

Local Voices for Peace in Northern Nigeria

The views of local civil society on the
causes of violent conflict in the region
and the prospects for peace



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Cover image: Children prepare themselves meals at a refugee camp in Northern Nigeria. Despite widespread violence, local peacebuilding organisations are optimistic that a more peaceful future remains a possibility.

Executive Summary

Northern Nigeria continues to suffer from waves of violence and armed conflict, the varied symptoms of varied causes. Amnesty International reports that by the end of 2015, over 2 million people had been displaced by the conflict between the military and the armed group Boko Haram. Despite the sobering statistics, peacebuilding organisations in Northern Nigeria are optimistic that a more peaceful future remains a possibility.

Peace Direct has more than a decade of experience successfully supporting civil society in conflict zones around the world. In July 2016, Peace Direct convened and consulted with a range of local peacebuilding organisations working in Northern Nigeria, in Kano, Kano State. The groups run a range of projects and programmes to respond to, mitigate and ultimately prevent atrocities and violent conflict in their communities. This report, based on those consultations, as well as research carried out by the groups prior to the meeting, shows that many remain optimistic about the prospects for peace in their region.¹

¹ **68%**

of 326 local people that we surveyed felt that a more peaceful future for the region was either 'likely' or 'very likely'.

However, in order to make that peaceful future a reality, their peacebuilding efforts must be strengthened. This report highlights civil society analysis of the main conflict issues in Northern Nigeria – and what can be done to address them. It provides an overview of seven key causes of violence, and the strategies that local

peacebuilders say are key to building lasting peace. They noted in particular that:

- ***Boko Haram is not the only threat***

There is a tendency to associate Northern Nigeria solely with the violence of Boko Haram. In fact, a wide range of conflicts and issues affect the region. Only through a more nuanced understanding of these issues, and how they have given rise to Boko Haram as well as other violence, will peacebuilders and their partners be able to address them.

- ***There needs to be a focus on youth engagement***

The challenge common to many conflict issues in Northern Nigeria is to find productive ways to support young people who, as well as being victims or survivors of conflict, are often drawn into violence. Only through an ambitious strategy to support young people and provide fairer economic development can they be offered a better future – and their involvement in violence reduced. Economic insecurity was the single most cited concern among communities surveyed for this report.

- ***Support to civil society is vital***

Successful peacebuilding efforts by local civil society groups are highlighted throughout this report. These initiatives are particularly appreciated by host communities,² not least because of the fact that despite the current crisis in Northern Nigeria, civil society groups remain generally able to operate openly and safely.³

² **67%**

of community members surveyed were aware of peace initiatives which they thought were either 'effective' or 'very effective'.

Some of these groups collaborate with and receive support from international actors, and there are positive examples of this type of work. However, such support remains fragmented. There are limited opportunities for local civil society organisations (CSOs) to access funding to design and implement their own interventions.

Furthermore, support should not just mean funding. There needs to be more support for larger-scale collaborations among local peacebuilding groups to develop locally-led solutions. Developing the capacity of local organisations – in particular in the area of preventing violent extremism – would be of particular benefit.

Overall, it should be noted that local peacebuilders feel that the international community has improved its understanding of the issues in Northern Nigeria. But many also say that international groups still base their information on reporting from Lagos, and make simplistic connections regarding the nature of violence in their region. This research highlights the nuanced understanding that local peacebuilders can provide, and the finely-judged interventions that will be necessary to better influence events. Peace Direct hopes this will be the beginning of further and more fruitful partnerships combining the skills and experience of all those who want to see peace in Northern Nigeria – local and international alike.

³ **76%**

of participating organisations in this report feel they can organise or operate in a 'free' or 'very free' manner, whilst 82% defined the security situation for operating as 'fair', 'safe' or 'very safe'.



Methodology

This report is based on a consultation, also referred to by Peace Direct and the participants as a 'Peace Exchange', held in July 2016 in Kano, Kano State, with local peacebuilding practitioners from across Northern Nigeria. From more than 70 applications, Peace Direct selected 17 organisations to participate in the consultation.

Prior to the workshop, participating organisations surveyed their communities and contributed to background research. 326 people from 10 states across Northern Nigeria were interviewed in these surveys, the results of which are summarised below and feed into the report.

Survey results

Prior to the Northern Nigeria Peace Exchange, participating organisations were asked to survey individuals in their communities about peace, conflict and security issues. Based on more than 300 participants, the most important concerns local communities have include:

- Economic insecurity – a lack of jobs and livelihoods (53% of respondents cited this as one of their most important concerns).
- Attacks by or the presence of armed groups such as Boko Haram (37% of respondents).
- Corruption (27% of respondents).
- Political or election-based violence (27% of respondents).
- Interreligious conflict (26% of respondents).

Peace is possible

Despite the headlines, Nigerians are optimistic that the situation in their area will improve. 68% of responses to the question "How do you feel about the potential for a more peaceful future in your community?" were 'somewhat likely' or 'very likely'.

Complex problems, complex solutions

As the range of concerns communities have suggests, the socio-economic complexity of Nigeria demands a variety of responses. This is reflected in the views of survey participants, who called for a range of almost equal peacebuilding priorities. These included calls for work on:

- Jobs and livelihoods - 43% of respondents said this was most needed.
- Interreligious peacemaking - 40% of respondents said this was most needed.
- Youth programmes - 39% of respondents said this was most needed.

Working together

Although more than half of the organisations who participated in the Northern Nigeria Peace Exchange said that cooperation between local peacebuilding organisations in Northern Nigeria is 'fair', 'good' or 'very good', seven – or 40% of those who took part – said there was only a 'low' level of interaction among civil society. In light of the varied causes of conflict and insecurity, this suggests

that work to support closer collaboration between organisations working on different issues would be a good avenue to explore.

Local knows best

16/17 organisations said that they felt local

communities had a 'fair', 'good' or 'very good' level of trust in the work of local civil society organisations. This suggests that civil society groups might be an appropriate place to begin coordinating larger-scale work in areas where trust in local political and administrative authorities is low.

The workshop was coordinated by the Peace Initiatives Network (PIN) in collaboration with Peace Direct.

This report is the first in a series of country and thematic reports that will canvas the views of local peacebuilding experts and practitioners on the conflicts in their communities. Peace Direct

aims to ensure that local perspectives, knowledge and recommendations feed into wider policy and programmatic decisions, and we hope that these reports will make an important contribution.

All unattributed quotes in this report are from local peacebuilders or workshop participants involved in the consultation in Kano.

Why I work for peace

Michael Olufemi Sodipo is the Project coordinator of Peace Initiative Network (PIN), a peacebuilding organisation based in Kano, where he still lives with his family. This is his story.

'I founded PIN in 2004 with five other people, Muslims and Christians, who had had similar experiences to me.

In 2004 in Plateau State there was a crisis. Well coordinated reprisal attacks by young people took place in Kano as a result of dead bodies brought to Kano from Shendam/Yelwa in Plateau State - the troubled areas.

'I am Christian and was born in Lagos, but had lived in the community in Kano for 19 years. Somebody decided I should be attacked and tipped off a militia from another area to come and do it.'

'That day at 10am, I came back to my house. My wife and brother were both out of town

so I was alone. I noticed that the whole neighbourhood was very quiet, the shops were all closed, I felt danger. I locked my house and went into the streets to see what was going on. When I reached the main road I saw about 100 young boys coming for me. I managed to run to my neighbours who were Muslim. They hid me.'

'I was at their house for four hours and I could see the smoke from them setting fire to my house and my car. Eventually, the police came and took me to a safehouse.'

'I had lived in the neighbourhood for 19 years and I was seen as a stranger. But I did not want to take revenge. I knew I must do something positive. For me, 'forgive' is the key word. I needed to forgive, move on and change the trend towards violence. So the other founders of PIN and I, who had all had similar experiences, set up the organisation to work with young people on leadership, peace and identity - to stop this happening again.'

Conflict issues in Northern Nigeria

At the workshop, participants highlighted a range of conflict issues that affect Northern Nigeria. These include disputes and violence related to:

- Religious conflict motivated by or in the name of religion, within and between different faiths.
- Violent extremism, defined by participants in this report as ‘the attempt to enforce an extreme interpretation of religious issues through the use of violence.’
- Socio-economic issues, in particular poverty and inequality.
- Politically-driven violence, notably related to corruption.
- Ethnic and inter-communal violence, driven by political patronage and the distribution of economic benefits to certain groups over others, as well as farmer-herder disputes.
- Human rights violations and gender-based violence, committed by multiple parties and a

cause and effect linked to all other issues.

