



CONFLICT RESEARCH NETWORK WEST AFRICA

Policy Levers for Peace

**Sub-National and Local Peacebuilding
Mechanisms in Nigeria**



Supported By:



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Policy Levers for Peace: Sub-National and Local Peacebuilding Mechanisms in Nigeria

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National Library of Nigeria Cataloguing

A catalogue record for this report is available from the Nigerian National Library

ISBN: 978-978-766-972-3

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Suggested Citation

Ebiede, Tarila Marclint and Kwaja, Chris (eds). 2024. Policy Levers for Peace: Sub-National and Local Peacebuilding Mechanisms in Nigeria. Conflict Research Network West Africa, Abuja, Nigeria.

Publisher

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Acknowledgement

We wish to thank the research participants for their invaluable knowledge and experience shared with our researchers. We are most grateful to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) for its support to this research project. The editors and authors of this report hereby assumes full responsibility for the comments and opinions expressed herein. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of USIP.

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With support from:



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Foreword

Recent scholarly and policy research has yielded significant new insights about the important role that peace plays in the everyday lives and experiences of human societies. The strategic value of integrating policy into the peacebuilding field underscores the effectiveness of collaboration between policy actors and peacebuilding communities. In Nigeria, there is a strong connection between national and sub-national policy mechanisms. Nigeria's rich history of active, community-level peacebuilding structures highlights and reinforces their relevance, particularly concerning social cohesion. Community voices serve as compelling forces that can prompt policy actors to act before, during, and after conflicts.

USIP's vision of a world without violent conflict and its support for community-centered peacebuilding interventions are based on the core belief that the policy levers of peace function optimally when the people play a key role in the design, implementation, and evaluation of peace infrastructures. By working with peace practitioners in Nigeria, USIP has supported measures that improve inter-religious and inter-ethnic relationships, along with other conditions necessary for building harmony and social cohesion—essential for transforming the country's landscape.

Drawing lessons from communities across Nigeria, CORN West Africa provides insights into some of the most outstanding institutions and mechanisms for peacebuilding, which have not received adequate attention regarding their utility and impact. USIP's support for this research stems from its belief that beyond the national level, profound lessons can be drawn from sub-national experiences. Communities possess peacebuilding related resources—both government-initiated and community-generated forms of social capital—that they rely on to meet their everyday peace needs. While the research covered Nigeria's six geo-political regions, there are gaps—

not all communities, of course, could be represented in a single study. We hope this publication serves as a foundation for future inquiry, particularly into communities excluded from the scope of this research—where greater understanding and untold lessons are undoubtedly held.

Given the growing complexity of conflict dynamics and security challenges, the increased role of communities in peacebuilding has gained greater attention. The key assumption is that communities can serve as catalysts for delivering peacebuilding needs through their engagement with policy. This publication highlights that, due to limited government presence in some areas, various groups and institutions have adopted community-led conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives with varying degrees of success. The progress these communities have made in crafting sustainable pathways for peace can be attributed to their resiliencies. Factors responsible for their successes include building and leveraging trust and effective communication, a shared sense of responsibility, ownership of peace processes, a commitment to resisting threats to peace and harmony, and strategic partnerships with government institutions and development partners.

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this research are crucial in pursuing practical pathways for sustainable peace and cohesion in Nigeria. They can also serve as a model for other countries facing similar conflicts threatening national harmony and stability. To this end, USIP has supported this research and remains committed to supporting the dissemination and adoption of its findings by policy actors, civil society, community-based actors, academics, and development partners.

Matthew Edds-Reitman
Program Manager, West Africa
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Executive Summary

Effective sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions may be able to ensure that Nigeria experiences relative peace and stability. These peace institutions and mechanisms exist. Yet, how they work, and the outcomes of their work have received little or no systematic documentation and analysis. This research report on Policy Levers for Peace: Sub-National and Local Peacebuilding Mechanisms in Nigeria seeks to explain how peacebuilding institutions work at the sub-national and local level, paying attention to how they emerge, the actors involved, the mechanisms and processes involved, the challenges, and the outcomes.

Key Findings:

1. Peace Institutions

The research shows that peace institutions exist at both sub-national and local levels. State and non-state institutions perform the role of peacebuilding at the sub-national and local levels. While state institutions are established formally by the government, non-state institutions often emerge from the traditional and cultural institutions of ethnic communities, as well as from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in peacebuilding. Based on the findings and analysis, the report proposes an architecture of peacebuilding in Nigeria.

2. Outcomes

Sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions have been able to address different forms of conflict drivers, thus ensuring peace in some communities. However, these institutions have been more effective in some conflicts than they have been in others. Conflict units such as the farmer-herder violence and armed banditry have proven to be more challenging for local peacebuilding institutions. Yet, there have been successful mediations by local peacebuilding institutions in specific communities involved in these conflicts that led to the de-escalation of tensions. This is also the case for other forms of conflicts in communities. The most significant factor

for successful outcomes is early warning and early actions by local peacebuilding institutions.

3. Challenges

Sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions face significant challenges in pursuing their mandate. These challenges, as identified by the research, include resource constraints, political interferences, security threats, and lack of social cohesion in communities. There is a consensus that the work of sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions is important and urgently needed. There has also been an increase in the number of state governments that have established state peacebuilding agencies. Yet, the research shows that these agencies are under-resourced. Limited funding and logistical support undermine the operational capacity of sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions.

Political interference also undermines the work of sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions. The report showed examples of how politicians attempted to use sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions to pursue their own political goals, thus undermining the capacity of these institutions to effectively build peace in their states and localities. Overall, the neopatrimonial nature of politics in Nigeria impacts how sub-national and local peacebuilding institutions work.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Peace institutions in Nigeria have made significant strides in promoting stability and resolving conflicts. However, to sustain and build upon these achievements, it is essential to address the challenges they face through sustained investments in peacebuilding, inclusive policies at the governmental level, and strengthened collaboration between different actors within Nigeria's peacebuilding architecture as outlined in the recommendations in this report. By doing so, Nigeria can foster a more peaceful and resilient society, paving the way for sustainable development and national cohesion.

Introduction

The prevalence of violent conflicts in Nigeria has prompted the emergence of different peacebuilding actors and institutions. While political violence and armed clashes have featured prominently in contemporary Nigeria – they are now central to its politics and governance – conflicts are not new to the country. Violent struggles were rife before Nigeria gained independence on 1 October 1960 and have continued since, including the 1966–69 Civil War. In colonial and post-independence Nigeria, state and non-state actors have played significant roles in formal and informal peace processes. Yet, there is little research on or analysis of peacebuilding institutions, their work, and the impact of their efforts on conflicts. This report addresses this gap by researching Nigeria's sub-national and local peacebuilding mechanisms (institutions and actors) through case studies in each of the country's six geopolitical zones. The report provides a coherent view of peacebuilding institutions across these zones, the impacts of their work and the challenges they face.

Policy in Nigeria is made on several levels, and the actions of individuals and institutions determine the extent of peace in societies and states in the country. This is important for understanding the context of peacebuilding in Nigeria. Some peacebuilders work formally at the state level or within organised civil society, while others are ad hoc and act informally. A third group, which includes traditional rulers and community members, bridge the formal and informal divide. The nature of Nigerian society demands that formality,

informality, and everything in between interact to produce peace outcomes. Given the ongoing violence and armed conflicts that threaten peace in Nigeria, it is crucial to understand how peacebuilders can better work together. A conversation about this complexity among Nigeria's policymakers is needed to ensure that peace-making efforts are successful. This conversation begins with understanding the peacebuilding landscape in Nigeria.

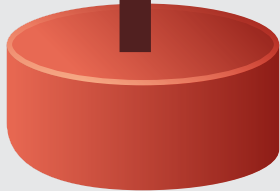
This report details how peacebuilders work in Nigeria, highlighting their actions and the outcomes of their actions. Two primary sources of evidence are used:

- Primary qualitative research comprising 220 interviews and 44 focus group discussions involving peacebuilders at state and local government levels, as well as communities. This fieldwork was conducted in six states, one in Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. These states are Anambra (South-East), Bayelsa (South-South), Adamawa (North-East), Katsina (North-West), Osun (South-West) and Plateau State – (North-Central)
- Secondary evidence is drawn from newspaper reports, policy reports, government documents, and published academic works on peacebuilding in Nigeria.

The information gained was triangulated, and the outcome was used to produce a coherent understanding of how peacebuilding actors work at sub-national and local levels.

FOUR PILLARS OF SUCCESS FOR PEACE INSTITUTIONS

1



LEGITIMACY

To be successful, peacebuilders must have legitimacy among those in conflict. Legitimacy could arise from civil, cultural, or traditional authority. Civil authority means being seen to act justly, to deliver a public service and to regard all conflict parties equally, which gives those involved the authority to intervene when conflicts occur; conflict participants with experience of these institutions or actors believe they will be treated fairly in the peace process.

2



RESOURCES

It takes resources to build peace, whether financial, human, or social capital. Peacemakers with the required resources are more likely to carry out peacebuilding activities successfully. Peacebuilding can involve consultative meetings, compensation, restoration for property damage, and sometimes treating wounded victims. These may need financial resources, and peacebuilders should have the means and ability to mobilise sufficient resources to carry out appropriate activities. Human resources are also required, and institutions without the skilled staff to fulfil a peacebuilding mandate will not have the desired impact on conflicts. Communities lacking people with the capacity and mediation skills are unlikely to resolve their conflicts and disputes and bring peace.

The report is informed by the theoretical understanding of the four main factors that can enable peacebuilding institutions to work for peace. These are legitimacy, resources, neutrality, and fairness.

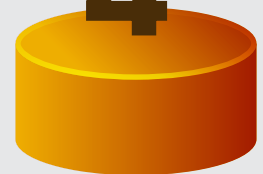
3



NEUTRALITY

Institutions and individuals involved in peacebuilding must be considered neutral. For conflict parties to cooperate and provide opportunities for peacebuilding, they must trust peacebuilders. Where institutions or individuals are partisan, those in conflict are less likely to collaborate or engage in the peace process. Hence, neutrality is central to determining the outcome of peacebuilding efforts.

4



FAIRNESS

Peacebuilding actors face complex challenges, especially in addressing the opposing needs of conflict parties. In most conflicts, especially struggles for natural resources, those involved often share existential and sometimes irreconcilable claims. Being fair in addressing the seemingly irreconcilable claims of conflict parties is crucial to achieving peace.

LEGITIMACY

RESOURCES

NEUTRALITY

FAIRNESS

Nigeria's Peacebuilding Architecture

Nigeria's political governance architecture is deeply rooted in attempts to address different forms of conflict. It comprises formal and informal rules, frameworks, policies, programmes, norms, agreements, and laws that structure socio-political and economic interactions. While institutions are the more intangible rules, the Nigerian state also creates organisations to facilitate how institutions function and are brought to life. For example, in 1969, after the Civil War, the Nigerian Government implemented a national integration scheme called the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC). The NYSC was a peacebuilding policy of the government because it was designed to enhance dialogue and build social contact between different ethnic groups.¹

Since the end of Nigeria's civil war, the peacebuilding objectives of government in Nigeria traverse all public institutions and constitute the main reasons for overarching laws and principles of administration in the country. The Federal Character Principle, for example, is an affirmative action policy that demands the representation of Nigeria's diversity in all Federal Government programmes and policies. Specifically, section 14 of Nigeria's 1999 constitution states that "there is no predominance of persons from a few states or a few ethnic or sectional groups in federal government agencies".² This principle is implemented by the Federal Character Commission (FCC), which ensures that all Federal Government agencies and institutions and the distribution of resources reflect the country's diversity. The distribution of resources, including positions in government, can be a conflict driver, especially regarding horizontal inequality,³ so addressing this is an attempt at peacebuilding. In essence, the FCC can be said to have a peacebuilding mandate.

It is essential to reflect on the national architecture of peacebuilding before

examining the sub-national and local peacebuilders that are the focus of this report. The sub-national and local peacebuilding environments are not necessarily isolated from the national ones. Many of the policies and actions of formal peacebuilding institutions and actors at the local level are designed and shaped at the national level or emerge from national policies. For the national peacebuilding architecture, it is essential to recognise that "peacebuilding embodies an array of processes, practices, and approaches required for conflict transformation toward more sustainable, enduring, and lasting peaceful relationships before and after conflicts".⁴ Hence, government activities that deal with everyday governance of social relations and economic and human development, if implemented according to the principles of peace, will likely contribute to lasting peaceful relationships before and after conflicts. While there is no clearly defined architecture of peace in Nigeria, we can imagine this architecture focusing on institutions at the national level that should be working towards peaceful relations between and among citizens and groups.

The Federal Government of Nigeria: The executive arm of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is constitutionally assigned the role of primary peacebuilding actor in the country. Its institutions, processes and norms should address all conflict drivers; it has an omnipresent role in peacebuilding. All variables critical to driving peacebuilding are anchored in FGN institutions, which should perform their duties as enshrined in the constitution and by relevant laws. Institutions in sectors such as education, health, agriculture, water resources, land management, public communication, security, infrastructure, youth, labour and productivity, women's affairs and social development are designed to provide public services essential to peacebuilding. These government agencies, coordinated by the Presidency, are at the pinnacle of Nigeria's

peacebuilding architecture, each playing a role according to its sector. The fact that these agencies play different roles in promoting peace shows that peacebuilding is a multisectoral exercise designed to lead to peace. To achieve this, institutions and agencies are guided by principles of good governance, dialogue, conflict sensitivity, violence reduction, gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion. This is why all FGN institutions should have a desk officer responsible for ensuring that policy implementation enhances the peacebuilding role of government and does not contribute to conflict escalation.

The National Assembly (NASS): As the legislative arm of government, the national assembly is empowered with making laws and providing broad oversight of the executive arm of government. NASS is empowered to make laws and review existing legislation that can facilitate 'peaceful relations' between individuals and groups. It also has the power to oversee state institutions in the executive branch of government responsible for government policies and ensure that these institutions effectively deliver on their mandate. The role of law-making, law review and legislative oversight is performed by NASS. This gives it a place in Nigeria's peacebuilding architecture.

Judiciary: The judiciary plays an essential role in peacebuilding. It is designed to adjudicate disputes and resolve conflicts based on the interpretation of the law. Its role cannot be overemphasised. A functional judiciary accessible to the people is likely to facilitate the civil resolution of disputes that could escalate into violent conflicts. Hence, the Federal Judiciary is an important policy actor in Nigeria's peacebuilding architecture.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC): INEC plays an important role in moderating relations between citizens and groups. As the primary electoral umpire, the

management and conduct of free, fair, and credible elections are essential to peaceful relations. Poorly conducted elections contribute to violent conflict and electoral violence is one of the most prominent, albeit seasonal, forms of political violence. In imagining an architecture of peace, we should think of INEC as a peace actor and its function in elections as an exercise in peacebuilding.

National Orientation Agency (NOA): The NOA was established by Decree 100 of 1993. Its main objective is to "ensure that government programmes and policies are better understood by the general public" and to "promote new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of goals and objectives of a united Nigerian State".⁵ One of the NOA's functions is establishing "social institutions and [a] framework for deliberate exposure of Nigerians to democracy norms and values for a virile, peaceful, united, progressive and disciplined society".⁶ The objectives of the NOA, as enshrined in the law, show that it is required to be involved in peacebuilding activities, especially conflict prevention and building social cohesion in pre- and post-conflict communities.

Law Enforcement Agencies: There are at least 12 law enforcement agencies under the control of the FGN. The armed forces focus on protecting the territorial integrity of Nigeria, and the Nigerian Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps address internal security, civil offences, and crime. Due to the intensification of violent conflicts, the armed forces have increasingly become more active in internal security operations, with the Nigerian Army having active operations in all six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Law enforcement agencies are key actors in Nigeria's peace architecture. Their responsibility for maintaining law and order means acting as conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution agencies, sustaining peace in communities and contributing to peacebuilding in conflict-affected

areas through their operations and law enforcement.

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

(IPCR): The IPCR is a think tank established by the FGN in 2000. It is the primary state-owned research centre and the agency responsible for generating new evidence for peace policymaking and peacebuilding capacity in Nigeria. It is mandated to engage in peace policy design, peace research, peacebuilding capacity building and peacebuilding intervention, which gives the IPCR a central place in Nigeria's peace architecture. As an agency responsible for conducting peace research, generating peacebuilding knowledge, designing peace policies, and building the capacity of other state agencies within the peacebuilding landscape, the IPCR should be an important peace policy lever in Nigeria.

National Boundary Commission (NBC):

According to the 2006 Act establishing the NBC its objectives include to “intervene, and deal with any boundary disputes that may arise between Nigeria and any of her neighbours with a view to settling the dispute” and “intervene, determine and deal with any boundary dispute that may arise among states, local government areas or communities in the Federation with a view to settling the disputes”. These are essentially peacebuilding objectives because boundary disputes between communities are one of the primary drivers of violent conflicts in Nigeria. Also, international boundary disputes, such as that along the Nigeria–Cameroon border, can fuel violent attacks involving cross-border communities. The peacebuilding responsibilities of the NBC include “holding meetings at least once in every quarter to ensure the maintenance of peace and order in the border areas”, to “encourage and support peace organs within the State and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja as the case may be, for the purpose of promoting peace and harmony between

communities involved in boundary disputes”, to “carry out awareness and enlightenment campaigns among the people in the State and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja as the case may be, on the essence of boundaries in order to foster peace and harmony among the people living along boundary lines”, to “liaise with neighbouring Local Government Areas towards evolving joint programmes that shall promote peace and harmony among border dwellers”, to “carry out awareness and enlightenment campaigns with the view of fostering peaceful relationship with neighbouring communities” and to “deal with inter-community boundary disputes”. This is not an exhaustive list of the activities of the NBC. However, these examples show clearly that conflict prevention and peacebuilding is integral to its existence.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):

Civil society actors also play a role in research and advocacy on peacebuilding, conflict resolution and conflict management. Nigeria has an institutionalised civil society environment, and many CSOs are engaged in peace research, advocacy and peacebuilding project implementation. While some of these organisations are embedded in local communities, the more institutionalised organisations are headquartered in Abuja, in the Federal Capital Territory. More established CSOs collaborate with communities, national government institutions, and international organisations to work on peacebuilding, elections, conflict resolution, social cohesion, accountability, governance, and peacebuilding. CSOs are important as policy levers for peace. Their advocacy and stakeholder engagement facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties in communities. CSOs also collaborate within civil society to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue on conflict issues. For example, the National Peace Committee, comprised of eminent Nigerians, is an outcome of the advocacy and engagements of the Kukah Centre, a

Nigeria-based policy research institute. The National Peace Committee engages stakeholders to promote violence-free elections. It facilitates dialogue between critical stakeholders during elections, including the signing of a 'peace treaty' by candidates regarding elective executive positions at state and federal levels. Another example of a CSO initiative is the Niger Delta Dialogue, convened by the Academic Associate Peace Works, which facilitates dialogue between conflict parties in the Niger Delta, the FGN and the oil industry. In the North-East, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) provides a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue in communities affected by the Boko Haram insurgency by convening the Sulhu Alheri Ne platform. The dialogue aims to support the reintegration of people associated with non-state armed groups. Many more CSOs are working on peacebuilding through research, advocacy, programme

implementation and policy engagement. These activities place CSOs, as a group, as important facilitators of peacebuilding in Nigeria.

Traditional Rulers and Religious Leaders:

Traditional rulers and religious leaders play moderating roles in socio-political relations in Nigeria. They are under the umbrella of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria and often engage with national political leaders on pressing issues, including those that could escalate conflicts or lead to the breakdown of law and order. Religious leaders from the two dominant faith groups – Christianity and Islam – also play prominent roles as peace actors. While there are no constitutional roles for these groups, members of the traditional cultural elites and clergy are often engaged to reach conflict parties or address concerns that could lead to conflict. In playing these roles, traditional and religious leaders could serve as agents of peacebuilding.

Table 1: Peacebuilding Institutions

Formal	Informal
Constitution	Power sharing arrangements
Federalism and its structures	
Presidentialism and its structures	Socio-cultural practices
Revenue allocation	
Educational policies	Faith and belief systems
Social distribution policies	
National Youth Service Corps	Compensatory mechanisms
Peace policies	
Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act	Transitional justice mechanisms
National amnesty institutions	

Nigeria's Peacebuilding Architecture

The Logic of Nigeria's Peacebuilding Architecture: Government and civil society activities that deal with everyday governance of social relations and economic and human development, if implemented according to the principles of peace, will likely contribute to lasting peaceful relationships before and after conflicts.



Table 2: Peace Actors

Formal	Informal
Peace commissions and Institutes	Traditional institutions
Ministries and parastatals	Women's and youth groups
NGOs/CSOs	Vigilantism and voluntary policing sector groups
Interfaith groups	Early warning systems

The discussions so far have sought to establish scope for understanding Nigeria's peacebuilding policy environment. National institutions and their functions are cascaded down to the states and local governments. It is not uncommon for a committee, agency or department established by state or local government to address concerns that fuel violent conflicts and contentions between groups. This report is mainly focused on these sub-national and local peacebuilding actors. The objective is to assess how they work and the outcomes of their actions.

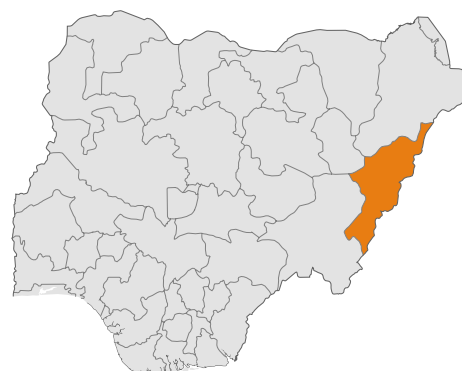
Nigeria's dual character, which emphasises a strong state and influential non-state authorities at the local level, creates informality in the governance architecture of the country. This means that non-state institutions are equally prominent in governance, especially in communities and

rural areas. This shapes how peacebuilding institutions emerge and function. Non-state authorities that seek to reduce conflict develop norms, policies, programmes and committees as mechanisms for responding to conflicts and bringing about peace. Often these are unwritten and include conventions and traditions embedded in culture. In contrast, state institutions are formal and have written laws, regulations, legal agreements, contracts, and constitutions that are enforced by third parties. The aim of this report is to understand how these institutions work and identify ways of strengthening local-level peacebuilding.

Highlights of Actions and Outcomes of Sub-National and Local Peacebuilding Mechanisms

Adamawa State is one of the states affected by violent extremism and terrorist violence. Since 2010 rural areas in the northern parts of the state have experienced insecurity because of the Boko Haram insurgency. This has led to the development of peacebuilding institutions. There have been increased efforts by state and local customary authorities to establish institutions with peacebuilding mandates and responsibilities. This has been shaped by and has influenced state politics. For example, former Governor Umar J. Bindow established the Adamawa State Peace, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (ADSPRRRA) in September 2018. The agency was created through Executive Order rather than by an Act of Parliament, which made it possible for the new governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, to decline recognition of the agency. He dissolved ADSPRRRA and established a new agency, the Adamawa State Peace, Conflict Resolution and Social Integration Commission, which will be less bulky, less complex in its duties, responsibilities and functions, cover more areas and have more grassroots representation. Some of the duties of ADSPRRRA, such as reconstruction and rehabilitation, have been transferred to a new state ministry, the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Humanitarian Services (MRRR&H).

The Peace Architecture Dialogue (PAD) was established by Search for Common Ground in 2019 as an early warning and early response mechanism to conflict, initially in five Local Government Areas (LGAs) – Demsa, Numan, Mayo Belwa, Girei and Lamurde – where it is being trialled. It comprises about 30 members, from communities, LGAs, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Humanitarian Services (MRRR&H), security



agencies, the All Farmers Association of Nigeria, and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association. The PAD has become a very strong institution because of its success in addressing different forms of conflict, particularly in local communities.

The MRRR&H was established in 2021, also through an Executive Order, to address rehabilitation, reintegration, and reconstruction in Adamawa State. Because it has a reintegration and humanitarian mandate, it can be considered a peacebuilding mechanism at the state level. However, we are unaware of any action it has taken to fulfil its rehabilitation, reintegration, and humanitarian mandate.

The Adamawa State Technical Committee for the Resolution of Farmer-Herder Conflict was set up by the Adamawa State Government in 2020. This followed the dissolution of the ADSAPRRR, which was set up to help reconcile farmers and herders, but which was perceived by the new regime as being improperly constituted and as being used to witch hunt and muzzle opposition candidates during the 2019 gubernatorial election. Additionally, there had been a resurgence of clashes between farmers and herders in some parts of the State, including in Numan, where the conflict had lingered for a long time.

An example of a non-state peace institution in Adamawa State is the Kabara Council, a conflict-management and peacebuilding institution among the Marghi ethnic group in Madagali LGA. The word 'kabara' in Marghi means 'common ground' or 'reconciliation'. The Council, which had existed even before the creation of Adamawa State, had become defunct. It was recently reinvigorated with some adjustments in 2007 to address rising community conflict among the Marghi.

The Traditional Peace and Arbitration Committee (TPAC) was established by the Adamawa State Technical Committee for the Resolution of Farmer-Herder Conflict in October 2021 and is a grassroots replica of the Technical Committee in LGAs where farmer-herder crises are prevalent. It was

established in seven LGAs. Demsa TPAC was selected for this research. Demsa TPAC comprises 30 members who are drawn from all Demsa districts. It involves Bwatiye and Fulani ethnic nationalities so that conflict in the Numan Federation can be addressed. The establishment of TPAC and the composition of its members is a result of the dialogue between the Bwatiye and Fulani nationalities in the Numan Federation.

