



Call for Proposals

Thematic Working Group Leaders



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About CORN West Africa

CORN West Africa is a knowledge platform for researchers based in institutions in West Africa who are working in the field of peace, security, conflict, and political violence. CORN West Africa is a non-profit company limited by guarantee with headquarters in Nigeria. The network has more than 240 members across 40 institutions in West Africa. Members of the network are mobilized and supported to conduct research on peace, security, violent conflicts, and political violence. The network organizes workshops, webinars, and roundtables for researchers to disseminate the outcomes of their research projects. The Network is also committed to building the capacity of emerging researchers to conduct impactful research.

About CORN West Africa Thematic Working Groups

Working groups are the knowledge hub of CORN West Africa. The Working Groups facilitate knowledge production in the areas of conflict, political violence, peace, and security in West Africa. Working Groups are expected to produce research-based knowledge that can be used to inform policy and programmatic interventions in the field of peace, conflict, and security in West Africa. CORN West Africa will work towards publishing the outcome of these working groups as well as integrating these publications into regional and continental debates and policies.

Below are the Research Working Group Themes:

Transnational Organised Crime (TOC)

Transnational organised Crime (TOC) is one of the many security challenges facing the West African region. TOC in the region include smuggling of illicit drugs, crude oil theft, human trafficking and smuggling, kidnapping, armed banditry, money laundering, wildlife trafficking, illegal logging, overfishing and organ trafficking. While TOCs have persisted for decades in the region, policy makers in countries in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and relevant development partners continue to face the challenge of understanding the changing dynamics of TOC. Researchers within CORN West Africa’s thematic working group on TOC will conduct research on different dimensions of TOC in the region. Beyond generating general knowledge of the different dimensions of TOC in West Africa, this thematic working group seeks to focus on policy research agenda to identify opportunities for policy makers to respond to TOC in the region.

Conflict and Political Violence

Countries in West Africa continue to face complex manifestations of political violence such as armed militancy, banditry, terrorism, insurgencies, ethno-religious conflicts, protests and riots, electoral violence, coup d'états, communal conflicts, and gang violence. This thematic working group seeks to deepen analysis of political violence in the sub-region, with specific focus on developing a micro-dynamics approach in the study of political violence in the region. The group will work on the origins, drivers, manifestations, and the impact of political violence on the everyday lives of people in countries within the sub-region. The group will also examine how political violence shapes the competition for power, state and non-state institutions and the local order in countries within the region.

Security Sector Governance in West Africa

There is increasing pressure on institutions at all levels in West Africa to respond to the growing insecurity in the region. This has led to the development of different forms of security sector governance framework at communal, sub-national, national, and regional levels in West Africa. While the regional level is plugged into the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), national, sub-national and community level security governance institutions continue to evolve in response to the dynamic security challenges within their domains. The security sector governance working group will seek to provide granular analysis of how the security sector is governed at different levels of society within West Africa.

Climate Change in West Africa

Climate change is a key dimension of regional security discourse in West Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and national governments recognise environmental changes, environmental conditions, and deteriorations as some of the main drivers of insecurity. Yet, there are competing claims on how climate change drives insecurity in the region. CORN West Africa recognises the need for more evidence and analysis linking climate change to political violence and insecurity in the region. Hence, this working group will collect and analyse evidence on the relationship between climate change, political violence, and insecurity in West Africa.

Gender Based Violence in West Africa

Gender dynamics in West Africa reflects the exclusion of women from economic and political decision making both in the household and the public sphere. Although the region has witnessed significant inclusion of women in the public sphere, women continue to face unique challenges within their households and in the context of violent conflicts. This working group will seek to collect and analyse data on gender-based violence at different levels in countries within West Africa. While significant emphasis is placed on gender-based violence, this thematic working group will also address the expanding discourse on the politics of gender in the region, unpack the intersection of diverse inequality towards men and women and examine the potential for policies at the sub-national, national, and regional levels that prioritizes gender equality.

