CONFLICT ASSESSMENT

REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE

HIGH COMMISSIONER
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION, ACCRA, GHANA

BY

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CECOTAPS</td>
<td>Center for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHRAJ</td>
<td>Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Conflict Prevention and Stabilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCE</td>
<td>District Chief Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISEC</td>
<td>District Security Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPD</td>
<td>Institute for Peace and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMDAs</td>
<td>Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCCE</td>
<td>National Commission for Civic Education</td>
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<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRPC</td>
<td>Northern Region Peace Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGSEC</td>
<td>Regional Security Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARPAID</td>
<td>Savannah Region Peace and Integrated Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRCC</td>
<td>Savannah Regional Coordinating Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAMA Foundation</td>
<td>Transformation of Marginal Areas Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>WANEP</td>
<td>West African Network for Peacebuilding</td>
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</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Savannah Regional Coordinating Council is grateful to the British High Commission in Ghana for supporting the conflict prevention and stabilization actions in the newly created Savannah Region. This support shows the commitment of our two countries to peace and sustainable development. The SRCC also expresses its gratitude to the chiefs, elders, youth groups, women groups, religious and CSOs, the media who supported the conflict assessment in the Savannah Region with their valuable information. We are convinced, our collective resolve to work and live in peace will contribute immensely to the implementation of our road map developed for accelerating development in the Savannah Region and entire country. This piece of work was conducted by peace practitioners from CECOTAPS and TAMA Foundation and we are extremely grateful for your technical assistance. We look forward to deepening our collaborations in the area of peace and development in the coming years.

Hon. Salifu Adam Braimah (MP),
Regional Minister,
Savannah Region
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Savannah Region of Ghana was created in 2019. It is made up of six districts with Damongo as the capital. Whilst the new Savannah Regional Coordinating Council (SRCC) is already in gear to accelerate the development of the region, existing and potential conflicts are posing a huge challenge to its efforts. As a consequent, the regional minister constituted a consortium of peacebuilding organisations to help prevent, manage and mitigate these conflicts in the region under a broader initiative known as the “Savannah Region Peace and Integrated Development (SARPAID). This conflict assessment is therefore an essential component of this initiative.

The objective of the conflict assessment is to understand the underlying causes of the conflicts in the region and to map out the required strategies for dealing with these conflicts. The British High Commission in Ghana has willingly accepted to fund the cost of this conflict assessment undertaken by the Center for Peace and Transformation Studies (CECOTAPS) and the Transformation of Marginal Areas Foundation (TAMA Foundation), two members of the SRCC consortium of peacebuilding organisations.

The assessment used the qualitative research method and collected data from a total of 320 respondents using both focus group discussions and key informant interviews techniques.

The results showed that land and natural resource governance of tenure were the structural causes of the conflicts in the region. The research indicated that many of the ethnic groups including the Tampulimas, Vaglas, Brifors, Nawuris and the others were not happy with the Gonja ethnic group control over all the land and natural resources in the region and this disenchantment has accounted for a number of the inter-ethnic conflicts in the region. Other types of conflicts identified included chieftaincy disputes, religious conflicts, political disputes involving the National Democratic Party (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) and cross border mercenary activities.

The research identified a number of CSOs and religious organisations including CECOTAPS and the Catholic Church as creditable, non-partisan and impartial institutions that have contributed immensely to the peace and security of the region. Besides the mediation efforts of these institutions, the research identified traditional leaders and queen mothers, military and police and the legal system as the other conflict response mechanisms in the region.

The study confirmed the destructive effects on conflicts in the region to include the loss of lives and properties, ruined relations among the ethnic groups and decreased investments and poor public delivery of public services due in part of refusal of professionals to work in conflict prone communities in the region.

The research concluded with a number of recommendations to improve the peace and security in the region. These include: creating platforms for dialogue among the various ethnic groups in the region; documenting chieftaincy succession lines, clarifying the role of land-priests and community chiefs; promoting inter-religious dialogues and human rights education to improve
religion in the communities; training the youth in technical and vocational skills to minimize their involvement in conflicts and vigilantism activities; improving security at the region's borders with neighbouring La Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso; developing in partnership with the youth associations guidelines for the use of royalties for community development; engaging the leadership of the NDC and NPP to promote peace before, during and after the 2020 general elections in Ghana; improving legal infrastructure in the region and building the capacity of chiefs and traditional leaders to engage in arbitration, negotiation and mediation in their communities.
1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background
The Savannah Region of Ghana was created by Constitutional Instrument (CI) 115 in 2019. It is made up of six administrative districts with Damongo as the regional capital as represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.1: Map of the Savannah Region of Ghana

Source: www.citinewsroom.com

The expectations of the people of the Savannah Region are that, with a land size of 36,985.5 square kilometers which is the largest in Ghana and an estimated population of 623,018 people, their new administrative status will bring governance closer to them. It is also the expectation of the people that the new region will address the huge infrastructural and service delivery deficits in terms of roads, water, electricity, health, education, telecommunication and access to justice as shown in Table 1.1. More importantly the people look forward to the needed partnerships to harness their very rich and diverse culture from the 28\(^\text{1}\) ethnic groups, expressed in the form of music, dance, festivals and their dexterity in indigenous industries including smock weaving and shea-butter extraction; the abundant natural resources that include a wealth of under-utilized fertile agricultural lands, drained by the Volta, Oti and Daka rivers and their tributaries; the mineral and tourism resources to propel the accelerated development of the region.

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Table 1.1: State of Essential Public Services in the Savannah Region of Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Types of services</th>
<th>No. of Basic Schools</th>
<th>No. of Senior High Schools</th>
<th>No. of Colleges of Education and Nursing</th>
<th>No. of Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>697</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. CHPS</td>
<td>District Hospitals</td>
<td>Polyclinics</td>
<td>Regional Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Whilst, the new SRCC under the leadership of the Regional Minister, Hon. Salifu Adam Braimah (MP) is in motion to put in place the needed bureaucracy for the smooth administration of the region, it is already confronted with a number of existing and potential conflicts. These conflicts if unresolved have the propensity to derail the development of the region given the fact that peace is a sine qua non for development.