These local institutions facilitate peace when violent conflicts break out in their communities. Our research revealed successful peacebuilding outcomes linked to the Kabara Council, Shuwa in Madagali LGA, Traditional Peace and Arbitration Committee, and Demsa LGA.

KEY OUTCOMES

Reduction in/de-escalation of violent and non-violent conflicts (reprisal attacks)

In Demsa LGA there was a marked decline in the number of violent conflicts because of interventions by the PAD and its local government and community structures. Most effective was the early warning response by PAD, and the thorough investigation of allegations of violent attacks by CSAD and CRN and subsequent prosecution of culprits. PAD, in collaboration with community youth leaders, prevented reprisal attacks that could have developed into long-term violence.

Access to the quick resolution of conflict

In Madagali, the Kabara Council has facilitated the resolution of conflicts ranging from chieftaincy tussles, land disputes and family and marital conflicts. This was achieved through regular consultation and mediation with the parties involved. Most conflicts that would previously have been reported to the police and courts are now resolved by the Kabara Council at little or no cost.

Reintegration of de-radicalised ex-Boko Haram members

The Kabara Council has been credited with facilitating the reintegration of de-radicalised Boko Haram members in Shuwa through a reconciliation programme for community members and ex-fighters. This is important: there have been reports from other parts of the north-east of difficulties in reintegrating the former fighters.

Deterrence and prevention of violence

The frequent responses of the TPAC/Adamawa State Technical Committee to conflict and attacks in the Numan Federation have deterred potential offenders. Demsa LGA stakeholders notify communities of their intention to prosecute those involved in criminal and violent activities. This is done through intelligence gathering, early warning, notification, and mobilisation of security agencies. Would-be perpetrators or agitators are warned or pacified.

Prosecution and transitional justice

TPAC/Adamawa State Technical Committee and PAD/CSAD/CRN interventions have ensured the successful prosecution of those responsible for conflicts. This has prevented reprisal attacks by victims.

Anambra State, South-East Nigeria

Anambra is where the secessionist movement, the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), has gained prominence. As in other states in the region, IPOB's sit-at-home order has stopped people from engaging in economic, educational, and political activity on Mondays. Secessionist tension has created insecurity due to the emergence of unidentified gunmen, whose violent attacks have made the area unsafe for residents, travellers, and businesses. Anambra State also experiences other forms of conflict including kingship tussles, land disputes, domestic and gender-based violence, communal clashes, and cult clashes, arising mainly from struggles over the control of revenue points and fights for territorial dominance.

There are many formal and informal peacebuilding institutions responsible for conflict resolution and peacebuilding operations. A foremost state institution is the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs. The Ministry is highly respected, and its decisions are accepted and adhered to by conflict actors because of its state-level status and because it derives its power from the Executive Governor, who appoints the Commissioner. The Ministry is seen as unbiased because of the level of independence and freedom it gives communities to address local concerns. It intervenes only when communities are unable to settle these conflicts.

Traditional Rulers, President-Generals (PGs) and the Council of Elders are the local-level leaders of communities and towns in Anambra State. They are informed both by community culture and by constitutions written locally for the purpose of native administration. When conflicts arise, especially disputes related to land, traditional rulers and leaders can intervene using their history and culture. The Council of Elders is a non-formal peacebuilding structure in local communities that enjoys widespread legitimacy from conflict actors, largely thanks to the constitution of its membership – men usually aged 60 and above. In our case study area, Umueze



Anam Community, Anambra West LGA, the Council of Elders, popularly called Irukpo N'izummuo, is recognised as the highest peacebuilding body mostly because of this. Despite their republican nature, the Igbo communities are gerontocratic and most conflicts are brought before the elders for settlement.

Youth groups derive their legitimacy from the formal recognition afforded them by the government and communities. They often enforce the decisions of the elders and traditional rulers. Their use of physical force to enforce decisions has become a norm in communities, which makes people adhere to the youth groups' decisions, even when they disagree. Within youth groups, anti-cult groups have emerged, which are responding to the increasing cult violence in Anambra State. Youth groups have established vigilante units, which provide security and maintain order in communities. The vigilantes are recognised by the state government through the Ministry of Homeland Security, which coordinates and regulates them.

These peacebuilding institutions use various intervention strategies including mediation, dialogue and enforcement. The formal and informal institutions identified play significant roles in peacebuilding in Anambra. These roles include mediation, advocacy, peace messaging and enforcement. They also have a reasonable degree of legitimacy in the communities in which they intervene. Legitimacy of the formal institutions is determined by factors such as sources of power bestowed by the

establishing law, government or community, membership, the level of transparency and involvement of the community in the institution's processes, and the norms and traditions of communities.

Our research examined the activities of the following actors and the outcomes they achieved: Anambra State Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs, the Council of Elders, traditional rulers, PGs and the Anti-Cult Group.

KEY OUTCOMES

Decline in violence in the kingship tussle

The formal recognition of Igwe Obi Gibson as the legitimate traditional ruler of Akwa by the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs led to two warring factions emerging in Akwa. Collaborative intervention by the formal and informal peace institutions – the Council of Elders led to a peace agreement that ended the violence between the two factions. This was achieved through panels of inquiry, mediation, and dialogue.

Decline in frequent violent cult clashes and collection of illegal tax

The interventions of formal institutions such as the anti-cult unit and the Nigeria Police Force in cult clashes arising from conflict over collection of revenue in Awka have not completely stopped the illegal activities and violence of these groups. However, the frequency of these cult groups' criminal activities has declined due to collaborative measures by formal and informal peacebuilding institutions. These measures include the prosecution of cult members.

Bayelsa State, South-South

Bayelsa State is the cradle of armed militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Since the mid-1990s communities in Bayelsa State have experienced different forms of violence. Communal violence emerged following conflicts with multinational oil companies, and eventually, anti-state armed militancy took root in the form of local agitations and demands for increased revenues and development for oil-producing areas.

In Bayelsa, there are several formal and informal peacebuilding institutions. These include the Police Conflict Resolution Unit (Bayelsa State Police Command), the Conflict Management Committee of the Institute for Niger Delta Studies, Environmental Rights Action, the Civil Liberties Organization (Bayelsa State Chapter), Bayelsa State Conflict Resolution Committee (Office of the Deputy Governor), Bayelsa Volunteers, The Ijaw National Congress, Ijaw Youth Council, community development committees of selected communities, and the Bayelsa State Council for Traditional Rulers.

The character of an intervening



peacebuilding institution can shape the impact of its conflict-resolution measures. Formal and informal peacebuilding institutions enjoy different loci of legitimacy in the communities in which they intervene. Despite the absence of formal platforms for coordinating the work of peacebuilding bodies, informal peacebuilding institutions such as traditional governance structures can fill engagement gaps.

In Bayelsa State, the study examined the activities of the following institutions and the outcomes they were able to achieve: the Mingi-in-Council, the Joint Task Force (JTF), Bayelsa State Government and youth groups.

KEY OUTCOMES

Significant reduction in the frequency of violence

While the interventions by formal and informal institutions in both study communities reduced violence, formal institutional peacebuilding interventions in Nembe seemed to focus on sustaining the peace rather than addressing the conflict drivers. Violence was reduced through military intervention by the JTF, mediation by the Mingi-in-Council and negotiation with conflict actors.

Re-emergence of socio-economic activities

The informal peacebuilding institution used negotiation and integration strategies to end violence in the community and enable the resumption of socio-economic activities after two years of violent attacks and counterattacks by the armed groups.

Adoption of peace accords

The formal institutional approach to peacebuilding in Nembe favours bargaining that leads to ceasefires and peace accords. While these are critical to sustainable peacebuilding, limitations in addressing the drivers of the conflict inevitably lead to the resumption of hostilities. The adoption of Nembe peace accord was achieved by the Mingi-in-Council through mediation and dialogue.

Inclusion of stakeholders in the resolution process

There was a shift from personalised ‘strong-man’ control of rents to communal control as a result of negotiation. This involved targeted meetings and dialogue between institutions and key conflict actors, usually conducted in stages. This intervention led to a renegotiated distribution formula for pipeline surveillance contract proceeds – one that involved every member of the community as a stakeholder and beneficiary. However, selective engagement with conflict actors complemented by control and containment strategies to manage violence fails in the mid to long term because the lack of inclusivity in engagement and failure to resolve conflict drivers leads to the resumption of hostilities between conflict actors.

Katsina State has witnessed a decade of diverse violent conflicts, including farmer–herder disputes, cattle rustling, armed banditry, kidnapping, forceful collection of levies and related gender and sexual violence. Several conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts have been made in Katsina State, which have resulted in the establishment of formal and informal peacebuilding institutions.

Institutions and actors involved in peacebuilding in Katsina State include the Office of the Senior Special Advisor on Security Matters; conflict-resolution centres (CRCs), conflict-resolution committees at district and village level;



religious and prayer committees, the Community Conflict and Dispute Resolution Centre (CCDRC) and the Multi-Door Courthouse.

KEY OUTCOMES

Increased access to procedural justice

The work of the Multi-Door Courthouse, established in 2012, has reduced the number of cases going to court. For instance, several disputes dealing with commercial property and land have been settled through mediation at little or no cost to the parties involved.

Decline in cases of armed banditry and post-conflict reconstruction

Peacebuilding measures have yielded positive results in relation to armed banditry. These include agreements between bandits and community leaders on protection levies. Other interventions have involved military action, the collection and sharing of intelligence, early warning systems and the deployment of armed vigilantes. There is a gradual return to normalcy, peace, and harmony in affected communities, which is also attributed to the activities of informal peace institutions. These include daily and weekly prayer sessions by religious leaders and the prosecution and execution of armed bandits by vigilantes and security agencies.

Decline in vigilante services

The number of night patrols has reduced significantly due to the decline in violence in selected communities. In the past, youth and community leaders mostly slept during the day and engaged in neighbourhood watches at night. In 2021, around 200 people were involved in patrols in Magama every night. This number is now significantly lower.

Integration and inter-ethnic relations

Inclusivity in the membership of both institutions has fostered integration and better inter-ethnic relations. Fulani involvement is not now limited to vigilante groups, the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), community policing and weekly and monthly meetings. Instead, the Fulani are now trusted with leadership positions in Jibia and Magama communities. This is because of deliberate sensitisation by formal and informal institutions such as the CRC, religious leaders and the CCDRC to the critical role of the Fulani in peacebuilding processes. Unity and trust between all ethnic groups in the communities has been improved.

In south-west Nigeria land disputes and clashes over community leadership are among the main drivers of communal conflicts. This has been the case in Osun State, where partnerships between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions have been highly successful. Formal peacebuilding institutions need to gain more acceptance from the local populace to be more productive. Informal institutions wield great influence among communities but seem to lack legal backing and adequate funding for conducting anti-violence campaigns, especially during conflict outbreaks.



Key institutions involved in peace outcomes include the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the Conflict Resolution Unit, the PCRC, Osun Youth Councils and Oodua Peoples' Congress.

KEY OUTCOMES

Strengthen collaboration between formal and informal peacebuilding bodies

Having a joint platform for resolving disputes enables the government to engage with the people, promote peace and resolve conflict. This was largely achieved by the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs. The interventions of state actors through traditional rulers, chiefs and local organisations aided the management of chieftaincy disputes in the Odo-Ijesha communities. Mediation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders were their means. Although the root cause of the disputes is before a court, the joint efforts of the institutions have yielded positive results in managing a protracted conflict.

Access to conflict-resolution platforms

The establishment of informal dispute and resolution platforms has ensured that members of selected communities are able to access justice at little cost in a short time. For instance, land disputes and inheritance concerns are settled through the Oke-Esinmirin Landlords' Association – measures adopted include investigations, meetings, and arbitration. The efficiency of this platform has ensured its popularity and legitimacy in selected communities.

Decline in violent cult activities

Violent cult activities have been largely ended through the intervention of the Oba-in-Council. All major actors were included in traditional interventions such as oath swearing to the local deity and mediation. While this is unconventional, it is widely believed that traditional rulers wield great influence over their communities and have an acceptable method of handling conflict that is widely accepted among local people.

Renewed trust in formal institutions – Nigeria Police Force

Successive effective responses to violent conflicts by the PCRC have renewed trust in formal institutions as agents of conflict resolution. Measures have included engagement in peace meetings, publicity and sensitisation, to engage people in conflict matters. This has been done in collaboration with traditional and religious leaders.

In the last two decades, violent indigene-settler conflict laced with religious undertones has been rife in Plateau State. The emergence of farmer-herder conflicts in rural areas has further enlarged the theatre of violence. The state government, NGOs and other informal institutions have responded with interventions such as mediation, dialogue, training, advocacy, awareness campaigns and the provision of relief materials. These have had a positive impact but have not addressed the main drivers of conflict.

In Plateau State, this study focused on the following peacebuilding institutions: Plateau



State Peace Building Agency (PPBA), religious leaders, ethnic associations, and youth groups.

KEY OUTCOMES

Reduction in Widespread Violent Conflicts

The interventions of formal and informal peace institutions through programmes and activities in Plateau State contributed to the reduction in violent conflicts. The peacebuilding efforts of the PPBA, NGOs, international state agencies and non-state agencies in rural areas such as Bokkos have helped to relieve tension, have reduced the likelihood of reprisal attacks and have provided succour to victims. Measures have included dialogue with stakeholders, facilitation of conflict-prevention settlements through multi-track diplomacy and negotiation, and military intervention through special operations such as Operation Rainbow.

Increased Awareness of the Positive Values of Peace and Tolerance

The sensitisation and awareness campaigns of informal and formal institutions in Plateau State have built bridges and fostered peace and tolerance. They were largely spearheaded by the PPBA through programmes such as PAD, capacity training, peacebuilding and consultative engagements with communities and religious leaders at flash points. There is evidence that awareness of the importance of peace and ethno-religious tolerance has increased.

Re-emergence of Social and Economic Integration

A major after-effect of the protracted crises in Jos was the polarisation of people along religious lines. The combined effort of peacebuilding intuitions in Plateau State supports the social and economic reintegration of the conflict groups. Measures adopted by the PPBA in collaboration with religious associations, youth groups, men's and women's associations, and ethnic/tribal associations include mediation, dialogue and peace advocacy campaigns. There is visible evidence that Muslims and Christians are now selling their goods and services freely in previous 'no-go' areas such as Agwan Rukuba, Angwan Rogo, Rukuba Road, Tudunwada, Fillin Ball and Congo Russia.

Policy Levers for Peace: Peace-making and Peacebuilding Institutions in Adamawa State, North-Eastern Nigeria

1.1 Introduction: Conflict Landscape of Adamawa State

Adamawa State is a microcosm of the Nigerian State, and is highly heterogeneous and complex in nature. It has the second highest number of ethnic groups in Nigeria after Taraba State; there are about 70 ethnic groups in total across the state.⁷ Adamawa's heterogeneity also includes religious diversity, and the religious and ethnic identities of conflict participants often overlap. The complex blend of ethnicity, religion and occupation is the root of much of the state's violent conflict, and some of the fiercest clashes are between the Bachama and Fulani in Numan Local Government Area (LGA). The Bachama are predominantly Christians and farmers; the Fulani are mostly Muslim and are usually herders. Their interaction pervades Adamawa, making it difficult to accurately classify the conflicts, which can be ethnic, religious, ethno-religious, land-related or between farmers and herders. Most external observers regard these conflicts as farmer-herder, but local people see them as ethnic and/or religious in origin. Participants in this study, key informant interviews (KIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs) in Numan LGA said the conflicts should not be attributed to livelihood and that they had good relations with herders.

The Boko Haram insurgency is another factor in conflict in Adamawa but, although it has led to the death and displacement of many, competition for land between farmers and herders remains a more prevalent problem. All 21 LGAs have experienced conflict outbreaks, which have been most devastating in areas such as Girei, Demsa and Numan, where there are complex mixes of ethnic, religious and agricultural occupations. Some conflicts

are particularly bloody, to the extent that body parts are sometimes removed from victims. This reflects the deep-seated hatred between conflict parties and is aimed at showing the domination of, or superiority over, adversaries. This has also been the case in wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone⁸. Although the incidence of farmer-herder disputes in Adamawa State has reduced since 2018, it is still one of the most devastating types of conflict in the region.⁹

Stakeholders have responded to these conflicts with various peace-making and peacebuilding initiatives. Local communities in Adamawa State, with support from other stakeholders, notably local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), have had to devise or reinvigorate traditional peace-making or peacebuilding mechanisms in response to the conflicts. Alongside this, the state government has created, disbanded, and then recreated peacebuilding mechanisms. This chapter examines these peacebuilding mechanisms, the nature of the relationships between them, and the outcomes of their work.

1.2 Analysis – Adamawa State Peacebuilding Institutions

1.2.1. Historical development of state Peacebuilding institutions in Adamawa state

Adamawa State has suffered some of the most horrendous conflicts in its history. Because of its proximity to Borno State and Sambisa Forest it was significantly impacted by the Boko Haram insurgency, with seven LGAs occupied from 2014 to 2015. As efforts were made to retake those LGAs,

conflict broke out in Numan Federation, which comprises five LGAs.¹⁰ Clashes were particularly serious in Demsa and Numan LGAs and were between the Fulani and the Bachama. Cohabitation between these two groups predates the formation of contemporary Nigeria. Still, shrinking land resources caused by climate change, modernisation, the growing population, and the lack of effective management of farmer–herder relations by traditional leaders early in the crisis has led to an escalation of conflict between the two groups including attacks, counterattacks, and retaliation.

The Boko Haram insurgency and farmer–herder clashes have together caused the destruction of public infrastructure and the significant displacement of people. In 2018, the Adamawa state government decided to return those who had fled to camps in Yola to their communities in its attempt to address the outcomes of the Boko Haram insurgency in the State. Farmer–herder conflict in Numan Federation also needed to be addressed, which involved rehabilitation, reconstruction, and reconciliation. To achieve this, the state government under Governor Umar J. Bindow established the Adamawa State Peace, Rehabilitation and Re-construction Agency (ADSPRRA), to be coordinated by Dr Agosto Bamaïyi. It was charged with rebuilding areas affected by the Boko Haram insurgency including damaged infrastructure. In 2019, ADSPRRA was caught up in the politicking of the general election and, instead of being allowed to focus on its remit, was required to monitor the conduct of elections. Further, because the Agency was created through executive order rather than an Act of Parliament, it was possible for the new Governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, not to recognise it. As a result, the perception of the main opposition party, which won power in 2019, was that ADSPRRA was a situation room,¹¹ a decoy to stifle opposition parties in Adamawa State rather than an organisation attempting to build peace.¹² It was subsequently dissolved.

There were also challenges relating to ADSPRRA's constitution. Its 'rehabilitation and reconstruction' label gave the impression, especially to local politicians, that it offered an opportunity for patronage, and they, therefore, started inundating it with contract bids. The Director-General said:

When I headed the Agency, as soon as I was announced my house became like a place for entertainment of different visitors; people I had never met or seen before in my life. I would return from office and I would see cars parked in front of my house and people standing under the tree shield waiting for me and when I attended to them, they would be telling me they have a company and that I should remember them for [a] contract. Instead of being a peacemaker or peacebuilder, they saw me as a contract giver. So, it became a distraction.¹³

After Governor Fintiri dissolved ADSPRRA, he established a new peacebuilding agency called the Adamawa State Peace, Conflict Resolution and Social Integration Commission (ADSPCRSIC). It was a less bulky organisation whose duties and responsibilities would be less complex and cover wider areas. It would also have more grassroots representation.¹⁴ Duties, including reconstruction and rehabilitation, were transferred to the new Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Humanitarian Services. There have been complaints, however, of too little consultation during the drafting and passing of the law by which ADSPCRSIC was formed. Civil society and NGOs have alleged that they were not consulted, despite their efforts to promote peacebuilding in Adamawa State. They are not represented on ADSPCRSIC.¹⁵

The process of establishing ADSPCRSIC has been very slow. It took two years following the relevant Act's drafting for it to become law (on 3 June 2022) – a year after the law was enacted by Parliament.¹⁶ Little has happened since, and no Chairman

has been appointed: ADSPCRSIC has yet to commence operations. Political considerations and lack of budgetary provision are factors, together with the government's focus on the 2023 general elections. Meanwhile, other peacebuilding institutions are attempting to build peace in the state. These institutions are discussed below.

i Peace Architecture Dialogue

The Peace Architecture Dialogue (PAD) was established by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in 2019 as an early response mechanism to address conflict in the state, especially in five major LGAs where it is

being trialled. Representatives of different communities and the five LGAs (Demsa, Numan, Mayo Belwa, Girei and Lamurde) were, involved alongside spokespeople from the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Humanitarian Services, security agencies, the All Farmers Association of Nigeria, and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association. There were about 30 representatives in total.¹⁷ PAD's aim was to address conflicts that cannot be tackled at community and local government levels by the Community Response Network (CRN) and by Community Security Architecture Dialogue (CSAD).

Peace Architecture Dialogue (PAD): A Framework for Conflict Resolution

Established in:

2019

Initiated by:

SFCG Search for
Common Ground

Goals



- **Address conflicts** beyond the capacity of local community and government interventions
- **Early response mechanism** to prevent and reduce conflict escalation

Participants



Total number of
representatives **30**

- Community representatives from the five LGAs
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, and Humanitarian Services
- Security agencies
- All Farmers Association of Nigeria
- Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association

Success Metrics



Indicators or brief notes on how
PAD measures its impact and
success in conflict resolution

Conclusion



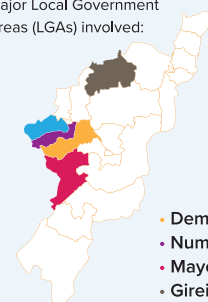
- Summary of PAD's contributions to peacebuilding in the state
- Contact information for further involvement or inquiries

how **PAD** works?

1. **Identification of conflict issues** that exceed community and local government solutions
2. **Engagement of diverse stakeholders** from relevant communities and governmental bodies
3. **Dialogue and strategy development** sessions

Geographic Focus

Highlight of the five
major Local Government
Areas (LGAs) involved:



- Demsa
- Numan
- Mayo Belwa
- Girei
- Lamurde

PAD has become a very strong institution in Adamawa State. Meetings are held fortnightly to draw up action plans to address conflicts highlighted by CRN and CSAD and to assess past actions. PAD is given legitimacy by the involvement of key community leaders, especially traditional leaders and the heads of security agencies and government ministries. It is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and has been effective in quickly engaging with conflict actors through dialogue. Among its successes is a reduction in farmer–herder conflict in Numan Federation. A respondent, Mr Mohammed explained:

*Before, there is little or no working platform or institution for people to dialogue in Demsa and Numan. So any little issue, especially since after the 2016 outbreak of conflict, will lead to outbreak of attack and counter-attack and before you know it many people are killed. But now that the dialogue platform ranging from the community to the state level has been instituted, it has reduced the conflict. But we cannot also rule out the fact that now the farmers and herders have clearly demarcated their territories and they are now staying separately except in places like Kporom, where they still stay together, and a platform like this has helped us monitor their relationship and prevent clash.*¹⁸

In other words, the drivers of conflict are still there but the PAD structure has given people the platform to discuss them. This has reduced the number of violent outbreaks, but the causes, which include climate change, poverty and unemployment, remain.

ii Adamawa Forum for Farmer–Herder Relations

The Adamawa Forum for Farmer–Herder Relations (AFFAHR) was created in 2021 by SFCG as an offshoot of the Forum for Farmer–Herder Relations in Nigeria. It is composed of scholars specialising in agriculture, peace and conflict, and related

disciplines. Their main duty is to conduct research into relationships between farmers and herders and to advise government on farmer–herder policies. Lack of research funds has prevented AFFAHR starting work, however.¹⁹

iii Adamawa State Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation Reintegration and Humanitarian Services

The Adamawa State Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation Reintegration and Humanitarian Services was established by the current administration in 2021 through an executive order of the Governor. Its remit is to address issues of rehabilitation, reintegration, and reconstruction. Because it has a reintegration and humanitarian mandate it can be considered to be a peacebuilding mechanism at state level. However, nothing public has been achieved with regards to rehabilitation, reintegration and humanitarian goals. It is currently redundant.

iv Adamawa State Technical Committee for the Resolution of Farmer–Herder Conflict

The Adamawa State Technical Committee for the Resolution of Farmer–Herder Conflict was set up by the Adamawa State Government in 2020, following the dissolution of ADSAPRRR. It was established in response to the gradual resurgence of hostility between farmers and herders in some parts of Adamawa, including Numan, where conflict had lingered for a long time. The Governor initially encouraged the formation of two committees – the Committee of Farmers and Committee of Herders – with a view to harmonising their opinions and demands. The Committee of Herders was headed by Lamido of Adamawa and chaired by Dr Abubakar Girei. The Committee of Farmers was led by Hama Bata and Hama Bachama and chaired by Mr. Timawus Mathias. These committees submitted independent

reports on how farmer–herder crises could be addressed. They were later merged to form the new Technical Committee. Hajia Jamila Suleiman, who was not linked to the two original committees and who is not from Adamawa, was appointed to coordinate the new body, which comprises four representatives each of farmers and herders and another four people from the state government.

A respondent interviewed explained that the committee enjoys both formal and informal legitimacy: it is acceptable to both the government and the general public, particularly those who are involved in farmer–herder conflict. It is well supported formally by the government.²⁰ The Governor has shown commitment to addressing the farmer–herder conflict and when there is an escalation of conflict, he goes himself, consoles people and identifies with them.²¹ His commitment is partly why he set up the Technical Committee, with the input of the first-class traditional rulers. Those he has chosen to serve on the Committee are well respected by the conflict parties.

