

Summary of the report of the research action conducted in Bourem Inaly and Lafia in Timbuktu Region



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Summary of the Research Action

The Timbuktu region has for a long time been characterized by socio-economic and political stability. However, since 2012, the region has been exposed to serious consequences and challenges related to security, governance and citizens' engagement for their rights and duties. The 2012 political and security crisis served as a start in raising awareness on facts and practices related to "Radicalization" and "violent extremism". Specialists point to several factors as being the root causes.

In this context, AMSS conducted this research with technical and financial assistance from the Youth Learning Foundation in the rural communes of Bourem Inaly and Lafia to establish a baseline situation on the underlying causes or motivation of young male and female candidates for violent extremism through radicalization.

To conduct this study, the methodology focused on:

- Organizing a work session with research assistants in Timbuktu to share the methodology, the agenda and make practical arrangements with the authorities in both communes;
- Collecting data and information through individual interviews and focus groups in both communes (Bourem Inaly and Lafia);
- Organizing a participatory workshop to analyze data collected in the two communes;
- Drafting an end-of-process report for the field work.

In terms of findings, we can mention the following:

Buying-in of locally elected officials, authorities and communities to the research process in the two communes through initiating a genuine debate between the authorities in charge of local development management and citizens (young people and women) of the communal services;

Civic engagement and awareness raising on the roles and responsibilities that elected officials and community leaders should play in conflict prevention and management. All participants agreed that the causes of the various conflicts remain poor governance of local affairs, injustice, marginalization and social exclusion of the most vulnerable poor groups.

As for violent extremism, all participants recognized that controlling violent extremism depends much on improving the living conditions of young people, i.e. their family environment, their material living conditions, their prospects for education and getting jobs.

Regarding **violent extremism in the communes**, participants agreed on the same thing. Most of them believe the impact would be great if nothing is done. Testimony by a young man from the village of Aglal in the rural commune of Lafia speaks for itself: "**Since 2012, there has**

been a gap/vacuum as regards to commitments, no action is planned or implemented by local authorities to address/curb the phenomenon.”

Regarding the roles of stakeholders and actions taken, discussions focused on:

- Information, education, awareness raising of youth and women on radicalization and violent extremism :
- Implementing economic initiatives for young people and women without incomes in the villages and fractions;
- Building the capacity young people to develop small-scale projects adapted to the their environment;
- Training of imams and preachers on communication and dissemination of messages on peace and tolerance;
- Creating and operationalizing a platform for inter-faith dialogue;
- Organizing awareness-raising, information and education campaigns on tolerant Islam, freedom of worship and peace;
- Creating a space for learning and dialogue between communities by urging people to peace, social cohesion and reconciliation;
- Reviving and upgrading local vocational training initiatives;
- Organizing debates on reconciliation: definition, orientations and perspectives;
- Setting up dialogue and collaboration spaces between authorities and citizens and between communities and civil society;
- Building the capacities of youth, elected officials, and leaders on leadership and decentralization;
- Awareness raising, information and training for youth, elected officials, community leaders and others on their rights and duties

Once these initiatives are carried out, they must be monitored by the authorities. The members of the community should be responsible for the sustainability of achievements through the implementation of sustainability mechanisms.