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## Gender Initiatives, Community Resilience, and the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Terrorism in West African Countries at Risk: Towards a Participatory Development Approach

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### Abstract

The dynamics of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism have been of serious concern throughout the world for decades. In West Africa, they are increasingly spreading from the Sahelian epicentre to at-risk countries as a result of state fragility and other underlying causes linked to poor governance, poverty and endemic instability. This has a negative impact on peace, security and development in West African countries at risk. Faced with the limited results of the reactive military approach, a change of method became necessary. As a result, several international strategies have been devised to meet the many challenges involved in preventing and combating radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. But what role does gender play in security system reforms in Africa? How can taking gender into account improve them, particularly through prevention? Answering these questions means examining the relationship between gender-specific initiatives, community resilience and the prevention of violent extremism and terrorism in West African countries at risk. Isn't an inclusive, development-oriented approach more effective and sustainable? These are some of the questions we will try to answer in our analysis. To do this, our work will focus on three points. The first will focus on the dynamics of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism in Africa. Secondly, we will review a number of international strategies and the major issues they address. The third point will focus on the paradigm shift needed in the fight against terrorism, with an emphasis on gender initiatives and community resilience.

**Keywords:** Community resilience, Conflict prevention, development, Peace, security