WORKING
PAPER N° 2

GAPS AND NEEDS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACEBUILDING, EARLY WARNING AND MEDIATION MECHANISMS AND STRUCTURES

IN GHANA AND ITS BORDER AREAS

AUGUST 2024

DR. SABINA APPIAH-BOATENG (RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PEACE STUDIES, SCHOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA)

DR. PATRICK OSEI-KUFUOR (SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PEACE STUDIES, SCHOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA)

RECAP
NETWORK
RESEARCH & ACTION FOR PEACE

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

P.5

2. RELEVANT POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACEBUILDING, EARLY WARNING AND MEDIATION MECHANISMS AND STRUCTURES IN GHANA AND BORDER AREAS

P.11

3. ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS' ONGOING AND PLANNED INITIATIVES

P.17

DISCLAIMER:

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Alternative dispute resolution
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
CAPI	Communities in Action for Peace and Inclusion
CDD	Center for Democratic Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CBOs	Community based organisations
CVE	Countering violent extremism
DCEs	District Chief Executives
DISECs	District Security Committees
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FOSDA	Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
LRI	Littorals Regional Initiative
MMDAs	Metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies
NAFPCVET	National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NPC	National Peace Council
NSC	National Security Council
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PoVETSA	Prevention of Violent Extremism through Social Accountability project
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
REcAP	Research and Action for Peace network
RESECs	Regional Security Councils
SRPS	Strengthening Regional Peace and Stability in West Africa Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Violent extremism
VEGs	Violent extremism groups
VEOs	Violent extremism organisations
VoA	Voice of America
WACCE	West African Centre for Counter Extremism
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

INTRODUCTION

GHANA REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST PEACEFUL COUNTRIES IN WEST AFRICA. IT HAS NEVER HAD A CONFLICT ON A NATIONAL SCALE AND HAS AN ENVIABLE DEMOCRATIC RECORD. DESPITE THE THREATS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES IN THE SAHEL AND OTHER INTERNECINE CONFLICTS, VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO SUSTAINED PEACE IN GHANA.

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Conflict Index 2024 shows that the security situation in the Sahel continues to deteriorate, with violent extremism organisations (VEOs), led by Al-Qaeda's Sahelian branch Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel), perpetuating violence and insurgency[1]. According to ACLED, "in 2023, the number of people killed by acts of political violence doubled in Burkina Faso, placing highest after Nigeria in West Africa. Across central Sahel, conflict fatalities from political violence increased by a staggering 38%, and civilian deaths by over 18%.[2]" The data for Ghana shows a more peaceful trend, although marked with the internecine conflict in Bawku and other events such as the deteriorating relations between farmers and Fulani herders over competition for land use. Various state and non-state institutions, including the National Peace Council and its regional councils, local government authorities, traditional political systems and community structures, have contributed to the relative peace in the country. However, all these institutions and mechanisms have come under stress and scrutiny and their resilience is being challenged. This working paper assesses the gaps and needs in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and response systems to VE and mediation mechanisms and structures in Ghana and its border areas.

The study investigates the relevant policy and programme frameworks in the areas of conflict prevention mechanisms, peacebuilding, early warning, mediation mechanisms and structures in Ghana, particularly in border areas. The study also provides a stakeholder analysis. This includes the identification and analysis of the needs and challenges of the main stakeholders, including national actors and community leaders (e.g. chiefs), and ongoing and planned initiatives from international donors, mainly in the northern regions of Ghana. Finally, the paper makes recommendations to engage in future efforts at relevant policies and programmes for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and countering VE in border areas in Ghana.

'' IN 2023, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED BY ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE DOUBLED IN BURKINA FASO, PLACING HIGHEST AFTER NIGERIA IN WEST AFRICA. ACROSS CENTRAL SAHEL, CONFLICT FATALITIES FROM POLITICAL VIOLENCE INCREASED BY A STAGGERING 38%, AND CIVILIAN DEATHS BY OVER 18%.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Ghana is often applauded for being a peaceful country in West Africa and seen as a beacon of democratic development in the region (Kendie, et al., 2022; Owusu-Nsiah, 2021). The country ranked fourth in Africa in the Global Peace Index 2023 (Global Peace Index, 2023). Ghana has been able to manage ethnic, political and religious differences nationally. The country has had eight successful elections since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992 and will have its ninth election in December 2024. In all these elections, the country has always held onto peace. Both state and non-state structures have played a significant role in helping to maintain this peace.

[1] The Sahel: A Deadly New Era in the Decades-long Conflict (17 January 2024). ACLED. - [2] Ibid

State structures for peace and conflict prevention, as well as for managing peace and resolving ethnic, political and religious differences, have helped to maintain peace and stability in Ghana (UNDP, 2022). One of these structures is the National Peace Council (NPC), with structures at the regional (Regional Peace Councils) and district (District Peace Advisory Councils) levels (Home-National Peace Council, Ghana, 2024). The NPC was established by an of parliament, The National Peace Council Act 2011, (Act 818). Its role is to prevent, manage, mediate and resolve conflicts across the country. Since its administrative establishment in 2006, the NPC has helped to maintain peace and prevent conflicts in Ghana through its mandate for mediation, peace education, conflict prevention and early warning and response. For instance, the NPC has mediated and prevented conflicts that include the ethnic Zongo conflict in Hohoe, the Al-Sunnah and Tijaniyay Muslim conflicts, resource conflicts between farmers and herders and political party tensions from escalating further to the national level (Kendie, et al., 2014; Osei-Kufuor, et al., 2021).

Because of the deteriorating security situation in the northern regions of the country, Ghana has strengthened the defence and security apparatus and taken a preventive approach to combating violent extremism (VE) and other security threats. As part of the measures to strengthen security in the northern regions, the defence structure has undergone extensive decentralisation to allow for a tighter territorial network and oversight (Agyekum, 2021). Other measures introduced at the national level include the formation of counter-terrorism and special forces units, the deployment of security to the northern border of Ghana (e.g. Operation Conquered Fist and Exercise Eagle Claws in 2020 and 2021), the National Framework for Preventing and Combating Violent Extremism and Terrorism, the National Security Strategy, the National Centre for Coordination of Early Warning Response Mechanism and Ghana's WARN programme instituted by the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). In addition, a joint intelligence framework for counter-terrorism has been established by bringing together the police, the Criminal Investigation Bureau and the National Investigation Bureau. At the same time, an integrative regional approach has been instituted by West African coastal states in response to the insecurity situation in the northern regions of their respective countries. The Accra Initiative was undertaken with the objective of preventing the spread of violent extremism from the Sahel and combating transnational organised crime in border areas (Promediation, 2021). Civil society organisations (CSOs) and international organisations and diplomatic missions such as the European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WANEP have also developed policy frameworks for conflict prevention, mediation and countering violent extremism[3]. Non-state actors such as chiefs, religious leaders and locally based organisations are also involved in peacebuilding efforts that involve traditional mechanisms of resolving conflicts using the chieftaincy and traditional family and clan systems and local structures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts across many communities in Ghana (Osei-Kufuor & Bukari, 2022). For instance, the Littorals Regional Initiative (LRI) and the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies (CECOTAPS) has been facilitating inter-ethnic mediations and inter-ethnic dialogues using Village Savings and Loan Associations. These measures and reforms have all helped to maintain peace and security in the country. These structures used local knowledge, customs and practices to prevent and manage conflicts among various groups in local communities. Importantly, these structures have helped to maintain peace and ensured cohesion among groups in Ghana.

> AS PART OF THE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY IN THE NORTHERN REGIONS, THE DEFENCE STRUCTURE HAS UNDERGONE EXTENSIVE DECENTRALISATION TO ALLOW FOR A TIGHTER TERRITORIAL NETWORK AND OVERSIGHT (AGYEKUM, 2021)

---

[3] UNDP and Partners review Ghana's national framework to enhance response to violent extremism (March, 2024).

