

MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme aims to support Nigerians with conflict resolution, at both the state and community level. Our work focuses on reducing violence, promoting stability and strengthening resilience so that Nigerians feel more safe and secure in their communities.

We work in North Eastern Nigeria in three focal states – Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe – some of the country's most conflict-affected regions.

Our work focuses on the following areas:

- Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities
- The role of women in peacebuilding
- Support to women and girls affected by violence
- The reintegration of young people displaced by conflict
- Support to policy makers through research and policy dialogue

Originally a four-year programme the Managing Conflict in North Eastern Nigeria (MCN) programme has been extended by 18 months and will continue until July 2022. The programme is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.



Community dialogue to commemorate International Day of Peace. Source: MCN/Garbjajb

Funded by the
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KEY ACTIVITIES

This newsletter highlights the key activities undertaken by the programme in July to September 2021.

Summary of key activities include:

Conflict management, reconciliation and stability in communities:

- Traditional dispute resolution enhancing security and resilience
- CPSP addresses security concerns after withdrawal of soldiers
- CPSP prevents communal violence

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence:

- MCN trains health care providers on management of SGBV
- Adamawa governor assents Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act

Women peace initiatives:

- Roundtable focuses on role of women in reintegration
- Group calls for inclusion of women in community decision making

Community policing initiatives:

- Improved community policing contributes to tackling crime

Youth peace initiatives:

- MCN supports roundtable on role of youth in reintegration
- Youth organisations raise awareness on reintegration

Promoting policy for peace and security:

- Roundtable seeks inclusion of people living with disability in peacebuilding
- Policy dialogue focuses on farmer-herder conflicts in Yobe State
- Policy dialogue sets requirements for successful reintegration

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY

Traditional dispute resolution enhancing security and resilience

Feedback from stakeholders participating in the bi-monthly review meetings of traditional councils supported by the

FACTS & FIGURES:

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence (July 2021)

SGBV cases reported and acted on by MCN supported Police Family Support Units

1,163 / 1092

No of victims treated at SARCs

2,270

No of SARC clients receiving legal, psycho-social & livelihood support

700

Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme indicates that dispute resolution services of traditional rulers are contributing to community security and resilience.

During review meetings organised in September 2021 in Bade Emirate Council, Damaturu Emirate Council, Fika Emirate Council, and Pataskum Emirate Council, traditional rulers reviewed data on 383 disputes received in July and August 2021. The data showed that 365 cases were successfully resolved.

The review meeting presented the Emirs with the opportunity to engage on the issues resolved by traditional rulers in their councils. They applauded the efforts to document the cases resolved and expressed their belief that the documentation of dispute resolution services provided by the traditional rulers will help to revive recognition of the relevance of traditional institutions, which have been undermined by successive governments.

An important feature of the meetings was the participation of female Sulhu ambassadors recently engaged by the MCN Programme to help coordinate dispute resolution services by female traditional rulers. Feedback from the female leaders show that they are addressing issues such as domestic violence and divorce that male traditional rulers find difficult to resolve.

The review meeting also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss progress being made in enhancing collaboration with the formal justice system through referrals and plans for the sustainability of the record keeping centres established by the MCN Programme.

“The record keeping system will enable us make a system of precedence of cases successfully resolved for reference by traditional rulers in other locations.”

HRH Abubakar Umar Sulieman, Mai Bade, Bade Emirate Council



Participants at review workshop on dispute resolution
Source: MCN/Garbajj

“The record keeping system will enable us to preserve what we are doing so future generations will benefit from what we have done.”

HRH Umaru Bubaram Ibn Wuriwa Bauya, Mai Pataskum, Pataskum Emirate Council

“People like the approach we have adopted to sulhu and come to us for services because of the credibility, acceptance, speed and prevention of external interference.”

Isa Mustapha, District Kasangula, Pataskum Emirate Council

“Involvement of female sulhu ambassadors has given women more confidence to bring their cases for resolution.”

