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Mediation of local conflicts in the Sahel

Burkina Faso, Mali & Niger





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This publication honours Abdou Sekou Ouologuem and Djibril Barry, two pioneers in the mediation of local conflicts in the Sahel who were kidnapped in central Mali on the 8th June 2020 and are still missing. Abdou, of the Dogon community, and Djibril, of the Fulani community, are an incarnation of the intercommunity friendship which transcends conflicts in Mali.

Preface

Mediating Local Conflicts in the Sahel: Historical Patterns & Contemporary Imperative

All too often, I see a search for solutions to African problems in European sociology and knowledge of the State as it exists in Europe. This misunderstands Africa, whose functioning is based on the cohabitation of three, sometimes contradictory worldviews: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial.

In the colonial system, the most important variable is the territory and its resources, with the notion of property. This leads to a hierarchy of statuses and inequalities. In pre-colonial governance, it is the communities that give meaning to the territory, whose resources they share through a permanent mechanism of collective deliberation. These two worlds overlap in the post-colonial era, which explains much of the conflicts in the Sahel today. Groups compete for access to the resources over which they claim rights. This situation reveals the impossible reconciliation between the positive law of the modern post-colonial State, which is underpinned by a logic of monopolisation through private property, and pre-colonial customary law, which is driven by a logic of redistribution favouring social cohesion. The cohabitation of these systems has become all the more difficult under the dual pressure of the demographic explosion and the scarcity of resources.

By intervening at the local level, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is forcing an appreciation of these realities and taking up the challenge of taking into account the subjective components of conflicts and peace. In the Sahel, mentalities are fuelled by a system of thought that works by stacking instead of elimination. Communities are constantly trying to find solutions, even at the cost of contradictory principles. This stems from the idea that any truth is provisional and can be revised in the name of continuity of debate. Because provisional agreements are reached, compromises are reached; permanent deliberation is therefore favoured. It is these paradoxes that the modern way of thinking does not manage to grasp sufficiently, and this is perhaps the greatest difference with European rationality. This does not mean that communities ignore their contradictions, but by putting them on the table, they fuel a continuous dialogue in order to preserve, at all costs, the chains of economic, political and symbolic collaboration that ensure the cohabitation of groups. It is a dynamic process that pushes for complementarity rather than difference, thus giving meaning to the respect of pluralism and discarding the principle of assimilation.

The fact remains that the traditional Sahelian system is one of inequality and domination between social classes. However, and this is where it gets interesting, the permanent deliberation does not exclude subordinate groups. The inequalities they experience do not exclude them from the decision-making process where they are instead represented to defend their interests. Returning to deliberation within the community means restoring its function as a means of resolving tensions and as a regulated place of resistance.

Engagement at the local level through mediation therefore goes against the grain of two ideas: the idea that ethnicity or community is negative and should be limited, and the idea that the Nation is the only space for conflict resolution. The crisis that Nation-States are going

“Returning to deliberation within the community means restoring its function as a means of resolving tensions and as a regulated place of resistance.”

through should however challenge us. It is a crisis of representation based on the European electoral model, where the winner of the elections, and therefore his community, wins. We remain de facto in a colonial system of administration of the populations and not of their government, since not all are represented in public institutions. Because the community is no longer a channel for defending interests, violence and radicalism inevitably develop as tools for regaining rights.

Pre-colonial States had taken on the central role of managing the diversity and interactions between the communities that made up the State and allowed it to exist. Citizenship as conceived in post-colonial States, largely inherited from the history of France, did not exist: the only way to construct regional or national citizenship was through the prior existence of the community as a basic unit – the place of permanent deliberation and governance of diversity.

Through its work, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue therefore contributes to reinventing a governance of diversity damaged by colonialism and post-colonialism: by helping communities to identify their conflicts, to analyse them and to identify consensual and inclusive solutions, which are necessarily unstable and always temporary. This does not mean that the State should be excluded – quite the contrary. The national level must nourish the local level so that it may evolve and become more like the communities it intends to govern. A system of government that will also have to propose a new political geography, which corresponds to the historical dynamics produced by the transactions between the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial sequences.

This path will, however, require Africans to overcome two other major rules that organise sociability in the Sahel: the rule of generation and the rule of gender, which require the youngest son to follow the oldest son and the woman, forever the younger daughter, to have no say in the matter. Reinventing deliberation requires going beyond these rules. Continuing to sideline the youngest would only feed the appetite for revolt of the majority of the population, and sidelining women would be tantamount to putting the brakes on the essential engine of modernisation in African societies.

Meanwhile, the mediation of local conflicts will contribute to rethinking the paths to peace. The following three conditions must be met: the mediator must be sensitive to the paradoxes and realities of the communities, African states must not feel threatened by the local actors and must accept to reinvent themselves, and the international community must rethink its relationship with the African state.

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Burkina Faso, Mali & Niger

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Executive Summary

- In the Sahel, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) has facilitated the mediation of **over 50 local agreements**. They are the result of several hundred negotiation meetings, involving thousands of participants speaking more than 25 languages and coming from remote areas that are often inaccessible to researchers. This publication details HD's expertise in mediating local conflicts in order to contribute to efforts to understand conflict dynamics in the Sahel.
- The Sahelian States are undermined by a multitude of sources of violence. Their origin lies in the scarcity of natural resources shared by community groups, the demographic explosion, the disruption of production systems, the marginalisation of rural communities, the questioning of governance models as well as social, religious and cultural practices and rules. All these factors are at the root of inequalities and tensions between town and country, young and old, rich and poor, farmers and herders.
- **Conflict in the Sahel is therefore multidimensional**, with agro-pastoral micro-conflicts feeding local community conflicts which, in turn, feed national conflicts between States and armed groups. Local conflicts reflect this system of interconnected tensions', since they are likely to involve communities, local and traditional authorities, local elected representatives, defence and security forces and armed groups.
- As long as they are based on the pre-colonial mechanisms of local governance and the tradition of permanent negotiation that regulate the coexistence of communities, **local peace processes have the capacity to prevent, mitigate and resolve ethnic violence**. Their endogenous nature ensures ownership by the communities that are the main driving force behind them.
- Adherence to a classic political mediation methodology ensures the quality of local peace processes. It is based on the following steps: intervention on the basis of a mandate from the parties in conflict; strict observance of the principle of mediation neutrality; endorsement of the processes by the state authorities; systematic and objective analysis of the conflict; confidence-building measures; tangible and measurable partial and final agreements; and a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the agreements.
- **The success of local peace processes depends above all on their legitimacy**. This implies rigorous ethical monitoring by an independent mediation team. In particular, mediation must ensure that the parties to the conflict are representative during negotiations, that the terms of the agreement are enforceable, that they are ethical in terms of fundamental principles of law and equity, that they are owned by the communities and that they are acceptable to the authorities.
- The indirect involvement of armed jihadist groups and sometimes direct involvement of community self-defence militias in mediation may be essential to easing intercommunal relations. However, this involvement poses a challenge because of the asymmetry of the negotiating parties. **It is the mediator's duty to ensure that agreements with armed actors are secure, and that dialogue with armed groups is limited to mitigating the humanitarian consequences of conflict**. Pragmatically, such agreements remove communities from conflict and restore their freedom of movement. But they do not exclude the possibility that prior agreements between armed groups and community representatives have prepared the way for community mediation, which can be an ethical dilemma for the mediator. In this case, the principle of humanity must prevail.

- The professionalism, rigour and contextual knowledge of the organisations involved in supporting or facilitating local conflict mediation are therefore vital conditions for their success. The result is a quality agreement if it ends the dispute, resolves past grievances, devises a common vision for the future, promotes justice and reconciliation, and prevents the recurrence of a dispute by reducing the scope for interpretation of the agreement and providing for a peace dividend.
- Local agreements may have as their objective the resolution, prevention or management of the humanitarian consequences of communal conflict, or a combination of these objectives. In all cases, **they should ensure that a permanent mechanism for managing community tensions, the follow-up committee, is established** to ensure the resilience of the agreements even in the event of a resumption of hostilities between the belligerents.
- The humanitarian impact of the more than 50 peace agreements concluded in the Sahel is measurable and demonstrates their effectiveness: 93,000 displaced people returned to their homes, 200 conflicts resolved amicably, 58 schools reopened, 196 hostages released and 34,000 animals returned. Their preventive value also tends to be demonstrated by **the decrease in ethnic communal violence in areas covered by the agreements** compared to areas not covered.
- However, local agreements are not a substitute for a peace agreement between States and armed groups ending hostilities on a national scale. They do, however, help to protect populations from the consequences of armed conflict, provide a valuable laboratory for conflict mediation in the Sahel, and offer insights into the potential of local governance as a tool for sustainable stabilisation in the Sahel.



I. Introduction:

Why mediate local conflicts?

Local mediations: An essential corollary to national peace processes in Africa

It is notable that national peace processes, reconciling governments and armed opposition, are not achieving peace in Africa. At best, they stall around an invisible battle line which is maintained with significant support from peacekeeping forces. However, they do not manage to address the many conflict hotspots that bring communities into opposition with the State, armed groups, or other communities. Whether based on identity, politics or the economy, these conflicts generate feelings of marginalisation, frustration and injustice while feeding the instability of African nations. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Mali, and the Central African Republic are the most recent demonstrations of stalled – but unresolved – conflicts.

Multiple factors explain this failure – from the democratic majority model, which governs most African States, to the difficulty of disarming irregular forces and deploying law enforcement capable of ensuring State sovereignty throughout the territory. However, local and traditional paradigms for the resolution of armed conflict are also to blame, especially their lack of representation and, therefore, legitimacy. In fact, national peace processes assume that parties to a conflict can be legitimately represented by a central government or by one or several armed opposition groups. This doesn't take into account that certain belligerents may be excluded from negotiations for ideological reasons, especially if they are labelled as terrorists. At the end of a peace process, the parties sign an agreement that is expected to be accepted by all, to be brought into force throughout the territory and to put a definitive end to hostilities. This is the romantic model of the 'peace of the brave' which characterises the end of interstate conflicts¹.

However, this model ignores both the strengths and weaknesses of African States. On one hand, governments and opposition groups are far from exerting influence over the entire nation. On the other hand, communities that make up the basic unit of traditional governance systems in Africa are often excluded from the new deal between belligerents. In addition, the communities do not feel bound by the peace agreement unless one of their members has signed it. The stalling of the military advances of official actors in the conflict consequently opens the way for the emergence of new armed actors with community allegiances. These new armed actors do not feel defended by the State or its former enemies, and rivalry among them soon creates conditions for the emergence of many micro-conflicts. These new *Jacqueries*² are often justified – rightly or wrongly – by the need to defend one's own community or by a feeling of being betrayed by the signatories of national peace agreements. They are a source of recruitment for organised crime and extremist movements, without threatening the territorial control which is the capital of the peace agreement

1. Although the end of the Second World War was never the subject of a peace treaty, but of an «Act of Surrender» on 8 May 1945 with Germany and an «Act of Capitulation» on 2 September 1945 with Japan.

2. The *Jacquerie* of 1358 was a spontaneous peasant revolt in northern France against the medieval order.

signatories. The crisis in central Mali is representative of this phenomenon. Those in Bamako, southern Mali or the northern armed Tuareg groups are not threatened by the residual violence between communities largely excluded from the Algiers Agreement, which was intended to bring peace to all of Mali.

