



SF PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Monthly Security Report

West Africa

January 2020



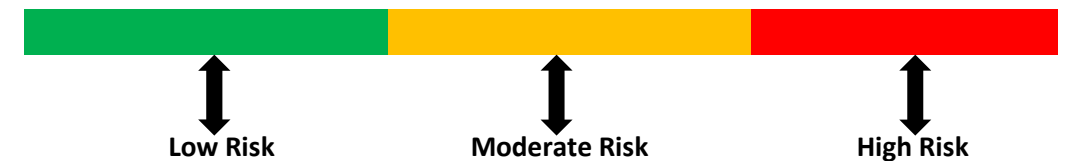
Risk Rating

	Overall Risk Level	This Month's	Forecast Next Month
Benin	GREEN	YELLOW	YELLOW
Burkina Faso	RED	RED	RED
Cameroon	RED	RED	RED
Gabon	GREEN	YELLOW	YELLOW
Ghana	GREEN	YELLOW	YELLOW
Ivory Coast	GREEN	YELLOW	YELLOW
Mali	RED	RED	RED
Niger	RED	RED	YELLOW
Nigeria	YELLOW	RED	YELLOW
Togo	GREEN	YELLOW	YELLOW

Risk Rating Scale

A country's risk rating is assessed by analysing all threats affecting the potential to operate in the country as a whole

- GREEN** Permissive operating environment, although, there are likely to be underlying security issues
- YELLOW** Notable security challenges to consider while operating in this environment
- RED** Unstable operating environment, extreme caution is advised



Benin

During the reporting period, Benin recorded several incidents of killing and robberies with at least six fatalities reported during the incidents. In Oueme department, two individuals were killed during two separate robbery attacks which occurred on 16th January. While, on 17th January, an attempted robbery was reported in vicinity of Cotonou Court when soldiers charged with securing the court attempted to steal narcotics and gold bars from the court's premises. The soldiers were caught and remanded in custody awaiting trial.

Three bodies were discovered in Plateau, Borgou and Couffo departments. On 17th January, the decomposing body of a security officer was discovered in Tchaada, Ifangni commune, Plateau department. The victim was initially declared missing in November 2019. While, on 20th January, the body of a child was discovered in Weze community, Parakou, Borgou department, two individuals were arrested in connection to the incident. Another body was discovered on 19th January in Dogbo, Couffo department.

On 15th January, members of the opposition party Forces Cauris pour un Bénin Emergent (FCBE) clashed with security personnel in Savé, Collines department, two individuals were killed while six others were injured during the clash. It was later reported that the clash was instigated by one of the opposition party leaders Faleti Biaou Ayodélé Prudence, also known as "General Civil Faleti" which led to his subsequent arrest in Parakou, Borgou department by

security operatives on 23rd January. Mr. Ayodélé was accused of disseminating various videos calling on citizens to demand the departure of military personnel from Savé community. Following the incident, the government dispatched a mediation envoy to assess the situation and report back to the President. Since the legislative elections of April 2019, Savé has witnessed several incidents of violent clashes.

The Municipal and Communal elections have been slated for 17th May, 2020, the date was announced by the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA). The likelihood of violence during the elections remain high particularly in Savé and Tcharou in Borgou department.

According to a report by Transparency International on Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Benin was ranked 80th out of 180 countries with a score of 41 points over 100 for 2019. The current position depicts an increase in the index ranking when compared to the 2018 report when the country was ranked 85th out of 180 countries.

Two fire incidents were recorded during the period under review. On 25th January, an illegal petrol depot was destroyed in a fire outbreak at Agla-Agongbome district, Cotonou, Littoral region. No casualty reported. On 17th January, a motorcycle retail store was destroyed in a fire outbreak in vicinity of Marina crossroads, Cotonou, Littoral department. The fire, caused by a faulty electrical installation was contained by fire fighters deployed to the scene.



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Risk Rating : Moderate





Burkina Faso

On 21st January, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the bill establishing the institution of Volunteers for the Defence of the Fatherland (VDP). This decision was made following several attacks orchestrated by terrorist groups either affiliated with Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) or Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) against military forces and civilians in the country. The law which contains 23 articles will guide volunteers who will be under the supervision of the Minister of National Defence. The volunteers' mission will be to contribute to the defence and protection of people and property in their villages or their areas of residence. No date has been scheduled for the start of the training which is expected to last for fourteen days.

As witnessed in neighbouring Mali, there has also been an intensity in planned attacks targeting military bases and civilians. Centre North, East, North and the Sahel regions were most affected during the reporting month. Notably majority of incidents occurred in proximity to the Malian Border to the Northwest and Niger border to the Northeast.