In order to promote sustainable peace and security in the region, the SRCC formed a consortium of peacebuilding organizations consisting of the Center for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies (CECOTAPS) in Damongo, the Northern Region Peace Council (NRPC), the Institute for Peace and Development(IPD), the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Ghana) and the Transformation of Marginalized Areas Foundation (TAMA Foundation) to develop a plan and initiate actions that will lead to Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) in the region.

This conflict assessment, is thus a component of the broader Savannah Region Peace and Integrated Development (SaRPAID)” initiative of the SRCC supported technically by CECOTAPS and TAMA Foundation, two of the consortium partners.

Following discussions between Hon. Salifu Adam Braimah (MP), the Regional Minister and Mr. Iain Walker, the British High Commissioner in Damongo and Accra, the British High Commission committed resources for this conflict assessment and some components of the on-going conflict prevention, management and mitigation efforts in the Savannah Region.

1.2. Objective

The overarching objective underpinning this study is to assess the underlying causes of existing and potential conflicts in the Savannah Region and to map up the required strategies to prevent, mitigate and transform these conflicts in the region.
1.3. Terms of Reference
The scope of work for the study included the following terms of reference:

1.3.1. Improve the SRCC’s understanding of the current, emerging and potential conflict dynamics and vulnerabilities;
1.3.2. Identify impacts and possible solutions to prevent, manage and mitigate conflicts in the region;
1.3.3. Make recommendations for strengthening the peace architecture of the SRCC.

2.0. METHODOLOGY
The qualitative research method was found to be appropriate for this kind of assessment. This is because it is participatory in nature and allows for in-depth analysis of specific conflict cases to understand the underlying causes, actors, perceptions, interests, challenges, opportunities and power dynamics. Additionally, the qualitative research approach provides a good basis for triangulating the data gathered to improve its quality and deduction, interpretation and description of the conflicts situation in the region. Other key components of the methodology including literature review, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis are discussed below.

2.1. Literature Review
The research team conducted a desk review that included review of newspaper reports on conflicts in the Savannah Region, conflict early warning reports from the NRPC and WANEP, relevant reports from the houses of chiefs, Savannah Regional Security Council, judicial rulings, land documents, policies, Acts of Parliament and research papers on conflicts in northern Ghana. The review of these sources of literature provided useful information for the development of the data collection instruments and the mapping of the various categories of respondents for data collection.

Some of the specific documents reviewed included the following:

- The Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 736);
- The Chieftaincy Act, 2008 (Act 759);
- The 1930 Gonja Traditional Council constitution;
- The National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act 818);
- The Alternative Dispute Resolution Act, 2010 (Act 798);
- The 2018, UNDP Northern Ghana Human Development Report;
- Ghana Living Standard Survey Report, Round Seven;
- The USAID’s Revised Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF 2.0) and CAF 2.0 Application Guide.
2.2. Sampling procedure
All the six districts in the Savannah Region were selected for the assessment. However, eight communities in the region were purposively selected for data collection. The criteria for the selection of the eight communities included communities with existing conflicts or potential conflicts as reported by the early warning mechanisms of the security agencies, media and key informants’. The selected districts and communities are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.1: Sampled Districts and Communities in Savannah Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Central Gonja</td>
<td>Büipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bole</td>
<td>Bole &amp; Tinga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sawla-Tuna-Kalba</td>
<td>Sawla &amp; Tuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. North Gonja</td>
<td>Daboya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. West Gonja</td>
<td>Damongo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. East Gonja</td>
<td>Salaga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2020

2.3. Data collection techniques and quality assurance
The data for the assessment of the conflicts situation in the Savannah Region was collected through focus group discussions and key informants’ interviews by three trained researchers from CECOTAPS and TAMA Foundation. The data collection period lasted two days in each of the selected communities, resulting in a total of 20 fields days from 1st March to 20th March, 2020 including travel time. In each of the eight communities, in the six districts, focus groups discussions were held with five different stakeholder groups made up of eight people in a group. The stakeholder groups were; 1) traditional community elders 2) religious leaders 3) women’s groups 4) youth groups and 5) professionals (former civil servants and teachers). The total number of respondents for the focus group discussions was 320 people. The respondents for the key informants’ interviews were the District Chief Executive (DCE) for the selected district and Assembly person for the sampled community, that is 16 people in total. The field data was reviewed and quality-checked by the senior project manager of CECCOTAP and the team leader.

2.4. Data Analysis and validation
The data collected was analyzed by transcribing the recorded interviews, conducting content, deductive and narrative analyses into various categories for interpretation and presentation. Presentation of the data included the use of flow diagrams, tables and direct quotations from the respondents. This approach to qualitative data analysis is supported by Ryan and Bernard (2003) who opined that the analytical process for qualitative research involves: (1) identifying themes; (2)
winnowing themes; (3) building hierarchies of themes and (4) linking themes into theoretical models.

2.5. Limitations and Challenges
The study faced two main limitations and challenges. First, some of the key respondents identified for the key informants’ interviews included the leadership of youth associations such as the Gonjaland, Tampulima and Vagla Youth Associations who were resident outside the region. This posed a challenge in terms of conducting face-to-face interviews with these respondents. This limitation was however, mitigated by conducting the interviews on phone. The second limitation was the inability of the research team to organized a planned validation forum. This was due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus which required people to adhere to social distancing protocols. This limitation was however, mitigated by sharing the draft report with key stakeholders who provided verbal or written feedback before the compilation of the final research report.

3.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
This section presents the results and discussions of the study based on the ToR provided. It includes an assessment of, the current, emerging and potential conflict dynamics and vulnerabilities in the districts; the impacts and possible solutions to prevent, manage and mitigate conflicts in the region and recommendations for strengthening the peace architecture in the region.

