

*NIGERIA RECONCILIATION AND STABILITY PROJECT*

*BACKGROUND STUDIES FOR PROGRAMME PREPARATION*

**MAPPING CONFLICT PREVENTION ACTORS AND INITIATIVES IN SELECTED STATES**

**REPORT NO. 4: KANO STATE**

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**Summary of conclusions**

Violent conflict is endemic to Kano. Most conflicts in the state are framed in the terms of the political and cultural tensions between the North and South of the country, and frequently in a religious idiom pitting Muslims against Christians, although rarely is religion the direct cause of violent conflict. Economic recession and a growing population, especially the increasing number of young unemployed, has added to state's propensity for violence, especially since the 1980s.

Many state and non-state actors have a role in conflict management. Traditional modes of conflict management by community and religious leaders co-exist with formal government institutions charged with maintaining peace and security. Community leaders tend to be more trusted than formal institutions. However, community and religious institutions are themselves losing public trust, as they are perceived to be increasingly politicized and ineffective. Both state and non-state institutions have been weakened. There is little or no coordination among state security and conflict management institutions and between the state institutions and non-government institutions. Many of the institutions also exclude women and youth and lack effective management capacity.

There are several opportunities for NSRP intervention. These include promoting and strengthening greater coordination among conflict management institutions; promoting inclusion among the institutions; building conflict sensitive and results management capacity in both state and non-governmental initiatives for peace and security; and supporting initiatives that aim to reduce vulnerability among youths and women.

**1. Study purpose**

This mapping study was aimed at providing an overview of the contexts of conflicts as well as the actors and initiatives in conflict management in Kano, one of the focal states of NSRP. The Terms of Reference outlined the objectives of the mapping as follows:

1. To better understand **the actors responsible for the prevention and management of violent conflict in Kano state**
2. To better understand **the degree of collaboration and cooperation between the different actors identified**, e.g. between the police and the traditional leaders; between Local Government Chairmen and the police.
3. To identify **who ordinary people (men and women, including young men and young women) trust to 'keep the peace' and who do they not trust? And why?**

4. To identify **promising conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives, including empowerment and employment programmes for women and youths as well as institutions that address conflicts over land and water use.**

## **2. Methodology and approach**

The main methods adopted for the mapping were key informant interviews (KIIs) with government officials, community leaders, religious leaders and representatives of selected civil society organization (CSOs) as well as desk research.<sup>1</sup> Interviews were mostly conducted in April and May 2012. This note also draws upon an earlier rapid mapping undertaken in November 2011.

The major challenge encountered during the mapping was the difficulty which investigators encountered gaining access to prospective interviewees because of the numerous check points of the Joint Task Force (JTF) along most of the major roads in Kano. Moreover, since the January 2012 attacks on Kano, security was reinforced in most offices of security agencies. This made it very difficult to meet with security personnel. Negative perceptions of the role of international organizations also diminished the willingness of potential informants to be interviewed. However, explaining our affiliation with the British Council did help to open doors, given the reputation that the British Council has built over the years in Kano.

## **3. What are perceived to be the major causes of conflict in Kano State?**

The mapping revealed that the major causes of conflict are competition for power and resources within and between political parties; struggles for pre-eminence and perceptions of inequalities among Islamic sects and between Muslims and Christians; and high levels of unemployment and destitution especially among male youths.

Although parties in some incidents of violence have been Muslims from different sectarian persuasions, most of the violent conflicts recorded in the state have been framed as being between 'Northern Muslims' and 'Southern Christians'. This framing echoes the earliest incidents of violent conflict in Kano, which involved reprisal attacks on 'Southern Christians' for the allegedly ignominious treatment of leaders of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) who had opposed the motion for independence sponsored by southern politicians in the Central Legislature in Lagos in 1953. This paradigm of antagonism between 'Southern Christians' and 'Northern Muslims' was further consolidated in 1966 after the first *coup d'état*, executed by mostly 'Southern Christian' military officers, resulted in the death of mostly 'Northern Muslim' politicians including Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the prime minister, and Sir Ahmadu Bello, premier of the Northern Region and leader of the NPC.