Youth, Peace, and Security in West Africa

Global discussion on youth, peace, and security (YPS) focuses predominantly on their role as perpetrators of violence, with young people seen as problems that must be addressed. On 9 December 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security. The passing of this resolution replaced unfavourable images of youths as perpetrators of violence with their recognition as peacebuilders. The resolution focuses on the YPS agenda's five action plans: participation, protection, prevention, partnership, and disengagement and reintegration. Since its adoption in 2015, the UNSC and its member states have passed two more resolutions: UNSCR 2419 (2018) and UNSCR 2535 (2020), to advance the YPS agenda and harness the potential of young people for peace. At the regional level, the African Union has also been actively involved in pushing the YPS agenda. The AU continental framework, like the UNSCR on YPS, aims to support the execution of five (5) main priority areas: participation, prevention, protection, partnerships and coordination, and disengagement and reintegration. The shift from youth involved in conflicts as perpetrators of violence to youth involved in peacebuilding conflict context has attracted both research and policy attention. Yet, this attention has focused extensively on formal institutions at both state and non-state. Majority of youth are not linked to any formal or informal organisation involved in peacebuilding, yet their everyday actions can either contribute to or hinder peace. This research working group therefore seeks to conduct research and analyse the everyday conduct of youth and how this contributes to the YPS Agenda in West Africa.

Women, Peace, and Security in West Africa

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council dedicated a full session to address the experiences of women and girls in armed conflicts and post conflict situations. This meeting resulted in the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, which recognises the disproportionately damaging effects of conflict on women and girls, as well as the need for gender equality in peace processes. It also recognizes the role of women as active agents of peace. The WPS Agenda is anchored on four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. This working group will conduct research on the extent to which the four pillars of the WPS Agenda have been implemented in peacebuilding efforts in different conflict contexts across West Africa.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Management

The prevalence of conflict, insecurity and violence in West Africa drives the need for peace and conflict management instruments and mechanisms. There has been extensive research on peacebuilding processes in West Africa. The persistence of violence and insecurity sustains the relevance of peacebuilding in the region. Hence, despite the significant body of research on peacebuilding, there remains a need to explain the outcomes of peacebuilding in the region. This thematic working group will seek to explain how state peacebuilding institutions work, the nature of everyday peacebuilding in the region and identify and explain the unintended consequences and outcomes of peacebuilding initiatives in the region.

Gangs and Non-State Armed Groups

There is an increasing proliferation of gangs and non-state armed groups in West Africa. While non-state armed groups are associated with militancy, terrorism and secessionist movements in the region, youth gangs, also known as cult groups in some contexts, prominent in urban areas and cities have also become increasingly politically relevant as the nature of their mobilisation and use of violence often determines political outcomes such as elections. Youth gangs are also known to seek to be integrated into community and cities' governance structures. This thematic working group focuses on mapping and analysing youth gangs and non-state armed groups in West Africa. Specifically, research and analysis from the working group will seek to explain how youth gangs and non-state armed groups shape governance and socio-political processes in communities where they exist.

How to Apply

- I This call is open to all researchers based in institutions in West Africa who are working in the field of peace, conflict and security. Applicants who are not already a member of CORN West Africa are encouraged to submit a membership application alongside their application to become Working Group Leaders.
- II Applicants should have a PhD in any social sciences discipline, humanities or law.
- III Applicants should have demonstrated experience leading research teams and must have at least 2 publications in peer reviewed journals.
- IV Applicants should submit a proposal of not more than 5 pages. Proposals should include a narrative explaining the state of the literature in the thematic area of interest, the contributions the working group aims to make, the research methods and a yearly work plan.
- VI Applicants should submit a detailed Curriculum Vitae, including all research projects, publications and policy engagements.
- VII All documents should be submitted as one PDF document to ebimboere.seiyefa@cornwestafrica.org and admin@cornwestafrica.org. Submissions can be made in English or French. **Deadline for proposal submission is July 20th 2023.**

CORN West Africa will provide working group leaders with administrative support and honorarium to cover the cost of convening the working group.

For more information, contact Dr. Ebimboere Seiyefa, Head of Research, Conflict Research Network West Africa: ebimboere.seiyefa@cornwestafrica.org