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**ORGANIZED CRIME, SECURITY THREATS AND GOVERNANCE:
THE SUSTAINABILITY OF EUROPEAN UNION
PROGRAMMES IN WEST AFRICA**

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1. Introduction

Europe remains Africa's closest neighbour, separated only by the Mediterranean Sea. The sea plays the dual roles of a boundary as well as a link between the two continents. History as well as the geographical proximity has created close trade and aid relationships as well as a tight interdependence on issues such as security and migration.¹ In the context of increasing inability of States in Africa to meet the socio-economic needs of their people, the youth tends to perceive Europe as the land of opportunity.

West Africa (with the exception of Cape Verde), the focus of this paper, has experienced military rule for several years. Some countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia and recently Mali) have degenerated into inter-tribal civil wars, which have left them with a militarized culture and fragile institutions. This is not without consequences. Evidence around the world has shown that whenever governments fail to meet the most basic needs of their people, many citizens adopt an "innovative" (however illegal) behaviour in order to survive.² In such instances, society becomes a breeding ground for criminals and conducive to terror.

The EU's Cocaine Route Programme (CRP) analyzed several factors in West Africa which made the region hospitable to organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking: weak institutions, endemic corruption, porous borders and a large pool of unemployed youth which can be easily recruited into crime.³ Besides these,

the Sahel region is also hit by a combination of drought, environmental degradation that affects food production and nutrition as well as a chronic underdevelopment.⁴ Rampant corruption offers opportunities for organized crime, and as organized crime grows, corruption within the public sector spreads in a pandemic way. As a consequence, the quality of public sector governance, i.e. administrative efficiency and effectiveness, decreases.⁵ The UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2010 – 2014 identified that about 20 – 40 tons of Cocaine is trafficked yearly through West Africa towards Europe. The massive money laundering generated by these illegal profits destabilizes both private and public sector governance; and threatens development and stability. West Africa is no longer only providing a transit hub for illicit drug trafficking, it is also becoming a consumption region.⁶

The criminal behaviour and corruption which surrounds organized crime bring serious security and governance threats. For instance, arms trafficking has resulted in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the region, and provoked an elevation of the death rate on the several theatres of violence. The increasing linkages between politicians, public officials and organized crime entrepreneurs have resulted in the infiltration of both executive and legislative arms of government as well as the judiciary into the criminal circle. The effort to capture state institution and influence policies is visible in the sponsorship of political parties, electioneering campaigns and elections.⁷ In Guinea Bissau for instance, protection of organized criminals by the state security agencies and officials have been reported.⁸

The EU's recognition of the corrosive effect of organized crime on governance dated back to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, and has become a policy since then. In the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, therefore, emphasis is placed on strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and the capacity of the judicial and civil authorities involved both in the fight against terrorism and organized crime, including illicit trafficking of people, drugs, firearms and explosive materials as well as in the effective control of illegal trade and transit, among others.⁹ Each country

1. Maria Olund (2012). Critical reflection on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Africa Development, Vol. XXVII, No. 20: 15 - 23
2. Muhyadin Ahmed Roble (2011). >>The third intervention: Kenya's incursion into Somalia goes where others have failed<<. Terrorism Monitor, Vol. IX, Issue 39: 4 – 5.
3. Axel Klein, Stella Aku Attakpah & Sergio Uribe (2013). European Commission: Midterm review of the Cocaine Route Programme. Brussel: IFS & HTSPE Ltd.
4. Mark Shaw & Walter Kemp (2012). Spotting the spoiler: A guide to analyzing organized crime in fragile states. International Peace Institute.
5. Edgardo Buseaghia & Jan van Dijk (2003) >>Controlling Organized and Corruption in Public Sector<<. FORUM on Crime and Society, Vol. 3, Nos 1&2, : 3 - 34
6. See Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment, published February 2013, by UNODC.
7. E.E.O. Alemika (Ed.). The Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in West Africa. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
8. African Confidential (2009). >>Guinea Bissau: A Cocaine coup fails<<. 5 AC, 50, 2(23 January).
9. Council of the EU (2007). The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: A joint Africa-EU Strategy. Lisbon.

develops its own action plan in line with its national or regional strategy. In this context, the EU assistance seeks to provide both building blocks for individual countries and regional responses. Taking this into account, this paper will identify threats to security and governance caused by organized crime in West Africa and analyze current EU intervention projects with regards to their design, implementation and sustainability.

Organized Crime as a Threat to Security in West Africa

The threat of organized crime to security in West Africa has never been more present than now. Contemporary violence associated with ethnic and religious violence, terrorism backed by Al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM) and a narco-state emerging in Guinea Bissau are raising an unprecedented number of security threats. These threats have consequences in all facets of life in the sub-region, especially regarding the physical, socio-economic and health dimensions. Although on the large scale state-permitted organized crime is now history - as exemplified in Charles Taylor's Liberia and Foday Sankoh's Sierra Leone - the presence of conditions favourable to organized crime business models allows private organized crime to thrive in the region.

Geographical Conditions favourable to Organized Crime

The location of West Africa is perceived as an appealing geographical ground for criminals. With the Atlantic Ocean bordering the western and southern part of the region, the Sahara in the north, and the Sahel and Savannah which constitute a part of the western and entire eastern border, the region is made up of many

unmanned and porous routes. This multiplicity of routes – rivers, creeks, desert, and savannah – provides criminals with a favourable ground with reduced risk to conduct their activities. The Sahara and the Savannah areas are not only too massive for effective policing, they also contain time-tested trade routes and strategically placed oases that facilitate the transit of contrabands. In these areas, the presence of the government is lacking.¹⁰ The discovery of the wreckage of a Boeing 727 with traces of cocaine on November 2nd, 2009; in the Goa area in Mali exemplifies the attractiveness of the Savannah and the Sahel for organized criminals and drug traffickers.