- Land ownership and access to and the use of natural resources.

The following sections discuss these issues in light of the views of local peacebuilders, and the strategies they suggest need to be prioritised in order to address them.

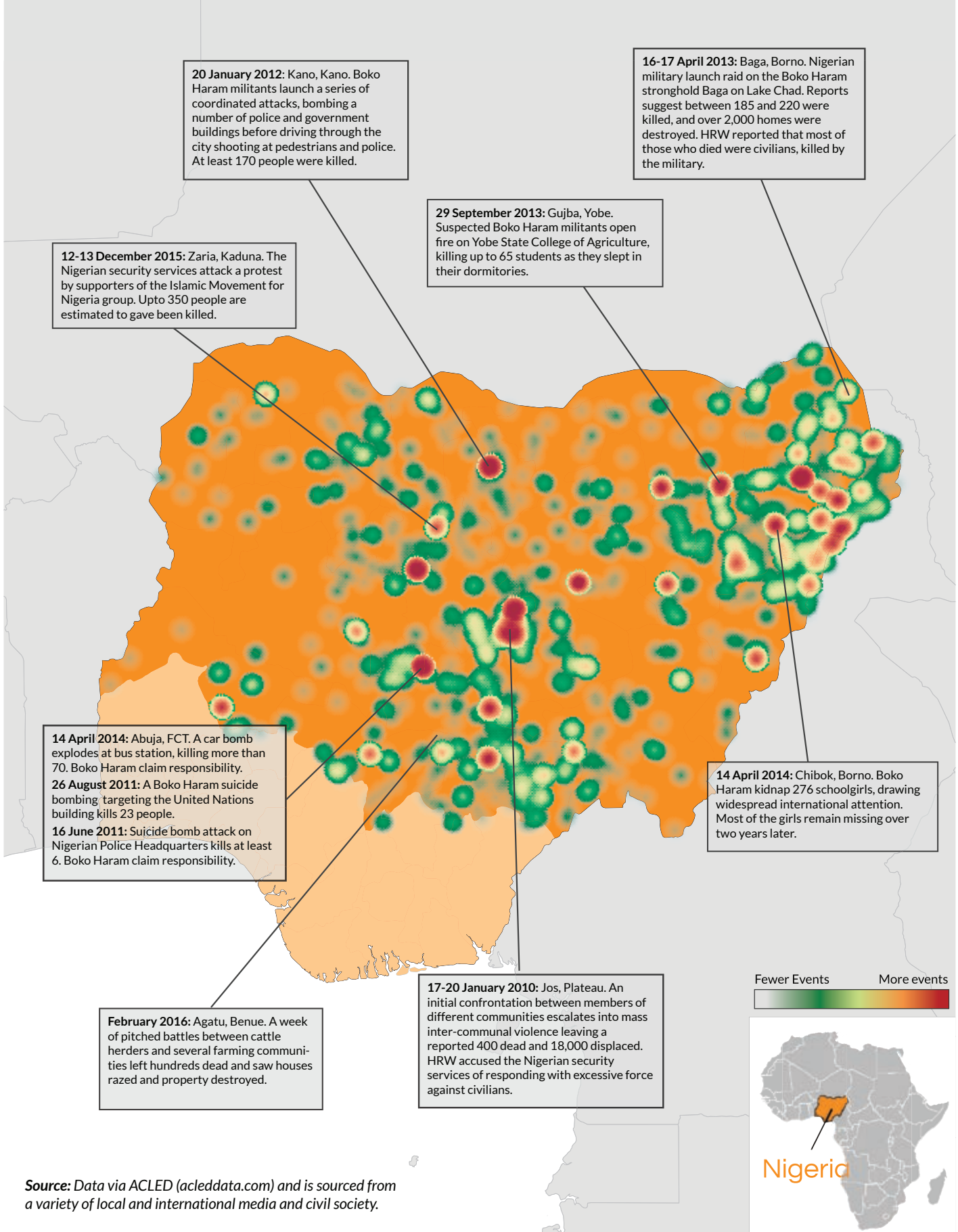
While it is important to address all of the factors relating to conflict in Northern Nigeria, the organisations also focused on developing initial strategies for the three areas they consider to be critical: socio-economic conflict, inter-religious conflict, and violent extremism.

The strategies as they are presented here form an initial overview of their analysis of what needs to be done and where key opportunities lie. Many of the peacebuilding organisations who participated are already actively engaged in pursuing some of these strategies. However, all agree that greater collaboration and further analysis would allow for larger-scale and more ambitious programmes.



Recent violence in Northern Nigeria

Violent events 2010-2016. Hotspots represent multiple incidents in the same location.



Source: Data via ACLED (acleddata.com) and is sourced from a variety of local and international media and civil society.

Religion: key conflict issues



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“The most powerful weapon not just in Nigeria, but in the world today, is religion.”

Local peacebuilders note that conflict motivated by or mobilised around religion continues to be a significant issue in Northern Nigeria. This includes both intra- and inter-religious conflicts and violence within and across Muslim and Christian communities. It is often fuelled by hate speech and sometimes perpetrated by religious leaders themselves, but geographic, ethnic and political dynamics are also involved. Local peacebuilders highlight that although such conflicts are rooted in intolerance and ignorance of other faiths, they are intrinsically linked to these factors. These are manipulated to drive divisions for other reasons.

“We see situations like in Plateau where most of the settlers are Muslim, but they are not in conflict over religion. They are seeking recognition.”

Unfortunately, the politics of Northern Nigeria in particular are often framed in terms of binary narratives that pitch the country’s ‘Muslim’ North against its ‘Christian’ South. Peacebuilders feel this is often a key misconception of external analysts. While Nigeria is often described in these terms, there are people of both faiths, and others as well, living across the country. The binary narrative therefore masks much more complex dynamics, where conflict is often a result of interactions between politics, religion, identity and citizenship.

Gender plays an important role as women are often disproportionately affected by religious violence and conflict. Ongoing religious conflict has led to divisions within communities that were once peaceful: rioting, looting, rape, killings, economic loss, and fear of other religious groups are some of its consequences.



State police officials inspect the wreckage of burnt vehicles at the scene of twin bomb blasts.

© Diaricritico de Venezuela/ AFP PHOTO/ STR

Areas affected by religious conflict include the North West, as well as Kaduna and Kano. The North Central area may be an area for increasing division along religious lines in future.

Religion: local strategies for peace

Northern Nigeria has been greatly threatened by religious conflict in recent years. Nevertheless, inter-religious harmony remains the norm in many communities, and there is much existing capacity to draw on. Civil society groups have been working to bridge religious divisions and mitigate religious conflict. This includes community peacebuilding efforts, working in schools and with young people, and using the media to counter hate speech, to educate, and to sensitize people for greater religious tolerance.

Women and young people are actively engaged in these efforts. Government security agencies have worked positively with civil society in some places to address religious conflicts.

Local peacebuilders believe that media have a particularly strong role to play in this area. Precisely because religion is such a strong identity factor for so many in Nigeria, it can be a powerful force for good, more so given that civil society in some areas, for example the North West, is mainly composed of faith-based organisations.

The following text is a summary of the key areas for investment by civil society to tackle the root causes of the violence.

Key areas for peacebuilding investment

- The development of advocacy partnerships with religious and traditional leaders.
- A reduction in religiously motivated hate speech
- The promotion of inter-communal, inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony using positive religious role models and local media.



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Existing civil society capacity in Northern Nigeria

The strengths of civil society include:

- The presence of sympathetic religious and traditional leaders and organisations.
- Specific expertise in countering hate speech and early warning systems to detect rises in tension.
- Expertise in working on inter-religious conflicts using a range of approaches including sports, culture and media.
- Support from some media organisations.
- Particularly strong work by women and youth groups.

Interfaith sporting activities run by local peacebuilding organisations in Northern Nigeria are especially effective in engaging large numbers of young people.



