# Conflict Prevention Tool

*Developing Multi-Stakeholder Strategies*

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND DEFENCE POLICY · QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

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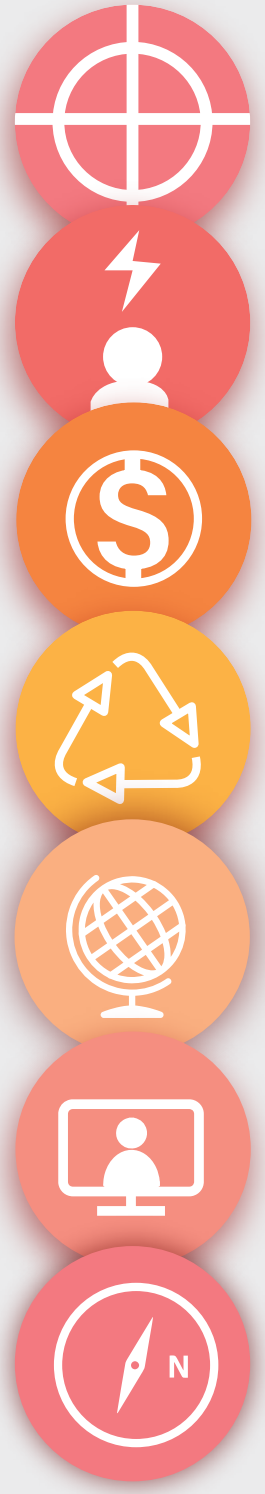
COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL GENÈVE · ICRC

DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

# What is the value-added of this tool?



Helps companies **establish clear priorities** to better manage the risks of conflict that are either independent from or linked to their operations.

Promotes a **conflict sensitive approach and offers a pathway to develop multi-stakeholder engagement strategies** (including both internal processes and external actors) that ensure a proactive, rather than reactive, risk management stance.

Reduces the **direct and indirect costs** that conflict imposes on a company, including: the increased cost of protecting staff and property, potential damage to the company's reputation, higher payments to security firms, the weakening of social capital, and resource degradation.

Favours a **conflict prevention mindset** across company functions through greater social awareness. Integrating corporate culture as suggested in the present tool has not been done in existing conflict analysis tools and produces a more accurate and complete picture.

Supports companies in meeting their **due diligence obligations related to security and human rights** and reinforces implementation of the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.*

Encourages different teams to **work together in analyzing conflict** (eg. security function, human resource department, procurement department, community and social performance function, operations, etc.).

Guides companies and professionals in their efforts to **anticipate, prevent, and manage conflict**, through a combination of desk-based and site level data collection, supported by questionnaires.

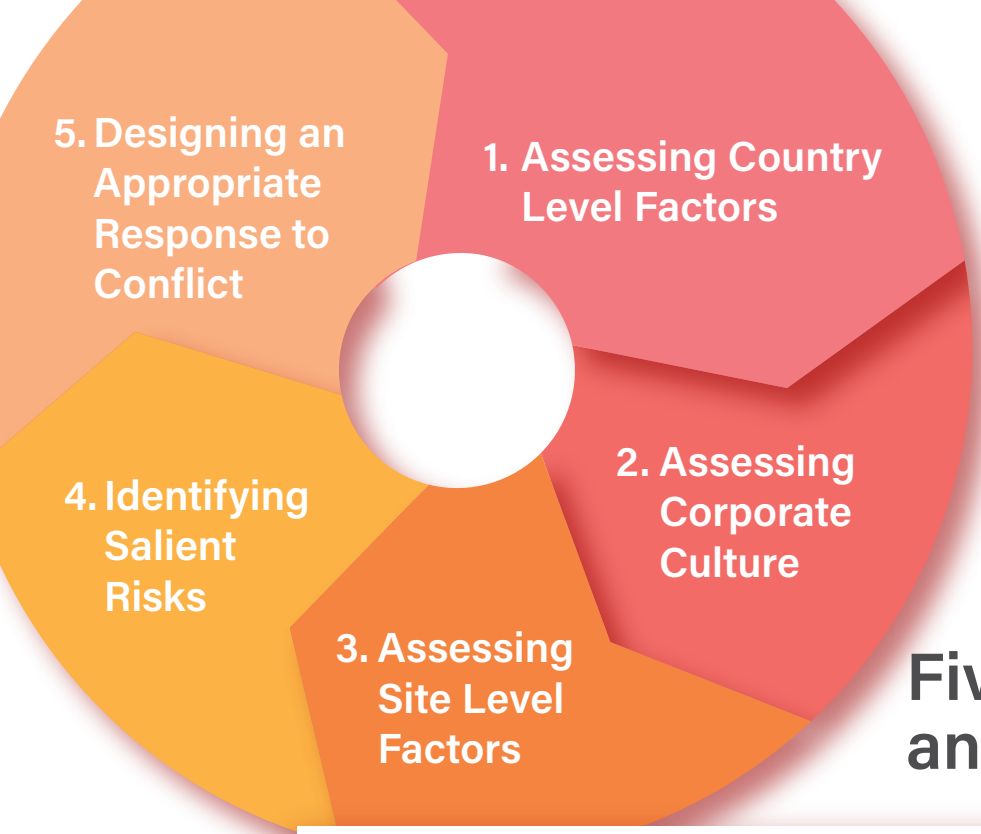
# How does the tool work?