Organized Crime and Terrorism

The link between organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism in West Africa has been seriously elevated during the Mali crisis and during the insurgency in Northern Nigeria. While a comprehensive analysis of this linkage is beyond this work, organized criminal activities with corrosive impact on different sectors of the economy have received scholarly attention.¹¹ Their involvement in drugs trafficking has turned West Africa into a hub for cocaine and heroin distribution and has also created a consumers' market in the region.¹² Equally, terrorism involving premeditated and politically-motivated violence against both military and civilian targets has become recurrent.¹³

In order to fund their logistics and sustain their activities, terrorists also attack and loot banks, kidnap people; and subsequently ask for ransom, extort money and impose tax on the movement of vehicles.¹⁴ The resort to criminal acts in terrorist struggle paves the way to the development of a wider organized crime. The incursion of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali has provided enormous unregulated space for crime. It has opened a floodgate for trafficking in weapons and cocaine through the Sahel route.¹⁵ The consequences of this consist not only in the corruption of State institutions and destabilization of communities in their path, but also the availability of arms.

Organized Crime and SALW

Violent crises and terrorism in the sub-region are being promoted by the spread of small and light weapons

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10. Human Rights Watch (2007). *Narcotic trafficking in West Africa: Dying for change*. Vol. 19, No.5 (A).
 11. Alex P. Schmidt (2004, December). Preface: Focus on Crime and Society, Vol.4 (1 & 2).
 12. Helga Schmidt (2013, February 21), >>United Nations Security Councils :Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa and the Sahel<< EU Statement delivered at the UN.
 13. E.O. Alemika (Ed.). *The Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in West Africa*. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
 14. Usman Hameed (2012). *Boko Haram terrorist and organized criminality in Northern Nigeria*. Maiduguri: Unima Press.
 15. B. Lynn Pascoe (2012, January, 26). >>Spiking arms proliferation, organized crime, terrorism, part of fallout from Libyan crisis affecting the Sahel<<. Being brief on the findings of UN inter-agency assessment mission to Sub Saharan region. 6709th Meeting, SC/10533.

(SALW). For instance Boko Haram (BH), a Nigerian based terrorist group; whose alleged link with AQIM gives them access to thousands of arms thought to have originated from Gaddafi's vast weapon armoury, have employed these in their insurgency operation in Northern Nigeria.¹⁶ The availability of these SALWs has given a significant boost to those manufactured internally and those stolen from government armouries. They have led to the rise of inter-ethnic wars, armed robbery and insurgency in the region. Efforts to develop a suitable legal instrument to contain this arms' flow, including the ECOWAS Convention on the proliferation of SALWs, does not yet seem to have yielded any meaningful results.

Organized crime on arms' trafficking appears to escape all control measures by using a clandestine operational system of transport, replete with money channel, middlemen and trafficking pipeline.¹⁷ The fact that these arms are available to criminals, rebel groups and insurgents explains the security threat involved. The discovery of Hezbollah's armoury in Kano¹⁸, Nigeria, and the seizure of 13 containers loaded with firearms and explosives in Lagos port¹⁹ in January, 2011, suggest a widespread availability of trafficked arms and ammunitions in West Africa and their increasing employment in crime.

Organized Crime and Piracy

The 2012 report of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) on piracy adds further to the image of insecurity painted above. The report revealed a growing problem of ship robbery and piracy in the West African sub-region.

Much of the piracy attacks - according to acceptable definitions of piracy - happened on the high sea, whilst the conditions which trigger such events in West Africa are located in the coastal communities. Many of the coastal communities are traversed by swamps, rivers, rivulets, canals and creeks, and lack basic infrastructures and amenities.²⁰ In some coastal communities this level of under-development is further complicated by oil spillage and outright pollution of the ecosystems as a result of the activities of the oil-extractive industries. These industries have devastating effects on traditional means of livelihoods such as fishing and farming, and therefore trigger a high level of employment and poverty amongst the coastal population. Within this, the government and the multinational oil companies operate as stake-holders in the oil business, whilst the coastal communities are left out of the picture. This observed state-oil nexus created accusations of social injustices linked to the exclusion of the coastal communities, threats to the livelihoods of coastal communities and brought justifications for oil theft, bunkering and piracy. The implication of this is that unemployed youths in the coastal communities, started collaborating with oil criminals by facilitating the passage of barges and collecting charges. Today many youths in the coastal communities have turned towards oil theft, bunkering and piracy, simply because these give them the perspective to earn themselves a livelihood.

The escalation in both frequency and intensity of piracy and ship robbery causes a significant decline in the volume of oil available for export. The consequences of this can reach far beyond the boundaries of West Africa. For instance, The EU depends on West Africa to meet some of its energy requirements. Should the current problem continue, Europe and West Africa would experience negative impacts on their economy. Government revenues from sea ports and related custom sources in West Africa have already declined, triggering consequences on the provision of social services, education, health and infrastructure, including for the landlocked countries. In Benin Republic for instance, maritime traffic recorded a decline of about 70 percent in 2013.²¹ This suggests a decline in government revenues as well since the ports account for about 80 percent of

16. See >>Law of unintended consequences strikes again: Was Gaddafi's removal good for Mali? Available at: <http://blog.inkerman.com/index.php/2012/02/13/law-of-unintended-consequences-strikes-again-was-gaddafis-removal-goodafrica/>. (Assessed: 5.02.2014). See also Kwesi Aning, Frank Okyere & Mustapha Abdallah (2012, May). Addressing emerging security threats in post Gaddafi Sahel and the ECOWAS response to the Mali crisis. Kofi Anan International Peace Keeping Training Centre. Policy Brief 1, May 2012.
17. Peter Landsman (2005, January 25) >>The girl next door<<, New York Times. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/25/magazine/the-girl-next-door.html>. See also Stephen Ellis (2009). >>West Africa's international drug trade<<. African Affairs, 108 (431): 171 – 196.
18. Punch Editorial (2013, June 9). Hezbollah armoury uncovered in Kano.
19. Marilyn Ogar (2012). >>SSS intercepts 13 containers of arms in Lagos, Nigeria<<. Available at: odili.net/news/source/2012/jul/18/14.html.
20. Ikoh, M. U. & Ukpong, E. A. (2013) >>The Niger Delta crisis: Taming violence beyond the amnesty<<, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3(17): 146 – 159.
21. IRIN (2013, March). Benin-Togo joining forces to fight piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

them. >>As Cristina Barrios of the EU Institute for Security Studies, rightly observed attacks are not random, they involve carefully targeting fully loaded tankers or ships with valuable good<<. In many instances the cargoes are stolen and the occupants kidnapped for payment of additional ransom.²²

Organized Crime and Governance

Organized crime thrives with illegal profits. In order to circumvent the laws, the profits gained in trafficking are often used to buy cooperation from bureaucrats and high level government officials. An empirical survey reveals four key governance sectors that are largely targeted by organized crime and terrorism in West Africa. These include the political sphere, the criminal justice system, private sector governance and public sector governance.²³

The Political Sphere

In many West African Countries, political parties are not funded by government. Members are expected to pay membership fees and contribute money to fund administrative costs, election campaigns and internal elections. In this context, organized criminals may use political platforms to launder their illicit money. In Nigeria for instance, money bags referred to as <<political godfathers>> (a title often used for organized mafia gang leaders) are the ones who decide who contests for which positions in elections. Politics therefore became an investment with expected monthly returns and government contracts for the political godfathers and their nominees. Elected officers are expected to make returns to the godfathers and not to the electorate.

