

Social Unrest: Analysis, Monitoring and Developing Effective Countermeasures

Knowing and Influencing Societies to Shape Security Environments

ENODO Global, Inc.

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**Know Your Community.
Predict & Mitigate Risk.**

Executive Summary

Societal-based tensions and grievances are the underlying factors that drive the majority of civil disobedience and unrest in regions around the world. Unprecedented access to communications technology, including social media, enable people to organize and assemble rapidly around ideas or movements. Using the same means, political organizations, activist networks, and even extremist groups leverage peoples' hopes and frustrations to disseminate their propaganda. In some cases, they are able to unite large, diverse segments of the population to achieve their own objectives. Their activities can have lasting negative effects on a region's political and socioeconomic conditions. However, the actions of destructive actors within a community can be understood and countered as described below.

Problem

Harmful actors and organizations frequently take advantage of legitimate community grievances to further their own objectives. The aims of these groups typically contradict the long-term goals of the community, region or country. In essence, they use communities, groups, and individuals within societies as a proxy force. These activities can have negative consequences and pose significant threats to private and public sector institutions. Moreover, government institutions are not designed, and are often times ill-prepared to counter internal or external threats posed by groups that leverage societal grievances as a means to achieve their objectives.

Solution

Governments and corporations must design and implement effective community-based communications and engagement strategies to counter negative messaging and actions associated with disenfranchised communities and extremist groups. The combination of population-centric analysis, unconventional warfare strategies, and social media monitoring pinpoint the underlying tensions existing within societies that trigger unrest. This unique combination delivers social engagement strategies that counter negative messaging and destructive activities. This allows for channeling of resources to address grievances in an ordered, constructive manner.

ENODO's Approach

The ENODO Global approach delivers a solution to counter the negative effects of civil unrest. Fundamental to our entire process is developing a comprehensive understanding of societies and how they identify themselves within their environments. We then explore individual communities to ascertain basic needs and grievances. It is our understanding of the communities that enables development of effective communications and engagement strategies. Our process uses proven U.S. Intelligence Community techniques, advanced software tools, a proprietary population-centric methodology, and unconventional warfare techniques to effectively identify, monitor, and counter the underpinnings of social unrest.

The process begins by using advanced software tools to compile, filter, and analyze large volumes of source data, including social media. A proprietary population-centric methodology is applied to the findings to delineate key issues and specific complexities in a given population or target group. The result is an accurate in-depth, historical and contemporary understanding of the political, religious, economic, and ethnic dynamics within a particular region or country. This allows for discovery of sentiments and narratives that resonate within particular segments of a population. Unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency techniques are then applied to understand, shape, and influence target communities. Activities are monitored near real-time, throughout the entire process, creating a feedback mechanism to continuously improve messaging and evaluate progress of tailored social engagement strategies.

By utilizing a pragmatic approach that focuses on both the immediate and longer term needs of people and communities, we pinpoint and mitigate the systemic drivers of instability and prevent a group's ability to negatively influence affected communities and societies.

“A clear understanding of the origins of unrest enables us to innovate strategies to ease social tensions, delegitimize activists, and shape community sentiments.”

Example: Mauritania

ENODO Global applied its approach to a real-world scenario in Mauritania. We examined Mauritanian civil society, including political, environmental, food insecurity, slavery, and security related issues. The following illustrates how our population-centric analysis identified the social tensions and grievances that drive instability, and the narratives and messages that resonate with various, diverse segments of the population. We then tracked and monitored activities, narratives, and attitudes near real-time through automated reporting tools. In this example, social media enabled individuals across different political, ethnic, and religious beliefs to coalesce and mobilize around a single narrative that fueled demonstrations and protests in the capital of Nouakchott.

A historical and contemporary analysis identified deep ethnic, religious, and economic cleavages within Mauritanian civil society. These fissures are exacerbated by drought, urbanization, Islamist extremism, regional insecurity, and political coups. Our population-centric analysis uncovered the systemic drivers of instability across various segments of the population, throughout the country. Key findings and outliers identified extreme poverty, a youth bulge, criminal activity, corruption, and food and water shortages as the driving factors behind the social unrest and political instability. Our baseline analysis, key findings, and outliers are provided in the Mauritania Quick Look Report (*Figure 1*).