This tool involves data collection through desk-based research and field-based stakeholder consultations. It is comprised of the following sections: an overview of the tool's purpose, the five steps to assess conflict, companion questionnaires, and practical tips on how to map stakeholders, handle exceptional circumstances, and conduct additional research.

It is important to note the tool requires insights and contributions from all areas of the company, including at the site level and from corporate management, as well as national, regional and local stakeholders. It also relies on engagement and discussions with external stakeholders. See the DCAF-ICRC Toolkit for more details.

The tool is designed to be practical, non-prescriptive, and user-friendly, to facilitate smooth integration into existing business processes and to improve corporate risk assessments. The tool is particularly relevant for companies with operations in fragile and conflict affected contexts, but the time required for the conflict analysis will vary based on each company's unique conflict analysis requirements and the number of stakeholders included in consultations.

The Conflict Prevention Tool is the culmination of a team project, which was designed as an incubator of new ideas to generate practical tools in support of conflict prevention and resolution efforts. It was developed by Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky, Claude Voillat, Alan Bryden, Almero Retief, and Brian Gonsalves, with research assistance from Morgan Fox. Thank you to Isabelle Brissette, Ben Miller, Dr. Andrew Grant, Dr. Nadège Compaoré, and Jonathan Drimmer for their insightful feedback.




# Five steps to assess and prevent conflict

## STEP 1. Assessing Country Level Factors

**What:** This step focuses on identifying risk indicators related to the overall situation at the country level.

**How:** By collecting information that is as precise as possible on the country's situation in order to identify the main risk indicators. The questionnaires starting on p.10 are designed to help with the collection of data and 5 sample priority questions are included below. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

**Sample Priority Questions:**

- Is there a significant urban-rural divide (in terms of quality of services, economic growth, etc.)? What is infrastructure like outside the major urban centres?
- How prevalent are national crises (ie. protests, public health crises, etc.)? How capable is the government at anticipating and handling them?
- Does the national long-term unemployment rate (as a percentage of the labour force) vary significantly by region, particularly between urban and rural regions?
- Has violence been associated with elections or a political party's activities in the past 5 years?
- What is the size of the national armed forces? Has the size of the state army increased over the past 5 years?

**Helpful Resources**

DCAF-ICRC Toolkit: Chapter 1 – Working with Host Governments
Overseas Security Advisory Council Country Reports
Control Risks

## STEP 2. Assessing Corporate Culture

**What:** This step focuses on identifying risk indicators related to corporate culture (e.g. structures and processes like governance and operating models, risk acceptance, management of resources, internal training, relations with stakeholders and other routine corporate practices).

