



Responding to Ebola- driven conflict

Dialogue initiatives in Mano River border
regions

Aim:	To enable local organisations and communities in the Mano River border regions to peacefully resolve tensions triggered or exacerbated by the Ebola crisis.
Duration:	2 March 2015 – 31 August 2016
Location:	18 border districts in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone
Partners:	ABC Development (Guinea), District Platforms for Dialogue (regional), Institute for Research and Democratic Development (Liberia), Network Movement for Justice and Development (Sierra Leone), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding-Côte d'Ivoire (Côte d'Ivoire), VOICE Network (regional)

Summary

The Ebola crisis and the inadequate responses of stakeholders to the outbreak have heightened tensions in the isolated Mano River border regions. In these fragile and vulnerable societies, still plagued by weak governance and complex local, national and regional antagonisms, the Ebola epidemic has exposed citizens' lack of trust in their governments and the potential for a rapid and widespread breakdown in social order. These mounting tensions are eroding relationships at all levels of society, whether it be between and within local communities or between communities and government representatives, security officials and health workers. What has until now largely been a public health crisis is at risk of becoming a larger security crisis unravelling years of effort to stabilise the region.

Working with local organisations and communities in the border regions of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Conciliation Resources will contribute to the prevention and mitigation of violence triggered or exacerbated by the Ebola crisis, and official responses to it. The 18-month project has four interlinked strategies:

- a) **Capacity building for conflict resolution in the Ebola context:** Throughout the project cycle Conciliation Resources will support civil society partners and local actors to ensure a coordinated, confident and effective delivery of the wider project actions. This support will, amongst other things, include providing conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity training, quarterly planning, developing monitoring tools and providing leverage for access to official institutions where needed.
- b) **Community sensitisation on managing social tensions related to Ebola:** The project will raise awareness of and share information about the Ebola-driven tensions in the border region. This community sensitisation will help demystify taken-for-granted beliefs and break the cultural barriers that can lead to some of the most pervasive tensions arising from the management of the Ebola crisis.
- c) **Local dialogue and mediation in the border region:** The project will create spaces for dialogue to mediate local tensions in the border region. By giving a voice to those who are often unheard, it provides them with the opportunity to present their grievances and propose solutions in a constructive and peaceful manner. This project will facilitate dialogue between communities and relevant stakeholders, such as health workers, security officials and local government representatives. It will also create spaces for discussion between and within border communities, such as between members of the community and the families of victims and survivors.
- d) **Policy dialogue and early warning:** Throughout the project, Conciliation Resources and partners will support District Platforms for Dialogue (DPDs) to monitor the emergency driven security situation in the border communities and the impact of official responses on local populations. This information will be channelled to national, regional and international policymakers via government institutions, Joint Border Security and Confidence Building Units (JBSCBUs), the Mano River Union (MRU) Secretariat and international actors. These policy dialogue meetings will strive to embolden these policymakers to employ more conflict-sensitive approaches to the current and future legacy of the Ebola epidemic.

