

Policy Brief

MITIGATION OF IDENTITY BASED VIOLENCE IN ADAMAWA STATE

IMPLEMENTED BY
GLOBAL PEACE DEVELOPMENT IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE NIGERIA NORTHEAST CONNECTION
AND WITH FUNDING SUPPORT FROM USAID

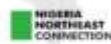


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INTRODUCTION

Adamawa State like other States in the Northeast continues to experience security challenges that have undermined the safety and security of citizens across the state. The growing insecurity when mixed with prevailing socio-economic conditions and protracted grievances often create a potent mix of “push and pull” factors that can lead groups who are discontented with the situation to be radicalized, restive, and even commit to crime to escape poverty and injustice. This has also been aggravated by the disconnection between the citizenry and the security agents due to a lack of trust and synergy between the citizenry and security agents. This has contributed to many ungoverned places otherwise referred to as “safe havens” where the scourge of insecurity thrives without adequate responsive measures to counter or prevent it.

To address the underlying issues around trust deficit, insecurity, lack of peace coordination platform, injustice, grievances, human rights violations, and poverty. Global Peace Development in partnership with the Nigeria Northeast Connection, and with funding support from United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**) launched the project “Strengthening Coordination and Synergy of State Level Citizen-Security Agents Peace Alliances to Mitigate Identity Based Violence and Extremism in Adamawa State.” The project's aim is to improve coordination and synergy among security agents, stakeholders, and citizens to respond to and sustain peace architecture at the State level, as well as support state-level dialogue, reconciliation, response, and intelligence gathering for improved peace. Thus, this policy brief is a highlight of the research conducted by GPD to ascertain the nature of insecurity, and learnings documented from the harmonization meeting, training, and organic dialogue session facilitated by Global Peace Development to support state-level dialogue, reconciliation, response-and intelligence gathering for improved security and peace and Adamawa State.

CONFLICT AND SECURITY CONTEXT

The growing insecurity in Nigeria has roots in political and economic inequalities, resources constraints, ethnic and cultural grievances, and acute corruption which manifested in the increase in kidnapping, banditry, losses of lives and infrastructure, mass displacement of people, robbery, and violence. Essentially, these violent conflict and crime are exacerbated by high rate of unemployment, inequality, exclusion, and degradation of natural resources and climate crush related violence like the herders and farmer's violence, which has incapacitated the informal sectors (farming) which accounts for over 50% of the livelihood income in Nigeria (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics 2020)

These existing conflicts, when mixed with prevailing socio-economic conditions and protracted grievances will create a potent mix of “push and pull” factors that can lead groups who are dissatisfied with the situations to be radicalized, restive, and even commit crime to escape poverty and injustice. As it stands today, citizen's safety and crime are biggest concern across Nigeria because of lack of trust between the security agents and the citizenry. The trust deficit is predicated on a poor feedback mechanism between the citizens and security agents when suspected criminals are arrested and freed by the security agents and the identity of source information that facilitated the arrests are revealed to the suspect which becomes a weapon of threat for the provider of the early warning information to the security agents. This has contributed to many ungoverned places otherwise referred to as “safe havens” for criminals as the citizen now resort to silence instead of providing relevant security information that eventually jeopardizes their life and that of their families. No wonder, Nigeria ranks the third most impacted country by terrorism (Global terrorism index report 2020).

Similarly, the concern is even greater when public goods (education, roads, health, and security) are in limited supply or almost not available as is in the case of Adamawa State where life expectancy is 45% and is below the National average of 50% (National Human

Development Report, 2015), thus contribute to “push and pull” people into violent conflict and acceptance of extremist ideology and eventual recruitment by violent extremist organizations. Equally, the growing insecurity and nefarious activity of the extremist organizations in Adamawa State is associated with poverty, joblessness, stereotyping, and ethnic grievances (economic, political, social, cultural, religious, and environmental factors). Conflict and violence increase because of poor reporting and responses (Nigeria Bureau for Statistics, 2018). Similarly, the lack of synergy among security agents, unhealed trauma, persistent ethnic violence, distrust among security agents and the citizenry, and proliferation of peace dialogue platforms without a holistic coordination mechanism for peace actors and security agents at the State Level is a mirage that needs to be addressed.

Research Methodology

This document is based on the outcome of the rapid assessment, harmonization meeting, training, and media dialogue carried out by Global Peace Development under the project “Strengthening Coordination and Synergy of State Level Citizen-Security Agents Peace Alliances to Mitigate Identity Based Violence and Extremism in Adamawa State.”

The research was conducted within the metropolis of Adamawa State utilizing a quantitative and qualitative method which include Surveys, Focus Group Discussions, and Interviews that were administered to get responders' perceptions and knowledge about insecurity in Adamawa State.