In order to overcome the shortcoming of national top-down peace processes, it is important to develop a parallel bottom-up model of local conflict resolution through intercommunity mediation.

Communities: The cornerstone of the mediation architecture in the Sahel

States in the Sahel are weakened by the multitude of violent hotspots in the region. The scarcity of natural resources, demographic growth, the marginalisation of rural communities, corruption and inequality are all factors that cause significant tensions between the cities and the countryside, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and farmers and herders. Models of governance themselves are increasingly being challenged, with some calling for radical reforms. The breakdown of Libya further destabilised Sahelian States, leading to the third rebellion in northern Mali in 2012. This was led mainly by the remnants of Tuareg and Arab mercenaries serving Colonel Gaddafi, some of whom recently joined the jihadist cause. This period of rebellion has led to a proliferation of light weapons, contraband and crime, and has driven out the few remaining representatives of the State and law enforcement.

The deteriorating security conditions in rural areas have led communities³ to seek the protection of armed groups, including jihadists, or to form identity-based militias for self-defence. This has created a cycle of attacks and revenge targeting entire villages on an ethnic basis. Intercommunity violence first arose in northern and central Mali, and has spread to neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso. Rural communities are isolated in the vast territory and are both victims and perpetrators of violence. They are caught between armed forces, self-defence militias, and jihadist groups. At the same time, these communities hold the key to local conflict management, provided they are actively involved in mediation processes.



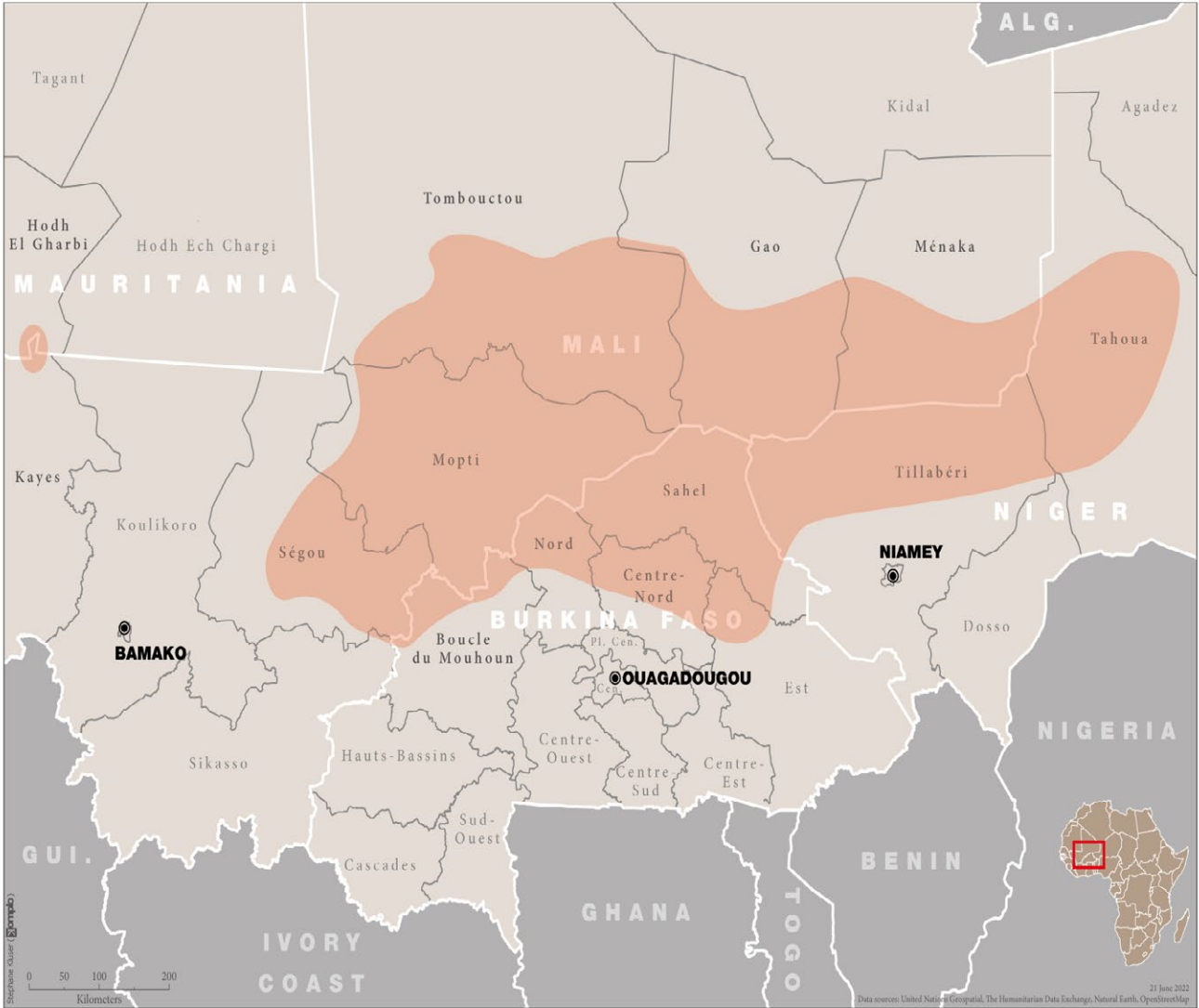
3. In Africa, a community is mainly defined by the use of a specific language. Communities are also referred to as tribes, ethnic groups or clans. A community usually has a homeland, but its members retain their identity wherever they are.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) first got involved in Mali during mediation efforts which led to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in 2015. HD has progressively developed a strategy for mediating the Sahel crisis at all levels. In addition to mediating, or supporting the mediation of, national peace agreements, HD also works locally to address community, agropastoral, religious and social conflicts. This strategy involves systematically identifying local conflicts, identifying their actors, and facilitating the negotiation of compromises acceptable to all parties. It aims primarily to regulate interactions between communities and to implement sustainable endogenous mechanisms to prevent and manage local conflicts. Dozens of intracommunity and intercommunity conflicts, some of them cross-border, have also been the subject of local agreements. This mediation of local conflicts is also used to renew dialogue between generations, between religious dignitaries, and between State apparatuses and communities. This is done through exchanges regarding societal issues and structured along the lines of local conflict mediation. This effort complements HD's support to a broad network of agropastoral mediators who have managed a thousand disputes between herders and farmers⁴.

With the growing control of armed groups in rural areas, these local intracommunity and intercommunity agreements have progressively adopted a humanitarian aspect. Communities have expressed the need to involve armed groups and the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) in negotiations in order to protect their reconciliation dynamic from retaliation and to agree on measures to mitigate the consequences of conflict between armed actors. This has enabled the adoption of humanitarian clauses ensuring, for example, freedom of movement for people and livestock, lifting barriers and blockades, the return of displaced people, the prohibition of carrying weapons in public spaces, reopening schools, and reinstating mayors and certain basic social services. In this way, local agreements are able to reaffirm the neutrality of civilian populations regarding parties to the conflict, without legitimising these parties, in accordance with the provisions of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions⁵. Furthermore, these agreements do not include any provisions which contradict national laws or human rights.

Local conflict resolution agreements significantly reduce the level of violence and humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. However, they are not formal ceasefire agreements between local combatants, nor are they a substitute for a national peace agreement between belligerents. By definition, any national peace agreement requires political negotiation between the leadership of the parties to the conflict – that is, the States and armed groups – and must be ratified by the States' national political institutions. These local conflict prevention or resolution agreements, therefore, do not end armed conflict and are vulnerable to a resumption of hostilities to which the communities are not party. However, the proliferation of local agreements clearly contributes to stabilisation in the Sahel by enabling the implementation of permanent mechanisms for preventing and managing community conflicts. These highly inclusive mediation processes revive the precolonial tradition of the palaver⁶, which historically governed the Sahel, and are a source of many lessons learned. They teach us about the role local government authorities could play in managing *res publica*⁷, as well as about the ability of parties to the conflict to negotiate compromises for public interest. While intracommunity and intercommunity mediations do not resolve armed conflict, they do prepare the way towards finding a sustainable resolution.

Since 2012, HD has been working in the field of local conflict mediation, mainly in the Sahel, but also in the Central African Republic and Togo. In order to mediate over 50 local agreements, the organisation facilitated several hundred negotiation meetings in rural areas, bringing together thousands of participants speaking more than 25 languages and coming from areas often inaccessible to researchers. Through this publication, HD intends to share its knowledge to contribute to efforts to understand local conflict dynamics in the Sahel.



Map :
Geographic area covered by local conflict mediation.

4. Follow the link to watch a video presentation of our agro-pastoral mediation project in the Sahel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnQe-QhbzKts&list=PLt-M_viwGIQRJDssRRR48xWFaX4rChzWC&ab_channel=TheCentreforHumanitarianDialogue%28HD%29, and see our publication on agro-pastoral mediation in the Sahel on <https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Agro-pastoral-mediation-in-the-Sahel.pdf>

5. Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 stipulates in its second paragraph that “The application of the foregoing provisions shall not affect the legal status of the Parties to the conflict”.

6. “The palaver is a custom for meeting and creating or maintaining social links. It is a real social institution in which all or part of the village’s community participates. This custom also makes it possible to settle a dispute without the protagonists being harmed.” (Jacques Chevrier, *L’Arbre à palabres - Essai sur les contes et les récits traditionnels d’Afrique noire*, Paris, Hatier, 1986, 384 p.).

7. Public affairs.

II. Adapting a classic political mediation methodology to local needs

Principles of local conflict mediation

Each mediation is different, but must be governed by three intangible methodological principles:

- Act exclusively under the mandate of the parties, so that there is a consensus among all parties regarding the action taken. It should also adhere to the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation⁸.
- Support the parties throughout the entire conflict management, resolution and prevention process, from initial contacts until agreement implementation.
- Do not take the parties' place when determining the causes of and solutions to their disputes. Rather, help them formulate their respective claims, goals, and red lines. While HD can suggest ways of resolving conflicts, it is up to the parties to work out the compromise that best meets their expectations. Furthermore, HD relies on local conflict resolution customs.

However, HD reserves the right to withdraw from the mediation if its independence is threatened or if the parties clearly use the negotiations in bad faith or agree on clauses which violate the fundamental rights of civilian populations and public interest.

Agreements signed at the local level are based on the good faith of the signatory parties. While a peace agreement does not always immediately put an end to violence, it is signed by the parties when they are willing to commit to a consensual and dynamic management of their present and future relations, even if they will continue to be marked by sporadic violence given the context.

Regardless of the parties, a good peace agreement:

- ends the dispute,
- resolves past grievances,
- develops a common vision for the future,
- promotes justice and reconciliation,
- prevents the recurrence of a dispute by reducing the scope for interpretation of the agreement,

8. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GuidanceEffectiveMediation_UNDPA2012%28French%29_0.pdf

- agrees on follow-up and implementation mechanisms,
- ensures external support to meet basic humanitarian and social infrastructure needs.

Conflict prevention agreements aim to define joint commitments capable of defusing a disagreement and thus preventing it from becoming an open conflict that would be more difficult to resolve. They do this through negotiation as soon as tensions between communities arise. Grievances must therefore be openly discussed so that ongoing tensions can be better understood and a good faith agreement can be reached. Its implementation will also need to be monitored.

What is local conflict mediation?