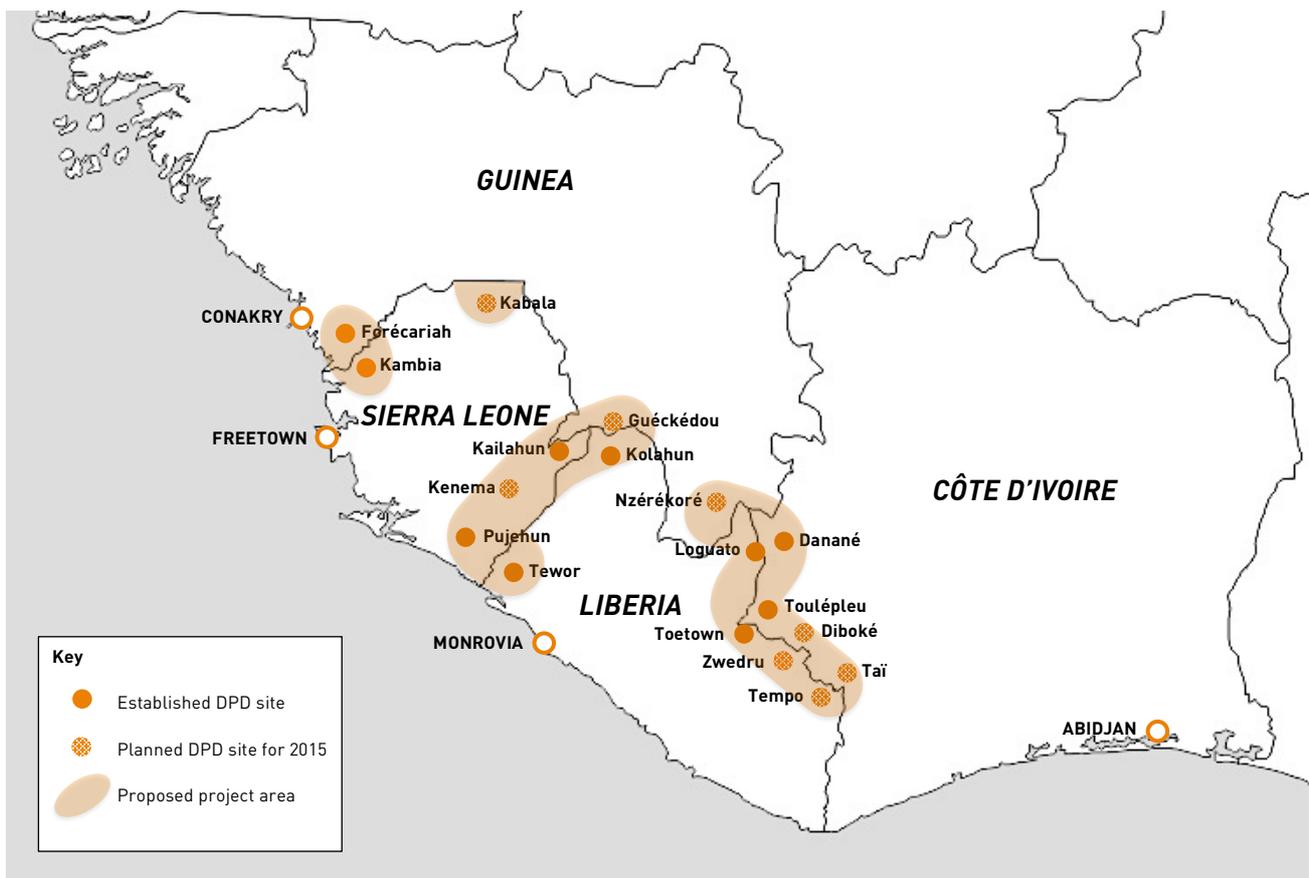
Location

The project will be implemented in 18 strategic border districts (Map 1) and will be led by the DPDs, supported by Conciliation Resources and our national civil society organisation (CSO) partners. DPDs are already operational in ten of the border districts, whilst the remaining eight will be established in 2015 (Table 1). These border districts have been selected because they are amongst the worst Ebola affected regions or because they had particularly significant pre-existing tensions which have been further exacerbated by the Ebola crisis.

Table 1: The location of existing DPDs and DPDs to be established in 2015.

Country	Existing DPD	New DPD to be formed
Côte d'Ivoire <i>(2 existing DPDs, 2 new DPDs to be formed)</i>	Danané Prefecture (Danané DPD)	Diboké Prefecture (Diboké DPD)
	Toulépleu Prefecture (Toulépleu DPD)	Taï Prefecture (Taï DPD)
Guinea <i>(1 existing DPD, 2 new DPDs to be formed)</i>	Forécariah Prefecture (Forécariah DPD)	Guéckédou Prefecture (Guéckédou DPD)
		Nzérékoré Prefecture (Nzérékoré DPD)
Liberia <i>(4 existing DPDs, 2 new DPDs to be formed)</i>	Cape Mount County (Tewor DPD)	Grand Gedeh County (Tempo DPD)
	Grand Gedeh County (Toetown DPD)	Grand Gedeh County (Zwedru DPD)
	Lofa County (Kolahun DPD)	
	Nimba County (Loguato DPD)	
Sierra Leone <i>(3 existing DPDs, 2 new DPDs to be formed)</i>	Pujehun District (Pujehun DPD)	Kenema District (Kenema DPD)
	Kailahun District (Kailahun DPD)	Koinadugu District (Kabala DPD)
	Kambia District (Kambia DPD)	

Map 1: Project coverage in Mano River border regions.



Partners

Conciliation Resources will implement the proposed action in partnership with the following national CSOs and networks:

ABC Development is a registered NGO in Guinea, established in 1998. It is a member of the West Africa Action on Small Arms and WANEP in Guinea. In partnership with Conciliation Resources, ABC Development set up the DPD in Forécariah, which has led dialogue between mining companies and communities in the surrounding region.

District Platforms for Dialogue (DPDs) are established and trusted community-based structures operating in the Mano River border regions. DPDs are comprised of community-nominated representatives from local organisations and women's groups. They are trained to facilitate dialogue between citizens, government authorities, security forces and other actors to enhance accountability. The DPDs have been working to disseminate information and mediate emerging tensions since the onset of the Ebola epidemic.

Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD) was founded in Liberia in 2000 (as the Liberia Democratic Institute) and serves on several civil society networks in Liberia that engage in policy influencing. It works to strengthen citizens' voices and engender a culture of local participation in policy development and implementation.

Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) in Sierra Leone is an advocacy and peacebuilding national civil society organisation, established in 1988. It has a wide range of experiences working in partnership with national and international institutions to build capacities, create and influence policies on mining, governance, peace and security and youth empowerment. NMJD has central offices in Freetown and Bo with sub-offices operating in Koindu and Kailahun. NMJD is currently coordinating the VOICE Network.

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding–Côte d'Ivoire (WANEP-CI) - WANEP is a leading regional peacebuilding organisation founded in 1998, which now has strong national networks in every ECOWAS member state. WANEP is experienced in bringing people together through dialogue platforms to promote social cohesion and reconciliation, and coordinating regional civil society engagement.

VOICE Network is a regional network of experienced peacebuilding CSOs drawn from the four MRU countries. It was established in 2011 in the aftermath of a *People's Peacemaking Perspective* conflict analysis workshop in Sierra Leone, facilitated by Conciliation Resources. The VOICE Network contributed to the development of the MRU Security Strategy 2014-18 through a process of consultations. Its members continue to engage with national, regional and international policy actors on border security issues within the MRU region.

Conciliation Resources is an independent organisation working with people in conflict to prevent violence and build peace. We provide advice, support and practical resources to help divided communities resolve their differences peacefully. In addition, we take what we learn to government decision-makers and others working to end conflict, to improve peacebuilding policies and practice worldwide.

For more information about Conciliation Resources work in West Africa contact: Janet Adama Mohammed, West Africa Programme Director, jmohammed@c-r.org or visit: www.c-r.org/west-africa.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Conciliation Resources and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.



Conciliation Resources

Burghley Yard,
106 Burghley Road
London NW5 1AL

Tel +44(0)20 7359 7728 Fax +44(0)20 7359 4081
Email cr@c-r.org Website www.c-r.org

Charity registered in England and Wales (1055436)