Particularly - but not exclusively - in Guinea Bissau, State institutions have increasingly come under the peddling influence of illicit drug barons. Coups and counter coups have been sponsored by illicit drug proceeds. Senior State officials including the military are suspected to have established safe havens for the receipt, storage and transshipment of thousands of kilograms of cocaine in the country.²⁴ In Ghana, the conviction of a ruling party member of parliament, Eric Amoateng, in the US on heroin trafficking charges, confirmed widespread public perception of involvement of drug money in politics.²⁵

Public Sector Governance

Buying protection from the State triggers negative consequences on public sector governance. This is mostly done through bribing public officers. The Custom services and the military officials provide an excellent example of such public sector capture by organized criminals. Matthew Green provides us with evidence of how drug cartels and other trafficking organizations spent billions of US Dollars to bribe their ways in West Africa.²⁶ Their bribing tactics which target government officials have succeeded greatly in recent time. For instance in Nigeria, two Naval Rear Admirals used their official powers to aid oil theft.²⁷

Criminal Justice Systems

In a highly corrupted socio-economic and political environment, the infiltration of organized crime into governance is not unexpected. Corrupt judges have abused their substantive and procedural discretion through rulings that have slowed down and sometimes obstructed law enforcement in money laundering and organized criminal cases. The Nigeria's Economic and Finance Crime Commission (EFCC) had to catalogue cases that have been distressed due to judicial obstruction.²⁸ It took the initiative of the Criminal Justice System in Great Britain to bring charges of corruption and money laundering against a former governor in one of the States in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Governor acknowledged the offences he was accused of, despite the fact that the Nigerian courts had adjudged him free during EFCC prosecutions.

22. Cristina Barrios (2013, May 22). Fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: Offshore and onshore. European Institute for Security Studies. Available at: www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/.../Brief_20.p... (Assessed: 06.05.2013).

23. Edgardo Buscaglia & Jan van Dijk (2003, December). >>Controlling Organized Crime and corruption in the Public Sector<<, Forum on Crime and Society, Vol. 3, Nrs. 1&2, December 2003. UNODC.

24. International Crisis Group (2009, June). Guinea Bissau: Beyond rule of gun. African Briefing No.16

25. Kwesi Aning, Sampson B. Kwarkye & John Pokoo (2013). >>Getting smart and scaling up: The impact of organized crime on governance in developing countries: A case study of Ghana<<, in Camino Kavanagh (ed.). Getting smart and scaling up: Responding to the impact of organized crime on governance in developing countries (pp. 97 – 134). New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University Press.

26. Matthew Green (2008, November). >> The unbroken line<<. The financial Times, 5, November, 2008, p.7.

27. IRIN (2005, January 6). Nigeria's conviction of Admirals confirms Navy role in oil theft.

28. Itse Sagay (2010, May). EFCC has given us hope. Our Mile Stone. 1(1): . 46 – 48.

The ease with which members of the CJS are influenced through bribery and corruption cuts across the West African region. It explains the proliferation of SALWs, piracy, trafficking of all categories and the emerging criminal sub-culture as well as violence in the region. West Africa is thus becoming a hospitable hub for organized criminals with illicit cash turning soldiers, policemen, custom officers, immigration officers and bureaucrats into willing accomplices.

Private Sector Governance

In this era of economic reforms, which involved the privatization of government's companies in West Africa, organized criminals are likely to invest their money in these companies. The fact that these companies go to the highest bidders and the lack of transparency in the bidding process suggest the involvement of organized crime proceeds in the emerging private sector governance.

In Nigeria, investigation by the Economic and Finance Crime Commission (EFCC) into the privatisation of four cement companies owned by the Federal Government, and into the shares' ownership in one of the country's leading telecommunication industries revealed how the privatisation exercise has been hijacked by criminals and corrupt public office holders, including the son of a former Head of State.²⁹

The scale of trade-based money laundering is difficult to assess, but in a purely cash-based economy, organized crime proceeds are usually laundered in sectors like real estates and trade, both within and outside West Africa. In a publication that gained wide circulation, the United States Department of Justice and Drug Enforcement Administration (USDJDEA), explained how money

launderers in Nigeria disguised and concealed the sources of their illicit proceeds by establishing and using >>front companies which co-mingle the proceeds from illicit criminal activities with legitimate funds<<.³⁰ Many of such front companies with branches in other West African countries are used for concealing crime proceeds through mass importation of all kinds of goods and other methods.³¹

The European Union Programmes: A Synopsis of Some Projects

In recognition of the inability of governments in West Africa to rein the activities of organized crime, drug traffickers and terrorism as well as their corrosive effect on democratic institutions in West Africa, the EU has severally intervened; and in many cases with remarkable success.

