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# Foreword

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In 2020, the SWAC/OECD Secretariat introduced a new way of analysing the geography of conflicts in North and West Africa, based on the Spatial Conflict Dynamics indicator (SCDi). This indicator allows us to understand the intensity and concentration of violence at different levels and to map its evolution over the past quarter of a century. The indicator is currently available on the MAPTA platform (<https://mapping-africa-transformations.org>).

In 2021, conflict networks were the focus of analysis which found that hundreds of armed groups are as unpredictable in their relationships with one another as they are in their movements across the region. This partly explains the difficulties faced by national and international armed forces in fighting them.

In 2022, the focus was on providing a better understanding of the links between borders and violence. Indeed, our indicator confirms that border areas and their inhabitants are

proportionally more affected by violence than other parts of the region. For armed groups, the border is an opportunity or a resource; for governments and their allies, it is too often a limitation and sometimes a constraint.

In 2023, this report questions the urban or rural nature of the conflicts that continue to engulf parts of the region. If, as the work of SWAC/OECD shows, Africa is experiencing urbanisation at an unprecedented rate, are we witnessing an "urbanisation" of conflicts?

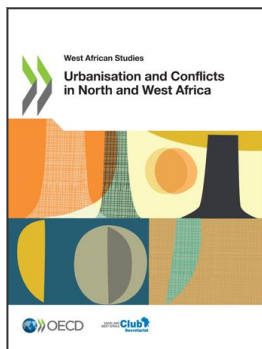
There is not one, but several answers to this question, depending on whether we look at it from a regional, zonal (the Sahel, for example), national or local perspective. It also depends on the period of analysis.

The indicator of the spatial dynamics of conflicts gives us the means to understand this plurality. It invites us to nuance policy options in the light of the complex realities and dynamics of the geography of conflicts.

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