The United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation defines mediation as a voluntary process “whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage, or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements.”⁹ Mediation practitioners have defined a scale with four levels, or tracks¹⁰, classifying the type of mediation undertaken according to the parties involved. Local mediation or community mediation falls within the framework of Track II and Track III processes. Track II mediations involve regional level societal figures, such as religious dignitaries, intellectuals, political parties, and regional power figures. Track III mediations include civil society figures and local leadership (customary or village chiefs, representatives of local associations, etc.)¹¹.

Thus, the local conflict mediation processes facilitated by HD in the Sahel involve local and/or regional actors in a conflict - notably communities, civil society representatives, armed actors, local and traditional authorities, local elected officials, and DSF.

It should be noted that the geographic range of a mediation process is reflected in the actors involved. A mediation process can be conducted at the village level or extend over a geographic area straddling several countries. For example, if one of the parties to the conflict is a nomadic community living between Mali and Niger, all members of the community in the two countries will be involved in the process.

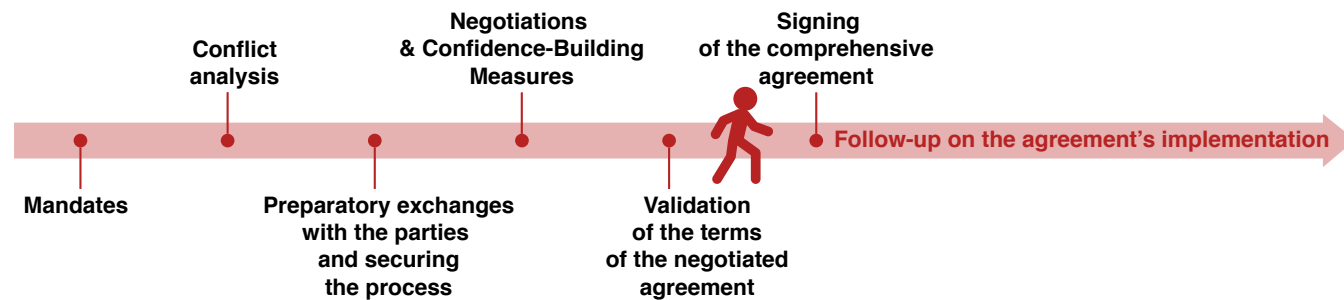
9. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GuidanceEffectiveMediation_UNDPA2012%28English%29_0.pdf

10. John Paul Lederach defined four levels of mediation depending on the actors involved in the mediation process and the format of the mediation. The four levels are: ‘track I’ - high-level negotiations involving governments and armed actors; ‘track 1.5’ - national dialogues and informal mediations involving governments and armed actors; ‘track 2’ - dialogue/problem-solving workshops involving regional power figures; ‘track 3’ - local peace committees, community mediation programmes involving local leaders. Lederach, John Paul (1997). *Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington D.C.: USIP, p. 39.

11. Palmiano Federer, Julia et al (2019). *Beyond the Tracks? Reflections on Multitrack Approaches to Peace Processes*.

Phases of local conflict mediation

HD is careful to open a safe and inclusive space for dialogue to facilitate its local conflict mediation processes, which last three and a half months on average. A mediation process is made up of seven phases which ideally, but not necessarily, result in a local agreement. The timeline for conflict resolution can vary between contexts. The mediation process may progress, then pause or move backwards until the conditions are right to begin negotiating an agreement.



1 • Mandates: It all starts with a formal request from the parties for the intervention of a mediator. This is done by obtaining an oral or written mandate from the parties, which is issued by local or national authorities. In some of the countries where HD works, it has a mandate from the national authorities to conduct local conflict mediation processes. These national mandates are complemented by ad hoc mandates from local authorities or communities to respond to specific requests. Authorities are regularly informed of the progress of the mediation process, or actively participate in them. Most of these mandates are granted to HD because of its networks on the ground, developed over the years with all local and national actors.

2 • Conflict analysis: Before undertaking a mediation process, the mediator must have precise knowledge of the history of the conflict, its consequences, and the direct and indirect actors involved in it. This is needed in order to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. This phase is carried out through informal exchanges with the parties or official exchanges during meetings devoted to identifying grievances, different versions of the history of the conflict, and red lines set by the parties. This allows the service proposed by the mediator to be adapted to the specific context in which they are working. It should be noted that this analysis work will not stop when the mediation process starts, but will continue in order to take into account the evolution of the context throughout the process.

3 • Preparatory exchanges with the parties and securing the process: This stage essentially involves identifying and mapping the actors influencing the conflict in order to help parties form negotiating teams that are as inclusive and legitimate as possible. It also helps them to specify the parameters of the conflict itself, notably grievances and perceptions, any history of intercommunity rivalries, as well as economic, social and political interests and issues. This phase requires individual meetings with each party, followed by the first joint dialogues. These meetings are often long and emotional. They have a cathartic¹² value as they create a bond of empathy between enemies. These exchanges enable all actors with influence over the conflict to be involved in the process, thus optimising the chance of success. To secure the process, these exchanges can be complemented by exchanges between parties and/or the mediator, as well as DSF and armed actors.

4 • Negotiations and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs): Based on parties' demands and grievances, preliminary negotiations are undertaken to determine whether the parties are truly seeking an acceptable compromise and to test the legitimacy of the negotiators. They generally result in the adoption of CBMs, which must be complied with in order to continue the process. Since trust between parties to a conflict is often broken, a preliminary reconstruction phase is needed. These CBMs can take many forms, from the liberation of the fields or homes of displaced people to an official pardon ceremony. If successful, substantial negotiations are undertaken on a grievance-by-grievance basis. These negotiations aim to build a consensus between the demands and red lines of the parties. During this process, while the parties may quickly agree on certain elements of peace, some points of contention are likely to take longer to overcome. In this case, the first provisions on which compromise can be found constitute a partial agreement, which is generally not formalised in writing.

5 • Validation of the terms of the negotiated agreement: The adoption of the clauses agreed by the negotiators involves constant liaising between the participants in the dialogue and the communities. Sometimes this requires sectoral negotiations to be reopened when the communities withdraw their representatives. The validation phase can take several months and does not systematically lead to signing a comprehensive agreement.

6 • Signing of the comprehensive agreement: The agreements facilitated by HD are written, and are only oral in rare cases. A public signing ceremony with the presence of all actors with influence over the process is organised, including State authorities and, if necessary, community representatives of armed groups. As part of this occasion, a follow-up committee for the agreement is appointed by the signatories. This committee is composed of about 15 members representing the diversity of the parties and is generally considered to be neutral and collegiate.

7 • Follow-up on the agreement's implementation: The follow-up committee works to disseminate the agreement and control its implementation. It measures the tangible impact of the application of the agreement, manages potential delays and violations, and works to prevent the emergence of new conflicts. The committee meets regularly and becomes a permanent mechanism for intercommunity mediation. Its mission is to maintain regular dialogue with local authorities to, ideally, create joint or complementary actions that can strengthen the peace dynamic or prevent conflict. HD supports the follow-up committees over the long term and remains at their disposal to facilitate post-agreement negotiations at their request. The follow-up committee may call on external actors to promote the sustainability of the agreement, notably through the construction of basic social infrastructure that reinforces social cohesion.

It should be noted that during the phases devoted to preparatory exchanges, CBMs, and the validation of the terms of the negotiated agreement, HD ensures that the communities are left to be as autonomous as possible in their approaches. The organisation provides guidance and support in setting up the methodology, but is careful not to monetize the mediation process. By facilitating meetings while refraining from direct intervention at each stage of the mediation process, HD ensures that the process is first and foremost the result of the will of the parties. This is especially appropriate given the communities' experience with traditional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms.

12. For Aristotle, the catharsis is the «purifying» effect produced on spectators by a dramatic performance. By extension, catharsis refers to any therapeutic method aimed at obtaining a situation of emotional crisis in order to provoke a solution to the problem that the crisis presents.

Traditional conflict prevention and management mechanisms in the Sahel

a) Mechanisms related to kinship status:

- Joking relationships: These are pacts of friendship and non-aggression between parties of different clans, castes, and ethnic groups. “The rule of the alliance stipulates that, no matter how adversarial a particular situation may be, involved allies must refrain from turning to conflict or must unconditionally use peaceful means to manage it. When conflict does arise, it should be joked about and diminish. In the worst case, when violence occurs due to belligerents’ ignorance or obstinacy, regardless of the form or intensity of the conflict, mobilizing the alliance to involve a third party puts an end to hostilities. Reparation rituals then follow.”¹³ A variation of joking relationships also exists between villages or localities. Due to the social ties that existed between their ancestors, the nationals of these villages or localities are forbidden to wage war against each other.
- Alliances through marriage ties: In order to prevent conflict and to establish their authority or influence in an area, some customary chiefs or community leaders take women from other communities as their wives. Children born of these unions belong to both communities and will be the glue between them. In general, communities united by marriage ties no longer have conflicts. If conflicts do arise, they are quickly resolved. On the other hand, if the marriage ends, the families or communities may be divided forever.

b) Mechanisms for turning to a known third party

- Tribal and village chiefs: These are generally chosen by village councils and have local administrative recognition (although, in some countries, their mandate is not enshrined in a specific law). In some cases, they also act as customary or traditional leaders. This allows them, when called on by conflicting parties, to propose a settlement based either on positive or customary law.
- Customary chiefs: These are the landowners or animal caretakers, who are all considered guardians of customs. They are generally called on when traditional leaders or village and tribal chiefs fail to reach a satisfactory settlement of the dispute. They incorporate religious or spiritual elements and perform sacrifices and incantations to resolve conflicts or determine the culprit. Their sentence is final, and those who violate it risk their lives or banishment from the community and the village. This mechanism is not unanimously accepted. It is categorically refused by certain Christian and Muslim religious communities because it is contrary to their beliefs. Others accept it.
- Religious authorities: Depending on their beliefs, the parties can turn to religious authorities and their communities. They will refer to religious prescriptions based on the Koran or the Bible to settle conflicts and determine the culprit and victim. The fear of divine punishment often leads the wrongdoer to accept their responsibility, which facilitates an amicable settlement. The person who makes the judgement according to Islamic principles is called a *cadi* in some Sahelian communities. In principle, the *cadi* cannot intervene on his own, but gets involved at the request of one or both parties. The second party has to accept this recourse. In areas under the influence of armed jihadist groups, a new practice allows *cadis* to intervene on their own.

- Caste men (griots, blacksmiths, or jesters): Caste has played, and continues to play, a major role in Sahelian societies. Caste men can intervene as community mediators as a first or last resort. They can intervene on their own or be called upon by one of the parties to the conflict or by a third party. Their approach to mediation is based on precise knowledge of the history and social ties between different families and communities. This enables them to initiate reconciliation between individuals, families, or communities

- Ancestors: In the event of conflict between brothers, in Songhai in general, the mother or father is called upon as a last resort. The mother, raising her right breast, implores the belligerents to put an end to the conflict “in the name of breast milk.” The father threatens banishment, *harame*. In general, the brothers reconcile for fear of banishment or a curse.

- Influential third party: The influential third party is a person who has a circumstantial relationship to one of the parties in conflict. He protects one and has bargaining power over the other. The reason may not be known and could be a secret. However, this influence, when sought, leads to settlement of the conflict. The limitation of this approach is that the balance of power, as well as the alliances between various parties, can be changed for economic, political or social reasons.