Fatima Abali, Sulhu Ambassador, Fika Emirate Council

CPSP addresses security concerns after withdrawal of soldiers

The Community Peace and Safety Partnership (CPSP) in Gulani LGA has intervened to restore public confidence in security following the withdrawal of soldiers stationed at Bara – the headquarters of the local government council. The withdrawal of military from the Bara community is a concern to community members because of the events in 2015 when their communities were occupied by insurgents.

In 2016, when the Nigerian Army liberated the Local Government from the insurgents, a military base was created in Bara. However, on 16 June 2021 the military base was relocated to Buni Yadi, the Headquarters of the 27th Task Force Brigade without prior notice to the local council and other sister security agencies. The concern was heightened by the experiences of neighbouring communities after the withdrawal of the soldiers.

CPSP members indicated there is a need to engage relevant stakeholders to address this security gap. The CPSP reported the matter to the management of the Gulani Local Government and engaged with the Local Government Authority with a request to discuss the issue as an urgent security matter. The CPSP also engaged Gulani representatives in the State Executive Council and House of Assembly.

- The Gulani Local Council Chairman convened an emergency security meeting to discuss the implications of the withdrawal of the military. This led to an agreement that the Divisional Police Officer would bring in vigilantes to cover the gap. Community stakeholders have gained an improved sense of security since 60 vigilantes began working in shifts to provide security.

“The intervention of the CPSP led the council to take prompt action to cover the security gap.”

Alhaji Dayyabu Ilu, Chairman, Gulani Local Government Council

CPSP prevents communal violence

The CPSP in Mayo Belwa in Adamawa State intervened to secure the removal of a roadblock that prevented the movement of persons through Gorobi community. The roadblock was mounted by people of the Yandang ethnic group to prevent the spill-over of violence between the Bwatiye and Fulani ethnic groups.

The ethnic violence, which occurred between March 2019 and November 2020, led to the death of 10 persons. The people of Gorobi mounted the roadblock to prevent any person who is not from the Yandang ethnic group from passing through their community. The roadblock generated tensions between the Yandang ethnic group and their neighbours in Adamawa and Taraba states. It also caused serious hardship as it affected the movement of goods and services.

The CPSP intervened by engaging different stakeholders to resolve the crisis. Major stakeholders involved included the National Union of Road Transport Workers, the Mayo Belwa Local Government Council, traditional rulers, and town development associations in the area.

Following the engagements, the CPSP influenced the Chairman of the Local Government Council to convene a meeting of all communities and groups affected by the roadblock. Participants at the meeting agreed to end hostilities and remove the roadblock.

The resolution agreed at the stakeholder meeting has been implemented and the roadblock has been removed. People, goods and services are once again moving freely with no reports of any security incidents.

“The intervention of the CPSP led to the end of hardship and prevented the outbreak of a major religious conflict in the local government area.”

Bamanga Misa, Chairman, NURTW, Mayo Belwa LGA

ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MCN trains health care providers in management of SGBV

The MCN Programme organised a capacity building workshop for personnel of the Adamawa State Primary Health Care Agency on the management of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The workshop – organised in collaboration with the Adamawa State Primary Health Development Agency (ASPHCDA) – was held at the AUN Conference Centre in Yola on 26-30 July 2021. Over 50 stakeholders participated in the workshop including doctors, nurses and health assistants drawn from primary health care centres in the 27 local government areas of the state.

Dr Suleiman Saidu Bahir, Executive Chairman of the ASPHDA, declared the event open and thanked the MCN programme for the partnership that enables victims of SGBV – particularly who live in areas far away from the state capital where the Adamawa Hope Centre is located – to access first aid care and treatment. Dr Ukoha Ukiwo, technical lead of the MCN Programme, said the initiative was part of efforts to increase awareness of SGBV and support for victims and survivors. He announced that the programme had commenced discussions with the Adamawa State Government on the establishment of two more Sexual

Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) to serve communities in the North and South senatorial districts of the state.