The informal legitimacy of the Committee arises from the fact that each conflict party has a representative it respects. Also important is the role of the first-class traditional leaders such as Hama Bachama, Hama Bata and Murum Bula. These leaders used to be rivals, which hampered their cooperation. This is no longer the case,²² probably due to changes in personal. At least two of the three kings have been replaced in the last three years following the deaths of incumbent monarchs. Their replacements are young, better educated and more progressive in their thinking. They support the Technical Committee's efforts to address farmer–herder conflict in their areas,²³ and have played a significant role in Committee nominations and the harmonisation of sub-committees.

The Technical Committee draws up regulations that guide the activities of farmers and herders and the relationships

among and between them, particularly concerning the shared use of resources such as land and water.²⁴ A major cause of conflict is the lack of respect for regulations guiding the relationships between farmers and herders. As a result, herders have taken their cattle to feed on farms when farming activities are ongoing, and farmers have farmed on *brutali* (cattle routes) and grazed reserves meant for herders. To tackle this the Technical Committee has published a new regulation which states that all farming activities in the state should end by 31 January to allow herders to feed their animals on agricultural residues. Compliance is weak, however, and as early as October, during the farming peak, herders invade farmland with their cattle. A second new rule aims to instil respect for longstanding demarcations such as *brutali* and grazing reserves. Most grazing reserves and some cattle tracks have already been occupied and turned into farms, leaving many herders without land for their cattle.²⁵ This lack of compliance makes the state susceptible to conflict outbreaks.

Despite this, progress has been made in communities where farmer–herder conflict is rife, through the formation of the Traditional Peace Arbitration Committee (TPAC) with the help of projects funded by international organisations such as the project Contributing to the mitigation of conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities in Adamawa State, Nigeria”, also known as COMITAS programme implemented by the Consortium of Mercy Corps, SFCG and International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Engagement with conflict participants has improved as a result and conflicts are more likely to be addressed before violence starts. It is only when conflict is beyond the control of TPAC that the Technical Committee is invited to intervene. This has helped stem the tide of violent conflict in Numan areas.

1.2.2 Community-Based Peacebuilding institutions

The Kabara Council

The Kabara Council is a conflict management and peacebuilding institution among the Marghi ethnic group in Madagali LGA. The word kabara in Marghi means 'common ground' or 'reconciliation'. The Council may be as much as 500 years old. It was reinvigorated in 2007 to address increasing community conflict among the Marghi people.²⁶ According to one respondent, the reinvigoration of the Kabara Council meant that some unwanted practices, which are now illegal, were replaced. These included significant recompense for the murder of a member of another family, such as through the provision of a virgin girl or property by the family of the perpetrator to the family of the victim.²⁷

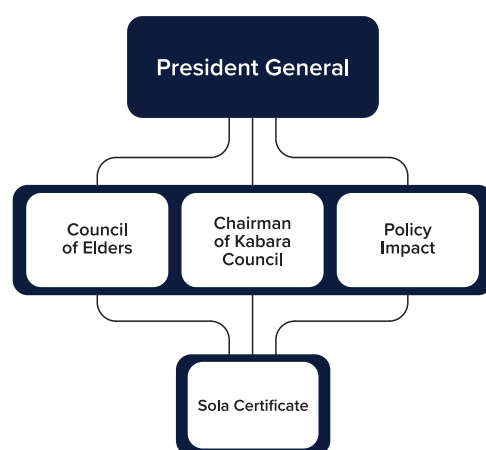
The Marghi people have experienced conflicts that have defiled formal institutions of conflict management such as the courts and the police. These include land conflict within families and between clans, marital or chieftaincy conflict, farmer–herder clashes and other disputes related to a caste system that segregates people as asserted by the Mekiri people. However, these conflicts have been dwarfed by the Boko Haram insurgency and related disputes, including that surrounding the reintegration of repented and deradicalised Boko Haram members. The prevalence of

these conflicts sparked the reinvigoration of the Kabara Council, which comprises 32 members drawn from all groups in the community, together with traditional and religious leaders. Figure 1 illustrates the Council's structure.

The Kabara Council is headed by a President-General who is the District Head of Duhu. The President-General oversees the Council's activities. Below him are the Council of Elders, Chairman of the Council and experts in peacebuilding and conflict management. The Council of Elders is made up of all the village heads. They report conflict management and peacebuilding activities in their villages to the Kabara Council, and disputes they cannot resolve are taken to the Council. The Chairman convenes, presides over and facilitates Kabara Council sessions. The Policy Impact Group, composed of experts in peacebuilding and conflict management,²⁸ consists of governmental and NGO workers who observe Council sessions and advise on conflict resolution. Once a conflict is resolved and an understanding reached, a draft armistice is drawn up and signed by the conflict parties. This is the Sola Certificate. Kabara Council sessions usually begin with a report on conflicts between individuals or groups, which can be delivered by one or all of the parties involved or a concerned member of the community. The conflict parties then present their cases to the Council. Areas of disagreement are ironed out and agreement reached.²⁹ During this process, the Kabara Council appeals to conflict parties to respect each other's views and apply the principle of give and take.³⁰ The agreement is formalised in writing, including restitution, apologies and a timeframe for action. This is read to a hearing of all the parties and then signed. Implementation is monitored by the Council and when complete, the Sola Certificate is issued to all parties, indicating the end of the conflict.

The Kabara Council uses mediation to manage local conflict and peacebuilding. Its representative nature makes it more

Fig. 1: Structure of the Kabara Council



Source: Adopted from the Kabara Office, Shuwa.

acceptable to people as a peacebuilding institution and its intervention has led to a significant reduction in conflict in Madagali, particularly among the Marghi people in Shuwa town. The Boko Haram insurgency in Madagali has limited state influence on conflict management and the police and courts rarely receive complaints from members of the community. Shuwa has a customary court and a police outpost overseen by the divisional police station in Gulak, the capital of Madagali LGA. This is about 15 kilometres from Shuwa. However, most people prefer to take their cases to the Kabara Council because they know their concerns will be amicably settled and the relationship between conflict parties maintained; courts and police tend to destroy these relationships and fail to fully resolve conflicts.³¹ During fieldwork we observed a Council session in which a conflict party lodged their case prior to the Council summoning other parties involved.

One of the landmark peacebuilding activities of the Kabara Council in recent times has been the reconciliation of repented and deradicalised Boko Haram and community members. The Federal Government deradicalisation programme, Operation Safe Corridor, has deradicalised almost 3,000 Boko Haram members in three batches. The reintegration of these people into communities is a further challenge, however, because affected communities are resisting reintegration.³² To resolve this, the Kabara Council has established a dialogue/reconciliation programme to bring together the deradicalised Boko Haram members and the people they have offended. Apologies are made, and assignments are given to the former fighters, such as tree planting and clearing drains.³³ This has paved the way for peaceful mutual coexistence, although elsewhere in the north-east less progress has been made. In 2022, the Kabara Council organised a novelty football match between reintegrated Boko Haram supporters and community members to herald renewed peace.³⁴ Football and

other sports have been shown to be one of the best ways of rebuilding relationships after conflict but have rarely been used in this way in Nigeria.³⁵ The Kabara Council, however, has made good use of sport, as illustrated in the images above from Shuwa.

1.2.3 Traditional Peace and Arbitration Committee

The TPAC was established by the Adamawa State Technical Committee for the Resolution of Farmer-Herder Conflict in October 2021, as a grassroots replica of the Technical Committee in seven LGAs where farmer-herder crises were prevalent.³⁶ Demsa TPAC is the subject of this research, and comprises 30 members drawn from the districts making up Demsa in addition to representatives of the Bwatiye and Fulani ethnic groups. Its remit encompasses conflict resolution in the Numan Federation.

The TPAC is supported by the government and by first-class traditional leaders Murum Mbula and Hama Batta of Demsa. It is hoped that TPAC members will use their goodwill and charisma to encourage their supporters to use dialogue rather violence to address disputes. If violence does break out, TPAC members should command sufficient respect from their groups to end it. Table II shows Demsa TPAC membership.

Many TPAC members have been trained in conflict management by Mercy Corps and use outreach and sensitisation to encourage dialogue. They can call on security agencies should back-up be needed to prevent conflict escalating into attack and counter-attack,³⁷ which has frequently happened in the past, endangering lives and properties.³⁸

1.3 Relationship Between State-level and Local-level Peace Institutions in Adamawa State

PAD and AFFAHR are operated by NGOs, although state and Federal Government agencies are involved. The Adamawa State

Technical Committee for the Resolution of Farmer-Herder Conflict is run by the state government as an ad hoc but responsive peacebuilding institution that specifically addresses long-term farmer-herder clashes, particularly in southern Adamawa. Both PAD and the Committee have a central base and local affiliate groups that can call on support from the centre. PAD replicates the functions of Demsa LGA through the CSAD and CRN. Some CSAD and CRN members also belong to Demsa TPAC. The different organisations are coincidentally linked but do not work together, instead running separate peacebuilding institutions that have the same aim. The remit of PAD is to help Adamawa State establish an early warning conflict-response system. The Committee's responsibilities are different: it was set up to address the farmer-herder crisis in Numan Federation after ADSPRRRA, the first peacebuilding institution, was scrapped.

Interviewees told us that the Technical Committee had met with PAD to discuss mirroring the PAD approach to help it improve conflict mitigation and peacebuilding at the state level. Agreement was not possible, however, because the Committee is currently ad hoc, pending the launch of the ADSPCRSIC. Rivalry between these institutions was also a factor in the failure to reach agreement.

This lack of synergy among and between government organisations and NGOs is a widespread problem in Nigeria. Government ministries, departments and agencies operate mostly as islands, even when their projects would benefit from collaboration. NGOs rarely cooperate with each other to avoid duplication, even when their work aligns. As a result, many NGOs in Adamawa and other north-eastern states, stationed there following the Boko Haram insurgency, are replicating each

other's efforts. Corruption and the political economy of peacebuilding intervention programmes may be factors in this:³⁹ they fear that their funding might diminish should they work together.

Both PAD and the Technical Committee have established local-level peacebuilding institutions to make their own organisations more effective. The TPAC is the Committee's 'eyes and ears', particularly in Demsa, and is always alert to potential conflict, making efforts to address it before it snowballs into violence. Sensitisation and awareness creation, dialogue and meetings, and mediation between conflict parties are among the tactics it deploys. When TPAC cannot address the conflict, the Committee is invited to intervene. This relationship has helped prevent disputes developing into full-blown violent conflicts and its absence opened the door to the devastating farmer-herder conflict of 2016 to 2018: there was no early warning mechanism or means of galvanising a quick response, allowing conflict to escalate and spread. The Technical Committee Chair and TPAC members told us that since then two clashes that could have erupted into violence had been resolved amicably thanks to their organisations' interventions.

1.4 Key Outcomes of the Peace Interventions of State-level and Local-level Peacebuilding Institutions

Interviews and FGDs showed that the establishment of these peacebuilding institutions has significantly reduced conflict. In Madagali, the Kabara Council has helped resolve many chieftaincy, land, and family or marital crises, amounting to 336 cases between June 2017 and December 2021. Table 3 shows the breakdown of conflicts addressed by the Kabara Council.

Table 3: Breakdown of Conflict Addressed by the Kabara Council from 2017–2021

S.No.	Year	No. of Conflicts Addressed
1	No date	12
2	2017	69
3	2018	95
4	2019	69
5	2020	78
6	2021	12
7	Total	335

Source: Kabara Conflict Management Registry

Thus, much of the conflict that would have been dealt with by the police has been resolved by the Kabara Council. One of the most compelling peacebuilding activities of the Kabara is how its reconciliation programme has enhanced the reintegration of deradicalised Boko Haram members in Shuwa. Elsewhere in the north-east, reintegration is still a challenge. Where the government and other stakeholders have forcefully reintegrated Boko Haram supporters, communities have killed, injured, alienated or stigmatised them or blocked them socio-economically, often causing them to return to Boko Haram and/or commit further atrocities.⁴⁰ This goes against the Federal Government's aim of containing Boko Haram recruitment. In contrast, the work of the Kabara Council is improving social cohesion and building peace.

Demsa and Numan LGAs used to be the hotbeds of farmer–herder conflict in Adamawa State. In 2018 report, Amnesty International asserted that farmer–herder conflict caused 3,641 deaths in Nigeria between January 2016 and October 2018.⁴¹ Out of 3,641 deaths, Adamawa State recorded 540 deaths which accounted for about 15 per cent of the total number of deaths within the period of 2016 to 2018.⁴² The fatality rate in Adamawa State is the second highest death tally in farmer–herder conflict after Benue State in Nigeria. Many of these deaths occurred in Demsa and

Numan LGAs.⁴³ The number of clashes has drastically reduced since 2019 because of the peacebuilding activities of the PAD, CSAD and CRN in Demsa and Numan. In 2021, in Kodomti village in Numan LGA, a woman was killed on her farm. Herders were suspected and members of her community began planning an attack on them. The three institutions were warned and alerted by the police and army, who created a buffer between the groups. Investigations found that the woman had had an altercation on her farm with a herder, who had attacked and killed her. He was arrested, preventing reprisal attacks.

In a similar incident on another farm the same year two women were attacked, one of whom died. Youths in her community planned retaliation. The CRN and CSAD were told and alerted security agencies, which, with the help of the leader of the youth group, who was a CSAD member, prevented the attack.⁴⁴

TPAC has been similarly successful in preventing reprisal attacks in Demsa. The Chairman of the Technical Committee, which TPAC serves, said that TPAC members had called the Committee many times to warn of attacks arising from farmer–herder disputes and leading to injury, death or the destruction of property. Early notice had enabled the Committee to mobilise security agencies and prevent further trouble. Those responsible were arrested.⁴⁵

This was confirmed in interviews with TPAC members and in FGD sessions with the community. One instance involved farming communities waking up to find their land had been grazed by cattle; both the cattle and their owner had disappeared. The farmers decided to attack the local herder community, assuming that they were responsible, but the TPAC and Committee were tipped off and were able to pacify the farmers. Their investigation revealed that transhumance herders passing through were to blame. Had the attack gone ahead, many reprisal attacks would have followed. This example mirrors the circumstances that have led to many farmer–herder conflicts in Numan, when the absence of peacebuilding institutions has paved the way for repeated clashes.

In addition to preventing conflicts, the involvement of TPAC and the Committee sends the message that criminals will be held responsible for their activities. Previously, no arrests would be made and reprisal attacks would follow.⁴⁶ People have been forced to be more careful and fewer violent incidents now take place in Demsa and Numan. Dr Agoso said:

Right now, the conflict [referring to farmer–herder disputes in Numan Federation] has reduced and I can say that because we have not had any major conflict relating to farmers and herders in the past three years and any communal conflict relating to that has not happened for long now. The reduction will be like 80 per cent. It has reduced that much in the past three years. And as we are talking now, there are no factors on ground that can ignite it. We are in election period and this is usually a period that the conflict will be ignited, but [there is] nothing to show that the conflict might be ignited and I am very happy about this.⁴⁷

Interviewees and FGDs confirmed that conflict had reduced significantly. The role of the PAD, TPAC and the Committee is significant in this conflict reduction but is not the only factor. The relocation of Fulani

and herder communities in the Numan Federation has also helped. Some have been moved to safe areas within Nigeria such as Mayo Belwa, Fufore and Yola, where many have family. Others have relocated to north Cameroon, where there are already significant populations of herders and Fulanis. A recent study found increased cross-border pastoralism on the Nigeria–Cameroon border and that herders were leaving Adamawa for Cameroon, partly due to farmer–herder violence in Adamawa.⁴⁸ This has reduced the population of Fulani herders in Numan Federation, especially in Demsa and Numan itself, helping to stem conflict in these areas.

A second factor is the activities of Governor Fintiri, who has played a major role in placating those in dispute. Unlike his predecessor, Governor Fintiri is committed to bringing about peace and it is his efforts that have encouraged communities to be peaceful. Thirdly, youth and women's groups and religious bodies have complemented the activities of peacebuilding institutions, a factor highlighted by Dr Agoso Bamaiyi in our interview. Traditional rulers have made groups such as these responsible for building peace after conflict outbreaks.

1.5 Conclusion

Adamawa State has a number of peacebuilding institutions. The influx of NGOs into the state after the Boko Haram insurgency enhanced the availability and effectiveness of formal and informal peacebuilding. We studied the PAD, Adamawa State Technical Committee at state level, the Kabara Council's work among the Shuwa in Madagali LGA, and the TPAC in Demsa LGA. The Adamawa State Government had earlier created a peace agency but it was not backed by law and was scrapped. The establishment of a new agency has been slow but the state is using the ad hoc Adamawa State Technical Committee for Farmer–Herder conflict to address prevalent farmer–herder disputes. The state-level peacebuilding

institutions have worked with community-level institutions to promote peace and mitigate conflict. This has involved the use of dialogue, mediation, meetings and peace enforcement. These bodies have a track record of working at community level in Demsa but not in Madagali, where the peacebuilding mechanism has no links to state peacebuilding agencies but has received support from the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the United Nations Development Programme.

All have contributed to conflict mitigation and peacebuilding in their localities. The Kabara Council has reduced land conflict, marital conflict, the number of

farmer–herder crises and has overseen the seamless reintegration of Boko Haram fighters by promoting reconciliation. The activities of TPAC in conjunction with the Technical Committee have significantly reduced farmer–herder conflict in Demsa and the wider Numan Federation. The values these institutions promote, such as inclusivity, have been crucial to their success, and their early warning and response mechanism has been invaluable in preventing conflict. The relocation of Fulani herders, the approach of Governor Fintiri, and the peacebuilding activities of other groups have also contributed to the mitigation of conflict and promotion of peacebuilding.

Policy Levers for Peace: Peace-making and Peacebuilding Institutions in Anambra State, South-Eastern Nigeria

2.1 Introduction

Anambra State continues to experience various forms of conflict, including kingship tussles, land disputes, domestic and gender-based violence, and communal and cult clashes, the latter over the control of revenue and territory. Of these, kingship, town leadership and cult fights are the most prevalent and violent, and undermine community peace. They also harm livelihoods, particularly night-time businesses.⁴⁹

The state has several formal and informal peacebuilding institutions, which use mediation, conciliation and enforcement to diffuse tensions. In the state capital and urban centres the formal institutions are more prominent; in rural areas informal institutions are more influential.

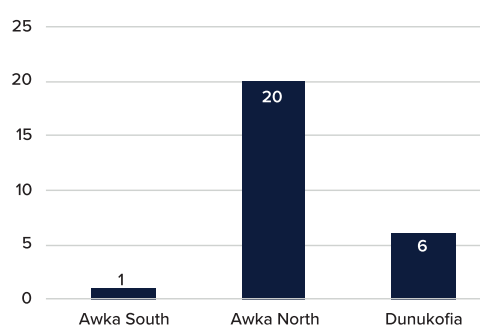
In this study, formal institutions are defined as state bodies established by law that operate through official channels. They have legally established mandates and regulations.⁵⁰ Informal institutions are culturally grounded, non-state institutions that operate based on cultural, social and conventional means of regulation, independent of official channels.⁵¹

2.2 Conflict Situation in Anambra and Institutions that Respond

In 2022 at least 27 people died in cult clashes in Anambra, most in Awka, the state capital (see Fig 1).⁵² The state was one of the ten states hit hardest by cultism and cult-related clashes.⁵³ These disputes in Anambra are linked to struggles over revenue collection points and gang superiority, especially those in student communities. The cults also attack security agencies and others attempting to stop

them. In January 2023 the leader of Obosi community in Idemili LGA was shot dead by gunmen suspected to be cultist.⁵⁴ He had spoken publicly against cultism.⁵⁵

Fig. 2: Total Deaths from cult clashes in Anambra State in 2022



Source: Nextier SPD (2023). 2022 Annual Review of Nigeria's Violent Conflict Situation Insights from the Nextier Violent Conflict Database. Abuja: Nextier.

A longstanding kingship dispute also plagues Awka, between Igwe Obi Gibson Nwosu, who is recognised by the state government as the traditional ruler of the city, and Chief Austin Ndigwe, who is believed by a faction of Awka indigenes to be traditional ruler. The dispute has turned violent relatively recently and in September 2022 security forces sealed the palace of Chief Ndigwe and used force to disperse people who had gathered to celebrate the new yam festival.⁵⁶ See Box Two for details. In Umueze Anam in Anambra West LGA – the case study community for this chapter – a prolonged struggle over the position of President-General is causing disaffection.⁵⁷ Box One has the full story.

2.2.1 Institutions that have responded to conflicts

Formal and informal institutions have used different means to respond to conflict, with varied success. These are discussed below.

Box 1: Conflict resolution by an informal institution, the Umueze Anam Council of Elders – Irukpo Na Izummuo

Umueze Anam community in Anambra West experienced prolonged conflict as a result of a struggle over the post of President-General (PG) of the community. It involved two men from the community. Because of this tussle the community was unable to elect a traditional ruler (an Igwe). The last ruler had died in 2009. The community must have a PG to present the elected traditional ruler to the government. The Council of Elders, under the umbrella of Irukpo Na Izummuo, intervened in the following ways:

- i. It talked with parties involved in the leadership tussle at meetings held every four market days.
- ii. It urged those parties to withdraw the suit they had filed in court over the leadership tussle.
- iii. It notified the court that, contrary to the leadership claims, Umueze Anam community was not a party to the conflict.
- iv. It urged those linked with the parties to end the dispute and enable the village to produce a PG.

Outcome of interventions

The following was achieved:

- i. The party that initiated litigations withdrew their case from the court.
- ii. A PG was elected in 2023.
- iii. The leadership tussle over the post of PG has been resolved within the community.

Box 2: Details of actions taken by key formal institutions in responding to a kingship tussle and cult clashes in Awka

- a. Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs: The Ministry responded by issuing a certificate of recognition to one of the contenders – Igwe Obi Gibson Nwosu. This did not end the dispute, however, because Nwoso's opponent for the post, Chief Austin Ndigwe, continued to parade himself as the rightful leader of Awka kingdom.
- b. Vigilantes, Police and Anti-Cult Group: Vigilantes, police and the anti-cult group responded to subsequent cult clashes by arresting cult group members and handing them over to the police. Cult groups have continued to attack the security agencies and vigilantes, sometimes killing members of vigilante groups.

National Orientation Agency (NOA): The NOA responded to the conflict through peace messaging targeted at young people, to dissuade them from engaging in cultism and other behaviours such as drug abuse. Despite these efforts, cultism has remained prevalent among young people in Anambra.

2.3 Roles, Functions and Legitimacy of Peacebuilding Institutions in Conflict Situations

Various formal and informal peacebuilding institutions have been identified across the state. These institutions are presented in the graphic ahead.

Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions in Anambra State:



FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

STATE INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs

Mediation in conflicts related to kingship, land tussles, and community conflicts

Ministry of Homeland Affairs

Management of internal security and coordination with vigilante groups

Directorate for Citizens Rights, Office of the Public Defender, Anambra State

Mediation in rights abuse disputes

National Human Rights Commission

Investigation of human rights violations and enforcement of decisions

Nigeria Police Force

Arrests, investigations, and prosecution of suspected violent individuals

Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

Protection of public installations from vandalism

National Orientation Agency (NOA)

Peace messaging and advocacy



NON-FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

COMMUNITY-BASED GROUPS

Town Unions & Village Associations

Grassroots mediation and collaboration with state institutions

Community Youth Groups

Mediation in youth conflicts and enforcement of norms

Neighbourhood Watch and Vigilantes

Night patrols and handing over suspects to police

Traditional Rulers, Council of Elders & Title Holders

Local conflict mediation

Women's Groups – Umuada

Mediation in women-related local conflicts

Landlords' Association, Caretakers, and Lodge Presidents

Mediation in residential conflicts



NON-STATE INSTITUTIONS

Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU)

Conflict resolution in collaboration with the state government

Justice Development and Peace Centre (JDPC)

Advocacy and facilitation of dialogue between communities and government

Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

Peace messaging and advocacy

Private Security Agencies

Specialised security services

International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA)

Mediation in conflicts and rights advocacy

Student Union Government

Mediation in student-related conflicts

Anti-Cult Group, Awka

Combatting cultism in Awka town

The formal and informal institutions identified play significant roles in peacebuilding in Anambra. Their roles include mediation, advocacy, peace messaging and enforcement as shown in tables 1 and 2. These peacebuilding institutions have a reasonable degree of legitimacy in their communities. Legitimacy of the formal institutions is determined by factors such as sources of power bestowed on the institutions by the establishing law, government or community, membership of such institutions, the level of transparency and involvement of local people, the general norms and traditions of the communities. These institutions will now be discussed in detail.

i. Anambra State Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs

The Ministry and its decisions are accepted, respected and adhered to by those involved in conflicts because the Ministry is an institution of the state and derives its power from the Executive Governor. According to a respondent, “They [conflict actors] respect our decision because it is the decision of the state government. The

commissioner holds a brief for the Governor. If you are not satisfied [with the decision of the Ministry] you go to court.” The Ministry can also “preside over chieftaincy and town union matters, supervise town union and kingship elections as well as issue [a] certificate of recognition to traditional rulers and President-Generals of communities”. It is perceived as unbiased because of the independence and freedom it gives communities to address internal concerns before intervening. The Ministry “allows communities to handle their affairs, we avoid interference with village matters, we direct the communities to their PGs and only intervene when they cannot resolve conflicts”, our interviewee said. “We adopt a bottom-up approach. We allow the local structures to handle matters first and tell us where they have challenges so that we can intervene.”⁵⁸

ii. Traditional Rulers, President-Generals and Council of Elders

The traditional rulers of communities and PGs of town unions derive their legitimacy from a form of democratic election involving local communities and town unions.⁵⁹ The state government issues a certificate of

recognition to traditional rulers and PGs.⁶⁰ The PGs are members of the Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU), which is recognised by the government and has an office in government buildings. Traditional rulers are members of the State Council of Traditional Rulers, which has an office at Government House and is recognised by the state government.⁶¹

The Council of Elders is a non-formal peacebuilding structure in local communities that enjoys wide legitimacy from those involved in conflict. It comprises elderly men usually aged 60 and above. In Umueze Anam, the Council of Elders, popularly called Irukpo N'izummuo, is recognised as the highest peacebuilding body, largely because of its membership. Our interviewee said that "Only those who have reached the age of 60 years are allowed to be members of this body."⁶² Igbo communities require respect for elders and their decisions on sensitive matters. This adds to the legitimacy of the Council of Elders. Despite their republican nature, Igbo communities are gerontocratic and most conflicts are brought before the elders for settlement. One interviewee said that "the elders are the village government, which is the central body that has the final say".⁶³ Another added: "Even if you caught the thief, you don't report to the police immediately, you report first to the community, that is the elders."⁶⁴ The judicial system and dispute-settlement mechanism used by the Council of Elders also contributes to its legitimacy. The Council is perceived as rigorous, transparent, unbiased and fair in its settlement of disputes. A FGD participant said that "the people involved in the conflict are given fair hearing and are paid attention to in order to understand them very clearly and as such, make the judgement credible. And we take time to investigate and establish the truth, and when we do, we find a way to settle it. That's why our people hardly go to the police."⁶⁵ This view was corroborated by another interviewee who noted that "After the questioning, if the elders are

not satisfied with the explanations, they can bring an oath to be sworn by the parties to the conflict. After swearing the oath, anyone that has lied will get sick and the person who has said the truth will be free."⁶⁶ The capacity of the Council to impose and enforce heavy sanctions on defaulters is another source of trust. "Any matter adjudicated by the elders, the guilty persons must fulfil the terms of the judgement. The sanction is usually more than that of the police."⁶⁷

iii. Youth Groups

Youth groups derive their legitimacy from the formal recognition given to them by the government and communities. "Government knows that they are existing. So they are like [an] autonomous security outfit which people felt should manage their local issues. So within that environment, they feel it is a legitimate body established to address their peculiarities. So if you look at it that way, the community accepted it, they pay their dues to see to the workings of that particular office. So since they believe in it and pay the relevant dues, I believe there is a high level of legitimacy because the people accepted them."⁶⁸ The fact that the youth group is made up of young people also bolsters the legitimacy the group enjoys, particularly among youths. As noted by an interviewee: "The Ndi Mmepi group are also respected because it also has youth as members."⁶⁹ Thus, the use of physical force to enforce decisions has become a norm in communities, which makes people abide by the decisions of youth groups even when they disagree. Another interviewee said that "In the case I mentioned earlier, they invited the man in question [alleged offender in a land dispute] but he refused to come. That was when they went to forcefully bring him because he didn't want to honour the invitation."⁷⁰

iv. Anti-Cult Group

The anti-cult group's source of legitimacy is its membership – state security agencies, private security agencies, students and

indigenes from several communities. However, the use of brutal force by the group and its justice system, which denies suspects a fair hearing, may be undermining its legitimacy in Awka. A FGD participant said, "The anti-cult group adopt bullying, they beat up people very well. In some cases now, you will just report to them, they won't even try to get to the root of the matter, or know anything about the matter."⁷¹

v. Vigilantes

Legitimacy for vigilantes comes from the local communities in their establishment and operations. They are recognised by the state government through the Ministry of Homeland Security, which coordinates and regulates their affairs.⁷²

vi. Human Rights Agencies

Human rights agencies derive their legitimacy from the power granted to them as agencies of the state. The pro bono services they offer and their interventions as neutral parties adds to their legitimacy. An interviewee said: "They [conflict actors] have trust in us because here, you don't pay a kobo for our services and we are trained to be neutral."⁷³

vii. NGOs

NGOs win legitimacy from conflict actors because of their altruistic development interventions in communities, which are offered pro bono. Explaining why conflict actors in Awka accept them and adopt their recommendations, the Programme Manager of one NGO said, "We don't demand money from them; all we need is their time. We transport them to and from the venue of events and we give them some stipends. This is why our programme has continued to work."⁷⁴

2.4 Engagement with Conflict Actors

Peace institutions engage with conflict through dialogue, mediation, enquiry panels, enforcement and sanctions. The

Umueze Anam Council of Elders meets every four market days to discuss and mediate conflicts. In the PG conflict, the Elders asked those involved to withdraw their court case and organise an election to produce a PG. An interviewee said:

*We have four villages that make up this community – Umu Ebendu, Umu Aya, Umu Aneke and Umu Ezumezu. As for the village that is supposed to appoint a PG, we wanted to give them an ultimatum to produce a PG but we learnt of a subsisting court case claiming that the entire Umu Eze Anam was involved as a party. So we wrote a letter to the court and explained that Umu Eze Anam is not a party to the court case and we have given this village date to withdraw the court case and produce a PG.*⁷⁵

When dialogue and mediation fail, the Elders can impose sanctions on the responsible party. "If the two people involved in the PG tussle refuse to abide by our instruction of withdrawing the case from court, we shall ostracise them, nobody will fight with them, we shall ostracise them."⁷⁶

In the Awka case, the state government engaged conflict actors at panels of inquiry. This strategy has been used to address many kingship tussles, including that between Gibson Nwosu and Alfred Ndibe.⁷⁷

2.5 Addressing Conflict Drivers and Grievances of Actors

The main drivers of conflict are revenue collection, land disputes, and tussles over kingship and town union leadership. Not all have been successfully addressed by peacebuilding institutions, including Awka's kingship dispute. Chief Ndigwe maintains his claim to power despite the state government's recognition of Gibson Nwosu.⁷⁸ An interviewee said:

There is nothing to show that these drivers are being addressed. Because these conflicts still exist, they just go

*down and reinforce themselves again. The grievances of the parties to the conflict are also not resolved because I know very much that the kingship tussle has not been properly resolved.*⁷⁹

Similarly, tax collection, the main cause of cult clashes in Awka, has not been addressed and cult groups have continued their tussles over control of tax collection points. According to another interviewee:

*Those grievances have not been addressed. You see free money is good to be eaten. So without controlling or stopping or severing that source, it will not stop. And then, the other rival group wants the same money.*⁸⁰

In Umueze Anam, however, the Council of Elders has mediated an agreement between the clans that they withdraw the court case, allowing a PG and traditional ruler to be elected. A Council member told us that “The clan that is supposed to produce a PG has agreed that once the community notifies the court that it is not part of the suit, they will withdraw the suit from the court.”⁸¹

2.6 Conflict Resolution by Peacebuilding Institutions

In Awka the state government is repressing the kingship conflict. Other conflicts have been similarly dealt with by the use of force or state power, leaving the disputes simmering. In the Akwa case, participants told us that the government had acknowledged Gibson Nwosu as the traditional ruler through the issue of the certificate of recognition,^{82, 83} Chief Ndigwe continued to parade himself as the new leader, however – at the new yam festival, for example. The government then used police to halt the festival and told invitees not to attend.⁸⁴

The conflict over tax collection between cult groups has not been resolved either. “The cult war is never resolved, it is a continuous something until they get their revenge,”⁸⁵ an interviewee said. Another

added: “The police tried to bring in the Special Anti-Cult team. But they were not really effective because they were arresting innocent people and collecting money. They have not been able to resolve the conflict because the conflict is still in existence.”⁸⁶

There has been more success in Umueze Anam, where the Council of Elders has brokered peace over the PG dispute. It appointed an interim caretaker to fulfil the role of PG to ensure there was no vacuum, then, through mediation, found that the root of the problem was a court case in which the community was claimed to be a party. The Council notified the court that the community was not a party and then mandated the clan concerned to withdraw the case and elect a PG.⁸⁷

Thus, conflict suppression and peace enforcement by formal peacebuilding institutions has not resolved either the kingship conflict or cult clashes in Awka. But in Umueze Anam, an informal institution's strategy of mediation and the creation of an unwritten peace agreement has settled the PG dispute.

2.6.1 Reduction in violence (key outcome)

Although the kingship conflict is not resolved in Awka, government intervention has ensured that it has not erupted into violence. According to one FGD participant, “We have not seen violence arising from the kingship tussle because of government intervention and official recognition of one of the parties to the conflict as the rightful king.”⁸⁸ Cult clashes remain violent, however, particularly over their struggle for revenue collection points. An interviewee said that “The conflict is increasing; it is escalating because there has not been effective management of the crisis by the stakeholders ... Last two weeks over 20 persons were killed over this conflict.”⁸⁹ Another added: “I will not say there is a reduction ... they pipe low only to resurface,”⁹⁰ and a third said:

On a daily basis, you will see there are

areas that have issues because of cultism and then we still hear about the kingship tussle brought to the fore. So it has not been totally resolved as it should be.⁹¹

The early and effective intervention of the peacebuilding institutions in Umueze Anam, particularly by the Council of Elders and influential individuals, ensured that the PG tussle did not degenerate into violence. Tensions were reduced as a result of the peace agreement brokered by the Elders, one of whom said:

We are lucky that we are able to control ourselves. If you go to the other community, you will see them shooting. If not for our interventions and the grace of God, there would have been shooting by now. But we are united in what we are doing.⁹²

Another interviewee said: “We’ve not had a King since 2003 when the last one died but it had never escalated to violence and taking of life.”⁹³

2.6.2 Resumption of hostilities

However, since then hostilities have resumed in Awka over kingship. One faction has continued to accuse the newly recognised ruler of impropriety including financing land grabbers and desecrating the culture and tradition of the town.⁹⁴ An Akwa resident said that “the conflicts are still there, the killings have also continued unabated”.⁹⁵

But in Umueze Anam, peace remains. A community member explained that conflicts are resolved in ways that make the resumption of hostilities difficult: “One good thing about them [the Council of Elders] is that they don’t just resolve cases, they have such a good mechanism that makes resurgence difficult.”⁹⁶ The intervention strategies adopted by peacebuilding institutions in Umueze Anam have been successful. Mediation gives those involved a fair hearing before a resolution is reached. “Their [Council of Elders] mechanism of resolving conflicts

has such an in-built follow up process that makes resurgence difficult because they don’t deliver judgement but meditate,” an interviewee said.⁹⁷ Once a resolution is reached, the peacebuilding institutions, particularly the Council of Elders, have the capacity to impose severe sanctions on any party resuming hostilities.

2.7 Relationship Between Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions in the State

There is collaboration between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions. In Awka, the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs collaborates with informal peacebuilding bodies at grassroots level to resolve conflicts and build peace. Our interviewee confirmed that “The Ministry meets regularly with the traditional rulers and PGs of town unions to resolve communal issues.”⁹⁸ ASATU provides an umbrella body through which the leaders of town unions engage with other formal peacebuilding institutions in the state. In addition, the government collaborates with informal institutions such as youth and women’s groups, providing them with offices and meeting opportunities. One interviewee said:

So they have officers who come to work in the Government House every day. Most times, whatever government needs to do that requires collaboration, they participate. So they are aware, there is a sense of participation and there is a sense of responsibility because they now become accountable to the government.⁹⁹

The Ministry of Homeland Affairs also collaborates on security with informal groups at grassroots level, and according to one interviewee:

The private security/local vigilantes have been told to be registering with the Ministry of Homeland Affairs. So from time to time, you have what is called a security summit called by the Ministry of Homeland Affairs and those heads now

*come and talk about security issues.*¹⁰⁰

The relationship between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions is deepened by programmes such as the government-initiated 'Community choose your project', through which communities can choose a development project towards which the government gives 20 million naira (USD\$13,300). Such projects bring the government and informal peacebuilding institutions together. Our interviewee explained:

There is the Council of Traditional Rulers in Anambra, they have a central office in Government House and they meet from time to time. It is made up of the Igwes. So when this 20 million naira choose your project came, they tell the Igwes to choose the project of interest that the 20 million can solve.¹⁰¹

In Umueze Anam, the level of collaboration between the formal and informal peacebuilding institutions is quite low. The community settles disputes without involving formal bodies. A member of the Council of Elders said, "We deploy local solutions to our problems. There is no form of collaboration with the government."¹⁰² One of the FGD participants added: "Whoever forcefully takes a case to the court will suffer the wrath of the land because we agreed to hear and possibly settle cases traditionally before one could talk of court,"¹⁰³ while the youth secretary stated that:

We don't usually get the police involved in issues. Although the police as an institution ensures that there's peace but sometimes they fail in this role. Ordinarily, a person involved in a case understands the customs, norms and tradition and therefore knows better that the local institution handles such better than the formal¹⁰⁴

This view was corroborated by a community youth:

If you report a case to the police without first reporting the case to the elders – Umuduru – you will use your money to

bail the person you took to the police ... If you take a matter to a different place without first reporting it to the community, the community will give you two or three days' ultimatum to return the person and the case to the community. So before any matter is taken to the police, the community must be aware of it and must have treated the matter in the first instance.¹⁰⁵

In Awka there is a cordial relationship between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions, perhaps because Awka is an urban centre and close to the seat of power. However, in Umueze Anam, the relationship between formal and informal institutions is weak. The rural nature of the community, the effectiveness of informal peacebuilding bodies and the norms of the community, which does not support the involvement of formal institutions in conflict resolution, are critical factors in this.

2.8 Key Outcomes of the Peace Interventions of Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions

2.8.1 Outcome of peace intervention by formal institutions

In Awka, the intervention of the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy Affairs and Town Union Affairs led to the formal recognition of Gibson Nwosu as traditional ruler,¹⁰⁶ but the conflict was not resolved. Chief Ndigwe still claims the kingship title and is recognised as such by a faction of the community. This failure to resolve the dispute has split the community.¹⁰⁷ The state government has filed a court case against Chief Ndigwe but has not followed up with his prosecution.¹⁰⁸

Likewise, violence continues between cult groups over the collection of revenue in Awka, despite the intervention of formal institutions such as the anti-cult unit and police. Instead, the cult group goes underground when the institutions intervene, only to resurface and continue the killings. According to one interviewee,

“The only reduction I will say is whenever the formal and informal intervene to reduce the insecurities. This is because once the cultists are apprehended, they know it will affect them. So they pipe low only to resurface.”¹⁰⁹

2.8.2 Outcome of peace intervention by informal institutions

Intervention by an informal peacebuilding institutions – the Council of Elders – in Umueze Anam has led to peace. The conflict there has not turned violent, enabling the village to elect a President-General.

2.9 Conclusions

This chapter has examined peacebuilding institutions in Anambra State with a specific focus on the Awka and Umueze Anam communities. Our study found that the major forms of conflict in the state are disputes over kingship, land conflict and between cults, and domestic and gender-based violence. Some of these are linked to revenue collection or territorial dominance. Awka has suffered a prolonged kingship conflict and cult clashes; Umueze Anam

has also endured a dispute over kingship, leaving the community without a traditional ruler for a many years.

Formal and informal peacebuilding institutions have proliferated, and intervened in conflicts by using mediation, dialogue and enforcement to build peace. They enjoy widespread legitimacy due to their membership composition, a justice system perceived to be fair, and the capacity to enforce sanctions. The Anambra State Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Town Union Affairs was the most prominent formal peace institution to intervene in the Awka kingship tussle. Gibson Nwosu was subsequently recognised as traditional ruler but the community became polarised as a result. The intervention of the police and the anti-cult unit in clashes in Awka has failed to bring resolution and violent clashes between cult groups continue. In contrast, the informal Council of Elders in Umueze Anam has led to the election of a President-General and to peace. The conflict-management strategy of the Elders has prevented violence, without the support of the state or other formal peacebuilding institutions.

Policy Levers for Peace: Peace-making and Peacebuilding Institutions in Bayelsa State, South-South Nigeria

3.1 Introduction

Formal and informal peacebuilding institutions play significant roles in managing and resolving conflicts in Nigeria. This chapter analyses the peacebuilding outcomes of formal and informal approaches in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. It assesses local government in two communities in which there have been several violent conflicts over the years, Nembe LGA (Nembe community) and Southern Ijaw LGA (Ondewari community).

Conflict in the state includes political and election violence, gang and cult-related violence, communal violence and violent criminality, such as clashes between bunker camps, piracy attacks and kidnapping. According to the Niger Delta Conflict Tracker (2022), there are four major recurrent conflict trends in Bayelsa: between April and June of 2022 there were five cases of violent criminality, eight instances of cult/gang-related violence, 11 outbreaks of communal violence, and three cases of political violence.

There is violence and conflict between and among armed groups in both communities. This has led to several deaths and to the destruction of property, and to socio-economic disruption for long periods. Political violence, especially before, during and after general elections, occurs in both LGAs as do struggles over natural resource rents.

Conflict participants in these locations are identifiable armed militia groups that continually compete for supremacy and access to oil rents and patronage. Armed groups have been generally classified as groups willing and able to use violence to pursue their interests and goals; they are mostly non-state and community-based, may have rigid or flexible structures and may be supported by or used openly or secretly by the state. The links and relationships between these groups and political figures are central to the violence in Nembe, where several armed groups are linked to politicians and political party structures. These include the Gabriel Jonah-led Otita Force, the Jonathan Obuebite-led Winged Restoration Group, the Chief Lionel Jonathan Omo-led Isongufuro, the Senator Nimi Barigha Amange-led Isenasawo and General Kojo Sam's Militia. Historical connections between these individuals and political patrons now shape patronage relationships between politicians and conflict participants in Nembe.

In Ondewari there are no open links between conflicts and political or state structures. Instead, the armed groups and violence arose firstly from struggles over the distribution of proceeds from a pipeline surveillance contract and the groups' relationships with David Lyon and his oil and gas security firm, and secondly from the surveillance contracts the company gives to individuals in oil-producing communities.

Table 5: Bayelsa State Quarterly Trends: Conflict Incidents and Fatalities

	2021 (Q2)	2021 (Q3)	2021 (Q4)	2022 (Q1)	2022 (Q2)
No. of Incidents	10	10	10	14	19
Fatalities	14	9	7	13	18

Source: PIND 2022 Niger Delta Conflict Tracker.

The competition between these groups in both locations has resulted in socio-economic dislocation, violence and deaths. This study assesses how formal and informal peacebuilding institutions at community and state levels have been unable to manage these conflicts and bring peace. It focuses on the activities of peacebuilding institutions and their outcomes, and aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the existing formal and informal peacebuilding institutions and processes in Nembe, Ondewari and Bayelsa State in general?
- How do formal and informal institutions and those involved in conflict management and peacebuilding engage in peacebuilding processes in these

communities?

- What are the outcomes of the activities and initiatives of formal and informal peacebuilding institutions in these communities?
- What are the coordination mechanisms for formal and informal participants and institutions engaged in the peacebuilding?

The chapter discusses peacebuilding institutions and their interventions in the study cases, with a focus on legitimacy, the nature of engagement with conflict actors, conflict drivers and resolution, reduction in violence, and the resumption of hostilities. It then assesses the relationship between formal and informal institutions, examines the outcomes of interventions, and offers recommendations.

Conflict Situation: ONDEWARI

Ondewari is a riverine community in Southern Ijaw LGA. Clashes over oil pipeline surveillance contracts and benefit distribution between 2017 and 2019 led to conflicts between armed gangs, human casualties and people deserting the community. Before the violence Darlon Security Limited, a company owned by David Lyon, was contracted by the Nigerian Agip Oil Company to coordinate oil pipeline surveillance in Southern Ijaw LGA. Darlon sub-contracted surveillance around Ondewari to a Mr Okpotu, who established a petroleum task force.

Conflict started when a group of community youths, aggrieved at their exclusion from the surveillance jobs, protested. The clash led to the deaths of two members of the Okpotu force. In July 2017 Okpotu retaliated and four community members were killed. A series of attacks and counter attacks followed, resulting in the death of Okpotu himself. By December 2017 the area had been deserted because of the violence. A key contributor to the attacks was the absence of any formal government security post in the community; community members say they appealed for help from the state government several times.

Peacebuilding Intervention:

Community chiefs attempted and failed to manage the violence, partly because of claims that some leaders were benefitting from the surveillance rents. Families whose relatives were casualties distrusted these chiefs, whom they thought to have received monies from Okpotu.

The violence was eventually brought under control by Philomena Kinyere Lafia, the recipient of funded peacebuilding training in Washington, USA. She was from Ondewari, a factor eventually crucial to her success, and with associates engaged conflict participants, affected families and others from elsewhere in moves to end the violence and resolve the conflict.

Actions Taken:

As an informal collective, Kinyere Lafia and her associates took a number of key actions, which included:

1. Incremental engagement with conflict actors within and outside the community. This included the leaders of the two warring groups, families of casualties, the police in Oporoma (the headquarters of Southern Ijaw LGA), surviving victims who were still hospitalised, and Darlon.
2. Financial responsibility for the accrued medical costs of victims and defraying the burial cost of those killed.
3. Negotiating for an out of court settlement of all pending legal matters relating to the violence and the victims.
4. Negotiating an inclusive mechanism for distributing surveillance jobs in the community and a sharing formula for surveillance rents.

Outcomes:

The following outcomes were achieved from the informal intervention:

1. Negotiation and integration strategies led to a complete cessation of violence and the resumption of socio-economic activities, after two years of attacks and counter-attacks by the armed groups.
2. The renegotiation of the resources distribution processes and the collective sharing of responsibilities.
3. A negotiated shift from personalised 'strongman' control of rents to communal control. A distribution formula for surveillance contract proceeds was agreed, which makes every member of the community a stakeholder and beneficiary in the pipeline protection contract.

3.2 The Bayelsa Context and Stakeholders

The communities chosen for this study were Nembe in Nembe LGA, and Ondewari in Southern Ijaw LGA, both in Bayelsa State, which is in Nigeria's South-South Geopolitical Zone. These communities had recorded instances of conflict and violence, and peacebuilding interventions by formal and informal institutions and others. Those interviewed included officials from state peacebuilding agencies and institutions, traditional rulers, community leaders,

women's group leaders, youth group leaders, NGOs, academics and civil society representatives. They were selected based on their affiliations to identified formal and informal institutions.

Formal or informal institutions contribute to peacebuilding decision-making through interactions that can shape and influence the actions of conflict participants. They help determine the links between those involved in disputes.



Stakeholder Map for Identified peacebuilding institutions in selected communities.

Formal Institutions

- Ministry of Youth, Employment and Conflict Resolution
- Standing and ad hoc committees set up by the Office of the Governor
- Conflict Management Committee (Institute for Niger Delta Studies, Niger Delta University)
- Conflict Resolution Unit (Nigeria Police, Bayelsa State Command)
- Police Community Relations Committee, Nigeria Police, Bayelsa State Command
- Civil liberties organisations in Bayelsa State
- Bayelsa Non-Governmental Organisations' Forum
- Environmental Rights Action
- Bayelsa State Volunteer Service

Informal Institutions

- Ministry of Youth, Employment and Conflict Resolution
- Standing and ad hoc committees set up by the Office of the Governor
- Conflict Management Committee (Institute for Niger Delta Studies, Niger Delta University)
- Conflict Resolution Unit (Nigeria Police, Bayelsa State Command)
- Police Community Relations Committee, Nigeria Police, Bayelsa State Command
- Civil liberties organisations in Bayelsa State
- Bayelsa Non-Governmental Organisations' Forum
- Environmental Rights Action
- Bayelsa State Volunteer Service

These organisations and individuals were selected because of their affiliations to peacebuilding institutions and study communities.

3.3 Peacebuilding Institutions and Interventions in Conflict Situations

Understanding the nature and context of violent conflict and its management in the two communities is influenced by the types of conflict taking place. In Nembe, disputes over the control of resource rents are mostly behind the violence. Interviewee Ebi Jonathan said:

*About the oil politics, we have talked about the struggle for offices, the gain in the community setting and there is also a larger political competition to have access to state power within the state at the local government level. So most of the conflicts in Nembe can be traced back to politics.*¹¹⁰

Tensions brewed between the two main political parties – the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's

Democratic Party (PDP) – in the months before Bayelsa's 2019 gubernatorial elections. During a campaign trip to Nembe in November that year violence broke out between supporters of the parties, specifically between the Otita Force led by Gabriel Jonah, the younger brother of the PDP's Deputy Governor, and a group led by General Kojo, who backed the APC.

In Ondewari, violence in 2017 and 2018 stemmed from intra-communal conflict over the distribution of pipeline surveillance contracts. The absence of security agencies and of government intervention meant the violence and deaths continued unabated for two years.

3.4 Legitimacy of Peacebuilding Institutions

In Nembe, links between political violence and control of resource rents have significantly influenced the engagement,

process and, more importantly, the legitimacy of peacebuilding interventions by formal and informal peacebuilding bodies. This greatly affects peacebuilding outcomes and the potential for conflict recurrence. Interviewee Mr Ayibamundiafiri said:

To a great extent, everybody recognises them because, like I said, the Nembe community or the Nembe society is a very traditional one but the reason why laws are broken in every place is because people want to become deviant when they want to. But that does not change the fact that they recognise them. When people want to push their interest, sometimes to hell with the institutions.¹¹¹

The tendency for conflict to arise is also influenced by links with political elites in and beyond the state. This helps determine the extent to which formal peacebuilding institutions and security agencies step in, shapes how violence is managed and how conflict over community control evolves.