Management of ethical dilemmas: An ethical imperative

Any mediation process is subject to manipulation, especially when negotiations are asymmetrical. Whenever a mediation process directly or indirectly involves armed groups, the temptation exists to exploit this process to impose political domination on civilian populations.

HD, therefore, maintains strict ethical control over the community mediations it supports or manages in order to preserve the humanitarian nature of clauses involving the parties to the conflict. In particular, the organisation guarantees that community agreements:

- are not political in nature, unlike national peace agreements. Indeed, local conflict prevention or resolution agreements do not grant sovereign powers (justice, security, defence, taxation and currency) to parties, nor do they modify the established constitutional order;
- do not violate the rights of civilian communities enshrined in international humanitarian law and human rights law, and are in alignment with international law;
- do not grant legal status or political legitimacy to armed groups;
- are voluntary and consensual in nature and are negotiated by legitimate, inclusive and mandated community representatives.
- are endorsed by local, regional and national State authorities.

13. Niagalé BAGAYOKO et Fahiraman Rodrigue KONÉ, *Les mécanismes traditionnels de gestion des conflits en Afrique subsaharienne*, Centre Franco-Paix en résolution des conflits et missions de paix, Rapport de recherche no. 2, p. 29..



However, involving the DSF and armed groups in community mediation is essential to securing the sustainability of the process. It ensures that armed actors support the communities' desire to end their dispute. It also guarantees the security of emissaries, participants in negotiations and mediators. In addition, their involvement endorses the agreement's clauses. Self-defence militias are usually directly represented, while local jihadist unit commanders are indirectly represented by community leaders who liaise with them. DSF are generally represented by the prefecture at meetings, and regular dialogue with their representatives is also maintained. HD mediators do not engage in direct dialogue with jihadist groups, in accordance with the mandate conferred on the organisation by governments.

Issues related to the application of sharia law and the imposition of *zakat*¹⁴ by armed groups are particularly sensitive. HD excludes any clause from the agreements it facilitates that enshrines extortion practices or conditions community protection on contributions to the war effort or submission to sharia law. However, it cannot be ruled out that such agreements were negotiated orally upstream of the mediation processes. This is a reality that HD must come to terms with, and one that often remains silent during community mediations. However, communities unanimously recognise that local peace agreements loosen the grip of armed groups on communities and limit the

14. *Zakat* (almsgiving) is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is based on the principle of charity and consists of giving a portion of one's wealth annually to those in need, according to the rules laid down in the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions. The beneficiaries include the poor and needy, those who have recently embraced Islam, *zakat* collectors, slaves (to free them by paying their masters), those in financial difficulty, those who are 'in the way of God' (including those who fight), and travelers. In the view of jihadist groups, the practice of *zakat* is a key element in the establishment of Islamic governance. It appears that jihadist groups initially solicited communities and then, over time and as their role increased, *zakat* was imposed as an obligation. *Zakat* is calculated annually as a percentage of each individual's (or family's) assets above a certain threshold. The formula and modalities for the distribution and redistribution of *zakat* varied from place to place, depending on the autonomy of commanders and local practices. In some places, all the *zakat* collected is redistributed to the identified needy, and in others, a percentage is given to the jihadist group, while the rest goes to the needy. Local communities, while not opposed to the principle of paying *zakat*, did not appreciate it being imposed by jihadists. Nevertheless, they are generally positive about the way the Islamic and Muslim Support Group (GSIM or JNIM) and its affiliates manage and redistribute resources, much better than the local authorities did before. In the case of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), the collection of *zakat* has in practice turned into an act of expropriation and plundering of the local population. It seems that local EIGS commanders have been given a free hand to take from the local population what they deem necessary for their livelihood.

constraints imposed by combatants on their daily lives. However, the relationship between communities and armed groups remains fundamentally asymmetrical.

Local peace agreements are not free of impunity dilemmas, as with any peace process. HD promotes forgiveness clauses in order to encourage intercommunity reconciliation. Thus, the parties often agree not to demand the return of stolen animals or reparations for other losses and damages incurred during the years of conflict. Physical violence, particularly bloodshed or forms of war crimes involving the conflicting parties, remain subject to criminal law. However, it is often the subject of symbolic dialogues of confession and forgiveness between communities prior to signing the agreements.

It should be noted that, in local peace agreements, armed groups generally limit themselves to demanding that the communities commit to not providing military intelligence to their enemies. These demands are not contrary to Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions¹⁵.

The success of local mediation processes has given rise to vocations, to mediators with little concern for ethical rigour or with an ideological agenda, whether it be Islamist or part of a counter-terrorism logic. Processes undertaken by such mediators are likely to compromise the credibility of endogenous mediation and should not be encouraged. In the absence of a reliable ethical compass, local mediation can, indeed, become an instrument of community manipulation.

In this context, HD offers its mediation services to communities in order to break the cycle of intercommunity violence and to implement permanent mechanisms for managing local conflicts. In some cases, these mediations also facilitate humanitarian agreements with belligerents, in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law. However, like any professional mediator, HD reserves the right to withdraw from a mediation when a party's demands violate the rule of equity or law, or assign illegitimate sovereign powers to a party to the conflict. In the case of armed conflict between States and armed groups, and in the absence of a political settlement of the conflict, community agreements are, by definition, temporary measures aimed at mitigating the humanitarian consequences of conflict between asymmetrical parties. They are nonetheless an important vehicle of reconciliation between communities and, while civilian in character, they are still protected by the rules of war.

Inclusive mediations: Approach and practices

For a mediation process to be effective and contribute to sustainable conflict resolution, the political, social, religious and/or identity-based aspirations of the victims and conflict actors must be taken into account. This must be done during peace process negotiations, which are usually limited to belligerents.

The complex terrain of local mediation interventions requires a broad approach to inclusion. HD aligns itself with the United Nations definition of inclusion as "the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice, and respect for rights. Thus, social inclusion is both a process and a goal."¹⁶ It is, therefore, as much a matter of taking into account the particularities of the groups that make up the community benefitting from the intervention as the context in which it takes place. The idea of doing no harm is a priority.

The two main objectives of HD's inclusive approach are to ensure the participation of the different groups and to strengthen the link between them by: recognising the validity of each group's

15. <https://www.icrc.org/fr/doc/resources/documents/article/other/article-commun-conventions-120849.htm>

16. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf>

suffering as well as their propensity to respond and transform in a collective way; ensuring the visibility of each group while working to strengthen their bonds; working to make space for each group's perception of itself and of the community; refining the understanding of conflict in its multiple contextual and human facets; bringing together conflict prevention and resolution practices and knowledge in a way that makes them consistent.

This requires detailed analysis and deep understanding of the reality of Sahelian communities and their social and cultural functioning, where inclusion is perceived and experienced in many ways. HD takes into account several criteria when assessing inclusion in conflict prevention or resolution processes: 1) the objective consideration of diversity (the factual composition of the different groups present, their socio-ethnic and religious diversity as well as economic dimensions); 2) respect for the political and geographic specifics of the context of the conflict; 3) respect for the socio-cultural balance among the different groups and any resulting connections (traditions and customs, distinctions between political roles and functions, roles assigned by the local culture, complementarity between the domestic and private sphere, and any local inclusion mechanisms).

In taking into account the roles assigned to the actors by the local culture, particularly for the sharing of roles between men and women, mediators may need to adapt their methodology to include women in mediation processes. The complementarity between the domestic and public sphere may mean that women's influence is expressed differently, particularly in terms of speaking out. While women or young people's speech is often discreet in public, it can, depending on the culture, be decisive at the family level and therefore have an impact on public decisions. In order not to reduce the exercise to the imposition of quotas during these meetings, HD works to:

- Capitalise on women's habits of meeting among themselves: by bringing together a significant number of women involved in an ongoing mediation process, HD gives them access to related information, and thus offers them the ability to undertake dialogue, directly or indirectly, with the parties to influence them in favour of peace. However, these meetings also contribute to the mediator's analysis of the context, the actors in the conflict, the people mobilised to influence them, or the actions to be taken to bring them together.
- Capitalise on the places of daily social interaction or frequented by women: when working with women, the mediator can help them organise awareness-raising actions and contributions to carrying out a mediation process. For example, actions to facilitate the operation of markets or schools by the whole community can be CBMs and can be achieved thanks to women's commitment.
- Provide a space for women who would like to be spokespeople and speak out: in the contexts marked by jihadist presence, many women who are publicly committed to peace are threatened. However, during secure negotiation meetings, HD is able to facilitate women's feedback on their exchanges as well as their expectations, fears and recommendations regarding reconciliation.
- Mobilise women to implement agreements: once peace is achieved, it can only be sustainable if the interdependent economic, social and/or cultural ties between communities are renewed. Because of their involvement in local economic life, women have a leading role to play and can be supported in the conduct of such intercommunity rapprochement measures.

For each mediation process, HD is careful to gain thorough knowledge of the local political and socio-cultural fabric in order to analyse the interdependence of the different groups involved, while collecting their specific testimonies and identifying their legitimate representatives. Local conflict mediation is based on considering the expectations, fears and interests of each group. The communities are represented in their social, religious, and gender dimensions. Representatives of armed groups can also be included. HD then contributes to establishing a structured network, representative of the social, economic, cultural and political fabric of the territory. When the peace agreements are formalised, each group is a signatory. This approach not only resolves the conflict, but also establishes a sound basis for a new socio-economic dynamic. Depending on the conflict, armed groups may or may not be signatories. However, they usually will at least have been consulted to secure the process.



Alpha, Koranic master and the president of the group of Koranic masters of Djenné, Mali

“We explained to the armed groups that we wanted peace for our people, so the farmer can farm, the fisherman can fish, and the herder can allow his animals to graze.”

III. Agreements to prevent, mitigate and resolve local conflicts in the Sahel

HD has been present in Mali since 2012 and now has extensive mediation expertise in the Sahel. Since 2016 the organisation has facilitated the signature of more than 50 local agreements. This experience allows HD to identify different types of conflicts and develop agreements that aim to prevent, manage or resolve them.

Types of community conflicts

The causes of community conflicts can be summarised in seven structural factors and three triggers.

The following seven structural factors have gradually stoked tensions between communities for the past 40 years:

- 1•Climate change, or rather climate instability (alternating periods of rainfall deficits, floods, or locust attacks creating competition between communities for use of scarce natural resources);
- 2•The disruption of production systems (as a result of the progressive depletion of resources and the increased desire for them among various socio-professional groups such as farmers, herders and fisherfolks);
- 3•The intensification of competition linked to demographic pressure (which leads to soil erosion and the reduction of pastures, and also reinforces competition for arable land).
- 4•Governance failures (which play a role in triggering conflicts as well as in increasing tensions and conflicts between communities) and the inability of the DSF to ensure security;
- 5•The non-existence (or lack of application) of some texts linked to access to/exploitation of resources (ignorance of relevant texts among non-natives often leads to their violation, which in some cases can be a source of conflict);
- 6•Lifestyle changes (in particular, some nomadic communities becoming sedentary following certain public policies or climate events);

7•Questioning social, cultural, religious, and economic practices (certain social groups, including young people, seem to be breaking with the established social order, following deep societal changes linked to mixed development and governance models borrowed from Western and Eastern countries), as well as the survival of traditional modes of governance (chieftaincies, imamates, etc.)¹⁷.