3.1. Current, emerging and potential conflicts dynamic and vulnerabilities
This section examines the perceptions related to the general security situation in the districts, the various types of conflicts that exist, critical factors that drive conflicts and the key actors involved in the conflicts in the various districts.

3.1.1. General security situation in the Savannah Region
The study generally showed that the region was fragile with respect to the security of the people. This was because of the existing and potential conflicts related to chieftaincy, land and natural resource governance of tenure.

The chieftaincy conflicts were either succession disputes or conflicts related to “minority tribes” demanding to have their own chiefs. Most informants attributed the prevalence of chieftaincy disputes to the absence of documentation or non-compliance with long tested succession arrangements, the manipulations of chieftaincy contractors using money to influence the selection processes of chiefs and political interference by the two major political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP. An interviewee aptly described the inadequacies in the selection processes of chiefs in the region as follows:
The Gonja Traditional Authority System where the right to rule is based on a history of conquest and ownership of land, excludes other ethnic groups from traditional leadership and governance of land and natural resources which is at the heart of all the conflicts related to chieftaincy, land and natural resources in the region. It is the “white elephant in the room” that must be tackled. Additionally, the current land tenure governance system is a potential security risk. It has several key actors and mobilisers involved whose greed create grievances as people are denied ownership, access and benefits sharing opportunities from the land and natural resources. While a few benefit from the land and natural resources, the majority have to deal with the burdens of a predatory and exploitative system. The potential for violent extremism is therefore very high because of the general discontent with the current system of governance of tenure. A number of the interviewees are worried that if this is not properly handled the potential for youth radicalization and violent extremism is inevitable.

3.1.2. Nature of conflicts in the Savannah Region
Conflict usually occurs primarily as a result of a clash of interests in the relationship between parties, groups or individuals, because they are pursuing either opposing or incompatible goals. Following from the above definition of conflict, the assessment revealed that the conflicts in the region were largely underpinned by structural inconsistencies and inequalities in land and natural resource governance of tenure which then links to chieftaincy, ethnicity, politics and religion. Based on this understanding, the study observed six types of conflicts in the region as presented in Figure 2 and examined in the ensuing sections of the report.
Figure 2: Type of conflicts in the Savannah Region

1. Land tenure conflicts;
2. Natural resource based conflicts mostly over:
   a. Non-timber forest products like shea, dawadawa, baobab;
   b. Rosewood;
   c. Water and grasses;
   d. Minerals, sand and stones;
   e. Wildlife hunting rights.
3. Chieftaincy succession conflicts (mostly intra-ethnic);
4. Political motivated conflicts (mostly between NDC and NPP);
5. Religious conflicts (between Muslims and Christians);
6. Cross border conflicts.

Source: Field survey, 2020

3.1.3 Key Drivers of Conflicts in the Savannah Region

First, the lack of demarcation in clan-based settlements or lands, the desire to expand land boundaries by land owners and clans, and clan affiliations controlling access to grazing land were identified as the key drivers of the existing violent conflicts and the future ones to follow.

Second, the struggle between members of various clans in the scramble for available land for different purposes (for farming, water and grazing) due to the effects of drought also exists. The increase in pastoralist populations like the Fulanis and the reduction in the size of the land available to the households or clans have also caused various groups of people to claim the same land, thus causing clashes between the claimants and the land owners. Often, if such conflicts are protracted, they escalate into violent clan conflicts.

Third, the lack of trust among the various ethnic groups living in the communities’ fuels some of the conflicts in the region.

Fourth, the lack of genuine reconciliation between the ethnic groups and feuding parties (especially those who have been in conflict with each other before) also trigger some of the conflicts in the region.

Fifth, local politicians also play a central role in either generating conflicts or fueling existing ones. Both the discussants and the interviewees agreed that politicians can be both a stabilizing and destabilizing factor in a conflict. As a destabilizing factor, the local politicians fuel existing conflicts by influencing and encouraging the conflicting parties to continue fighting in order to gain victory over their counterpart. In most cases, the politicians’ objectives are to gain mileage in the political sphere.
3.1.4. Existing and potential conflicts in districts and key actors
The study revealed a number of existing and potential conflicts in the various districts in the region as discussed below.

I. BOLE DISTRICT
a) Bole chieftaincy dispute

The Bole chieftaincy dispute is an intra-ethnic chieftaincy succession dispute over the occupancy of the Bole skin which has been lingering on for over five years after the death of the previous Bolewura, known as Pontonpron Awuladese II. It remains a major concern to the SRCC. Though now at the de-escalation stage of the conflict, the desire of the people of the district and region is to see a complete resolution of this conflict. There are currently two rival chiefs in Bole, chief Issahaku Abudulai Kant who has the support of the Bole Traditional Council and the Regional House of Chiefs and chief Bukari Abudu, who has the backing of the Yagbonwura, the overlord of the Gonja Kingdom, Boresa Tuntumba I and the Gonja Traditional Council. The Bole chieftaincy dispute has also assumed partisan political dimensions with chief Issahaku Abudulai Kant aligned to the NPP and chief Bukari Abudu to the NDC. This conflict has witnessed open violence in the past resulting in the loss of a life, and destruction of property. This necessitated the imposition of a curfew in the town for more than a year which paralyzed economic activities and heightened the suspicion among the feuding parties. The interviewees intimated that, the Yagbonwura who is the Overlord of the Gonja Kingdom was very central to the resolution of this chieftaincy conflict. This will however, require the assistance of creditable and impartial mediators to open spaces for genuine dialogue among the interests’ groups.