On 2nd January, unidentified armed men attacked a gold panning site near Salmossi in Oudalan province, Sahel region. The assailants shot and killed a civilian; set ablaze several buildings and, stole goods from the site. The incident set the tone for other attacks which resulted in several casualties. On 20th January, 36 individuals

were killed by armed men who infiltrated a market in Nadraogo, Sanmatenga province, North Central region. Another devastating incident occurred on 25th January when an estimated 50 persons were killed by armed men who invaded Silgadji village, Tongomael province, Sahel region. The assailants reportedly destroyed the telecommunication towers to prevent the residents from seeking assistance. Also, Yendere border police station in Comoe, South West region was attacked by armed men on 25th January, the attack was successfully repelled by the security personnel attached to the station. The attack represents the fourth attack by armed men on the station and in all attacks the assailants were successfully repelled.

Two kidnap incidents were recorded in North and Cascades region, six individuals including a male nurse were kidnapped by members of a jihadist group.

Eight IED incidents were recorded in the month between 4th and 28th January along routes leading through Sourou Province in Boucle de Mouhoun region and routes within East region.



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Risk Rating : High



Cameroon

The Anglophone crisis intensified during the reporting period as separatist fighters continued calls for boycott of the Parliamentary and Municipal elections scheduled for 9th February 2020. The last Parliamentary and Local elections were held in 2013 after polls due in 2018 were postponed by President Paul Biya due to lingering security situation in the country.

On 7th January 2020, suspected separatist fighters set fire to the office of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) in Misaje commune, Donga Mantung division in Northwest region. Representatives of ELECAM also disclosed that many of its employees in the restive regions have fled due to threats from separatist fighters and some of their offices in Ndu, Kumbo and Ndop had been destroyed by separatists.

The Ambazonian Governing Council also announced a six-day restriction on movement between 7th and 12th February across the Northwest and Southwest region. The proposed lockdown has led to apprehension amongst residents in the affected area. A similar restriction was imposed between 5th and 14th February 2019 which resulted to paralysis of business activities within the area.

The government in its commitment to ensuring elections are conducted all over the English-speaking regions deployed a large number of security operatives to the restive region to ensure the safety of residents before, during and after the joint local council and parliamentary elections.

Despite the heightened presence of security operatives, abductions have become rampant in the Northwest and Southwest regions of the country as general elections draw near. A notable incident occurred on 21st January, at least 24 school children were abducted by armed separatists in Kumba, Meme division, Southwest region. The victims were later rescued by security operatives after a gunfire exchange leading to the death of two armed separatists. Separatist fighters also carried out multiple abductions of politicians/public office holders including a town mayor and four councilors in Ngoketunjia department, Northwest region. An attempted abduction of a traditional leader was however foiled by residents of Babungo, who retaliated against separatist camps in the area.

The government continued efforts to enhance the growth and sustainability of the economy with grants and financial aids. Despite noting several challenges faced during the implementation of several financial projects across the country in 2019, the executive board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved the disbursement of USD76.1 million after a fifth review of economic reforms under a three-year agreement known as the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) between the government and the institution.



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Risk Rating : High



Gabon

Reports of child abductions increased in the country with several cases recorded in the reporting period. The increasing reports of child abductions led to a climate of insecurity for residents and locals across the country. The reports of a series of child abductions spread on several social media platforms following the disappearance of a 3-year-old on 12th January.

Several kidnap attempts were recorded while several others were wrongly mobbed by individuals who claim justice for themselves. On 24th January, residents in response to uptick in kidnap incidents across Libreville erected barricades, burned vehicles and lynched two individuals wrongfully accused of being kidnappers. Security operatives were deployed to the affected areas resulting in the arrest of at least 89 individuals. The national police also launched a manhunt for ten individuals suspected to have actively participated in the violence.

Strike actions often occur in the country with protesters staging demonstrations and disrupting business activities in response to socio-economic conditions and unpopular government austerity policies. On 23rd January, the trade union commenced a nationwide strike over the proposed reform of the country's labor law. Following concessions, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the government and the trade union confederations over reform of the Labor Code, and the union representatives are

expected to participate in a plenary session on the project to reform the labor code with all the social partners.

Following a B rating with a stable outlook from Fitch Ratings, an international credit rating agency in December 2019. The country grew from its debts to a surplus citing an improving fiscal trajectory. Gabon, ranked the eighth largest producer of oil in sub-Saharan Africa with a production of at least 198,000 barrels per day remains heavily dependent on oil, which accounts for a large amount of Gabon's exports, 45% of its GDP, and at least 50% of its state budget revenues. Nonetheless, the government put in measures to achieve its projected 50% increase in crude oil production and avert further output dips. Two exploration and production companies, Panoro Energy and VAALCO Energy defied speculation of possible instability to post progress in their offshore Gabon operations while also strengthening their drilling programs in preparation for possible increase in oil production this year.