New Era Education and Charitable Support Foundation is an organisation based in Plateau State, with more than ten years' experience of interfaith peacebuilding. They successfully managed to gather more than 200 people from Muslim and Christian backgrounds, women and men, to sit together and share their experience of interfaith peacebuilding. This event proved highly successful and the participants were tense yet excited to cross lines of religion, economics, tribe and gender, to transcend the status quo and discover empathy for each other's personal life experiences. Together they realized that *"an enemy is one whose story we have not heard."* Over 3,000 DVDs of the event were requested by people from 70 countries around the world, highlighting the importance of shared learning in peacebuilding.

Priority activities recommended by local peacebuilders

Local peacebuilders suggested a variety of activities that ought to be supported. These include:

- Region wide radio campaigns promoting peace and tolerance between religions.
- Expansion of peace clubs and interfaith activities at youth centres. These should focus on interfaith dialogue, tolerance, community development, hate and dangerous speech, women's rights and youth engagement. All the Peace Exchange participating CSOs saw the provision of training in delivering these programmes as key to supporting their work.
- Expansion of interfaith sporting activities, which are especially effective in engaging large numbers of young people. These usually draw

large crowds and give opportunities for talks about peacebuilding or community issues.

- Building capacity of civil society and government officials to combat the drivers of violent conflict, and strengthen links between them to coordinate their atrocity prevention actions.

Resources required

Local peacebuilding organisations feel that this is an area where their capacity is strong; many already have effective programmes in this area. However, more support and collaboration among groups will allow programmes to have a much larger impact, for example by allowing more training of volunteers.

This is an area where there are opportunities for more engagement with and support from local businesses, In particular, more support from media groups could help promote inter-religious harmony and counter divisive messages.

Church of The Brethren is one of the biggest churches in Borno, Northern Nigeria, destroyed by Boko Haram. One of the church guards helped many of the church members escape. He was later targeted and killed by Boko Haram while in town on his motorbike.

Protecting victims of child marriage

Based in Bauchi, the ASHH Foundation works to empower women and young people to improve their lives and build peace in Nigeria, through capacity building, training for caregivers and peace education.

A recent case in which the ASHH Foundation intervened shows the importance of strong relations with different stakeholders. A teenage girl who was forcefully married attempted to poison the man so she could escape the marriage. ASHH was able to respond and liaise with the State Sharia Commission, looking to ensure the safety of the girl. However, when further punishments were threatened against her, ASHH were also able to hold a series of meetings with the state authorities and secure her safe release. Although this angered some militants in the area, the girl was safe due to ASHH's ability to intervene on her behalf with a number of different authorities, both state and religious.



“You can pull this state together, or you can destroy it”

The Imam and the Pastor

One organisation represented at the Nigeria Peace Exchange was the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC). A community-based organisation that specializes in Muslim-Christian dialogue and mediation, the IMC has become one of Nigeria’s most well-known peacebuilding groups. This is its founding story, reproduced from the IMC:

“Ten years ago, Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye were mortal enemies, intent on killing one another in the name of religion.

In 1992, violent inter-religious conflict broke out in Kaduna State. Christians and Muslims fought each other in the marketplace, destroying each

others’ crops and attacking each others’ families. Both the Imam and the Pastor were drawn into the fighting, and both paid a heavy price for their involvement – Imam Ashafa lost two brothers and his teacher, and Pastor James lost his hand

Afterwards, they each dreamed of revenge against the other. Nonetheless, as leaders in their communities, the two men reluctantly agreed to meet. Imam Ashafa recalls what happened: “A mutual friend took both of us by the hand and said: ‘The two of you can pull this state together, or you can destroy it. Do something!’” Over the next few years, through increasingly frequent meetings and separate religious epiphanies, the two men slowly built mutual respect, and decided to work together to bridge the religious divides between their communities

In 1995, they formed the Interfaith Mediation Centre.”

The role of media

Both local and international media have contributed to inter-religious misunderstandings and conflict. At the same time, media has the potential to be a solution and local media has the potential to promote peace. One example is the work of the Strategic Powerful Information Network (SPIN) in Kano. Their peace journalism work over the past decade has played a vital role in promoting non-violent solutions and countering violent extremist narratives. Their ‘Civil Society’ newsletter has been published in Kano for over a decade, funded entirely through its sales.



Violent extremism: key conflict issues

The definition of violent extremism that the workshop participants agreed on for this report is: *Attempts to enforce an extreme interpretation of religious issues through the use of violence.*

Violent extremism has severely affected Northern Nigeria, resulting in death, kidnappings, abductions, sexual abuse and slavery, the destruction of property, political instability, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and deepening mistrust and enmity among different groups in the region.

The violence perpetrated by Boko Haram and other extremist groups continues to be a serious threat to communities in Northern Nigeria, despite a reduction in attacks over the past year. Since it first emerged, the group has moved operations across the North in response to government and international action against it.

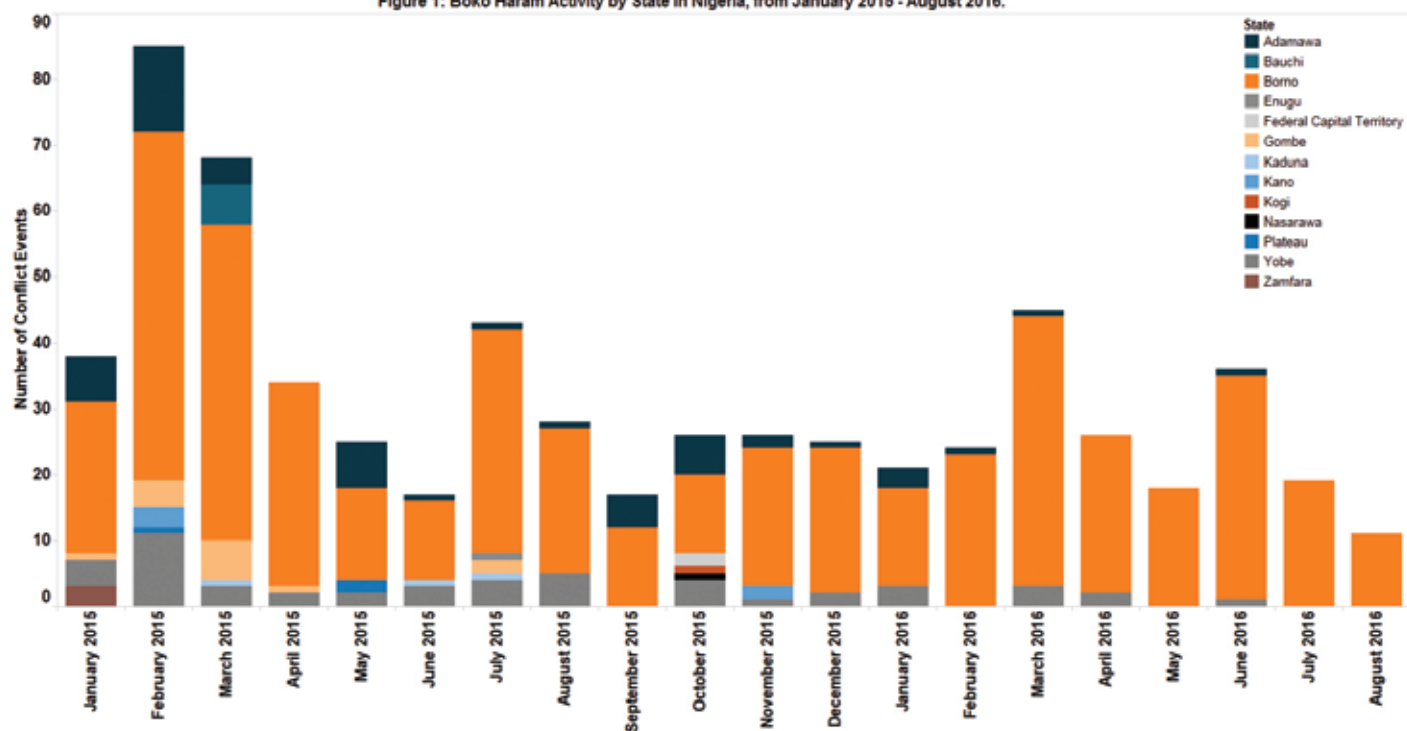
Boko Haram reportedly has ties to other international extremist groups, as well as with local cattle rustlers, politicians, and security agents – meaning there is a complex array of relationships behind the violence.

While Boko Haram’s influence has been diminishing in some areas because of continuing efforts by the Nigerian Army, members of the group have scattered across the country, with cells active in many states and potentially able to recruit in new areas.