These structural factors cause tensions which can degenerate into open conflicts under the effect of systemic or specific triggering factors, which allow local conflicts to be classified into three categories:

- 1•**Territorial conflicts triggered by the emergence of armed groups.** The Koglweogo in Burkina Faso, the hunters in Mali, and local factions of the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda in the Sahel have exacerbated pre-existing community rivalries. Armed groups exploit these community rivalries to reaffirm their territorial control.
- 2•**Conflicts over access to natural resources or rural land triggered by the appropriation of a waterhole, farmland or transhumance corridor initially shared under an intercommunity convention.**
- 3•**Local political conflicts triggered by claims made by chieftains or imams outside traditional rules, or by the attempts of self-defence groups such as jihadists to usurp the authority of local elected officials and traditional leaders to administer public order, justice, taxation or civil status themselves.** This is often done by relying on ancestral chieftaincy rivalries.

Finally, a distinction can be made between intercommunity and intracommunity conflicts, some of which involve armed actors opposed to the State.

Types of local agreements

Local agreements are often hybrid in nature. They can combine conflict management, resolution and prevention clauses, and may be concluded between local civilian communities only or indirectly involve local armed actors.

There are three main categories of local agreements:

- 1•**Agreements on Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs):** These measures are intended to test the parties' sincerity and their will and ability to find negotiated ways to manage conflict. This requires a trial period, at the end of which the mediation process can actually begin. These measures can be oral or written and may be limited to public statements of good intent. However, in the majority of cases, they involve practical measures. They usually relate to freedom of movement for people, livestock and goods or the liberation of occupied houses or fields. It is possible that the mediation process will stop once the CBMs are adopted, even if they have been respected by the parties. However, these measures may have made lasting contributions to reducing conflict intensity.
- 2•**Conflict prevention agreements:** These agreements are signed when there are strong tensions between parties. Sometimes, these tensions even lead to sporadic violence, but without leading to armed conflict between communities or the extinction of traditional channels for regulating intercommunity relations. By signing a conflict prevention agreement, parties demonstrate their willingness to manage their disputes through dialogue and mediation in order to preserve their peaceful coexistence.

17. Bertrand Badie *L'État importé - Essai sur l'occidentalisation de l'ordre politique*. Fayard, 1992

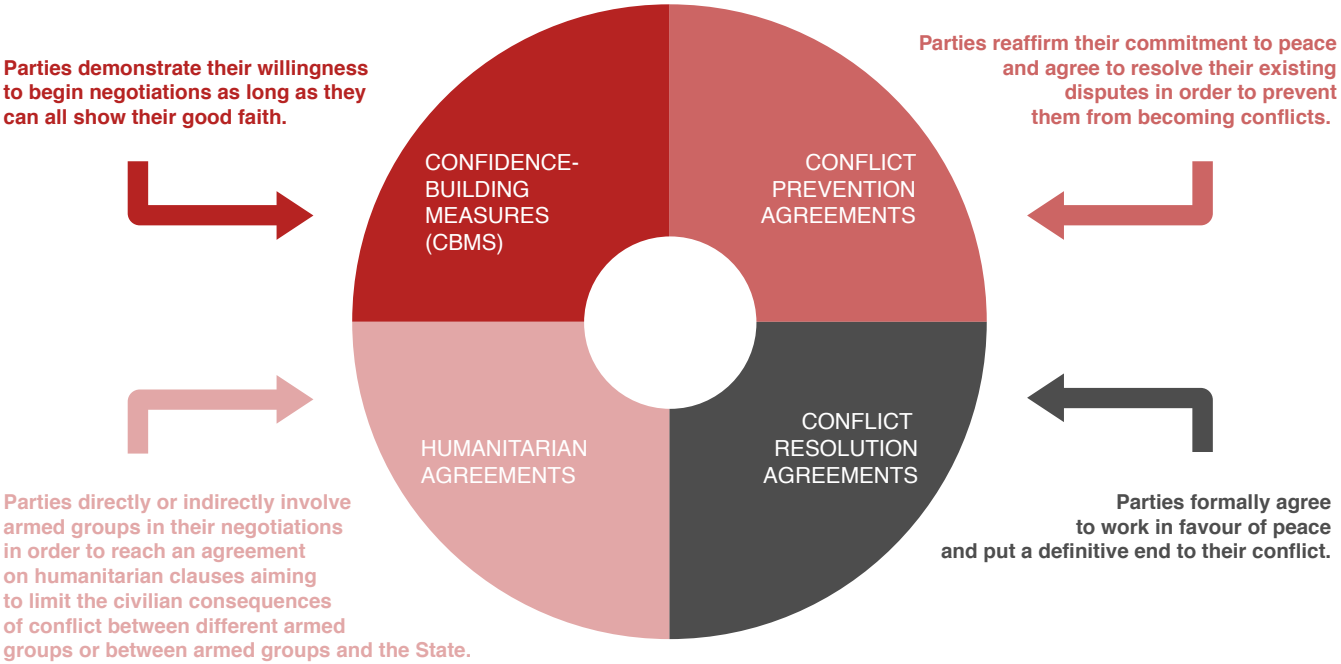
3 • Conflict resolution agreements: Communities commit to definitively ending their conflict and renounce the use of violence in managing their disputes. Also known as peace agreements, these agreements are a pledge of reconciliation between parties and of their will to work for lasting peace by renewing their ancestral co-operation. In addition to solemn declarations of peaceful coexistence, they frequently include tangible measures for the normalisation of relations between parties. These may include the return of displaced people or local authorities, or the reopening of schools, markets and transhumance routes. They may also include measures to combat community stigmatisation, livestock theft, or even joint actions to raise awareness of the need for communities to live together.

The clauses contained in the three types of agreements are also likely to include:

4 • Humanitarian agreements:
These agreements aim to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of a conflict between armed State or non-State actors on civilian populations. They occur in a context where conflict between communities is part of a larger conflict, opposing armed groups with States, and/or between groups. Therefore, while communities are still the only signatories of agreements, humanitarian clauses are generally indirectly endorsed by units of local combatants. These clauses aim to extricate communities from conflict between armed actors through a mutual commitment to non-participation in the war effort. They also aim to alleviate the resulting suffering: lifting blockades and embargos, free access to fields and markets, and demilitarisation of public spaces.

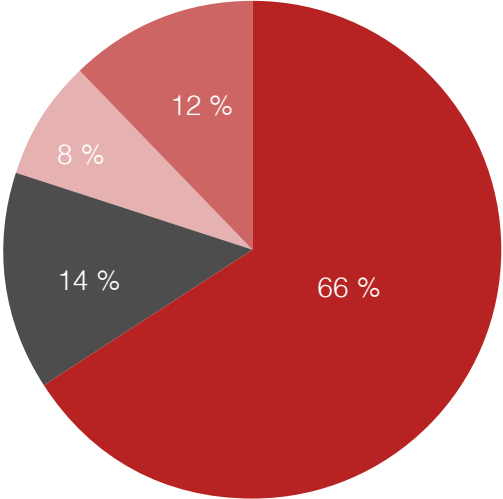
All agreements provide for the establishment of follow-up committees. They institute a permanent mechanism for intercommunity conflict mediation, and sometimes the ongoing management of the humanitarian consequences of political conflicts affecting communities. Over time, communities neighbouring the parties to an agreement may decide to join the conflict prevention or resolution dynamic. In this case, an agreement of accession to the pre-existing agreement is signed.

Djeneba, female leader, Circle of Djenné
“Before, even going to the market was a problem, especially because of the presence of hunters. Now things are fine and we no longer see hunters at the market with their weapons.”



Since 2016, HD has facilitated more than 50 agreements, including 24 conflict resolution agreements, 12 conflict prevention agreements, 9 agreements on CBMs, 2 humanitarian agreements, and 4 accession agreements. Of these, 33 are still in force and upheld by the parties. Seven conflicts have been extinguished as a result of signing an agreement, and four were amended by another agreement.

Six agreements have become no longer valid and are considered as such when the parties no longer comply with their commitments or when conflict dynamics in the area of an agreement have evolved, making the application of the agreement by the parties impossible. Indeed, when the conflict dynamics evolve, populations frequently move to escape the violence. Population displacement contributes to the impossibility of applying the agreements.



Agreements facilitated by HD, classified by their status

- Agreement still in force
- Agreement no longer respected
- Amended by another agreement
- Conflict ended

Local agreements facilitated by HD since 2016

Type of agreement

- ▲ Communal agreement
- Area covered by an agreement
- ▲ Confidence building-measure(s) at the communal level
- Area covered by confidence building-measure(s)

Type and status

- ☰ Conflict settlement
- ☷ Conflict prevention
- ☰ Humanitarian agreement
- ✕ Agreement no longer respected or conflict ended
- ☰ Involving directly or indirectly armed actors

Cities

- **NATIONAL CAPITAL**
- Regional Capital
- Other city

- International
- National administrative boundary (level 1)



8 June 2022



Agreements

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 - Authorities - Hunters ☰☷ | 12 - Fulani - Dogon ☰☷ |
| 2 - Authorities - Communities - Hunters ☰☷ | 13 - Tuareg - Songhaï - Arab ☰☷ |
| 3 - Fulani - Bambara - Hunters ☰☷ | 14 - Tuareg - Songhaï ☰☷ |
| 4 - Authorities - Communities - Hunters ☰☷ | 15 - Kel Inacharia - Sedentary ☰☷ |
| 5 - Farmers - Herders ☰☷ | 16 - Songhaï - Fulani ☰☷ |
| 6 - Farmers - Herders - Hunters ☰☷ | 17 - Fulani - Daousahaq ☰☷ |
| 7 - Fulani - Bozo ☰☷ | 18 - Idoufane - Ibogolitane ☰☷ |
| 8 - Fulani - Bobo - Dafing ☰☷ | 19 - Daousahaq - Imajgan ☰☷ |
| 9 - Fulani - Hunters ☰☷ | 20 - Authorities - Communities - Hunters ☰☷ |
| 10 - Fulani - Dogon - Dafing ☰☷ | 21 - Dogon - Dafing - Fulani ☰☷ |
| 11 - Fulani - Dogon ☰☷ | 22 - Dogon - Bobo - Mossi - Fulani ☰☷ |

Confidence-building measures

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 - Hunters - Fulani ☰☷ | 11 - Farmers - Herders ☰☷ |
| 2 - Fulani - Dogon - Dafing ☰☷ | 12 - Kel Ghounane - Idoufane ☰☷ |
| 3 - Fulani - Dogon ☰☷ | 13 - Malinke ☰☷ |
| 4 - Fulani - Dogon ☰☷ | |
| 5 - Zarma - Fulani ☰☷ | |
| 6 - Mossi - Fulani ☰☷ | |
| 7 - Mossi - Fulani - Rimaibe ☰☷ | |
| 8 - Mossi - Fulani - Rimaibe ☰☷ | |
| 9 - Malian communities - Mauritanian communities ☰☷ | |
| 10 - Tamasheq - Fulani ☰☷ | |

0 50 100 200
Kilometers

Data sources: United Nations Geospatial, The Humanitarian Data Exchange, Natural Earth, OpenStreetMap

Note :

For readability reasons, not all agreements facilitated by HD are represented on the map. Some conflicts may require the mediation of multiple local agreements before a sustainable resolution of the conflict is reached.

Where multiple agreements were facilitated to resolve a conflict, only the last agreement signed has been mapped. HD also facilitated local agreements in the Diffa region of eastern Niger, which are not shown on this map.