The government continued to deepen cooperation and improve diplomatic representation with other countries. On 17th January, the Gabonese consulate was inaugurated in Laayoune, Western Sahara region, Morocco.



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Risk Rating : Moderate



Ghana

As the country enters into an election year, several political parties have begun systematic positioning to ensure victory in the upcoming general elections scheduled for Q4 2020. The national official body responsible for the conduct of all public elections, the Electoral Commission of Ghana announced the intended creation of a new voters register which sparked off several responses from several stakeholders including civil unrest. Several citizens embarked on a demonstration on 21st January in Kumasi, Ashanti region in protest of the creation of the new register. Another protest was witnessed on 11th January in relation to the planned compilation of a new voters register; several members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) embarked on a demonstration in Tamale, Northern region in protest of the proposed task by the Electoral Commission. Reports indicate the protesters set fire to vehicle tyres and barricaded several roads in vicinity of the protest.

The Ghana Police Service conducted numerous arrests across several regions including Greater Accra, Volta, Eastern and Upper East in response to a plethora of incidents including; secessionist related activities, narcotics, theft, robbery. The prevalence of organised and petty crimes by criminal syndicates continually compels government security forces to carry out operations which have proven relatively successful. Notwithstanding, crime continues to exist in its various forms.

Illegal mining continues to affect the socio-economic fabric of the country despite government and security actions. On 13th January,

operatives of the regional Forward Operating Base arrested fourteen suspected illegal miners in Adansie North district, Ashanti region.

The rising trend of highway robberies continued in the current reporting period; on 17th January, a cargo truck was attacked by three masked assailants along the Bole-Bamboi highway in vicinity of Bole, Savannah region; a Police officer onboard the vehicle repelled the attack and inflicted a gunshot wound on one member of the robbery syndicate who was subsequently arrested while two others remain at large.

The Ghanaian government strengthened bilateral ties with the United States (US) government; three high-level officials partook in bilateral discussions from 19th - 23rd January concerning border, maritime, police peacekeeping, cybersecurity, and the administration of justice in several meetings which were attended by the U.S Ambassador to Ghana.

With the emergence of the Coronavirus and the influx of foreign nationals at airports, the Ministry of health announced that it had initiated measures to protect the general public from an outbreak of the virus which originated from the Wuhan province in China. According to a statement signed by the Minister of Health, Kwaku Agyemang Manu, passengers from China will undergo enhanced screening procedures including the administration of health questionnaire.



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Incidents of politically-motivated violence will likely witness an uptick with the countdown to general elections in Q4. Also, petty and organized crimes are expected to continue over the next reporting period.
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Risk Rating : Moderate





Ivory Coast

Following heightened tension in the political scene, mostly triggered by the clampdown on leaders of several opposition parties, the Catholic Church in Abidjan announced a march scheduled for 15th February, to create awareness on the need for a peaceful election ahead of the October 2020 presidential elections. However, the event was cancelled over concerns of alleged infiltration by an undisclosed group.

Armed criminal groups probably acting on information received from their accomplices working in banks, conducted attacks on unsuspecting customers along the road. On 22nd January, a trader was robbed of a sum of FCFA 85m (approx. USD 143,000) after carrying out a transaction at a commercial bank in Man, Montagnes district. The vehicle of the victim was trailed by the assailants before the incident occurred. A similar incident also occurred in the same district on 12th December 2019 when four assailants on motorcycle waylaid the accountant of an agricultural cooperative after he departed a bank premises at Duekoue. The assailants shot and injured the victim and; also made away with FCFA 15m (USD 25,000).

One incident of mob violence was recorded in Savanes district on 23rd January, when a group of Dozo hunters lynched a victim identified as a Burkina Faso national over the theft of a handbag in Niangbo community.

On 27th January, a communal clash following a land dispute occurred between indigenes of Baoule Adahikro and Burkinabe indigenes in Garango, Boualfe, Sassandra – Marahoue district. The conflict occurred after indigenes of Adahikro allegedly commenced construction of a primary school on a piece of land already earmarked for the erection of a youth center by indigenes of Garango community. Report indicates that several youths from Garango reportedly attacked Adahikro community with sharp edged weapons and firearm, it remains unclear if the attack was a reprisal. An estimated six individuals were injured whilst several buildings were set ablaze. The Garango community in Sassandra – Marahoue district is largely occupied by Burkina Faso nationals who migrated and settled in the community for generations. Many of them have also acquired Ivorian nationality.