The group is not centrally organised. It operates in different areas with different local commanders, who often send fighters from one area to undertake attacks in another, or move units around.

Boko Haram activity has diminished over the last 18 months.

Figure 1: Boko Haram Activity by State in Nigeria, from January 2015 - August 2016.



“If something is not done, [Boko Haram and other armed groups] will recruit people in new areas, and we will have bigger problems.”

Northern Nigerian peacebuilders consider that the international response to Boko Haram has not addressed the underlying roots of mobilisation for and recruitment into extremist groups. They say that the role of external actors, entrenched poverty and underdevelopment, and extremist religious indoctrination have not been adequately addressed. While the lack of education, jobs, and economic opportunities is not the only reason people join extremist groups, issues such as poverty and illiteracy are important drivers for recruitment in the north. Many fighters have come from the northwest and north central areas in particular.

While Boko Haram is the most well-known extremist group in the region, there are others on the rise. They often do not have clearly identified names and identities, but attention to prevent the proliferation of similar groups is paramount.

Civil society’s most important role in preventing and responding to extremist violence in the North has been to:

- Engage youth to reduce recruitment.
- Offer alternative avenues for young people to pursue positive opportunities and leadership roles in their communities.

Nigerian government policy

The counterterrorist strategy of the Office of the National Security Adviser of the previous administration, led by Goodluck Jonathan, was well received and appreciated by local peacebuilders in Nigeria. It was the first time that civil society and the government had come together and adopted the ‘soft’ approach to countering violent extremism. It acknowledged that the hard approach initially taken by national security forces may have alienated some local populations and inadvertently contributed to the recruitment and propaganda of Boko Haram.

The strategy, introduced in March 2014, is centred on three pillars: counter radicalisation; de-radicalisation; and strategic communications. The approach weaves multi-stakeholders engagement strategies with human rights compliant approaches of responding to, preventing and dealing with extremism and radicalisation that lead to extremism. This counter-terrorism approach espouses technically sound, practicable ideas for building robust partnerships with states, local governments, and civil society.

Boko Haram

Founded in

2002

by Mohammed Yusuf

Led since the death of Yusuf in

2009

by Abubakar Shekau

Has launched violent attacks throughout north-eastern Nigeria, including kidnapping

276

girls in Chibok in 2014

Boko Haram and state actors together have killed more than

28,000

people since 2011, according to the Council on Foreign Relations.

Violent extremism: local strategies for peace

The following text is a summary of the key areas for investment by civil society to tackle the root causes of the violence.

Key areas for peacebuilding investment

- To strengthen community resilience to violence and religious extremism through economic and peacebuilding activities.
- Focus on advocacy to policy makers to help reduce high levels of marginalisation and fragmentation due to poor governance.

Existing civil society capacity in Northern Nigeria

- The reputations of local peacebuilding organisations at community level allow for the trust needed to build effective programmes.
- Strength in leadership and youth training programmes.
- Strong connections with religious leaders must be built upon to counter narratives that support violent extremism.
- Women's groups are able to engage with women to start strategies from within the home.

Priority activities recommended by local peacebuilders

- Large-scale youth training programmes, focused on training in peacebuilding, sustainable business skills and leadership.

- Focus on creating livelihood opportunities for disadvantaged young women.
- Religious education among youths to create religious literacy against the narratives of violent extremists.
- Build early warning response systems among young people as a mechanism to identify and report on signs of violent extremism.
- Advocacy visit to ministries of Religious Affairs in the north. They are the main partners and entry points to the state governments and to help with advocacy for government policy change.
- Build trust between the security forces, in particular the police, who are a permanent presence, and local communities.
- Promote positive engagement between local government officials and their respective communities, particularly with youth.
- Promote social cohesion, inclusiveness and national identity.
- Identify locally influential religious and traditional leaders to establish credible and effective messaging and narratives, and develop peace language and messages with them.
- Provide capacity building on basic principles of conflict prevention, trauma healing, early warning signs and response mechanisms, risk assessment, strategies for effective advocacy, and security training for safety consciousness. 95% of local groups interviewed signified the need for capacity building on issues related to peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

- Build local capacity to manage IDP issues and develop collaboration with existing structures in affected areas.

Resources required

The capacity to design effective programmes to prevent violent extremism is one area where local organisations feel weakest. The rise of Boko Haram is on a scale that presents a challenge that they are not familiar with.

Though many have capacity in inter-religious peacebuilding, they feel they need more support to learn from the experiences of groups in other countries on how to prevent violent extremism. More focus on rehabilitating the education system is required, including both building new schools and reinforcing positive messages of peace through the curriculum. More research is also needed on the triggers for recruitment into violent extremist groups in Northern Nigeria, to help more effective programming by local groups.

Military intervention

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is a joint counter-terrorism entity comprised of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, whose militaries agreed to work together to defend their territorial borders of these countries. The Lake Chad Basin MNJTF serves as the coordination hub, synchronizing all the representatives' military forces in action against Boko Haram. In 2015 the MNJTF headquarters were relocated to N'Djamena. Civil society groups view the military response to Boko Haram as inappropriate; a brutal crackdown has inhibited local support, and in some places actually driven recruitment for the group.

PAVE – success, failure, success again?

The Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) was a network of Nigerian civil society organisations founded as a means to enhance collaboration between civil society and government institutions in order to counter the violent extremism. PAVE was an inclusive network, engaging with communities at a grassroots level, aiming to address the underlying causes of violent extremism.

The Office of the National Security Adviser reached out to a number of Nigerian civil society organisations based throughout Nigeria. With support from the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation

Task Force, European Union (EU) and the International Centre for Counter Terrorism, the Office of the National Security Adviser hosted a meeting with over forty local civil society organisations in October 2014. This led to the establishment of Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE), whose focus areas included peacebuilding and conflict resolution, women and youth, security and safety, media outreach, and humanitarian interventions and internally displaced persons.

But PAVE was short-lived. With the emergence of the present administration, PAVE was abolished and all its laudable programmes were stopped. It was a useful outlet for peacebuilding support that needs to be revitalised.



Engaging young people to prevent violent extremism

Nasir 28, Kabiru 32 and Jamilu 32, alumni of Peace Clubs run by the Peace Initiative Network, (PIN), based in Kano. Both now volunteer as facilitators for the clubs.

‘We have spent almost ten years now working with young people, helping them to become involved with the community.

‘The young people from poorer backgrounds do not have any employment and have nothing to do, then they get into drugs. Some youth also lack money to continue their education.

‘Extremism is a big issue with the youth. Boko Haram can pay just 10,000 Naira to a young person to burn down their school and they will take it as they have nothing else. It is not just boys, girls are likely to become suicide bombers as Boko Haram can hide bombs under their robes.

‘PIN provides these youth with livelihood training, tie-dye, making soaps, carpentry, and painting houses. Sometimes we pay for their fees to continue school. We train around 200 young people [aged between 15 and 30] a year and they come to the vocational centre every week day after school finishes at 2pm.

‘It takes around three months for a young person to learn a skill and while they do it we provide them with peacebuilding and leadership training. But PIN does not have the resources to provide the young people with the tools they need to pursue the trade, we can only provide the training. Some young people are able to raise the funds to start the business but many go back to do nothing on the streets. We need more support.

‘It is important that the youth see themselves as important in society. What we are doing is ensuring the youth can contribute to their society.’

Socio-economic issues: key conflict issues

“It’s more than just jobs. Even if there were jobs for everyone, there would still be conflict about how the jobs are distributed”

Entrenched social and economic inequalities, unemployment, labour disputes, corruption, and economic domination by some groups over others are deep-seated conflict issues in the North.

The lack of economic and employment opportunities, particularly for young people, is an important factor contributing to restlessness among young people and their political manipulation. It is also important for recruitment into armed groups. Areas with high rates of youth unemployment include Kebbi and Zamfara in the northwest and Bauchi and Borno in the north, central and east.

Communities across the region face immediate and long-term effects of socio-economic conflict, including violence, drug abuse, non-payment of salaries, industrial unrest and strikes, a lack of basic services including health and education, and poor governance.

There is a particular concern over the lack of engagement and ongoing exclusion of youth from participation in local governance, as well as a lack of service provision supporting their needs, which has weakened the relationship between the government and the next generation.