West Africa's location along the cocaine route is a factor in the expanding culture of criminality in the region. A significant proportion of cocaine produced globally is now destined for Europe. Analysts argued that the consumption of cocaine in Europe has doubled in less than ten years, and that >>an estimated 4.2 million people consumed more than 124 tonnes of recreational drug per year in Europe<<.³² Because organized crime activities spread across sovereign boundaries, it is therefore not sufficient to restrict control mechanism to one country; it also has to be extended to weak and fragile states. This informs the EU's creation of the Instrument for Stability (IfS), a department tasked with the design of the Cocaine Route Programme (CRP). The CRP has a mandate to support law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and judicial authorities in third countries along the >>cocaine route<<, ranging from the production countries in Latin America to Europe, via Central America, the Caribbean and West Africa.³³ Four of the CRP components are located in West Africa: an Air component (AIRCOP), a Sea component (SEACOP), the Anti-money laundering for West Africa (AML/WA) and a West African police information service (WAPIS). The projects aim at curbing organized crime activities and drug trafficking through air, sea, and land by providing support, technical advice, building capacity and

29. Kola Ologbondiyan, Sufuyan Ojeifo & Funsho Muraina (2006, September 26). >>Senate probes Obasanjo, Atiku<<. This Day Newspaper. See also Sunny Awhefeada (2006, October 3). >>Babangida and the burden of history<<. The Guardian Newspaper.

Also available at: www.dawodu.com/awhefeada (Assessed: 28.05. 2009)

30. US Department of Justice and Drug Administration (2006). >>drug trafficking by Nigerians, 1984 – 1994<<. NOFORM, Vol. 4, No. 8, 13 - 14

31. Ibid.

32. Report of the Conference on >>Improving responses to organized crime and drug trafficking along the Cocaine Route<<, held at Grand Hotel Plaza, Rome, Italy, May 28 – 30, 2013. European Commission, European Union External Action & Ministero degli Affaire Esteri.

33. See for instance, Instrument for Stability (IfS) Regulation (EC) 1717/2006 of 15 November, 2009.

encouraging coordination between the States located along the cocaine route. Fifteen out of the 58 countries located along the cocaine route are found in the West African sub-region.³⁴

The Aircop Project

The Aircop project involves joint Airport interdiction Task Forces (JAITFs) at selected airports in West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The details of the project show that the JAITFs will be connected to international data bases such as to the one of the International Police Organization (Interpol) and the World Custom Organization's Central Communication (CENCOMM). Under the system, a single data base on organized crime is expected to be created and made available to all of the 15 West African countries.

The Aircop project has been given 48 months for implementation and preliminary operation. During this time law enforcement officers in the benefiting countries will be taught the technicalities of its operation with a view to taking over. Although much of Aircop is lauded, analysts have called for a comprehensive strategy because the success of Aircop would merely displace organized crime route onto other entry points.³⁵

The evaluation report indicates that Aircop has been successful in raising the capacity of beneficiary LEAs in intercepting the flow of cocaine coming through the air route to West Africa. The interceptions were made possible through the establishment of Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITFs) in five West African countries. The regional cooperation also enabled a series of joint trainings, operations and the supply of communication tools. But by comparison, the progress in

West Africa could not match the achievements in Latin America and the Caribbean where Aircop has already started the preliminary operations. This is because LEAs in Latin America and the Caribbean have the capacity required to conduct complex investigations to trace the financiers and drug barons after initial arrest of couriers and seizure of drugs.³⁶ This is lacking in West Africa as LEAs' activities are limited to drug seizures and the arrest of couriers and handlers. Follow-up investigations to identify principal barons or financiers were not carried out due to lack of required capacity.³⁷ This finding suggests that the activities of Aircop are yet not efficient enough to tackle organised crime structures in the region.

However, the question of sustainability persists. Analysts have pointed out problems of competition between Aircop and existing government agencies that perform similar functions. For instance, in Ghana, evaluators observed that the government agency, NACOM, was receiving support from Italy, the UK and the US, and had viewed Aircop as a possible competitor. In Senegal, the agency which handled drug control before the advent of Aircop found itself being marginalized.³⁸

What is not observable in the short run of this programme is that training would have to be continuous as the fluctuation of the LEAs would be high in future. The LEAs are drawn from security agencies that would want to replace them in future, some due to career advancement, political reason or failing out of favour with the commanding officer. Where an effective officer is replaced with a new one with no experience and the required technical competency, the output might be affected by the risk of corruption due to this procedure. Organized criminals may take advantage of such gaps to operate especially where an insider could provide them with information.

The SEACOP Project

The SEACOP seeks to work in partnership with the Aircop project to improve maritime governance. The aim is to build intelligence and investigation units as well as Joint Maritime Control Units (JMCU) that would search suspected shipments in the region. Besides this, SEACOP

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34. Latin America Network Information Center (LANIC)(1992). Latin America and Caribbean Countries. Lazano Long Institute – LLILAS: The University of Texas, Austin. Also available at: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/subject/countries/> (Assessed: 22.04.2014).
 35. Report of the Conference on >>Improving responses to organized crime and drug trafficking along the Cocaine Route<<, held at Grand Hotel Plaza, Rome, Italy, May 28 – 30, 2013. European Commission, European Union External Action & Ministero degli Affaire Esteri. Also Available at: www.ec.europa.eu_cocaine_route_conf_... (Assessed: 17 .09. 2013).
 36. Axel Klein, Stella Aku Attakpah & Sergio Uribe (2013). European Commission: Midterm review of the Cocaine Route Programme. Brussels: IfS & HTSPE Ltd.
 37. Ibid.
 38. Ibid.

is expected to explore the feasibility of setting up a Regional Maritime Information System (RMIS) and a Regional Training Center (RTC) that will train coastguards. The project will last for a duration of 48 months to build the capacity of West African stakeholders who will then take over its operations.

The expectations on SEACOP are extremely high. The ability to curb piracy activities will strengthen trade and improve maritime governance. As the water-ways become safer, more opportunities will be created for those who depend on the sea for their livelihood. Furthermore, it is hoped that the adoption of the Yaoundé >> Code of Conduct<<³⁹ concerning the prevention and repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illegal maritime activities in West Africa and the recently adopted EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea⁴⁰ will help to strengthen maritime capabilities for the realization of effective maritime governance and administration across the region. The establishment of a regional training center, which aims at standardizing strategies and strengthening information-sharing between the countries will certainly enhance the realization of the EU strategy.