Reading the map:

The map provides an overview of the geographic scope of local agreements facilitated by HD. The map shows, in orange, the conflict resolution and prevention agreements as well as exclusively humanitarian agreements. Agreements on CBMs, both oral and written, are shown in green. Some agreements cover a single locality and are shown as a triangle. Others concern a more or less expansive area that is delimited with the epicentre of the conflict in the centre as a reference.

The agreements are then classified under the map in order of appearance: the parties to the agreement are indicated, as well as the type of agreement and its current status, and whether it directly or indirectly involves armed actors. The parties to the agreements are mainly communities. In Mali, agreements are mainly between the Fulani community and other communities. This is due to the characteristics of the conflict in the country and conflation between the Fulani community and armed jihadist groups (see the box on the conflict in central Mali later in this publication). The hunters are self-defence groups whose members come from the brotherhood with the same name. When the conflict broke out in central Mali, the hunters came together to defend their communities and fight armed jihadist groups, sometimes alongside the Malian armed forces (FAMA).

Committing to peace: Excerpt from an Agreement

The various stages of a mediation process make it possible to set out the parties' commitments. These commitments may be shared by all signatories or concern only one of the parties. They are the result of intense discussions between parties. They are approved by the communities since their representatives, sitting at the negotiation table, take the time to get their recommendations and make sure they support the commitments made.

These commitments vary depending on the nature of the conflict. These are some examples:

a) Encouraging community leaders to commit to peace through the dissemination of cohesion and appeasement messages;

b) Facilitating the free movement of people and their goods;

c) Respecting and enforcing the rules in place regarding access to pastoral resources;

d) Opposing livestock theft, regardless of the owner's community, and facilitating searches for stolen goods and animals so they can be returned to their owners;

e) Not moving about with weapons in villages and towns;

f) Promoting free use of natural and land resources (fields, pastures, pastoral corridors, lodgings) by all communities;

g) Encouraging the gradual return of basic social services and facilitating humanitarian access;

h) Respecting the habits and customs of different communities and places of worship;

i) Respecting the moral authority of traditional and religious authorities who preserved social cohesion and calmed social tensions before the crisis;

There is an excerpt below from the peace agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities of Koro, signed in central Mali on the 26th January 2021.

Other agreements are available on the HD website.

30 Mediation of local conflicts in the Sahel

Mediation of local conflicts in the Sahel 31

Central Mali demonstrates the suffering of the Sahel

Only non-jihadist armed groups from the northern regions of the country were involved in the process that led to the signing of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in 2015. Military operations focused on northern Mali, and jihadist groups took advantage of the low military presence in central Mali to establish themselves there permanently. They sought to recruit from the Fulani community first using a strategy based on pre-existing local grievances which had already proved successful in the north with some Tuareg and Arab communities. The preacher Amadou Koufa came from the Fulani community and was the leader of Katiba Macina, a jihadist group of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), with ties to Al-Qaida. He became the face and voice of an Islamic insurgency that was able to capitalise on the failed State and the frustrations and resentments specific to the region.

Intercommunity violence was mainly rooted in rivalries, family feuds and ancestral land disputes and has been exacerbated by the rise of jihadist groups. The influx of weapons of war from the north has led to increasingly deadly clashes, accelerating the breakdown of social cohesion and causing a crisis of confidence between communities. Malian State officials have fled targeted assassinations and retaliations committed by populations who feel abandoned and jihadist groups challenging their authority. Attempts to re-establish the administration have failed and the State presence continues to retreat in the north and centre of the country.

Dozo hunters are a self-defence militia from a traditional society in Mali. They gradually replaced the DSF, which had deserted the territories, to protect their communities from jihadist attacks. The acquisition of automatic weapons gave them a protective role. They formed groups, the best-known being Dan Nan Ambassagou (active mainly in the Mopti region).

In this context, and given strong intercommunity resentment, the conflation between the Fulani community and jihadists, as well as between the Dogon, the Bambara, and the hunters has led to numerous massacres. Many pre-existing local conflicts were thus exacerbated or tensions developed into full conflicts.

In 2017, HD published a premonitory study by our late advisor and friend Adam Thiam titled "Central Mali: Issues and Risks of a Neglected Crisis."¹⁸



Lamido, group leader in Toumour, Niger.

Traditional leaders committed to preventing community conflicts along the Komadougou River, around the Lake Chad Basin in the Diffa region in Niger on the 12th September 2019.

"The follow-up committee was established to implement the agreement step by step. Its role is to ensure the application and implementation of this agreement, but also to regularly take stock of changes in its implementation. If there is a flaw, the committee must point it out quickly. If there is a success, it must encourage those who enabled the resolution of this problem."

18. <https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Centre-du-Mali-Enjeux-et-dangers-dune-crise-négligée.pdf>

Follow-up committees: Permanent dispute management tools

In a security context where danger is widespread, agreements facilitated by HD are often unable to completely put an end to violence or livestock theft. The parties to the agreements may be manipulated by external actors opposed to the peace dynamic or the regional context may change, leading to a change in the armed actors in the area which could make it impossible to apply the current agreement.

Establishing a follow-up committee ensures that parties apply the agreement and that when the context changes, they try to adapt it to include the new actors and their grievances. Follow-up committees are composed of an average of 15 members chosen by the signatory parties. The members are influential figures (community representatives, religious representatives, heads of community armed groups, representatives of local authorities, etc.). Their commitment to the agreement ensures its survival in the face of possible violations or renewed violence.

After an agreement is signed, HD continues to support members of follow-up committees by advising them and, when needed, helping them resolve tensions or find solutions and responses to basic humanitarian and social needs. The organisation has thus helped follow-up committees facilitate the return of displaced people, seek solutions in order to reopen basic social services such as schools or community health centres, or find responses to humanitarian needs (the restoration of houses, water points, emergency food supplies, etc.). This support stage can last several months or even years. Each conflict is unique. The support offered to follow-up committees is assessed on an individual basis, allowing the time necessary to ensure long-lasting peace.

Thanks to the hard work of the follow-up committees and their efforts to establish the newfound peace, the agreements facilitated by HD in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have included:

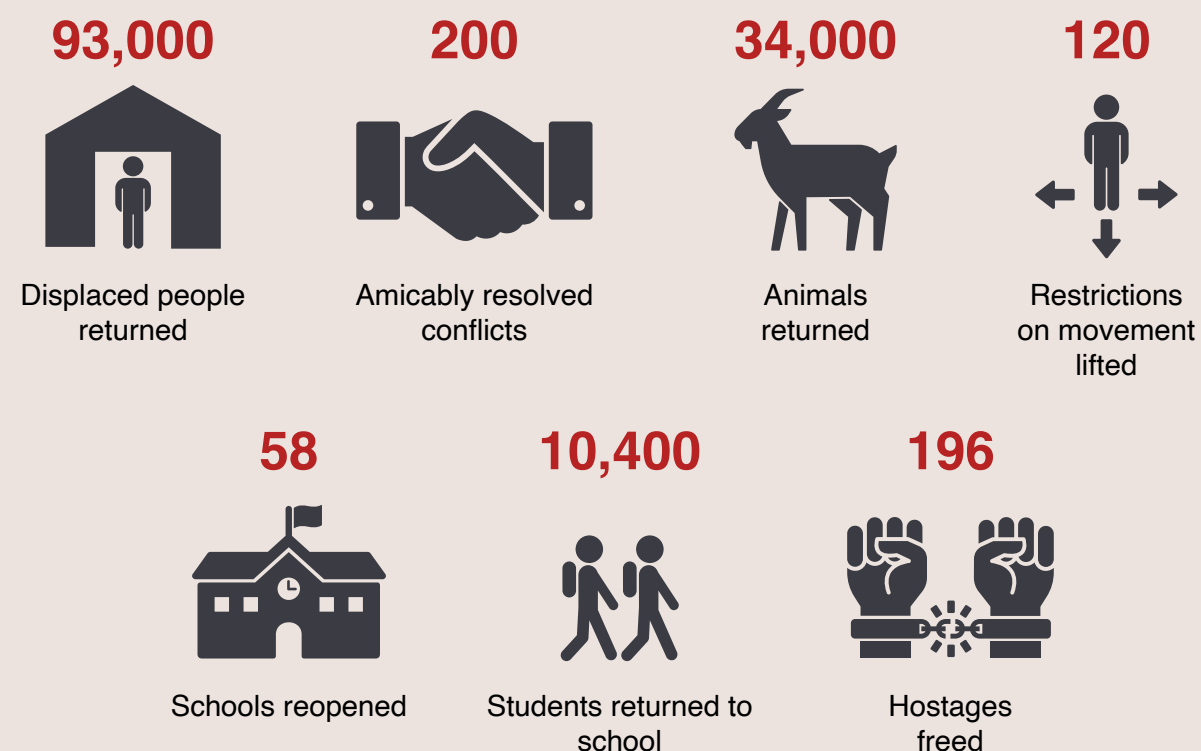
- promotion of humanitarian access;
- the return of freedom of movement for people and goods;
- the return of displaced people;
- more frequent use of non-violent dispute resolution mechanisms;
- the return of stolen goods and animals;
- the release of imprisoned people;
- the reopening of schools and basic social services (notably community health centres or clinics).

Conflict leaves a lasting impact, so follow-up committees work with local authorities and humanitarian organisations to rebuild the lives of communities and prevent a resurgence of violence. HD focuses its efforts on identifying infrastructure needs and sharing them with the relevant authorities. However, Sahelian governments lack resources and have trouble responding. Therefore, they generally call on technical partners such as humanitarian organisations. Although this is not HD's main work, it has symbolically supported the fulfilment of peace dividends. For example, the construction or restoration of water points, the construction of markets and stockyards, or the marking out of transhumance corridors.

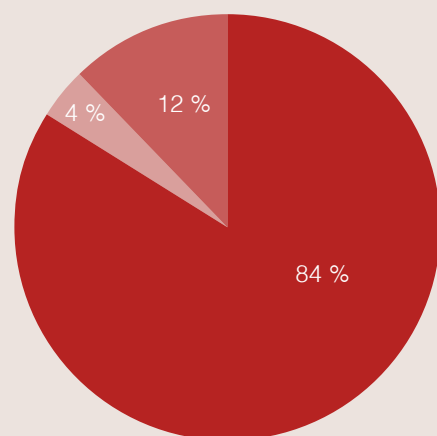
19. These needs range from the construction or rehabilitation of water sources to the construction of schools or houses for displaced people to return to. In 2021, HD has identified 274 infrastructure needs in Mali in areas covered by local agreements, of which 163 relate to water sources.

Measuring the impact of local conflict mediation

HD has set a series of indicators that can measure the impact of an agreement. During meetings with follow-up committees, the organisation works to collect relevant data from the parties and local authorities as systematically as possible. This methodology is based on the perception and information of the parties and people spoken to during the meetings. This measurement of impact is therefore not exhaustive and may change over time, but it provides a clear indication of the added value of conflict mediation and its positive impact on the daily lives of communities. This is demonstrated by the following figures:

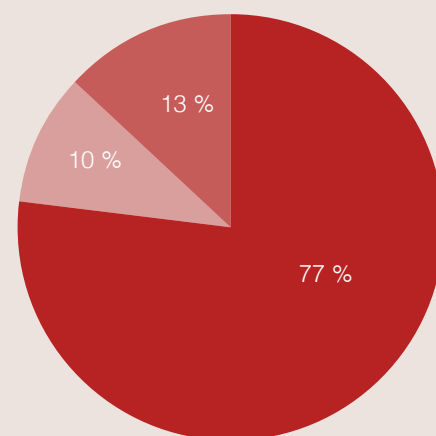


Percentage of the agreements that enabled a reduction of tensions



■ Yes
■ No
■ N/A

Percentage of the agreements that enabled a reduction of theft



■ Yes
■ No
■ N/A

Mediators' stories

Peace agreement mediation between Idourfane and Ibogolitane communities in the Gao and Ménaka regions in Mali and the Tillabéry region in Niger in November 2018.

