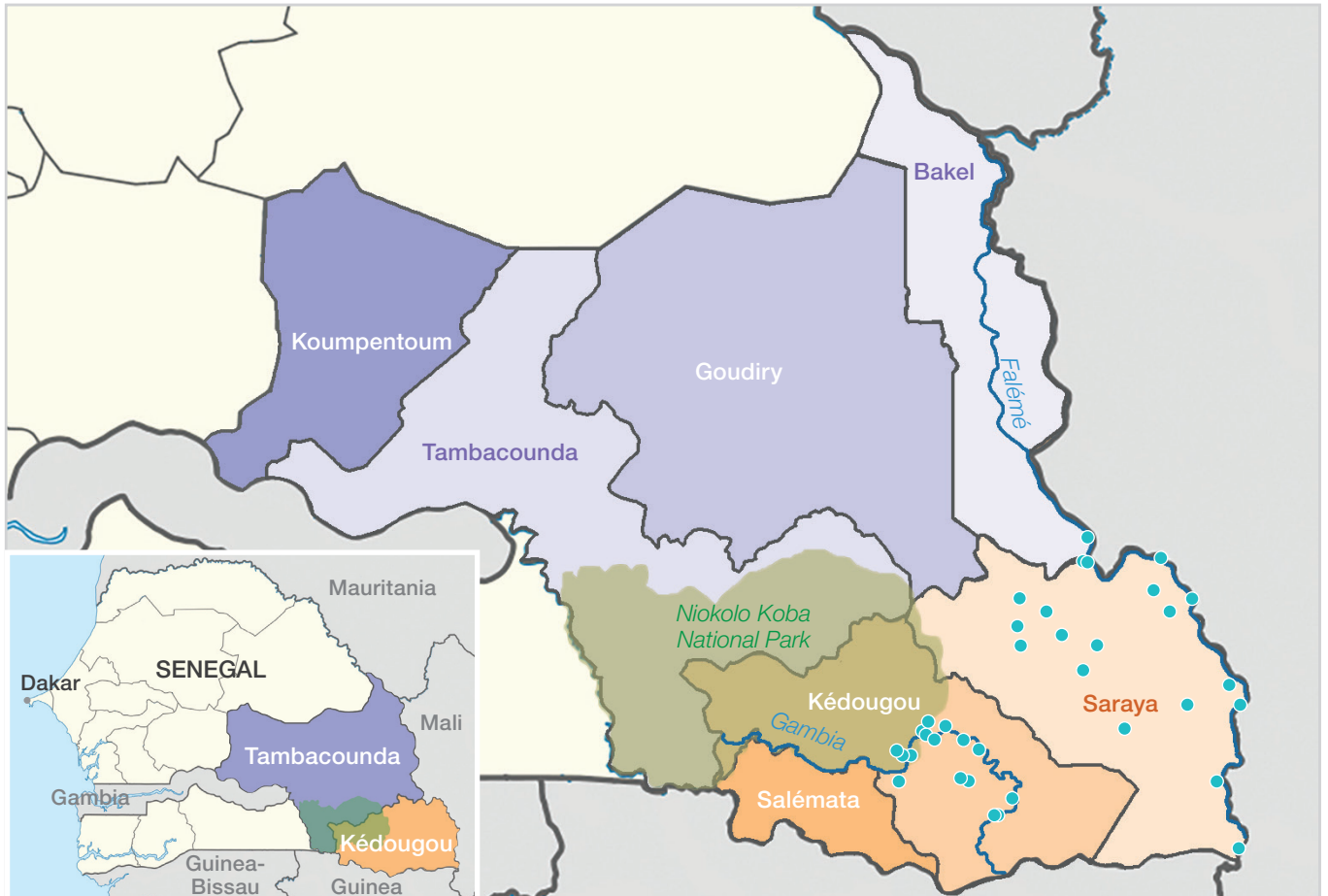
and establishment of violent extremist groups operating in West Africa, as well as the role of artisanal gold mining, trafficking, community tensions and feelings of exclusion and injustice. This section summarises current knowledge about these phenomena.

Attacks recorded between 2012 and October 2021 and attributed to violent extremist groups confirm an expansion of their activities beyond the Sahel region, particularly towards the eastern and northern borders of West African coastal states.<sup>8</sup>

In Mali, these attacks were initially confined to the north and centre of the country but have gradually spread westwards, resulting in increasing security pressure, particularly in the Kayes region that borders Senegal. This region has recorded several incidents since 2018, specifically in the *cercles* of Diéma and Kita.<sup>9</sup>

Armed men suspected of belonging to Katiba Macina have targeted gendarmerie, customs, water and forestry

Chart 3: Research localities



posts as well as transport trucks in Dioumara, Didiéni, Diéma, Sebekoro and Sanakoro.<sup>10</sup> On 28 September 2021, this group claimed responsibility for the attack on a mining convoy between Sebabougou and Kwala, on the Bamako-Kayes route.<sup>11</sup>

No jihadist attack,<sup>12</sup> or labelled as such, has yet been officially recorded in Senegal. However, on the night of 7–8 February 2020, a group attacked the Moussala customs post in the department of Saraya (Kédougou region) and subsequently fled in the direction of Mali with five assault rifles.<sup>13</sup>

About two weeks before this incident, a patrol of the gendarmerie's *Groupement d'action rapide de surveillance et d'intervention* (rapid action group for monitoring and intervention – GARS) came under fire on the outskirts of Gathiary village, in the Kéniéba district in the Tambacounda region, not far from the Mali border.<sup>14</sup>

### Four people allegedly linked to Katiba Macina were arrested by Senegalese authorities in Kidira in February 2021

In February 2021, a United Nations Security Council report mentioned the presence of JNIM elements in the Bamako-Dakar corridor, specifically along the road from Kayes to Kaffrine, in Bakel, in the Ferlo reserve and in the gold extraction area of Saraya.<sup>15</sup> In the same month, four people allegedly linked to Katiba Macina were arrested by Senegalese authorities in Kidira,<sup>16</sup> near the border with Mali.

The expansion of violent extremist groups appears to have several drivers.<sup>17</sup> One of the objectives is to overstretch existing security and military arrangements deployed by national, regional and international actors in the Sahel. To this end, the groups target border areas, which are often neglected by states and are beyond the control of security arrangements.

Another driver is to control transit points in certain territories, in order to access financial, operational and human resources. Recent publications show that gold mining is an important source<sup>18</sup> of funding and supplies for violent extremist groups operating in the Sahel.<sup>19</sup> For example, in the Soum province of Burkina Faso, gold miners pay terrorist units to provide security at gold mining sites.<sup>20</sup>

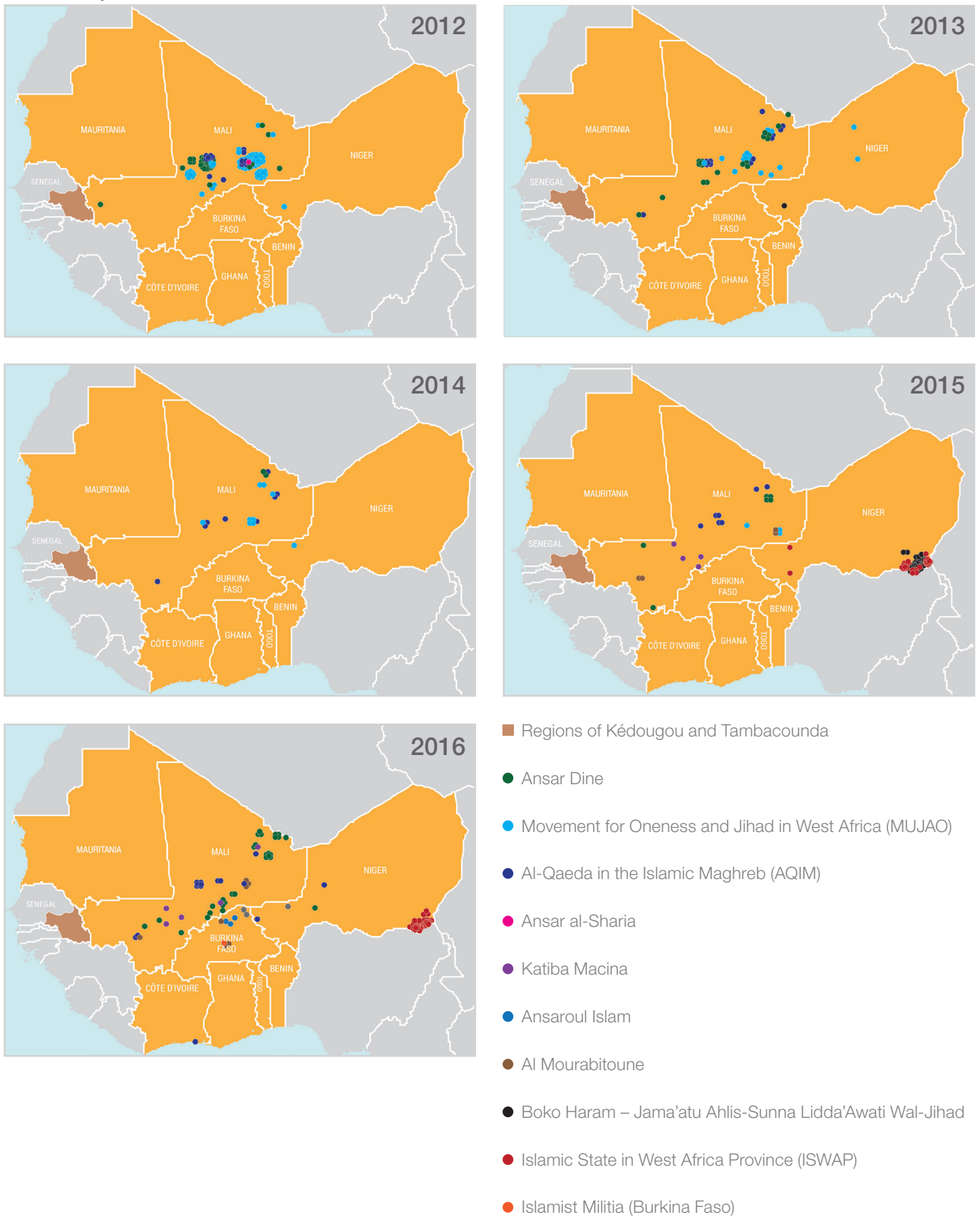
In the areas of Tinzawaten, Intabzaz and Talahandak, in the north of Mali's Kidal region, Ansar Dine levies operating taxes on gold miners.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, in eastern Burkina Faso,<sup>22</sup> groups affiliated with JNIM or the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, are collecting these taxes as *zakat*.<sup>23</sup>

These groups are also directly involved in mining and selling gold. In eastern Burkina Faso, they have helped consolidate mine pits to allow gold miners to work in greater safety.<sup>24</sup> They also allow certain buyers to visit sites under



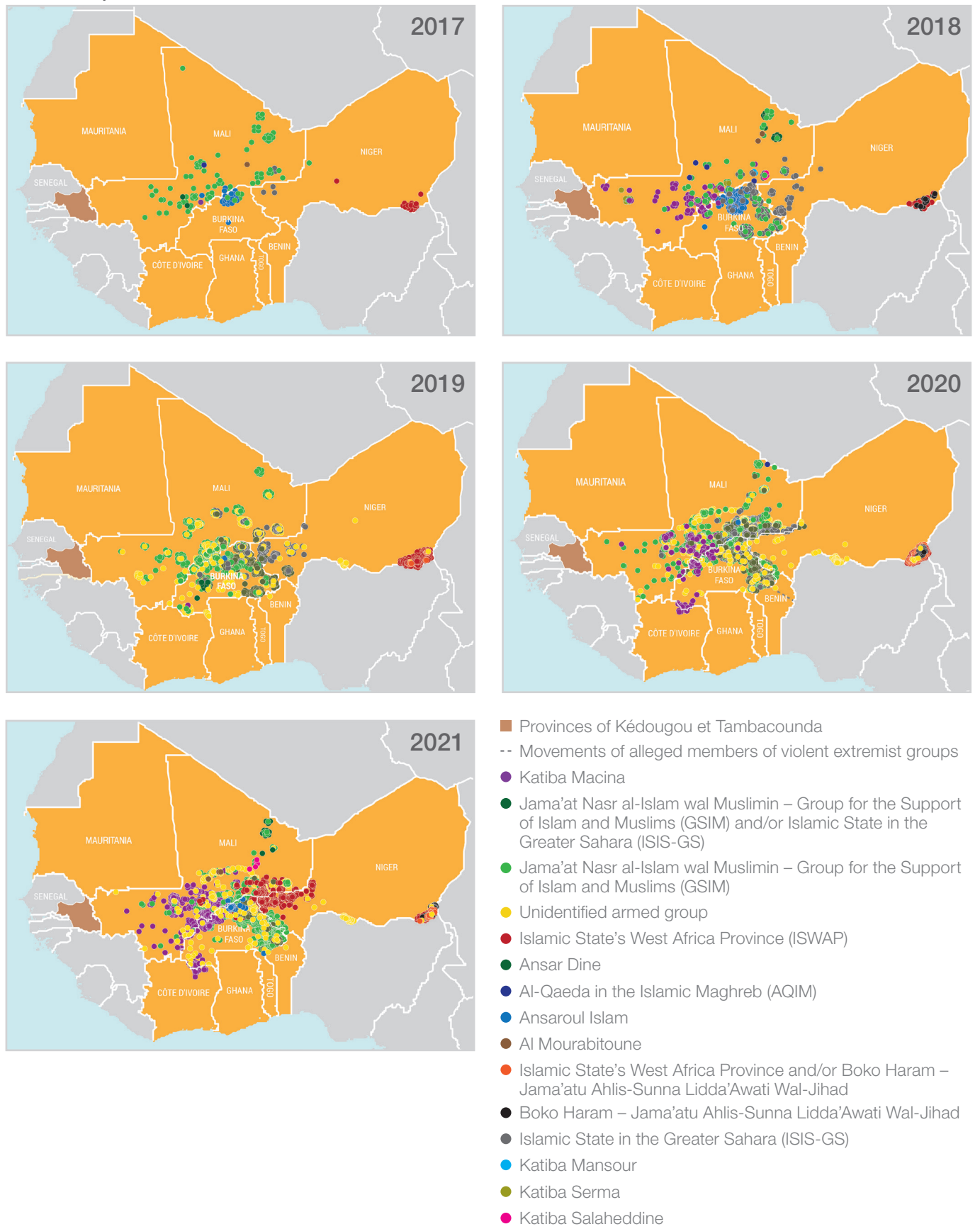
VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS  
NEED HUMAN, FINANCIAL  
AND OPERATIONAL  
RESOURCES TO EXPAND

Chart 4: Expansion of the terrorist threat from 2012 to 2016



Source: Maps produced from ACLED data

Chart 5: Expansion of the terrorist threat from 2017 to 2021



Source: Maps produced from ACLED data



their control.<sup>25</sup> In some cases, these groups buy gold directly from the miners.