Religious and traditional leaders maintain stronger ties and are able to engage with youth more actively, with both positive and negative implications, while labour unions, political parties, civil society groups, the judiciary, the security forces, and youth are all also key stakeholders for socio-economic work in Northern Nigeria.

For its part, civil society has an important role as a watchdog of government, but local groups noted the need to improve trust and partnership between government and civil society. The current struggles between the Executive and Judiciary at the national level are also creating challenges that impact communities.

Research organisations such as the International Crisis Group have noted that “Preventing and resolving conflict in the far north will require far better management of public resources, an end to their distribution according to ethnic identity and job-creating economic revival.”

Youth unemployment is an additional challenge that most organisations working in affected states have to face when trying to implement a project. Indeed, when implementing peace clubs in Bauchi State, the ASHHH Foundation initially had to deal with a high number of young people asking for payment in return for participating in activities. They managed to turn this challenge into an opportunity by reorganizing their methodology to work with self-motivated groups aiming to restore peace in their communities. In the words of Kingsley Yalling from the ASHH foundation: “The result is encouraging and outstanding. The membership [of these peace clubs] has increased from inception to date. We are so proud”.

Socio-economic issues: local strategies for peace



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Families displaced by Boko Haram violence console themselves with indigenous songs as they farm.

In surveys completed by peacebuilders prior to the workshop organised by Peace Direct, community members prioritised socio-economic programmes above all else as key to building peace in the north.

For example, poverty and inequality are linked to the emergence and growth of Boko Haram, according to local peacebuilders, and addressing these effectively and fairly remain a critical aspect of building a peaceful future in Northern Nigeria.

Groups noted the critical role that the government can and must play in supporting more just and sustainable development in the north, engaging actively with civil society, including local peacebuilding organisations, towards that end.

The following text is a summary of the key areas for investment by civil society to tackle the root causes of the violence.

Key areas for peacebuilding investment

Local peacebuilders have outlined the following priorities:

- Improving community awareness of government-sponsored programmes for youth.
- Investing in local economic development: job creation, grants and vocational training schemes for young people and women in particular.
- Advocating and strengthening policy implementation that reduces socio-economic divisions.
- Strengthening local governance so that communities have greater faith in how resources are allocated.

Existing civil society capacity in Northern Nigeria

There is a strong basis for strengthening current socio-economic peacebuilding activities, and developing more programmes run at the local level (with small and medium enterprises which link to international targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals). Local peacebuilders have highlighted the human resources available in the region – competent, networked staff and consultants who understand and can develop programmes related to socio-economic conflict. They should be provided with support for their strategic planning and other capacity development, building on the trust that allows them to engage with communities.

Local peacebuilders also noted that the Nigerian Government is dedicating effort and resources to programmes, for instance for youth skills and job training through the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). However, communities are unaware of some of these programmes so investment in communication to local communities is needed.

Priority activities recommended by local peacebuilders

- Livelihoods training programmes, including vocational training, targeting young people in particular.
- Youth leadership programmes and youth-led community activities, such as planting trees and community clean up initiatives. These encourage young people to develop leadership skills at the community level.

Resources required

While there is some existing capacity for socio-economic peacebuilding programmes, three key gaps need to be filled:

Local civil society staff need additional training (and in some cases re-training) to develop and implement effective programmes. Programmes should also include more access to training facilities for youth and the creation of markets for their products.

International interventions need to be improved so that they focus more on socio-economic aspects of the conflict issues in Northern Nigeria.

Increased funding from donors dedicated to socio-economic peacebuilding programmes is needed. There remains inadequate support for these types of efforts and an overreliance on security/military efforts.



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Politics and elections: key conflict issues

“Corruption is a driver of conflict – maybe the key driver.”



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Electoral and political conflict is a significant issue in Northern Nigeria, as in the rest of the country.

Conflicts occur both within and between political parties, and elections are often a time of increased hate speech, corruption, and abuse, as candidates and parties vie for voters.

These issues are recurring in some communities, where party conflicts determine access to power and resources at the local level and directly impact the ability of local communities to develop and prosper.

Political and electoral conflict has had a wide and negative impact on the north, including uneven economic development, marginalisation, social and political instability, violence, and impunity. Political leadership is often seen as incompetent and corrupt, and national integration is impeded

by ongoing local and national level political conflicts. Political conflict and electoral violence often connect or overlap with ethnic and religious divisions, and both government and opposition parties mobilise and manipulate vulnerable young people into the conflicts.



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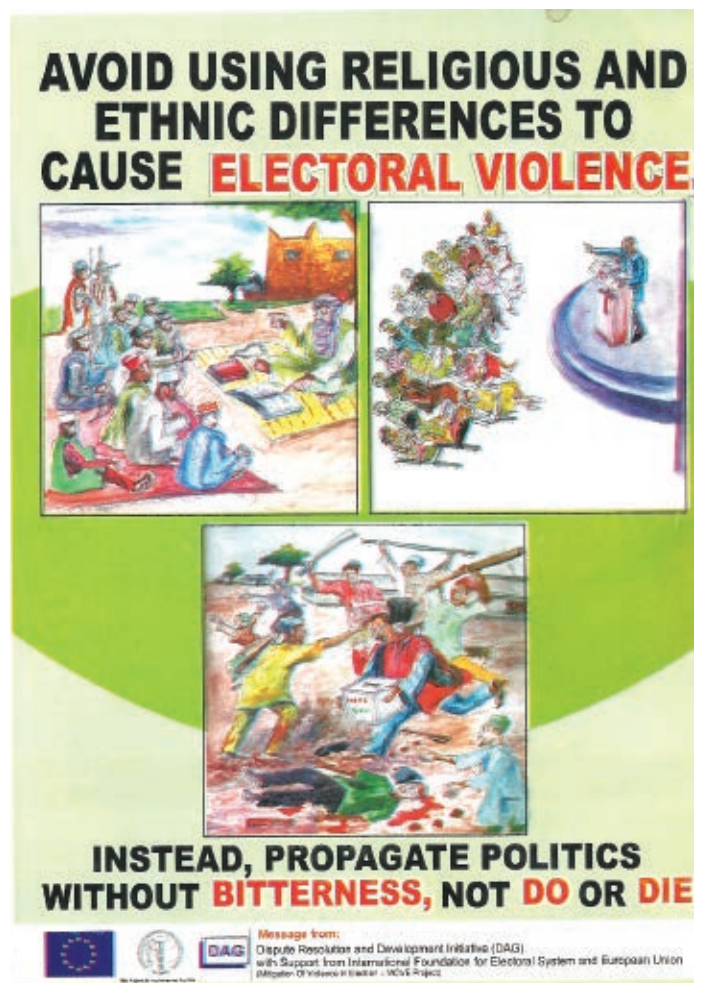
But these issues should not be seen as involving only formal political officials. Other actors include traditional and religious leaders, the security forces, the electoral commission, international private and non-governmental organisations, civil society and pressure groups, local businesses, women, and youth. Extremist groups are also sometimes linked to political disputes.

Complex alliances exist that link government, multinational businesses, security forces, and the electoral commission. At times religious leaders and government officials are both allied and in conflict, and relationships between government and traditional leaders can be complicated. Local conflicts are also linked to national politics and the nature of the presidency in power.

“The Nigerian government, it is like a force that is centrifugal and centripetal. Everything is gravitating toward it and also away from it.”

The root causes of political party and electoral conflicts are institutional, social, economic, and sometimes interpersonal. Geographic politics, ethnic rivalries, and religious differences are entwined with political party and electoral disputes. The role of money in politics, the unlawful use of the state security apparatus, and corrupt institutions all play a role.

The winner-takes-all nature of elections has also historically impeded the search for more cooperative solutions, although the election of Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 was widely seen as a marker of progress. Buhari was the first opposition leader to defeat an incumbent in a general election, in a country with a history of political violence. A former general who was head of state in the 1980s after leading his own coup d'état, Buhari was elected on an anti-corruption platform as well as a promise to defeat Boko Haram militarily.



Many local peacebuilding organisations organize campaigns around the elections to call for peace. This poster is by the Dispute Resolution and Development Initiative, DAG.

Human rights violations and gender based violence: key conflict issues

The media focus on mass atrocities committed by Boko Haram often overshadow the serious levels of violence that relate to human rights abuses and gender-based violence in Northern Nigeria.