Testimony of Souleymane Ag Fanaou, responsible for HD's local mediation in northern Mali



Les communautés Idourfane et Ibogolitane cohabitaient depuis toujours dans le village de Injaga. The Idourfane and Ibogolitane communities have always coexisted in the Injagalane village (the Gao region). When the conflict in Mali broke out in 2012, the two communities were divided. The Ibogolitane joined the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), and the Idourfane joined the Imghad Tuareg Self-Defense Group and Allies (GATIA)²⁰. The village chief was of Ibogolitane origin, but the Idourfane community is the majority in the village of Injagalane. His role was gradually challenged by the Idourfane because his management of politics and natural resources was considered partisan. At the same time, tensions intensified in the area and the conflict underwent another change with a series of robberies, kidnappings of herds, and attacks on Ibogolitane villages by the Idourfane in the Gao and Ménaka regions of Mali and the Tillabéry region of Niger. The first attack took place in July 2018 and resulted in the death of nearly ten people, mostly Idourfane. To retaliate, the Idourfane community attacked the Ibogolitane. This time, a dozen people on each side were killed. Then, in September 2018, at Inekar in the Ménaka region, about 30 people were killed, mostly Ibogolitane.

Tired of the increasingly frequent clashes, community leaders from Bamako, Gao and Niger came together to try to find a way out of the crisis. It was then, in October 2018, that the Idourfane community sought HD's support to facilitate a mediation process. HD was accepted as a mediator by both parties and began the mediation process. For a month, intense exchanges took place with all of the actors with an influence over the conflict. After meetings where they were able to voice their versions of the history of the conflict, grievances and red lines, the communities finally wanted to commit to peace.

On November 20, 2018, HD supported the agreement signing ceremony, which was held in the presence of the Idourfane and Ibogolitane communities, representatives of other neighbouring communities, women and youth representatives of both signatory communities, as well as armed groups which took part in the clashes (CMA, Plateforme, and MSA). A follow-up committee of ten members was established with the signing of the agreement.

Since the signing of the agreement, armed clashes between the Idourfane and Ibogolitane have ceased. Eight hundred and fifty-six livestock have been returned to both communities and all displaced families have returned to their localities. Cohesion between Idourfane and Ibogolitane communities has been restored, and the communities are coexisting again, despite the degrading security situation in the region. The conflict that existed between them has been put to an end.

20. Both groups are signatories to the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali which ended the war for independence in northern Mali.

Mediation of traditional leaders' commitment to preventing community conflicts along the Komadougou River, around the Lake Chad Basin, and the oasis basins in the Diffa region in Niger in September 2019.

*Testimony of Kiari Moustapha,
HD's Head of Office in Niger*



Along the Komadougou River, which separates the State of Borno in Nigeria from the Diffa region in Niger, communities of transhumant Fulani herders and sedentary Kanuri farmers share agro-pastoral spaces. Conflicts between these communities are frequent, especially during the rainy season (June to August) and the dry season (September to December), since farmers take possession of their land along the Komadougou River at the same place where transhumant herders bring their animals to graze. Beginning in February 2019, conflicts regarding resource sharing intensified, leading to the loss of many human lives. From February to June 2019, new clashes between Kanuri farmers and Fulani herders took place in Chetimari, causing the death of 16 people and injuring around 30. As tensions between herders and farmers increased, traditional leaders feared the conflict between users of the Komadougou River would degenerate into an intercommunity conflict between Fulani and Kanuri.

The Nigerian Minister of the Interior then met with representatives of both communities in February and July 2019 in hopes of reconciling their differences. Tensions worsened despite this effort, and there was a joint mission to convince communities to stop calling for violence. Under these circumstances, in June 2019, the governor of the Diffa region requested HD's support to carry out a mediation process.

To carry out the mediation process, HD relied on traditional leaders, who have great influence because of their status, their authority with communities, and their traditional role as mediators. The organisation especially turned to two group leaders – one Toubou and one Arab – both considered neutral as they were not parties to the conflict. HD helped these two traditional leaders identify grievances, red lines and versions of both communities' history. Negotiations with community leaders lasted three months and resulted in a compromise. The traditional leaders notably recognised their responsibilities in the dispute and wanted to commit to preventing and managing conflicts in the future. After consulting with the authorities and government technical services in charge of herding, agriculture and water on the draft commitments, the Fulani and Kanuri communities were brought together in September 2019 to sign a commitment to prevent intercommunity conflict. A follow-up committee of 11 members was established, including traditional leaders and local authority representatives.

In June 2020, HD facilitated the signing of a conflict prevention accession agreement by the Fulani of Bokolodji and Ouda (municipalities of the State of Borno in Nigeria), who are regularly accused of initiating conflicts along the Komadougou River, especially in Chetimari. The signing of the accession agreement by Bokolodji and Ouda leaders in 2020, which includes the establishment of a cross-border committee, marked the start of official cross-border co-operation between the two regions, aiming to strengthening sustainable conflict resolution between farmers and herders in the cross-border area. Since the signing of this accession agreement, a notable calm has prevailed in the areas covered. HD continues its support of the follow-up committee in order to prevent renewed violence in a context characterised by the presence of armed jihadist groups.

Mediation of the peace agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities of Koro in central Mali in February 2021.

*Testimony of AbdelKader Sidibé,
HD's Head of Mission - Sahel*



Since 2015, relations between the Fulani and Dogon in the circle of Koro have deteriorated following the arrival of the jihadist group JNIM to the area. Indeed, the Fulani and Dogon already lived in separate villages, but coexisted and worked together peacefully. However, the arrival of jihadist groups and the resulting instability (increasing attacks on the FAMA) led Dogon hunters to form self-defence militias. Noting the absence of the State to ensure security in the region, the Dan Nan Ambassagou militia was created at the end of 2016. It was headed by Youssouf Toloba, a former member of the Ganda Koy and Ganda Izo militias which had fought the Tuareg rebellion in the north in the 1990s. Many young Dogons were recruited to join his ranks.

Starting in 2017, the next stage was reached when the jihadists attacked important Dogon figures, accusing them of collusion with the Malian army. The Dogon militia intensified their recruitment. The ensuing conflict led to repeated attacks and pillaging of villages and hamlets by armed individuals, targeted assassinations of influential figures, massive theft of livestock, and restricted access to farmland for some communities.

On August 28, 2018, HD facilitated the signature of a first agreement between the Dogon and Fulani in the Koro circle by 34 village chiefs of both communities and localities affected by the conflict. This agreement helped mitigate the consequences of the conflict on the communities. A follow-up committee for the Koro agreement was then established. Thanks to its efforts, stolen livestock were returned, embargos on fairs were lifted, and displaced people were able to return. However, the security situation deteriorated sharply between 2018 and 2020 in the area, and hunters resumed their clashes with jihadist groups. At the end of 2019, the hegemony of Katiba Macina (a jihadist group affiliated with JNIM) in the circle opened up new opportunities, enabling the Dogon villages and the Fulani neighbours to come together spontaneously. Previously, this was forbidden by hunters.

The Koro circle communities then decided to come together in an association known as Monobèm ("let's live together" in Dogosso). They initiated mediation processes to facilitate local agreements on freedom of movement. Monobèm was made up especially, but not exclusively, of members of the Koro agreement. It has established contact with local jihadists to urge them to participate in peacemaking efforts. Seizing the opportunity to act as mediators, jihadists of Katiba Macina then worked to convince unco-operative Fulani communities to join the intercommunity dialogue. With this success, Monobèm began receiving requests from village chiefs, who had previously been reluctant to join the Koro agreement, but now wished to enter into negotiations in order to loosen the stranglehold on their communities.

It should be noted that in this process, the jihadists supported the association's efforts, keeping in mind the need to consolidate their territorial gains and control the recruitment campaign of ISGS (another influential jihadist group in the area) by gaining communities' sympathy. The hunters had an ambiguous stance towards this initiative, ranging from pragmatic tolerance at the local level to open hostility at the Dan Nan Ambassagou level. The group's national leader, Youssouf Toloba, openly threatened members of the association. However, Dan Nan Ambassagou combatants were increasingly tired of the conflict. As for the communities, they were looking for security, but not at any price. They wanted to preserve their identities, ways of life, and values.

From September 2020, at the request of Monobèm, HD supported them in a continued mediation process and in extending it to all towns in the circle. HD's support was also requested to secure

the process with respect to authorities and DSF, and to structure the dialogue between the Dogon community and hunters. For the authorities, it was important for negotiations with armed actors to also include acceptance of the return of basic social services so that the State's presence would not recede further. They wanted mediation to instead open the door to regaining communities' trust. It was also important to support communities' dialogue with DSF in order to convey the humanitarian nature of this mediation, which did not deal with power relations between arms bearers.

After five months of mediation between the parties, three municipality-level peace agreements were signed in the Koro circle between the Fulani and Dogon from January 21-24, 2021. They covered 11 of the 16 municipalities in the circle. Having served as a confidence-building measure to demonstrate the communities' firm commitment to ending the conflict, these agreements were completed by signing a circle-level agreement on February 26, 2021, in the presence of the Malian Ministry of Reconciliation.

Since the signing of the agreements, 25,590 displaced persons have returned, 26 hostages have been released, 8 market embargos against either community have been lifted. Additionally, 26 road checkpoints have been lifted, 1238 livestock have been returned, 57 schools have reopened (with more than 10,300 students returning to class), and attacks have stopped. Communities can now move and farm their fields freely. The signing of the agreements in Koro allowed communities in neighbouring circles, also affected by conflicts, to realise that peace is possible. The calm achieved convinced them to also commit to peace. These agreements have had national and international repercussions, as they are the first in the area to have brought an end to inter-community confrontations thanks to the involvement of armed groups in the process.



VI. Conclusion

The methodology for mediating local conflicts is not fundamentally different from that of traditional peace processes, with the sequence of talks, confidence-building measures, negotiation, and intermediate and final agreements with peace dividends and transitional justice mechanisms. However, the increase in these conflicts as well as their complexity constitute the main challenge. They are numerous because there are hundreds of intercommunity disputes in the Sahel. They are complex because the parties are only weakly hierarchical and not very homogeneous: traditional, State or religious authorities, herders' or farmers' groups, new economic elites resulting from trafficking, self-defence militias, and sometimes armed groups affiliated with extremist movements, are all demanding their place at the negotiating table. A detailed knowledge of the physical terrain and people involved as well as technical skills specific to the mediation of national conflicts are needed to identify all the parties with an influence on the resolution of the conflict, untangle the web of divergent interests, identify the sources of tension, take into account the influence of armed groups, and propose pragmatic solutions involving both the State and the communities. Few actors have both the networks and the skills to conduct peace negotiations at the community, national, and often regional levels, given the cross-border nature of both nomadic and sedentary communities.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue has demonstrated the usefulness of involving communities in situ, by letting them designate their representatives and mediators, formulate their grievances, and develop a conflict resolution agreement. Since 2016, more than 50 local agreements have been promoted by the organisation in the Sahel. However, these agreements are weakened by the difficulty States have in providing peace dividends quickly, even though these are rarely more than a well, reintegrating a handful of militiamen, or a health clinic. Dialogue between authorities, mediators and humanitarian and development actors should be strengthened in this regard. Moreover, local agreements are by definition unstable, given the variability of contexts and actors. Their follow-up also requires continuous presence on the ground. However, the ultimate objective of exogenous local mediation efforts is to reactivate traditional mechanisms for managing community conflicts, even if the intervention of an independent mediator is still useful when these conflicts involve armed groups and States.