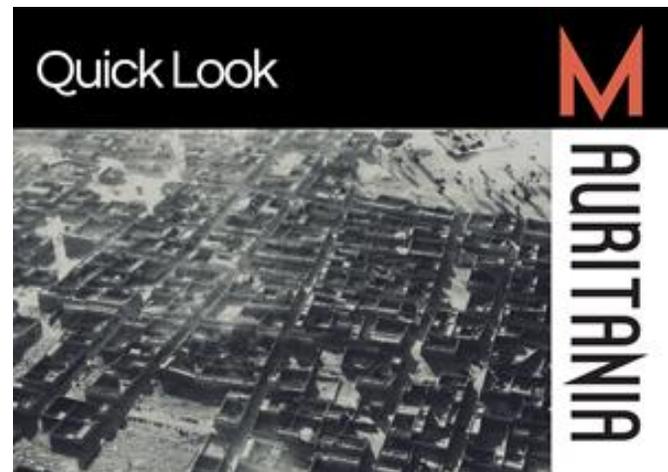


Figure 1 Mauritania Quick Look Report

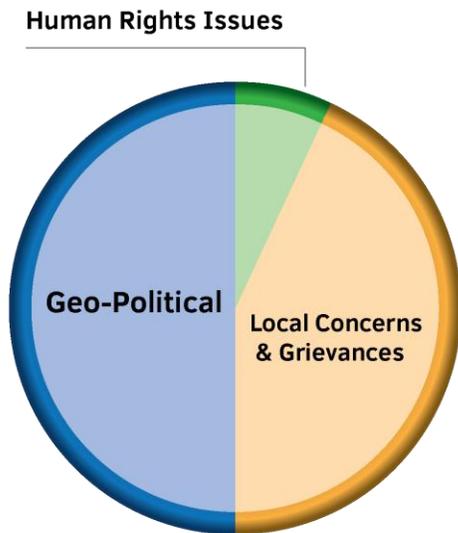


Figure 2: Event Type

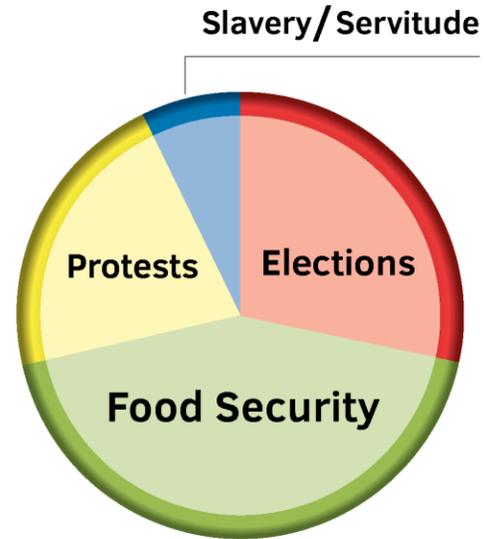


Figure 3: Event Sub Type

Our baseline analysis informed the design of specific data collection requirements and tailored search queries to retrieve information from various sources, including local and national domestic news outlets, international news agencies, and social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Data collection occurred from June 1, 2014 until July 9, 2014, in which time 2,318 individual data sources were collected and analyzed. In order to refine and evaluate, the data was filtered and organized by event type, within distinct categories (*Figure 2*). Within these broad categories, data was further segregated into subtypes related to security issues, slavery and servitude, elections, and protests (*Figure 3*). Analyzing data by subset validated the key findings and outliers in the Quick Look Report and identified narratives and messages that had the greatest impact across different segments of the population. Additional validation of key findings and outliers was provided by regional subject matter experts and human networks.