At least 6,000 residents of the Aerocanal, Amangoua and Kamboukro communities located in proximity to Felix Houphouet-Boigny airport in Port-Bouet, Abidjan district were displaced following the demolition of their houses on 23rd January. The residents were evicted after the body of a 15 year old stowaway was discovered at the landing gear of an aircraft (Air France) at Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris on 8th January.



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Risk Rating : Moderate



Mali

Fifty-eight incidents were recorded in the month of January which has been classified as one of the most intense period for terrorist activities in which both civilian and security forces were targeted leaving a trail of casualties. Thirteen attacks were orchestrated against security forces during the month. One shelling incident on 9th January, seven armed attacks against military positions in the Centre and North regions between 1st and 26th and; five Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks on military and peacekeeping patrols occurring mostly in Gao and Timbuktu region. On 26th January, the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) published images of vehicles, arms and ammunition reportedly stolen from an attack against a Malian Army Camp on 22nd January in Dioungani, Mopti region.

Following the increase in threat level amplified by the incessant attacks orchestrated by terrorist groups in the Sahel, the French President Emmanuel Macron held a meeting with Presidents of Francophone countries in the Sahel part of West Africa on 13th January in Pau, France to determine the measures that could eliminate terrorist groups in the region. President Macron reiterated plans to focus its military effort on the three-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger to tackle the presence of the terrorist group, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). France sent 220 soldiers at the beginning of month to reinforce the 4,500 Operation

Barkhane troops already deployed in the Sahel and announced further plans for additional troops by the end of the month.

Despite these efforts by foreign forces in the country, protests were held in Mopti region precisely in Bankass requesting the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region, which prompted MINUSMA to withdraw peacekeepers from the area on 6th January. The presence of foreign forces has been an issue since 2019, citizens continue to demand their exit from the country.

Robbery attacks continue to pose a threat in the country with ten incidents recorded during the month, notably majority of incidents were recorded in Mopti region and Bamako, which is indicative of a change in pattern when compared to the previous reporting period which recorded more incidents in Gao region.

Teachers who are signatories to the 15th October 2016 agreement with government embarked on a strike action to demand better working conditions. To further compound the situation, Prime Minister Boubou Cisse hired 15,000 newly graduated teachers without negotiating with the union. This led to a demonstration on 23rd January. Additionally, students demanding a return to school and doctors demanding better working conditions and equipment at the General Hospitals also embarked on strike actions.



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Risk Rating : High



Niger

The Nigerien security forces suffered one of the deadliest attacks in the fight against terrorism. On 9th January, a large number of heavily armed men on vehicles and motorcycles attacked a military position in Chinagodrar, Tillaberi region. Following intense gun fight, the ground troop were supported with airstrikes from French Operation Barkane "Dassault Mirage 2000 jetfighter, which forced the group of insurgents to withdraw. Prior to the attack on the military camp, the group had earlier destroyed a mobile communication mast located in Dareydeay village. According to the Nigerien authorities, confirmed casualties' figures stands at 89 soldiers killed and an unconfirmed number were injured while 77 jihadists were reported dead. Although no jihadist organisation has claimed responsibility, it should be noted that the attack occurred in the same region where 71 soldiers were killed at a military camp in Inates in December, 2019. The Tillaberi region shares borders with Mali and Burkina Faso which remains an active hub for various jihadist organisations. Despite the massive presence of foreign backed troops and the regional armed forces in Niger republic, insurgency have rapidly escalated in recent months.

In the aftermath of the attack on Chinagodrar military post, the president of the Independent National Electoral Commission, (CENI) Issaka Sounna announced the suspension biometric enrollment operations for the electoral register in Tillia municipality in Tahoua

region and eight other municipalities in Tillaberi region over heightened security risk. The affected municipalities in Tillaberi region include, Abala, Tondikiwindi, Makalondi, Torodi, Gouroual, Diagourou, Inates and Banibangou. The registration is expected to go as scheduled in other regions including Niamey. The CENI president disclosed that its personnel and equipment will be deployed to the affected areas as soon as the security situation improves.

On 26th January, suspected Boko Haram insurgents abducted three women in Ala N'gairi community, located in vicinity of Kablewa, Diffa region.

The national police on 4th January, arrested an estimated 335 Sudanese asylum seekers for their involvement in setting fire to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) camp near Agadez town. The asylum seekers were earlier dislodged from the premises of the UNHCR where they had started a sit -in to demand the hastening of their application processing for refugee status. According to reports, out of a total 331 settlements, 290 as well as an infirmary were reportedly razed by the protesting group, while projectiles belonging to the security forces were destroyed. Two individuals sustained injuries during the incident.