Recent evaluation reports on the contribution of SEACOP showed encouraging and remarkable achievements. Illicit drugs including cocaine were intercepted through the Joint Maritime Control Units (JMCUs).⁴¹ However, SEACOP activities have been limited by several factors. In Ghana and Senegal for instance, the fear of competition between SEACOP and the UNODC-run Global Container Control Programme (GCCP) was cited. Evaluators reported that initially UNODC staff and those of the national agencies in some of the countries regarded SEACOP as a competitor.⁴²

More importantly, SEACOP officers were found to lack adequate investigation skills and capacity for quality information-sharing. These inadequacies caused adverse effect on JAITFs and JMCUs operations.⁴³ Besides these, SEACOP is operational in only a few countries in West Africa. Strengthening interdiction capacity in these countries may cause a balloon effect that merely displaces organized crime routes to other countries in the region. The availability of weak spots in the several rivers, swamps, creeks and rivulets that branch out of the sea, and the willingness of some youth in coastal communities to collaborate and protect illicit trades will remain a serious obstacle to the realization of SEACOP objectives and the sustainability of this program.

The AML/WA Project

Unlike Aircop and SEACOP, which have their focus on the interdiction of illicit flows, the Anti-Money Laundering in West Africa (AML/WA) project seeks to tackle money laundering. In order to realize this, the project is reinforcing Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Cape Verde. It is also expected to support the police, gendarmerie, customs, immigration and national security services in the pilot countries. The project has implementation duration of 24 months to build the capacity of law enforcement agencies in the selected countries with regards to investigation techniques of money laundering. The hope is that raising the capacity of the security agencies in this direction will equip them with better skills to curb money laundering.

The initial project planned that AML/WA was supposed to be housed by the Inter-Government Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), an organ established by the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) to track money laundering. Surprisingly, the recent midterm review of the CRP revealed that the relationship between the AML/WA project and GIABA was yet to be clarified,⁴⁴ suggesting that the AML/WA still has not taken off in West Africa. Certain consideration may have influenced the delay. GIABA is a regional programme (ECOWAS Anti Money laundering Programme) that addresses database development and supports FIUs. Article 2 of the regulation establishing Ifs may not allow it to fund AML/WA supervised by GIABA.⁴⁵ This is not

39. See for instance, European Union External Action (2014, March). Fact sheet: EU strategy on the Gulf of Guinea. Brussels, 14031/01.

40. Council of European Union (2014). EU strategy on the Gulf of Guinea. Foreign Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels, 17 March, 2014.

41. Axel Klein, Stella Aku Attakpah & Sergio Uribe (2013). European Commission: Midterm review of the Cocaine Route Programme. Brussel: Ifs & HTSPE Ltd.

42. Ibid.

43. See Report of the Conference on >>Improving responses to organized crime and drug trafficking along the Cocaine Route<<, held at Grand Hotel Plaza, Rome, Italy, May 28 – 30, 2013. European Commission, European Union External Action & Ministero degli Affaire Esteri .

44. Axel Klein, Stella Aku Attakpah & Sergio Uribe (2013). European Commission: Midterm review of the Cocaine Route Programme. Brussel: Ifs & HTSPE Ltd.

without consequences on the fight against organized crime. In a region with endemic corruption and little knowledge about money laundering as well as its varied uses, organized crime and illicit drug related business will continue to boom, especially, if the routes that enable the illegal profits to enter the formal economy remain opened. Therefore, it is unsure whether the AML/WA objectives would be achieved and how soon this will happen.

West Africa is predominantly a cash-based economy with large Diaspora communities that rely on unofficial remittance transfers. Additionally to the trade-based money laundering described above, private money transfers might also facilitate money laundering. This requires the establishment of the AML/WA component, effective funding and supervision to checkmate money laundering sustainably in the region.

WAPIS Project

The West African Police Information Service (WAPIS) project is implemented in cooperation with Interpol. The objective of the project is to set up a regional police information system consisting of national data-bases with a regional hub which will be hosted by ECOWAS. The project has to be delivered within duration of 13 months.

The goal is that WAPIS will become very useful to the West African Police Chiefs' Committee (WAPCCO) which has now been enlarged to the Committee of chief security services (CCSS) to create room for the commanders of gendarmerie forces. The understanding is that drug-related cases are sometimes very complex in nature and investigations require reliable information.

The collection, processing and analysis of such information would rest on the shoulders of the WAPIS. However, based on the recent evaluation,⁴⁶ WAPIS appears to suffer a fate similar to AML/WA's. It has yet to effectively commence operation. Phillipe Baeten, the team leader of the project warned that a >>technology based solution offered in the region will only be useful if the level of capacity and infrastructure available for operation is adequate<<.⁴⁷ Such warning raises fear for the sustainability of WAPIS because communication technologies in Interpol are well-advanced with sophisticated data management, analysis and tracking capabilities. Considering such technicalities, 13-months delivery period cannot build effective capacity for its operation in the long term.

The Sustainability Challenges

The EU intervention in West Africa is premised on the understanding that West Africa is a conglomerate of sovereign States. According to Andris Piebalgs, the EU Commissioner for Development, the EU wants to see the West African region and its countries in the driving seat of the projects<<.⁴⁸ This suggests that the EU would only want to provide the building blocks for strategies and programmes that would allow West African countries to grow their capacity to own the programs and execute them. All the projects have therefore durations for implementation and test run, after which the benefiting countries would be required to take over the operation.

In developing the Gulf of Guinea strategy, Rear Admiral Jürgen Ehle, who heads the EU military working group for West Africa frowned at the suggestion to send EU war ships to the West African waters, emphasizing that the EU will give only military advice on how to improve coordination between regional navies, rather than deploy war ships.<<⁴⁹ Unlike Somalia and the Gulf of Aden, which had no responsible government for many years, the EU believes that the West African security officers can be trained on strategies and skills as well as being equipped to response successfully to organized crime threats. Increasing the capacity of West African security officers and bureaucrats therefore becomes important.

45. See Article 2 Regulation(EC) No. 1717/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of November 15, 2006 establishing IfS.

46. Axel Klein, Stella Aku Attakpah & Sergio Uribe (2013). European Commission: Midterm review of the Cocaine Route Programme. Brussel: IfS & HTSPE Ltd.

47. See Report of the Conference on >>Improving responses to organized crime and drug trafficking along the Cocaine Route<<, held at Grand Hotel Plaza, Rome, Italy, May 28 – 30, 2013. European Commission, European Union External Action & Ministero degli Affaire Esteri.