This study's analytical focus and monitoring activities were directed toward geopolitical activities, local concerns and grievances, and human rights issues. However, based on social media indicators, analysts shifted their attention toward broad civil unrest emerging over Israeli bombings and activities in Gaza. To properly address this development, our team of analysts redirected their social media-based collection and analysis efforts to monitor local anti-American protests. Figure 4 illustrates details of the situation report that tracked the protests and their approach to the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott.

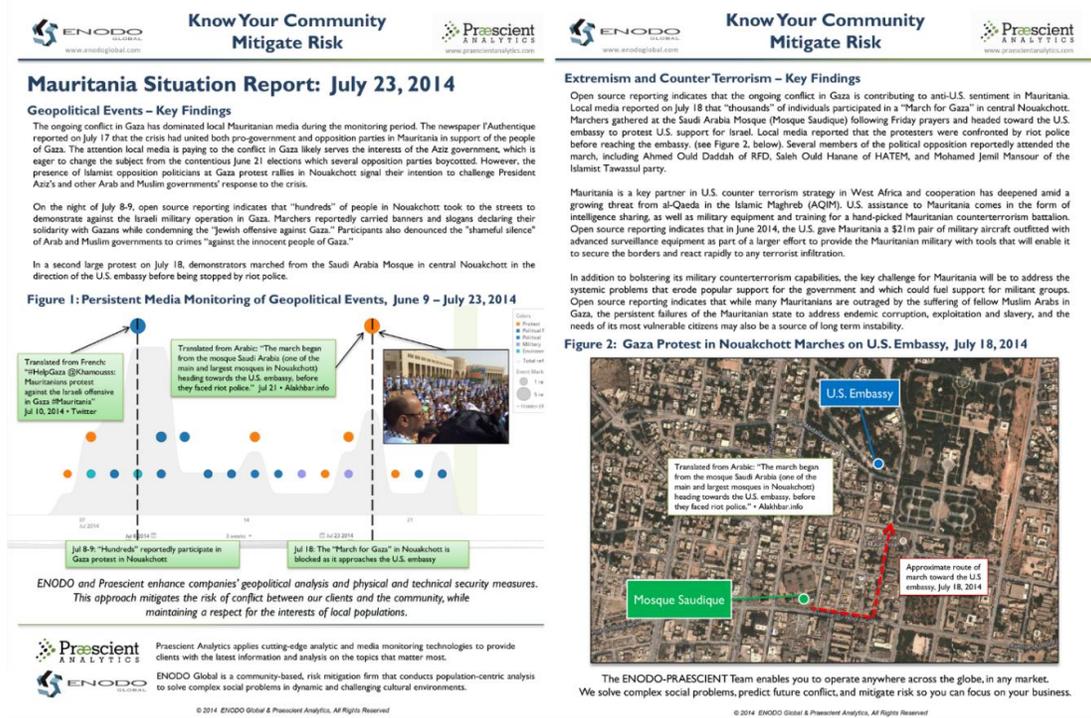


Figure 4: Situation Report

The July 18th, 2014, protests in Mauritania demonstrated how thousands of individuals with diverse ethnic, religious, social, and economic backgrounds could quickly mobilize and coalesce around a single narrative. By tracking this individual event, analysts identified, post-facto, the anti-U.S. narratives that initiated the protests. With this understanding, our analysts identified themes and messages that resonated with the greatest segments of the population and began development of effective counter narratives to mitigate future agitation and protest.

Conclusion

ENODO Global understands the risks associated with civil unrest. Our population-centric methodology and superior analytical capabilities allow us to mitigate threats by developing effective social engagement initiatives. Our approach delivers innovative strategies and tailored narratives to counter social tensions and positively change a target group's attitudes and behaviors. We delegitimize activist's narratives and activities, diminish their influence and utility, and build cohesion between government institutions, companies, and communities. This enables our clients to channel resources towards activities of mutual benefit and prosperity which preserves public security.

The Mauritania example demonstrates a small portion of ENODO Global's overall capability to shape future security environments. Whether in benign or conflict environments, our process can be applied to any geopolitical, socioeconomic or ethnocentric condition to promote enduring stability and security within civil societies.