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Nigeria

The month under review was characterised by series of criminal incidents spread across the nation. The Northeast continue to record attacks attributed to insurgency. Members of the Islamic State West African Province and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) carried out attacks resulting in over 80 fatalities including security personnel, vigilante, and civilians. Military convoys including one escorting the theater commander of Operation Lafiya Dole were ambushed along connecting roads, villages were raided with livestock reported stolen, NGO and IDP camps were attacked in several LGA's in Borno and Adamawa States. Insurgents also destroyed the electricity equipment of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) disconnecting Maiduguri, the state capital from the Borno State grid. Notably, for the second consecutive reporting month, a total of five executions were carried out by both the ISWAP and Boko Haram factions in Borno State. Four of the deceased including the Chairman of CAN Adamawa State were abducted earlier in the month.

Approximately 192 fatalities were attributed to attacks by bandits, herdsmen and unidentified armed individuals in Niger, Zamfara, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Akwa Ibom, Adamawa, Bayelsa, Osun, Katsina, Delta and Lagos states. In Kaduna State, armed men opened fire targeting travelers making use of the train connecting the FCT to Kaduna State on several occasions.

Reports of election violence were recorded in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States during the re-run elections which took place across eleven States. Electoral officials were kidnapped and ballot boxes were stolen by armed individuals.

At least 198 individuals comprised of travelers, security personnel, politicians, students, were kidnapped across several states especially in the Northern part of the country. The victims were either abducted while in transit along major roads or during attacks on rural villages.

Robberies targeted at mostly passengers, small private firms and commercial stores were recorded in Lagos, Anambra, FCT, Cross River and Niger states. During one of the incidents, a passenger was drugged with an unknown substance, robbed and pushed out of a moving vehicle along Abuja-Lokoja road.

The frequency of protests remained unchanged over the reporting period with at least 25 incidents occurring in 17 states across the country. Protesters barricaded both interstate and intrastate highways in Delta, Adamawa, Ekiti, Rivers and Kaduna States to protest insecurity, lack of infrastructure, non-payment of pension arrears. Violent protests by the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) continue to emerge in Abuja. A passerby was killed and four others were injured after responding police officers fired gunshots to disperse IMN protesters in Abuja.



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Risk Rating : High



Togo

As with the previous reporting period, several members of the insurgent group known as the “Tigre Revolution” were arrested by operatives of the National Police. In two separate raids, 31 suspects including foreign nationals of Beninese descent in possession of firearms, ammunitions and several sharp-edged weapons were arrested in Davie and Agoe. To date, a total of 59 people have been arrested in connection with activities of the insurgent group. The recent arrest is the second attempt by the group at destabilizing the existing security conditions in the country according to a statement by the country’s Minister of Security and Civil Protection, Yark Damehane. The renewed attempt by the insurgent group could also be linked to the possible disruption of the upcoming Presidential elections, however, the Security Minister reassured the general populace of the adoption of several measures to guarantee a successful election.

Togo is organizing the first round of its Presidential election on 22nd February with electoral campaigns to begin on 6th February. A total of seven candidates are vying for the Presidential seat including incumbent, Faure Gnassingbe who is seeking a fourth consecutive term in office under the Union for Republic (UNIR) party - the announcement was made at the beginning of the month. The main opposition party, National Alliance for Change candidate, Jean-Pierre Fabre and five other candidates are also in the running.

Due to the impending elections, incidents of politically motivated violence will likely witness an uptick as the D-day draws closer as was recorded on 21st January when a media personnel was physically assaulted by suspected members of the National Alliance for Change (ANC) in vicinity of Radio Canal FM in Lome. There will likely be an uptick in the number of politically motivated violent crimes in the next reporting period; intimidation, vote buying and clashes are expected.

Owing to the evident proliferation of firearms in the country, the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons in collaboration with the European Union held a four-day workshop which commenced on 6th January to produce a road map which will ultimately produce a bill to expectantly prevent and control the proliferation, circulation and illegal trafficking of small and light weapons in the country.



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With the impending elections scheduled for February 2020, politically motivated violence will likely erupt across several regions of the country.
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Risk Rating : Moderate





SF PROTECTIVE SERVICES

FOR ANY ENQUIRIES REGARDING THIS REPORT OR ANY OTHER COMPANY DELIVERABLES, PLEASE CONTACT:

SECURITY INTELLIGENCE & ANALYSIS TEAM

Email: infocell@sf-protectiveservices.com