The *OECD Principles of Corporate Governance* make particular note of "mechanisms for employee participation … and [the ability] to freely communicate their concerns about illegal or unethical practices."

**How:** By finding out relevant information regarding corporate culture in order to identify the main risk indicators. The questionnaires starting on p.10 are designed to help with the collection of data and 5 sample priority questions are included below. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

**Sample Priority Question:**

- What methods currently exist to ensure that knowledge about community needs and expectations is not dependent on individual staff members? What kind of information do you collect and how is it stored?
- How does your company handle legacy issues (inherited from past operators, contracts, teams, etc.) between the company and the community? Have these methods been successful?
- What practical initiatives exist that reflect the company's mission and values? Describe the culture and the organizational structure.
- How are different teams (operations, security, health/safety, management, etc.) involved in risk/conflict analysis and community relations?
- How does the company manage its commitments/promises vis-à-vis local stakeholders?

**Helpful Resources:**

Company website
United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
Harvard Business Review
Report of International Roundtable on Conflict Management and Corporate Culture in Mining Industry

## STEP 3. Assessing Site Level Factors

**What:** This step focuses on identifying risk indicators related to the overall situation at the site level.

**How:** By collecting information on stakeholders that are involved (directly or indirectl y) in company operations at the site level in order to identify the main risk indicators, and facilitate multi-stakeholder consultations. The questionnaires starting on p.10 will support the collection of data and 5 sample priority questions are included below. Please use the additional field-based questionnaires for a more in-depth review of site-level dynamics. Key stakeholders may include government officials, security sector actors, and community representatives. For more information on stakeholders, see our list below. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

The *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* note that "in order to gauge human rights risks business enterprises should [have] … meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders," as well as effective non-judicial grievance mechanisms.

### Sample Priority Questions:

- What does the community think of the company's business activities? How has it changed over time?
- Does the community/region have historic grievances against the state?
- Are there local elections in the near future? Have past elections typically been associated with violence and conflict?
- Are there militias/criminal groups operating in the region? Do they control territory? Be sure to consider violent crime rates at the country vs. community level.
- Have large populations relocated within the region in the past 2 years?

### IMPORTANT: Stakeholder Considerations

It is important to consider how stakeholder relations impact conflict and conflict analysis. An up-to-date stakeholder map should be kept and verified at each stage of the business cycle, and consultation should happen regularly. A non-exhaustive list of stakeholders and several mapping tool examples can be found below. For more details, see the DCAF-ICRC Toolkit.

### Helpful Resources:

Business Risk Register
Community grievance mechanisms
Employee complaints/ grievances
Site security incident reports
Stakeholder communication plans
Site level performance reviews
Media reports
Local crime statistics

The *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights* (VPs) recognizes the "value of engaging with civil society and host and home governments to contribute to the welfare of the local community."

## STEP 4. Identifying Salient Risks

**What:** This step focuses on identifying the 'centre of gravity' of the risks that the company has to manage, in order to tie the main conflict trends to the company's attitude and responses.

**How:** By filtering the results of the three previous data collection steps to identify potential conflict risks, knowledge gaps, and blind spots. This is accomplished by identifying the number of risk indicators from each level (country, corporate, and site) to pinpoint the conflict's 'centre of gravity' and prioritize company resources based on where they are most needed. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

### Guiding questions for identifying the 'centre of gravity':

- Based on the three levels of data collection (country, corporate, site), is one more salient than the others in terms of the number of risk indicators identified and/or their intensity or salience?
- Does one level appear directly related to the existence/continuation of conflict?
- Would the conflict fundamentally change or not exist if certain risk indicators were absent?

**Helpful Resources:**

Methods for Evaluating Conflict Prevention
Output, Outcome, Impact: Focusing the Analytical Lens for Evaluating the Success of Corporate Contributions to Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

## STEP 5. Designing an Appropriate Response to Conflict

**What:** This step focuses on determining the company's response strategy to conflicts based on where the 'centre of gravity' is located (country, corporate, or site level).

