EU Community Network on Youth, Peace and Security

West Africa Regional Webinar — Concept Note

Date: 20 November 2026

Time: 18:00–19:30 GMT

Platform: Virtual (Zoom / Microsoft Teams)

Background & Rationale

Across West Africa, young people account for over 60 percent of the total population. Their vitality, creativity, and energy position them as the most critical demographic for shaping the region's stability, governance, and long-term peace-building efforts. However, traditional security discourse often reduces youth to a dangerous binary — viewing them either as vulnerable victims to be saved or as primary instigators of violent conflict and civic unrest.

To challenge these pervasive misconceptions and unlock the true potential of young people, the EU-YPS West Africa Network is convening a regional webinar titled "Demystifying Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) in West Africa: Fundamentals, Frameworks, and Regional Dynamics." This concept note outlines a narrative framework for an interactive virtual session designed to equip youth leaders, civil society actors, and regional partners with the knowledge and connections needed to drive meaningful peace-building across the sub-region.

Narrative Structure & Agenda

First Segment: Grounding in Normative Frameworks

The session opens by contextualizing the evolution of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda. Participants will examine the foundational United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (UNSCR 2250), its complementary resolutions (2419 and 2535), and its important intersection with the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) framework (UNSCR 1325).

The presentation will systematically walk through the 5 Pillars of YPS:

Participation: Elevating youth into decision-making spaces across peace processes and local governance.
Protection: Ensuring the safety and rights of young civilians and human rights defenders in active conflict zones.
Prevention: Supporting youth-led initiatives that tackle the root causes of violence and radicalization.
Partnership: Building structured collaboration between youth organizations, national governments, and international institutions.
Disengagement & Reintegration: Facilitating the positive transition of youth away from armed groups back into community life.

Second Segment: Deconstructing Myths & Recasting the Narrative

Following the structural overview, the webinar transitions into a panel discussion addressing the real-world dynamics of youth engagement in West Africa. Panelists will unpack the "youth bulge" thesis and challenge the security-centric narratives that stigmatize young people. By contrasting empirical realities against popular stereotypes, this segment highlights how West African youth consistently serve as frontline peacebuilders, community mediators, and important warning indicators for emerging conflicts.

Third Segment: Mapping the West African Youth Landscape

To ensure the network’s interventions reflect regional realities, the third segment focuses on youth actor mapping. Through an interactive exchange, participants will map the diverse ecosystem of youth groups operating across West Africa: established regional youth platforms and registered NGOs; community-level organizers, informal youth associations, and local peace committees; and digital activists, academic researchers, and creative artists leveraging technology and media for conflict transformation.

Final Segment: Institutional Synergies with ECOWAS and the African Union

The webinar concludes by bridging local grassroots action with regional policy mechanisms. Experts will detail actionable entry points within the African Union Continental Framework on YPS and the mandate of the AU Youth Envoy. Furthermore, the discussion will explore how participants can engage with ECOWAS frameworks including the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), regional early warning networks (WANEP/ECOWARN), and youth policy channels while leveraging EU support to sustain long-term collaboration.

Expected Outcomes & Next Steps

By the end of the session, participants will have gained a clear understanding of YPS policy instruments and their practical application within West African contexts. Insights gathered during the session will feed into a Regional Youth Actor Directory and inform a Policy Brief outlining concrete recommendations for ECOWAS, the AU, and European partners to strengthen youth inclusion in regional security architecture.