Despite national structures for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, including the NPC and national programmes to combat VE, as well as traditional and local structures and CSO activities and efforts, there are pockets of conflict that have lingered on in northern Ghana alongside the threat of VE around the northern border areas. Ethnic, religious and resource conflicts still linger on and have remained violent. The case of Bawku in the Upper East Region has shown that obvious challenges and gaps exist in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and resolution in northern Ghana. With growing discontent and the youth bulge problem in the region, the resilience of conflict prevention, resolution, early warning and response mechanisms and structures to VE is very much under scrutiny. One issue that has compounded the security situation in northern Ghana is the increasing resource-based conflicts which have turned violent and led to extreme antagonism against the Fulbe by local communities (Kendie, et al., 2023; Bukari, 2022). This situation has been compounded by climate change, which is inducing Fulani migration from the Sahel to Ghana, thereby inducing competition for grazing land with farmers (Bukari, Sow and Schaffran, 2019; Bukari et al., 2020). Coupled with the constant attacks and continuous isolation of the Fulbe, the potential for vulnerable Fulbe youth, who do not feel that they belong in Ghana, to join terrorist cells in the Sahel is very high (Kendie et al., 2023; 2023B). This problem resonates with concerns about the evolution of the violent extremists' threats on the northern borders of all the coastal countries in West Africa (Promediation, 2021). The security dilemma at Ghana's northern borders, especially in the Upper East Region and the Upper West Region, has raised questions about the security of Ghana and the resilience of national policy frameworks such as NAFPCVET and NSC framework in dealing with the rise of VE from Burkina Faso and the Sahel and the increasing conflicts over land and natural resources in the region (northern Ghana). The conflict in Bawku also poses serious challenges to conflict prevention, mediation and resolution efforts in northern Ghana, as there are fears that Violent Extremism Groups (VEGs) will exploit the conflict. To deal with VE and counter radicalisation there is, therefore, a need to assess gaps, needs and challenges in peace efforts and the various structures put in place by state and non-state actors on conflict prevention, resolution and mediation in northern Ghana and its border areas.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMME FRAMEWORKS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION MECHANISMS, PEACE-BUILDING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN GHANA

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding represent crucial components of Ghana's broader strategy for achieving sustainable peace and development. At the societal level, conflict prevention and early warning interventions seek to either prevent or mitigate the outbreak of violent conflicts, particularly in ethnic and chieftaincy disputes, land and resource conflicts, intra-religious struggles, border disputes and political violence, as well as other conflicts driven by widening inequality and frustrations with the state. Despite the incidence of these conflicts, several factors contribute to social cohesion and stability in Ghana. The presence of traditional authorities across different layers of governance and the active role of religious leaders in promoting inter-faith dialogue combine to promote the peace and stability of the country. The activities of civil society organisations and numerous community initiatives promote and foster a national identity based on a notion of peace and a strong community culture that contributes to creating a strong sense of belonging, which unites the country.

At the national level, there are peace infrastructures that have been consciously established by the state to build peace and engage in conflict prevention. These are the NPC and its 16 Regional Peace Councils, district advisory councils, regional and district security councils, traditional political systems and local peacebuilding structures at the district assembly and community levels throughout the country. The national security infrastructure recognises the NPC as the fulcrum on which the national peace rests, as stipulated in the Security and Intelligence Agencies Act, 2020 (Act 1030). The National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act 818) established the peace council with the mandate of conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. The NPC should champion peacebuilding in all facets of Ghanaian society, among political parties, ethnic groups, religious groups and communities. According to Kotia and Aubyn (2013), Osei-Kufuor, et al. (2021) the NPC has been engaged in conflict management, resolution and peace-

THE PRESENCE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES ACROSS DIFFERENT LAYERS OF GOVERNANCE AND THE ACTIVE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN PROMOTING INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE COMBINE TO PROMOTE THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY.

building activities that find solutions to chieftaincy and land disputes, communal violence and election-related violence in Ghana. The NPC has used dialogue for dealing with different conflicts that have had the potential to lead to violence and VE activities such as religious, political vigilance and electoral violence. However, the NPC lacks sufficient financial, human and technical capacities to effectively carry out its mandate. Due to this, the NPC has not been able to set up functioning District Peace Councils as enshrined in its mandate (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2014; Shale, 2017). The NPC has not properly collaborated and coordinated with other state actors such as the NCCE and security agencies in peacebuilding. For example, the National Elections Early Warning and Response Group (NEEWARG) and the Regional Elections Early Warning and Response Groups (REEWARGs) have not sufficiently collaborated with state security agencies, such as the police, due to suspicions and accusations of the NPC taking over police duties (Shale, 2017). Also, specific actions to prevent violent extremism, such as peace education and community awareness campaigns, have not been sufficiently linked to ethnic conflicts or farmer-herder conflicts.

CSOs, who undertake a number of peacebuilding activities, including conflict prevention, early warning and mediation, are also key actors. (Okumu, 2020; Osei-Kufuor, 2022). They strengthen partnership building, research, conflict prevention, management and resolution, outreach, capacity building and advocacy for peace issues (Osei-Kufuor & Bukari. 2022). In Ghana, Osei-Kufuor and Bukari (2022) and Bukari and Guuroh (2013) found that CSOs play a role in diffusing tensions and restoring relationships in communities in northern Ghana hit by violent conflicts. At the local or community level, various communities institute their own peacebuilding mechanisms. The traditional councils in the communities are led by chiefs and their duties are to prevent the escalation of violent conflicts, manage or resolve conflicts that emerge among their people and/or between their people and other groups and build peace through transformative approaches.

Mediation is a critical tool for resolving conflicts, particularly in the context of inter-ethnic disputes, chieftaincy conflicts and land disputes (Anamzoya, 2016). Mediation is a widely accepted method of conflict resolution in Ghana, with a long history of use in traditional and customary settings. Mediation in Ghana can be broadly categorised into two types: formal and informal (Slade Shantz, Kistruck, Pacheco & Webb, 2020). Formal mediation is typically conducted by trained mediators who follow a structured process and adhere to established rules and procedures (Nolan-Haley, 2015). Informal mediation, on the other hand, is often conducted by community leaders, religious leaders, or other respected individuals, who use their influence to bring parties together and facilitate dialogue. Informal mediation is prevalent in traditional and customary settings like chieftaincy or land disputes in Ghana. Traditional authorities such as chiefs and elders, along with religious leaders like imams and pastors, often serve as informal mediators due to their community standing and familiarity with the parties involved.

> MEDIATION IS A CRITICAL TOOL FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTER-ETHNIC DISPUTES, CHIEFTAINCY CONFLICTS AND LAND DISPUTES (ANAMZOYA, 2016)

> THESE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES ARE PART OF A MULTIFACETED APPROACH IN RESPONDING TO THE COMPLEX SECURITY CHALLENGES THAT THE COUNTRY FACES

There have been concerns about the potential rise of violent extremism in Ghana from neighbouring countries. In response to the various security threats, the Government of Ghana created the National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism as well as the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2008 (Act 762). These government initiatives are part of a multifaceted approach in responding to the complex security challenges that the country faces. Additionally, the government has initiated specific programs designed to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism among the populace (Aubyn, 2021).

> LOCAL NON-GO-VERNMENTAL ORGA-NISATIONS PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN ADDRESSING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN GHA-NA. ONE NOTABLE GROUP IS THE WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING (WANEP), WHICH PROMOTES PEACE AND PREVENTS VIOLENT EXTREMISM THROUGHOUT THE REGION (EZE & FRIM-PONG, 2020).