48. Andris Piebalgs (2013, March 18). >> The EU steps up response to fight money laundering and drug trafficking in West Africa. European Commission – IP/13/230. Available at: europa.eu/.../press-release_IP-13-230_en... (Assessed: 23 -08-2013).

49. Andris Piebalgs (2013, March 18). >> The EU steps up response to fight money laundering and drug trafficking in West Africa. European Commission – IP/13/230. Available at: europa.eu/.../press-release_IP-13-230_en... (Assessed: 23 -08-2013).

As much as these projects are laudable, the sustainability of their defined objectives needs to be guaranteed. Crime is motivated by multi-dimensional factors. Curbing it to a tolerable level would therefore require a multi-dimensional intervention. In this context, only a combination of control components (which the present projects seek to implement) and preventive components (which are presently lacking) may sustainably curb organized crime in West Africa. Additionally, sustainability requires maintaining the speed and the successes recorded by these projects beyond the implementation phase or the trial period. It will depend on the >>quality<< and >>sincere commitment<< of the officers who are trained to continue with the project.

The variable of >>quality<< is not in doubt given the experts who handle the training, the quality of equipments used, and knowledge imparted. But <<sincere commitment>> is a variable that is subject to the influence of several social factors in West Africa.

The selection of officers to be trained

At first, the choice of officers who will be trained will be influenced by both ethnic and religious consideration. Other than these, senior officers will want to influence the choice of nominees because certain interests must be protected or represented. Additionally, officers who would want to acquire the new skills might have to lobby to be included in the list of nominees, because they would expect to benefit from it. It is no longer a secret that LEAs officials (police, soldiers, custom officers, immigration officers, etc.) lobby and pay handsome bribes to their controlling officers to influence their posting including the participation in Peacekeeping missions abroad, where the allowances are paid in Euro and Dollars.

Ethnic and religious factors

Ethnic and religious factors constitute significant building blocks of social capital in West Africa. This is because of

the existence of shared norms and values, which facilitate social bonds. Such bonding helps in several ways – emotionally, socially and economically. Many people have secured jobs, assistance through such bonds. Ethnic groups and religious organizations have had to fund the education of relatives and less privileged members as well as look after orphans and the elderly.⁵⁰ While these bonds are useful at times, organized crime also uses these religious and ethnic bonds as building blocks. As Constanze Blum assesses, West African criminal >> networks consist of recruited relatives or friends. Secrecy and loyalty to the group are ensured by cultural pressure as well as the use of religious rituals<<.⁵¹

The heterogeneity of ethnic groups and religion and the incessant occurrence of ethno-religious crises make people feel secure when dealing with ethnic members. Many criminals prefer to use their ethnic group members or those in the same religious faith who would not disclose their identity.

The role of corruption

Another social factor that affects sincere commitment is corruption. The assumption of the EU intervention project is that every security officer and government official is automatically oriented toward serving the interest of the region. This may not be correct, judging by the endemic and systematic nature of corruption in West Africa. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system and the security agencies which are expected to be the principal beneficiaries of these trainings in capacity building are not immune to corruption. Empowering the members of the security sector who are used to corruption would result in giving them more skills to strategically locate themselves in advantageous positions where grafts can be received. The sabotage of security information for personal enrichment remains a challenge for the realization of the EU's project objectives.

Socio-economic factors

The EU Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) raised the issues of poverty and unemployment in West Africa and the possible linkage with organized crime activities.⁵² These are social factors which

50. Amado Philip de Andres (2008). *West Africa under attack: Drugs, organized crime and terrorism as the new threat to global security*. Geneva: UNODC.

51. Constanze Blum (2014). *Cross-border flows between Nigeria and Benin: What challenges for (human) security?* Peace and Security Series, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

encourage participation in organized crime activities. West Africa consists of the least developed countries in the world. In its 2009 ranking, the UNDP ranked 13 out of the 15 countries in West Africa as low in human development⁵³. Poverty and unemployment among the young ones remain high and access to basic services, such as health care and education, is limited. Many West African States are therefore unable to offer an adequate level of development for their citizens.

Poverty and unemployment have consequences. Poor access to basic services and the inability to attain acceptable societal goals could result in using non-conform ways (violating the laws) to get access to means, albeit illegal, that could enable the achievement of one's goals.

Weak prosecution and judicial capacity

While we acknowledge the existence of corruption in the CJS, which constrains a speedy delivery of judgment, many cases suffer frustration as a result of poor investigation and prosecution. The IfS intervention projects recognise only weaknesses in the capacity of law enforcement officers, whereas many Prosecutors and Judges lack the capacity to deal with cases like organized crime, piracy, corruption and terrorism. In many instances these cases are transnational in nature, involving international jurisdictions; various legal, practical and political obstacles must therefore be overcome in order to achieve success. For example in money laundering cases, many corrupt officials use the services of financial intermediaries which have offshore facilities that can eliminate paper trails.⁵⁴ In such a situation, investigation and prosecution would not only

involve the cooperation of foreign jurisdictions but also experts in financial investigation and forensic accounting. Similarly, international corruption cases take place in a complex environment where different national legal systems, including different institutions and models of investigation as well as prosecution are required. But many judges and prosecutors in developing countries lack the capacity to >>prepare indictment, collect, preserve and present evidence, properly adjudicate cases and obtain convictions, as well as trace the proceeds of corruption and obtain freezing, confiscation, and repatriation of stolen assets<<.⁵⁵ In order to overcome these difficulties, training on capacity building is required.

Suggested Roadmap for Sustainability

The multi-layered intervention strategies mentioned above are indeed laudable for their goals. But the realization of these and their sustainability in curbing organized crime in West Africa to a tolerable level is a matter of speculation. A proper understanding and appreciation of the social and structural causes that encourage and sustain organized crime in West Africa and the dynamics involved is required. It would ensure that programme implementation does not end up with reinforcing the authority of the few privileged at the expense of the programmes objectives. Past evidence shows that corrupt law enforcement officers, having been used to pecuniary benefits, are bound to thwart the effort of effectively realizing these objectives through information sabotage and outright collaboration with criminals. For instance, in Nigeria, 18 soldiers attached to the Joint Task Force (JTF) at Borno and the Special Task Force (STF) at Jos to combat the menace of the Boko Haram were found to have frustrated military operations by leaking security information to the terrorists.⁵⁶ Beyond this observation, the EU intervention projects are merely controlling measures. These are subject to the >>balloon effect>>. As these intervention projects become effective, organized criminals and drug traffickers are likely to develop new routes to survive. In this era of information and communication technology, new measures and counter measures are designed every day.⁵⁷ Furthermore, impunity related to organized crime remains a major problem in West Africa. Political interference has

52. EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA)(2013). Making Europe safer. The Netherlands: European Police Office. Available at: www.europol.europa.eu (Assessed: 16. 07. 2013).