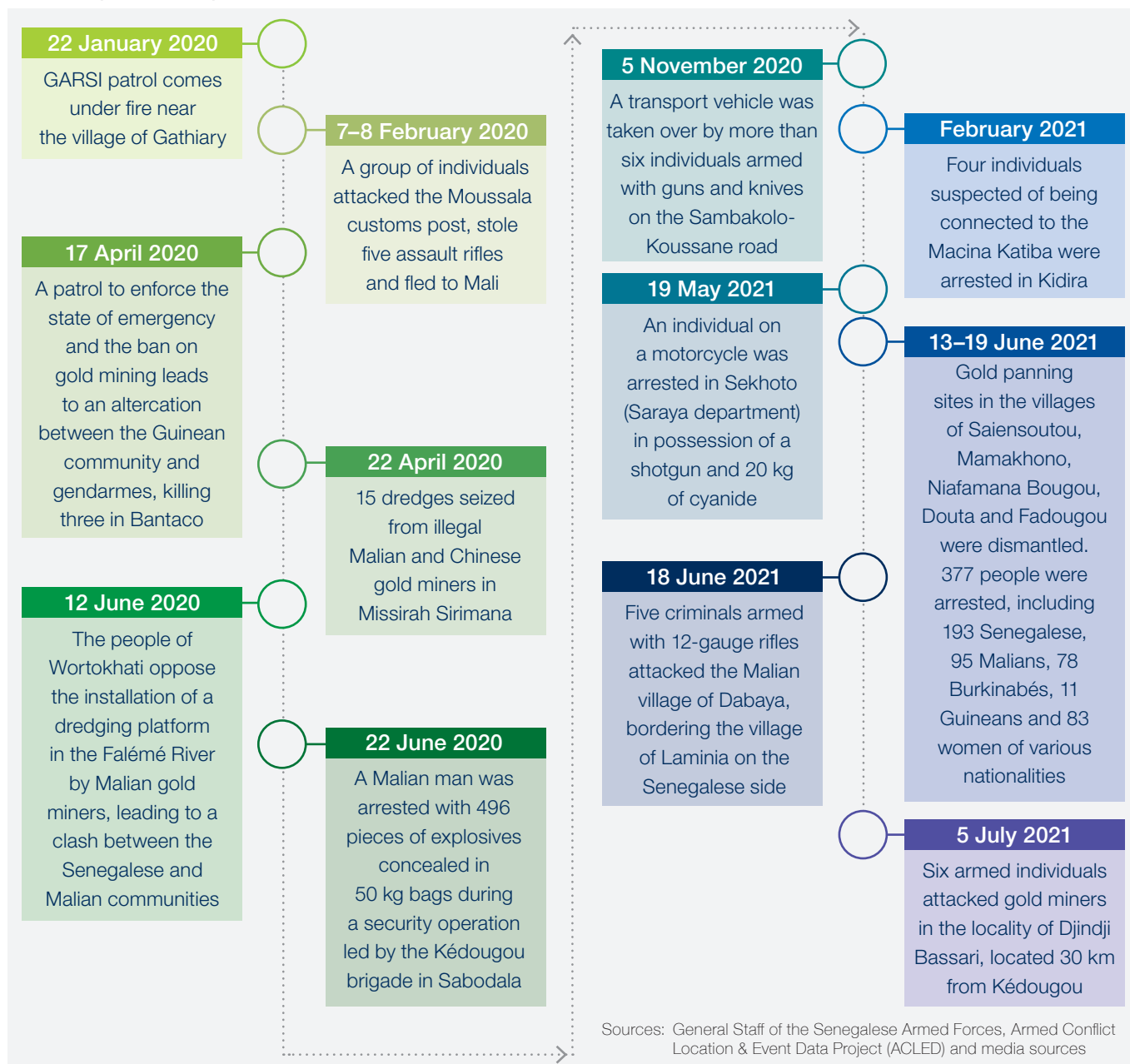
In terms of supply, gold mining sites make it possible to obtain ammonium nitrate, which is used by violent extremist groups to make improvised explosive devices, particularly in central Mali and in certain regions of Burkina Faso.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, gold mining sites can be used as a training ground for handling explosives. After their arrest in 2016,

several members of Katiba Khalid ibn Walid, the southern branch of Ansar Dine, reportedly admitted to receiving training in handling explosives at one of the many artisanal gold mines in northern Côte d'Ivoire, near the Mali border.<sup>27</sup>

Extremist groups often have vital links with illicit traffickers operating in the Sahel and beyond.<sup>28</sup> These groups participate directly or indirectly in illicit trafficking to procure means for operations and subsistence and

**Chart 6: Reported incidents related to phenomena covered by the research in South-Eastern Senegal (2020–2021)**



to generate financial resources. They are reportedly paid for providing protection to convoys of legal and illegal goods, or they collect 'taxes' on their transit.<sup>29</sup>

Trafficking and other criminal activities also provide opportunities for violent extremist groups to create circumstantial alliances with other operators seeking to evade state control. This is not an end in itself, but a means to facilitate and accelerate their establishment. This has been documented in eastern Burkina Faso, for example, in the context of illegal gold mining and poaching.<sup>30</sup>

Forests, including national parks such as the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex<sup>31</sup> and Wagadou forest,<sup>32</sup> also play a role in extremist groups' strategies. These wooded areas make surveillance difficult and facilitate access to food resources through poaching.<sup>33</sup>

Extremists groups have sometimes presented themselves as an alternative to the state – but fall short of the population's expectations

Lastly, violent extremist groups take advantage of structural vulnerabilities to establish themselves and/or recruit. They exploit frustrations arising from people's socio-economic insecurity and the need to protect income-generating activities, especially in areas where state presence is minimal or contested.<sup>34</sup>

Extremists seek to establish themselves in places where the social contract between the state and its citizens is weak or broken and where they can take advantage of falling state presence. In the border regions of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, extremists have sometimes presented themselves as an alternative to the state, whose performance has not matched the population's expectations.<sup>35</sup>

The dynamics of conflict, both between communities and between communities and state representatives, can also be exploited. In the Liptako-Gourma area, for example, extremist groups have taken advantage of local conflicts, in particular by supporting one side or acting as arbitrators.<sup>36</sup> Their strategy depends on their level of penetration in the communities, their sociological composition and the balance of power between the conflicting parties.<sup>37</sup>

Violent extremists' operational strategies for expansion and establishment in the Sahel provide a good framework for analysing how they can exploit the vulnerabilities of gold mining sites in Kédougou and Tambacounda. From this perspective, the expansion of violent extremism into Senegal not only poses risks in terms of potential attacks on Senegalese territory. It can also be used for financing, procurement and recruitment.



---

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
EXTREMIST GROUPS  
IS FACILITATED IN AREAS  
WHERE THE SOCIAL  
CONTRACT BETWEEN  
THE STATE AND ITS CITIZENS  
IS WEAKER

---

## Key vulnerabilities in south-eastern Senegal

Violent extremist groups' interest in south-eastern Senegal was highlighted during the legal investigation into Senegalese nationals who joined Boko Haram<sup>38</sup> in Nigeria and were convicted in 2018. During the hearings, some of the accused mentioned the plan to establish a base in the Kédougou region, where there were wooded areas near water sources.<sup>39</sup>

Based on an analysis of violent extremist groups' expansion strategies, this section highlights five categories of vulnerability in relation to gold mining in the Kédougou and Tambacounda regions. The first relates to the largely informal, even clandestine, nature of artisanal gold mining. The second is about loopholes in gold trading.

The third arises from the population's sense of exclusion, resulting from the socio-economic insecurity of the area, which contrasts with the wealth of its subsoil. The fourth category concerns the dynamics of conflict, in a context where large migratory and financial flows are disrupting social relations against a background of tensions over access to resources.

Lastly, the fifth category concerns the development of illicit trafficking, where border management, surveillance and control are challenging.

### Persistence of illegal sites

South-eastern Senegal, western Mali and northern Guinea were an integral part of the Bambouk-Bouré territory<sup>40</sup> and hosted the main gold mines of the Mali empire.<sup>41</sup> The age-old activity of gold mining had long been conducted in an artisanal manner. In the south-east of Senegal, this sector, originally run by women, started to expand considerably in the 1990s.

The 2000s then saw an acceleration in gold mining, boosted by foreign mining companies moving in (particularly following the adoption of the 2003 Mining Code) and the massive arrival of migrants from the sub-region. These migrants contributed to the development of semi-mechanised mining techniques. During the same period, the granting of zones to mining companies and changes to legislation, in particular the creation of gold mining corridors and the introduction of mining permits, drove some operators, sites and practices underground.

*'We need to be supported with the formalisation process, but not discouraged from artisanal gold mining. It's true we need to change our behaviour too, but please help us!'*

Gold miner, June 2021

This has created significant regulatory, operational and financial challenges. Basic hygiene, health and safety principles are often ignored, exposing mining communities and populations to serious health, safety and environmental impacts.

Aware of these challenges, Senegal has sought to lay the groundwork for better management of ASM by adopting many regulatory texts,<sup>42</sup> including the 2003 and 2016 Mining Codes. In March 2016,<sup>43</sup> Senegal also ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which includes provisions specifically relating to ASM. Although it represents a major step forward in managing the sector, the regulations have shortcomings and their concrete effects are slow to be felt on the ground.

The 2016 Mining Code established two types of mining permit for ASM. These are the artisanal mining permit and the semi-mechanised mining permit. The first is reserved for Senegalese nationals, but it can be granted to citizens of neighbouring countries, if these countries grant reciprocity.<sup>44</sup> The permit, in the form of an artisanal miner card, applies only in the territory of the community where the corridor is located. The card is valid for five years and can be repeatedly renewed for the same period, subject to payment of the applicable fee of 50 000 CFA francs.

*'We were not involved in marking out the corridors.'*

Gold miner, June 2021

However, in practice, this regulation is not enforced because it is ineffective in restricting holders of artisanal mining permits to the zone containing a particular corridor for five years. It is a challenge to restrict gold miners, who are by nature nomadic, to a single site for such a long time, especially in corridors that are not

reputed to be rich in ore. As a result, of the 19 corridors defined by the national authorities since 2014, only eight are currently operational.<sup>45</sup>

Semi-mechanised mining permits are issued to legal entities under Senegalese law for three years, renewable for the same period until the deposit is exhausted.<sup>46</sup> While it is groundbreaking for this type of mining to be included in the 2016 Mining Code, there are still many limitations.

The first challenge encountered by mining communities wishing to formalise their activities is the administrative burden. They often complain about how long it takes for mining permits to be issued.<sup>47</sup> For example, developers have to submit their physical files in Dakar, where they are assessed, and which is more than 700 km from the mining area. The views of the local state authority and the Regional Department of Mining and Geology are only sought at a later stage. The process of granting permits is also misunderstood by many communities, who don't receive any technical support.

***'My village, which has existed for five centuries, is threatened by a mining company.'***

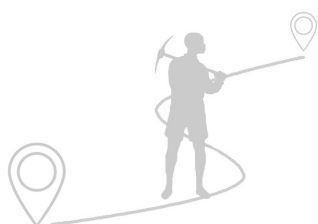
Gold miner, June 2021

Another challenge affecting the sector is that some mining permits aren't utilised.<sup>48</sup> Permits are sometimes issued to operators who don't have the technical capacity or financial resources required by the Mining Code. This reduces communities' access to land, pushing them further towards illicit operations.