Beyond the frameworks and strategies, other national institutions and civil society organisations support the implementation of the strategies and policies enacted to address the underlying factors that are likely to promote violent extremism. Examples of such institutions include the Counterterrorism Fusion Centre at the National Security Ministry which fosters inter-agency collaboration by coordinating operations and communications among the country's security agencies, mainly customs, immigration and police, to maximise their ability to fight terrorism and other criminal activities (Strouboulis, Yayboke, & Edwards, 2023). The Youth Employment Agency offers employment opportunities to young individuals, especially those living in regions susceptible to violent extremism. Furthermore, the creation of the National Youth Authority empowers young Ghanaians by providing resources and support to help prevent recruitment into extremist groups (National Youth Policy, 2022). Local non-governmental organisations play an essential role in addressing violent extremism in Ghana. One notable group is the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), which promotes peace and prevents violent extremism throughout the region (Eze & Frimpong, 2020). WANEP establishes community-based early warning systems to detect potential conflicts before they escalate into violence. Additionally, WANEP conducts training programs for local leaders and youth to foster peace and discourage violent extremism. Another prominent civil society organisation is the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), which focuses on promoting democracy and good governance in the country (CDD, 2019). CDD-Ghana researches the root causes of violent extremism in Ghana and advocates for policy changes to address these issues. Moreover, CDD-Ghana organises training programs for journalists and civil society organisations to encourage peace and deter violent extremism (CDD, 2022).

Several cross-border cooperation programmes between Nigeria and Niger exist, with financial backing provided The EU has also funded various programmes to counter VE by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). Global actors contribute significantly to Ghana's efforts against violent extremism. The United States, for instance, supports Ghana's security forces, through training and technical assistance, to improve their ability to prevent and respond to violent extremism (Prah & Chanimbe, 2021). The EU supports the NCCE and the Ghana Armed Forces. For instance, in 2023, the EU handed over 105 armoured vehicles to the Ghana Armed Forces under the European Peace Facility. In addition, the Spanish government supports the National Security Ministry through the Preventing Electoral Violence and Providing Security to the Northern Border Regions of Ghana (NORPREVSEC) programme, which aims to connect and digitalise all of Ghana's security agencies nationwide to enhance the exchange of police information. These collaborative endeavours demonstrate the importance of international cooperation in combating global threats like violent extremism. The study highlights the comprehensive approaches employed by the Government of Ghana, civil society organisations and international partners to confront the challenges posed by violent extremism.

Gaps identified in the literature review include a lack of research and literature on local frameworks, responses, interventions and mechanisms for dealing with VE. Many of the VE interventions and frameworks are often national and standardised with inadequate connection with the local context. Locally based frameworks, responses, interventions and mechanisms for VE are conspicuously missing from the literature or are inadequate. Another area missing in the literature is how to harmonise and coordinate local peace interventions and efforts to ensure a synergy in peacebuilding efforts. For example, the literature presents varied interventions under community cohesion and stability, but which are aligned differently to their peacebuilding goals. Again, the issues of early warning and response mechanisms are also key towards peacebuilding. The literature does not document evidence of the successes of early warning mechanisms and there are not many examples of local early warning and response mechanisms. The key question is, what local knowledge, mechanisms and approaches support early warning and response mechanisms? The literature is silent on this. Connected to this is the disconnect between information gathering and response mechanisms.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research methodology. The study reviewed secondary data related to the study to identify the activities and gaps in policy and programme frameworks in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures in Ghana, particularly in border areas. The secondary data collection and analysis comprised relevant journals, policy documents and frameworks, books, academic articles related to the study and other relevant materials on projects and programs completed or in progress, as well as evaluations in the areas of the working paper. Areas of literature reviewed included:

- Relevant policy and programme frameworks in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms.

- Conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures in Ghana.

- National policies and frameworks for responding to violent extremism in Ghana.

- Initiatives by international donors and NGOs responding to violent extremism in Ghana.

The documentary review included the identification and selection of national authorities and partners working in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures. Identified actors included the National Peace Council, all five Regional Peace Councils (RPCs) in northern Ghana, civil society organisations such as Coginta and WANEP-Ghana and international organisations such as the European Union (EU), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives through the Littorals Regional Initiative (LRI).

The researchers made online appointments with officials from these actors for data collection. During the data collection, researchers clearly communicated the purpose of the data collection exercise, detailing who will have access to it as well as its usage. The team also communicated to participants about the freedom to leave at any point in time and clearly provided guidelines on how to withdraw from participation.

The collected data was transcribed and meticulously coded to capture various thematic areas. These themes included the development and implementation of policy and programme frameworks, which provide the structural and strategic foundation for addressing security and development issues. Additionally, the data encompassed mechanisms specifically designed to prevent violent extremism, highlighting proactive and reactive strategies to mitigate extremist threats.

Furthermore, the coding process identified conflict prevention strategies, detailing approaches and practices to foresee, prevent and resolve conflicts before they escalate. Peacebuilding initiatives were also identified, including efforts to create sustainable peace through community engagement, reconciliation processes and development programs.

The themes also included early warning systems and mediation mechanisms with an emphasis on the importance of timely information gathering and analysis to predict potential conflicts and the role of mediation in resolving disputes peacefully.

These themes collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted approaches employed to maintain security and promote stability.

> THE COLLECTED DATA WAS TRANSCRIBED AND METICULOUSLY CODED TO CAPTURE VARIOUS THEMATIC AREAS.

2 RELEVANT POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACEBUILDING, EARLY WARNING AND MEDIATION MECHANISMS AND STRUCTURES IN GHANA AND BORDER AREAS

GLOBAL/REGIONAL/SUB-REGIONAL POLICY AND PROGRAMME FRAMEWORKS

BEFORE TACKLING THE RELEVANT POLICY AND PROGRAMME FRAMEWORKS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION IN GHANA, IT IS EXPEDIENT TO CONSIDER POLICY AND PROGRAMME FRAMEWORKS FROM THE GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL LEVELS. THESE HAVE, IN SOME CASES, FORMED THE BASIS FOR THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS.

At the global level, the United Nations (UN) has many frameworks in place for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The UN was established on the premise of fostering peace among member nations and the global community. Frameworks reviewed include:

- The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which is primarily concerned with how to include women in peacebuilding activities, both formally and informally.

- The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, which aim to build the capacity of key beneficiaries to become more resilient to violent extremism and reduce the threat of terrorism.

- The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which is part of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, created with the aim of building a bridge between all the relevant stakeholders, both within and outside the UN, that were 'doing' peacebuilding. It is supported by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which was established to assist and support the PBC and to coordinate the peacebuilding efforts within the UN.

- The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which is a multiyear standing trust fund for post-conflict peacebuilding operations. The PBF was created to fund immediate response activities before donors arrive and to fund peacebuilding activities where attention from donors is lacking.

- The United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2535 (2020), which consider the involvement of youth in peacebuilding in the world.

At the regional level, the following frameworks were identified as guiding peace and conflict prevention programming:

- The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) framework for promoting peace, security and development on the continent. The early warning and response component deals with violent situations and help the peace and security council of APSA to adopt strategies to prevent violent conflicts.

At the sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has policy and legal frameworks that are geared towards maintaining peace and preventing conflicts in the sub-region. These are as follows:

- The ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture.

- The ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

- The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), which aids in the management and resolution of conflicts and enhances peacebuilding efforts in the sub-region.

- The Sahel Peace Initiative, which the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been implementing since 2019 to promote peace and social cohesion in Ghana and the Sahel.

- The ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Ghana has instituted many policy frameworks and pro-
grammes to sustain conflict prevention and peace ef-
forts. These include:

- The Security and Intelligence Agencies Act, 2020 (Act
  1030). The Act serves as the framework that regulates
  the National Security Council (NSC), Regional Secu-
  rity Councils and District Security Committees.

- The National Security Strategy 2020.

- The Anti-Terrorism Act, 2008 (Act 762)/The Anti-Terro-
  rism (Amendment) Act, 2012 (Act 842).