53. UNDP (2009). Human Developing Index and poverty profile. Geneva: Author

54. Sherven Majlessi (2012). Essential problem: Insufficient institutional and procedural safeguards against corruption and lack of cooperation in recovery of stolen public assets. UNODC. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/...corruption/...> (Assessed: 20. 02. 2014).

55. Marie Chene (2008, July 29). Mutual legal assistance treaties and money laundering. Anti-Corruption Resource Center, Transparency International and Chr Michelsen Institute. Available at: www.u4.no/...money-laundering/.../378 (Assessed: 09. 10. 2013).

56. Yusufu Aminu Idegue (2013, July 2). Army puts 18 on trial for alleged Boko Haram link. The Nation Newspaper, Vol. 8, No. 2534, pp.: 1, 4 & 60.

57. EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA)(2013). Making Europe safer. The Netherlands: European Police Office. Available at: www.europol.europa.eu (Assessed: 16. 07. 2013)..

been reported in high profile cases suggesting even a general corruptibility of institutions created to checkmate crime.⁵⁸ Although ECOWAS and its specialized institutions like GIABA have been working in the area of money laundering, no serious impact has been felt as the thieves are still operating unhindered. The involvement of political elites in organized criminal activities has not yet been given the needed priority. Additionally, the existence of different legal systems within the region constitutes a hindrance to speedy judicial collaboration.

In West Africa, porous borders remain largely un-policed with community members either collaborating or looking the other way while organized crime thrives. In view of these challenges, the objectives of the EU projects can only be effectively achieved and sustained if preventive measures are also established alongside the controlling measures. Based on these observations, the following recommendations are made:

1. Support Civil Societies to Raise Community Awareness on Organized Crime

Despite the fact that international organizations like the UNODC, World Bank and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung have successfully raised attention on the issue of organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism on a global scale, awareness should now be raised amongst the local communities. Many have never heard about cocaine and heroin. The sale and consumption of these illicit drugs are not seen as threats by them. Similarly, they would not consider that being assisted to travel to Europe or anywhere else to find a job when there is none at home would constitute human trafficking. In spite of the threats posed by fake, substandard and adulterated drugs to public health in West Africa, many citizens have no knowledge of how to identify them. Such ignorance would remain so long as no deliberate effort is made to sensitize the local communities on the corrosive impact of these activities on their society.

An example in this regard is the HIV/AIDS advocacy campaign in Sub-Saharan Africa. It drives the knowledge on the meaning of HIV/AIDS and spreads the threats to health and the need for prevention to all nooks and crannies of Africa, such that even primary school pupils in the remote communities came to understand at least the threat to health associated with HIV/AIDS. Civil societies and community-based NGOs were assisted by International Organizations and governments to carry out these advocacy campaigns.

The EU should therefore support, invest and encourage civil societies to embark on awareness campaigns of their local communities on the threats posed by organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. Such action can create partners inside the communities who would be committed to the long-term realization of the objective and goals of EU's intervention projects.

Given the fact that civil society activities on such advocacy can expose and destroy the recruitment base and marketing routes of organized criminals, actors can become targets of elimination. Their physical safety should therefore be given priority through regional and international recognition.

2. Good Governance and Service Delivery

The challenges of poverty and unemployment are numerous. One of such challenges is the creation of a generation of functional criminals. This is because endemic poverty and unemployment constitute a threat to economic survival. In the long run, the inability to effectively address issues of poverty and unemployment could hinder the realization of the objectives of the cocaine and heroin route programme. Solving the problem of poverty and unemployment can help to mitigate the influence of organized criminal groups on the vulnerable population.

Intervention projects designed by the EU to confront the flow of illicit drugs through West Africa can be used as a spring board to address concerns of good governance and service delivery in the region. This is in line with the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership that seeks to ensure

58. E. E.O. Alemika (ed.)(2013). *The Impact of Organized Crime on Governance in West Africa*. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

cooperation between Africa and the EU on democratic governance.⁵⁹ Examples of these activities by the EU can be seen in Niger, where more than €100 million of budget support has been disbursed since 2008 to boost the ability of government to deliver social services. In Burkina Faso, the EU is supporting the construction of a photovoltaic power plant that will produce about 32 Gigawatt hours per year. Other EU projects directed at enhancing service delivery are located in Mali, where about €225 millions have been given to support State building. The inclusion of the element of monitoring and accountability in these donations suggests that corruption would be curbed and that an implementation that reaches the target beneficiaries would be realized. In Nigeria, the EU's support for water supply and sanitation is targeting to reach five million Nigerians by the end of 2017. More of such intervention projects (with an emphasis on accountability) are needed in the area of youth empowerment. It can prevent the motivation factors that push many youth to join organized criminal gangs.

3. Combating Corruption

Corruption in West Africa is said to be endemic and systemic. This suggests that corruption has become routine on both small and large scale. When projects fail due to corruption, the work of many years is destroyed. In order to ensure the realization and sustainability of EU's projects objectives, there should be anti-corruption agreements with the benefiting countries. This involves ensuring that measures are taken by beneficiaries to prevent the abuse of positions by the newly empowered teams and agencies. Such undertaking can be achieved through strict oversight, adherence to standard operating procedures and proper documentation of the process involved. It also means regular information on activities to civil society organizations, particularly those working on human rights issues. This would still fit in the framework of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, which provides for

commitment toward the >>protection of human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption<<.⁶⁰ With respect to the SEACOP, AIR-COP, AML/WA and WAPIS, members of the newly empowered team and agencies should be required to demonstrate certain character traits, e.g. a written undertaking, with clause of vicarious responsibility by community leaders or reference by high ranking member of the society. Such undertaking seeks to involve community leaders in the fight against corruption by demonstrating their active commitment towards preventing it. It can also help to change the psyche of the LEAs through compulsive deterrence, to make them remember the implications of involvement in corruption and the disgrace to their community leaders and or their referees if they are caught. Such stringent undertaking can help to drive down the emphasis of the CRP that it would not be business as usual, and that involvement in the programme will not tolerate any form of corruption.