In addition, the high level of taxes limits the ability of local community operators to obtain semi-mechanised mining permits. Operators must also pay an entry fee of 1.5 million CFA francs on top of the surface royalty, which amounts to 50 000 CFA francs. Currently the cost of obtaining a semi-mechanised mining permit, including both the entry fee and the surface royalty, can be as high as 4 million CFA francs.

Lastly, the regulations stipulate that only Senegalese nationals may hold mining permits, except where there is reciprocity with neighbouring countries. However, there is little traceability of who is conducting and financing gold mining activities. And it's difficult to determine the origin of their funds, due to the clandestine nature of most sites and the porous nature of the borders.

Operating underground is also a deliberate choice for some gold miners who can increase their earnings by ignoring the rules. The limitations to the regulations, which in some cases are inadequate or ineffective, encourage the proliferation of illegal gold mining sites, of which there are now estimated to be over 100 in the research area.<sup>49</sup> This makes it harder for authorities to manage, control and monitor mining activities, and provides an opportunity for violent extremist groups to infiltrate the sector.



MORE THAN A HUNDRED  
ILLEGAL MINING SITES  
WERE IDENTIFIED

## Containing illegal gold mining

- Artisanal gold miners can be encouraged to formalise their activities by continuing to sensitise them on the need to do so. This requires gold miners' Federation and Union coordinated action by the Ministry of Mines and Geology and by the, as well as incentive measures. Developing a policy of positive discrimination towards communities could encourage the emergence of local operators working in accordance with the rules in force. This approach would include reducing the overall cost of obtaining a semi-mechanised mining permit to 250 000 CFA francs. This amount would be in line with current international practice.
- Encouraging gold miners to form economic interest groups and cooperatives would also help them find the collective means to obtain the necessary mining permits. The Ministry of Mines and Geology could take inspiration from Guinea in implementing this recommendation.<sup>50</sup>
- It is important to ensure that applicants for mining permits have the required technical and financial capacities, and that they observe the two-month deadline set in law for starting mining activities. If the Ministry of Mines and Geology implemented this measure, it would help reduce the problem of the lack of available land for communities and limit illegal activity.
- Creating a specific agency to oversee artisanal and semi-mechanised mining could help make the process more understandable and accessible to those who want to formalise their activities. This could be similar to the Agence National d'Encadrement des Exploitations Minières Artisanales et Semi-mécanisées (National Agency for the Supervision of Artisanal and Semi-mechanised Mining) in Burkina Faso.<sup>51</sup> This type of body, with sufficient human and material resources, could be set up in Kédougou in order to ensure that they are not detached from the realities on the ground.

## Lack of control of gold marketing

The most recent assessment of the amount of gold produced through ASM in Senegal was in 2018. Production was estimated at 4.3 tonnes: 3.9 tonnes from gold ore mining and 341 kg from alluvial mining.<sup>52</sup> The value of gold production was 86.6 billion CFA francs: 80.18 billion from gold ore mining and 6.42 billion from alluvial gold.<sup>53</sup> In terms of wealth generated, gold mining activities created an added value of 73.9 billion CFA francs, and crushing and grinding activities 3.7 billion CFA francs, i.e. an overall added value of 77.6 billion CFA francs.<sup>54</sup>

ASM gold trading has been regulated since 2014 by the inter-ministerial order establishing the terms and conditions for opening and operating trading posts for precious metals and stones. This order requires mining permit holders to sell any quantity of gold over 10 g at a trading post.

Despite these regulations, gold is traded through mostly informal channels in Senegal, making it more difficult for the state to control the marketing circuit.

***'Local people get no benefit from the gold found in Senegal's soil.'***

Local authority, June 2021

As of October 2021, there were seven authorised national trading posts in the Kédougou region, but only three were operational.<sup>55</sup> Capital of 20 million CFA francs is required to open a trading post. The managers of these trading posts are registered with the Ministry of Mines and Geology.

To export gold, the trading post is required to present the necessary administrative documents, an authorisation from the Ministry of Finance and an inspection certificate issued by the Ministry of Mines and Geology. It must also provide information on the nature, number of bars, quality, title and estimated export value, based on the London Gold Fix.<sup>56</sup> The gold marketing chain is strongly linked to the system for sharing out the ore, which is specific to each site.<sup>57</sup> Generally speaking, after dividing

up the ore, the gold miners – in groups or individually – process their share of the ore to extract the gold. Therefore, a high number of miners are involved in processing and trading.<sup>58</sup>

Gold is generally sold at a competitive price (over 80% of the world gold price, which varies over time) to buyers in the nearest town or with representation at the mining sites. These are the first actors in the marketing circuit with whom the gold miners come into contact.

### The lack of traceability of resources fuels the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing

According to estimates by the Association of Gold Trading Posts, there are more than 300 informal gold buyers in the Kédougou region.<sup>59</sup> In addition to national buyers, a network of mostly Malian and Guinean traders has been established in south-eastern Senegal.

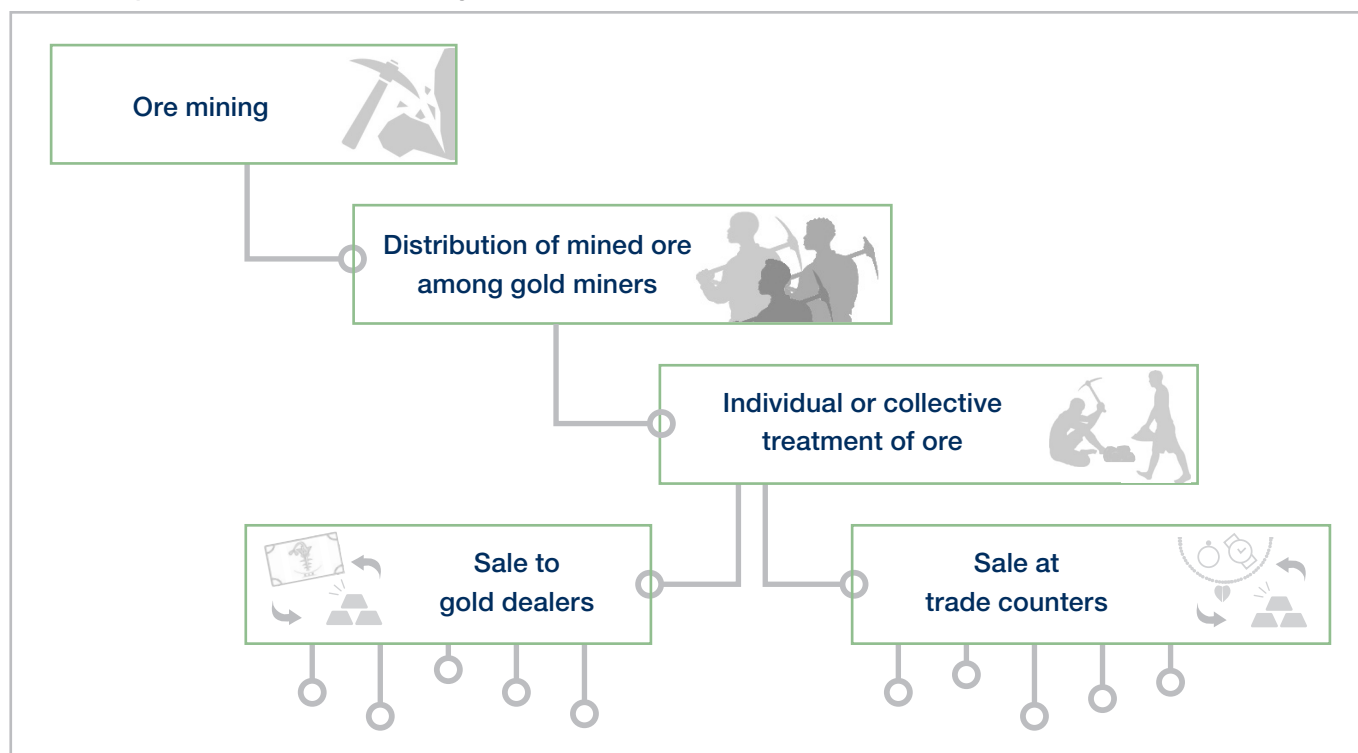
Unlike the trading posts that are far from the mining sites, these traders are based in the gold mining villages and buy most of the gold produced through ASM. To secure

their supply of gold, they sometimes finance extraction of the ore and provide the chemicals needed to process it. They are often the local representatives of more powerful traders who finance and commission buyers, sometimes at several mining sites.<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, the Senegalese trading posts find it difficult to secure supply, especially because of customs complications and the prevailing insecurity in the area. The regulations require the gold miners to sell the gold they have extracted at trading posts. However the posts are in the town of Kédougou, and many gold miners cite the risk of theft or seizure of the gold as an obstacle to selling their product. They prefer to sell their product directly onsite to reduce these risks.

Due to these barriers and to secure their supply, the trading post owners have set up a collection mechanism in collaboration with the customs authorities. They send staff to the sites to buy directly from the gold miners, with formal authorisation from the customs authorities. Despite this system being introduced, it is struggling with a shortage of collectors, and the risks of seizure and robbery persist.

Chart 7: Operation and distribution system



The introduction of the 4% export tax in 2018 has also contributed to the proportion of domestic production captured by national trading posts falling from 30% to 10%, according to one trading post owner.<sup>61</sup> The remaining 90% is reportedly bought by the network of traders who control the informal gold market in the area.<sup>62</sup>

## Senegalese trading posts find it difficult to secure supplies because of customs complications and the prevailing insecurity in the area

In this environment, Senegal has no detailed information on the quantity of gold extracted in the ASM sector, the identity of the buyers or their sponsors, the destination of the gold or the use of the profits. This lack of traceability of resources, both those used to finance gold mining and those accruing from selling gold, fuels the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing.<sup>63</sup>

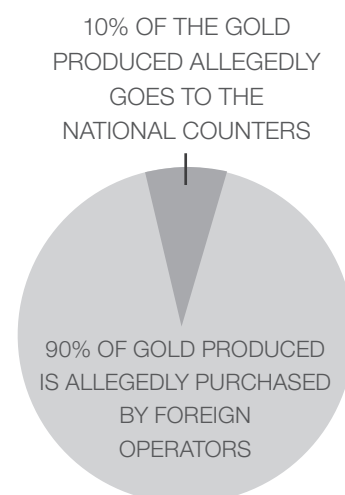
### Socio-economic insecurity vs wealth of subsoil

As a result of ASM, Keidougou and Tambacounda have experienced strong population growth and the development of economic activities such as trade, hospitality, transport and money transfer. According to the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, 32 474 people were directly employed in the gold mining sector in 2018.<sup>64</sup> Income from gold mining enables local people to cover many health, food and education expenses.

However, the important role of gold mining in the local economy and the improvements observed in the population's income<sup>65</sup> have not translated into real development of the area. Its economic indicators are among the weakest in Senegal. Poverty remains prevalent (61.9% in Kédougou and Tambacounda in 2021),<sup>66</sup> despite a slight improvement<sup>67</sup> since gold mining has intensified.

### Controlling the gold marketing chain

- Gold trafficking could be tackled by encouraging the establishment of onsite purchase points and issuing a professional card to the various actors in the supply chain (from the collector to the trading post manager) to facilitate collection and trader identification. The Ministry of Mines and Geology could be responsible for implementing these measures, in conjunction with the Association of gold trading posts. Trading posts could be made competitive by reducing or eliminating the export tax.
- Improving the control and traceability of the resources financing gold mining and generated by the sector would help limit the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing. Regional action is also needed to control the cross-border movement of gold and financial flows.



Since 2014, Senegal has launched three major national development programmes to improve living conditions, particularly in rural areas. These are the Emergency Plan for the Modernisation of Border Roads and Regions (PUMA),<sup>68</sup> the Emergency Community Development Programme (PUDC)<sup>69</sup> and the Cities Modernisation Programme (PROMOVILLES).<sup>70</sup>

Despite the efforts made by the state, access to health, education, water and sanitation infrastructure remains problematic, especially for those living in rural border areas. These are the poorest areas which are least equipped with basic social facilities.

### Pollution is endangering species and making income-generating activities such as fishing, market gardening and agriculture impossible

Although Kédougou's new regional hospital, completed last year, will help improve medical facilities, it will not be sufficient to address poor access to healthcare. In many rural communities close to the borders with Mali and Guinea in both Kédougou and Tambacounda, there are no health huts. These communities are based far from health facilities. Those that do have them are faced with staff shortages, difficulties in obtaining medicines and a lack of specialist services.

Patients have to travel long distances, sometimes by motorbike, to access healthcare.<sup>71</sup> The isolation of these communities, the poor condition of the roads and the lack of ambulances for emergency evacuations push the inhabitants to seek treatment at health facilities in Mali's Kayes region.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, access to drinking water is a real problem, particularly in the border areas of the department of Saraya, where population pressure due to ASM is increasing demand. In these communities, water is mainly supplied by boreholes and wells, but these facilities are often unreliable. This sometimes leads to communities seeking out contractors, including foreign nationals, to drill wells.