- The National Framework for Preventing and Coun-
  tering Violent Extremism and Terrorism (NAFPCVET)
  2019.

- The National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (GHANAP
  I - 2010 and GHANA II - 2020-2025), which aims to
  ensure that women, particularly young women, play
  a role in the country's peace and security landscape.

- The National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act 818).

- The Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2020 (Act 1044).

- The Economic and Organised Crime Office Act, 2010
  (Act 804).

Despite the institutionalisation of this elaborate and
well-structured security and peacebuilding system,
Ghana's security sector is faced with several challenges
and weaknesses. These include the absence of opera-
tional independence of statutory security agencies from
intrusions by political entities, which intensifies the domi-
nance of party interests over security sector institutions,
culminating in their unwillingness to take actions against
politically exposed individuals and institutions. Other
weaknesses include inadequate logistics and human re-
sources for the execution of statutory functions and po-
liticised recruitment processes which create disciplinary
problems in the chain of command (Matveeva, Anning &
Osei-Kufuor, 2020; Wolseley & Chanimbe, 2021).

Ghana has several policy frameworks for preventing VE.
In Table 1 below, these frameworks are identified, along
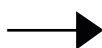with the gaps inherent in them.

TABLE 1: FRAMEWORKS FOR PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN GHANA

N°	Framework	Focus	Year	Level	Successes and gaps	Description of framework and main activities
1.	National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Ghana (NAFPCVET)	Countering and preventing VE (pre-empt, prevent, protect and respond)	2019	National but targeting border areas	**Successes** • Provided a comprehensive national strategy for countering violent extremism. • Led to intense education and awareness among actors on VE. • Provides an all-inclusive approach. • Allows for cooperation and collaboration among national actors such as the security agencies on dealing with VE. **Gaps** • Donor-driven. • Lack of local ownership. • Disconnection with other drivers of violent conflicts. • Not effectively implemented.	The framework helps outline a variety of activities that Ghana will undertake to prevent violent extremism and terrorism. These activities include educating the public about the dangers of violent extremism, improving border security and promoting religious tolerance. The framework also emphasises the importance of international cooperation.
2.	Anti-Terrorism Act (Act 762)	Identifies terrorist acts, as well as acts not considered to be terrorist acts, and identifies the financing, recruitment and support of terrorist activities.	Promulgated in 2008 and amended in 2014	National law	There are challenges with the enforcement of the Act. People arrested under the Act could not be prosecuted for lack of evidence.	The Act is enforced by national security agencies and regulated by the law courts.

3. 4. ⟶

N°	Framework	Focus	Year	Level	Successes and gaps	Description of framework and main activities
3.	National Security Strategy	Overarching strategy to consolidate Ghana's fragmented policy initiatives on national security into one integrated and comprehensive national security policy framework.	Adopted in 2020	National	**Successes** **1**. Preservation of the national sovereignty of Ghana. **2**. Sustainable development. **3**. National cohesion for peace, security and stability. **4**. Enhancing regional, continental and global cooperation. **Gaps** There is lack of coordination among some actors on its implementation.	The formulation and implementation of the National Security Strategy is based on the central tenet of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society involvement, grounded in the principles of unity of purpose and coordination of effort to enhance social cohesion, tolerance, national security and national stability.
4.	National Awareness Campaign	Public awareness campaign, via SMS, jingles, infomercials and social media, designed to combat VE. Focuses on the phrase – "See Something, Say Something".	2018	National	**Successes** • Improved information sharing between the public and security agencies. • Increased public vigilance can deter crime and terrorist activities. • Empowers citizens to take an active role in safeguarding their communities. **Gaps** • Unsustainable. • Campaign/cannot be long-term due to financial constraints and inertia. • Illiteracy rates will not lead to a large target. Awareness creation is ongoing at different levels.	• Targeting the general public across Ghana. • Collective responsibility. •Awareness and education. •Focus on behaviour, not appearance. • Anonymity and security. • Respect for civil liberties.

Aside from these frameworks, other measures include the security deployments Operation Conquered Fist and Exercise Eagle Claws as well as Operation Koudanlgou and the Accra Initiative, which are both measures undertaken with other countries within the sub-region.

ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

This section provides a detailed analysis of projects and programmes funded by international technical and financial partners in northern Ghana. The focus is on the four thematic areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures. Within the spectrum of conflict prevention activities and peacebuilding, the priorities of funding agencies are similar, with an emphasis on supporting efforts to address the multiple drivers of conflict and fragility and enhancing sources of community-level resilience, including fostering social cohesion. Early warning and response mechanisms and approaches to violent extremism are major activities. Border communities, due to their higher vulnerability to violent extremism, are the major recipients of projects that aim to reduce violent extremism.

THE PROJECT SEEKS TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS THE IMMEDIATE LOCALISED DRIVERS OF RADICALISATION LEADING TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN TARGET COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN GHANA

The Embassy of The Netherlands funds the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Social Accountability project in Ghana (PoVETSA) to improve and support national peacebuilding institutions, public trust and civilian confidence in security services. The project is being implemented by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the Regional Peace Councils and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). The second phase of the project (PoVETSA II) is focused on civilian-military dialogue, Fulbe dialogue and human rights.

The UNDP-Ghana is implementing the Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in the Atlantic Corridor programme with support from Denmark and Australia. The project seeks to prevent and address the immediate localised drivers of radicalisation leading to violent extremism in target communities in northern Ghana. In addition, the programme supports the strengthening of 'Infrastructures for Peace', which include mechanisms for early warning and early response at local-level and the socio-economic resilience of at-risk youth and women and other vulnerable populations. The programme further provides alternative and counter-narrative messages to hate speech that promotes violence and violent extremism. It also disseminates specific interventions that directly target at-risk groups and factors at the local level and supports coordination and implementation of national CVE/PVE strategies, institutional capacity building and complementary sub-regional information sharing and analysis.

Programmes funded by Australian High Commission focus on strengthening the capacities of communities to prevent and respond to violent extremism through the implementation of activities at the local level with local partners such as NGOs and RPCs. The Mining for Peace programme in the Savannah Region, for example, aims to foster resilience to extremism in vulnerable mining communities. The project is being implemented by the West African Centre for Counter Extremism (WACCE) and the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA).

The World Bank's Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion project is aimed at responding to the multiple crises and conflicts that include climate change and COVID-19, as well as the long-standing challenges of poverty, exclusion and weak governance, all of which may breed marginalisation and inequality. The project is being implemented in all five regions of northern Ghana.

With respect to core peace and conflict prevention objectives, **USAID** programme interventions seek to achieve "increased stability and strengthened resilience across Coastal West Africa (CWA), to mitigate the external threat of violence spreading from the Sahel and fragility from the internal risks of violent extremism and democratic backsliding". This goal is expected to be accomplished through three main areas: (i) strengthening of social cohesion within and between at-risk communities; (ii) enhancing security force responsiveness and accountability to at-risk communities; and (iii) improving government responsiveness, inclusion and accountability to at-risk communities, which focuses on secondary peacebuilding activities. The first two are considered core peace and conflict prevention work, with the third focusing on inclusive political processes. USAID programmes have both a regional and national focus due to the effects of eroding social cohesion, violent extremism, poor service delivery, uneven economic development and increasingly disaffected youth in the northern areas of Coastal West Africa.

In the context of northern Ghana, five key USAID programme areas were identified. These are as follows:

- Ambassador's Resilience Fund: the goal of the program is to support projects that bolster local community resilience efforts and counter vulnerability to fragility. The focus is to support a variety of interventions/projects that increase community resilience against political instability and insecurity.

- Voice of America (VoA) Fulani Language Radio Programming: the project seeks to counter extremism by using radio programmes to reach the Fulani. The contents of the radio messages include straight news, relevant economic reporting and cultural segments with geographic and topical focus. The programming will offer a consistent Fulani counter-narrative to the recruitment messages from extremist groups. The project is funded by the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM). Developing partnerships with local radio stations that carry the programmes, USAGM distributes content, trains their local affiliate partners in journalism and media business topics and sometimes co-produces programming with them.