The *UNGPs* also suggest that "where it is necessary to prioritize actions to address actual and potential adverse human rights impacts, business enterprises should first seek to prevent and mitigate those that are most severe or where delayed response would make them irremediable."

**How:** By analysing the different indicators, response strategies can be identified that focus on prevention, resolution, or resilience. Risk mitigation is identified as a cross-cutting issue because mitigation measures for all risks identified in the questionnaires should be considered on an ongoing basis.

## Conflict Assessment Results

- **A majority of country-level risk indicators** leads to a **resilience** posture, to ensure business continuity. While these country-level indicators are likely to impact operations in numerous ways, no single action taken by the company is likely to affect these macro-level trends decisively. Depending on the severity of conflict, it might also be advisable to halt all activities.
- **If most risk indicators are at the corporate level**, there is a clear opportunity for **conflict prevention**, which entails improving corporate practices to address grievances and potential indicators of conflict in a timely and transparent manner. Manifestations of conflict, combined with many risks identified at the corporate level, suggest that conflict might escalate due to the company's own actions (or inaction).
- **A majority of site-level risk indicators** suggests that there could be multiple causes of conflict or grievances impairing company-community relations: **conflict resolution** should be prioritized, involving engagement, collaboration, and consultation with multiple stakeholders. If there are regular instances of violence, conflict resolution might not be immediately possible – focus on resilience instead as a temporary outcome.

| Country-Level Indicators | Company-Level Indicators | Site-Level Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| **Resilience Strategy:** | **Prevention Strategy:** | **Resolution Strategy:** |
| If conflict has occurred and cannot be resolved in the short term due to regional or country-level dynamics, the company must have the capacity to absorb the effects and costs of conflict for an extended period, to ensure business continuity. | The company may have the opportunity to intervene with no further escalation by fixing company-level issues. Timely improvement of corporate practices, through better information and communication management, can help in managing grievances and preventing conflict. | Conflict has occurred but identifying appropriate solutions should be prioritized through multi-stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and consultation. |

**Risk Mitigation:**

For each of the conflict risks identified, the company can be empowered to respond to, or lessen, the impacts of risk factors, by developing solutions in concert with both internal and external stakeholders.

- **These three options are not mutually exclusive but help in terms of establishing priorities, given resource and personnel constraints.**

- To identify or validate **appropriate response strategies**, refer to the Security and Human Rights Knowledge Hub and the Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments toolkit, developed by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

**Helpful Resources:**

Conflict Trends and Conflict Drivers: An Empirical Assessment of Historical Conflict Patterns and Future Conflict Projections

Core Elements of Conflict Analysis

Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA)

DCAF-ICRC Knowledge Hub

DCAF-ICRC Toolkit

## Risk Indicator Examples

Each of the three text boxes below includes an illustrative and non-exhaustive list of risk indicators to consider. When completing steps 1-4, refer to this list, alongside the information drawn from the questionnaires, to add missing risk indicators and determine the 'centre of gravity':

| Country Level | Corporate Level | Site Level |
|---|---|---|
| ▪ Increasing military presence<br>▪ Dramatic economic downturn<br>▪ Upcoming or recent elections (+/- 6 months)<br>▪ Ongoing conflict (possibly severe) across the country<br>▪ Widespread violence<br>▪ Widespread poverty and unemployment<br>▪ Downward socio-economic trends<br>▪ Climate change<br>▪ Food insecurity<br>▪ Epidemics / pandemics | ▪ Legacy issues<br>▪ Lack of practical community relations initiatives<br>▪ No self-evaluation or lack of measurable performance goals<br>▪ Poor knowledge/communication on security issues across the corporate hierarchy<br>▪ Gap between corporate policy and reality in terms of managing community relations<br>▪ Inadequate communication and information management strategies<br>▪ Inadequate stakeholder engagement | ▪ Increase/escalation in security requirements<br>▪ Violence within the local community<br>▪ Tensions between the community and company/security forces<br>▪ Violence or intimidation by the company/security forces<br>▪ Economic poverty specific to the region/community<br>▪ High/unrealistic stakeholder expectations<br>▪ Internal (or cross-border) migration is disrupting the social, ethnic, or religious balance<br>▪ General feeling of discontent within the community |