Colonial policy which segregated 'settler Southern Christians' in Sabon Gari from 'indigenous Northern Muslims' ossified the cleavage by creating a territorial fault-line between the conflicting parties. This categorization obviously occludes the fact that there are Southern Muslims as well as Northern Christians, even among Kano indigenes. It explains why Muslims who are southerners and resident in Sabon Gari often also come under attack by young Muslim fighters during so called conflicts between Muslims and Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> The mapping has benefitted from the following reports and papers: Blench, R. et al (2006) 'The Role of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in Northern Nigeria', DFID Consultancy Paper; Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2008) Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria: Consolidated and Zonal Reports, Abuja: IPCR and UNDP; International Crisis Group (2010) 'Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict', *Africa Report No. 168*, Brussels : ICG; Ladbury, S., et al (2011) 'Religion, Exclusion and Violence in Northern Nigeria', Independent study for DFID.

Southern Christians are usually not targeted during intra-Muslim sectarian conflicts, which pitch new movements against existing orthodox orders. In such sectarian conflicts, targets include adherents and leaders of opposing sects and government officials and institutions considered to be favourably disposed to the established order. The most violent sectarian conflict in Kano was the Maitatsine conflict that swept across Northern Nigeria in the early 1980s and led to the death of 4,177 persons in Kano alone. However, the Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS), which attacked state security formations in Kano on 20 January 2012 leading to the death of over 200 persons, has subsequently targeted both Muslims and Christians and their places of worship. The attacks have been part of the strategic objective of JAS to take advantage of entrenched longstanding suspicions and rivalry between Islam and Christianity to portray its militancy as a struggle between Muslims and Christians.

However, some Northern Muslims have been attacked alongside Southern Christians during conflicts linked to politics. For instance, during the post-election violence of 2011, aggrieved youths attacked Muslim politicians and traditional rulers alongside 'Southern Christians' that were perceived to have worked against the interest of Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC).

The deepening economic crisis since the 1980s is perceived to have made Kano in particular more vulnerable to violent conflict. Kano is the most populous state in the country and Kano city is second only to Lagos in population. Its historic status as centre of Islamic learning for over 1000 years and a large commercial centre has attracted populations from across the country and the West African sub-region. Rising poverty and ecological disasters have also triggered waves of rural urban migration especially of youth to Kano. These youths, who increasingly have access to hard drugs, are seen to be more vulnerable to being mobilized by different actors to inflict violence on perceived opponents. The deepening economic crisis has also provided the context for an intensification of competition among propagators of Islam and Christianity, and exposed religious leaders to the influence of local and national politicians as well as global religious orders and donors.

The mapping found that although there is a religious narrative to most incidents of violent conflict in Kano, the causes of conflict are seldom that of religious difference. More commonly, conflict results from the politicization of religion and its manipulation for economic and political purposes. Key drivers of violent conflict are the perception of encroachments by other faiths into a particular faith's assumed sphere of influence,<sup>2</sup> and the perception of state bias in favour or against one religion (and sect) or the other. For instance, the decision of the Kano State Government to approve the use of Kano Race Course for a Christian evangelistic programme after reportedly disallowing use of the same facility for a preaching event of a Muslim preacher in August 1991 was a major factor that contributed to one of the most violent conflicts in Kano.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4. Events that may trigger violent conflict**

Against this background of manipulation and politicization of religious differences, any event or development that is interpreted to pose a threat to a particular religious order has the potential to trigger violent conflicts. Inflammatory statements by religious leaders that make reference to other religions, and utterances of politicians considered offensive by particular communities, are typical triggers of violence. Trigger factors have always ranged from the

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<sup>2</sup> See, Olaniyi, R. (2011) 'Hisbah and the Sharia Law enforcement in Metropolitan Kano', *Africa Today*, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 70-96.

<sup>3</sup> See, Albert, Isaac. O. (1999), Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano, in: Onigu Otite and Isaac O. Albert (eds.), *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books, pp.274-309. See also, Adesoji, A. (2010) 'The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria', *Africa Spectrum*, No. 2, pp. 95-108

immediate to the remote and from the trivial to the mundane. For example, in 1982, conflict erupted in Kano over the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to lay a foundation for the expansion of the Hausa Anglican Church in Fagge that is bordered by a mosque. In 1991, violent conflict started over the planned evangelistic visit of German preacher Reinhart Bonkie to Kano. The stated cause of the conflict was that the state government had refused to grant permission to Sheik Deedat, a visiting Southern Africa Muslim preacher to Kano. In 1995, widespread violence in Kano escalated from a quarrel between a Muslim and a Christian in Sabon Gari Market.