- Strengthening Regional Peace and Stability in West Africa (SRPS): this project addresses transhumance issues and farmer-herder conflicts across CWA, with a focus on cross-border interventions and the promotion of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The project brings together regional governments (including from neighbouring Sahel countries) to facilitate regional transhumance policy frameworks, engages national governments to help put in place and implement actions to reduce/resolve conflicts between farmers and herders, supports regional and national civil society organisations (especially Fulbe) to advocate for their needs and reduce stigmatisation and takes other actions as determined through analyses and consultations.

- Building capacity for peacebuilding and conflict resolution (communities, journalists, youth, security forces): this project applies a variety of approaches to build capacity for peacebuilding and conflict resolution among young community leaders, journalists, security forces and young professionals within Ghana and CWA countries.

- Community in Action for Peace and Inclusion (CAPI): the CAPI project strengthens social cohesion in northern Ghana by supporting diverse community stakeholders to form CAPI, which will work across identities (ethnic, religious, political and trade) to enact community-based early warning and early response processes and implement Community Connector Projects to address shared, locally identified security and economic challenges. In this project, community stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, especially youth, will come together to address security and economic development challenges and to generate livelihood projects for shared economic benefit.

THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS TO SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT BOLSTER LOCAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE EFFORTS AND COUNTER VULNERABILITY TO FRAGILITY.

3 ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS' ONGOING AND PLANNED INITIATIVES

IN THIS SECTION, THE ONGOING AND PLANNED PROGRAMME AREAS OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ARE ANALYSED. IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ARE BOTH STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS.

The key state actors are the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the National Peace Council (NPC) and affiliated Regional Peace Councils (RPCs). The key non-state actors constitute civil society actors at all levels in conflict prevention, resolution and mediation in northern Ghana and its border areas that deal with VE and counter-radicalisation. Key among the groups in northern Ghana are the USAID/OTI Littorals Regional Initiative (LRI) and CSOs like CogintaGenerally, all the state and non-state actors work in the key thematic areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures. However, the focus is to analyse their programme areas to understand who is doing what and where the gaps are in the four thematic areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION (NCCE)

The NCCE has conducted research on violent extremism in Ghana. Specific research projects undertaken are: (i) the baseline study on preventing and countering violent extremism in eight selected regions of Ghana; (ii) risk threat analysis of violent extremism in ten border regions in Ghana. NCCE is implementing the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) project which is funded by the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments in continuation of the Preventing Electoral Violence and Providing Security to the Northern Border Regions of Ghana (NORPREVSEC) programme. This project started in November 2022 and will end in mid-2024. As part of the broader framework for PCVET, the NCCE undertakes awareness raising and inter-party dialogues. High level national dialogues have been organised by the NCCE in Accra and Tamale on PCVE. NCCE regional and district offices continue to organise sensitisation and awareness programmes on violent extremism, promoting peaceful coexistence and national cohesion. Furthermore, the NCCE undertook a cinema van show to educate the border communities in northern Ghana about violent extremism, radicalisation and community cohesion.

THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL/ REGIONAL PEACE COUNCILS

The NPC has a national office and 16 regional offices throughout Ghana. The RPCs are composed of community members from religious, traditional, youth and women groups in the communities. Since its establishment, the NPC has formed collaborative partnerships for capacity building and funding with the following international organisations: the Danish Embassy, the Commonwealth, the Canadian High Commission, USAID, the European Union and the British High Commission. The NPC supervises the RPCs and offers strategic guidance in their programming. This assessment is focused on the five northern regional offices of the NPC; the Northern, North East, Upper West, Upper East and the Savannah Regions.

All five Regional Peace Councils have undertaken interventions in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures. However, the activities vary due to the different conflict drivers in each region. Therefore, the analysis focusses on each regional NPC, after which the issues will be summarised and the gaps highlighted.

The Northern Regional Peace Council, with support from USAID and Coginta, has formed three district peace committees in Tolon, Nanumba North and Nanumba South. Under the WANEP STAR Ghana Foundation project, two district peace committees were established in Savelugu and Yendi. The CARE International Agriculture Governance, Resilience and Economic Empowerment (CARE-AGREE) project implemented with WANEP-Ghana established peace committees in Saboba and Chereponi. Currently, ten out of the 16 districts are without peace committees. Apart from those set up by Coginta, all the other district peace committees set up by the various partners (STAR Ghana Foundation and CARE-AGREE) are for specific activities and are therefore unsustainable. For example, the renewal of the AGREE project did not support peace committees, and the STAR Ghana Foundation support is election related. The challenge is that the peace committees have been set up under the previous AGREE project in two districts (Savelugu and Yendi), but now there is no funding to build their capacity for mediation. Eventually, the peace committees in these districts will be weakened and possibly cease to function.

Sensitisation campaigns aimed at strengthening social cohesion have been undertaken in the following districts: Nanumba North and South, Nanton, Kumbungu, Mion and Savelugu. The remaining ten districts are lagging behind. This has affected the capacity of the NPC Tamale office to "calm down tensions" in the ten remaining districts. The NPC also has preventive measures and undertakes engagements through WANEP, which is funded by Coginta. Another programme is early warning reporting on preventing conflicts, implemented by WANEP. NPC is a partner in the implementation of this.

There are only two mediation committees by the Catholic Archdiocese of Tamale; in Kpandai and Salaga. Many communities, however, lack mediation interventions. For example, there are no mediation committees to intervene in existing communal conflicts, especially resource conflicts (land and farmer-herder conflicts) in many communities.

Key gaps in the programming of the NPC include the lack of district peace committees in the other districts. There appear to be many districts without peace committees. Also, the NPC does not build the capacity of traditional and religious leaders to redirect efforts towards Nanumba North and South, Kumbungu, Mion and Savelugu. There is a lack of mediation in existing chieftaincy, land and religious conflicts that interact to ignite violence. Moreover, there is inadequate funding to sustain conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts in the region. Finally, the NPC lacks sensitisation programmes to calm down tensions in the Eastern Corridor through preventive diplomacy.

The Savannah Regional Peace Council is implementing the dialogue platforms funded by the USAID/OTI-LRI Engaging Youth for Peace project which provides an opportunity for the youth and other duty bearers to regularly engage on many of the critical issues in the region. At its essence is the aim to build the communication gap between the youth groups and the duty bearers to enhance social cohesion. For example, the RPC identified 62 youth groups (referred to as either the Ghetto or the Attaya groups) and facilitated engagements between them and the leadership of the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs). The dialogue platforms are beneficial for the youth and duty bearers to discuss pertinent issues that affect their communities. These platforms have reduced tensions by closing the communication gap between the high-risk youth groups and the duty bearers. The project was undertaken in only two (Bole and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba) of the seven districts in the region. But the districts that immediately need this intervention (dialogue platform for high-risk youth groups) are East Gonja (Salaga), North Gonja and Central Gonja. The Savannah Regional Peace Council is also implementing early warning and response on conflict detection and prevention in collaboration with WANEP-Ghana.

Coginta (EU) is also implementing a project that profiles conflict hotspot areas for engagement. But while seven districts have notable hotspots, the project supported engagement in only three (North Gonja, Central Gonja and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba). The Savannah RPC has three local peace committees

in Lingbinsi (North Gonja District), Mpaha (Central Gonja) and Kalba (Sawla-Tuna-Kalba). The RPC is also implementing the UNDP-Dialogue sessions with Fulbe communities in Bole (a border town). The project formed a seven-member local peace committee which included Fulbe and minority group members. After establishing the peace committee, there was a need to follow up with some capacity building for mediation and other conflict resolution mechanisms, which, according to the RPC, could not be realised due to funding challenges. The AGREE project selected communities for similar engagements in Sawla-Tuna-Kalba and West Gonja Districts. Although these local peace committees were established in the hotspots identified in these communities, there was no follow-up. Another key project is the STAR Ghana Foundation (WANEP-Ghana), which established two district peace committees in North Gonja and Bole Districts. The committees were to engage with District Chief Executives and coordinating directors.