Facilitators of the training were Dr Ejike Oji of the Association of Family Planning in Nigeria; Dr Uchenna Agu of the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital; Ms Comfort Eshiet of the Mirabel Centre, Lagos; and Ms Amaka Agu of the Tamar Centre, Enugu. They used participatory training methods and role plays to instruct participants on how to provide medical treatment and psycho-social support to victims of SGBV. The sessions included guidance on how to conduct forensic medical examination and the role of medical personnel in supporting victims to access justice.

Pre-test and post-test evaluations conducted showed a remarkable improvement in knowledge and skills acquired by the participants with a 50 percent increase in knowledge.

“The training was timely and impactful. The facilitators were excellent.”

Sarah Haruna, participant

“I will go back and step-down the training to my colleagues and try to sensitise the community so we can help address rape.”

Semsuini Stephen, Manager, Health Care Centre, Ganye LGA

“There was a lot of enthusiasm shown by the participants to go back and do the work. They confessed that the training changed their world views about rape.”

Dr. Ejike Oji, Facilitator

Adamawa governor assents Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act

Governor Umaru Fintri of Adamawa State has signed into law the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act. This followed focused advocacy by the MCN Programme and other civil society groups and development programmes in the state. The signing event, which took place on 4 September 2021, came several months after the bill was passed by the state House of Assembly. MCN and its partners had worked with key policy influencers, including the wife of the governor, to achieve the early passage and implementation of the VAPP.

WOMEN PEACE INITIATIVES

Roundtable focuses on role of women in reintegration

Participants at a roundtable on the role of women in reintegration have called for the recognition of the role of women and their inclusion in peacebuilding initiatives. This is in the spirit of the National Action Plan on the UN Security Council Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. The roundtable was organised in commemoration of the International Day of Peace on 22 September 2021 in Maiduguri, Borno State by Peace Ambassadors Centre for Humanitarian Aid and Empowerment, with the support of the MCN Programme.

The roundtable commenced with lead presentations from Dr Zaynad Muhammad Chelube of the University of Maiduguri on ‘the insurgency and its effects on livelihood of women’ and Hajja Bawa Babagana of the National Emergency Management

Agency on 'Workable empowerment strategies for women affected by conflict'. Participants discussed the experiences of women in the 12-year insurgency in the Northeast. Women have been largely portrayed as victims of the insurgency given the massive abduction of women and girls, killing of women and girls, high levels of displacement of women and girls and high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the context of the insurgency.

However, women have also supported the insurgency. Some have been coerced to provide domestic services to combatants; supported their husbands who join the insurgent groups; engaged in intelligence gathering, recruitment of women and youths for the insurgent groups; and engaged in the movement of arms, food and fuel supplies for insurgent groups.

Participants discussed the positive counter-insurgency and peacebuilding roles of women. These include their roles in early warning and response activities that enable men and boys to escape before the arrival of insurgent groups; their protection activities of covering men and youths by dressing them up as women; their roles in raising awareness on the impact of the insurgency through initiatives such as the bring back our girls (BBOG) movement, their involvement in the negotiation of release of captured persons; and mediation between government and insurgent groups.

Participants noted the dialogues initiated by women groups for the return of women, girls and boys abducted by insurgent groups and children born following mass abductions and forced marriages. Many women have provided psycho-social and counselling services to victims of SGBV and worked to address stigmatisation of victims of SGBV.

The roundtable discussed the different ways the insurgency and counterinsurgency have worsened the conditions and status of women in the region. The insurgency has aggravated the high levels of marginalisation of women in education, politics, governance, and the economy in the Northeast. The participants expressed concern about the exclusion of women in the management of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and peacebuilding efforts. Consequently, Northeast states have been slow to adopt the legal measures required for the protection of women, such as the Child Rights Act and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Bill.



A session at the public dialogue on reintegration. Source: MCN/Garbajb

The roundtable ended with key resolutions on steps to be taken to address the observed challenges, including:

- Government, security agencies, civil society and development partners should include women in the

peacebuilding and recovery efforts in the region. Women leaders and associations should be engaged during consultations for the design of initiatives, including the planned reintegration of ex-combatants and people associated with them.