Since 1987, when the violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Kafanchan spread to Kano, most of the conflicts in Kano have also been sparked by events that happened outside the state. Initially it was the return of corpses of Muslims who died in religious conflicts elsewhere that triggered reprisal attacks on Christians. This has however evolved to a situation where any perceived wrong doing against Islam and Muslims by Christians elicits attacks on 'Southern Christians' resident in Kano, almost as a reflex. Examples of such reprisal attacks include the beheading of Gideon Akaluka, an Igbo resident in Sokoto for desecrating the Quran in December 1994; violence following US attacks on Afghanistan following the declaration of the war on terror in 2001; the Sharia riots in Kaduna in 2000; the perennial violent conflicts between 'Christian' Plateau indigenous groups and 'Muslim' Hausa and Fulani; violence following the controversial Danish cartoon of The Prophet; and violence following a controversial article on Nigeria's proposed hosting of the Miss World Contest. The attacks on 'Southern Christians' in Kano as a result of events that occur in western countries is based on the perception of an alliance between 'Southern Christians' and westerners that are assumed to belong to the Christian civilization.

## **5. Who is keeping the peace now – and how?**

A range of actors are responsible for conflict prevention and management in Kano State. Some of these same actors also play a part in causing or even instigating violence. Who is involved depends on the nature and intensity of the conflict. The main actors responsible for conflict prevention and management are the governments at state and LGA levels and government agencies. At the same time government policies and government officials also contribute to the outbreak of violent conflicts. Other actors involved in keeping the peace are traditional rulers, religious leaders and leaders of youth and women organizations. Disputes in the family and between individuals are generally managed by traditional authorities and religious leaders. Women leaders, women's associations, non-governmental organizations and youth leaders and associations are also involved in peace-building activities.

Although each of these actors operates independently in their own spheres of influence they are expected to collaborate for the maintenance of law and order. Traditional and religious leaders play and are expected to play central roles in prevention of violence. Given their strategic roles as gate keepers to their communities, they are expected to have information on movements into and out of the communities, and to monitor different forms of mobilization taking place, for example, through the preaching of religious leaders. The pyramidal structure of the emirate system is configured to transmit information from the ward level through the village and the district to the emirate level. Traditional rulers are expected to intervene early to facilitate resolution before conflict issues lead to violence. Ideally, the traditional authorities are also expected to notify local governments, state governments and security agencies of potential threats to peace and security.

However, in practice much of this system has been eroded by mutual suspicions and tensions in relations between traditional authorities and government officials and also with their community members. It is therefore quite common for violent conflicts to escape the notice of the traditional authorities. Religious leaders are expected to play an equivalent role, especially in checking inflammatory preaching and the fractionalization of sects. One factor

responsible for what appears to be a rising number of conflicts that escape the radar of traditional rulers and religious leaders is fear of attack. Members of new sects and aggrieved youths have often attacked traditional rulers, and this has made them wary of providing information or being involved in early warning and response. Traditional rulers generally lack the protection available to politicians or government, and can be easy targets.

Traditional rulers and religious leaders mediate in conflicts at all institutional levels – ward, village, district and emirate/state. Family, intra-ward and intra-village conflicts are usually mediated by village heads and ward heads. However, when conflicts involve groups and persons from more than one village, the district head generally becomes involved. The offices of the emir are usually called on in conflicts affecting the entire emirate and state as well as national conflicts. Religious leaders mediate in conflicts involving their members as well as in inter-faith mediation initiatives. Mediation depends above all on the level of trust and respect in which traditional and religious authorities are held. In recent years, the capability of the leaders to mediate has been eroded and the effectiveness of mediation weakened by the politicization and co-option of traditional and religious leaders. This has reduced levels of trust, and also the reverence, that the public used to have for them.

Many of the functions exercised by religious leaders and traditional rulers have been formalized by the state in various institutions. The institutional architecture for regulation and management of religious conflicts in existence since the advent of Sharia implementation in 2000 include the Sharia Commission, Zakkat Commission and Hisbah Commission. The State Council of Ulama also exists to regulate the activities of Islamic preachers. In addition to the State Council of Traditional Rulers, which is headed by His Royal Highness Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, these bodies assist the state government maintain law and order. The Commissions mediate in conflicts and the Hisbah in particular are also involved in community policing.