Moreover, the RPC set up inter-ethnic mediation committees in response to the regular Fulbe and farmer clashes. These mediation teams include agricultural extension officers and traditional authorities. So far, 12 committees (7 in Bole District and 5 in Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District) have been set up. Together with the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies, the RPC implemented a similar project in the West Gonja District, supporting 14 committees. In addition to the mediation committees, the Savannah RPC has undertaken advocacy on conflict prevention, human rights and peaceful co-existence with the district assemblies in Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, Bole and West Gonja Districts.

Notwithstanding the above programmes, a key gap identified in the Savannah RPC programming on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation is the apparent lack of proper response to the inter and intra-ethnic stereotyping and marginalisation of minority groups on hate speech and negative counter-narratives (North Gonja, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, East Gonja-Salaga). Besides, the RPC response mechanisms to dealing with reprisal attacks (especially in North Gonja and Central Gonja) are weak. The NPC has not looked into the ongoing illegal mining in the region, and as a result, people from Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire are migrating to areas such as Bamboe, Tinga and Banda Nkwanta, which, based on observations from security agencies and community members, raises fear of extremists, bandits and armed groups in the region.

> IN ADDITION TO THE MEDIATION COMMITTEES, THE SAVANNAH RPC HAS UNDERTAKEN ADVOCACY ON CONFLICT PREVENTION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WITH THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

> UNFORTUNATELY, THE NPC HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO INTERVENE DUE TO LOGISTICAL AND FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS.

The North East Regional Peace Council is implementing a number of projects aimed at Fulbe inclusion in governance, thereby enhancing the social cohesion between the Fulbe and other ethnic groups. In these projects, the RPC engages with relevant stakeholders including the local chiefs, the Fulbe leadership, the district assemblies, the Ghana Health Service, the National Identification Authority and the National Health Insurance offices in the districts to make sure that minority groups access service delivery by government and further participate in all governance structures. These interventions are in the Mamprugu-Moagduri District, West Mamprusi Municipality and East Mamprusi Municipality. There are tensions between Fulbe and local farmers in the Goriba, Zanwara, Nangruma and Yikpabong communities in the Mamprugu-Moagduri District. Unfortunately, the NPC has not been able to intervene due to logistical and financial constraints. The LRI intends to start a project on Fulbe inclusion and mediation. The project will include five communities in the East Mamprusi, Mamprugu-Moagduri and West Mamprusi Municipalities The communities include Kpasenkpe, Wungu, Kparugu, Goriba, Zanwara, Tantala, Kparigu and Amantin. However, this project does not cover the two communities (Gyanga and Kurugu in West Mamprusi) where there have been reports of Fulbe clashes in the region. Similar to the other RPCs, the North East RPC relies on WANEP early warning monitors.

Together with Coginta, the North East RPC undertook dialogue and mediation under the NORPREVSEC project in some areas. Coginta also has the Peace Project for all the districts in the region. Coginta has established local peace committees to support the RPC in mediation efforts in Chereponi, West Mamprusi, Bunkpurugu Nakpanduri, Mamprugu Moagduri and Yuyo Nasoun Districts, which are considered hotspots. However, East Mamprusi Municipality has no peace committee, but it is a hotspot (there are conflicts between Konkomba and Bimoba in Yuyo Nanton District, which threaten peace in the area). Coginta has also trained the RPC council members on mediation. The North East RPC, together with UNDP, implemented an activity in 2023 to intervene in five communities in the East Mamprusi District. The conflicting parties were brought together for a two-day mediation intervention. A number of community dialogues have also been implemented in the Yonyoo Nanson District (ethnic tension between Konkomba and Bimomba and Konkomba and Chakosi). The community dialogues are effective as they enable the affected ethnic groups to open up and propose solutions.

Importantly, the RPC was of the view that interventions in the North East Region lacked dialogue spaces and inter-ethnic mediation committees. Compared to other regions, the North East RPC has the least support for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation, although it is a critical region with diverse ethnic groups and a number of potential conflicts on chieftaincy, resources and politics. There has not been much donor support, unlike in other regions.

The Upper West Regional Peace Council has been intervening in the following conflicts: chieftaincy (Charia, Dorimon), land (Funsi, Koro, Guassie and Gudayiri), religion -intra-Muslim tension of Imanship (Tumu) and ethnic (Koro). It also engages in capacity building programmes supported by Coginta to establish peace committees in Charia, Kaleo and Wa-East. These 3 out of 11 districts are now supported by the peace committees who facilitate community mediations. There are also interventions by WANEP to support mediation capacity building and early warning monitors. There are early warning monitors in all the districts. There is also a sensitisation on hate speech project with funding from Coginta. This is in Lambussie and Funsi. Gaps in projects on VE, conflict prevention, early warning and peacebuilding in the Upper West Region include issues of understaffing as there are no research teams to undertake conflict analysis. Also, the interventions lack strong dialogue and mediation interventions.

The Upper East Regional Peace Council. The Upper East region faces a complex conflict profile, predominantly driven by competition for power, resources and identity-related issues, with about 55 active and latent conflicts. Approximately 70% of these conflicts are related to land and farmer-herder disputes, 25% involve chieftaincy issues and 5% are rooted in ethnic identity. The region's proximity to Burkina Faso and Tongo heightens its vulnerability to VE, as evidenced by the hosting of over 4000 refugees in various communities and an increased risk of VE activities spilling over the border. In response to these challenges, various interventions and programs have been initiated, focusing on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and countering violent extremism. The Regional Peace Council, supported by organisations like USAID, UNDP, Christian Relief Services, Media Foundation for West Africa, Coginta and various embassies such as the Danish, Norwegian and Australian, has engaged in multiple initiatives. These include conducting dialogue sessions among ethnic and community groups, training in conflict-sensitive reporting and sensitization on PVE. Ongoing efforts also focus on fostering positive community relations, enhancing community conflict resilience through the formation of local peace committees and addressing specific disputes such as the Bawku ethnic conflict and the Bolga Chieftaincy dispute through dialogue and judicial processes. These comprehensive efforts aim to manage conflicts, reduce tensions and build a foundation for long-term peace in the region.

> COMPARED TO OTHER REGIONS, THE NORTH EAST RPC HAS THE LEAST SUPPORT FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACEBUILDING AND MEDIATION, ALTHOUGH IT IS A CRITICAL REGION WITH DIVERSE ETHNIC GROUPS AND A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS ON CHIEFTAINCY, RESOURCES AND POLITICS.

THE LITTORALS REGIONAL INITIATIVE (LRI)

LRI programmes are mainly focused on northern Ghana. The programmes include preventing violent extremism and deradicalisation, inter-community and inter-ethnic peacebuilding, Fulbe inclusion programmes and Village Savings and Loan Associations. LRI programmes are funded by USAID through The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). The LRI's main objectives are firstly to empower critical stakeholders through strengthening awareness of community vulnerabilities to VE and capabilities of addressing them using actions to promote preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism (PCVET) awareness among community stakeholders. The second objective is to strengthen social cohesion in targeted communities. This is being done by increasing sustained, positive inter and intra-community engagements between targeted groups in conflict through actions to promote socio-economic resilience and relationships and networks. The discussions with LRI staff re-echo the objectives above with the participants indicating that their programme focus is on farmer-heeder tensions, land disputes and reducing inter-Muslim tensions. These conflicts are prevalent in the northern areas of Ghana. The problems with resource management and the influence of chiefs and other family heads in land access and ownership directs LRI programming to land and inter-ethnic relations. In this regard, LRI has built the capacities of traditional authorities on land allocation and management. Besides this, LRI work pays attention to "reducing structural vulnerabilities, including women empowerment and gender-related issues". Furthermore, the security situations in Togo and Burkina Faso also shift the programming of LRI to creating awareness on PCVET in at-risk communities in order to pick up early warning signs and communicate as expected. The relocation of Fulbe from Burkina Faso to some border communities, for example, has led to community tensions between herders and farmers.