- Implementing agencies and organisations should ensure that the special needs of women and girls are considered in plans for resettlement of people in communities.
- Government and security agencies should provide the enabling security environment for the return of women and girls to schools and markets.
- Economic empowerment initiatives targeting women should promote the acquisition of assets such as land, housing and livestock by women.
- Governments in the Northeast should take measures to adopt and implement key legislation for protection of women such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act.

Group calls for inclusion of women in community decision making

Members of the Kasaisa Women Peace group have called for the inclusion of women in decision making at the community level. They made the call during an advocacy visit to the Bulama (Community head) as part of activities to commemorate the International Day of Peace held in Kasaisa, Damaturu, Yobe State on 23 September 2021. The visit was aimed at briefing the community leader on the outcome of the community dialogue and sensitisation event organised to raise awareness of women on peacebuilding by the Othman Memorial Foundation with support from the MCN Programme.

During the community dialogue sessions, women had called for more voice and recognition in community leadership and other governmental interventions. They identified the following actions as critical for enhancing participation of women:

- Promote exchange visits among community groups
- Establish effective communication and network systems between women groups
- Promote inclusiveness in decision making on issues of community concerns
- Establish community peace clubs and associations for social interaction
- Train community members in multiple roles across the peacebuilding spectrum; and
- Identify influential members of the community to serve as actors in peacebuilding.

At the end of the dialogue, the women expressed their willingness to support the reintegration of persons who have renounced violence and a genuine desire to return. However, they said the return should be preceded by the empowerment of women and other victims of the insurgency and development and implementation of a workable transitional justice mechanism.

“I am happy that women are leading the peace effort. Our community will be a better place if all of us learn to live in peace and unity.”

Yusuf Mele, Bulama, Kasaisa, Damaturu, Yobe State

COMMUNITY POLICING INITIATIVES

Improved community policing contributes to tackling crime

Feedback from quarterly coordination meetings between voluntary policing sector (VPS) groups, the police and civil defence in Girei and Gombi, Adamawa State, shows there is a reduction in crime rates in the two localities. The observations were made at meetings held in Girei, Gombi, Madagali, and Mubi in July and August 2021. The meetings were organised by the Al Hakeem Foundation with support from MCN.

In **Girei**, the stakeholders noted that advocacy initiatives to introduce regular patrols have led to successes in arresting drug peddling and abuse, curtailing a number of underaged drivers, and relocating criminal elements from the locality. The sensitisation initiative also contributed to the improved understanding of members of voluntary policing sector (VPS) groups. Members of the VPS no longer detain suspects but hand them over to the formal security agencies. The platform also received feedback that initiatives of the coordination mechanism to raise awareness of the public on various tactics adopted by kidnappers was well received and is contributing to crime management.

In **Madagali**, the coordination platform reviewed results of improved collaboration between police and the VPS groups. It was reported that joint patrol teams arrested 8 cattle rustlers and recovered 118 cows. The joint patrol has led to a decrease in incidents of cattle rustling. In addition, there were reported arrest of a kidnapper and suspected members of an insurgent group.

The coordination meeting in **Michika** highlighted that improved collaboration led to the arrest of four kidnappers and one suspected sexual offender. As a result of joint advocacy, a political leader donated patrol vehicles to the police and VPS groups.

In **Mubi**, resolutions and actions of the coordination platform to improve security and safety were successfully delivered. Notable results include the enforcement of business closure times by the Bureau de Change operators, and the arrest of persons involved in the theft of commercial tricycles.

“The collaboration between police, the vigilantes and hunters has made a difference fighting crime. Through the effort, some members of Boko Haram were arrested and handed over to the authorities.”

DSP Pius Paul, Divisional Police Officer, Mubi North LGA

“We commend the cooperation between the police, hunters and vigilantes that have led to more arrests of cattle rustlers and reducing insurgent attacks.”

Mark Tsingari Birdling, Chief of Staff to Chairman, Madagali LGA

“We are grateful that the security agencies and our local vigilantes and hunters are working together to keep the peace.”

Alhaji Mahmud Shuaibu, District Head, Gombi

“The vigilantes and hunters have really supported law enforcement agencies to combat the crime of cattle rustling.”