The road infrastructure and telephone coverage are extremely poor in these border areas. The Malian telephone network provides the best coverage, and because of poor road access, people also turn to Mali for basic supplies.

This contrast between the area's economic potential and the level of poverty, combined with the lack of basic social facilities, fuels a sense of frustration and exclusion<sup>73</sup> among the population. Particularly those settled along the Falémé River, the main tributary of the Senegal River and the natural border between Senegal and Mali.

Reducing these vulnerabilities must involve addressing the environmental and health impacts of ASM, which are already evident in the area and will constitute a major challenge for Senegal in the medium and long term if



WEAK BASIC SOCIAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE RESULTS  
IN FRUSTRATION



permanent solutions aren't found. Such impacts could exacerbate the vulnerabilities identified, notably by reducing existing income-generating activities and negatively affecting the population's health.

Environmental degradation is one of the most worrying impacts of ASM in south-eastern Senegal. This often involves excessive cutting of timber to support mine pits and to meet gold miners' housing and heating needs. The resulting deforestation is no longer limited to gold mining villages, but is increasingly extending to communities far from the major gold mining sites in the area.

For example, in the department of Kédougou, villages located near Niokolo-Koba National Park, such as Mandathies or Bagnon, are being affected by deforestation due to trafficking of timber to supply the gold mining sites in Bantaco.<sup>74</sup>

Soil degradation is another visible effect of ASM in the research area. As a result of miners frequently moving to other sites considered more gold-rich, hundreds of mine pits can be abandoned. Although the Mining Code requires holders of semi-mechanised and artisanal mining permits to restore sites after their activities, it is a major challenge for the authorities to monitor compliance with this requirement. This is because the regional services responsible for monitoring mining activities and compliance with environmental legislation don't have enough human and material resources to fulfil their role.

Combined with the decreased availability of land as a result of areas being allocated to mining companies and gold miners, this is leading to a progressive loss of arable land and exposing the population to food insecurity.<sup>75</sup>

Another serious environmental impact is the contamination of soil, water and air due to the use of mercury to treat gold in the process known as amalgamation. The amount of mercury used for ASM in Senegal was estimated at 5.2 tonnes per year<sup>76</sup> in 2019. A study conducted in 2017 showed very high concentrations of mercury and methylmercury at gold mining sites in Koliya (Kédougou department).<sup>77</sup>

In addition, water quality and associated ecosystems in the Falémé River are deteriorating. This is due not only to the use of mercury, but also to the riverbed being dredged for ore. The ban on dredging<sup>78</sup> in Senegal and Mali is not well observed.<sup>79</sup>

From the Mali side, Chinese operators continue to conduct this activity in the river, in collaboration with local actors.<sup>80</sup> The resulting pollution is endangering species and making income-generating activities such as fishing, market gardening and agriculture impossible, further reducing sources of livelihoods for households in the border areas.

In addition to mercury, cyanide is increasingly used at gold mining sites due to its affordability and effectiveness. It guarantees a better return for



THE AMOUNT OF MERCURY  
USED IN 2019 WAS  
ESTIMATED AT 5.2 TONS

---

gold miners, as cyanidation allows 90% of the gold to be recovered.<sup>81</sup> This technique for processing gold was introduced into the area in the early 2000s by operators from Burkina Faso who buy the tailings left after processing the ore.

ASM and commercial services at the sites also generate a lot of waste (plastic bags, batteries, motor oil, etc.), which constitutes a threat to ecosystems in the medium and long term.

Lastly, the activity carries health risks for gold miners and people living in gold mining villages. Exposure to mercury can cause muscle weakness, vision and hearing problems and a loss of coordination and balance.<sup>82</sup> In severe cases, it can lead to birth defects or death.<sup>83</sup> The level of exposure to mercury depends on the methods used to amalgamate, enrich and purify gold ore. It also varies according to the protective equipment used.

In the research area, it was found that amalgamation is carried out without protective equipment. Gold

miners are not the only potential victims of mercury contamination, but also communities living in mining areas, including women and children, are at risk.

In the research area, people living at gold mining sites were also found to experience acute respiratory infections, due to inhaling dust generated by crushing the ore.

### The contamination of soil, water and air due to mercury use is another serious environmental impact

The population growth resulting from the development of gold mining has also been accompanied by an increase in prostitution, particularly clandestine prostitution. This has led to an increase in HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, particularly in communities around gold mining sites.<sup>84</sup>

#### Women in ASM

Although the ASM sector is male-dominated, women play a significant role. According to the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, in 2018 women accounted for 8.7% of those working in the extraction, crushing and grinding of ore.<sup>85</sup>

Alluvial mining has been practised for centuries by women, who dominate this sector.<sup>86</sup> However, they have a limited role in mining gold veins, as their economic situation prevents them from acquiring mine pits. In fact, socially, women have very little involvement in the governance of gold mining sites and occupy the lowest rank in the operational hierarchy.<sup>87</sup>

Their tasks consist mainly of taking turns in pulling the ropes attached to the buckets containing the ore, which are mechanically passed to them by the mine pit diggers. They are also involved in the transportation, crushing and processing of the ore by separating the gold, with or without chemicals.

Their income depends on the chance of discovering, in the buckets of ore distributed to them, a sufficient

quantity of gold for sale. These earnings are random and depend on the rules set at each gold mining site.

As this income is uncertain and often low compared with the physical effort involved, women are driven into related activities on the sites, such as water and food supply.

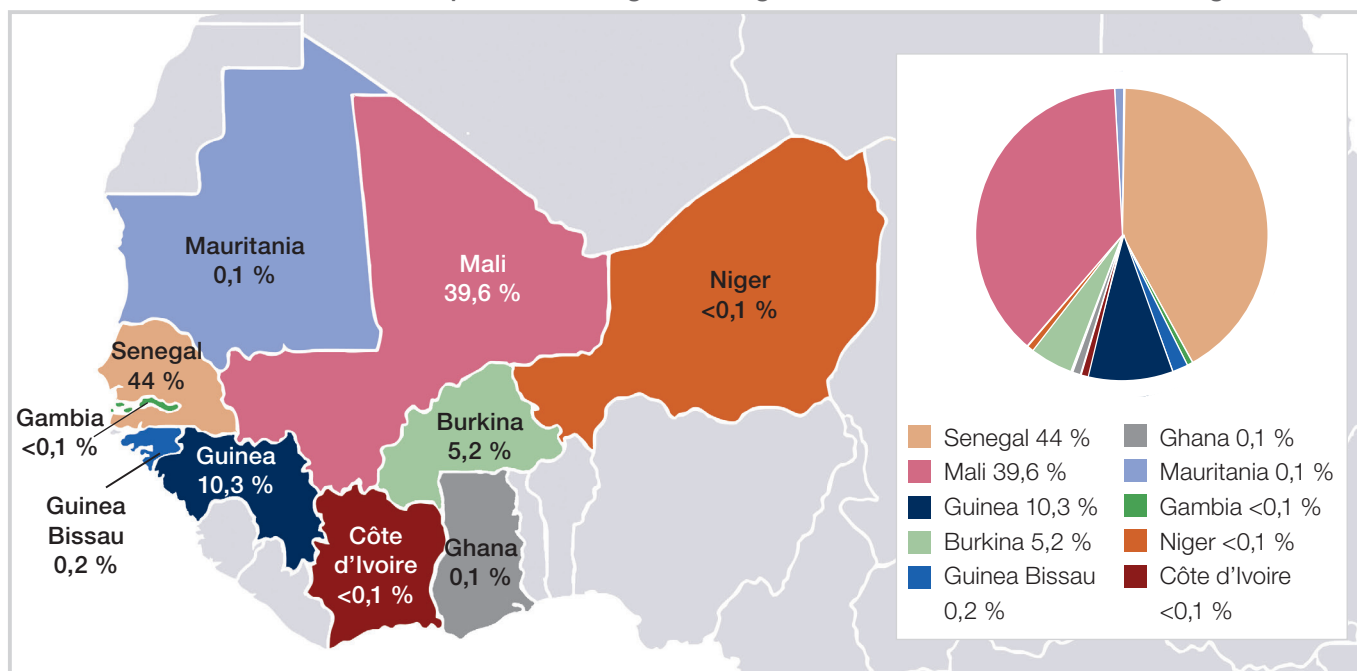
In terms of health, women's participation in amalgamation or cyanidation without protective equipment, generally onsite but also in their homes, exposes them to serious health risks, along with their children, especially during pregnancy.

The environmental impacts of gold mining are also affecting women's income-generating activities, such as market gardening, agriculture and fishing. For example, women are particularly affected by land occupation by both mining companies and gold miners, and by the pollution of the Falémé River and in some places the Gambia River.

## Accelerating development and limiting environment and health impact

- Making the south-east of the country a priority intervention area, and improving the financial capacity of programmes such as the PUMA, the PUDC and PROMOVILLES, would send a strong signal to the populations of Kédougou and Tambacounda about the government's willingness to change the socio-economic situation.
- Improving coordination between these three programmes in the Ministry for Community Development, Social and Territorial Equity would help avoid duplication and ensure remote areas have good infrastructure for health, education, roads, telecommunications, water and electricity.
- Developing a land-use plan that delineates the areas reserved for agriculture, livestock, gold mining and industrial operations would preserve each of these economic activities and avoid conflicts. This plan should be jointly developed and implemented by the Ministries of Mines and Geology, Environment and Sustainable Development, Fisheries and the Maritime Economy, Agriculture and Rural Infrastructure, and Livestock and Animal Production, in consultation with local authorities.
- Increasing the number of reforestation campaigns that specifically target gold mining sites would limit the destruction of vegetation, which encourages soil erosion and leaching. This should be the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, through its relevant departments such as the Directorate of Water, Forests, Hunting and Soil Conservation, in collaboration with relevant non-governmental organisations. Priority should be given to fast-growing trees that can replace those currently being used for mine pit supports. Other techniques,<sup>88</sup> such as reinforced concrete supports, could be used as alternatives to wood.
- There is also a need to limit the impact of waste generated on the sites. The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the local authorities and the gold miners' Federation and Union, should raise awareness of the environmental risks of this waste. At the same time the Ministry should initiate a recycling programme based on tools and work developed by the Kédougou technical high school.
- Further discussions are needed on how best to jointly enforce the ban on dredging in the Falémé River. These discussions between the Senegalese and Malian authorities, within the framework of the Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River Basin, should also cover measures to restore the Falémé River.
- Based on the studies conducted, the Ministry of Health and Social Action should build the capacities of health staff to diagnose and treat mercury poisoning, and intensify awareness campaigns for gold miners in collaboration with the gold miners' association. This could help limit the short-, medium- and long-term impacts of mercury on the population's health.
- Creating mercury-free gold-processing centres, following the model of the Bantaco unit<sup>89</sup> in Kédougou, would limit the environmental and health impacts resulting from the use of chemicals.
- The Ministry of Health and Social Action could limit the risk of HIV transmission by intensifying awareness campaigns on the need for self-protection, to operate legally and to get medical checks. In addition, the police and gendarmerie could help tackle clandestine prostitution<sup>90</sup> by strengthening controls, particularly around gold mining areas.
- Introducing a positive discrimination policy to facilitate women's access to mining land would help reduce their economic vulnerability and encourage them to formalise their activities. In addition, the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection could support the creation of an association of women gold miners to help women engage in the sector's governance.

Chart 8: Distribution of nationalities present in the gold mining sector in Tambacounda and Kédougou



Source: Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD), Report of the monographic study on gold mining in Senegal, July 2018

## Conflict dynamics

Conflict dynamics are among the vulnerabilities that extremist groups may exploit in their strategies to establish themselves and to recruit. Although they are currently of low intensity in south-eastern Senegal, they could worsen as gold mining becomes more prevalent.

Data collected in the research area confirms that several structural and contextual issues underpin the situation. Three types of dynamics can be identified: tensions between Senegalese and foreign communities, communities and mining companies, and state officials and gold mining communities.

## Low intensity conflicts in south-eastern Senegal could worsen as gold mining becomes more prevalent

Over the past decade, gold mining sites in south-eastern Senegal have acted as migration magnets,<sup>91</sup> generating major population shifts and often confrontational social and community relations. According to the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, six out of 10 gold miners are foreign nationals.<sup>92</sup> Among these, a dozen different nationalities have been identified. In most

gold mining villages, the majority (39.6%) are from Mali, followed by Guinea (10.3%) and Burkina Faso (5.2%).<sup>93</sup>

While these communities have strong expertise in gold mining,<sup>94</sup> their coexistence with the local population has been problematic, especially at certain places in the department of Saraya, bordering Mali. The tensions mainly relate to the organisation and operation of the gold mining sites, and to compliance with rules established by the village communities.

Mining operations are prohibited on Mondays and Fridays, or in the event of death, in most sites. Also, to enable the communities to benefit from mining, some gold mining villages have imposed taxes. Even so, there is evidence from the data that these rules are not always observed and some members of foreign communities refuse to pay the required taxes.<sup>95</sup>

At some sites, the settlements of foreign gold miners, referred to by the Malinke word *gnafa*, are perceived by the Senegalese communities as following their own rules.<sup>96</sup> It is also difficult for the local population to access these areas, which are beyond the control of the authorities.