b) Mandari potential chieftaincy dispute

The Mandari chief known as the Mandariwura hierarchically is under the Bolewura. The current chieftaincy stalemate in Bole therefore has implications for the Mandari skin. This conflict could best be described as being at the latent stage and fueled by speculations and fears which can possibly manifest into full conflict depending on the dynamics in Bole. The current Mandariwura is Seidu Awusi who was installed by chief Issahaku Abudulai Kant, one of the protagonist in the Bole chieftaincy conflict. The fear of the people of Mandari is that, if chief Bukari Abudu eventually emerges as the Bolewura, there is every possibility that he will enskin another royal as the Mandariwura rather than endorsing chief Seidu Awusi who currently occupies the skin. This situation will be chaotic since there will be two rival chiefs. A peaceful resolution of the Bole chieftaincy dispute will prevent this potential conflict from manifesting in the district.

c) Bole Vaglikoori versus Land-priest dispute

The “Vaglikoori” is the chief of the Vaglas in Bole and he is in dispute with the land priest of Bole over royalties from the sale of land. Traditionally, the office of the land-priest performs traditional religious functions and works closely with the Bolewura. The office of the land-priest pre-dates
the Vaglikoori which was institutionalized by the Vagla people as a parallel chieftaincy system to the Gonja chiefs to assert their autonomy. The Vaglikoori therefore enjoys the support of the Vagla youth in the community. This long standing dispute between the two systems require mediation and negotiation to promote peaceful co-existence and mutual cooperation.

**d) The Bolewura versus Chorbang Land-priest Dispute.**

The Bolewura and Chorbang land-priest dispute is over the ownership of land and is potentially a security risk with the possibility of degenerating into violent conflict. The land-priest of Chorbang maintains that he owns the land in his community and yet the Bolewura sells the land without consulting him. Engaging both the Bolewura and the land-priest of Chorbang and their elders in healthy dialogue sessions may give way to peace.

**e) Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims at Dakurpe**

Dakrupe is a settlement of the Kamara ethnic group in the Bole District. It is typically a Muslim community with the Imam as the community leader. The Dakrupe community also has a good number of settlers originally from the Upper West Region of Ghana who predominately Catholics engaging in either smallholder farming or surface mining. Since April 2014, the Catholics have been prevented from worshiping in the community by the Imam, who openly declared that Christianity is forbidden in Dakurpe. This position has been supported by the Muslim community in Dakrupe but not the Imam and Muslim community in Bole. The Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Damongo, Most Rev Peter Paul Angkyier and the Catholic community in Bole have intervened in several ways but there has not been any success.

In 2015, the matter was reported to the DISEC (Bole), the Northern Region Peace Council, and the National Justice and Peace Commission. In 2018, it was reported to the Minister of Interior. So far, there has not been violence. It was only once the celebration of the Sunday Mass was stopped in the community. Since then, the Catholics have not been free to worship.

As a temporary measure, the Catholics have been advised to go to the surrounding villages for worship on Sundays. This is an obvious case of religious intolerance and a violation of the rights and freedoms of the people to association which needs to be resolved. A good approach to resolving this conflict is to use non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms such as education and information sharing focusing on the fundamental human rights of people as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and other international conventions and protocols.

**f) Threat of cross border violent extremism**

The western corridor of the Savannah Region borders La Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso with very porous borders and poor social amenities. Chache in Bole and the Kalba area are very vulnerable to rebel activities. The respondents gave insinuations of mercenary activities as some of the rebels are available for hiring. In Kui (dollar power), an illegal mining town our informants told us the rebels are controlling the mining concessions and taxing people. They claim the
revenue is being used to finance rebel activities across the border. This issue is worrisome because of the potential for violent extremism in Ghana. Young people aggrieved by a chieftaincy dispute or land tenure system can easily become grounds for radicalization and mobilizing for violent extremism.

2. SAWLA-TUNA-KALBA DISTRICT
   a) Inter-ethnic conflict between Gonja and Vagla

This violent conflict between the Vaglas and the Gonjas was at its peak in the 1980s. It's sometimes called the Tuna Conflict because that was the “battle field” but engulfed Valgas and Gonjas outside the Tuna area. The underlying structural cause of this conflict is the desire of the Vaglas to be autonomous, have their own paramountcy and be an integral part of the traditional council which the Gonjas are oppose to. This concern is still not resolved and any triggers can re-ignite this conflict. Historically the Vaglas settled in the area but were overpowered by the Gonjas in the wars of conquest. The Gonjas therefore assumed chieftaincy role over the Vaglas but recognized the spiritual role played by the land-priests in offering sacrifices and praying for rain, good harvest and a peaceful environment devoid of calamities and sicknesses. Over the years the Vaglas have enskinned their own parallel chiefs in their communities referred to as Vaglikoori even though the Gonja traditional system views this as an illegality. Prior to the open conflict between the two ethnic groups, the Vagla Youth Association fueled the conflict by composing provocative songs that projected the Vaglas as the owners of the land and taught these songs in some schools within the locality.

A series of events finally resulted in the violent conflict between the Vaglas and Gonjas. First, the Vaglas in Tuna resisted the rule of their Gonja chief by asking him to leave, destroying his tobacco farm and pulling down his house. Second, the Vaglas in Nyoli followed by removing their Gonja chief in Nyoli and third, it was alleged that in an open confrontation between some Vaglas and Gonjas, the Vaglas killed and mutilated the bodies of some Gonjas and carried them in a victory dance. These events infuriated the Bolewura and Yagbonwura. In response, the Gonjas attacked Tuna and overcame it within two days. The Vaglas fled for their lives as their livestock and properties were destroyed and many people killed until the intervention of the police. Following from this conflict, the office of the Vaglikoori was out lord until Yagbonwura Timu ascended the throne and re-established the office and returned all their confiscated properties to them. In the Vagla villages, there are Gonjawuras and Vaglikooris even though the Gonjawura maintains a higher status and comes in to handle cases that are beyond the Vaglikoori. Currently the two ethnic groups live peacefully together but the Vaglas are certainly not happy. They complain about the Gonja chiefs allowing foreigners to deplete their forests through illegal burning and logging. They also complain about the Gonja chiefs selling land, imposing high taxes and using royalties from the quarry near Tuna for their personal gain and demand to be part of the Traditional Council.
b) Royalties paying conflict between the Gonja chiefs/ Vagla Youth and Brifors