The root causes of human rights abuses are manifold. They include poverty and exclusion, particularly of women, combined with some traditional beliefs which condone gender-based violence.

There is a lack of respect for the legal framework protecting human rights, including by state authorities. Perhaps the worst example of the latter is the alleged use of extra-judicial killings by security agencies. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have commented on these and other allegations of abuses, with Amnesty claiming in 2015, for example that Nigerian military forces had executed more than 1,200 and arbitrarily arrested at least 20,000 people between 2009-2015. The Nigerian Army has responded by establishing an office of human rights, but concerns remain.

State actors have the power and responsibility to act to reduce human rights violations through better legislation and support to communities, not least including policies to promote better economic development.

The abuses of human rights affect communities in ways large and small; from high levels of sexual violence to the denial of political rights. There is particular concern for the plight of women and children, who continue to bear the brunt of the violence in Northern Nigeria. The breadth of

impacts on communities means that the work of peacebuilding and human rights organisations in Northern Nigeria frequently overlaps. The defence of human rights and ending of gender-based violence is key to building a sustainable peace in the face of armed conflict.

The International Criminal Court has an ongoing preliminary examination on alleged crimes against humanity or war crimes committed in the Niger Delta, the Middle-Belt States and in the context of armed conflict between Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces in Nigeria.

If local communities continue to fear the security services, who are perceived by many as perpetrators of violence, it is difficult to see how stability can come to the north.

The Gender Awareness Trust (GAT) has for the last 15 years been promoting a society free from all sources of discrimination. It runs peace clubs whose objectives are to reduce violence against women and girls, as well as to increase the participation of women and girls in decision making and peacebuilding. According to GAT, “[these peace clubs] have provided a safe space within which the participants learn life skills relating to conflict, participation in decision making. So far, it has enhanced their self-esteem and helped them to make healthy living choices, know their rights and to report violence against them and in their communities.”

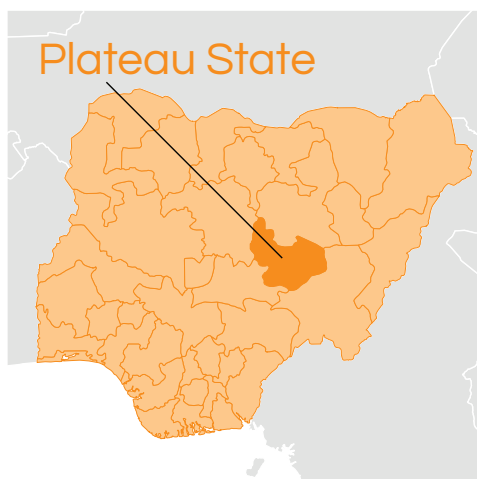
Land and natural resources: key conflict issues

Conflict over land – particularly between farmers and herders – is increasingly important in Northern Nigeria.

Key disputes include contestation over land ownership, access, and use; boundaries, crops, and animal grazing; and access to and disruption of natural resources like water and forests.

On top of these multiple conflict dynamics, a severe food crisis began threatening the northeast in late 2016. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) estimates that 4.5 million people are at risk, and UN Assistant Secretary General Toby Lanzer warned that Nigeria is on the edge of “a famine unlike any we have seen anywhere.” If not addressed quickly, this major humanitarian crisis will have significant implications for peace, stability, and economic development in the region.

In recent years, conflicts over resources have turned increasingly violent, in particular in the Middle Belt. As well as Boko Haram, attacks by other militant groups motivated by localised disputes over land have been lethal. The 2015 Global Terrorism Index ranked ‘Fulani militants’ among the five most deadly terror groups in the world.



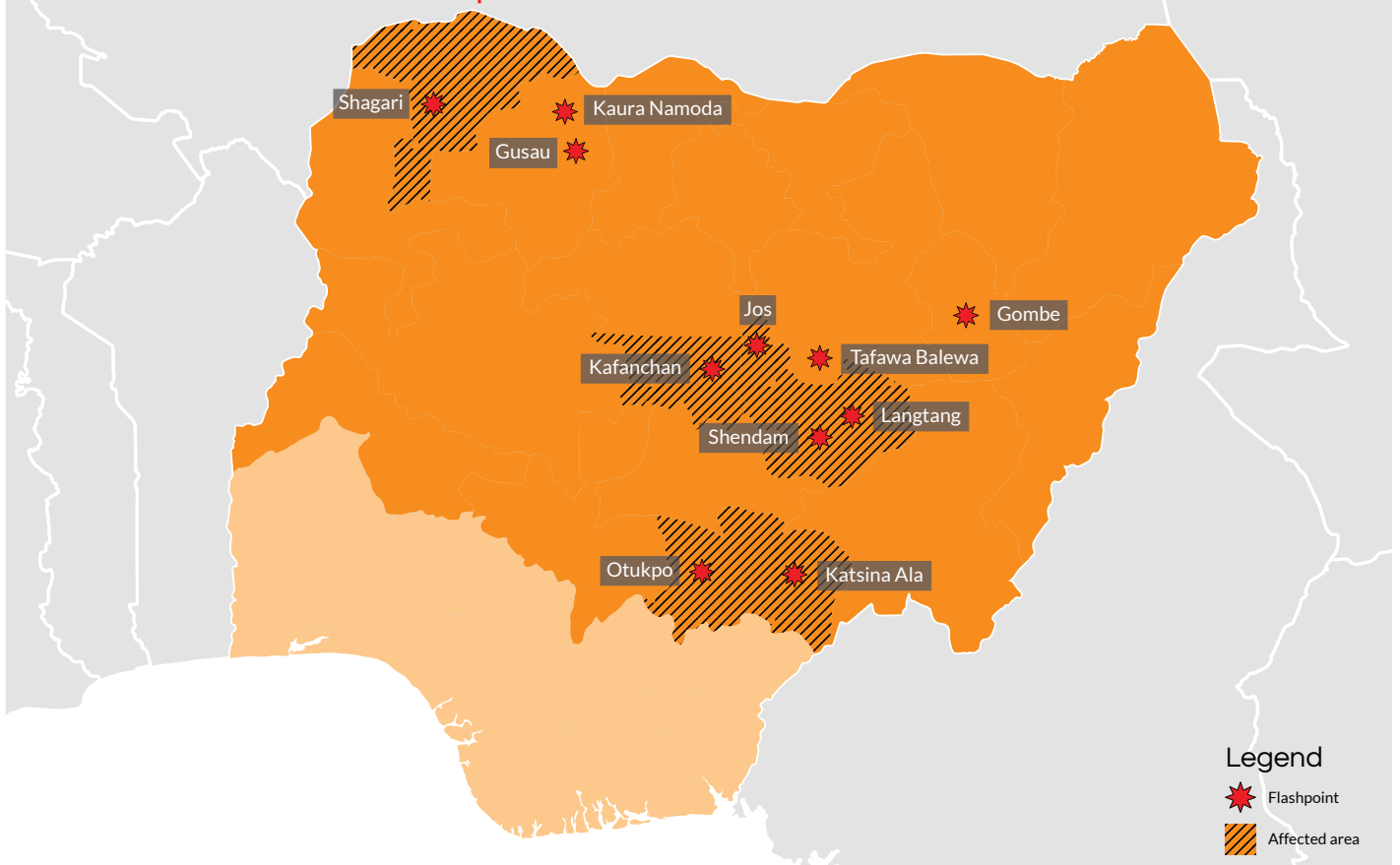
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In surveys carried out with community members, Plateau State residents were the most concerned about land conflicts. Desertification has also become a serious issue, in particular in Gombe and Borno state. The map below highlights areas of particular concern according to the analysis of the peacebuilding groups.

The Fulanis are an ethnic group spread across West Africa. They are often cattle herders, who travel with their stock in search of pasture. This can lead to clashes with farmers, who say the Fulanis’ animals damage their land and crops. The Fulanis say they are defending themselves from farmers trying to steal their cattle. This type of violence is known as “farmer-herder” conflict. Local disputes can escalate and lead to significant violence, which is why the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Fulani and similar groups is a key conflict issue in Nigeria.

Land conflicts in Northern Nigeria

Affected areas and flashpoints



Many communities where peacebuilding organisations operate feel that the government response to this violence has been inadequate. There is a danger that this perception could be interpreted as the favouring of some groups over others by the government.