The considerable presence of foreign nationals also raises questions about identification. Entire areas inside

and outside villages in the department of Saraya, occupied by foreign nationals, are beyond the control of state institutions. In most of these settlements, prostitution and drug use are rife. Although gendarmerie and army patrols manage to dismantle them and seize prohibited substances, they do not prevent new uncontrolled settlements from forming.

At the same time, the large number of migrant gold miners of various nationalities, and the under-representation of Senegalese religious confréries, are making it easier for other religious traditions to establish and grow. In this environment, there is a risk that tensions between worshippers belonging to distinct traditions, which have so far been localised and limited, may escalate.<sup>97</sup>

Relations between communities and mining companies have improved<sup>98</sup> since the incidents in Kédougou in 2005, 2007 and 2008<sup>99</sup> and the incidents in Diakhaling in 2014.<sup>100</sup> However, there is evidence from the data that there are some persistent tensions over access to resources, land and employment, as well as the environmental and health impacts of industrial mining.

For example, the mining communities complain about loopholes in the semi-mechanised mining permit.<sup>101</sup> Although it only gives exclusive rights to the resources to a maximum depth of 15 m, it doesn't limit exploration by mining companies. If a company identifies mineable deposits, someone holding this type of permit may then be displaced, in return for compensation.

However, in practice, this arrangement is rarely respected. In most cases documented,<sup>102</sup> communities are neither informed of the allocation of mining permits to industrial companies nor compensated if their areas are reallocated.<sup>103</sup>

Such situations create tensions between industrial developers and communities, who find themselves deprived of their livelihoods.<sup>104</sup> These tensions are likely to intensify with the ongoing exploration operations, the expected allocation of new exploration areas and the likely arrival of new industrial and semi-mechanised mining companies.

***'As young people, we know that if we interfere with the mining companies, the state will react.'***

Young person from Kédougou, June 2021

Another source of tension is employment for young people in communities where mining companies have moved in. Few young people from the surrounding communities hold skilled positions in the mining companies due to their low level of education.

***'Previously, people went to university and worked at the diouras<sup>105</sup> on their return, so we prefer to go straight there.'***

Civil society representative reporting the words of a gold miner, June 2021



### Gold mining at the expense of schooling

Although village leaders in some communities prohibit children from going to gold mining sites during the school year, there are high numbers of these children at the sites. Some women working at the sites bring their children with them as they cannot leave them unattended at home. Once there, these children are given various tasks, mainly looking after younger children, selling water and helping to process the ore.<sup>106</sup>

The educational representatives interviewed for this study<sup>107</sup> lamented the low number of students in classrooms. Children from other countries, especially Burkina Faso, are also involved in gold mining. Gold mining attracts young people as it is potentially more financially lucrative than other types of activity.

This involvement of children in the gold mining sector puts them at several health and safety risks, including exposure to chemicals, drugs and mine collapses.

### Reducing dynamics of conflict

- Tensions between local communities and mining companies should be prevented, in particular by setting up frameworks for dialogue in the areas of activity. This type of framework, which already exists in some areas where mining companies are operating, could be adopted and adapted to communities currently facing tensions.
- Permit holders should be informed in a timely manner, and compensated in accordance with the regulations in force. They should be allocated to other economically viable areas when permits are granted to mining companies in their areas. This way the Ministry of Mines and Geology could avoid tensions.
- Implementing a programme for training young people in Kédougou and Tambacounda in industrial and artisanal mining trades would help reduce tensions relating to the difficulty of securing qualified positions in the mining sector. The Ministry of Employment, Professional Training, Apprenticeship and Professional Integration could work with the mining companies and

the Apprenticeship and Production Unit of the Kédougou technical high school to achieve this. For this recommendation to be successful, it is essential to identify the human resource needs of the mining companies, raise awareness among parents and young people in the communities concerned and introduce support measures to facilitate training and professional integration for young graduates.

- If the dismantling of illegal sites and the response to mine collapses were accompanied by awareness-raising activities, relations between the population and state officials would improve. It would be beneficial for this work to be carried out jointly with the gold miners' federation. Involving military engineers in constructing certain basic social facilities would help the army to improve its relations with the population.
- An effective and enforced ban on child labour at gold mining sites should be accompanied by better educational coverage and the introduction of incentives to keep children in school.

Tension among the population, gold miners and state officials essentially stems from the army and gendarmerie patrolling the gold mining areas or dismantling illegal sites. These operations usually result in arrests and seizures of prohibited equipment and substances, but don't necessarily prevent new settlements.

To ensure compliance with safety laws, in the event of a mine collapse, the local powers systematically arrest the pit manager and the person responsible for operations and safety on site. This person is known as the *tomboulman*.<sup>108</sup> Although these interventions help create a climate of security and are generally appreciated by the

population, they generate considerable frustration among the mining communities. The arrests and the dismantling of illegal sites, which are used as a deterrent, are poorly understood and negatively viewed by the gold miners.

Perceptions of multiple injustices and of state action as a threat to gold mining as a legitimate source of livelihood have facilitated recruitment and establishment by extremists among local populations in some parts of the Sahel.

### Multiple trafficking networks

The intensification in gold mining in south-eastern Senegal has been accompanied by the emergence or expansion of illicit activities. The area is affected by trafficking in drugs, fake medicines, chemicals, explosives, and humans. The movement of weapons,<sup>109</sup> particularly at gold mining sites, also needs to be addressed. However, there are major weaknesses in the current border surveillance system.

While there is no evidence from the data of direct links between the trafficking economy in the area and the activities of violent extremist groups, this economy constitutes a threat to Senegal. In particular, it provides a means for extremists to recruit people who could facilitate links with trafficking networks and potential alliances with operators trying to evade state control.

***'Gold miners are my main customers.'***

Cannabis seller, Kédougou, March 2021

As gold mining has intensified and gold miners have started to use different types of drugs, the Kédougou region has gone from being a transit area to a major consumer area in 10 years.<sup>110</sup>

Cannabis is the most commonly used drug at the sites because of its availability and relative affordability (1 000 CFA francs).<sup>111</sup> Two types of cannabis are consumed. These are 'green' cannabis, originating from Sindian (a village in the department of Bignona, Ziguinchor region), and 'brown' cannabis, originating in southern Nigeria and transiting through Mali.<sup>112</sup>

Supply is mostly through trafficking networks, composed mainly of Senegalese and Malian nationals.

Some of these Senegalese nationals also supply 'brown' cannabis, in particular from Diabougou in the Tambacounda region.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to cannabis, tramadol and Valium are widely used at gold mining sites. Known as the 'worker's drug', tramadol is a painkiller with euphoric effects. It is the most widely used synthetic opioid in West Africa.<sup>114</sup> It originates in India, usually passes through countries on the Gulf of Guinea such as Benin, Ghana and Nigeria, and is then transported to countries in Central and West Africa.<sup>115</sup>

Tramadol sold at artisanal gold mining sites in the Kédougou region is smuggled into the country by traffickers, particularly from Mali, who collaborate with Senegalese nationals responsible for transporting it to its destination via minor roads.

In Senegal, tramadol is a legal prescription drug. Unlike the standard 50 mg dose found in pharmacies, the illicit sale of the drug is in doses of 120 mg, 200 mg or 250 mg, and consumers refer to it using these figures. These dosages are sold on the black market at 1 000, 1 500 and 2 500 CFA francs per tablet, respectively.<sup>116</sup>

The illicit sale of this substance is not yet criminalised by Senegalese law, although some dealers arrested are being prosecuted on the charge of usurping the position of pharmacist.<sup>117</sup>

Valium, an anti-anxiety drug,<sup>118</sup> is also channelled to the gold mining sites, and usually originates from Guinea. Like tramadol, it is diverted from its normal medical use and is used to increase resistance to fatigue and physical exertion.<sup>119</sup>

***'I was able to buy several houses and motorbikes from trafficking tablets and drugs.'***

Former tramadol and drug dealer, March 2021

The Kédougou region has also long served as a transit area for substandard or counterfeit medicines, known as fake medicines. These come mainly from Guinea, with the city of Toubia being one of the primary destinations.<sup>120</sup> However, as ASM has intensified over the past decade, Kédougou has become both a transit point and a major location for the consumption of fake medicines.<sup>121</sup>

This growth is due to the unavailability of some medicines, the absence of pharmacies in many parts of the region, the fake medicines' relatively low prices and the population's ignorance about their negative health impacts. The networks of traffickers, reported to be mostly Senegalese and Guinean nationals,<sup>122</sup> take advantage of this situation to supply fake medicines to the population and to the gold mining sites, where demand is high.

Trafficking in chemicals such as mercury and cyanide has also increased as gold mining has intensified. Mercury is channelled from China,<sup>123</sup> where it is produced, through Benin and Ghana, and on to the gold producing countries of West Africa.

The mercury is brought into Senegal from Mali, mainly by Malian and Burkinabe nationals.<sup>124</sup> The Malian nationals involved in this trafficking are mainly gold buyers who take advantage of the lack of security officers on the Falémé River and periods of low water levels to bring in the prohibited substance.

Once in Senegal, they sell the mercury or barter it for ore. A 10g bag of mercury is sold for 1 000 to 1 500 CFA francs.<sup>125</sup> Smaller quantities are also reportedly being diverted from dental surgeries in Dakar and smuggled to sites in the south-east of the country.<sup>126</sup>

As with mercury, the increasing use of cyanide at gold mining sites despite its prohibition indicates that this is also being trafficked in the area. The substance is reportedly brought in by Malian and Burkinabe nationals, in collusion with Senegalese nationals. Most seizures of cyanide<sup>127</sup> have been in the border areas with checkpoints, namely Saiensoutou and Guémédji.

***'I didn't know that explosives were banned because they are used not only in this area, but also in Mali.'***

Gold miner, March 2021



THE INTENSIFICATION  
OF GOLD MINING HAS LED  
TO AN INCREASE IN  
ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

Some gold miners use explosives to break up the ore, despite these being prohibited on the sites. The traffickers, including Malian, Guinean and Burkinabe nationals, obtain them in their country of origin and sell them in Senegal.

Few seizures have been recorded in the research area over the past decade. Most of them are the result of security operations or unannounced raids on gold mining sites. In February 2020, five people were arrested by the Kédougou gendarmerie with 524 kg of explosives, 479 detonators and 500 m of slow fuses in their possession.<sup>128</sup>

In November 2020, 150 explosives, 50 detonators and 150 m of wire were seized in Sambrambougou.<sup>129</sup> Although these interventions are necessary, they have very little impact as there is inadequate follow-up after dismantling trafficking networks.



***'When I was under the lady's control, I was forced to practise prostitution to pay back my travel expenses and free myself.'***

Young Nigerian woman, trafficked for sexual exploitation, March 2021

Trafficking in young women for sexual exploitation has developed alongside the influx of large numbers of migrants to gold mining sites in south-eastern Senegal. There is a popular belief at gold mining sites that defilement through sex will increase the chances of finding gold.<sup>130</sup>

Networks of traffickers have exploited this belief to transport hundreds of young women to Kédougou to satisfy the high demand.<sup>131</sup> While some of these women come from Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, most are from Nigeria, mainly Edo State.<sup>132</sup>

Most come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are 18 to 25 years old.<sup>133</sup> They are recruited mainly by pimps known as madams, who are often former victims of trafficking and have set up their own businesses. Recruitment is sometimes done by men who work for the 'madams'. The young women are recruited with false promises of employment in hair salons in the United States or Europe.<sup>134</sup>

The data collected provides information on the modus operandi and supply chain of human trafficking networks for sexual exploitation, particularly those involving Nigerian women. They are initially taken to Cotonou by a first group of smugglers, where false travel documents are made.<sup>135</sup> Once their identity documents are prepared, they are handed over to other smugglers who transport them by bus to the Malian capital city of Bamako, via Kouri in Burkina. Bamako is a strategic location in the trafficking network, as it is where their final destination is decided.

Women travelling towards Kédougou are taken on motorbikes to Djidian, a town in Mali considered an important transit point, from where they are transported to the Senegalese border.<sup>136</sup> They are then taken across the Falémé River on canoes to reach the gold mining communities, where their travel documents are confiscated by the pimps.<sup>137</sup> Some networks manage to

smuggle their victims through the official crossing point at Moussala,<sup>138</sup> taking advantage of free movement of people and goods within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

Pimps sometimes enjoy the complicity of village leaders, to whom they make monthly payments to be able to continue their activities.<sup>139</sup>

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation generates significant income, which is fed back into the legal economy through investments in real estate or commerce.<sup>140</sup>

In the research area, the geographical position of the region and the porous nature of its borders facilitate the movement of weapons (both homemade and assault). While the data collected didn't confirm the existence of arms trafficking, interviews conducted confirmed that the financial resources generated through ASM are a source of envy and insecurity.<sup>141</sup> This has increased demand for weapons, particularly from gold miners and traders wishing to protect themselves.<sup>142</sup>

### Human trafficking for sexual exploitation generates major income, which goes back into the legal economy

Poaching in the Niokolo-Koba National Park is also reported to have encouraged the movement of weapons in the area. This very lucrative practice has led poachers to make their activity profitable by trading their traditional hunting weapons for more sophisticated ones.<sup>143</sup>

Lastly, there are also weapons from Mali in the area,<sup>144</sup> which are transported in pieces to the gold mining sites of Kédougou and Tambacounda, mostly by motorbike.<sup>145</sup>

The existence of illicit trafficking, built around cross-border networks and run by nationals from countries experiencing violent extremism, presents an opportunity for extremists. By becoming directly or indirectly involved in illicit trafficking, they can generate financial resources, acquire operational means and form strategic or circumstantial alliances with other operators seeking to evade state control.