> '' LRI FOR TWO YEARS NEVER WORKED IN THE NORTH EAST REGION, NOT BECAUSE WE'RE NOT COLLECTING SUFFICIENT INFORMATION, BUT WITH TIME, OUR DATA WAS LEADING US TO CERTAIN PATTERNS OF CONFLICT IN SOME AREAS ''

Our analysis shows that LRI activities are similar across the five regions with the projects using an integrative approach that mixes various objectives. Therefore, in areas "where LRI identifies issues that are of interest or concern, the project staff develop activities in that direction, which cuts across all the thematic areas highlighted". As indicated by a respondent:

> "LRI for two years never worked in the North East Region, not because we're not collecting sufficient information, but with time, our data was leading us to certain patterns of conflict in some areas. So, we now look at who is in the space, who can we work with to try to address some of these. Are there even local grassroots organisations that are also within that space, that are also interested to work or to partner, to co-create interventions to address some of these community vulnerabilities?"

In terms of spatial coverage, LRI work in the northern region has largely been in the districts within the Eastern Corridor, except for the Nanumba area. LRI works in Yendi, Saboba, Gushegu-Karaga and Chereponi, which is in the North East Region. In the North East, LRI has recently signed agreement with the Chereponi District Assembly and the Regional Peace Council to commence a partnership to address problems with resource access, especially between Fulbe and other ethnic groups. In the Tamale Metropolitan District, LRI works with religious leaders to strengthen intra-Muslims relations.

In the Savannah Region, LRI work has largely focussed on strengthening community cohesion in the West Gonja, Bole, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, North-Gonja and North East Gonja assemblies. The focus is on building community cohesion due to the frequent farmer-herder conflicts, alongside illegal activities such as mining, smuggling, cattle rustling and intra-Fulbe kidnapping in Sawla-Tuna-Kalba and Bole Ddistricts.

In the Upper West Region, LRI has presence in all the districts, with many of their activities concentrated in Wa. In the Upper West Region, unlike in the other regions, the LRI has interventions that use local level structures. For example, the Regional Security Council and the MMDAs have been partners in developing by-laws to address some of the structural injustices that minority groups like the Fulbe encounter.

In the Upper West region, the LRI intervention focus is in Nandom and Lambussie Districts due to inter-ethnic and land disputes. Furthermore, the growing number of refugees from Burkina Faso has necessitated the extension of LRI community cohesion and PCVET programmes to Sissala East, Sissala West and other border communities in Lambussie District. These programmes also have components on border security due to the growing number of refugees from Burkina Faso and illegal cross-border trading activities along the border communities. These refugees suffer discrimination due to fear of being tagged VE.

> **LRI HAS PRESENCE IN 6 OUT OF THE 15 ASSEMBLES IN THE UPPER EAST REGION WITH THEIR INTERVENTIONS PLACING AN EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING INTER AND INTRA-FULBE RELATIONS IN HOST COMMUNITIES.**

LRI activities in the Upper East Region centre on community cohesion and stability, which is in response to the ethno-chieftaincy conflict in the Bawku West District. A similar project is running in the Bongo, Kassena-Nankana West, Talensi and Kassena-Nankana Districts due to the marginalisation of Fulbe populations and reprisal attacks/retaliatory violence. Activities to promote PCVET awareness among community stakeholders have been implemented in border communities in Bawku West, Kassena-Nankana West and Kassena- Nankana East. LRI has presence in 6 out of the 15 assembles in the Upper East Region with their interventions placing an emphasis on improving inter and intra-Fulbe relations in host communities.

Generally, LRI programmes in northern Ghana cover all the key intervention areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation. On mediation, LRI works in the five northern regions, with the exception of the North East Region where LRI has recently started intervening, with local organisations to set up community-level mediation mechanisms and structures to help deal with some of the community vulnerabilities. The partnership with the RPCs is commendable as it offers the opportunity to use existing institutions to engage local actors. Such partnerships serve as an assurance for sustaining the mediation structures at the community level. According to a respondent, LRI has prioritised over time to work with community leaders like the chiefs and the queen mothers. This is strengthened by "building their capacity from conflict resolution to dealing with trauma using various methodologies and tools". The absence of mediating structures to intervene in conflicts in certain conflict hotspots such as Bunkpurugu, Nanumba and Mamprugu is worrying. Mediation structures are needed in these communities to:

> "offer a forum where people can go with their problems to get them resolved. I sense that some of these conflicts have been in and out of court. But perhaps maybe the courts are not the best place to resolve some of these conflicts that are based on tradition and customs like chieftaincy and land issues".

Dialogue platforms are being created to build community cohesion and to further deepen engagement between state (District/Regional Security Councils) and non-state actors (Fulbe chiefs and traditional leaders). According to project staff interviewed, these dialogue platforms were considered effective in building/improving relations between the Fulbe communities and the military, police, forestry agents and the District/Regional Security Councils to discuss security problems in the area. A respondent from LRI explained that the dialogue platforms resulted in the capacity building interventions for Fulbe and non-Fulbe chiefs on national and international laws and protocols governing land ownership, transhumance and traditional governance as well as dialogues between Fulbe and non-Fulbe chiefs. Though these dialogue platforms enhanced communication between farmers and herders to promote peaceful coexistence, they are ephemeral in nature and may collapse due to funding and ownership challenges. The absence of sustained dialogue spaces has the potential to erode all the gains made for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

COGINTA

Coginta programmes in northern Ghana focus on preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism. Coginta has implemented a two-year EU-funded project called Preventing Electoral Violence and Providing Security to the Northern Border Regions of Ghana (NORPREVSEC), which aims to prevent electoral violence, violence against women and girls and secure the northern borders against cross-border crime. The NORPREVSEC project is being implemented with local partners (both state and non-state) and is categorised into three parts.

The first part is managed by NCCE and is premised on the idea that the discourse around violent extremism has just started appearing in parts of Ghana and there is therefore a need to undertake sensitisation programmes to equip citizens with knowledge on violent extremism and radicalisation. Therefore, NCCE took up that part of the education. The second part involves funding and providing technical assistance for: (i) thirty civil society organisations (CSOs) in northern Ghana to carry out activities related to peacebuilding and violence prevention; and (ii) all five Regional Peace Councils (RPCs) in Northern Ghana. Coginta supported the RPCs with capacity building, training in PVE and alternative dispute resolution and provided them with logistic support that included furnishing their offices and giving them computers and motorbikes to support their work. Thirdly, the programme targets chiefs and traditional authorities in northern Ghana by equipping them with knowledge on the Chieftaincy Act using an abridged version which is translated into eight different languages. They were also trained in alternative dispute resolution, arbitration, negotiation and mediation and exposed to the new Land Act. The chiefs and traditional authorities in northern Ghana "are also the source of justice. Chiefs are the semblance of governance in many areas in northern Ghana where there is no judicial system". Coginta's training for chiefs aims to build their capacity to handle conflicts effectively in their communities.

In reporting on the new areas of Coginta programming, the respondents mentioned that Coginta has a new 18-month project to train regional and divisional police commanders in northern Ghana to build their capacity on PCVE. In addition, the project seeks to train people to be focal points for community policing and support them in deploying, especially in hotspots, and dealing with VE prevention in border areas. The project will further support the Ghana Police Service (GPS) in the north with one or two police stations and police posts for easy response. Under the new project, the Spanish Police will oversee the education of civil society groups on community policing. The project helps communities without police or security build their capacity in community policing as a way of responding to security concerns.