From 1999 to 2002 two violent groups clashed in Nembe – the Isongufuro and the Isenasawo. They were led by Lionel Jonathan-Omo and Senator Amangi respectively and were closely tied to political parties; violence worsened close to general elections.

The Bayelsa State Government responded by establishing commissions of enquiry and formally through its Ministry of Chieftaincy and Community Affairs, which is overseen by the Office of the Deputy Governor. The Joint Military Task Force (JTF) and police were deployed. The state's formal peacebuilding institutions have been politicised, however, eroding public trust in their involvement. Some interviewees identified key political figures who were also deeply involved in the violence. One interviewee, Barr. Jubilee Kingboy, said:

There are identifiable persons in these conflicts, you hear of Chief Lionel Jonathan-Omo, who until his death was a major politician in the state and from Nembe. Then you hear George Fente,

he is also of blessed memory. Those are the political actors that had huge followership. And on the part of Basambri town, you hear George Fente, he is the leader of EKPOMOC and in Ogbolomabiri town, Lionel Jonathan-Omo, he is the leader of Isongufuro, but he is of blessed memory. Then there is Senator Barigha Amangi, who is the leader of Isenasawo.¹¹²

The legitimacy of these formal interventions should be based on respect for government authority but many in the community did not believe that security agencies were neutral. Lionel Jonathan-Omo had held several political posts before his death in 2018, including Commissioner for the Environment. A 2003 Human Rights Watch report stated that he used that role to provide political backing to the Isongufuro and their rampage through the community between 1999 and 2002, before the group was chased out by the rival Isenasawo group. At the time the Isenasawo leader, Senator Nimi Amangi, was a legal adviser to the Ogbolomabiri Chiefs' Council. Political links continue to be the foundations of conflict in Nembe, exemplified by pre-election violence between the Otita Force and General Sam's Militia, borne of political competition between Dickson (PDP) and Chief Timipere Sylva (APC). Conflict participants repeatedly ally themselves with political parties to increase their own influence.

Growing political party pressures and opposing party affiliations among key conflict participants in Nembe lead to mistrust for government-driven and formal peacebuilding interventions. Significantly, it is the political affiliations of those involved in conflict in the community that helps undermine the legitimacy of these institutions. Amangi and Obuebite have repeatedly used their positions to determine the nature and outcome of peacebuilding interventions. Control of the community also determines control of rents and political benefits, and so conflicting groups have always had opposing party affiliations. This in turn has created suspicion of peacebuilding efforts. One

interviewee in Nembe said:

Those who are suspected to be the originators of those issues causing conflict in the community are suspecting those who are coming to meet them for peace.¹¹³

What is clear from interactions with people in Nembe is that government-led peacebuilding interventions have been undermined by the lack of legitimacy, due to the perceived lack of neutrality and local agency in their involvement. This is tied to the strong influence of politicians who are not members of the community and their competition to secure control of the community for election purposes. In addition, those locally who straddle community leadership and state appointments are increasingly constrained in their peacebuilding efforts because of the drive to maintain their links with political power structures at the state and national levels. These include Obuebite, Ebi Ben-Ololo (a member of the state House of Assembly), Kojo Sam and Gabriel Jonah (the younger brother of the state's previous Deputy Governor).

Suspicion of formal peacebuilding interventions and political influence on attempts to manage violence was also evident in the state government's response to the outbreaks on 19 November 2015, with the appointed Chairman of the Judicial Panel of Inquiry, Justice Ebiyeren Umukoro, declining the role and because of his relationships with people involved in conflict. The role was subsequently filled by Justice Margaret Akpomiemie. The government favours the use of these panels rather than the establishment and empowerment of peacebuilding structures that can attract local support. While the panels are legitimate and their compositions constitutional, the potential for external influence and for selecting members who share the views of the Governor generates distrust of their findings and recommendations.

This failure to ensure the legitimacy of formal peacebuilding institutions such as the government and security agencies has created opportunities for informal

peacebuilding bodies, such as the King and his Chief-in-Council. After security agencies were unable to manage the 2019 pre-election and election-day violence the King and Chief-in-Council, after engagement with community stakeholders, took action including the signing of peace accords between community politicians and armed groups and their leaders, and the establishment of the Nembe City Internal Security (NCIS) Taskforce, a body comprising youths from the eight traditional compound and war canoe houses in Nembe. The NCIS was to serve as a vigilante group and maintain security in Nembe, and report to the King directly.

Research has shown that local ownership makes peacebuilding more sustainable and legitimate (Nyamnjoh, 2018). But in Nembe, the absence of this legitimacy in formal peacebuilding institutions, and of a structured, formal peacebuilding process, undermines the foundations on which peace and stability should rest.

In contrast, the Ondewari community has no formal peacebuilding institutions – there is no police station or military encampment there or nearby. A 2018 Premium Times report quoted a community member saying that Ondewari's leadership had made several pleas to the state government for a police post, and drew attention to the raging issue of pipeline surveillance jobs, but at the time of our research there was no police or other security agency presence. (Premium Times, January 2018).

Violent conflict in Ondewari broke out in 2016 and was resolved in 2019. It represents a complex scenario in which one informal community-based structure failed to resolve the problem and another succeeded. It involved two groups struggling for the control and distribution of pipeline surveillance contract proceeds, and escalated when an attack by the group led by One Okpotu caused the death of four community youths.

The community Council of Chiefs failed to intervene and mediate between the opposing groups, and attacks and reprisal

attacks continued. This failure was linked to family affiliations between some of the chiefs and the leaders of the groups; some chiefs were also beneficiaries of the surveillance contract. One interviewee said:

So it's a kind of...if you trying to get into the matter, this other person that his son is involved will now be suspecting you. Say his son is the leader of that group and what effort can he do to resolve this matter. Maybe what you trying to...even if you sincere...¹¹⁴

Thus, family ties, economic interests and suspicion undermined the Council ability to intervene in the conflict and bring peace to the community. Eventually, however, Philomena Kinyere Lafia, an indigene of the community living elsewhere, was able to stop the violence. She is the daughter of a former chief of Ondewari community and a fellow of funded peacebuilding training in the United States. Her skills and close ties enabled her to mobilise allies to address the conflict and her involvement won community-wide acceptance. Her neutrality gave her legitimacy. Her intervention was aided by widespread disenchantment with the violence and its impact on livelihoods and economic activities.

3.5 Engagement with Conflict Actors

Contact and engagement with those involved in violent conflict can be a challenge for peacebuilders, and engagement can be limited when one or more of the key players is not part of the state while others are. If, when and how engagement takes place is shaped by the degree of legitimacy and acceptance of peacebuilding initiators by the conflict participants and communities affected, especially when conflicts are political and resource-based.

In Nembe, a key aspect of formal and governmental engagement with conflict actors has been with key political patrons in the community, a path to conflict management that some key informants have referred to as external, selective and

based on political considerations rather than actual intentions to manage the violence. In November 2019, engagements with conflict participants were coordinated through several formal channels including the office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Security, the Judicial Panel of Inquiry chaired by Justice Margaret Akpomiemie and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs.

Meetings between these parties and those involved in conflict were arranged through political networks and individuals identified through personal recognition and perceived links to mid- and low-level conflict participants. An interviewee from within the conflict resolution unit of state command, described the process as follows:

We approached the government through the SA security to the Governor, then we engaged with the leadership of the community, we engaged with the youth, the Youth President, the CDC Chairman and the paramount ruler of the community. These engagements started with a visit to Nembe and then inviting specific persons to Yenagoa.¹¹⁵

In Nembe, because conflict arose from political division and competition, and the struggle for surveillance contract control, engagement was selective, which contributed to the failure of formal peacebuilding interventions. As a result the violence has continued.

Engagement with perceived high-level conflict participants instead of the youths involved did not address the underlying drivers of the violence. These highly placed politicians included Chief Timipre Sylva, a serving Minister of State for Petroleum (and former state Governor), Chief Senator Nimi Barigha Amangi (a former Senator representing Bayelsa East Senatorial district), Chief George Fente and the Hon Jonathan Obuebite. This was because their commitments to peace were not passed on to their followers and because their involvement was often as interested

individuals not as members of government or others holding political positions. This makes it very difficult to understand at what point in peacebuilding interventions such people are acting as individuals or as representatives of government agencies, and is a major reason for the failure of formal peacebuilding institutions in Nembe.

Formal negotiations with key conflict actors, such as Jonathan Obuebite and his 'Winged Prosperity family', Gabriel Jonah and his Otita Force, Sen. Amangi and the Isenasawo, and General Kojo and his militia, which is affiliated to Chief Timipre Sylva, the Minister of State for Petroleum, are usually seen as being driven by political considerations and practicalities rather than by an interest in managing violence and bringing peace. This is partly why verbal commitments to peacebuilding fail: violence during the 2023 state and national assembly elections broke out after these individuals and their groups had signed a peace accord denouncing election violence.

Fluid political alliances and their tendency to change according to the prevailing politics is another reason for these commitments falling flat, and a further driver of violence. This fluidity of alliances was referred to by a research interviewee:

Instance as that the time of that violent conflict in 2019 when Obuebite was having those issues with the Otita Force for instance, he was friends politically with Ebi Ben-Ololo. As of today, he is no longer...¹¹⁶

The government in Nembe seems to have a procedural and reactive approach to peacebuilding and conflict management. It publicises its activities to show an apparent willingness to act and an interest in peace. Committees are established, their findings announced, and a White Paper promised. This, however, only contributes to the failure of conflict-management initiatives because the violence is a result of the mix of the interests and affiliations that shape politicians in positions to act. Violent outbreaks are more likely in Nembe than in any other Bayelsa community. They reflect

partisan demarcations when political activity increases. One interviewee said:

Never forget that the sources of conflict and the determinant of the length of conflict and say grudge and bad blood, are determined by the interest of different political actors.¹¹⁷

All key conflict participants in Nembe were politically influential; their capacities and capabilities were directly tied to the size of their armed groups and their affiliations made them the direct stakeholders in formal peacebuilding institutions. They were driven by political considerations rather than an intention to address the drivers of violence. Politics and the control of surveillance contracts were the key players in Nembe's formal peacebuilding institutions.

This, coupled with the fluidity of alliances between conflict actors, creates engagement outcomes that are disconnected from lower-level conflict participants, who, despite their statuses, are critical to understanding and managing community violence. Consequently, those perpetrating and those attempting to manage violence are connected politically but disconnected pragmatically. The political connections undermine positive engagement because peacebuilding institutions and their remits reflect political considerations, and those involved are themselves central political figures. The mid to lower levels of conflict participants in Nembe are community youths, who are least considered in conflict-management processes (dialogues, meetings, invitations) and whose participation in violence and their allegiances are most often driven by economic and financial interests.

The situation in Ondewari was different. The conflict there was primarily over an oil pipeline surveillance contract and so the statuses and affiliations of those involved were less complex, enabling a more direct approach by peacebuilders. The contract was initially sub-contracted by Darlon Security to one of the warring groups.

Importantly, Ondewari was less militarised than Nembe and access to arms and ammunitions was limited.

The process of engagement with the conflict actors by Philomena Kinyere Lafia was incremental, and had a snowballing effect. She explained her mission to the parents of conflict victims and established her non-affiliation to any formal governmental institution or to the conflict protagonists. Her engagement was at the most basic level and was motivated by the need to involve those indirectly affected by the violence through the loss of relatives. She said:

It took me a long time to meet with several persons involved. It was an individual conversation at first. I met individually with all the persons I identified as directly or indirectly involved. It was not easy, as those who had lost family members wanted revenge.¹¹⁸

The community Council of Chiefs were the next group of stakeholders with which Kinyere Lafia engaged, through direct visits and dialogue. It was essential to secure their commitment to an open and impartial process to enable the conflict to be resolved. Kinyere Lafia and her group then engaged separately with the leaders of the conflicting groups, and later met with them together. The groups were asked about other direct or indirect conflict stakeholders who should also be involved.¹¹⁹

Kinyere Lafia's approach built legitimacy, acceptance and commitment to the conflict-management process. It highlights the fact that peacebuilding and conflict management are significantly dependent on acknowledgement by and engagement with the different levels of conflict participants and stakeholders and with the roles they play, together with consideration of the inclusive or selective nature of engagement, as determined by the nature of the conflict.

The peacemakers then involved Darlon, to try to ensure an inclusive and mutually beneficial outcome and to reduce the potential for claims of non-neutrality, which

could have undermined the legitimacy and acceptance of their efforts.

The incremental nature of their engagement underscored their legitimacy and increased their chances of success. Targeted meetings and dialogue with stakeholders were critical to the engagement strategy and eventual management of the conflict and reduction in violence.

3.6 Addressing Conflict Drivers and Actors

Success in addressing conflict drivers, especially when they are political, depends on the commitment of the main conflict participants and the protection of their interests and positions. Where interests and positions are tied to structures of power and the flow of rents, managing violence without managing power tussles and access to rents and their distribution increases the likelihood of conflict reoccurrence.

In Nembe, the key conflict drivers were political competition and struggles over natural resource rents; incidences of violence and human casualties had always been overt struggles for political power and the influence it brought over resource rent control. To tackle the violence the government and other formal bodies predominantly followed a 'peacekeeping' rather than 'peacebuilding' approach, because of the networked character of major conflict participants and the increasing proliferation of arms. Thus, attempts to manage the conflict meant stationing the JTF at strategic locations.

The presence of security personnel does not address the drivers of conflict. It helps reduce violence and establish peace, but struggles over oil rent and surveillance contracts are more complex and cannot be resolved by committees or panels of inquiry and reports that are not implemented. Attempts to manage the violence by institutional interventions have failed to address this one major conflict driver. And as community youths and others see how others have gained

financially and gained social status through the award of surveillance contracts, the chances of new violent groups emerging increases. The formal interventions have failed to address the conflict, causing one interviewee to say:

People have benefited a lot, a lot of persons have benefited and within that period, there is always, there is this tendency of overthrowing people that are holding and controlling the contracts.¹²⁰

There also appears to be growing acknowledgement of the failure of government and other formal institutions to effectively address the drivers of conflict in Nembe.

If the state government should have settled any crisis, believe me it would have been that one of 2019 where innocent lives, people who came for campaign, they are murdered, some persons who sent out of the town for as long as two years.¹²¹

One consequence of the inability of formal institution interventions to address the underlying problems in Nembe is the frequent resumption of hostilities and the unpredictability of alliances between political actors. A significant outcome is the increasing tendency of the community to resort to informal traditional institutions such as the Mingi King and the Chief-in-Council, who have engaged conflict actors and addressed the causes of conflict through traditional means. After the November 2019 crisis they filled the gap created by the failed intervention strategy of the formal institutions. The threat that Obuebite of the Winged Restoration Group would face violent reprisal after clashes with the Otita Force was not addressed by formal institutions. Instead, traditional governance structures intervened. An interviewee said:

The Mingi-in-Council, which is the final authority in Ogbolomabri and in Nembe environment, made a vivid settlement at this point here. This is the centre of the town; it's called Opupolotiri.¹²²

Importantly, informal traditional institutions

derived their authority from traditional processes, culture, and history of the community. A system and process acknowledged and accepted by the community, including the major conflict actors such as the leaders of the Otita Force and the Winged Restoration Groups.

They might be the ones to resolve such conflicts and bring the people together and have some kind of brotherhood and say this person is free to come, you are all brothers, we have seen situations like that where they have created such parley or peace accord between conflict actors in Nembe.¹²³

The group led by Kinyere Lafia addressed conflict in Ondewari through mediation and the renegotiation of the surveillance contract. Its meetings with Darlon secured commitments to ensure that the two conflict parties – the leaders of the warring groups – were included in the new agreement. Because only two parties were involved, engagement with them was less complex than it might have been had there been more stakeholders.

3.7 How Was the Conflict Resolved?

Competition over surveillance contracts was the key conflict driver in both Nembe and Ondewari. Access to the operating oil company (Aiteo Exploration and Production Limited) in Nembe was far greater, however, which triggered political bargaining and allowed parties to influence contract control, often through political connections. In Ondewari, access to the oil company and pipeline owners was monopolised by Darlon. This difference determined the outcomes of the resolution strategies of the formal and informal peacebuilding organisations in the two communities.

The management of violence in Nembe, which was no more than temporary containment, was achieved through militarisation – the stationing of the JTF along strategic entry points into the community. This was complemented by the intervention of a traditional governance

institution, the Mingi-in-Council (the King/the Council in Chief), and by the commitment of the major conflict actors, Gabriel Jonah (Otita Force), Hon. Obuebite (Winged Prosperity Group) and General Kojo to sign a peace accord framed within traditional principles of mediation and the acceptance of mediated outcomes.

Although this approach did not tackle the major conflict drivers and the violent competition over access to and control of surveillance contract jobs, it was successful in managing the violence by engaging with the leaders of the armed groups. This was achieved through deployment of the JTF, the signing of the peace accord coordinated by the Mingi-in-Council, and the reverence within the community of traditional and cultural commitments to negotiations.

In Ondewari, resolution of the conflict was more systematic and did address the major conflict driver, the control of surveillance jobs. There was a collective agreement to manage the conflict informally and outside of formal security and judicial institutions, starting with the agreement by the parties to settle legal claims relating to conflict victims out of court, with Kinyere Lafia acting as guarantor that there would be no resumption of violence. Agreement to defray the medical costs and financial debts of conflict victims was the first step and was achieved through mediation, enabling conflict stakeholders, families of casualties and other victims to come to the negotiation table.

The next step was dialogue and negotiation with the leaders of the two opposing groups – the key players in the conflict. The aim was the redistribution of income from the surveillance contract. Now, fees are paid monthly into a community account, which is distributed to families, who share proceeds within their groups. This way, responsibilities and benefits are shared equally among all adult members of the community, which makes maintaining peace the responsibility of the entire community.

3.8 Reduction in Violence (Key Outcome)

The reduction in violence resulting from interventions by formal and informal peacebuilding institutions in Nembe and Ondewari is a key outcome, but a major difference is whether peace has been sustained. Engagement by formal peacebuilding institutions in Nembe, influenced by the political nature of the conflict and by the violent competition over the pipeline surveillance contract, led to conflict participants being involved selectively. This excluded some stakeholders and did not address the cause of the conflict, creating the potential for a resurgence of violence.

In Ondewari, the intervention of Kinyere Lafia brought an end to the violence. The agreement by stakeholders to dialogue was the first step. At the time of publication, violence had not reoccurred.

3.9 Resumption of Hostilities

Violence broke out again in Nembe on 15 February 2023, when three people were shot dead in what the police described as a battle for supremacy between two groups. Informants say that those responsible were members of the group led by General Kojo and that the victims were an aide to Youth President Moses Ayerite and the aide's girlfriend. The third victim had not been identified. The home of the Youth President was vandalised. Reprisal attacks were likely. The Youth President and the victims were affiliated to Gabriel Jonah and the Otita Force. The 2019 pre-election violence also involved the groups led by Kojo Sam and Jonah. Jonah had again allied with Jonathan Obuebite and the Winged Restoration Group ahead of the 2023 Assembly elections, against the PDP candidate Ebi Ben-Ololo, who was attempting to win a third term.

The likelihood of hostilities resuming in Ondewari is low because of the more inclusive approach of peacebuilders: there has been no violence in the community for a year. Community members have expressed faith in the current arrangement

and believe that the problem has been resolved and the violence ended.

3.10 Relationship Between Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions in the State

Formal and informal peacebuilding institutions can operate in the same location at the same time. However, whether they operate independently or cooperatively may have consequences for peacebuilding outcomes.

In Bayelsa State there is no operational or contextual working relationship between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions. Formal peacebuilding institutions in Nembe – state government agencies and security agencies – acknowledge the functionality of some informal institutions, such as traditional governance structures, but pay lip service to them as stakeholders with moral and traditional authority. As the Nembe case highlights, informal traditional governance institutions have had to step in to make up for the inadequacies of formal institutions, especially when seeking legitimacy in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Where formal peacebuilding institutions have failed, informal institutions such as the Nembe Se and the Mingi-in-Council have stepped in to fill the void.

Evidence from informants shows there to be little public knowledge of the working relationship between formal and informal peacebuilding bodies in Bayelsa State. Those who are familiar claim there is almost no working relationship and that the state's council of traditional rulers is expected to mediate between them when attempts are being made to resolve communal conflicts.

The Ondewari example shows that formal institutions are operationally disconnected from communities in terms of responding early to violent conflict. Their capacity to do so is often limited and where there are no informal institutions to step in, either as emergency responders or as mediating agents, the potential for more violence increases. This highlights the necessity

for a means by which formal and informal peacebuilding institutions can collaborate in responding to conflict.

The current situation questions formal peacebuilding institutionalism and its suitability and applicability to specific conflicts. It calls for a re-imagining of how the policy and practical links between formal and informal peacebuilding contributes to more robust outcomes. This relationship is critical to sustainable peacebuilding, especially so in contexts of violent communal conflict.

3.11 Key Outcomes of the Peace Interventions of Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions

From our data on and analyses of peacebuilding institutions in Nembe and Ondewari, their processes, engagements and effectiveness, several outcomes are identified:

Nembe:

- a. The formal institutional approach to peacebuilding in Nembe favours bargaining that leads to ceasefires and peace accords. While these are critical to sustainable peace, their failure to address the drivers of conflict inevitably leads to the resumption of hostilities.
- b. The formal institutional intervention in Nembe appears to favour a reactive approach to maintaining peace over tackling conflict drivers.
- c. Back-channel communications between formal peacebuilding institutions and key conflict actors was instrumental in reducing violence. However, recent events show that this approach may not necessarily lead to sustainable peace, given the nature of the conflict drivers.
- d. Intervention mediated the return to the community of key conflict actors, who previously had been effectively barred from returning.
- e. Selective engagement with conflict actors complemented by control and

containment strategies to manage violence fails in the short- to mid-term, because the lack of inclusivity in the engagement process and the failure to address conflict drivers leads to the resumption of hostilities between conflict actors.

Ondewari:

- a. The intervention of the informal peacebuilding institution involved negotiation and integration strategies that led to a complete cessation of violence and a resumption of socio-economic activities after two years of violent attacks and counter-attacks by armed groups.
- b. The intervention was successful because it involved a renegotiation of resource distribution processes and the collective sharing of responsibilities.
- c. The negotiation led to a shift from personalised 'strong man' control of rents to communal control, and to a renegotiated distribution formula for surveillance contract proceeds that involved every member of the community as a stakeholder and beneficiary.
- d. The successful withdrawal of all criminal and legal claims relating to the conflict increased the community's acceptance of the legitimacy of the informal peacebuilding institution.

3.12 Conclusions and Recommendations

The competition to control the flow of oil rents into communities and of political finance through political patronage continues to drive conflict, and where this is intertwined with violent political contests the dynamics and tendency for violence becomes even more potent. This is made worse when key actors are dispersed and proliferate. Evidence from Nembe and Ondewari shows that the nature and distribution of oil rents, especially through surveillance contracting and the struggle for community control before elections, has been a significant driver of conflict.

Surveillance contracting has localised the responsibility to protect oil infrastructure but has also become one of the major drivers of violent conflict in Bayelsa State. Managing this violence through peacebuilding requires an understanding of the fact that non-state armed groups are dispersed, fragmented and willing and able to use violence in pursuit of their objectives. Consequently, institutional engagement with these groups should be strategic, inclusive and embedded in interventions across all identifiable peacebuilding institutions, formal and informal.

The outcomes of formal and informal institutional interventions in peacebuilding in the selected communities indicates that the nature of the conflict and the character of the intervening peacebuilding institutions can have differing impacts on managing violence and sustaining peace. Importantly, formal and informal peacebuilding institutions enjoy different loci of legitimacy. Even in the absence of formal platforms for coordinating collaboration between these peacebuilding bodies, informal peacebuilding institutions such traditional governance structures fill gaps in engagement with conflict actors.

Evidence shows that there is an absence of any institutionalised process or indeed interest from the state in coordinating peacebuilding interventions by formal and informal organisations. Peacebuilding interventions by the state are managed on a case-by-case basis and there are no processes for institutional learning in conflict management. There appear to be no functional formal platforms for coordinating peacebuilding interventions by formal and informal institutions. Furthermore, informal peacebuilding institutions fill vacuums left by ineffective interventions by formal bodies.

The use of positive proposals in managing indirect impacts of violence can function as a key causal mechanism in peacebuilding interventions in communities. It not only fosters legitimacy but also enhances inclusivity of direct and indirect conflict stakeholders.

Policy Levers for Peace: Peace-making and Peacebuilding Institutions in Plateau State, North-Central Nigeria

4.1 Introduction

The North-Central region of Nigeria continues to witness high levels of insecurity and violent conflict across its states, which are Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory, and Abuja. It is located in central Nigeria and has previously been peaceful. It is a convergence centre for Christians and Muslims and different ethnic groups. Plateau state in particular derived its slogan, 'The Home of Peace and Tourism', because of its beautiful natural landscape and peaceful nature. In 2001 that peace was shattered by a violent conflict borne of grievances and political competition between the indigenous people of the state capital Jos, mainly the Berom, Afizere, Anaguta and Hausa. The state has since become a frontline of vicious clashes that often overlap and that manifest themselves as religious or ethnic, indigene-settler or farmer-herder conflicts.