Considering the geographical position of south-eastern Senegal, the growing terrorist threat in the sub-region, and the presence of multiple trafficking networks, there is an urgent need to strengthen border surveillance and control.

## Conclusion

***'If we want to address security issues, we will need to invest. We must show these people that they are part of Senegal.'***

Institutional stakeholder, June 2021

Gold mining sites offer opportunities for violent extremist groups to generate financial resources through providing security for the sites or through mining or selling the gold. They also provide the opportunity for them to obtain explosives and train in using them.

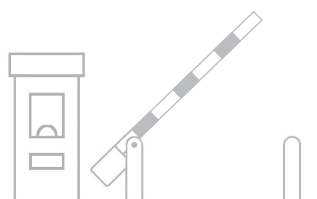
Meanwhile, illicit trafficking allows these groups to procure operational resources, create alliances and recruit. This potential is also fuelled by feelings of injustice and abandonment by the central state and by the presence of dynamics of conflict, particularly in areas where the state is practically absent.

## Suppressing illegal gold mining and controlling the gold marketing chain through better regulation would reduce structural loopholes in the sector

As concerns mount about a possible expansion of the threat from violent extremist groups in south-eastern Senegal, and given the extent of vulnerabilities identified in the regions of Kédougou and Tambacounda, Senegal would benefit from taking a holistic preventive approach. This would require an accelerated process to formalise ASM activities.

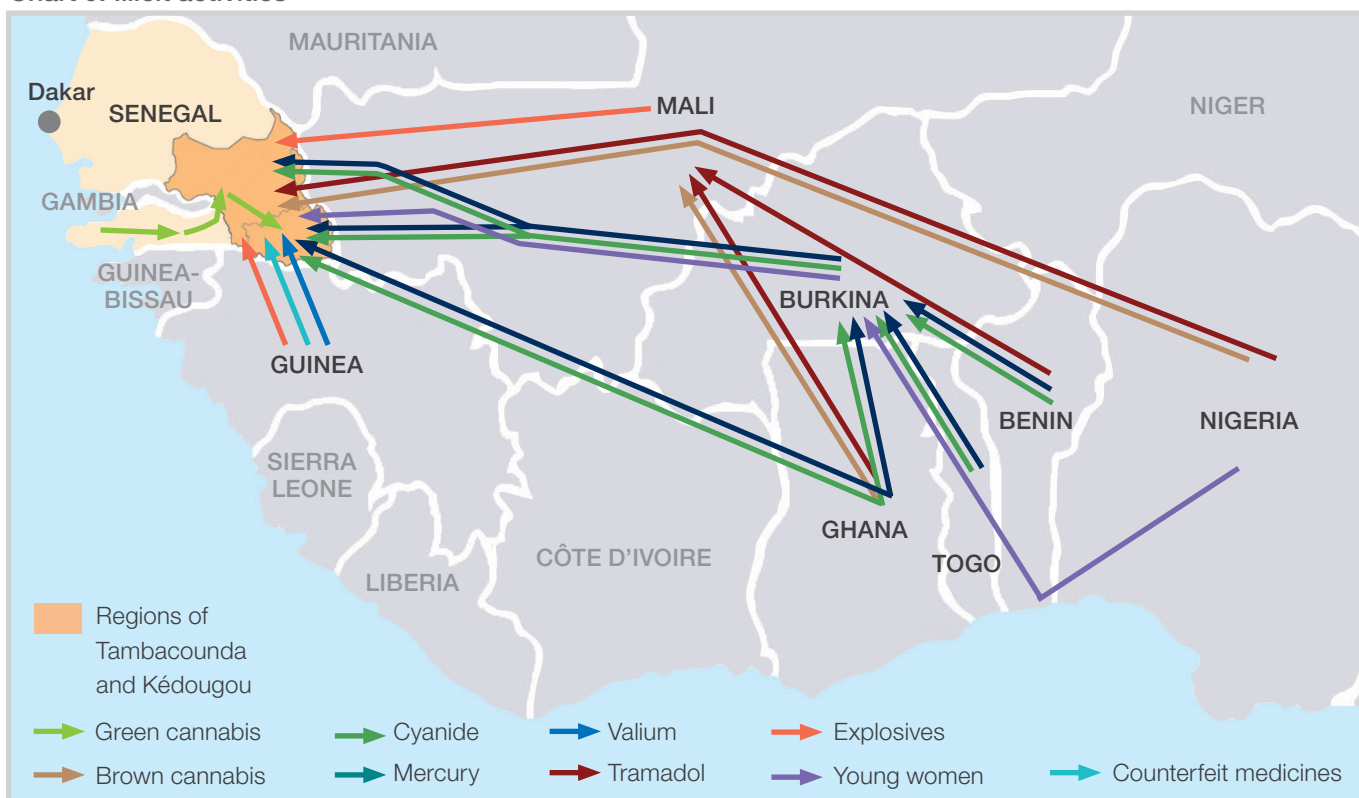
Suppressing illegal and clandestine operations at gold mining sites and controlling the gold marketing chain through better regulation would help reduce structural loopholes in the sector. This would also make gold mining part of a sustainable development approach for communities in south-eastern Senegal. As well as addressing the vulnerabilities plaguing the area and limiting the risks of financing violent extremist groups, this would mitigate financial losses for Senegal and ensure that the population has better access to mining resources.

Socio-economic disparities must be reduced, and environmental and health impacts of artisanal mining that may exacerbate the socio-economic vulnerabilities identified must be addressed. This would help



THE CURRENT BORDER SURVEILLANCE SCHEME FACES MAJOR CHALLENGES

Chart 9: Illicit activities



### Strengthening border surveillance and anti-trafficking measures

- Intensify security coverage to make the defence and security forces more effective in terms of intelligence gathering and anticipation of potential threats. In particular, this coverage could be extended to the villages bordering the Falémé River, where river and sea patrols should be increased.
- Involve the population further in border management by establishing awareness campaigns and ongoing dialogue between the defence and security forces and key figures in villages on the borders.
- Strengthen the legislative framework to tackle trafficking of fake medicines. To do so, the government should adopt and implement the MEDICRIME Convention. This criminalises, among other things, any ‘medical product manufactured, supplied or placed on the market without authorisation or without being in compliance with the conformity requirements.’<sup>146</sup>

Legislation should also be passed to criminalise the illicit sale of tramadol.

- Strengthen security surveillance in the Niokolo-Koba National Park to help tackle poaching and the movement of weapons in the area.
- Establish frameworks for technical cooperation to effectively tackle human trafficking. Senegal should create links between the countries of origin, transit and destination for victims of trafficking (notably Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria). It could also consider establishing a policy of voluntary return for those who have been trafficked, in collaboration with the relevant countries and humanitarian organisations.
- Increase the operational capacity of the joint patrols conducted by Mauritania, Senegal and Mali, and encourage Guinea to participate. These patrols, established several years ago by the three countries in the border area, help secure the borders and tackle illicit trafficking.

limit the opportunities for violent extremist groups to become established and recruit.

Social cohesion should be improved, amid major migratory and financial flows and military and security interventions that may be perceived as jeopardising significant income-generating activities.

### Integrated responses, designed to make a difference in the short, medium or long term, will avert worst-case scenarios in south-eastern Senegal

Strengthening the security arrangements would certainly limit the potential for trafficking and infiltration that can result from the migratory flows generated by gold mining. It could also help improve relations between the defence and security forces and the communities. However, if not properly managed, it could fuel existing tensions.

Only integrated responses, designed to be mutually reinforcing and to make a difference in the short, medium and long term, will avert the worst-case scenario in south-eastern Senegal. For example, security coverage could be made much more effective by improving infrastructure, particularly roads, which would also give communities who feel largely forgotten by the central administration a greater sense of inclusion.

An important part of the solution lies in implementing various responses at the national level. However, Senegal will only be able to deal with these threats to human security associated with gold mining if it takes preventive action as part of a regional drive.

It will be important to consult with the neighbouring countries affected – Mali, Guinea and Mauritania. The cross-border nature of the challenges calls for a thorough understanding of the regional perspective and for coordinated responses.