Musa Umaru, Chairman, Tabital Pulakku, Girei, Girei LGA

YOUTH PEACE INITIATIVES

MCN supports roundtable on role of youths in reintegration

The MCN Programme supported a roundtable on the role of youths and persons living with disability in the reintegration process. The roundtable, organised by the Peace Ambassadors Centre for Humanitarian Aid and Empowerment (PACHE) was held in Maiduguri on 22 September 2021, in commemoration of the 2021 International Day of Peace.

The event featured lead presentations by Abubakar Abdullahi Suleiman, executive director of the Centre for Social Cohesion, Peace and Empowerment (CENSCOPE), on ‘Addressing drivers of conflict: youth perspective’ and A. Y Bala on ‘An inclusive approach toward reintegration: understanding the needs of people living with disability’. Participants discussed the renewed initiatives of the Borno State government to ensure the safe return of persons who have passed the deradicalization programme and have renounced violence back to communities.

Participants said that youths have been most affected by the insurgency and have played crucial roles in counter-insurgency operations through their participation in the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Most insurgent groups have primarily targeted youths for recruitments and lack of socio-economic opportunity for youths is pushing some to join the insurgent groups.

Discussions at the roundtable highlighted that the approach adopted for reintegration is insensitive as the focus on ex-combatants gives the impression that violence pays. This is due to little progress made in the empowerment of youths who did not take up arms. Many of the youths live in appalling conditions while their peers who took up arms and are being rehabilitated and catered for.

Participants noted the dearth of discussion of the specific impacts of the insurgency and counter-insurgency operations on people living with disability. The interest of people living with disability have also been marginal in plans to reintegrate and resettle victims and perpetrators of the insurgency.

The following resolutions were made at the event:

- Given the central role that youths have played in the insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, there is a need for sustained engagement of youths in the reintegration process to enhance community acceptance of returnees. This should include supporting youths to organise sensitisation and dialogue processes required for successful reintegration.
- Government and development partners should address gaps in youth empowerment and employment to check the continuous recruitment of youth in armed violence.
- The administrators of the reintegration should engage persons with disability and ensure that the implementation takes into consideration their specific needs.
- To stem the cycle of grievance and violent conflict in the region, there is need for greater involvement of youths in governance and peacebuilding line with the UN security Council Resolution 2250.

Youth organisations raise awareness on reintegration

Fourteen youth-focused organisations held a dialogue forum to promote the understanding and acceptance of reintegration in Yobe State. The Youth Dialogue Forum was held on 23

September 2021 and was organised with support from the MCN Programme to mark the 2021 International Day of Peace. Notable among participating organisations include the Nigeria Youth Council (NYC), the Youth Assembly of Nigeria (YAN), the Tarmuwa Youth Forum, the National Union of Youth State Students (NUUOSS), the Female Emancipation League (FEMEL), the Spotlight for Transparency and Accountability, the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), and the Northeast Youth Federation (NEYIF).

Presenters included Muazu Alhaji Modu, Executive Chairman of the Spotlight programme, who made a presentation on 'Understanding reintegration and the role of youths and social groups in the process in Yobe State', and Dr Fatsuma Muhammad, Executive Director of FEMEL, who spoke on 'Galvanising community approach to reintegration in Yobe State'.

Participants at the forum observed that youth should be involved in public policy because they constitute up to 62% of the population. They said there have been misperceptions about reintegration because citizens have little knowledge of the process, which has largely been led by the military authorities. Participants opined that what will be most useful is if the government communicates better so people understand the different categories of persons to be reintegrated and the processes adopted for screening them and ensuring they no longer pose a threat to the community. The government will also need to be sensitive about engagement of the people and consider engagement approaches that will ensure the participation and buy-in of all social groups.

The forum set up a policy brief drafting committee that will synthesise the position of the youths for presentation to government and relevant agencies.