The incessant clashes in Plateau state have led to interventions by the government, non-government agencies, individuals, traditional rulers, religious bodies and other stakeholders in the quest to bring a return to peace. The Plateau state government has previously established various commissions of inquiry and peace and reconciliation committees in an attempt to build peace. These initiatives include the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Conflict in Namu town, Qua'anpan LGA in 2006, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the November 28, 2008 Unrest in Jos and Environs, the Peace and Reconciliation Committee between the Berom and Fulani Communities in Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs, the formation of Operation Rainbow in 2010 and the establishment of the Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA) in 2016.

This chapter examines the attempts by formal and informal peacebuilding institutions to promote peace in Plateau state. It particularly focuses on the interventions of the PPBA and traditional rulers in selected communities, and analyses the coordinating mechanisms between informal and formal peacebuilding bodies and the combined outcome of their activities.

4.2 Conflict Situation and Institutional Responses

Indigene-settler conflicts have occurred in different parts of Nigeria. The conflict situation in Plateau state is the most extreme case of this type of clash; it has overlapped with religious and ethnic confrontations since 2021.¹²⁴ The first episode of widespread violence in Jos occurred in 2001 and was a result of political tensions following the appointment of Alhaji Muktar as National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) coordinator for Jos North LGA. The trigger was the attempt by a young woman to pass along a road that was blocked by a Muslim congregation during the Jumaat prayer. Subsequent clashes broke out in Jos the same year and in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2018 and 2021. Rural areas of Plateau state outside Jos North LGA have also been affected by violence, with thousands killed in old mining settlements, farmlands or at their homes over the years.

Plateau state conflicts, particularly those in Jos North LGA, are rooted in attempts to establish political authority by those referred to as settlers, who comprise mainly Hausas and who are also predominantly Muslim. These attempts are resisted by indigenous groups such as the Berom, Afizere and Anaguta, who are largely

Christian. Industrial tin and columbite mining contributed to the growth of Jos and the migration of diversified ethnic groups from different parts of the country, who lived peacefully together from the early colonial period. Over time, settlers began to demand political power due to their prolonged residence in the state. Indigenous groups resisted their demands. Following the transition to democracy in 1999, politicians and ethnic leaders heightened mistrust between the groups by exploiting ethnic and religious differences, made visible by the prevalence of poverty and other socio-economic problems, to gain political and economic support and acceptance. Criminality and attacks increased, leading to divided communities within the state.¹²⁵

The demand for farming and grazing land in the other Plateau LGAs, such as Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Bassa and Bokkos, has also increased tensions between indigenous groups and the Hausas. Some clashes are between farmers and herders over land but several others attacks have been committed by unknown gunmen. Most occur at night. Interference by interests outside the state compound security problems. The conflicts in Jos reflect the wider challenge of ethnic and religious divisions being deepened by structural and economic problems.

These conflicts significantly harm the development prospects of the state because they cause the loss of thousands of lives and the destruction of properties including businesses. A PPBA incidence report stated that from 2008 to 2022, more than 7,000 deaths had occurred and 4,531 people had been injured since the outbreak of violence. In addition, 6,829 properties had been destroyed and 3,053 people displaced (PPBA Action Plan 2018–2022). Tourism has been negatively impacted, with potential investors and visitors scared off.

The state government and non-state actors have responded with conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives. The government has deployed security forces during and after conflicts to maintain law and order, and established commissions

to examine the primary causes of violence and make recommendations. These measures have not reduced the violence. In some cases, people have accused security officers of human rights violations and of a failure to intervene when needed.¹²⁶ Separate judicial panels of inquiry have been set up by Federal and state ministers, including after the 2008 crisis. Neither panels advanced the cause of peacebuilding. Both were perceived as favouring a certain group, the Federal Government panel leaning towards the Muslims while the state Commission was believed to sympathise with the Christians.¹²⁷

Operation Rainbow was established in 2010 during Governor Jonah Jang's tenure. It was the state's special task force and would conduct neighbourhood watches in collaboration with the police, civil defence and the military. It was mandated to provide intelligence and bridge gaps in grassroots and community protection. In February 2016, the PPBA was established by the state's next Governor, Simon Bako Lalong. Its remit was to continue peacebuilding efforts. The following sections of this chapter discuss the peacebuilding roles of both the PPBA as a formal institution and of informal traditional institutions.

4.3 Context of the Study

This study mainly used primary data sourced from FDGs and interviews. It identified formal peacebuilding institutions in Plateau state including the special task force, NGOs, international state agencies, the PPBA and other state government bodies. The PPBA was chosen for particular analysis because it is the Agency responsible for spearheading and coordinating all peacebuilding efforts in the state. The traditional ruling council was selected as the informal institution due to its traditional authority and activities at grassroots level.

Fieldwork was conducted in Jos North and Bokkos LGAs. These two local governments have witnessed different forms of conflict and are located in separate geopolitical zones. The indigene-settler question reflects crises in Jos North LGA. Conflicts in Bokkos LGA are a result of farmer-herder

clashes, as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 6: Selected Peacebuilding Institutions, Conflict and Communities

Conflict	Community	Institution
Indigene–Settler Conflict	Jos North LGA, Plateau State	Formal
Farmer–Herder Conflict	Bokkos LGA, Plateau State	Informal

Nine FGDs and 24 KIIs were conducted in Jos North and Bokkos LGAs. The activities of the selected peacebuilding institutions were analysed as was the outcome of their attempts to resolve conflict in their communities.

4.4 Peacebuilding Institutions and Interventions in Conflict Situations

Plateau Peacebuilding Agency and Peace Interventions in Jos

4.4.1 Legitimacy of PPBA

The PPBA was established in 2016 through legislation, as a policy response to two decades of violence in Plateau state. The Agency's primary responsibility is to spearhead and coordinate all conflict-prevention and peacebuilding efforts, which involves resolving existing conflicts, preventing new ones and promoting a safer, stable and secure state and society.

The PPBA is the state's institutional peacebuilding mechanism. Its roles include promoting a culture of peace and harmonious coexistence among diverse ethnic and religious groups; developing coordination and cooperation between government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), through dialogue, research and the implementation of peace and conflict-prevention programmes; facilitating conflict-prevention settlements through diplomacy, negotiation, conflict resolution,

training, mediation and peace education; and developing collaborative partnerships with international organisations and donor agencies working on and around issues of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The legislative and institutional framework of the PPBA gives it legitimacy and it is supported by communities. This gives it convening power among stakeholders. A representative of the PPBA said:

*There hasn't been any time since the Agency was formed or established that we call on stakeholders that they refuse to come; you know somebody coming out and then walking out no! It means a lot in peacebuilding process, that means there is trust, there is credibility, there is legitimacy, because if they don't trust you, if they don't consider you even as being neutral, they wouldn't come.*¹²⁸

The PPBA's legislative mandate and popular support means that continuity and viability with succeeding governments may be sufficiently established, because it was created by a state Governor. In 2010, the previous Governor, Jonah Jang, had established Operation Rainbow, a community policing structure. Operation Rainbow still exists but has suffered major setbacks and redundancy due to lack of funds. Another peace structure in the state will not be created with the emergence of a new government.

4.4.2 Engagement of the PPBA with conflict participants

This study finds that the PPBA adopted different approaches to engage with those involved in conflict in Jos. These include:

Peace Architecture Dialogue: The peace architecture dialogue is an initiative convened by the PPBA to which keyholders are invited on a monthly basis to take a deep, introspective look at the peace and security landscape. The aim is to assess options for addressing the conditions that lead to instability and insecurity. Participants are from traditional and religious institutions, civil society organisations and academia.

Some, such as youth leaders, NGOs, community leaders and religious leaders, have recognised the importance of these regular peace meetings between the government and citizens.

Capacity Training Peace Building: The PPBA offers peacebuilding training and capacity building to youth and community leaders. Selected youths then become community peace ambassadors. Their role is to further enlighten their peers on the values of peace. An Agency representative recounted the case of gangster Agwan Rukuba benefiting from local and international training and being transformed into a peace ambassador. He became a stakeholder who supported peace initiatives in his community before his death. Some youth leaders in Agwan Rogo, a Muslim-dominated area, and in Agwan Rukuba, a largely Christian area, are also now peace ambassadors as a result of the PPBA training.

Consultative Engagements with Community and Religious Leaders in Flash Points: The PPBA regularly engages with community leaders and district heads from areas prone to violence in Jos North. These areas include Agwan Rogo, Farin Gada, Rukuba Road, Agwan Zinariya, Fillin Ball, St Michael, Rikkos, Fillin Sukuwa Congo, Agwan Jarawa and Naraguta. They are consulted about security concerns in their communities and recommend ways to resolve the conflicts.

Media Enlightenment and Awareness Campaigns: The PPBA also collaborates with media partners on radio programmes aimed at creating awareness and encouraging peaceful coexistence. It is active on social media; its website details its activities and programmes and has a mechanism through which members of the public can report early signs of conflict.

Sports and Creative Activities: The PPBA, through its peace partners, organises sports competitions and activities for Muslim and Christian youths in Jos North, to address youth restiveness and idleness. The theatre for drama and change is a

creative means of resolving reoccurring violent conflict.

4.4.3 Efforts of PPBA in addressing conflict drivers and actors

PPBA-initiated measures including mediation, dialogue and enlightenment campaigns to address conflict drivers in Jos. Its training and advocacy work with a wide range of stakeholders – young people, women, the elderly, community leaders, traditional leaders and religious institutions – has helped address conflicts caused by religious intolerance, youth restiveness and lack of employment. However, the Agency's ability to address the main driver of the indigene-settler conflict in Jos North LGA is limited. This conflict is centred around constitutional issues that are yet to be clearly defined by the Nigerian constitution. Subsection 42 sections 1 and 2 of the constitution note that a citizen of Nigeria shall not be subjected to any disability or derivation merely by reason of circumstance of birth. Section 143 subsection 3 recognises that being an indigene of a state is a criterion for appointment as a minister.

As a relatively new organisation, the PPBA is still attempting to address drivers of conflicts that have deep historical roots and that are linked to ownership, marginalisation and lack of inclusion. To do this the Agency advises the government on its role in and responsibility to promote peace through inclusion and the provision of a level playing field for all. It is also trying to win the support of different groups in Jos by maintaining neutrality in mediation. A representative of the Jasawa Community in Jos said of this:

This is the administration that brings peace. We don't know the next government that will come. Whether they will inherit that particular method to apply or they will come back with the same former attitude of the former government.¹²⁹

4.4.4 How Conflict was resolved by the PPBA

The conflicts in Jos communities were resolved through continuous engagement, mediation, dialogue and community outreach. During meetings, people were allowed to voice their feelings and make suggestions, and rather than leaving people to settle disputes through litigation, with one party winning and the other losing and the resultant anger and resentment, the Agency suggested ways in which conflict parties could work towards reconciliation, forgiveness and healing. For instance, the Community Peace and Architecture Forum, convened monthly by the PPBA, provided opportunities for people to share experiences, which could lead to conflict resolution and cooperation. The dialogue and mediation initiated by the Agency also caused a reduction in clashes between the Irigwes and Fulanis in Bassa LGA, with these groups eventually signing a peace deal. The PPBA worked with peace partners and community leaders to quell new conflicts by addressing the sources of disputes early.

4.4.5 Reduction in violence (key outcome)

The intervention of the PPBA has brought about a reduction in violent conflict in Jos. Far fewer clashes have broken out compared to 2001, 2004, 2008, 2010 and 2015, when violence led to the imposition of curfews and a state of emergency.¹³⁰ When clashes have occurred in Jos North, they have mostly been contained. Previously they would have spread.

The likelihood of reoccurrence or relapse is high, however, because the indigene-settler agitations driving conflicts have not been adequately addressed. An interviewee in Jos North said:

I can show you the house I was born, as old as I am. But if you say you are

*driving me away, what are you looking for? Then all my children, all my grandchildren would fold hand waiting for you to destroy our house, our shops and kill me and go away free, it can't be possible! They must give me protection if government cannot protect me.*¹³¹

Another, an indigene, said:

*Because, if I am born today and I was told that the land belongs to my dad but someone is staying there and no one has done anything about it, when I try every possible means to see that I get another land and I can't, I will be forced to face him to see that he leaves my land, so justice should be served. Even in Jos, the issue of Jos is just on a time bomb because when perpetrator of violence is not checked and he has occupied a certain space, give him some time when that space is not enough, he will strike on another community.*¹³²

Thus, underlining issues relating to land ownership, inclusion, marginalisation and justice remain.

4.4.6 Resumption of hostilities in Jos North.

Due to the multifaceted nature of conflicts in Plateau state, cultism, gangsterism or reprisals of violent conflict from the rural areas sometimes assume a religious undertone and spiral into conflict-prone communities in Jos North. However, there is evidence of gradual integration and movement of people even within 'no-go areas' and flash points. The majority of respondents believe they can move freely within different communities and markets in Jos, although they are cautious and suspicious.

4.5 The Traditional Rulers and Peace Intervention in Bokkos LGA

4.5.1 Legitimacy of the traditional rulers in peacebuilding.

The traditional council in Bokkos is headed by the Saf Ron Kulere, the traditional overseer of the land and its inhabitants. He is helped by other traditional rulers such as the Mishkam Mushere, Saf Butura, Saf Maguna and Saf Daffo. When there is conflict, the traditional ruler is the first point of contact via the community leaders known as Mai-Agwans. The legitimacy of the traditional rulers as peacebuilders dates back to precolonial times. The Saf is responsible for helping the community abide by the customs and traditions of the land. Though the traditions are not documented, people accept this authority and integrate traditional values into their lives. A traditional ruler in Bokkos stated that:

*I was told by my grandparents that in the days my great grandfather was the Saf, people contributed food to them... even the Fulani's brought meat, milk to feed the Saf and his family, so it was it was something in their heads even when they didn't have any written documents to that, but they knew and respected the traditional ruler.*¹³³

The traditional rulers are not backed by any legal document and the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs is responsible for monitoring the activities and functions of the traditional council. Previously, the colonial government had created a legal framework for traditional leadership, for administrative convenience. This led to the establishment of the Ministry. However, local government reforms by the post-colonial government did not give constitutional or legal backing to the traditional rulers to perform their role as peacebuilders.

4.5.2 Engagement with conflict actors in Bokkos

The Saf in Bokkos regularly meets conflict participants including community and youth

leaders, women's leaders and heads of herder and farmer groups, to set guidelines for farmer and herder relationships and to discuss security concerns. Increasing conflict and tension between the two communities prompted the Saf Butura to set up the Farmer–Herders' Committee on Peaceful Coexistence, in 2018. It consisted of five Fulani leaders, including Wakilin Ardo (head of herders) in Bokkos and 11 community leaders from different clans in Butura. The Chairman was a farmer and the Vice-Chairman a herder. The Committee made recommendations that discouraged night grazing, which had caused farmers and herders to take the law into their own hands. A Committee report was presented to the Saf Butura, the Commandant Special Task Force, Bokkos Police Command, the Civil Defence Commandant in Bokkos and the state security services. The Committee meets regularly with the Saf to review its activities.

4.5.3 Addressing conflict drivers and actors.

The most common drivers of farmer–herder conflicts are farm invasions and cattle rustling or poisoning. Other sparks are competition for land or unprovoked attacks. To tackle these problems, the Saf in Butura Bokkos banned night grazing and told farmers to harvest their crops at the same time, to limit cattle invasion on other farms. Herders migrating into the community were required to bring letters of attestation from the head of herders of their community (the Ardo) or the community leaders.

These measures have helped address farmer–herder conflict but the influx of herders and their cattle from neighbouring villages remains a challenge for traditional rulers. These incursions have been attributed to scarcity of grazing land and water, caused by climate change and other factors. The gunmen responsible for some attacks remain unidentified and traditional rulers have limited capacity to deal with these: the Saf Ron Kulere, Lazarus Agai, a first-class traditional ruler in Bokkos,

was killed in 2016 by unknown gunmen suspected to be herdsmen from another community. In such cases, traditional rulers themselves are left at the mercy of gunmen because state security services are absent.

4.5.4 How conflict was resolved

The traditional ruler in Bokkos mediates between conflict participants. When a farm has been destroyed by cattle the farmer reports the incident to community leaders and the traditional ruler, who assess the damage and determine the compensation to be paid by the erring party. Compensation payments create more problems, however, because some herders become resentful and attack the compensation recipient. The Farmer–Herders’ Committee has facilitated agreements between conflict parties on compensation with a written undertaking from the police not to continue further attacks. Traditional rulers encourage farmers and herders to discuss events and forgive each other once compensation is paid.

4.5.5 Reduction in violence (Key Outcome)

The mediation efforts of the Saf in Bokkos led to a moderate reduction in violence, particularly among farmers and herders. Meetings with the community and youth leaders helped suppress reprisal attacks. Some interviewees said meetings with traditional rulers discouraged retaliation and the killing of cows because those responsible would be identified.

4.5.6 Resumption of hostilities

Despite the peacebuilding interventions of traditional leaders, violence has reoccurred. However, the Chairman of the Farmer–Herders’ Committee in Butura has said that, comparatively, peace was maintained after the Committee was set in 2018 until late 2019 when the COVID 19 lockdown was implemented. Hostilities increased then because movement was restricted, and herders from other places continued to migrate in and invade farms. Since 2019

there has been attacks by unidentified gunmen in Maikatko, Kwatas and Butura, all in Bokkos LGA, leading to many deaths and the destruction of properties.

4.6 Relationship Between Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions in the State.

Our research reveals collaboration and partnership between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions in Plateau state. The PPBA collaborates with other formal peacebuilding agencies at local and international level to promote its peace agenda and implement some of its programmes. These organisations include The Islamic Council Initiative of Nigeria (ICIN), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development (WISCOD), the Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria, the Displaced Women and Children Foundation (DWCF), Operation Safe Haven, the TRI Center Initiative, the Search for Common Ground (an international NGO working to build bridges through mediation, dialogue and community outreach), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The CAN and ICIN benefit from programmes, training and meetings that promote and transform interfaith religious relationships and build tolerance, trust and peaceful coexistence. Other NGOs, such as the TRI Center Initiative, the WISCOD and the DWCF are stakeholders in peace talks. In 2020, the DWCF and the PPBA launched an annual football tournament involving Muslim and Christian youths aged 18 to 25, to promote peace and tolerance. WISCOD works with women who have experienced trauma related to conflict or sexual abuse and provides training to women in new skills and in early signs of conflict. The Plateau Peace Practitioners Network is coordinating body of all NGOs, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and humanitarian workers in Plateau state.

Meetings and training have taken place

involving representatives of Operation Safe Haven, to promote cordial military and civil relations. International NGOs partner with PPBA to create sustainable peace programmes. Peace talks overseen by the PPBA were initiated by the Search for Common Ground, which handed them on in 2020. The GIZ has sponsored programmes such as the Protect Peace Core through the PPBA, aimed at strengthening relations between farmers and herders in North-Central Nigeria. Other international state institutions such as the United States Institute of Peace, the British Council and The Norwegian Embassy have supported and sponsored peacebuilding programmes in collaboration with the PPBA.

The Agency also works with informal institutions such as community development associations, youth groups, community leaders and traditional leaders, who can alert it to new conflicts. UN Women and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) have also collaborated with community, youth and traditional leaders in peacebuilding training, mediation and reconciliation programmes. Though partnerships and collaborations exist between formal and informal bodies in Plateau state, there is a need to strengthen the peacebuilding and conflict-management capacities of traditional rulers through engagement, training and integration into security councils.

4.7 Key Outcomes of the Peace Interventions of Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions

4.7.1 Reduction in widespread violent conflicts

The peace interventions of formal and informal institutions in Plateau state have reduced violent conflict, notably in Jos North LGA, which has been a focal point of indigene-settler conflict and religious violence since 2001. While violent clashes still occur sporadically in Jos, they are often contained within specific areas and

are less intense. The peacebuilding efforts of the PPBA, NGOs, international and non-state agencies in rural areas such as some communities in Bokkos are relieving tensions, reducing the likelihood of reprisal attacks and providing succour to victims of violence. The reduction in conflict has brought relative and stability.

4.7.2 Increased awareness of positive values of peace and tolerance.

The sensitisation and awareness campaigns of informal and formal institutions in Plateau state are building bridges and fostering positive values of peace and tolerance. There is significant evidence of increased awareness of the importance of peace and ethno-religious tolerance. Most respondents in this study said they wanted to coexist peacefully with people from different ethnic and religious groups. They believed their communities would progress more when they embraced peace and shunned violence.

4.7.3 Reemergence of social and economic integration

A major aftermath of the protracted crises in Jos was the polarisation of citizens along religious lines. The combined efforts of peacebuilding institutions are supporting the social and economic reintegration of conflict groups. Some respondents said they had invited friends of different faiths and shared food and drinks during festival seasons such as Sallah and Christmas. Muslims and Christians now move more freely in previously no-go areas such as Agwan Rukuba, Angwan Rogo, Rukuba Road, Tudunwada, Fillin Ball and Congo Russia, where they can sell their goods and services.

Some respondents in Bokkos who were affected by the farmer-herder clashes said that despite the conflicts, the children of farmers and herders still attended the same schools and interacted with one another. A visit to the market in Bokkos showed the Fulani and indigenous communities buying and selling from one another.

4.8 Conclusions

Plateau state derived its slogan as the 'Home of Peace and Tourism' due to the peaceful coexistence and convergence of Muslims and Christians and different ethnic groups over several years. But since 2001 peace has been broken by violent indigene-settler conflicts interacting with religious violence. The emergence of farmer-herder conflict in the rural areas turned the once peaceful state into a centre of vicious clashes.

The state government, NGOs and other informal institutions have responded with mediation, dialogue, training, advocacy, awareness campaigns and the provision of relief materials to conflict communities, which have reduced the occurrences and intensity of conflicts and brought relative peace and stability. People are gradually making efforts to embrace peace and coexist, despite their religious and ethnic differences.

Despite this positive outcome, our study has found that the main drivers of conflict

have not been adequately addressed. The indigene-settler crises in Jos North still awaits the resolution of constitutional questions. Further, conditions creating competition for land, water and grazing routes and resultant farmer-herder clashes in rural areas have not been effectively addressed by peacebuilding efforts. Some study participants still felt excluded and marginalised in the community and others believed that their ancestral lands and farms had been forcefully invaded and occupied.

The implication of not addressing these concerns is that conflicts will keep reoccurring. They are worsened by socio-economic hardships, which increase competition for scarce resources. It is therefore crucial that lawmakers to review the indigene-settler question in the Nigerian constitution by revisiting the privileges and rights of indigenous people in relation to settlers, who also have historical roots in communities. Grazing laws should be reviewed to progressively transform pastoralism into settled forms of animal husbandry.

Policy Levers for Peace: Peace-making and Peacebuilding Institutions in Katsina State, North-West Nigeria

5.1 Introduction

The situation in Katsina State stands out in relation to the dynamics of conflict and conflict-resolution efforts. The ongoing ethnic crisis has taken on new dimensions – a farmer–pastoralist dispute and the emergence of violence. Of most concern is the increase in the level of sophistication of those responsible for the violence, which includes banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling and SGBV. Thousands of lives have been lost and many households have been forced to move far from their livelihoods, pushing them further into poverty. Most worrying is the closure of schools and the long-term impacts of this. The number of people displaced from Katsina in 2020 and 2021 is estimated to be 32,688. A total of 658 incidents were recorded by the state between January 2020 and February 2023, resulting to 2,154 deaths. In addition, 124 cases of abduction and kidnapping were recorded.¹³⁴


Security of people and property is the primary responsibility of governments. Glaring evidence that state security officials were unprepared for new ethnic, religious and cultural conflicts led the Katsina State Government to establish several institutions and introduce regulations aimed at arresting the tide of violence and insecurity. Among initiatives was the establishment of the Office of the SSA and the Multi-Door Courthouse. These formal peacebuilding institutions were charged with addressing the longstanding ethno-religious crisis and other violent neighbourhood conflicts.

Their formation was predicated on the belief that achievement of conflict

transformation and peacebuilding objectives would not be possible without the intervention of well-functioning institutions. They are essential for effective peacebuilding. Peacebuilding efforts that are either led by weak institutions or do not reflect the consensus among diverse ethnic groups will fail to produce enduring peace. This means that state peacebuilding institutions must engender collaboration between traditional institutional partners and other NGOs (Darren, 2021) to resolve conflicts and ensure sustainable peace. The Hakimai, Ardos and religious leaders are always at the centre of any conflict, either as its victims or as the agents of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Understanding this and the shortcomings associated with the state security architecture necessitated the establishment of traditional security institutions and synergy between formal and informal conflict resolution bodies. This resulted in collaboration between formal and non-formal peacebuilding institutions in Katsina State and the establishment of Jibia Ina Mafita (early warning and early response systems), Gidauniyar Mazanya, a group of local vigilantes working with traditional institutions and the grassroots CRC. Relatively new institutions established in Kaduna and Adamawa and other states have had early success in arresting conflict.¹³⁵

This study assesses the effectiveness of formal and informal peacebuilding institutions in north-west Nigeria, using Katsina State as a case study, and how together they have reduced conflict.