ACCELERATING THE  
PROCESS OF FORMALISING  
THE ASM AND MAKING IT  
MORE INCLUSIVE WILL HELP  
IMPROVE SECURITY

---

## Annex

Chart 10 : Map of the South-Eastern part of Senegal



## Notes

- 1 W Assanvo et al., Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, *West Africa Report*, 26, December 2019; International Crisis Group, Getting a grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush, *Africa Report* No 282, 9, 13 November 2019; N Munshi, Instability in the Sahel: how a jihadi gold rush is fuelling violence in Africa, *Financial Times*, [www.ft.com/content/8ff4c2ca-7ac3-4f3b-96ba-6fb74bbb60d5](http://www.ft.com/content/8ff4c2ca-7ac3-4f3b-96ba-6fb74bbb60d5), 26 June 2021.
- 2 T Ollivier, Le Sénégal redoute la contagion djihadiste à ses frontières [Senegal fears jihadist contagion on its borders], *Le Monde Afrique*, [www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/02/24/le-senegal-redoute-la-contagion-djihadiste-a-ses-frontieres\\_6071089\\_3212.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/02/24/le-senegal-redoute-la-contagion-djihadiste-a-ses-frontieres_6071089_3212.html), 24 February 2021; C Cluzel, Fin de Barkhane : quelles répercussions sur le Sénégal ? [End of Operation Barkhane: what are the repercussions for Senegal?], *Le Point Afrique*, [www.lepoint.fr/afrique/fin-de-barkhane-quelles-repercussions-sur-le-senegal-16-06-2021-2431315\\_3826.php](http://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/fin-de-barkhane-quelles-repercussions-sur-le-senegal-16-06-2021-2431315_3826.php), 16 June 2021; Dakaractu, Expansion djihadiste vers l'ouest : Comment la Katiba Macina s'approche dangereusement du Sénégal... [Jihadist expansion towards the west: how the Macina Katiba is getting dangerously close to Senegal ...], [www.dakaractu.com/Expansion-djihadiste-vers-l-ouest-Comment-la-Katiba-Macina-s-approche-dangereusement-du-Senegal\\_a196320.html](http://www.dakaractu.com/Expansion-djihadiste-vers-l-ouest-Comment-la-Katiba-Macina-s-approche-dangereusement-du-Senegal_a196320.html), 20 November 2020.
- 3 Law No. 2016-32 of 8 November 2016 enacting the Mining Code defines artisanal mining as 'any operation which consists of extracting and concentrating mineral substances to obtain marketable products by using traditional or manual methods and procedures.' The Mining Code defines semi-mechanised mining as 'any operation whose daily processing capacity does not exceed five hundred (500) tonnes of ore and which consists of extracting and concentrating mineral substances to obtain marketable products, using some mechanical means in the chain of operations.'
- 4 The field research campaigns took place in November 2019, November 2020 and February and March 2021.
- 5 To document vulnerabilities in relation to gold mining and the threat of violent extremist groups, sites were selected based on the following criteria: geographical position bordering Mali; presence of several types of mining activities (artisanal, semi-mechanised and industrial); very high presence of gold miners from Senegal and other West African countries; evidence of socio-economic, environmental and health impacts of gold mining; and presence of tensions between actors involved in mining activities. The data collected was analysed using a primarily qualitative approach.
- 6 National Agency for Statistics and Demography, Rapport de l'étude monographique sur l'orpaillage au Sénégal [Report on the monographic study on gold mining in Senegal], [www.ansd.sn/ressources/rapports/RAPPORT%20EMOR%20du%2020%20juillet%202018.pdf](http://www.ansd.sn/ressources/rapports/RAPPORT%20EMOR%20du%2020%20juillet%202018.pdf), July 2018. However, according to a study released in October 2019, the Kédougou region accounts for 96% of gold mining sites. See United Nations Environment Programme, Artisanal Gold Council, Mali Ministry of the Environment, Sanitation and Sustainable Development and Senegal Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Estimations initiales nationales du secteur de l'extraction artisanale et à petite échelle d'or au Sénégal conformément à la Convention de Minamata sur le Mercure [Initial national estimates of the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector in Senegal under the Minamata Convention on Mercury], [www.artisanalgold.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Senegal-Inventory-Report.pdf](http://www.artisanalgold.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Senegal-Inventory-Report.pdf), October 2019.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 LA Théroux-Bénoni and N Adam, Hard counter-terrorism lessons from the Sahel for West Africa's coastal states, *ISS Today*, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/hard-counter-terrorism-lessons-from-the-sahel-for-west-africas-coastal-states>, 5 June 2019.
- 9 According to data extracted for the Kayes region, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.
- 10 Studio Tamani, Kayes : attaque du poste forestier de Dioumara [Kayes: attack of the Dioumara forest post], [www.studiotamani.org/index.php/themes/breves/20678-kayes-attaque-du-poste-forestier-de-dioumara](http://www.studiotamani.org/index.php/themes/breves/20678-kayes-attaque-du-poste-forestier-de-dioumara), 11 July 2019; M Keita, Diéma : attaque du poste des eaux et forêts de Sagabara [Diéma: attack of the Sagabara water and forest post], *Malijet*, [malijet.co/crise-malienne/diema-attaque-du-poste-des-eaux-et-forets-de-sagabara](http://malijet.co/crise-malienne/diema-attaque-du-poste-des-eaux-et-forets-de-sagabara), 9 April 2020; Studio Tamani, Insécurité au Mali : la région de Kayes « ciblée » par des terroristes [Insecurity in Mali: the Kayes region 'targeted' by terrorists], [www.studiotamani.org/index.php/themes/politique/23358-insecurite-au-mali-la-region-de-kayes-ciblee-par-des-terroristes](http://www.studiotamani.org/index.php/themes/politique/23358-insecurite-au-mali-la-region-de-kayes-ciblee-par-des-terroristes), 14 April 2020; RFI, Mali : deux camionneurs marocains tués lors d'une attaque à Didiéni [Mali: two Moroccan truckers killed in an attack in Didiéni], [www.rfi.fr/afrique/20210913-mali-deux-camionneurs-marocains-tu%C3%A9s-lors-d-une-attaque-%C3%A0-did%C3%A9ni](http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20210913-mali-deux-camionneurs-marocains-tu%C3%A9s-lors-d-une-attaque-%C3%A0-did%C3%A9ni), 13 September 2021.
- 11 Agence Ecofin, Cinq morts dans l'attaque d'un convoi minier escorté par l'armée [Five killed in an attack on a military-escorted mining convoy], [www.agenceecofin.com/mines/2909-91960-mali-cinq-morts-dans-l-attaque-d-un-convoi-minier-escorte-par-l-armee](http://www.agenceecofin.com/mines/2909-91960-mali-cinq-morts-dans-l-attaque-d-un-convoi-minier-escorte-par-l-armee), 29 September 2021.
- 12 LA Théroux-Bénoni and W Assanvo et al, Mali's young 'jihadists': Fuelled by faith or circumstance?, *ISS Policy Brief* 89, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/policybrief89-eng-v3.pdf>, August 2016.
- 13 These weapons were found a few months later. Interview with defence officers, November 2020. See also La Vie Sénégalaise, Kédougou – Le poste des douanes de Moussala cambriolé : des armes emportées [Kédougou – the Moussala customs post burgled: weapons taken], [laviesenegalaise.com/kedougou-le-poste-des-douanes-de-moussala-cambriole-des-armes-emportees/](http://laviesenegalaise.com/kedougou-le-poste-des-douanes-de-moussala-cambriole-des-armes-emportees/), 10 February 2020; and M Sané, Douanes de Tambacounda: les armes volées retrouvées [Tambacounda customs: stolen weapons found], [senego.com/douanes-de-tambacounda-les-armes-volees-retrouvees\\_1110458.html](http://senego.com/douanes-de-tambacounda-les-armes-volees-retrouvees_1110458.html), 22 June 2020.
- 14 Xalima.com, Gathiary : des individus ouvrent le feu sur une patrouille de la gendarmerie [Gathiary: individuals open fire on a gendarmerie patrol], [xalimasn.com/gathiary-des-individus-ouvrent-le-feu-sur-une-patrouille-de-la-gendarmerie/](http://xalimasn.com/gathiary-des-individus-ouvrent-le-feu-sur-une-patrouille-de-la-gendarmerie/), January 2020.
- 15 United Nations Security Council, Twenty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), al-Qaeda and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, para. 33, 3 February 2021.
- 16 RFI, Sénégal : 4 présumés jihadistes ont été inculpés [Senegal: four suspected jihadists have been charged], [www.rfi.fr/afrique/20210212-s%C3%A9n%C3%A9gal-4-pr%C3%A9sum%C3%A9s-jihadistes-ont-%C3%A9t%C3%A9-inculp%C3%A9s](http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20210212-s%C3%A9n%C3%A9gal-4-pr%C3%A9sum%C3%A9s-jihadistes-ont-%C3%A9t%C3%A9-inculp%C3%A9s), 12 February 2021; Dakaractu, Sénégal : mandat de dépôt pour les quatre présumés jihadistes arrêtés à Kidira [Senegal: detention warrant for four suspected jihadists arrested in Kidira], [www.dakaractu.com/Senegal-Mandat-de-depot-pour-les-quatre-presumes-jihadistes-arretes-a-Kidira\\_a199724.html](http://www.dakaractu.com/Senegal-Mandat-de-depot-pour-les-quatre-presumes-jihadistes-arretes-a-Kidira_a199724.html), 11 February 2021.
- 17 LA Théroux-Bénoni and N Adam, Hard counter-terrorism lessons from the Sahel for West Africa's coastal states, *ISS Today*, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/hard-counter-terrorism-lessons-from-the-sahel-for-west-africas-coastal-states>, 5 June 2019.
- 18 International Crisis Group, Getting a grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush, *Africa Report* No. 282, 9, 13 November 2019; FR Koné and N Adam, How Western Mali could become a gold mine for terrorists, *ISS Today*, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-western-mali-could-become-a-gold-mine-for-terrorists>, 1 April 2021.

- 19 Other documented sources of local funding include cattle rustling and poaching. See W Assanvo, B Dakono, LA Théroux-Bénoni and I Maïga, Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, *West Africa Report* 26, December 2019.
- 20 International Crisis Group, Getting a grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush, *Africa Report* No. 282, 8, 13 November 2019.
- 21 Ibid, 8.
- 22 Ibid, 8.
- 23 The use of the term zakat in this context can be considered a misuse by extremist groups. *Zakat* is not a tax, but rather obligatory annual alms given by every wealthy Muslim.
- 24 W Assanvo, B Dakono, LA Théroux-Bénoni and I Maïga, Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, *West Africa Report* 26, 18, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war-26-eng.pdf>, December 2019.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 International Crisis Group, Getting a grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush, *Africa Report* No. 282, 9, 13 November 2019.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 W Assanvo, B Dakono, LA Théroux-Bénoni and I Maïga, Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, *West Africa Report* 26, 10, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war-26-eng.pdf>, December 2019.
- 29 Ibid, 10.
- 30 Ibid, 18.
- 31 Straddling Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin.
- 32 In north-west Mali, near the Mauritania border.
- 33 LA Théroux-Bénoni and N Adam, Hard counter-terrorism lessons from the Sahel for West Africa's coastal states, *ISS Today*, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/hard-counter-terrorism-lessons-from-the-sahel-for-west-africas-coastal-states>, 5 June 2019.
- 34 LA Théroux-Bénoni, W Assanvo et al, Mali's young 'jihadists': fuelled by faith or circumstance?, *ISS Policy Brief* 89, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/policybrief89-eng-v3.pdf>, August 2016.
- 35 W Assanvo, B Dakono, LA Théroux-Bénoni and I Maïga, Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, *West Africa Report* 26, December 2019.
- 36 LA Théroux-Bénoni and B Dakono, Are terrorist groups stoking local conflicts in the Sahel?, *ISS Today*, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/are-terrorist-groups-stoking-local-conflicts-in-the-sahel>, 14 October 2019.
- 37 W Assanvo, B Dakono, LA Théroux-Bénoni and I Maïga, Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma, *West Africa Report* 26, December 2019.
- 38 This movement, which has been active since 2009 in north-eastern Nigeria, has split and now operates in the Lake Chad region (Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon). See MA Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *In Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014. See also OS Mahmood and NC Ani, Factional dynamics within Boko Haram, ISS Research Report, 2018.
- 39 Tribunal De Grande Instance Hors Classe de Dakar [High Court of Dakar], judgement No. 91/Ccs/ of 31 and 59, 19 July 2018.
- 40 The territory of Bambouk straddles Mali and Senegal. Bouré is located in the prefecture of Siguiré (Guinea), specifically in the rural community of Kintinian. These provinces have a strong gold mining identity, with the resource having played a key role in the political history of the great pre-colonial states, in particular the empires of Ghana and Mali. FB Mbodj, Boom aurifère et dynamiques économiques entre Sénégal, Mali et Guinée [Gold boom and economic dynamics between Senegal, Mali and Guinea], *EchoGéo*, 8, [pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7e21/228e9e8c4fb70dbb9761600f1e467eb66e48.pdf?\\_ga=2.210983381.1114118274.1571399995-2085032953.1571399995.2009](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7e21/228e9e8c4fb70dbb9761600f1e467eb66e48.pdf?_ga=2.210983381.1114118274.1571399995-2085032953.1571399995.2009).
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 These are Order No. 009249 of 14 June 2013 on the organisation of gold mining activities, Order No. 2472 of 10 February 2014 defining gold mining corridors, and Interministerial Order No. 09931 of 18 June 2014 establishing the terms and conditions for opening and operating trading posts for precious metals and stones.
- 43 Journal Officiel du Sénégal [Senegal Official Gazette], Law No. 2016-05 of 6 January 2016 authorising the President of the Republic to ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury, adopted in Kumamoto, Japan, on 10 October 2013, [www.jo.gouv.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer&id\\_article=10703](http://www.jo.gouv.sn/spip.php?page=imprimer&id_article=10703).
- 44 As is the case for Mali and Guinea.
- 45 Order No. 2472 of 10 February 2014 defining gold mining corridors.
- 46 See articles 46-53 of the 2016 Mining Code.
- 47 Interview with gold miners, Tomboronkoto, February 2021.
- 48 Focus group, Bagnon, March 2021.
- 49 Interview with an administrative authority in Kédougou, November 2020.
- 50 Regulations in Guinea prioritise granting artisanal mining permits to gold miners who are grouped into cooperatives. For example, the Tonson (Siguiré) cooperative received free permits for 5% of the 200 0.5 ha plots. The cooperative reserves the right to buy other plots, depending on its resources.
- 51 Burkina Faso created the National Agency for the Supervision of Artisanal and Semi-mechanised Mining (ANEEMAS) in 2015, in response to the many challenges facing its gold sector. ANEEMAS is under the technical supervision of the Ministries of Mining and Finance, and is responsible for overseeing and monitoring artisanal and semi-mechanised mining activities. It aims to contribute to minimising the negative impacts of artisanal mining on the environment, ensuring better onsite safety in mining activities, reducing fraud in the artisanal gold economy and eradicating child labour on artisanal mining sites. See [www.aneemas.bf](http://www.aneemas.bf).
- 52 National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD), Rapport de l'étude monographique sur l'orpaillage au Sénégal, July 2018.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Interview with an institutional stakeholder, April 2021.
- 56 The method by which the price of gold is set in London.
- 57 Interviews with gold miners, November 2020 and February and March 2021.
- 58 YB Alvarez, B Coué and P Schein, Analysis report: marketing chains of artisanal gold in West Africa, 6, 2016.
- 59 Interview with the Association of gold trading posts, Kédougou, March 2021.
- 60 Interview with a gold trader, Mouran, February 2021.
- 61 Interview with a trading post owner, Kédougou, March 2021.
- 62 Ibid. Mali is generally cited as a transit country, and the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland are believed to be final destination countries.
- 63 Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa, Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Linked to the Extractive Industry/Mining Sector in West Africa, October 2019.
- 64 ANSD, Rapport de l'étude monographique sur l'orpaillage au Sénégal, July 2018; latest ANSD report on the subject.
- 65 Interviews in Kédougou and Tambacounda, November 2020 and February and March 2021.