PROMOTING POLICY FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

Roundtable seeks inclusion for people living with disability in peacebuilding

A roundtable was held on 24 September 2021 in Damaturu to discuss the role of persons living with disability in peacebuilding. The event was organised by the Yobe State Chapter of the Joint National Association of People with Disability (JONAPWD), with support from the MCN programme.

Stakeholders called for more inclusion of persons with disability in peacebuilding interventions. Participants expressed concern that while persons with disabilities have been badly affected by the insurgency and other forms of violence, their concerns and interests are rarely considered.

Usman Bura Gabai, Chairman of JONAPWD in the state led the discussion on the impact of violence on persons with disability. Participants observed that disabled persons are often the last to escape from communities facing attacks and are therefore subjected to violence, including rape by attackers.

Discussions highlighted that when people living with disability eventually get to IDP camps, they discover that the camps are not built to cater for disability. This creates difficulty for PWDs when accessing food, sanitation, and medical facilities.

It was also noted that violence perpetrated by insurgents and actors engaged in counter-insurgency operations have led to an increase in the number of PWDs. This increase needs to be factored into plans by government for humanitarian aid, social

welfare support, and empowerment and resettlement programmes.

Participants commended some efforts made to respond to the needs of PWDs in the state, notably the appointment of a representative of the JONAPWD into the State Protection Council and the passage of the law on disability by the State House of Assembly.

At the end of the meeting, the following recommendations were made:

- SEMA and other government agencies need to reserve some percentage of livelihood support for people living with disability.
- Government should address the infrastructure needs of school for people living with disability relocated to Damagum.
- Government should conduct a risk assessment of all interventions, including the reintegration initiative to mitigate the adverse impact on people living with disabilities.
- Government and development partners should provide special empowerment programmes for people living with disabilities to enhance their economic independence.
- There should be a platform for people living with disabilities to continuously engage with decision makers.



Participants at roundtable on role of people with disability on peacebuilding. Source: MCN/Garbajb

Policy dialogue focuses on farmer-herder conflicts in Yobe State

The MCN Programme in collaboration with the Yobe State Pilot Livestock Development Programme organised a policy dialogue on Farmer-Herder Conflicts on 11 August 2021. The event was attended by members of the state executive council, chairpersons of local government councils, traditional rulers, religious leaders, representatives of associations of farmers and herders, civil society groups, and the media.

Keynote addresses were made by Dr Yusuf Madaki, Programme Manager of the Yobe State Pilot Livestock Development Programme, and Dr Ukoha Ukiwo, Technical Lead of the MCN Programme. Participants examined the various structural, facilitating and trigger factors contributing to the perennial conflicts between herders and farmers, the impact of the conflicts, and possible solutions.

Participants identified demographic, environmental, political and socio-economic factors responsible for the upsurge in incidents of conflicts between farming and herder groups. The conflicts have led to loss of lives, loss of property and means of livelihood, and a state of insecurity. While noting several interventions by

the state government to address the problems, notably through the creation of reserves and the introduction of tracking devices to trace and recover stolen livestock, participants said expected dividends have not fully accrued. This is due to abuse, corruption, and poor enforcement mechanisms.

The policy dialogue issued a communique, which recommended the following measures to address the conflicts:

- Associations of farmers and herders should be engaged to sensitise their members on the need to abide by policies on land and water use.
- Conflict mediation and dialogue platforms should be established to manage conflicts between farmers and herders.
- All-inclusive resource management committees should be established to govern resource use.
- The capacity of local institutions engaged in managing resource use and resolving disputes should be enhanced, including traditional rulers, security agencies and local council officials.

“This is a welcome development. This dialogue has raised concerns that if addressed will contribute toward mitigating conflicts between farmers and herders.”

Usman Ngarai, Chairman, All Farmers’ Association of Nigeria, Yobe State

“The dialogue is laudable and has come at the right time. It will contribute to addressing the perennial conflicts between farmers and herders.”