However, mediating local conflicts cannot do everything, even if it involves peace dividends. Only the integration of all communities at all levels of governance, decentralisation of public resources under community control, and democracy by consensus rather than by majority vote will bring lasting peace to African nations. This is achieved through permanent mediation mechanisms such as the age-old tradition of the palaver. However, the difficult exercise of reforming political institutions will only be possible if a peace agreement between States and insurgent groups puts an end to the violence to prepare the way for a process of inclusive national dialogue, that is, with all people regardless of their beliefs.

ANNEX

Annex - List of Agreements facilitated by HD in the Sahel since 2016

The table below includes all agreements facilitated by HD in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger since 2016. The table indicates the category of each agreement, its current status, and the type of conflict it addresses.

Date Agreement was signed	Agreement Title	Agreement category	Did the Agreement mitigate humanitarian consequences of the conflict on civilian populations?	Type of conflict	Agreement Status
13.05.2016	Agreement between the Daoussahaq in Talatayt (Mali) and the Fulani of Niger on the peaceful use of natural resources along the Mali-Niger border. <i>Additional agreement on reconciliation between Daoussahaq and Fulani communities on peaceful use of natural resources along the Mali-Niger border (signed 11.07.16)</i>	Peace agreement	Yes	Intercommunity conflict	Conflict ended
25.01.2017	Tin Hamma agreement between Kel Ghounane and Idoufane youth in northern Mali	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement no longer valid
09.02.2017	Commitment between the Imouchq and Ifogas communities in the rural town of Ouinerden in northern Mali	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement no longer valid
09.02.2017	Commitment between the Tamasheq and Fulani communities in N'Daki in the rural town of Gossi (Gourma-Rharous circle, Timbuktu region in Mali)	Peace agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement no longer valid
30.07.2017	Commitment to reconciliation of the Nawa-die, Tafadala, and Gondogourou-Dogon villages (Koro circle in the Mopti region in Mali)	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement no longer valid
26.08.2017	Bourra commitment in the Ansongo circle in the Gao region in Mali	Prevention agreement	Non	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement no longer valid
28.04.2018	Peace agreement between the Tarbanasa, Ibhawan, and Targaitamout communities in the Tamalet area on the border between Mali and Niger	Peace agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Conflict ended
22.06.2018	Unilateral commitment of the Fulani of Chetimari for withdrawal from Dongol Poulakou in the Diffa region in Niger	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
20.11.2018	Peace agreement between Idoufane and Ibogolitane communities in the Gao and Ménaka regions in Mali and the Tillabéry region in Niger	Peace agreement	Yes	Intracommunity conflict	Conflict ended
19.12.2018	Commitments for conflict prevention between farmers and herders in the Tominian circle in the Ségou region in Mali	Prevention agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Conflict ended
23.12.2018	Peace agreement between the Fulani and Mahamid Arab communities from the municipalities of Foulatari, N'guelbeli, Goudoumaria, and Mainé Soroa in the Diffa region in Niger	Peace agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
19.01.2019	Agreement between the Fulani and Bozon communities from Kewa to lift the blockade on Kouakourou in the Djenné circle in the Mopti region in Mali <i>Preceded by the agreement between the Fulani and Bozo communities from Kouakourou on 30.05.18</i>	Humanitarian agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement no longer valid

06.02.2019	Oral commitments of the Maure, Tamashek, and Fulani communities for conflict prevention in Méma in the Mopti region in Mali	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
09.03.2019	Peace agreement between the communities from the municipalities of Alafia, Doukire, and Salam in the Timbuktu region in Mali	Peace agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
12.03.2019	Intercommunity agreement for the peaceful return of displaced Fulanis in the municipality of Koula in the Tominian circle in the Ségou region in Mali	Humanitarian agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors	Conflict ended
13.03.2019	Agreement between the Kel Inacharia and sedentary communities of the municipalities of Alafia, Bourem, Inaly, and Lafia in the Timbuktu region in Mali	Peace agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
16.05.2019	Intercommunity agreement for the peaceful management of the land of Lakes Horo and Yourmi in the rural municipality of Tonka in the Goundam circle in the Timbuktu region in Mali	Prevention agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
25.07.2019	Peace agreement between the Dafing, Samogo, Fulani, Dogon, and Bozo communities in the municipality of Baye in the Bankass circle in the Mopti region in Mali	Peace agreement	Yes	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
01.08.2019	Peace agreement between communities of Dozon farmers, herders, and hunters in the Djenné circle in the Mopti region in Mali <i>Preceded by:</i> <i>- the agreement for the prevention of conflict between herders and farmers in the Djenné circle, signed on November 20, 2018</i> <i>- the commitments of the youth of the Djenné circle on December 7, 2018</i> <i>- the commitments of women in the Djenné circle to express their accession to the agreement for the prevention of conflict between herders and farmers in the Djenné circle, signed on November 20, 2018</i>	Peace agreement	Yes	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
16.08.2019	Peace agreement between the Fulani, Dogon, and Dafing communities in the municipality of Ouenkoro in the Bankass circle in the Mopti region in Mali	Peace agreement	Yes	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
12.09.2019	Commitment of traditional leaders to prevent community conflicts along the Komadougou River, around the Lake Chad Basin and oasis basins in the Diffa region in Niger <i>Accession agreement of Bokolodji and Ouda leaders to the commitment of traditional leaders to prevent community conflicts along the Komadougou River, around the Lake Chad Basin and oasis basins in the Diffa region in Niger (signed September 26, 2020)</i>	Prevention agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
26.09.2019	Commitment between local authorities and inter-river municipality hunters for conflict prevention in the municipality of Soloba in the Macina circle in the Ségou region in Mali	Prevention agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors - local authorities	Agreement still in force
15.10.2019	Joint commitment of farmer and herder communities from the municipality of Barsalogo and surrounding areas for the peaceful return of social cohesion in the Sanmatenga proving in the central-northern region in Burkina Faso	Confidence -Building Measure	No	ommunity conflict - armed actors - local authorities	Agreement still in force

13.11.2019	Agreement for the prevention of conflicts between communities, hunters, and local authorities of San inter-river municipalities in the municipalities of Ouolon, Siadou-gou, and Sy in the San circle in the Ségou region in Mali	Prevention agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors - local authorities	Agreement still in force
25.01.2020	Peace agreement between the Fulani and hunter communities of Somadougou in the Mopti circle in the Mopti region in Mali	Peace agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
10.02.2020	Commitment between the delegations of the Diffa region in the State of Borno on conflict prevention between farmers and herders in the border region in Niger	Prevention agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
12.02.2020	Commitment between local authorities and hunters from the municipalities of Kolongo, Monimpébougou, Kokry, and Bokywéré for conflict prevention in the Ségou region in the Macina circle in Mali	Prevention agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors - local authorities	Agreement still in force
26.02.2020	Peace agreement between the Fulani, Bambara, and hunter communities from M'bella in the municipality of Folomana in the Macina circle in the Ségou region	Peace agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Conflict ended
07.02.2021	Peace agreement between the Dogon, Dafing, and Fulani communities in the municipalities of Diallassagou, Koulogon Habé, Lessagou Habé, Ségue, Soubala, Sokoura, and Tori in the Bankass circle in Mali	Peace agreement	Yes	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
26.02.2021	Peace agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities of Koro in Mali <i>Preceded by:</i> - the peace agreement between the Dogon and Fulani communities from the Koro circle on August 28, 2018 - the peace agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities from Dagatène, Bondo, Diougani, and Koro on January 12, 2021 - the peace agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities of Pel Maoudé, Dougouténé 1, Dougouténé 2, Koporo Kendié Na, Koporo Pen, and Youdiou on January 22, 2021 - the peace agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities from Madougou and Barapiréli on January 24, 2021	Peace agreement	Yes	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
11.03.2021	Peace agreement between the Mahamid, Arab, and Fulani communities from the municipalities of Toumou (Djariho), Kablewa, and N'Guigmi in the Diffa region in Niger	Peace agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
26.03.2021	Peace agreement between the Dogon, Bobo, Mossie, and Fulani communities from Timiniri and Bara Sara in the Bandiagara circle in the Bandiagara region in Mali	Peace agreement	Yes	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
02.04.2021	Agreement between village chiefs, local authorities, and hunters from the municipality of Monimpébougou for the peaceful return of social cohesion in the Ke Macina circle in the Ségou region in Mali	Peace agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors - local authorities	Agreement still in force
22.06.2021	Commitment between Malinke leaders from the villages of Koloni, Nema, Diyo, Soufouroulaye, and Kouna in the rural municipality of Sio for intracommunity conflict prevention in the Mopti circle in the Mopti region in Mali	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force

10.07.2021	Peace agreement between the Fulani community from the municipalities of Ouenkoro, Sokoura, and Diallassagou in the Bankass circle and the Bwa, Dafing, and Dogon communities from the municipalities of Timissa, Lanfiala, Koula, and Benena in the Tominian circle in the Mopti region in Mali <i>Accession agreement of the municipality of Fangasso on September 18, 2021 to the peace agreement between the Fulani community from the municipalities of Ouenkoro, Sokoura, and Diallassagou in the Bankass circle and the Bwa, Dafing, and Dogon communities from the municipalities of Timissa, Lanfiala, Koula, and Benena in the Tominian circle</i>	Peace agreement	Yes	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
22.10.2021	Intracommunity peace agreement between the Idaksahak communities (pro MSA-D) and the Idaksahak communities (pro CMA) in the municipality of Talataye in the Gao region in Mali	Peace agreement	Yes	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
14.11.2021	Declaration of the Fulani community and Mamba hunters for peaceful coexistence in the municipality of Diafarabé in the Ténenkou circle in the Mopti region in Mali	Confidence -Building Measure	No	Community conflict - armed actors	Agreement still in force
15.12.2021	Agreement for conflict prevention between the Fulani communities from Atta and the neighbouring Sonrais, Bozos, and Tuaregs from the villages of Tonka, Mekoreye, Guidigata, Saya, and Karango in the rural municipality of Tonka in the Goundam circle in the Timbuktu region in Mali	Prevention agreement	No	Intercommunity conflict	Agreement still in force
23.03.2022	Agreement between the Donzo hunter communities from the municipalities of Cinzana, Dioro, and Katiena for the return of peace and social cohesion in the Ségou circle in the Ségou region in Mali <i>Accession agreement of Donzo communities and hunters in the municipality of Fatiné to the peace agreement between Donzo communities and hunters in the municipalities of Cinzana, Dioro, and Katiena for the return of peace and social cohesion on April 27, 2022</i>	Peace agreement	No	Community conflict - armed actors - local authorities	Agreement still in force

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