The mapping exercise found that community members prefer the security provisioning services of the Hisbah to that provided by the conventional police. This is often associated with the perception that the members of the former are selected from the community and are seen to be motivated by Islamic values rather than by materialism. Another institution considered very effective and trustworthy in conflict management is the Zauren Sulhu. This is a community-based forum organized by the Emirate Council and Hisbah Commission. It brings together elders and leaders of different groups, both indigenes and non-indigenes, to resolve conflict amicably and accountably. Many of the disputes that could have led to religious and political clashes are reportedly resolved amicably through dialogue between the various settlers in the state.

The faith-based organizations such as the Jamatu Nasril Islam (JNI) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) have also been active in peace building initiatives. However, in recent years there is evidence that these associations have been more involved in resolution initiatives rather than those concerned with prevention. However, there is also evidence that the activities of some of the leaders of the main organizations may have contributed to triggering conflicts and exacerbating tensions.

Nevertheless, some faith-based initiatives at the community level have supported conflict prevention. Discussions during this mapping study found that the leaders of different faith groups have tried to prevent violent conflicts by convening inter-faith meetings to discuss and resolve issues they anticipate may lead to breaches of the peace. This approach was particularly evident during the last fuel subsidy protest, which almost turned violent in Kano. At that time there were concerted efforts to make Muslims provide the security for Christians to pray and, at the same time, make Christians protect Muslims during their prayer times. The strategy that emerged is now being extended to organise security for Churches during festivities, such as Christmas and Easter celebrations.

The mapping found that the state and community level conflict management process is not participatory as it does not include youths and women. Youths and women do not generally participate in these structures. However, some women associations and youth associations mediate in conflicts involving their members. Elderly women and senior wives of traditional rulers also perform some mediatory and mentorship for womenfolk especially over domestic issues among young wives. This usually works through the Zauren Sulhu initiatives, as well as the CBOs.

The government employs a range of instruments to maintain peace. The State Security Council, which is headed by the governor, receives report from different institutions concerned with law enforcement and security as well as from traditional authorities. The state government can influence deployment of security agencies to contain threats to peace. This often takes the form of joint patrols by members of security services including the Nigeria Civil Defence and Security Corps and community watch groups. Although joint patrols are routinely constituted in cases of outbreak of conflicts, there is little coordination of efforts among security agencies for conflict prevention purposes. Reporting of early warning tends to be vertical rather horizontal with each security service sending information upwards. This entrenched system undermines the probability of an effective early response.

The government also deploys a 'stick and carrot' approach to maintain peace. The state government and local government councils have the powers to sanction the traditional and religious leaders perceived to be promoting violence or disloyal to the regime. The 'carrot' approach is evident in the government's provision of various types of empowerment programmes to critical stakeholders. The current government of Engr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso is implementing a number of empowerment programmes for vulnerable social clusters such as youth and women. Although most of the beneficiaries are supporters of the ruling party the initiatives are perceived as helping to distract and keep busy some youths that may otherwise be mobilized into violent conflict.

The state programmes include:

1. Lafiya Jari: This programme targets young secondary school leavers and graduates of schools of nursing and technology by training them to operate patent medicine stores in their villages. After training, each beneficiary is given N50,000 in cash and drugs worth 100,000 to establish his store.
2. CRC Women Empowerment: This programme targets women, who are trained in poultry keeping, macaroni production, and goat and sheep rearing. At the end of training each beneficiaries is provided with N10,000 to start up a business. The programme selects 10 women each from the 480 wards of the 44 LGAs in Kano.
3. KASMA Traffic Offices This programme targets young men and women, they are trained in traffic control and other related services. It currently employs about 1,000 youths who receive N15,000 monthly as wages.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) including NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs) have also been involved in promoting peace and managing conflicts in Kano.<sup>4</sup> These non-state actors carry out activities such as human rights advocacy, peace education, women and youth empowerment programmes, as well as mediation training and facilitation. The mapping found that collaboration between NGOs and the government was the exception rather than the rule. Most of the NGOs depend on support from international donors, whose agendas influence their programmes. Collaboration between NGOs and FBOs is quite

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<sup>4</sup> For a background on activities of Islamic FBOs see, Gwarzo, T. H. (2003), "Activities of Islamic Civic Associations in the Northwest of Nigeria: With Particular Reference to Kano State" in *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 289-318.

common, as NGOs have found it effective to execute programmes through the agency of FBOs. However, most of the NGOs and FBOs lack the capacity for monitoring and evaluation and do not document the impact their programmes are making.