Table 7: Process Tracing of Peacebuilding Institutions

	Cause	Action	Action	Action	Action	Action	Outcome
Casual Mechanism	Peace building institutions	Jibia Ina Mafita and Gidauniyar Mazanya	Conflict Resolution Committee at LGAs	Yanbanga/ Yan Sitrin CRC at District Level	Office of the SSA security Matters	Joint task Force (JTF)	Reduction in armed violence
							
Theory	Agent	Community members	Hakimi and Mai Anguwa and other elites	Heads of Vigilante Yan Sitrin and Yan Sake	SSA to Governor	Head of military and local vigilante	

Source: Authors' Design

5.2 Nature and Dynamics of the Conflict

Katsina State has been badly affected by violent conflict between farmers and herders and by clashes involving armed banditry, cattle rustling, kidnapping and SGBV. These clashes have caused feelings of hopelessness and despair among Katsina citizens. Some incidents, including conflict between farmers and herders and cattle rustling, are common in the state's rural areas. Local authorities (traditional and religious leaders) are responsible for settling these disputes but they have no moral or constitutional backing to do so and are becoming increasingly irrelevant as conflict is now escalating on an unprecedented scale. Most threatening is the transformation of violent armed banditry into tribal conflict between the Fulani and Hausa, which has led to genocide and ethnic cleansing through the activities of Yan-Sakai, an informal vigilante group. These bandits have recently established strong links with international ideology-based terrorist groups Ansaru and JAS.¹³⁶ Their activities include kidnapping, brutality,

the sporadic and barbaric killing of innocent citizens, setting travellers ablaze and raping women in front of their children and husbands, all of which reflect the failure of government security agencies to act against them effectively. The killings and destruction of properties and farmland have created fear and trauma in many citizens and left many homeless. Between 2020 and 2023, the number of displaced people in Nigeria was 138,719.¹³⁷

Table 3 shows the number of conflicts and fatalities recorded in the eight frontline LGAs in Katsina State, and Figure 2 shows the locations affected by armed banditry in Katsina. The table indicates that, Jibia LGA recorded the second highest death toll in 2022 and third highest in 2022. In terms of conflict incidence, there were far more outbreaks in Jibia than any other LGA in 2022. In 2020, three LGAs suffered more outbreaks than Jibia. This further justified the selection of Jibia as primary case study area.

Table 9: Intensity of Conflicts in Frontline LGAs

LGA	Incidence		Fatalities		Abductions	
	2020	2022	2020	2022	2020	2022
Jibia	21	42	183	94	2	5
Batsari	40	20	205	34	5	3
Safana	10	22	41	120	2	3
Danmusa	22	12	155	72	2	1
Kankara	12	15	38	32	2	1
Faskari	45	4	211	15	3	3
Dandume	14	6	24	3	3	4
Sabuwa	15	16	31	8	3	-

Source: ACLED Database, 2023.

5.3 Types of Conflicts and Mapping of Existing Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions

Several types of conflict have been identified in communities within Jibia and 80% of respondents agreed that banditry, farmer–herder conflicts, land grabbing, domestic violence, neighbourhood and commercial conflicts, and SGBV were the most common disputes in the area. Illustration below shows the mapping of existing peacebuilding institutions in Katsina.

MAPPING OF EXISTING PEACEBUILDING INSTITUTIONS IN THE STUDY AREA



FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

- Office of the Senior Special Adviser on Security Matters | **Coverage: State-wide**
- Conflict resolution centres organised and operated by the judiciary placed on the provisions of Order 12, Rule 1 of the Katsina State Sharia Court of Appeal | **State-wide, but offices in selected LGAs**
- Community Conflict and Dispute Resolution Centre established in February 2020 | **Existing in all 34 LGAs**
- The 3-Tier Security Structures | **State-wide**
- Multi-Door Courthouse | **State-wide**
- Commercial Dispute Settlement Centre | **State-wide**



INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS

- Conflict Resolution Committee at district at village Levels | **Existing in all the eight frontline LGAs**
- Religious/prayer committees | **Jibia LGA**
- Local vigilantes | **All LGAs exposed to conflict**
- Jibia Ina Mafita (Early Response Security Committee) | **Jibia LGA**
- Multi-Door Committee (handling domestic /neighbourhood conflicts | **All LGAs**
- Gidauniyar Mazanya | **Jibia**
- Mai-Anguwa Informants' Group | **Jibia and other frontline LGAs**
- Hisbah | **Jibia and other LGAs**
- Mazanya Youth Association | **Jibia**
- Police Community Relations Committee | **All LGAs**

The mapping of existing formal and informal peacebuilding institutions took place in December 2022. There are a significant number of informal and formal peacebuilding institutions in Katsina State. An institution is considered to be formal if it was created by legislation. An informal body is one not recognised or backed by law and which operates with community or collective acceptance of its members. Six formal and ten informal peacebuilding bodies were identified for this study. Most addressed issues relating to banditry and farmer–herder conflicts and a handful focused on neighbourhood conflict. Several rules are used in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. For instance, in Jibia, guidance for prayer times was introduced and mosques in the same area are not expected to observe prayers at the same time. This is to ensure that one group of worshippers can provide security for another.¹³⁸ The prohibition of Fage (a ceremony to mark the start of the harvesting season) and the restriction of movement in the town between 9pm and 6am every night is intended to reduce conflict and build peace.¹³⁹

Two formal peacebuilding institutions (Office of the SSA and Multi-Door Courthouse) were specifically analysed because they were established and functioning peacebuilding institutions in Katsina and addressed different conflicts. The former addressed armed banditry and associated crimes and the later mediated on domestic, commercial and neighbourhood disputes on the basis of a Penal Code.

5.4 Results and Discussion

5.4.1 Legitimacy of peacebuilding institutions

Legitimacy is significant, not only for governance but also for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It is concerned with the capacity of a government to win the allegiance and support of its citizens (Heywood, 2004). A legitimate government

makes laws that increase societal wellbeing. Thus, the central issue in the maintenance of peace and stability in any given country is to have an institution established on the basis of legitimacy. This is because legitimacy confers the right of a government to control and dictate to its citizens and has been defined as the belief in the rightness of an individual to make authoritative, binding decisions. Thus, legitimacy is generally based on the consent and obedience of people living in country to a constituted authority.

The sources of legitimacy of peacebuilding institutions in the study areas can broadly be grouped into three areas – legal authority, traditional authority, charisma, as revealed by FGDs 1 and 2. More than 70% of members of FGD 2 agreed that legitimacy for all the formal peacebuilding institutions was drawn from state House of Assembly Acts. For instance, the Multi-Door Courthouse was created by legislation. The source of its legitimacy of informal institutions is its charisma or traditional authority, which attracts the collective consent of communities. A CRC at ward level wins legitimacy through the status of traditional rulers. Traditional rulers are seen as religious leaders by communities and, based on this and the dictates of the Quran, followers must obey their leaders’ directives. Therefore, the law that restricts movement during a certain period of the day in Jibia LGA, as specified by the Hakimi, was consented to by community members. The legitimacy of Jibia Ina Mafita and Gidauniya Mazanyar (both informal institutions) comes from the charisma of those involved.

Armed bandits do not appear to recognise formal or informal institutions as legitimate, however, illustrated by their unwillingness to surrender their authority to recognised institutions. Interviewee Hassan said the bandits had no respect for anybody, implying that they were loyal only to their leaders: neither government nor traditional peacebuilding institutions had legitimacy for them and were not recognised.

5.4.2 Engagement with conflict actors

Engagement with armed bandits takes several forms in Katsina State, and at state government and community/local levels. At state government level, an arms amnesty was granted to bandits who repented, and then traditional, community and Fulani leaders (Ardos) and other stakeholders met to negotiate peace and stop conflict. These efforts have been inadequate, however. Hajia Mariam Aminu (Interview, 2023) said “There are some engagements by the institutions with conflict actors but they are inadequate.” He added that from that perspective of engagement, more needed to be done and that recommendations for engagements had been initiated by international donors and other organisations that provided support, rather than the state government, which needed to do more in terms of bringing conflict parties together and encouraging collaboration.

At the community level, there are variations in the approach towards engagement between those involved in conflict. Some communities have decided to enter into agreements with the bandits but others have not. An interviewee said:

Magama community has never thought of sitting with the terrorists because it is not possible to enter into negotiation with them. The terrorists always broke the promises between them and other people. They levied the community to pay certain amount of money as ransom but we rejected their request and we believe our decision is in our best interest. This is because payment of protection levies to terrorists will be a reoccurring act, once they are in need. We do not want them to come to our place and we will never for once go to their place.¹⁴⁰

Thus, community members cannot require the bandits to agree to peace. Peace agreements go beyond compensation negotiations and involve identifying those affected, documenting agreements, and assigning roles and obligations to all

parties. A mere verbal agreement made with someone of little relevance will only lead to unsustainable peace.

In neighbourhood and commercial conflicts, the engagements of established peacebuilding institutions with conflict actors have been effective in communities across Katsina, and the role of the Multi-Door Courthouse in resolving conflicts has been commended.

Hisbah is one of the formal conflict resolution institutions. Government is not responsible for its funding but it is registered with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). In other north-western states, such as Kano, Hisbah was established by legislation. Its activities are guided by the Quran and Hadiths, and it intervenes in conflicts that involves SGBV, drug abuse, theft, adultery and fornication. The organisation's legitimacy stems from the charisma of its members and its CAC-registered Islamic entity. Its engagement with conflict actors includes a recent case involving SGBV and a youth known for burgling shops in Jibia (see Box 2). Hisbah Commander Mallam Mohammed Mahdi Rabo told us that the youth had been apprehended by Hisbah and asked to explain what led to his criminality. The boy said the burglaries were a means of survival and that his parents were not ready to support him in acquiring the skills needed to be a functional member of society. Hisbah then enrolled him as a carpentry apprentice as a form of rehabilitation. He is now a member of Hisbah and a carpenter.¹⁴¹

5.4.3 Conflict drivers and actors

There are many drivers of violent armed banditry in Katsina as in other states. These include poverty, ethnic profiling, climate change, injustice, impunity, collapse of the rural economy, drug abuse, the proliferation of small arms, porous borders and youth restiveness.¹⁴² Each of these is associated with specific groups, such as youths, bandits, farmers, herders and vigilantes. Conflicts often have an

ethnic dimension, with the most bandits and kidnappers thought to be Fulani herders, while local vigilantes are mostly Hausa farmers, who are responsible for curbing the Fulani herder threat.¹⁴³ In this way, historical grievances and animosity between the two groups intensifies violent conflict and most of our respondents saw armed banditry as a continuation of age-old farmer-herder conflicts. The astonishing difference between the old and new conflicts is the level, intensity and sophistication of the violence. Also, the armed bandits and kidnappers, in spite of their ethnic affiliation (mostly Fulani) have no ethnic boundaries, in terms of targets and victims. Both Fulani and Hausa people are victims of cattle rustling, kidnapping, rape and pillage by the Fulani-dominated armed bandits.

5.5 Resolving Neighbourhood Conflicts

Peacebuilding institutions responsible for conflict resolution locally are the ward head's office, the CRC at village level, the district heads' committee and the Multi-Door Courthouse. According to interviewee Alhaji Usman Nagogo, criminal cases are reported to the police or sent to the court for adjudication, but commercial disputes and neighbourhood and domestic conflicts are reported to the ward head or district heads, depending on whether parties involved agree to mediation.¹⁴⁴ Figure 2 illustrates the tracing of conflict-resolution strategies adopted in Jibia.

Conflict transformation and peacebuilding in Katsina began with the CRC at the ward head's office, managed by the Mai-Anguwa and other community members including the Imam, youth and other respected people. When the Mai-Anguwa receives a report he calls on his committee to mediate. If mediation fails, the case is passed to the CRC at village level, which is headed by the Hakimi. Alhaji Usman Usman Nagogo said:

Then we have the courts at our level, we have the District Head office, the village head office and then the ward head office. We use all these offices. The ward heads are at the lower end. So, when there is anything, they can sort out themselves. If they can't solve it, they move it to the village head office. The village head will advise the actors in the dispute and try to resolve the conflict. If he cannot, he passes it to the district office where we will do our best. In an event where the District Head could not resolve the conflicts, same will be forwarded to the emirate council that has the final authority.¹⁴⁵

The village head advises conflict parties of the Penal Code. If the case remains unresolved it is transferred to the District Head Committee, which comprises the District Head, Imam and other chiefs, the women's leader, youth leaders and district elites. This committee is Katsina's second-tier peacebuilding institution. Above it is the Multi-Door Courthouse, to which unsolved cases are referred. A commercial conflict will be handled by CDSC; neighbourhood

Table 11: Process Tracing of Domestic, Neighbourhood and Commercial Conflicts

	Cause	Action	Action	Action	Action	Outcome
Causal Mechanism	Peace building institutions	War Head Office	Conflict Resolution Committee (Village Heads Committee)	The District Heads Committee	Multi-Door Court-house (CCDRC)	Reduction in court cases, Access to informal inexpensive speedy resolution of conflict
Theory	Agent	Mai Aniguwa	Hakimai	District Head	Director and skill Mediators	

Source: Data from the field

and domestic conflicts are addressed by COPM. Both these bodies are overseen by the Multi-Door Courthouse. Their members are skilled mediators. Agreements reached at Multi-Door Courthouse level are signed by disputing parties, the Director and other mediators, and a copy is presented to the state Attorney General for approval. This is called consent judgment, and once it is achieved none of the conflict parties has the right of appeal. To appeal, parties must return to the Area Court, where appeal can still be denied.

5.6 Resolving Armed Banditry

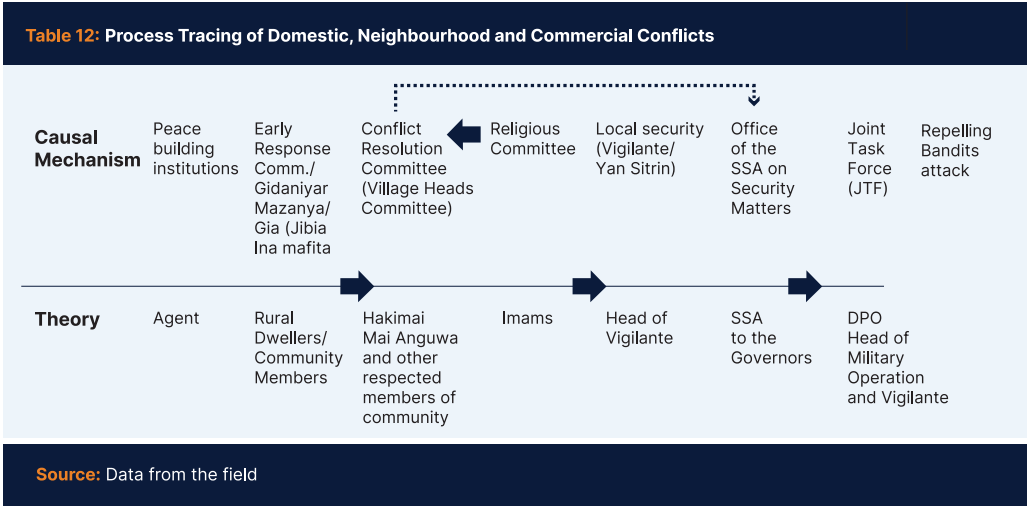
Armed banditry is tackled in Katsina through the gathering and sharing of intelligence from early warning and early response mechanisms. Membership of the various committees is based on appointment by the Mai-Anguwa and other key members of his cabinet. Committee members are responsible for intelligence gathering and pass on security information to the Mai-Anguwa and Hakimai, which together constitute the CRC at community and district levels. Information is considered by the CRC then forwarded to the Office of the SSA for further action. The Command Centre, which is overseen by the Office of SSA, is responsible for tracking information on conflict participants.

The Religious Committee lies between the Office of the SSA and the CRC and

comprises Imams and other Islamic clerics. It advises the CRC on spiritual matters and provides spiritual support to vigilantes. The office of the SSA uses intelligence from the CRC to track bandits and direct vigilantes. Government security officials plan action and mobilise their members to repel attacks. In some instances they have laid an ambush for bandits. This process of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is presented in Figure 3.

5.7 Reduction in Violence (Key Outcome)

Formal and informal peacebuilding institutions have made several attempts to resolve conflict in different Katsina communities. Whether there are now fewer incidences of armed banditry is unclear, however. About 40% of interviewees said there had been no reduction in conflict and that bandit attacks were incessant. Ambassador Gidado S. Farfaru said that all the villages around Magama in Jibia LGA had been deserted due to the activities of bandits, and that about 10,000 people had been forced to leave his home village of Farfaru, which was controlled by the bandits.¹⁴⁶ However, 60% of interviewees believed that armed banditry had reduced. Statistics and reports support this claim: of the 808 deaths recorded between 2019 and 2022, 102 (12.62%) took place in 2019 and 429 (53.09%) in 2020, but in 2021 and 2022 the number fatalities fell



to 149 (18.44%) in 2021 and 128 (15.84%) in 2022 (Nigeria Watch, 2023). Other sources have reported less violent conflict (Sahara Reporter, 2022, with one claiming a reduction of up to 80% (AIT, 2022).

Different factors have been credited for this reduction. Muhammed Abdulkadir said incidents of banditry had dropped since the establishment of the Katsina State Joint Operation and Communication Centre in the Office of the SSA.¹⁴⁷ Previously there had been a bandit attack or distress call almost every 24 hours. Another interviewee, Mal Suraju Maida, said better security may have helped.

5.8 Resumption of Hostilities

Despite several attempts to achieve sustainable peace there have been recurrences of hostilities in different communities across Katsina State. Hajia Mariam Aminu, the women's leader from Magama community during our interview period, said relations had not improved between community members and the bandits.

Ambassador Gidado S. Farfaru, Chairman of the NGO Ambassador for Peace, described the relationship between community leaders and the bandits as "very sour". According to him, suspicion from both sides had undermined interaction. He said:

The reason why the relationship is very sour is because being you a traditional ruler, if the government discover or identify that you have a direct association or link with the bandits, you are in trouble. Also, on the other hand, if the bandits discover or identify that that you are in direct link with the government, you are in trouble. For him, it is something that everybody must be careful about.¹⁴⁸

Mallam Suraj Maida, a member of Local Government Security Committee, agreed that there was no trust between the Committee and the bandits. Similarly, an interviewee said there was evidence of hostilities resuming because bandits

had entered the Magama and attacked houses. These attacks had become daily, headed.¹⁴⁹

5.9 Relationship Between Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions

Katsina State is one of the few frontline states with multiple formal and informal peacebuilding institutions working towards the same goal. After violence escalated in recent years, traditional peacebuilding institutions were activated and modern, structured institutions established. In some instances, they were integrated into the old/informal system.

There are many informal institutions in Jibia, including Jibia Ina Mafita, Gidauniyar Mazanya and Mazanya Youth Development. They do not operate in isolation, and within them are committees and sub-committees that deal with specific issues based on the expertise of their members. 'Gidauniyar Mazanya' means 'pot of Mazanya' but contextually Mazanya stands for peace and development initiatives, and within it are committees that address farmer-herder disputes, land disputes, armed banditry, marriage and other civil reconciliation, and violence against women. Age, gender and expertise determine involvement or appointment to one of these committees.¹⁵⁰ Each committee has a leader, but the head of Mazanya/Jibia Ina Mafita is the supreme head and receives briefings from the leaders of the main and sub-committees.¹⁵¹ There is direct and indirect communication within the organisation. Direct communication takes place in the event of an attack or an incident that requires a rapid response. In this case, any member of the committee can instantly report the problem to relevant formal security agencies (police, Army, civil defence, and vigilante groups). Indirect communication follows a particular pattern, in which the leader of the relevant committee responding to an issue will pass

the message to the District Head, who will pass on the information to the Emir responsible for the relevant peacebuilding institutions at state level.¹⁵²

With respect to armed banditry, all the peacebuilding and security agencies, irrespective of their classification (formal or informal) share intelligence and operational strategies for early warning and early response. The Office of the SSA is the engine room and main coordinating organ of the formal and informal institutions. All security measures emanate from the Command Centre. According to Elkhasim Mukhtar, field monitors have been trained on early warning and early response mechanisms and deployed to the state's 34 LGAs, where they collate information about security threats.¹⁵³ The Office of the SSA is the central security decision-making body in the state, and organises and coordinates monthly security meetings with formal and informal security institutions. The Victim Support Committee, under the leadership of the Deputy Governor, forges relationships between the formal and informal institutions. Victims of insecurity in the state, irrespective of their ethnic and religious backgrounds, are also supported.¹⁵⁴ The Gidauniyar Mazanya and Jibya Ina Mafita work closely with the Victim Support Committee to generate data and support victims.¹⁵⁵

Alhaji Muhammadu Juma'a, the Hakimi Magama, said that at local government level the formal and informal institutions worked in synergy.¹⁵⁶ Most patrolling, identification of potential hotspots, risk factor and threat assessments were done collectively. Joint patrols comprised members of the Gidauniyar Mazanya, Mazanya Youth Development Association, vigilante groups, Yan-Sakai, soldiers, police and the NSCDC. Committee members had a common social media platform to enable

easy communication and interaction. In Jibia, unlike other communities, members of informal institutions were trained by formal institutions in both kinetic and non-kinetic measures, which has cemented relationships between and among different peacebuilding institution.

The operation of the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) is an outstanding example. This committee is one of the strongest in the LGA. An FGD participant in Magama said the PCRC had fostered understanding and stronger ties between the community and police, and that through it, the police were able to profile criminals, their locations and family backgrounds.

Weekly and monthly security meetings also take place at community level in Jibia LGA, to which village and district heads, leaders of informal peacebuilding institutions, traders and ethnic associations are invited. Security decisions are often taken. The local government Chairman often heads the meetings with the support of district heads and other security agencies.¹⁵⁷ Challenges facing these organisations' peacebuilding efforts are lack of funds for some of activities and capacity building of members in terms of handling security matters and engaging with conflict participants.

5.10 Key Outcomes

The data collected during interviews and FGDs suggest the following key outcomes from peacebuilding efforts in Katsina State. The conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts of the Multi-Door Courthouse, established in 2012, have reduced the number of cases reaching court.

Box 3: Case Story from the Intervention of Multi-Door Courthouse

One day, there was a dispute between two neighbours in Malumfashi town. One of the parties in dispute is a Christian, while the other is a Muslim. The Christian neighbour was born and brought up in Malumfashi, although his parents are not indigene of Malumfashi. The Christian wanted to extend fence of his building and his neighbour (a Muslim) with the support of other members living within the neighbourhood objected to the extension of the fence. They argued that the extension of the fence will block the route used by his Muslim neighbour. However, the Christian neighbour claimed that he has the right to the land, and therefore his neighbour has no legal right to stop him from using the remaining part of his plot of land. This resulted to land dispute, all the Muslims living in the area gathered at the construction site to ensure that construction of the fence is stopped. The owner of the land in dispute who is a Christian equally invites his church members for support, the situation was about to turn to religious crisis in the community. Envisaging the implication of the conflict on peacebuilding, Mal. Arewa who is the leader of the CRC at the Village level reported the case to the Multi-Door Courthouse in Malumfashi for mediation. The institution immediately invited the Youth leaders, Mal Anguwa and the District Head who is the head of District Heads Committee. The joint efforts of all the invited stakeholders resolved the conflicts and further entrenched cordial relationship among the two neighbours and other members of the community. Thanks for the prompt intervention of the Multi-Door Courthouse, the conflict could have degenerated into religious crisis in the whole country. The reason behind my conclusion is that the Christian party in dispute reported the case to his brother who is a Military Officer in Jaji, Zaria and the brother directed him to him to gather military report. He was also about to report to Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), but for our intervention. He was prevented from doing so. Malumfashi, being a volatile town when it comes to religious issues, the neighbourhood conflict at village level could put the whole country on fire! Hajia ----- Assistant Director, Multi-Door Courthouse, Katsina State.

In our interview, Hajia Basira Umar, Director of the Multi-Door Courthouse said that several commercial and land disputes had been settled through mediation at no cost to the parties involved. This was in addition to the 400 million-plus naira recovered. A key outcome of this organisation's work has been the peaceful resolution of a neighbourhood conflict that could have escalated into a nationwide religious crisis (See Box 1).

The intervention of Hisbah (an informal peacebuilding institution) in SGBV cases has also produced a key outcome, as told by Mallam Muhammed Mahdi Rabo, Hisbah Commander. It resulted in the marriage of a man involved in SGBV to his victim. See Box 2 for the account.

In relation to armed banditry, peacebuilding measures in the LGA have yielded positive results and there has been a gradual return to normalcy, peace and harmony in affected

communities. Some interviewees have attributed this to the activities of informal peacebuilding institutions. The daily and weekly prayer sessions usually organised to seek God's intervention are also often credited for the gradual return of peace. During interviews, Alhaji Sabiu (a religious leader) and Muhammed Juma'a (Hakimi Magama) said the weekly recitation of the Holy Quran and the giving of alms to the needy, which was initiated by the PCRC, accounted for over 50% of the reduction in violence.

Most importantly, some members of bandit gangs have been killed, including a leader, Ibrahim Dangawo, who had led attacks on communities for more than five years (FGD Daddara). Others have repented, such as Isah Black, and many have moved to the neighbouring state of Zamfara thanks to the efforts of Jibia Ina Mafita and Gidauniyar Mazanya.

Box 4: Key Outcome from Hisba Intervention

There was a day, Hisba member found a woman in a cave at the outskirt of the town in Jibia Local Government (Jibia). The woman has since been suspected by neighbours and other members of the jibia community to be a lunatic. Some members of Hisba decided to engage the woman and interacted with her. To our utmost surprise, our interaction with the woman revealed that the human is in her senses but living in abject poverty. From our interaction, we were made to understand that she has been sexually abused on many occasions by a man who is capitalising on her poverty situation. Through this sexual harassment, the woman gave birth to two sets of twins. The man who is responsible for the abuse abandoned her in a miserable condition and she decided to leave her environment and decided to be living in a cave at the outskirt of the town. This revelation attracted serious attention of the Hisba and investigation was carried out to ascertain the authenticity of the victim narration. At the end, the perpetrator of sexual abuse was compelled to marry the woman. The man agreed to marry her and takes care of both the children and the mother. Hisba Association with support from other well-meaning members of the community contributed money and bought beddings and kitchen utensils for the woman. The couple are now living together with their children as a family.