The impact of these conflicts includes growing competition (sometimes leading to violent clashes) over resources between herders and farmers; reduced crop yields and other socio-economic activity; increased poverty, disease, and malnutrition; and the destruction of property, farmland, livestock and fish.

There is concern for the growing number of children unable to access education, as a result of these conflicts, the displacement of many and proliferation of IDP camps, and the direct loss of life during communal clashes over land and resources. There have been some helpful steps through efforts to establish national policies related to regulating grazing reserves and stock routes, but problems are likely to persist due to the limited nature of these policy responses, limited land resources, and growing communal divisions between herders and farmers.

Conflict to cooperation: transforming land disputes

The **Fantsuam Foundation**, based in a rural community in Kaduna State, decided to address conflicts in its community between herdsman and farmers over water resources.

First, they investigated communities which were successfully managing conflicts. They carefully studied what was happening in the southern Kaduna community of Kanikon, where relations between farmers and Fulani herdsman remained strong, despite violence in other regions.

Here, the community has developed a strategy to identify areas of land where pasture and a water source can be provided for both communities. The pasture is grown by the farmers and sold to the herders, while the herders supply manure for the farmers at an agreed price. The source of water is a solar-powered borehole.

Fantsuam Foundation has helped to support the community by assisting with the formation of a committee, made up of respected individuals from both communities.

Fantsuam provide support to financial management as well as aspects of pasture management, but the committee works

only on the basis of support from both communities.

The belief that livestock is a cause of desertification can reinforce tensions. However, initiatives by groups such as the Kanikon Livestock Management Centre, an initiative of local communities and leaders in Southern Kaduna, have demonstrated that with controlled grazing and collaboration with farmers, it is possible to reverse the process of desertification, improve soil fertility and feed more people. At the same time, more jobs have been created, with a focus on opportunities for female community members. The project has helped reduce fears over shortage of land or water.

All of this is only possible because both communities, with the support of the Fantsuam Foundation, have been able to work closely together. The strategy contrasts with the approach of the government, which is to create grazing reserves only to lose them to encroachment and poor land management. The secret of the Fantsuam intervention is the creation of an environment in which farmers and herders manage their own land and water resources. This approach to apparently sectarian crises caused by land and water competition could be used throughout Nigeria for a lasting and sustainable solution.

Ethnic and inter-communal conflict: key conflict issues

There are ongoing divisions, discrimination, and sometimes violence between communal, tribal, and ethnic groups, including what is often called indigenous-settler or farmer-herder conflict.

Farmer-herder conflicts have been widely reported on by the international media and have had an impact across the country. They often involve disputes with herders roaming on 'settled' grazing land with their livestock.

Recent inter-communal conflicts have led to kidnappings, rioting, direct violence and killing, as well as property destruction. These conflicts are a growing issue in North Central Nigeria, as well as North West and North East. As one participant noted in the analysis of inter-communal and ethnic conflict, "Kaduna is now boiling": communal tensions in Kaduna state have acquired a frightening dimension and gravely threaten the social bonds that hold people together.

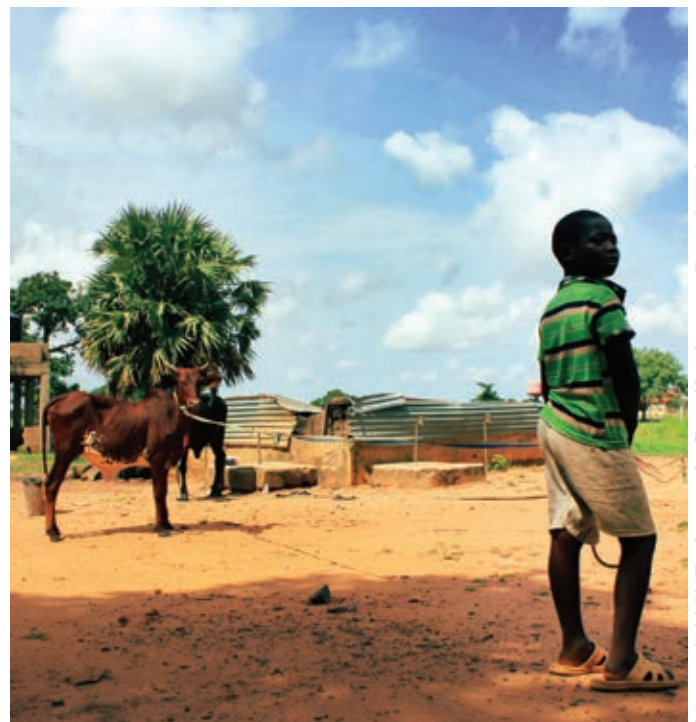
Kaduna is boiling – the need for atrocity prevention efforts

"Kaduna is boiling" refers to the inter-ethnic / communal conflicts among the Fulani herders and southern Kaduna communities in the Kafanchan and Godogodo area, which have led to the killings of dozens and wanton destruction of properties. There have also been attacks and killings of members of Shi'a groups in Zaria by the military, attacks by young people in October 2016, in Tudun Wada community in Kaduna which also led to the deaths of suspected Shi'a members.

"Every community has reasons why they discriminate or deny people their rights. It's a very complex situation."

These conflicts are driven by political patronage and the distribution of economic benefits to certain groups over others. They also include deeper issues of identity, discrimination, and social relationship.

These issues can involve local, state, and federal authorities, traditional and religious leaders, civil society and business, indigenous and settler groups. Traditional leaders, business, and groups like market women can play a powerful role as they can control or influence access to the local economy for certain groups. But they can also engage positively to help manage and resolve conflicts across communal or ethnic groups.



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TEDiiN's pragmatic approach to communal, inter-ethnic and indigene-settler problems in Kogi

"I have witnessed so much peace work in our community. TEDiiN's approach saves generations"
– a local traditional leader.

'News of inter communal, ethnic, and indigene-settler conflict is no longer news in Kogi state.

This is the result of the more than 14 tribes that live here, and the easy proliferation of arms in the area.

During the last two years, the Kogi Network of NGOs has recorded at least 34 communal clashes, which have claimed property and lives. The need for targeted peace work is obvious to end these disputes across the state.

TEDiiN has been on the frontline of this cause. We have worked to end such disputes in 10 different communities this year. We use a variety of approaches, which have been tested and found over time to be the most appropriate way to end violence in our communities.

In Akutupa village, in the Kabba-Bunu area, there has been a recurring dispute between indigenous or 'indigene' people and settlers. Most of the time, the settlers are herdsmen. 80% of the indigenes are farmers.

In 2014, there was a serious, avoidable crisis which claimed lives. It started as a result of farmland grazing by the settlers. The indigenes tried to stop this but it was done violently.

In August 2016, violence again erupted because of the same old causes. The farmers were on a rampage, burning every house of the herdsmen. The news got to us at TEDiiN and we sent people to visit the community.

When we got there, the first thing we did was to call for an emergency meeting between the leadership of the two warring factions. We were briefed on the root cause of the problem and we first sued for peace between them. Immediately there was a ceasefire. What we observed was that these people depend on their farm produce to survive. So to please them, we promised to ensure that their farm produce for the season, from areas where they alleged grazing by herdsmen, would be sold for them in the city.

We promised to bring vehicles from the city to convey their produce to the city to sell. Afterwards, they were happy and we embark on a house-to-house peace talk all through the community. We started with the settlers, telling them to respect their hosts. We also talked to them about the many benefits of living in peace. And the indigenes were encouraged to be good hosts. To establish a landmark, we agreed that they should form a co-operative society to help them economically. The groups agreed to do the next yam festival with a building dedicated to events in their community.

We believe that this will help the settlers to see themselves more as indigenes, and the ore of an indigene and the indigene will see the settlers as more of indigene.

One of the settlers, Usman, said: *"With what you have done here, I would love to marry in to the Akutupa people, they are actually beautiful."*

We plan to work more on the settlement, with sporting and educational activities with their young people in the future. Overall, the project has helped to foster a relationship between two groups that were perceived to be sworn enemies.'

The role of the international community



© Department for International Development

The international community has a vital role to play in helping find solutions to conflict in Northern Nigeria. Already many international partners are playing positive roles; almost all the organisations that participated in this research have had some form of partnership with international actors, and in most cases these have been very positive.