The research respondents include Security personnel (Police, NSCDC, DSS, and NDLEA), NGO workers as well as Adamawa State government officials who were interviewed and engaged in discussions utilizing designed research questions.

Overall, a total of 170 respondents participated in the study; 128 filled the questionnaires administered through the Kobo Collect application; 23 were engaged in a Key Informant Interview, and 19 participated in the Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Research Questions utilized for the research include;

1. What is the nature of insecurity in Adamawa State?
2. How are the security agencies working in Adamawa State performing with regard to curbing crime and preventing violent conflict in local communities in Adamawa State?
3. What is the nature of synergy among the security agencies in Adamawa State?
4. What factor affects promotes the lack of synergy among the security agencies working in Adamawa State?
5. What are the programmatic efforts put in place to ensure synergy and collaboration among the security agencies in Adamawa State?
6. How has these programmes impacted synergy among the security agencies in the state?
7. How can synergy among the security agencies in Adamawa State be improved upon so as to enhance the security of the state.

Key Findings from the Research

- Adamawa State like other states in Nigeria is plagued with the scourge of security challenges that are often occasioned by prevailing violent conflict and criminal activities such as; kidnapping, farmer-herder clash, inter-communal clash, gender-based violence and shilla gang violence. Shilla Gang violence are notorious youths inflicting both emotional and psychological pain on the citizenry through coordinated crime. Though, these conflicts are more prevalent in some areas than others, they have had a monumental impact on the lives and properties of the citizenry across the state.
- Although the security agencies tried to perform optimally in curtailing security challenges in the state, they are significantly challenged by the problem of logistics, inadequate cooperation of the locals as well as problem of synergy among the security

agencies. These dwarfed their performance in curtailing insecurity in the state effectively

- It was also found out that a lack of synergy between security agencies is a major challenge limiting the effort of security agencies to address security threats in the state. This according to respondents is caused by multiple factors such as overlapping mandates of the security agencies, lack of trust in handling and responding to intelligence, superiority/inferiority complex, competition for the attention of the executive, especially the Governor of the state, as well as lack of framework for collaboration of security agencies in Adamawa State.
- Synergy between security agents and citizenry is weak due to lack of trust for the security agents
- Although programmatic interventions have come from the International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO), Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the Adamawa State Government to build synergy among the security agencies and make them work together for effective security. Despite the fact that those programme were able to achieve laudable goals and achievement, they are little drop of water in a large ocean. They are challenged significantly in terms of grossly limited reach and scope, problem of continuity, limited coverage of security agencies and problem of coordination among the different programmes organized by different bodies.
- Feedback from respondents also revealed that security threat such as Kidnapping, Communal Clash, Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict, Shilla Gang violence as well as gender-based violence are increasing and should be addressed urgently.