Rabe Hassan, Chairman of Kagaye Youth Development Association told us that there had been seven unsuccessful attempts by bandits to enter Magama town in 2022, who had been either repelled or neutralised by the security forces.

Night patrols have been reduced significantly due to the reduction in violence. In the past, youth and community leaders mostly slept during the day and engaged in community policing at night. An FGD participant in Magama said that in 2021, on average, about 200 people patrolled Magama town every night, but now very few people did so. In addition, improved inclusivity in the membership of peacebuilding institutions had fostered integration and better inter-ethnic relations. Those in the Jibia FGD had said that Fulani people were previously barred from membership of vigilante groups and the PCRC, and from attending meetings. But once their critical role in peacebuilding was recognised, some were entrusted with leadership positions in both Jibia and Magama. This has contributed significantly to restoring the unity, trust and good relations between the Fulani and Hausa.

The Victim Support Committee was

mandated by the government to involve and engage with the Fulani in all their activities and to consider them in social security initiatives aimed at improving the wellbeing of victims. This has produced a very good result and won the support and buy-in of some rural Fulani communities (FGD Daddara). Through this initiative, the state government has succeeded in accepting and de-radicalising some bandits in Jibia and Batsari LGAs. An interviewee told us that Fulani members of the Gidauniyar Mazanya had provided intelligence on plans by bandits to attack. Most interviewees said there were fewer bandit attacks due to the presence of and synergy between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions (FGD Magama).

5.11 Conclusion

Katsina State has suffered a decade of violent conflicts of varied magnitudes, with distinct causes and involving different people. These include farmer–herder disputes, cattle theft and rustling, and armed banditry. The killing of innocent people by bandits, kidnapping for ransom, the imposition and forceful collection of levies, rape and other SGBV have created

widespread insecurity in the state, leaving inter-ethnic relations and trust at their lowest ebb. Many people have had to flee across the border to Niger. Peaceful coexistence in Katsina is being threatened by neighbourhood and domestic conflicts, commercial disputes and SGBV. To address these problems several conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts have been initiated, involving the establishment of formal and informal peacebuilding institutions. The aim is to resolve conflicts locally.

The synergy between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions and the composition of their members has led to a reduction in the rate and scale of violent conflict, community distrust and ethnic profiling. Jibia community, particularly, has successfully addressed some of the drivers of conflicts related to injustice through the establishment of the Multi-Door Courthouse, which gives people free access to justice. However, the engagement of these peacebuilding institutions with the armed bandits has not led to sustainable peace and there is a high probability that their violence will resume because of suspicion and distrust between those involved.

Policy Levers for Peace: Peace-making and Peacebuilding Institutions in Osun State, South-West Nigeria

6.1 Background

The establishment of peacebuilding institutions is a reaction to the existence of drivers of conflicts and outbreak of conflicts. In Osun State, and much of the South West region of Nigeria, more often, conflicts are derivatives of overlapping concerns including those over land resources and chieftaincy titles. Peacebuilding addresses the situation before, during and after conflicts, the immediate, short-term and long-term effects on conflict areas, and the causes of conflict. By pinpointing causes and developing forms of resolution, peacebuilding aims to increase human security. Theoretically, the goal of peacebuilding is to design and implement a multi-level approach to restorative justice, humanitarian relief, and development in communities devastated by crises. Associated public policies and programmes are aimed at enhancing peace, and the context of a conflict is central to identifying and understanding peacebuilding institutions.

In Yorubaland peacebuilding institutions are as old as human civilisation. In the precolonial era chiefdoms and kingdoms had traditional mechanisms managing and reducing conflict violence: a primary responsibility of chiefdoms and kingdoms was to ensure peaceful and harmonious relationships among their people. They aimed to foster unity and progress and provide a defence against internal and external invasion.

Colonial rule in Nigeria did not bring an end to the traditional responsibilities of these authorities. Instead it used existing structures for adjudication through native courts. The introduction of regionalism by the 1946 Richards Constitution strengthened traditional institutions at

regional and local levels, enabling these bodies to develop modern governmental responsibilities until political independence in 1960. Democratic governance was restored in 1999 and since then many violent conflicts have broken out. Formal and informal peacebuilding institutions are crucial to comprehending, managing and resolving violent conflicts in Nigeria but there is little empirical and policy-relevant research examining their actions and effects.¹⁵⁸ The impacts of formal and informal peacebuilders at local and state levels in Osun State, south-west Nigeria are the subject of this study.

6.2 Peacebuilding Institutions and Interventions in Conflict Situations

Interviews and FGDs were conducted in selected communities in Osun State. This section discusses concerns about the legitimacy of peacebuilding institutions, their engagement with conflict participants and their attempts to address conflict drivers. It assesses how conflicts have been resolved locally and examines the relationship between formal and informal peacebuilding organisations in the state.

6.3 Legitimacy of Peacebuilding Institutions

Legitimacy is commonly regarded as the judgement by an individual of the rightfulness of an institution; the support such an institution receives dictates its level of acceptability. Peacebuilding institutions are now central to everyday life in south-western Nigeria. At state level, the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs was established many years ago and works closely with local governments. At local government level, several committees,

including the Community Development Committee (CDC), the Community Development Association and the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), address conflict.¹⁵⁹ Each committee has a Chairman and meets quarterly to discuss concerns and prevent them escalating. The committees collaborate with external agencies such as the police, civil defence, Amotekun, the Peace Corps and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) to maintain peace.¹⁶⁰ Although they are creations of the state, they have an advantage over the formal judicial structure and are widely accepted by the people because their utmost concern is conflict management and peacebuilding. The Ministry uses several communication channels including oral sensitisation, radio, television and social media to achieve its goals. This has helped resolve conflicts.¹⁶¹ Awareness of the consequences of conflict also helps prevent outbreaks. The Ministry's legitimacy may stem not from its status as a state body but from how it operates as a peacemaker. The Chairman of the Landlords' Association, Oke-Esimirin, said:

It would be difficult for the activities of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs to be acceptable without the involvement of other institutions. The collaboration between all the stakeholders ranging from the police, NSCDC, police community relations, local council and various leaders at the community level give credence to the legitimacy of all the institutions.

This collaboration led to the formation of the PCRC, through which all stakeholders, formal and informal, meet to discuss concerns that threaten peace.¹⁶²

Informal peacebuilding institutions exist at local level in many forms. They have become institutionalised because they have been instrumental in peacebuilding and sustaining relationships between conflict parties for a long time. In the Ile-Ife community in Osun State, longstanding informal institutions include, from the lowest

level, the Emese, which tackles minor domestic crises, the Ogungbe court, which rarely engages in direct judgement, and the Igbimo-agba, which sits in the palace of the Oba – traditional ruler – and which is the highest peacebuilding institution locally. It comprises 16 top traditional chiefs,¹⁶³ who work closely with Oonirisa in providing and maintaining peace. The Igbimo-agba also operates through committees on some issues, such as land disputes, for which a delegation visits the disputed land and reports back. These informal institutions in Ile-Ife have existed for centuries and have become acceptable because of the urgency with which they act, unlike the formal court system, which prolongs cases: in recent years, some disputing parties have asked the traditional institutions to intervene in matters involving the police and even the courts. In this instance, a committee that includes members of the Igbimo-agba and representatives of conflicting parties, preferably respected elders from the families of those parties, meets police officers in charge of a case and proposes informal means of handling it. The Igbimo-agba is well respected because it is known for peacebuilding. Previously, the only cases it has been barred from dealing with are murder related.¹⁶⁴ A replica of local peacebuilding institutions in Ile-Ife exists in other parts of the state. In Odo-Ijesha, the Oba-in-Council consists of the Kabiyesi and all town chiefs. Disputes are handled in a meeting chaired by the Kabiyesi or the highest-ranking chief.¹⁶⁵ Prominent cases brought before the Oba-in-Council include land disputes, quarrels involving associations or groups, and chieftaincy clashes. They are resolved quickly to avoid a breakdown of law and order.¹⁶⁶ Other local peacebuilding institutions are the Landlords' Association, which tackles landlord-related conflicts, the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), and the Market Women's Association.¹⁶⁷ All of these informal institutions are recognised as legitimate in Osun State, and, usually, it is only when they cannot resolve disputes that higher

authorities get involved.¹⁶⁸ When violence has broken out only state bodies are legitimate responders.¹⁶⁹

6.4 Engagement with Conflict Actors

The Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs has intervened in numerous disputes, the most serious of which are land setback and chieftaincy clashes, both of which threaten peace. The Ministry engages with those in conflict mostly through non-violent intervention such as mediation, and liaised with parties in a chieftaincy dispute in Odo-Ijesha through a committee. Commenting on this, a committee member said that “The Ministry also called the royal family into peace meetings as regards the Odo-Ijesha chieftaincy dispute, where there is a fraction of imposing an outsider against the acclaimed choice of the family.”¹⁷⁰ The committee failed to resolve the dispute, however. The Ministry has also worked with the media when community sensitivity is needed in relation to conflicts. This encourages conflict prevention and improves stability and law-keeping. Other peacebuilding institutions operate locally too. Before the current chieftaincy dispute in Odo-Ijesha, several people were vying for the chieftaincy title. The Committee of Chiefs engaged with disputing families through their elders and, after a winner emerged, the families agreed to sign a peace accord.¹⁷¹

The chieftaincy remains unresolved, though. High Chief Omotosho Abiodun, of the Committee of Chiefs said, “We mediated and tried to resolve the dispute. Even the concerned elders in the royal family intervened, but little or no success was recorded.” Chief Adekunle Adeyeni revealed that “The council also engaged in a series of meetings with the conflicting members of the royal family, but no success was recorded. When it seemed that the tussle was beyond the control of the committee and an end was not in sight, the Owa Obokun of Ijesha, who doubled

as the paramount ruler of Ijashaland, also set up an arbitration committee to settle the dispute. The disputants pulled out of the arbitration committee and the matter is now in court.”

For land setback disagreements, a committee of elected executives works with the Chairman of the Oke-Esinmirin Landlords’ Association. The most common land-settlement dispute in the community involves landlords and the omo-onile, the Yoruba word for landowners. In one case the purchaser of land was charged both legal and illegal fees, which included foundation, lintel/level, roofing, electricity and drainage levies. The land remained prone to encroachment by the omo-onile, however. The Landlords’ Association is able to resolve most disputes amicably. The Chairman of the Association said, “I moved to this community as a tenant in 1988 and moved into my apartment in 2006. In all my years in this community, no member of the community has ever involved the police or court in any of the disagreements in our community.”

It is important to note that the Oke-Esinmirin Landlords’ Association handles more than land setback disagreements and also deals with family disputes and quarrels over inheritance and the use of shared amenities such as electricity and water.¹⁷² In most cases, conflict parties are called to a meeting, and where a party belongs to a minority ethnic group, the leader of that group is invited to help resolve concerns. The Eze Ndigbo, the leader of the Igbo community, of Ile-Ife community said that most conflict participants are youths. When a conflict involves members of the igbo ethnic group, community leaders engage him and his cabinet members in the peacebuilding process.¹⁷³

Other peacebuilding institutions involved in peacebuilding are religious leaders, market women and informal security networks such as the OPC, the VGN and the Nigeria Hunters and Forest Security Service (NHFSS). The Chairman of the Pentecostal

Church of Nigeria, Osun State chapter said:

Religion also plays a great role in peacebuilding. Apart from the fact that the tenet of religion forbids conflict, in the situation where dispute arises, conflicting parties are called to round table meetings and the bone of contention is addressed by giving conflicting actors room to express their minds.

Informal peacebuilding institutions have been hugely successful in peacebuilding in the area but their activities are usually limited during violent conflicts because engagement with disputing parties involves the use of force. In these cases, the peacebuilding institutions are mostly not recognised by conflict actors and the OPC, VGN and NHFSS are usually called in. Usually, these groups work with the police and other law enforcement agencies to address conflict.

6.5 Addressing Conflict Drivers and Actors

In the past, people not favoured by the committee set up to install chiefs have been later honoured with another chieftaincy title for allowing peace to reign.¹⁷⁴ This is considered a better method of managing a dispute – all parties resolve the matter together and there is no victor and no vanquished. This remedy was proposed in the chieftaincy dispute that was later transferred to the court, but one of the parties did not agree and withdraw from the committee leaving the case to go to court.¹⁷⁵

When a land setback disagreement arises between two landlords it is usually resolved in a way that leaves none of the disputants feeling cheated. Most such conflicts involve an omo-onile, however. When the matter was unbearable, their leader, a young man popularly known as 'Machine' was invited to our meeting where the matter was discussed. All the elderly people peacefully engaged him. After very long deliberation, he agreed with the position of the elderly

people and promised not to terrorise the community again. Some of the people working with him have become okada riders in the community.¹⁷⁶¹⁸ The matter has been resolved and no related cases have been reported since then. However, for Ile-Nla in Ile-Ife, the ultimate goal is to reconcile the conflicting actors and restore peace. To achieve this aim, the traditional institution emphasises the use of traditional gods such as Ogun, to avoid insincerity in the peacebuilding process. It has helped to prevent protracted conflict between those involved. When the dispute is addressed, alcoholic drinks and kolanuts may be demanded of the conflicting parties. The kolanuts are broken and passed around among the mediators and the parties. The alcoholic drink is also passed around. This process is symbolic and represents a way of celebrating the peaceful resolution of a conflict.¹⁷⁷

6.5.1 How was the conflict resolved?

To address the chieftaincy dispute, all stakeholders, such as the police, the council, traditional rulers, community leaders and religious leaders met. An investigation was carried out but the matter was not resolved and it was transferred to a higher committee established by the Owa of Obokun. The dispute continued, however and it now goes to court, although associated clashes in the community caused by the disagreement have been resolved and normalcy has returned. The latter was achieved through the intervention of the PCRC, the media, chiefs, elders and various community institutions.

The Chairman of the Oke-Esinmirin Landlords' Association said that peace and security in the community could be achieved through proactive measures such as mediation involving all stakeholders. This was true of the case involving the omo-onile and landlords in Oke-Esinmirin. The omo-onile group had been called to several meetings, where they met community elders who told the group of atrocities being committed on their behalf.

They stressed that landlords should pay all legal fees due. Thus, the dispute was resolved through mediation.

In Oke-Esinmirin the Chairman of the Landlords' Association also reported cases involving churches accused by community members of noise pollution, especially during their vigil. The Association met church leaders, who agreed to stop using public address systems at night. Disputes between farmers and herders have also been resolved through negotiation initiated by the Association.¹⁷⁸ However, in the Erefe community of Ile-Ife, farmers-herder disputes developed beyond the jurisdiction of the Landlords' Association and it took the intervention of the Oba of Erefe, other chiefs, the Ooni of Ile-Ife and the police to reach settlement.¹⁷⁹ The Chairman of the Township Association said both formal and informal institutions had acted as mediators. Cases involving religious or community security matters or farmers and herders are among those that bring formal and informal institutions together, when disputes are mostly resolved through dialogue and negotiation.

6.6 Relationship Between Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions in the State

The role of the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs is to create an environment in which the traditions and customs of the community are adhered to, and to encourage communities to embrace peace in all their activities.¹⁸⁰ To achieve this, the Ministry works with many organisations, governmental and non-governmental. Because local institutions are central to providing intelligence, this ministry collaborates with key community stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, chiefs, chairmen of landlords' associations, the OPC and the VGN.¹⁸¹ Jingles, aired on radio stations across the state, are made by traditional rulers to sensitise people to conflict concerns. This is how people

in Ijeshaland were told of a chieftaincy dispute and the measures being taken to resolve it. A committee comprising high chiefs, youth leaders and representatives of the law enforcement agency and of market women was set up to address the chieftaincy dispute, and when the matter was transferred to court and the dispute escalated in the community, they worked with informal stakeholders to restore peace.¹⁸²

Aside from instances of when special committees are formed to tackle specific cases, peacebuilding institutions come together through the PCRC and meet every quarter.¹⁸³ The PCRC runs peace meetings and organises publicity and sensitisation.

The cordial relationship between formal and informal institutions has helped anti-violence campaigns and conflict-resolution training run smoothly. Local non-state actors such as religious leaders, traditional leaders, leaders of community development associations and non-state security personnel have benefited from the activities of PCRC, and are now partners with formal and informal peacebuilding bodies.¹⁸⁴ Thus, peacebuilding institutions in the state incorporate individuals from ethnic and religious divides in peacebuilding, which inspires trust from communities.

6.7 Key Outcomes of the Peace Interventions of Formal and Informal Peacebuilding Institutions

The intervention of formal and informal institutions in Osun State has been successful in many ways. Having a joint platform for resolving conflict enables the state government to engage with people, promote peace and resolve conflict at its source.¹⁸⁵ Interventions by the Ministry through traditional rulers, chiefs and local organisations has improved dispute management in Odo-Ijsha,¹⁸⁶ but in Odo-Ijsha the chieftaincy dispute continues

despite the involvement of formal and informal peacebuilding institutions. However, their efforts have eliminated conflict outbreaks linked to the dispute, and without the CRC, the Ministry would have struggled to obtain sufficient intelligence on these conflicts and may have been far less successful.¹⁸⁷ Informal peacebuilders, though willing to address such issues, lack the resources and state backing to bring resolution.¹⁸⁸

Another successfully resolved conflict was that involving cultists who were disturbing the peace of the community. They were taking advantage of local unrest to perpetuate their acts and to wage war among themselves. The Oba-in-Council summoned to the palace all major players in the crisis and persuaded them to swear an oath never to disturb the peace again.¹⁸⁹ The Oba-in-Council worked with government agencies, traditional leaders, chiefs and community elders to achieve peace. It is widely believed that traditional rulers wield great influence in their communities and that their methods of handling conflict are widely accepted. Other conflicts have been dealt with by the PCRC, including disputes

in the marketplace, among families, and in compounds, communities and larger urban areas.¹⁹⁰

6.8 Conclusions

This study reveals that the partnership between formal and informal peacebuilding institutions in Osun State has been highly successful in promoting peace and improving community security. Formal peacebuilding bodies must still build acceptance locally and will be even more successful when they have. Informal institutions are more influential in communities but lack the legal backing and funding for anti-violence campaigns. A joint platform for these institutions helps plug these gaps and sharing its leadership with informal peacebuilders would give the latter a greater sense of belonging, especially since the informal actors have great influence among the local populace. The joint platform is not backed by state legislation and a change in leadership could affect its operation. To avoid this it should be restructured into a Peacebuilding Commission. This would be possible through state legislation.

Transforming Sub-National and Local Peacebuilding Mechanisms in Nigeria: Key Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This study has shown that the levers of peace across states in Nigeria are not necessarily rigid or centrally controlled structures and processes. They are a dynamic, functional and webbed at all levels of society, with strong mechanisms for synergy and collaboration. These levers of peace are important for several reasons:

- (i) They draw attention to the foundational principles and considerations that guides the establishment of the levers of peace as the building blocks of social cohesion; and
- (ii) They emphasise the need to identify the necessary preconditions for peace in terms of the identity and role of actors – persons, groups and institutions.

The study has shown a strong and important elements of building blocks for sustainable peace across Nigeria, drawing lessons from the different elements and levers of peace. The challenges as shown in the study include the lack of inclusion, in term of the marginal role that youths, women and people living with disabilities play, lack of capacity, poor coordination, politicization or capture of these institutions by powerful political forces and inadequate resources to sustain the peace building effort among others. In the light of the foregoing, the following overarching policy recommendations are hereby highlighted:

- (i) **Activate and Strengthen Warning and Early Response Capabilities of States and Communities:** The capabilities of states and communities should be strengthened, with specific focus on their abilities to effectively and proactively respond to early warning signs.
- (ii) **Build Strong Inter-State (Sub-National) Relations in Conflict Prevention and Management:** Closer relations between and among contagious states should be bolstered in ways that enable them to collaboratively identify and respond to common security challenges.
- (iii) **Domesticate Action Plans Youths, Women People living with Disabilities in Governance, Peace and Security related Decision Making:** State governments should urgently domesticate the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda in their states. Similarly, state governments should domesticate the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in their states. This should be followed by developing an action plan to ensure that both the YPS and WPS will be implemented and reflected in all peace and security policies and programmes at the state level. To further strengthen inclusion in peace and security policy making, state governments should design specific policies that seeks to integrate people living with disabilities (PLWD) into peace and security policymaking at the state with a view to addressing their sense of safety in public spaces, as well as meet their specific needs during peacebuilding in conflict affected communities.
- (iv) **Engender security institutions:** The security institutions at the national and state levels are generally masculine, making the security architecture male dominated. They were originally constituted for male only, even when women were admitted, the structural framework, including training, uniform and

culture remained masculine. All the security institutions and structures are male led with limited involvement of women.

- (v) **Design and Implement an Integrated Structure for Peacebuilding at the Local Level:** the strategic roles that traditional and religious institutions play in fostering community cohesion makes them important actors in peace making. Hence, the need for them to play prominent role in peacebuilding. The state and local governments should integrate such roles in the formal peacebuilding structures that are in operations or ensure its inclusion in the design processes.

Furthermore, the analysis and findings in this report leads us to make the following recommendations to stakeholders in Nigeria's peacebuilding landscape:

7.1. Donors and Development Partners

1. Donors and development partners should provide technical and financial support to governmental and non-governmental institutions, towards the development and implementation of action plans on the involvement of youth, women and people living with disabilities in peace and security decision-making processes.
2. Support programmes that are designed to forge and strengthen better coordination between governments and civil society and other non-state actors towards a multi-actor, inclusive and holistic peacebuilding strategy. Such an approach is one that recognises the strategic value that the synchronisation of efforts can add in actualisation of peacebuilding objectives.
3. Support initiative and programmes that engender diversity, equity and inclusion, with specific reference to

women, youths and persons living with disabilities, in line with the relevant global, national and sub-national aspirations towards the realisation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, on Women, Peace and Security; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, on youth, peace and security; as well as United Nations Security Council Resolution 2475, on the protection of persons with disabilities.

4. Increased investments in peacebuilding will contribute substantially to building sustainable infrastructure for peace, through the provision of adequate and sustained peacebuilding related resources. Through the instrumentality of a peacebuilding fund, donors and development partners should support a joint-donor basket fund on peacebuilding for the sustenance of the levers of peace at the sub-national level.

7.2. Federal Government

1. Design and implement a national peace policy that integrates both federal, state and local institutions. The peace policy should adopt a whole of government approach that ensures that all government policies are conflict sensitive, does not contribute to conflict and contributes to peace in the country.
2. Support state and local governments with the infrastructure for the development of effective strategic communications systems that promote peaceful coexistence between and among different communities. This will help counter disinformation and amplify moderate voices of peace and tolerance at the local level, targeting communities that are at-risk.
3. Intensify efforts in supporting the state and local governments in curtailing the spread, access and use of small arms

and light weapons by unauthorized persons, which undermines the operations of the levers of peace. By so doing, the structures of peacebuilding will be preserved and protected.

7.3. State and Local Governments

1. For states that do not have a formal peacebuilding agency, establish or put in place the necessary structures and mechanisms for peace institutions to ensure conflict drivers are detected, prevented or resolved in a proactive manner.
2. To improve the grassroots operations of the levers of peace, existing and localised models of peacebuilding such as the Kabara Council in Adamawa state, as well as the Peace Architecture Dialogue (PAD) that has been active across several states, should be adopted or adapted by the local government councils due to the rich experiences of this model of peacebuilding in fostering community cohesion.
3. Governance institution such as the Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs should increase its collaboration with communities and other informal peacebuilding institutions at the grassroots level, towards ensuring better coordination in the deployment of peacebuilding tools for mediation, dialogue or conciliation.
4. In states where peacebuilding institutions have been established by the state – Kaduna and Plateau, they have made efforts in building bridges of peace, through conflict resolution. State peacebuilding institutions should proactively engage in conflict prevention, through the establishment of structures for conflict prevention as a cost-effective approach to peacebuilding.

7.4. Civil Society and Peace Practitioners

1. Deploy their expertise and experience in supporting state and non-state institutions in the design of systems, structures and mechanisms for early warning and early responses, with focus on dealing with threats to peace and security.
2. The strategic roles that traditional and religious institutions play in fostering community cohesion makes them important actors in peace making. Hence, the need for them to play prominent role in peacebuilding. The actualisation of this goal rests in the deployment of the requisite skills and expertise that will empower these strategic actors with the knowledge to act as agents of peace.
3. Civic and peace education programmes should be designed and implemented in ways that leverages on the existence of social platforms such as schools and religious organisations among others. The involvement of these actors would engender the needed support and buy-in of the people. For instance, a specialized training for the youths on conflict sensitive communication would go a long way in addressing the issue of hate speech, since these categories of persons constitute the vehicle for transforming hate speeches into violence.
4. Design and deliver targeted capacity building programmes on dialogue and negotiation for civic actors at the sub-national levels, in order to adequately prepare them for such responsibilities, as part of a broader early response strategy that promotes peaceful coexistence around natural resource management, inter-group relations, sustainable livelihoods among others.
5. Design and implement programmes that supports mental health and psycho-social issues that address trauma in conflict affected communities, using the skills, capacities and experiences of local social-psychologists and trauma therapists.

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ISBN 978-978-766-972-3



9 789787 669723