The mapping showed that community members trust the FBOs, Hisbah and NGOs that work in their communities more than they do many government agencies. In matters of security during conflicts, trust in the military is greater than in the police, who are seen as ineffective and incapable of maintaining order. For instance, during the violent attacks by JAS in January, many Kano residents complained of a huge security vacuum before the deployment of the Joint Task Force (JTF). It is said that the poorly equipped and poorly motivated police force officers went into hiding during the JAS onslaught. The military, on the other hand, are appreciated for having restored order in Kano.

Kano residents however complained of the high handedness of some military officers during patrols and the harassment of innocent civilians. This has prompted the Emirate Council to second Hisbah guards and community vigilantes to the JTF during neighbourhood patrols to reduce the molestation of civilians and enhance effective crime prevention. The Emirate Council has asked the government to accept the system where the traditional security and the State Hisbah guards are deployed alongside the JTF. It is believed that the presence of Hisbah guards in the JTF teams will go a long way towards addressing the abuse of civilians.

## 6. Gaps in the conflict prevention architecture – and how the NSRP could help

The shortcomings of the conflict prevention and management architecture identified in the mapping include:

- Poor coordination among critical stakeholders;
- The exclusion of women and youth from existing conflict management institutions;
- Human rights abuse and poor community engagement by security agencies in conflict situations;
- The politicization of empowerment programmes; and
- The lack of management capacity by both government and civil society empowerment and peace-building programmes.

These gaps offer the following strategic opportunities for prospective NSRP engagement.

NSRP should:

1. Explore initiatives that are aimed at **strengthening coordination among conflict management institutions at all levels**. This initiative should seek to strengthen early warning and response as well as promote participation of excluded groups such as women and youths in peace building. There is real opportunity for NSRP to support coordination mechanisms for security at state and local council levels – in the same way that the DFID supported Justice Four All programme is doing amongst justice sector institutions and agencies;
2. Consider supporting **existing state government programmes targeting vulnerable groups to make these programmes conflict sensitive and more transparent and accountable**. There are indications that the state government may be willing to work with NSRP on this. Most of the government officials contacted appeared willing and happy to work with the NSRP as soon as the programme implementation commences.
3. Look for opportunities to **build the capacity of security agencies to intervene effectively** in violent conflicts. This should be aimed at ensuring that security officers receive the requisite training and orientation for constructive engagement with the civilian population and respect for culture of local people in conflict situation. This measure will help build

confidence of the public in the security agencies and enhance conflict management. An entry point for such initiative could be to support the training of joint patrols by JTF and Hisbah guards.

4. Build the **monitoring and evaluation capacity of government and NGOs administering peace building programmes**. Such training should enable the agencies to be better able to manage for results.

5. **Design a grant mechanism to support empowerment initiatives for women and youth in vulnerable communities**. There are promising opportunities as some of the organizations are currently implementing programmes that can be strengthened through grants.

## Appendix 1. List of people met

<b>KANO STATE:</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Description (title, place of meeting or organisation)</b>	<b>Contact details if relevant (phone, email)</b>
Abba Sufi.	D.G. Kano State Hisbah Board.	08032777174
Dr.Abdullahi Umar Ganduj	Deputy Governor Kano State	08038139166
Alh. Ibrahim Idris	Commissioner of Police Kano State Command.	08031803555
Adamu Soja	State Commander Civil Defence	08032704738
Lamido Ado Bayer	District Head Gwale	08037873311
Mr. Etteng	State Director S.S.S .	08036271370
Abdulmalik Rogo	IMO Fagge LGA	08033472173
Bala Abdullahi	KCSF (Civil Society forum)	08035860771
Malama Sadiya Adamu	FOMWAN	08037022566
Apostle Bello	Sec. Gen. CAN Kano branch	07040139361
Sheik Ibrahim Khali	Chairman Council of Ulama Kano.	08033436170
Haj. Altine Abdullahi	Voice of Widows, Divorces and Orphans.	08034737877
Hashimu Saleh	Chairman Okada Riders.	08023791002
Barr. Abdurrazaq Aikawa	Chairman NBA Kano.	08023111180
Alh. Gambo Sallau	Speaker Kano State House of Assembly	08023111418