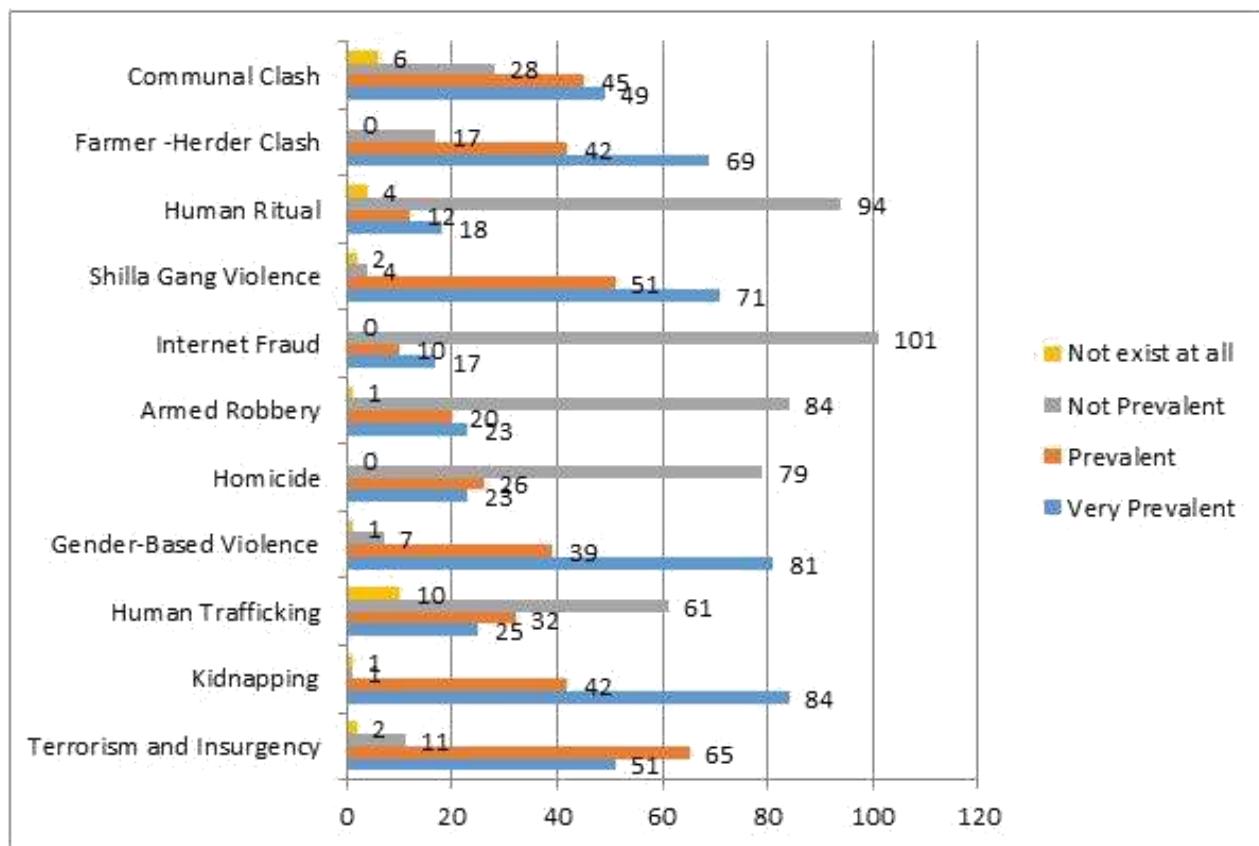


Figure 1 Respondents' Perception of the most common threat to security in Adamawa State

EFFORT THUS FAR BY GLOBAL PEACE DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE THE SYNERGY AND COORDINATION AMONG SECURITY AGENTS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND CITIZENS TO RESPOND TO AND SUSTAIN PEACE ARCHITECTURE AT THE STATE LEVEL

Building upon the findings from the rapid assessment, Global Peace Development in partnership with the Northeast Connection with funding support from USAID carried out strategic engagement with stakeholders across the state to address the underlying issues identified during the rapid assessment. Particularly, to improve coordination and synergy among security agents, stakeholders, and citizens to respond to security threats in Adamawa State, Global Peace Development carried out a series of activities consisting of harmonization and coordination meetings, training of relevant stakeholders from the existing Peace Platforms, and media dialogue that validated the findings from the rapid assessment as well as flagged-up security gaps and propositions.

Harmonization/Coordination Meeting for Conflict and Peace Platform Members in the State:

The harmonization and coordination meeting was facilitated to consolidate the ongoing peace-building activities in the state. During the meeting, the leadership of existing, functional, and non-functional conflict and peace platforms present collectively reviewed the security context of the state and developed an action plan on the modalities for continued engagement, dialogue, and reconciliations of deep-rooted conflict and grievances in the state. Key security gaps identified by stakeholders during the meeting include;

- Absence of a coordinated platform for stakeholders championing peace and security in Adamawa State. This identified gap stimulated a collective commitment from stakeholders to establish the state-level peace platform tagged “Citizen-Security Conflict Management Alliance, (CISCOMA)” to serve as a coordinated platform that would harmonize existing peace platforms in the state, as well as consolidate the effort

to promote peace through early warning and early response.

Establishment and Training of Harmonized Citizen-Security Conflict Management Alliances

To further strengthen the knowledge and capacity of members of the harmonized Citizen-Security Conflict Management Alliance, Global Peace Development in partnership with the Nigeria Northeast Connection conducted a 2-days training workshop on conflict sensitivity, conflict transformation, inclusivity, tolerance, and Early Warning and Early Response (EWER), and culture of peace. During the training, participants observed that;

- For effective functionality of the Citizen-Security Agent Conflict Management Alliance, community structures should be integrated into the Citizen Security Conflict Management Alliance to promote a holistic early warning and early response system.
- There is minimal knowledge of early warning system among citizens particularly at the rural area, thus, there is need to sensitize more citizens about the relevance of early warning and early response in prevention of violent conflict.
- Media has key role to play in conflict prevention in Adamawa State, hence media practitioners should be sensitized on conflict sensitive reporting

Media Dialogue and Talk-Show on Community Peace and Resilience

This was facilitated utilizing radio and TV media chat and talk-show to promote resilience, tolerance, and culture of peace. Through this engagement, large number of citizenries across communities and LGAs within Adamawa State were reached and engaged on the early warning and early response tools designed and adopted by the Citizen Security Conflict Management Alliance. As a result, emerging issues were identified and flagged-up for responsive action;

- The Inter-communal conflict between Girei and Demsa LGAs
- Intra-communal conflict in Mayo-Belwa Community
- Farmers-Herders Conflict in Fufure LGA