Baba Usman Ngelzerma, National Secretary, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria



A young herder in the Northeast. Source: MCN

Policy dialogue sets requirements for successful reintegration

Stakeholders at a policy dialogue on reintegration have outlined the measures required to enhance community acceptance of persons associated with non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in the Northeast. The event was held at the El Kanemi Hall in the University of Maiduguri on 21 September 2021. It was organised by the Peace Ambassadors Centre Humanitarian Aid and Empowerment (PACHE), with support from MCN. The policy dialogue was one of the events held to commemorate the 2021

International Day of Peace with the theme: ‘Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world’.

The policy dialogue was convened to explore opportunities for enhancing community acceptance of persons associated with the no-state armed groups, whose violent activities have contributed to death, displacement and destruction in the region. This is because of reports of resentments expressed by community members on planned return of ex-combatants and their associates to communities. Agitations by residents in Borno State had intensified following the reported mass return of over 3,000 people associated with the NSAGs.

The event was declared open by Hajija Zara Bukar, special adviser to the Governor of Borno State on Health and Chairperson of the MCN Advisory Committee (who represented the State Governor). Keynote presentations were delivered by Dr Kawu Monguno of University of Maiduguri; Imam Ahmed Abdulkadir of the Nigeria Arabic Language Village, Gamboru-Ngala, Borno State; Pastor Abraham Akporue of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Borno State Chapter; Major General Christopher Musa, Theatre Commander, Operation Lafiya Dole; Alhaji Hassan Zanna Boguma of the Borno Emirate Council; Hon. Engr. Satomi Ahmad of the federal House of Representatives; and Dr Zainab Chellube of Director, PACHE.

Lead presenters and participants appraised the different counterinsurgency and peacebuilding efforts in the state. They argued that reintegration seems challenging due to the serious and grave impact of the insurgency and feelings in the state that victims of the insurgency continue to suffer from the impact of the insurgency. Participants also noted that popular responses to reintegration appear to be influenced by a lack of understanding of the processes and steps taken by authorities to treat ex-combatants and returnees. The participants agreed that while religious and cultural norms provide the basis for community acceptance of persons who have repented for misdeeds, such acceptance is not unconditional. Social norms and expectations demand that certain issues need to be addressed and some conditions met before full acceptance.

After the event, the participants issued a communique, which included the following resolutions:

- The authorities should embark on a thorough screening of returnees to ensure the differentiation of returnees depending on the roles they played in the insurgency.
- There is need for transparency in the management of the reintegration process. Religious leaders, community leaders, civil society, and the general public should be informed of the processes adopted for reintegration and involved in its implementation to address widespread scepticism arising from ignorance.
- There is need for the prioritisation of resettlement and empowerment of victims of the insurgency to correct the widespread impression that reintegration is perpetrator rather than victim focussed.
- The government should reconsider plans to establish reintegration facilities in communities given public concerns about security and safety.
- Implementers of the reintegration programme should draw on the lessons learned in de-radicalisation and reintegration process since the commencement of the Operation Safe Corridor Programme.
- There is a need for the comprehensive transitional justice programme to complement the reintegration initiatives.

PROGRESS AGAINST EU INDICATORS

Indicator	Target 2022	Achieved 31 July 2021	Comment
Number of staff from government institutions and internal security forces trained	1,210	8,950	Activity Years 2-5
Number of people participating in conflict prevention and peace building activities	2,860	87,913	Activity Years 1-5
Total number of community beneficiaries	3,600,000	3,318,864	Activity Years 2-5

UPCOMING ACTIVITY

- Dissemination of study on prevalence sexual and gender-based violence in some localities of Yobe State
- Meetings and initiatives of the community peace and safety partnerships in target LGAs
- Dissemination of study on the EndSARS protests and social mobilisation in Northeast Nigeria
- Community reconciliation initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Launch of new SARCs in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Coordination meetings of voluntary policing sector groups
- Meetings of the community accountability forums in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Advocacy initiatives of SARC Steering Committees in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Youth peace initiatives in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Operations of family support units in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
- Peacebuilding initiatives by women associations and youth groups in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states

ONGOING CHALLENGES

- The COVID-19 pandemic and other public health challenges
- Continued unrest in the Northeast and the impact to travel and work outside state capitals
- Capacity of civil society organisations and state institutions

Find out more

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