# Stakeholder List

Note that this list is not exhaustive, and that different stakeholders are more relevant at different stages in the business lifecycle:

- Investors
- Corporate HQ
- Other companies in the region/country
- Multi-disciplinary teams (including Community Relations, Human Resources, Procurement,
- Security, Health, Environment, Operations, etc.)
- Home government
- Host government
- Regulators
- Community leaders (including traditional, cultural, religious, and minority group leaders)
- Community members (including women and other vulnerable groups)
- Local community and business associations
- Local NGOs
- Local farmers
- Local environmental/conservation groups

**Mapping Tools**

World Health Organization
World Bank
BSR
DCAF-ICRC

**Helpful Resources**

Small Reservoirs Toolkit
DCAF Toolkit – Chapter 1
Working With Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action

# Considerations for Exceptional Circumstances

There are numerous exceptional circumstances that make direct discussions and contacts with external stakeholders difficult, as has been shown by the COVID-19 pandemic. In those cases, here are some questions to consider:

- How is communication being impacted by the near elimination and restriction of site visits?
- How have security plans and priorities been adjusted?
- How are private security assets being reevaluated?
- How are company relationships with public security forces changing given shifting priorities under COVID-19?
- Are site-level incidences of crime being handled differently by the company and by security forces?
- What measures has the company taken to help local communities deal with exceptional circumstances?
- How has the company's internal culture shifted and adapted to the exceptional circumstances?

# Desk Based Questionnaire

## Step 1 - Country Level:

1. Is there currently violence in the country?
2. Is the country experiencing a running international or non-international armed conflict?
3. Has the country recently emerged from an international or non-international armed conflict?
4. How high is annual military expenditure as percentage of GDP? Has it grown in recent years?
5. What is the size of the national armed forces? Has the size of the armed forces increased over the past 5 years?
6. Are national armed forces underpaid?
7. Does the government have difficulty controlling public security forces?
8. Does the government face problems in controlling the private use of small arms?
9. Does the government face problems in controlling the activities of private security companies?
10. Are there incidences of group violence in neighbouring countries?
11. Does the country rank highly on the Corruption Perceptions Index?
12. Does the country rank highly on the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)?
13. Is there a significant urban-rural divide (in terms of quality of services, economic growth, etc.)? What is the quality of infrastructure like outside the major urban centres?
14. Does the national long-term unemployment rate (as a percentage of the labour force) vary significantly by region, particularly between urban and rural regions?
15. Has violence been associated with elections or a political party's activities in the past 5 years?
16. Are there limits on the rights to free speech?
17. Has there been a recent economic crisis or decline? Describe national vs. regional trends.
18. How are other regions affected by the company's industry?
19. How prevalent are national crises (ie. protests, public health crises, etc.)? How capable is the government at anticipating and handling them?
20. What role does the international community play in governing the country?

### Helpful Resources

United Nations Human Development Reports
SIPRI Databases
The Military Balance
Small Arms Survey
Crisis Watch
CIA Factbook
UNESCO Communication Indicator
Human Rights Watch
Country Security Reports
Governmental Travel Advisories

## Step 2 - Corporate Culture:

1. Are there any legacy issues involving this company or others in the community?
2. How does your company handle legacy issues (inherited from past operators, contracts, teams, etc.) between the company and the community? Have these methods been successful?
3. What is the relationship like between the company and the host government? What has the relationship been like historically?
4. What practical initiatives exist that reflect the company's mission and values? Describe the culture and the organizational structure.
5. What level of funding does the company provide to the community/region? What initiatives and programs do they fund/invest in?