Policy Implication of the Gaps Identified

- Lack of cooperation and distrust between security agents and the citizenry on one part, and between security agents on another part is a monster that empowers and triggers violent conflict and crime because people feel unprotected and unsecured when sensitive security information is shared with security agents at their own peril. Also, because of the competition of supremacy among the security agencies, intelligence information that would have been shared to ensure citizens' safety and security is never divulged. Impliedly, the trust deficit and lack of cooperation between and among security agents are constantly shrinking and delegitimizing security agent's relevance to the people, thus, extremists are quick to infiltrate the citizens by filling the gap created by formal security agents by committing to the people's protection, safety, thereby having the legitimacy of the people.
- Ungoverned spaces are expanding daily due to limited knowledge of the citizenry on collaborative and contributory security intelligence gathering. The more the ungoverned spaces expand beyond government control, the faster extremists take ownership of the spaces and begin to enthrone their own governance at the peril of the State by imposing tax on the citizenry which often affect agricultural produce, and it eventually reduce the people's income earnings, as well as institutionalize poverty and the recycling of violence and crime in the State.
- Absence of functional Citizen Security Peace Platforms is a catalyst for continued expansion and prominence of Shilla Gangs. The prominence of Shilla Gangs is weakening businesses and night life within Yola and its environs because residents are scared of either being killed or robbed off their monies and properties while travelling to transact legitimate businesses. The implication of this is that the social, economic, and political fabrics of the State is threatened, as it will have great impact on the Internally Generated Revenue if the menace continues unabated. Apart from the

Internally Generated Revenue that dwindle, the development of the state will be retarded when Shilla Gangs become more visible and resilient against formal security agents that appear to have lost their legitimacy to the citizenry due to protracted distrust associated with a poor feedback mechanism.

Recommendation

Though the efforts from Global Peace Development as an implementing partner and other peace actors in the state are highly impactful, we can't ignore the fact that these interventions are temporary considering the limited time apportioned for the project. Hence, there is a need for Adamawa State Government to leverage on this effort to prevent all forms of violence and extremism actions across the State.

In this regard, it is strongly recommended that;

- Adamawa State Government should leverage on the already existing Citizen Security Conflict Management Alliance established by Global Peace Development in partnership with the Nigeria Northeast Connection and funded by **USAID** to activate a strong collaborative and coordinated early warning and early response. This will also promote cooperation between security forces, government actors, and the citizenry.
- Adamawa State Government should ensure maximum support and cooperation to the Citizen Security Conflict Management Alliance activities by ensuring prompt response to early warning and conflict issues that would be referred from the platform.
- Government should support the effort of CSOs by providing free airtime on Government Radio and Television Stations to enable us rigorously to continue with the civic education of the citizenry on tolerance, culture of peace, and community resilience
- Government should ensure proper naming and numbering of streets for effective surveillance, referral, and response to criminal activities and security issues.
- To ensure holistic early warning and early response mechanism in the state, community peace structures such as Community Action and Response Team (CART), Ward Action and Response Team (WART), and Local Peace Alliance (LOPA) established by Global Peace Development in Demsa, Mubi North, and Mubi South LGAs should be adopted and scaled-up to all LGAs in Adamawa State where they are not existing.
- There should be a conscious effort to strengthen the synergy between security agencies

- to promote a strong collaborative response to security threats in Adamawa State.
- The Leadership of the security agencies in Adamawa State should see the need to work in synergy for the purpose of ensuring peace and security in Adamawa State.

Conclusion

Adamawa State is greatly disturbed by the prevalence of violent conflict and crimes which continue to affect the security landscape of the state. Lack of synergy among the security agencies and citizenry limits the effectiveness of response of the security agencies. Although programmes have been implemented to improve on this, they are large drops of water in an ocean. However, there is a glimmer of hope if the existing Citizen Security Conflict Management Alliance established is given full support by the Government of Adamawa State so that extremist incursion and/or infiltration will be abated in the State.



GLOBAL PEACE DEVELOPMENT

WHO WE ARE

Global Peace Development is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in April 2002 and focuses on promoting peace for development in Nigeria. The organization is registered with Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja in 2004, and National Planning Commission in 2011.

Global Peace Development operates actively in 5 out of the 6 Geopolitical Zones of Nigeria. Specifically, we have physical offices in 8 States disaggregated as;

- North Central Geopolitical Zone: Nasarawa State
- North East Geopolitical Zone: Adamawa and Taraba State
- North West Geopolitical Zone: Kaduna State
- South East Geopolitical Zone: Ebonyi State
- South-South Geopolitical Zone: Edo, Cross River, and Delta States

VISION

A Country where peace and development is enjoyed by all

MISSION

We seek to build peace, gender equality, social justice, and foster democracy and good governance at the community, local, state, and national levels.

CORE VALUES

Transparency; Integrity; Fairness; and Accountability