4. Training of Prosecutors and Judges

Winning the war against organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism in West Africa faced with a weak and inefficient justice delivery system will be difficult to achieve. There is a need to develop the capacity of the LEAs as well as the one of the prosecutors and judges. For many prosecutors and judges, organized crime, money laundering, piracy and terrorism are an emerging phenomenon which they lack skills and capacity to adjudicate, especially when these crimes are sometimes transnational and require legal cooperation across borders. EU-training on skills ranging from effective application of information and communication technology (ICT) in court processes, application of mutual legal assistance (MLA), preparation of indictments, collection, preservation and presentation of evidence, to securing proceeds of corruption through freezing, confiscation and repatriation of stolen assets is recommended. Additionally, the reforms of court processes to include timelines (to avoid undue process delay) would also need to be accelerated. This may not be included in the CRP objectives, but it could be embraced in the EU projects on Justice Sector reform.

59. The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: A joint Africa-EU strategy. Lisbon, 9 December, 2007, 16344/07 (Presse 291).

60. Maria Olund (2012). Critical reflections on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Africa Development, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, pp.: 15 – 23.

5. Involvement of civil society in EU interventions

Domestic civil society in West Africa is on the front line of investigating and criticizing corruption as well as the predominant abuse of power by politicians and other state actors. It will therefore be necessary to involve them in the EU's project monitoring for the objectives to be realized. They will help not only in the creation of awareness about the projects, but also in gaining public support for them and ensuring that the media keeps a close monitoring of LEAs activities as well as the prosecution's and courts' decisions. In a corruption-endemic region like West Africa, activities of the civil society will not only ensure compliance with human rights, but can also steer the projects toward governance issues.

6. Deepening Regional Policy Cooperation

The efforts of the 15 West African States to achieve economic integration under the umbrella of ECOWAS have received commendable support from the EU. However there are differences in laws that regulate economic activities and punish criminal behaviour in every country. In order to curb the danger of organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, the EU may wish to support the harmonization of these laws, streamlining the punishment requirements and codifying them into acceptable ECOWAS Law, other than mere Conventions. Such harmonization of laws will demonstrate the readiness of West African government to participate in the holistic and global approach towards winning the war on drugs and achieve the EU projects' objectives. An harmonization of drug-related laws in West Africa can achieve two urgent purposes: firstly, criminals could be prosecuted and punished in any of the countries, regardless where the offence was committed and secondly, such harmonization will help in furthering the integration agenda of the West African region through the criminal justice system. In this context there will be no hiding place for criminals in the West African sub-region anymore.

7. Reform Party Financing

One of the Strategic Frameworks of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is the realization of good

governance and human rights. Tied to this is the need to ensure that West Africa is not degenerating into a narco-region. The EU can build components for good governance through the CRP in two ways: support for national legislation to regulate party financing, and enable civil society to provide for checks of unaccountable political leaders. One way to ensure this is to prevent organized crime from capturing governance in West Africa. Laws to regulate campaign and party financing would ensure that political parties and hence the government are not captured by organized criminals and drug lords. Civil society should speak out by publishing reports and disseminating information to citizens of the countries and international audiences about unaccountable and corrupt leaders.

8. Increase the formative years of CRP projects

The life span of the projects ranged from 13 months for WAPIS, 24 months for AML and 48 months for AIRCOP and SEACOP. Given the ambitious objectives of CRP, the time frame given for their implantation appears too short for an effective realization. Promoting law enforcement based on trust requires building a reliable institution. The new team members will need time to adjust to the culture and the norms of the programme. Five to six years may be required for the programmes to be sustainable.

Conclusion

Factors that motivate crime are manifold. Organized criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists rely on the ignorance of people in order to create and sustain their business model. The impact of these activities causes corrosive effects on the political sphere, the CJS, private sector governance and on public sector governance in West Africa. While facing the problem of organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, West Africa is equally being confronted with socio-economic problems of poverty, youth unemployment, low levels of public health, insurgency (e.g. Mali, Niger, Nigeria), civil war (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire) and post-war recovery (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone). These factors combined have so far constrained an effective response to organized crime and drug trafficking.

The EU interventions through the Cocaine Route Programme hold promises to checkmate these unwholesome activities. The hope is that after the slowing down of economic crisis in Europe and the impending review of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, West African States will be assisted to put in place development strategies. These could help establishing capacities for a basic service delivery to its people and develop both community buy-in and LEA's capacity to curb organized crime and its associated corrosive activities. Otherwise, without an alternative to illicit economies, criminal activity may continue to remain attractive to the people, especially to the most vulnerable amongst them.

To realize the EU program objectives and in order to achieve sustainability, this paper contains the following suggestions:

- Support civil societies to initiate community awareness campaigns on organized crime activities, drug traffickers and terrorism.
- Encourage good governance and service delivery to checkmate poverty and unemployment.
- Combat corruption.
- Train prosecutors and judges.
- Involve civil society in the CRP projects.
- Increase the formative years of CRP projects.
- Support reforms of laws on political party financing.

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About this study

Forms of Organized Crime in West Africa span from SALW proliferation to drug-trafficking, terrorism, and piracy. This publication aims to stimulate the debate on the root causes and on actions to be taken to prevent such crimes. It examines in particular the European Union's intervention programmes tackling Organized Crime in West Africa. Further, it outlines factors impeding a sustainable implementation of viable strategies and projects. By drawing a link between the prevalent political, economic, social, and geographical conditions for Organized Crime in

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West Africa, the author highlights the necessity of effective and sustainable actions, but also reveals challenges. Corruption, weak judicial prosecution, ethno-religious conflicts, and increased armed violence remain obstacles for peace in the region and, as a result, for the sustainability of EU interventions. Evaluating these impediments, the study draws up a 'Roadmap to Sustainability', by which the author proposes approaches to counter Organized Crime in a sustainable way.