Funding and capacity support

The international community has played an important role supporting CSOs, and **indeed many local organisations have benefited from funding and training support**. Training support is particularly welcome as local groups face the challenges of countering violent extremism.

Local peacebuilders feel they have much to learn from effective approaches to preventing violent extremism in other countries. However – the majority of funding still remains with international organisations, or in the offices of the large groups based in Abuja. Local groups encourage more efforts to work directly with organisations based across Northern Nigeria.

Better understanding of the conflicts

Local peacebuilders feel that the international community overall has worked well in building an understanding of the issues in Nigeria. In a survey of the peacebuilders, they scored international understanding of conflict issues at 3.5 out of 5.

In some cases the international community has helped bring a broader understanding of the conflict. However – this is not uniform and some international partners still have too simple an understanding of the issues. Local peacebuilders insist that it is necessary to be on the ground to understand the realities. This is one area where partnerships between local and international groups can be mutually beneficial.

Local peacebuilders report that many international groups base their information on unreliable sources, for example reporting from Lagos rather than people based in Northern Nigeria. Too often simplistic connections are made between terrorism, Islam and people from the north of Nigeria. Other misconceptions about levels of literacy and poverty mean that local capacity is often under-estimated.

Close support and partnerships

The perception of corruption has led some funders to be wary of support local groups. Despite this, there are some international funders who have found ways to work closely in support of local CSOs, and these approaches need to be encouraged so that corrupt organisations are not rewarded, while those who are doing good work do not miss out because of perceptions of corruption.

Pressuring the government

Overall, local peacebuilding organisations feel safe operating as civil society in Nigeria (all of those surveyed rated their ability to operate as either ‘free’ or ‘very free’). However, many still have great difficulty in influencing the Nigerian government, and international partners have a great deal more leverage in this regard. There



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have been notable successes where international pressure has resulted in improved government policies, for example in increasing resources for girls’ education and improving the human rights record of the Nigerian army. Local peacebuilders encourage the international community to continue to find ways to push for improvements in the human rights policies of the government, an area that is difficult for local groups to work in.

Reflections from Peace Direct



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The July 2016 consultation in Northern Nigeria, and community research carried out alongside it, confirmed what Peace Direct knows to be true in so many areas of the world: wherever there is conflict, there will be dedicated, inspiring people working to stop it. The number and quality of applications to take part in this consultation – 70 in total – is testament to the vibrant status of local civil society organisations in Northern Nigeria. Reviewing the conversations these groups had, with each other and with Peace Direct, several things are clear.

First: complex problems cannot be solved with a ‘one-size fits all’ solution. Peacebuilders, and those who support them, should not be afraid of this fact. It may seem obvious that there are multiple causes to the violence in Northern Nigeria, yet there are still too many single-issue projects operating in isolation. This is understandable in the context of community

groups, which sometimes work on a small scale. But the potential of otherwise worthwhile work is going unfulfilled. So a key challenge in Northern Nigeria – and opportunity – is to identify meaningful ways in which clusters of organisations can collaborate more effectively. Deploying specific projects in concert will better address the broader social phenomena that lead to conflict, without requiring individual organisations to expand their work so much that they dilute their own expertise.

Second: headlines come and go, but the broader social issues that are at the root of much of the violence in northern Nigeria could fill a newspaper. Boko Haram is the clearest example of how attention is often focused on one issue, sometimes at the expense of underlying causes. But although the group is obviously a source of conflict in Northern Nigeria, it was originally a symptom of other problems. It is tempting to see

Boko Haram as a military problem that demands a military solution. Yet as local peacebuilders highlight in this report, trying to cut the head off the Boko Haram hydra has in some instances led to others growing elsewhere. The immediate threat of the group is apparently receding. But so long as the many problems Northern Nigeria faces remain unaddressed, the potential for similar groups to emerge will continue. Boko Haram may be on the wane, but now is not the time to look away.

Third: youth are the key. While all involved in this report stress the complexities of conflict, peacebuilding must start somewhere. Working with young people is that place. They are the present and future of Northern Nigeria. A troubled legacy of recent years is the failure not only to provide for, but in some cases actively to repress, the involvement of young people in society. If it is clear that many young Nigerians have been pushed or pulled into violence

because of politics, policy, poverty, inequality and culture, it is also clear that many young Nigerians have refused, and are working to address the challenges to which some of their peers have succumbed. Anyone serious about ending conflict in Northern Nigeria should recognise the need to support all of them.

Finally, what should be clear from this research is that there is no substitute for the reach and engagement that local groups can have. The only people with the credibility and connections to do this work properly in Northern Nigeria are those in and from the region itself. Outsiders may have a role to play as neutral voices, facilitators and advocates, and international groups who wish to support local peacebuilding efforts should not be made to feel like they have nothing to contribute; their skills, resources and expertise, if deployed properly, will do much to help. Peace is possible – and it will take the work of many to grasp it – but local people must lead.



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Participating organisations

The research and analysis in this report is based on the views of a range of local peacebuilding organisations from across Northern Nigeria.



Advocates for Youth and Health Development

Advocates for Youth and Health Development works for attitudinal re-orientation, peacebuilding, human rights, and health development for youth, women and children through capacity building, advocacy, litigation, research and documentation.



Ashh foundation

The Ashh foundation works to empower women and young people to improve their lives and build peace in Nigeria, through capacity building, training for caregivers and peace education.



Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria

The Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria works to create peaceful communities in Nigeria by promoting peacebuilding and development through dialogue, conciliation services, training, research, and disseminating accurate and reliable information on peace and development.



Community Empowerment and Development Association

The Community Empowerment and Development Association promotes peace, resolves conflicts and promotes the development of young people as agents of change.



Democratic Action Group (DAG) Dispute Resolution and Development Initiative

The Democratic Action Group is promoting the use of non-violent means for resolving conflict, and the importance of strong democracy and human rights, by working with young people, women and marginalised groups.



Fantsuam Foundation

The Fantsuam Foundation is a rural development organisation whose focus is on peacebuilding, sustainable livelihoods, health and education.



Gender Awareness Trust

The Gender Awareness Trust promotes a just society through democratic development, gender equity, empowerment of the poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups, capacity building, research and peacebuilding.



Interfaith Mediation Centre

The Interfaith Mediation Centre promotes trust and tolerance between Christian and Muslim communities, in the hope of creating a peaceful society in Nigeria and beyond through non-violence and strategic engagement.



Millennium Development Centre Gusau

The Millennium Development Centre Gusau works to help build a peaceful and healthy Nigerian society where vulnerable and marginalised people and groups are empowered to demand and exercise their rights.

National Youth Council of Nigeria Borno State Council

The National Youth Council provides a platform for the advancement, mobilisation and coordination of young people in Borno to further development, peace, unity and tolerance in the state.



New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation

The New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation establishes cross-cultural leadership teams of young women and men with skills that help them become peer-leaders and agents of peace.



North East Youth Initiative Forum

The North East Youth Initiative Forum works towards improving the living condition of vulnerable people in North East Nigeria through poverty eradication and promoting peace and security.



Peace Initiative Network

The Peace Initiative Network prevents and manages violent conflict through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns.



Strategic Powerful Information Network

The Strategic Powerful Information Network embarks on peace journalism to give peacemakers and other stakeholders a voice towards non-violent solution with visible and viable options.



Teens Educational Development and Information Initiative

The Teens Educational Development and Information Initiative mission is to develop and promote models and strategies for the training and education of young people to become valuable members of society who work towards peace and community development.



University of Maiduguri Muslim Women Association

The University of Maiduguri Muslim Women Association works on issues related to safety and security, communication, self-esteem, violence against women and girls, livelihoods, and conflict negotiation.

Women's Interfaith Council

The Women's Interfaith Council brings together Kaduna leaders and members of women's faith groups under one umbrella, to address peace and conflict issues, women's and poverty-related issues.





About Peace Direct

Peace Direct is an international charity that works with local people to stop violence and build sustainable peace. We believe that local people should lead all peacebuilding efforts, and this report is the first in a series that will canvas local views on violent conflicts around the world in an effort to highlight local capacities for peace and local expertise.

For more information on the planned series of reports, please contact us.

www.peacedirect.org

www.insightonconflict.org

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Photo: A man stands in front of his destroyed house in Lassa town, Northern Nigeria. Many displaced by war desire to go back to their homes but their livelihoods and properties have been destroyed.