6. How thorough is the company in evaluating good and bad corporate practices when acquiring a company?
7. How integrated is the company's process when tackling security, human rights and community-related issues?
8. How does the company manage its commitments/promises vis-à-vis local stakeholders?
9. How does the company handle security providers' respect for human rights (one-off briefing/training or regular engagement)?
10. What is the company doing to ensure that community relations are considered everyone's responsibility?
11. What is the company doing to ensure that security and health/safety are considered everyone's responsibility?
12. Is respect for communities or human rights integrated in any way into the performance reviews of teams or individuals?
13. How are different teams (operations, security, health/safety, management, etc.) involved in risk/conflict analysis and community relations?
14. What methods currently exist to ensure that knowledge is not dependent on individual staff members? What kind of information do you collect and how is it stored?
15. Is there a grievance mechanism in place that aligns with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (see pp. 33-34)?

**Helpful Resources**

Mining Industry Perspectives on Handling Community Grievances: Summary and Analysis of Industry Interviews

Report of International Roundtable on Conflict Management and Corporate Culture in Mining Industry

Conflict Management and Corporate Culture in Extractive Industries: A Study in Peru

## Step 3 - Site Level:

1. Does the community/region have historic grievances against the state?
2. Does the community/region have historic grievances with this company or other companies in the same industry?
3. Is there a history of conflict (violent or otherwise) between certain groups within the community/region?
4. Is there a large security presence in the community/region?
5. Is the local economy dependent on the company's industry?
6. Is there a high level of unemployment in the region (particularly youth unemployment)?
7. Is one (or more) identifiable group at a significant economic disadvantage in the community/region? How does this manifest itself?
    - Access to housing? Education? Employment? Sanitation? Public services?
8. Are there local elections in the near future? Have past elections typically been associated with violence and conflict?
9. Are there militias/criminal groups operating in the region? Do they control territory? Be sure to consider violent crime rates at the country vs. community level.
10. Have large populations relocated within the region in the past 2 years?
11. Is there a regional dimension to any past or present conflicts?

**Helpful Resources**

Population and housing censuses, refined to the regional or municipal level

Local news websites

Congressional Research Reports

Local community and business associations

Community leaders and members

Local municipalities

Local law enforcement

# Field Based Questionnaire

It is important to note that many of the answers to these questions will be qualitative and cannot be easily quantified into a matrix or dashboard. Further, some questions will apply to certain interviewees and not others – use the most relevant questions for the internal and external stakeholders you are engaging with (a stakeholder list can be found above).

## Internal Stakeholders:

1. How would you describe your company's corporate culture? What are its primary shared values and 'pillars'?
2. How would you describe your team's culture? What additional responsibilities are placed on your team beyond official expectations?
3. What was your staff training experience like? How effective did you find it in terms of learning about conflict sensitivity, conflict prevention, etc.?
4. How would you describe the level of corporate transparency at your company, both internal (within your company) and external (in terms of sharing information with external stakeholders)?
5. What sort of power dynamics exist between the different departments?
6. What is the knowledge and information hierarchy and how is it communicated? Have there ever been any situations involving knowledge silos?
7. How are in-house security staff chosen?
8. What sort of training and equipment is provided to ensure the protection of people and assets? Do you feel that it's adequate?
9. What is your assessment of the security operations, in terms of protecting people and assets? How safe do you feel in this community?
10. How does the security team involve external stakeholders (authorities, public security, communities, NGOs/CSOs) in risk/conflict analysis?
11. In what ways do the local/regional/national authorities support security management in the community?
12. What are your team's interactions with the public security forces like?
13. What are your team's relations with the community relations team like?
14. What sort of tensions exist within the community (between groups or vis-à-vis the company)? How do they manifest themselves? Can you describe a recent incident?
15. What do members of the community think of the company's operation? Do you think there is there a connection between conflict in the community and the company?
16. Which stage of operations has generated the largest number of security issues/concern?
17. How has the public perception of the company's operation changed over time? Has it improved or worsened?
18. What is the community's opinion of the company? Are you respected, appreciated, and/or trusted?
19. How does the company respond to violence or conflict when it surfaces? What are some standing operating procedures?
20. How frequently has force been used to protect the site? What measures/policies are in place to regulate the use of force when responding to violent conflict?