The Brifors historically have not be happy about the annual ritual of paying royalties to the Gonja chiefs. This situation is compounded by the Valga youth who go around catching fowls of the Brifors for the annual sacrifice to the earth-god. This is often associated with verbal attacks and sometimes physical violence necessitating the intervention of the police to keep the peace. The root cause of this tension however, is the right to own land. Whilst it is the desire of the Brifor Youth Association to be recognized as full citizens and natives after having settled on the land for many decades, the Gonja chiefs and Vagla Youth Association think this posturing is farfetched and insist on maintaining the status quo. Recent clashes between these interest groups dates back to 2019. On the 26th June, 2019 there was a violent clash at Nasolyir, between the Brifors and some Vagla Youth from Jentilpe who went there to catch fowls for the annual sacrifice. In August, 2019, the Taletuma community resisted paying royalties in the form of shea nuts to the emissaries sent to their community by the Kongwura and this resulted in some clashes. In both cases, it took the intervention of the police to prevent the clash from escalating into a violent conflict.

The Justice and Peace Commission of the Damongo Diocese of the Catholic Church has in the past mediated between the feuding parties in the “fowl catching” related conflict in Tuna. Various compromises were reached including, the communities bringing their own fowls, communities providing the fowls on rotational basis or reducing the number of fowls used for the sacrifice among other options. This worked for a while but has relapsed to the ad hoc catching of fowls annually.

c) Vagla Youth against Gonja Chiefs over royalties from quarry

This emerging conflict is over the use of royalties from the quarry near Tuna. The Vagla youth have consistently accused the Tunawura of using the royalties for his personal development and not in the interest of the people. They assert that, they have a share in the royalties from the natural resources of the area since they are the original settlers in the place before the arrival of the Gonjas. Their position is being supported by other ethnic groups such as the Brifors and Dagaabas who live in the area. They all believe that if some of the proceeds are used for community development, it will be beneficial to all of them. This advocacy by the Vagla youth has resulted in many meetings, consultations and dialogue sessions on the best way to prevent this brewing conflict. There are however, indications that the present Tunawura, Dramani Isaac Mumuni will likely build a palace with some of the proceeds from the quarry. This is a move supported by all the interest groups and will probably signal the end of this potential violent conflict.
d) Potential Inter-Political Party Conflicts

Many of the interviewees mentioned the growing suspicion among supporters of the NDC and NPP in the districts which could degenerate into violent conflict during the 2020 general election. A trigger in their view will be the voter registration exercise which is a prelude to the elections. Some of the interviewees indicated that the NDC is positioning itself to disrupt the registration process since their party does not support this exercise nationally. The NPP leadership and supporters are equally mobilizing to support the registration process. A timely engagement with the leadership of these parties could lower the tensions before, during and after the 2020 elections in the district.

3. NORTH GONJA DISTRICT

Inter-ethnic conflict between Gonja and Tampulima

The average adult in the North Gonja district will tell any researcher that the relationship between the Gonjas and Tampulimas is not the best. The land tenure system, which recognizes the Gonjas as land owners and the “chiefly ethnic group” and the Tampulimas as not the owners of the land they have settled on for many years is at the core of this conflict. The Tampulimas are demanding their autonomy over the land and right to be chiefs in the communities and that is the bone of contention between the two ethnic groups. This demand is similar to the one from the Vagla and Brifor in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district. So clearly both ethnic groups are interested in having control over the land. The actors on the Tampulima side pushing their autonomy agenda included: chief Mahamadu of Salugu, chief Kambonkora Asuma of Mankarigu, and chief Basig Braimah of Kparia. On the Gonja side are the; Wasipewura of Daboya, chief of Kparia, chief of Yagbon, chief of Gbasempa Sommuon and the Mbonwura. One of the demands of the Tampulimas is to have their own paramountcy. In January 2018, there was an attack on Diisah and Salugu by the Gonjas from Daboya because these villages supported someone who claimed to be the paramount chief of the Tampulimas. These two villages were completely burnt down resulting in the death of three people. The Satellite Peace Centre of the Diocese of Damongo of the Catholic Church intervened and this brought some calm but the conflict has not been completely resolved.

4. CENTRAL GONJA DISTRICT

Land conflict between Buipewura and Kusawguwura over Fufulso

A notable potential conflict in the Central Gonja district is the land conflict between the Buipewura and Kusawguwura over Fufulso. According the respondents, oral history has it that the land originally belonged to Mankpan but it was given to Buipe many years ago by the
Mankpanwura. However, the present Kusawguwura is also claiming it. Both Paramount chiefs have enskinned sub-chiefs there namely the Fulfusowura and Junctionwura. Fulfusowura was enskinned by Buipewura while the Junctionwura was enskinned by Kusawguwura. The two chiefs play the same role at events and this causes confusion. Naturally the two Fulfulso chiefs have become parties in the conflict. Both the Buipewura and Kusawguwura enjoy the support of the youth and elders in their paramountcy. There hasn’t been any open violence yet but the signals for the escalation of this conflict are very visible whenever there is a decision to site any development project on the Fulfulso land.