- 66 ANSD, Enquête harmonisée sur les conditions de vie des ménages (EHCVM) au Sénégal [Harmonised Survey on Household Living Conditions (EHCVM) in Senegal], Final report, [www.ansd.sn/ressources/publications/Rapport-final-EHCVM-vf-Senegal.pdf](http://www.ansd.sn/ressources/publications/Rapport-final-EHCVM-vf-Senegal.pdf), September 2021.
- 67 For comparison, in 2011, poverty rates were 71.3% in Kédougou and 62.5% in Tambacounda.
- 68 The PUMA aims in particular to improve road, river, sea, telephone, health and digital access for border regions and communities, in order to contribute towards sustainable development and ensure the security of border regions and roads. Several projects to improve living conditions and strengthen border surveillance have been completed or are under way. These include the construction and equipment of two health centres, including staff accommodation, at Diakha Macky and Thiankoye; the electrification of Diakha and Guémédji; the ongoing construction of a combined security station in Guémédji (Médina Baffé); equipment for the Moussala border area; Guémédji police station; the Saraya forest brigade; and governance of Kédougou. For achievements in Kédougou under the PUMA, see [www.puma.sn/region/kedougou](http://www.puma.sn/region/kedougou).
- 69 The main objective of the PUDC is to help reduce inequalities and disparities by establishing core infrastructure in rural areas. During the first phase (2015–2018), the Kédougou region received 69 boreholes and 424 pieces of post-harvest equipment, and 11 villages were electrified (seven using solar power). PUDC, Progress Report, April 2018.
- 70 The programme includes building 5.5 km of roads in the commune of Kédougou, installing 275 street lights, renovating Bakary Danfakha school, building classrooms at Tripano 1 and 2 schools, and paving 24 000 m<sup>2</sup> as part of the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi programme. Ministry of Community Development and Social and Regional Fairness, Lancement des travaux de PROMOVILLES à Kédougou, <https://equite.sec.gouv.sn/actualite/lancement-des-travaux-de-promovilles-kedougou>, 3 June 2021.
- 71 Focus group, Mouran, March 2015.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Interviews with local people, November 2020 and February and March 2021.
- 74 Interview in Bagnon and Mandathies, March 2021.
- 75 Focus group in Saiensoutou, February 2021
- 76 This refers to the two main gold producing regions, Kédougou and Tambacounda, which respectively use an estimated 3.9 tonnes and 1.3 tonnes per year. Senegal, Plan d'action national pour réduire, voire éliminer, l'usage du mercure dans l'EMAPE au Sénégal [National action plan to reduce or eliminate mercury use in ASM in Senegal], [www.mercuryconvention.org/sites/default/files/documents/national\\_action\\_plan/Senegal\\_ASGM\\_NAP-Nov2019-FR.pdf](http://www.mercuryconvention.org/sites/default/files/documents/national_action_plan/Senegal_ASGM_NAP-Nov2019-FR.pdf), November 2019.
- 77 JR Gerson et al., Senegalese artisanal gold mining leads to elevated total mercury and methylmercury concentrations in soils, sediments, and rivers, *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene* 6:11, 2017.
- 78 While dredging has never been officially authorised in Senegal, in Mali the ban only came into effect in 2019, in particular through the interministerial order of 15 May 2019.
- 79 Le Jalon, Utilisation des dragues sur le Falémé : le ministre Housseini Amion Guindo à la chasse des orpailleurs illégaux [Use of dredges on the Falémé River: Minister Housseini Amion Guindo on the hunt for illegal gold miners], <https://lejal.com/2020/03/31/utilisation-des-dragues-sur-le-faleme-le-ministre-housseini-amion-guindo-a-la-chasse-des-orpailleurs-illegaux/>, 31 March 2020.
- 80 Focus group, Garebouréya, February 2021.
- 81 Mercury amalgamation only captures up to 40% of the gold.
- 82 JR Gerson et al., Senegalese artisanal gold mining leads to elevated total mercury and methylmercury concentrations in soils, sediments, and rivers, *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene* 6:11, 2017.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 In 2020, HIV prevalence was 0.9% at gold mining sites, compared with 0.6% in the Kédougou region and 0.5% at the national level. Interview with a health worker, Kédougou, March 2021.
- 85 ANSD, Rapport de l'étude monographique sur l'orpaillage au Sénégal, July 2018.
- 86 According to the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, almost all of the 1 216 operators in alluvial mining are women.
- 87 There are some rare exceptions, notably in the communities of Mouran and Kharakhéna, where at the time of writing, two site managers were women.
- 88 Such as the prototype ladder made by a student at the Kédougou technical high school as part of a study project to make it easier for diggers to descend into the mine pits.
- 89 Ore processing unit, funded by the Global Environment Facility and the US Department of State, with the Artisanal Gold Council and the Alliance for Responsible Mining as implementing agencies, and for the benefit of Bantaco gold miners. The miners were sceptical at first but later fully engaged. They all processed the ore in this way, paid the wages and maintained the equipment after the project. Mercury-free gold is produced using the following processing stages: crushing, simultaneous grinding and sluicing, shaking table, burning of the amalgam using oxygen, acetylene and borax instead of mercury. The unit is currently faced with technical, material and human resource challenges and a lack of monitoring by the relevant national authorities. Interview with a member of the project, November 2021.
- 90 There is also authorised prostitution. Those operating legally have health checks and health records.
- 91 International Organization for Migration, "Gold fevers" in Senegal: an analysis of migration profiles and dynamics in the Kédougou Region, November 2019.
- 92 ANSD, Rapport de l'étude monographique sur l'orpaillage au Sénégal, 33, July 2018.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 For example, the use of cyanide in gold processing was introduced into the area by operators from Burkina Faso, who buy the tailings left after processing the ore to then process them using cyanidation.
- 95 This perception of rules and taxes among foreign communities could warrant an in-depth study.
- 96 Focus group in Bondala, February 2021.
- 97 For example, at some sites local authorities have banned public religious demonstrations by some foreign-influenced movements because of speeches about the religious practices of the native population, suggesting they could not find gold because they were bad Muslims. Focus group, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 98 Mining companies contributing to the annual budget for certain communes, often resulting in the construction or improvement of educational, health or leisure facilities, has reportedly led to improved relations with the population.
- 99 Young people set fire to government buildings in Sabodala, Kédougou region, in protest at receiving no benefit from the extraction of gold by multinationals. ML Diallo, Mine d'or et développement durable [Gold mining and sustainable development], *EchoGéo* 8, <http://journals.openedition.org/echogeo/11103>, 2009.
- 100 Gold mining sites in Diakhaling were closed by the state because the land was granted to the Canadian company Teranga Gold Corporation (Sabodala Gold Operations). This led to clashes between the police and the local population. PressAfrik, Sabodala: l'or de Diakhaling oppose gendarmes et villageois [Sabodala: Diakhaling gold pits gendarmes against villagers], [www.pressafrik.com/Sabodala-l-or-de-Diakhaling-oppose-gendarmes-et-villageois\\_a122539.html](http://www.pressafrik.com/Sabodala-l-or-de-Diakhaling-oppose-gendarmes-et-villageois_a122539.html), 21 May 2014.



- 101 Focus group, interview in Sambarabougou, March 2021.
- 102 This situation was reported in Sambarabougou, Douta and Kharakhena, but it was not possible to get all stakeholders' versions of the story.
- 103 Focus groups in Kédougou, November 2020, and in Sambarabougou and Douta, March 2021.
- 104 Interview with gold miners in Kharakhéna, Kédougou, November 2020 and March 2021.
- 105 Malinke word for gold mining sites.
- 106 In 2017, 0.5% of gold miners were children under 15 years of age. ANSD, Rapport de l'étude monographique sur l'orpaillage au Sénégal, July 2018.
- 107 Interview with educational representatives, February 2021.
- 108 Interview with a law officer, Kédougou, November 2020.
- 109 Interview with a security officer, November 2020.
- 110 Interview with a law officer, Kédougou, September 2019.
- 111 Interview in a prison, Kédougou, March 2021. It was not possible to determine the exact amount of cannabis per bag; however, it was estimated to be a few grams.
- 112 Interview in a prison, Kédougou, March 2021.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 European Union and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, At the crossroads of licit and illicit: tramadol and other pharmaceutical opioids trafficking in West Africa, [www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Tramadol\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_West\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Tramadol_Trafficking_in_West_Africa.pdf), 2021.
- 115 A Ebo'o, Trade-offs in managing tramadol abuse in Central Africa, *ISS Today*, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/trade-offs-in-managing-tramadol-abuse-in-central-africa>, 2 August 2018.
- 116 Interview in a prison, Kédougou, March 2021. It was not possible to determine the number of doses per tablet.
- 117 Interview with a law officer, Kédougou, November 2019.
- 118 Psychomédia, Qu'est-ce que le Valium (diazépam)? [What is Valium (diazepam)?], [www.psychomedia.qc.ca/medicaments/qu-est-ce-que-le-valium-diazepam](http://www.psychomedia.qc.ca/medicaments/qu-est-ce-que-le-valium-diazepam), 5 October 2017.
- 119 Interview in a prison, Kédougou, March 2021.
- 120 City in Diourbel region, 194 km east of the capital, Dakar.
- 121 Interview with a security officer, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 122 Prison interview with a trafficker, March 2021, and with a security officer, November 2020.
- 123 United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Swiss Confederation and Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Curbing illicit mercury and gold flows in West Africa: options for a regional approach, [https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/gold\\_mercury\\_ecowas/](https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/gold_mercury_ecowas/), November 2018.
- 124 Interview with a gold miner, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 125 C Lassen et al., Mercury trade and use for artisanal and small-scale gold mining in sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank and COWI, <http://cegem.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mercury-Sub-Saharan-Africa-Trade-Report-12-December.pdf>, 2016.
- 126 Ibid.
- 127 Interview with a security officer, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 128 I Diallo, Série d'opérations de sécurisation de la gendarmerie nationale à Tambacounda et Kédougou – 21 malfaiteurs arrêtés, des armes, explosifs et beaucoup d'argent saisis [Series of security operations carried out by the national gendarmerie in Tambacounda and Kédougou – 21 criminals arrested and weapons, explosives and a large sum of money seized], *Sud Quotidien*, [www.senetoile.net/regions/116-kedougou/1009599-serie-d-operations-de-securisation-de-la-gendarmerie-nationale-a-tambacounda-et-kedougou-21-malfaiteurs-arretes-des-armes-explosifs-et-beaucoup-d-argent-saisi.html](http://www.senetoile.net/regions/116-kedougou/1009599-serie-d-operations-de-securisation-de-la-gendarmerie-nationale-a-tambacounda-et-kedougou-21-malfaiteurs-arretes-des-armes-explosifs-et-beaucoup-d-argent-saisi.html), 21 February 2019.
- 129 S Sakhanokho, Kédougou : 150 explosifs et 50 détonateurs saisis sur un Guinéen [Kédougou: 150 explosives and 50 detonators seized from a Guinean national], *PressAfrik*, [www.pressafrik.com/Kedougou-150-explosifs-et-50-detonateurs-saisi-sur-un-Guineen\\_a224109.html](http://www.pressafrik.com/Kedougou-150-explosifs-et-50-detonateurs-saisi-sur-un-Guineen_a224109.html), 21 November 2020.
- 130 AA Seck, Se souiller pour décrocher le jackpot : dans les entrailles de Sabodola [Defiling oneself to hit the jackpot: in the bowels of Sabodola], Apache et Kharakhena, *Senepus*, [www.senepus.com/article/se-souiller-pour-d%C3%A9crocher-le-jackpot](http://www.senepus.com/article/se-souiller-pour-d%C3%A9crocher-le-jackpot), 24 November 2014.
- 131 Interview with a social worker from the NGO La Lumière, Kédougou, November 2020.
- 132 Interviews with individuals who were trafficked, November 2020 and February and March 2021.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 Focus group with trafficked Nigerian girls, February 2021.
- 135 Interview with a trafficked woman, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 136 Interview with a trafficked woman, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 137 Interview with a trafficked woman, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 138 Interview with a trafficked woman, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 139 Interview with a pimp, Kédougou, February 2021.
- 140 Interviews, November 2020 and February and March 2021.
- 141 Interview with a security officer, November 2020.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 Interview with a security officer, Kédougou, March 2021.
- 144 Interview with a security officer, Kédougou, March 2021 and November 2020.
- 145 Interview with a private security officer, Tambacounda, March 2022.
- 146 Council of Europe Convention on the Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Similar Crimes involving Threats to Public Health (CETS No. 211), [www.coe.int/en/web/medicrime/the-medicrime-convention](http://www.coe.int/en/web/medicrime/the-medicrime-convention).

## About the authors

The research work underpinning this report was conducted collaboratively by Paulin Maurice Toupane, Adja Khadidiatou Faye, Aïssatou Kanté, Mouhamadou Kane, Moussa Ndour, Cherif Sow, Colonel (ER) Bachir Ndaw, Tabara Cissokho and Younoussa Ba. It was conducted under the supervision of General Mbaye Cissé, Director General of the Centre des hautes études de défense et de sécurité (CHEDS) and Dr. Lori-Anne Thérroux-Bénoni, Director of the Regional Office for West Africa, the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

## About the ISS

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) partners to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future. The ISS is an African non-profit organisation with offices in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Senegal. Using its networks and influence, it provides timely and credible policy research, practical training and technical assistance to governments and civil society.

## About CHEDS

The Centre des Hautes Études de Défense et de Sécurité (Centre for Advanced Studies on Defence and Security – CHEDS) is a Senegalese public institution. Its overall mission is to provide the state with the knowledge and expertise it needs on strategic issues related to security, foreign policy, science, technology and economic and social phenomena.

## Development partners

The research project was implemented with funding from the Governments of the Netherlands and Denmark, the United Kingdom's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and the Swiss Embassy in Senegal.

It also received institutional support from the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal.

CHEDS and the ISS are thankful to the governors of the Kédougou and Tambacounda regions, the prefect of Saraya, the defence and security forces, representatives of ministries and civil society organisations and the various interviewees for their openness and availability.

The ISS is also grateful for the support from the following ISS Partnership Forum members: the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the European Union and the governments of Denmark, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden.

---

© 2021, Institute for Security Studies

Copyright in the volume as a whole is vested in the Institute for Security Studies and the authors, and no part may be reproduced in whole or in part without the express permission, in writing, of both the authors and the publishers.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the ISS, its trustees, members of the Advisory Council or donors. Authors contribute to ISS publications in their personal capacity.

Cover image: © Steve Aanu/Flickr

---