21. What de-escalation mechanisms exist before hard security measures (building walls, arming guards, etc.) are taken within the company?
22. How are the sources of conflict involving the company, its operations, its security forces and the local community isolated, listed, and analyzed?
23. How do past security incidents lead to 'lessons learned' exercises that outline what the company did wrong or could have done better? How are these 'lessons' being integrated into future operations?
24. What processes exist to share concerns and suggestions regarding security with management? Do indicators exist to ensure they are acted on?
25. Is the security team proactively consulted on business decisions that may lead to conflict with stakeholders (ie. changes in contracting or procurement practices that may result in conflict with contractors, employees, lay-offs, labour negotiations, etc.)
26. Is the security team proactively informed of community grievances that may lead to conflict, protests, or disputes with the community (ie. grants, community support, etc.)
27. When security risks are being discussed, and what groups/teams are involved in those conversations?
28. How often is the risk and conflict analysis re-visited/updated?
29. What is the company's collaborative relationship with the private and public security teams like?
30. How well is the community relations team engaging with the community?
31. What initiatives exist to create links/bonds with the local community (social events, sports events, etc.)?
32. What kind of information is provided to the community? What are the main communication channels with the local community and how quickly is information provided?
33. How does the company define and measure community relations' processes? How does the company 'steer' when adjustments are needed?
34. In what ways do the local/regional/national authorities support the community relations team in terms of engagement with the community?
35. How is the community reacting to the company's general presence and operations?
36. How is the company gauging the community's general mood and accounting for possible divergences of opinion within the community?
37. How does the company measure community perceptions and any shifts over time?
38. How has the public perception of the company's operations changed over time? Has it improved or worsened?
39. What sort of tensions exist within the community (between groups or vis-à-vis the company)?
40. Are certain groups more vulnerable or disadvantaged within the community?
41. What are the main impediments to peaceful and mutually beneficial company-community relations?
42. What mechanisms exist to assess the various impacts (security-wise, social, economic, cultural) that company operations, including security measures, have on the local communities?
43. How is the company capturing 'weak signals' from its operating environment – that indicates that tensions may have quietly been building up?
44. How is the community relations team perceived and valued within the company?

## External Stakeholders:

1. What is your assessment of security in this community? In your view, does the community feel safe?
2. What does the community think of the company's operations? How has it changed over time?
3. What was your recruitment and training process like? Were you vetted? Are you from the local area?
4. What do you think generally causes conflict in the community? Have incidents increased with the company's presence in the region?
5. What sort of tensions exist in the community (between groups or vis-à-vis the company operations)? How do they manifest themselves? Can you describe a recent incident?
6. How do you respond to violence or conflict when it surfaces? What are some standing operating procedures?
7. What does the community think of you and your role here? Is the presence of the public security force adequate to maintain order? If not, what are your personnel and equipment needs?
8. What are the competing priorities of the public security forces in this community?
9. What is your relationship with the company like? Do they provide any support to the public security forces?
10. How much interaction do you have with the local company operations? Are you frequently called on to respond to incidents on and around the site?
11. How do you share information or coordinate with the company's security personnel when incidents occur? What is the division of labour between you and the in-house security staff employed by the mine?
12. Overall, what do you think of the community? Is it a safe place to live and work?
13. What sort of tensions exist in the community? How are different people and groups working to solve them?
14. What do you think of the local politicians and leaders? How do they serve you and provide for your needs?
15. What is your relationship like with the local public security forces? How do they interact with the community? How do they handle conflict and violent incidents?
16. Has the community's relationship with public security evolved over time – and if yes: why or what triggered the evolution?
17. What do you think of the local company and their operations? What is your relationship with them like?
18. In what ways does the company engage with and listen to the community? How successful are they in this?
19. How easy is it to express grievances with the company?
20. How has the presence of the company impacted the community? What do you think of the changes it has caused?
21. What do you think of the in-house security staff that work for the company? How do they interact with the community? How do they handle conflict and violence?
22. Has the community's relationship with in-house security evolved over time – and if yes: why or what triggered the evolution?
23. What do you think the community will be like in 10 years? Will it be better or worse?

# Data Sources and Key References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