The existing and potential conflicts and the interested parties are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Existing and potential conflict spots and interested groups in the Savannah Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Towns involved</th>
<th>Title of conflict</th>
<th>Interested parties in conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bole</td>
<td>Bole</td>
<td>Bole Intra-chieftaincy conflict</td>
<td>• Yagbonwura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chief Issahaku Abudulai Kant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chief Bukari Abudu</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bole Traditional Council</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Northern Region House of Chiefs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vaglikoori</td>
<td>Vaglikoori and land-priest dispute</td>
<td>• Vaglikoori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Land-priest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bolewura</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Valga youth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorbang</td>
<td>Bolewura and Chorbang land-priest dispute</td>
<td>• Bolewura</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chorbang land-priest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Elders of Chorbang</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandari</td>
<td>Potential Mandari intra-chieftaincy conflict</td>
<td>• Mandariwura, Seidu Awusi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chief Issahaku Abudulai Kant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chief Bukari Abudu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Conflict Description</td>
<td>Parties Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakurpe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious conflict between Muslims and Christians</td>
<td>Imam of Dakurpe, Muslim community, Catholic community, SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chache Kui</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cross border mercenary activities</td>
<td>DISEC-Bole, REGSEC-SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawla-Tuna-Kalba</td>
<td>Tuna Nyoli</td>
<td>Inter-ethnic conflict between Gonja and Vagla</td>
<td>Yagbonwura, Bolewura, Tunawura, Vaglikoori, Vagla Youth Association, Gonjaland Youth Association, SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna</td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural resource conflict over use of royalties from quarry between Vagla Youth and Tunawura</td>
<td>Tunawura, Vagla Youth Association, SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taletuma Nasolyir Tuna</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gonja chief and Vagla Youth against Brifors cover royalties</td>
<td>Vagla Youth Association, Brifor Youth Association, Gonja and Vagla traditional elders, SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna</td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential political conflicts between NPP and NDC</td>
<td>Executives of NPP, Executives of NDC, Parliamentary candidates for NPP and NDC, SRCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Gonja</td>
<td>Daboya Diisah Salugu Mankarigu Kparia Yagbon Gbasempa Sommuon</td>
<td>Inter-ethnic conflict between Gonjas and Tampulimas.</td>
<td>Yagbonwura, Gonja chiefs, Tampulima chiefs, Gonjaland Youth Association, Tampulima Youth Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. Impacts and possible solutions to prevent, manage and mitigate conflicts

The impacts of the various conflicts and the mitigation strategies are discussed below.

3.2.1. Effects of conflicts on the development of the Savannah Region

The effects of conflicts on the development of the Savannah Region permeate every aspect of the people’s lives. These include, the economy, social, religious and political spheres. The effects are also felt at the individual, household, community, district, regional and national level as examined below.

First, the conflicts have resulted in the destruction of properties, loss of precious lives and life threatening injuries to people in communities in the region. Some of those affected being the breadwinners of their families. This has disrupted the education of girls and boys and made their families food insecure. An example is the recent Tampulima and Gonja violent conflict which claimed lives in the Diisah and Salugu communities in the North Gonja district as recent as 2018.

Second, the conflicts have affected the development of communities and districts in the region. As is the case in Bole, where the District Assembly spends part of its common fund allocations and internally generated funds in maintaining military and police detachments to keep the peace. These resources but for the chieftaincy conflict would have been channeled into infrastructural development and other productive activities spelt out in the district medium term development plan.

Third, the conflicts in the region have resulted in the displacement of women, children and the youth. The Vagla and Gonja conflict in the 1980s for instance resulted in the migration of many young people and their families to other parts of the country to avoid the calculated ethnic cleansing agenda that was invoked. These involuntary migrations have affected the livelihoods and economy of their communities and districts in the region. Additionally, professionals including teachers, nurses, planners who left never returned to these communities. This has affected and continue to affect the health and education outcomes in these communities.

Fourth, the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts have been costly to families, districts, the region and central government. During the Vagla and Gonja conflict for instance a number of market centres were burnt down, water systems, schools, health centres and other
on-going development projects destructed or abundant. This has certainly derailed the development of the region.

Fifth, the conflicts have curtailed the fundamental human rights of the people to free movement, association and fair hearing. The religious conflict between the Muslims and Christians in the Dakurpe community in the Bole district has prevented the Christians from worshipping which infringes on their right to association and religious freedom; Sixth, the conflicts in the region have ruined social relations and inflicted an indelible psychological harm on the people. This is because the conflicts have polarized and created mistrust between the ethnic groups in the region. This is the case between the Gonjas and other ethnic groups in the region such as the Vaglas, Tampulimas, Brifors, Konkombas, Nawuris and others. This has also affected inter-ethnic marriages, cultural festivals and political representation at the various levels of governance at the community, district, regional and national level.

3.2.2. Conflict response strategies in the Savannah Region

The study identified four clear response strategies for preventing, managing and mitigating conflicts in the Savannah Region. These are; (1) Military/Police interventions, (2) Legal system, (3) Traditional system (4) CSOs and Religious bodies mediation. These mechanisms are not mutually exclusive but work together or complement each other to prevent, manage and mitigate conflicts in the region. These peace mechanisms are represented in the Figure 3.1 and explained below.

**Figure 3.1. Conflicts response strategies in the Savannah Region**

Source: Field survey, 2020
1. **Military/Police Intervention**

The role of the military/police interventions in the prevention, management and mitigation of conflicts in the region has been state led and represented at the district level by DISEC and the regional level by REGSEC. Their roles involve enforcement of curfews, patrols and disbarment of feuding parties which have provided some calm and peace for private and public services. This has been the case with the Bole chieftaincy conflict were a curfew has been imposed in the town for over a year. However, though the intervention of the military and police have been welcomed by the people, they insist it is not the best way to resolve the conflicts in the region since their actions are temporal and do not address the underlying structural causes of the conflicts in the region.

2. **Legal system**

Some of the conflicts in the Savannah Region have gone through the adjudication process either by the Northern Region House of Chiefs or the courts. The respondents however, found the legal processes to be culturally insensitive, expensive, unjust or decision not enforceable. They cited the Bole chieftaincy dispute as a case in point. In October, 2018, the Judicial Committee of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs ruled that chief Issahaku Abudulai Kant was the legitimate Mandariwura chosen by the late Bolewura. Following this ruling he was installed Bolewura according to the customary rites. How this ruling has not been accepted by his contender, chief Bukari Abudu and the Yagbonwura. The respondents are also concerned about the high cost associated with the legal processes. They indicated that there are only two districts courts in the region with an estimated population of 623,018 people. The absence of circuit and high courts mean some cases involving people from the region will have to be transferred to other jurisdictions to be heard which comes with huge cost to the feuding parties.

3. **Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms**

Traditional dispute resolution processes have been employed to prevent, manage and mitigate some of the conflicts in the Savannah Region. These include, arbitration, negotiation and mediation. The principal actors involved in the traditional dispute resolution processes are the chiefs, elders, sooth sayers, land-priest, queen mothers and the feuding parties. This medium of conflict management generally works well except in a multi-ethnic environment where the chief is perceived to be partial towards his ethnic group or exhibits some form of biases base on self-interest. An informant painted this picture vividly as follows:

> “I have lost confidence in the chief as a fair mediator. I go to the chief's house because a Fulani man’s cow destroyed my yam farm and end up being charged by the chief to pay a fine”.

Sometimes chiefs tend to meddle in criminal cases which is beyond their jurisdiction. In some cases, chiefs call for cases at the police stations to be brought to their palaces for settlement.
This therefore calls for some training for the chiefs and elders in ADR. The involvement of the women in conflict management in a patriarchal society like the Savannah Region though not visible is still very important. In exercising their roles as queen mothers, mothers and wives, they have engaged in shuttle diplomacy to solve some conflicts in the region without being at the arbitration, mediation and negotiation table. Queen mothers by their role serve as advisors to the chiefs. They have used this position to get chiefs to participate in mediations and soften their positions to allow for mediation processes to start and continue. In some instances, as was the case in Buipe, they mobilized women to engage in peace matches and community sensitization to prevent conflicts in their communities and district with the support of WANEP.

4. Mediation organisations-CSOs/Religious groups

CSOs like CECOTAPS, WANEP and TAMA Foundation and religious groups particularly the Catholic Church have played tremendous roles in managing some of the conflicts in the region. The respondents indicated that they find these institutions creditable, non-partisan and impartial. The CSOs focus on conflict assessments to understand the causes and dynamics of the conflicts and advise the traditional and political leaders, build the capacity of community peace groups to prevent and manage conflicts and provide assurances to feuding parties to continue the peace processes. The Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church in the Damongo Diocese is credited for mediating in the Dakurpe religious conflict in the Bole district, the Gonja, Vagla youth and Brifor conflict over royalties in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district and the Tampulima and Gonja conflicts in Diisah and Salugu in the North Gonja districts in the region. The study however, showed that the capacity of these institutions to engage in conflict prevention and management activities have declined over the years due to insufficient funding for their activities.

3.3. Developing a sustainable peace architecture in the Savannah Region

The assessment showed that there is a peace architecture in place under the leadership of the SRCC. This is made up of: state security apparatus, traditional authority system and a consortium of peacebuilding organizations. However, the existing peace architecture needs to be enhanced in four areas: 1) capacity building for existing institutions 2) establishment of non-existing peace institutions 3) resourcing peace institutions to work and 4) improving coordination among peace actors. The key actors in the SRCC peace architecture are shown in table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Actor</th>
<th>Name of Actor</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Existing Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>1. DISECs</td>
<td>Maintenance of peace and security at MMDAs</td>
<td>More of peace enforcement no planned strategies for peacebuilding</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. REGSEC</strong></td>
<td><strong>Maintenance of peace and security in the region.</strong> More of peace enforcement no planned strategies for peacebuilding</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Regional Peace Council</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prevent, manage and promote peace. Coordinate peace activities as per the National Peace Counc, 2011 Act, Act 818.</strong> Regional Peace Council yet to be functional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Regional House of Chiefs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adjudicate over chieftaincy matters and advice the SRCC on chieftaincy issues.</strong> Regional House of Chiefs structure yet to be functional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional institutions and ethnic associations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Gonja Traditional Council</strong></td>
<td><strong>Resolve chieftaincy and land related disputes within the Gonja Kingdom</strong> • Need resources for arbitration and mediation; • Some decisions not accepted by lower structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Traditional Councils</strong></td>
<td><strong>Resolve chieftaincy and land related disputes within their paramountcy</strong> • Need resources for arbitration and mediation; • Some decisions not accepted by lower structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Youth Associations (Gonjaland Youth Association; Vagla Youth Association; Tampulima Youth Association etc)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promote peace and development in their communities.</strong> Many promoting ethnic interest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Queen mothers and women association</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promote peace and inclusive development in their communities</strong> Many stereotypes against women in a largely patriarchal society.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Groups and CSOs</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Catholic Church</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promotes inter-religious dialogue and mediates in conflicts</strong> Depends on limited church funding for peace work</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Muslim leaders (Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission; Al-Sunnah Muslims &amp; Tijaaniya Muslim Groups)</th>
<th>Promotes inter-religious dialogue and mediates in conflicts</th>
<th>Depends on limited mosque funding for peace work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>CECOTAPS</td>
<td>Facilitates inter-ethnic dialogues, mediation, capacity building and peacebuilding.</td>
<td>Depends on periodic donor funding for peace building activities which is irregular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>WANEP</td>
<td>Conflict mediation, capacity building and peacebuilding.</td>
<td>Depends on periodic donor funding for peace building activities which is irregular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>TAMA Foundation</td>
<td>Conducts conflict assessments, and engages in policy advocacy for equitable development</td>
<td>Depends on periodic donor funding for peace building activities which is irregular.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, 2020
4.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key conclusions from this assessment and accompanying recommendations are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Summary of key conclusions and recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The underlying cause of many of the conflicts in the region is due to disagreements over land and natural resource governance of tenure. Many of the ethnic groups in the region including the Vaglas, Tampulimas, Brifors, Nawuris etc are not happy because they do not own land which is the preserve of the Gonja chiefs.</td>
<td>1. It is recommended the SRCC consortium of Peacebuilding Organizations create a platform for dialoguing between the traditional leadership of the “chiefly” ethnic group (Gonja) and the “non-chiefly” ethnic groups in the region over the access, use and benefit sharing of land and natural resources in the communities. This will be a proactive way to addressing the existing and future land and natural resource conflicts in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The chieftaincy disputes in the region are largely due to the circumvention of laid down succession procedures by royals, chieftaincy contractors and politicians as is the case in Bole.</td>
<td>2. The SRCC with the support of the traditional and Gonja Councils and Regional House of Chiefs should commence the documentation of the succession procedures, constitutions, traditions and customs of the various chiefdoms in the region. These should also be properly gazette to prevent the contestations associated with the oral narration of chieftaincy lines which are easily disputed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The office of the land-priests is in dispute in some communities as their roles and that of the chiefs’ overlap as is the case in Bole and Chorbang in the Bole district. This needs to be addressed to prevent conflicts in the region.</td>
<td>3. SRCC consortium of Peacebuilding Organizations should create platforms for dialoguing between the land-priests, elders and chiefs of the communities to define their roles and make it known to the community members. This will curtail the role conflicts between the two institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There is evidence of religious intolerance in the region as is the case between Christians and Muslims in</td>
<td>4. SRCC consortium of Peacebuilding Organizations, District Peace Council, NCCE and CHRAJ should organize human rights campaigns, sensitization and knowledge sharing forums</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dakurpe in the Bole district. This could result in violent conflicts.

to educate community members on the need for religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence. Inter-religious dialogues should also be promoted in the communities and districts.

5. There is evidence of the threat of violent extremism along the western part of the region which borders La Cote D’Ivoire and Burkina Faso. This is because of the illegal mining activities in towns like Chache and Kui (Dollar power) which attract rebels from the neighbouring countries. These rebels have the capacity to mobilize the youth in the region for militia and mercenary activities in and outside Ghana if not checked.

5. Two recommendations are proposed here. First, the SRCC should alert the national security to secure the borders of Ghana. Second, the SRCC, MMDAs and development partners should facilitate the training of the youth in the region in technical and vocational skills and support them to start their own small scale businesses. This will prevent them from engaging in illegal livelihood activities and thereby minimizing the possibility of their involvement in militia and rebel activities.

6. There is a growing dissatisfaction by the youth over the use of royalties from common pool resources by the chiefs as is the case between the Vagla youth and the Tunawura.

6. The SRCC, MMDAs and CSOs should work with the traditional councils to develop voluntary guidelines for benefits sharing of royalties from the use of natural resources in their communities along the lines of the FAO(2012) guidelines for voluntary responsible governance of tenure for land, fisheries and forests.

7. There is an emerging trend of youth associations in the region e.g Vagla Youth Association, Tampulima Youth Association, Gonjaland Youth Association etc, The activities of these youth associations need to be monitored since they have the dual capacity of preventing or fueling conflicts in the region.

7. NCCE, District Peace Councils and CSOs in peace building should form youth ambassadors for peace in the communities to promote peace. These peace volunteers should also be supported to engage in economic activities of their choice.

8. The Catholic Church and CECOTAPS from the study have been identified as credible, non-partisan and impartial actors in the conflict landscape in the region and could support the SRCC in preventing, managing and mitigating conflicts.

8. Development partners working in northern Ghana should be encouraged to partner with CECOTAPS and the Catholic Church peace structures to promote peacebuilding and economic empowerment activities in the communities targeting women and the youth.
9. It can be concluded from the assessment that, the actions of both the NPP and NDC could fuel violent conflict before, during and after the 2020 general elections. Mechanisms to prevent this from happening have to start now.

9. The Electoral Commission, CSOs and religious bodies should engage the executives of the political parties in the constituencies in the region to ensure they play according to the electoral rules and report any persons seeking to secure unfair advantage in the elections to the appropriate state institutions.

10. The region has huge deficits in accessing judicial services with only two district courts and no circuit and high courts. The absence of these legal structures could compel feuding parties to resort to other mechanisms for seeking justice including violent conflict.

10. The SRCC should lobby the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General and Chief Justice to establish more courts including circuit and high courts in the region.

11. The region lacks other important conflict prevention institutions such as Regional House of Chiefs and Regional Peace Council. This gap in the peace architecture in the region needs to be addressed.

11. The SRCC should lobby the of Ministries Interior and Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, the National Peace Council and National House of Chiefs to establish a Regional Peace Council and Regional House Chiefs in the Savannah Region as a matter of priority.

12. The chiefs, elders and queen mothers in the region play useful roles in preventing, managing and mitigating conflicts in their communities. They will however require training in ADR and other peace building tools to be more effective in their peace roles.

12. The SRCC, MMDAs and development partners should partner with CECOTAPs and TAMA Foundation to build the capacities of chiefs, queen mothers and youth leaders in ADR and conflict prevention, management and mitigation strategies.

13. The SRCC has a modest peace architecture in place including good CSOs like CECOTAPS, TAMA Foundation and WANEP, state and traditional structures but coordination of the peace actors and peace advocacy activities need to be enhanced.

13. The SRCC and development partners should support peace building NGOs like CECOTAPS, WANEP and TAMA Foundation to build the capacity of the peace institutions in the region. This also includes collaborating with the University for Development Studies to mount certificate, diploma, degree and post-degree programmes in conflict management and development for people working in peace institutions.

14. The effects of the past, existing and emerging conflicts on the region are enormous and very visible. There

14. The SRCC and consortium of peace building organisations in the region should explore opportunities for partnership to
| have been loss of lives and properties, loss of investments in tourism and public services and ruined relations among the ethnic groups. These negative effects from the past and present conflicts make a compelling case to stop future conflicts and promote inclusive growth in the region. | implement the SARPAID initiative with DFID, USAID, UNDP, EU, ECOWAS, AU and others organisations interested in promoting sustainable development in northern Ghana. |
5.0. CONCLUSION
This piece of work is in all respects useful to the new region. It is the expectation of the SRCC that having completed this elaborated conflict assessment exercise, development partners and other collaborators will support the conflict prevention and stabilization initiatives in the region in the coming years for mutual benefit.

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