Key Gaps in Coginta's projects include the fact that the funds that are available can be transferred to other PCVE projects.

Also, conflict analysis is essential for conflict sensitive programming. Without proper conflict analysis, interventions do not yield the necessary results. This is an area where the capacity of local CSOs can be built. There are a lot of CSOs with local knowledge, doing great work, but they need support and funding to build their capacity. Therefore, international donor organisations need to find ways of supporting local CSOs with funding to help build capacities in the area of PCVE and peacebuilding in general.

> THE PROJECT WILL FURTHER SUPPORT THE GHANA POLICE SERVICE (GPS) IN THE NORTH WITH ONE OR TWO POLICE STATIONS AND POLICE POSTS FOR EASY RESPONSE

'' THIS WHOLE BUSINESS OF SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING IS POPULAR WITH PEOPLE BECOMING VERY PARTICULAR. ''

....

There should be targeted awareness training for local people like mobile repairers, food vendors, drivers and community members on VE and its drivers because they may be indirectly promoting VE activities without knowing it. For instance, drivers may be transporting VEOs and their equipment such as guns. Educating them will help in PCVE.

Other key gaps include poor organisational capacity of local CSOs, causing an inadequate focus on women in peacebuilding, poor youth involvement in peacebuilding and peace activity not linked to livelihood development. A major gap identified is the fact that while the traditional systems of governance are important in northern Ghana, they are neglected and have weak capacity. For example, the short-term nature of ADR training for chiefs because of the cost involved has not empowered them to mediate and resolve conflicts.

Finally, the judiciary is left out of peace and security work in northern Ghana. The view of the respondents is that there is a need to target the judges at courts to raise awareness of the dangers of violent extremism and radicalisation. For example, "in the court in Tamale, a group of criminals were let off the hook because the judge said they were scrap dealers, yet investigations revealed that they were moving AK-47s to conflict areas in Bawku."

Another key gap is that the projects are narrowly focussed on responding to the imminent VE threats from Burkina Faso and the Sahel, leaving aside the agenda of domestic terrorism. Emphasis should be placed on locating hotspots that are not directly linked to border areas and the means of recruitment. The respondent was of the view that:

> "the focus on border communities is to create awareness. This whole business of See Something, Say Something is popular with people becoming very particular. However, not all the border regions are hotspots. There are some areas that are not near border towns, but have the potential for radicalisation. So, when you push the agenda of domestic terrorism, then you see the need to locate hotspots that are not directly linked to the border".

A MAJOR GAP IDENTIFIED IS THE FACT THAT WHILE THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE ARE IMPORTANT IN NORTHERN GHANA, THEY ARE NEGLECTED AND HAVE WEAK CAPACITY

WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING-GHANA (WANEP-GHANA)

Presently, WANEP-Ghana runs six programs with different funding sources. These projects have components focusing on all the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation processes and structures. However, certain gaps were identified in the programming. These gaps are listed as follows:

- Weak capacity of early warning community monitors.
- Poor response from relevant state actors to early shared warning signals.
- Inadequate support from the state to strengthen and sustain the inter-related elements of the early warning infrastructure.
- Weak capacity of peace committees to undertake successful mediation. In addition, these committees lack presence in many of the conflict hotspots in the region. The existing ones are not sustained due to the reliance on external funding.

TABLE 2: WANEP PROGRAMMES, INTERVENTION FOCUS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Project	Intervention focus	Funding agency
Electoral Violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation project (E-MAM)	Promoting peaceful elections and mediating issues related to election. Inter-party youth dialogue committees.	EU/GIZ
NORPREVSEC (Coginta)	Early warning and response. Supporting the National Peace Council to form peace committees.	EU
Trust to Peace	Building community cohesion and resilience against conflict and violent extremism. Supporting the National Peace Council to form peace committees.	CARE International
Agricultural Governance, Resilience and Economic Empowerment (AGREE)	Building civil society voice/advocacy in agricultural governance. Capacity building in partnership with NPC and training monitors for early warning and response systems. Using shuttle diplomacy and dialogue. Building capacity of various actors.	USAID
Frontiers of Democratic Culture and Peace in Ghana	Strengthening democratic culture among Ghanaian society by building the capacity of various actors - local government agencies, women and youth.	UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office through STAR Ghana Foundation
Sustainable and Empowering Peace Project	Building community resilience and infrastructure to address climate-induced conflicts due to agropastoralism.	Danish International Development Agency through Oxfam
Youth Capacity Building	Establishing youth programmes to build the capacities of the youth.	US Department of State through Partners Global
Community Cohesion and PCVET project	Building cohesion in at risk communities.	UNDP-Atlantic Corridor Project

TABLE 3: BUDGETS FOR THE VARIOUS PROJECTS

Project	Budgets	Duration
Prevention of Violent Extremism through Social Accountability in Ghana	€250,000 - The Embassy of The Netherlands	2022
PoVETSA II	€250,000	2023
Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in the Atlantic Corridor programme	US$27.9 million - UNDP-Ghana	2021-2027
The Mining for Peace programme in the Savannah Region	US$880,000 - Australian High Commission	2022-2024
Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion project	US$450 million - The World Bank	2022-2027
USAID programme interventions to achieve increased stability and strengthened resilience across CWA	The President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget Request for the State Department and USAID is US$60.4 billion, which includes US$29.4 billion for USAID fully and partially managed accounts, $1.7 billion (6%) above the FY 2022 Request. US$100 million to support the USAID-implemented Anti-Corruption Initiative. US$2.6 billion for USAID fully and partially managed accounts in foreign assistance funding for democracy, human rights, and governance programming. US$2.6 billion – to support the implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. US$47.6 million to empower local organisations through programmes.	
Strengthening Regional Peace and Stability in West Africa (SRPS)	US$17 million - USAID	2023-2028
Building capacity for peacebuilding and conflict resolution (communities, journalists, youth, security forces)		2023
Communities in Action for Peace and Inclusion	1 million USD - USAID	2024

Project	Budgets	Duration
The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) project	GH 68,318,151 - EU	2022-2024
NORPREVSEC (Coginta)	€2 million - EU	September 2021 – January 2024
Ambassador's Resilience Fund	**US Embassy in Togo:** Total Amount Available: US$100,000 Maximum Award per Project: US$20,000 **US Embassy in Ghana:** US$10,000 - US$100,000 per award	2023 - 2024
Voice of America (VoA) Fulani Language Radio Programming	US$257 million - USAID	2021

4 GAPS IDENTIFIED IN PROGRAMME AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

A critical analysis of the programme and policy frameworks in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and mediation mechanisms and structures in Ghana and its border areas reveals that a lot is being done to prevent conflicts, build peace and prevent violent extremism. Donor groups, CSOs/NGOs and government-level structures like the RPCs and NPC have mechanisms for dealing with conflicts at the regional and local levels. Importantly, the intervention programme and policy frameworks that are used by donor agencies, CSOs/NGOs and various structures at the regional and district levels have been very useful in helping to maintain peace and prevent conflicts. One of the key observations is that many of the interventions have always covered the broader issue of violent extremism and have helped in building awareness campaigns even though gaps still remain in this area. Also important is the fact that many of them have touched on the subject of social cohesion, which covers many issues, especially cohesion between minority groups like the Fulbe and other ethnic groups. This has helped to maintain some level of social cohesion between Fulbe communities and non-Fulbe communities. This is important because of the frequent violence that occurs between local communities and the Fulbe and the danger of isolating the Fulbe, which is a driver for them to join violent extremist groups in the Sahel.

However, major gaps still remain in the activities undertaken by CSOs/NGOs, donor organisations and government structures. One of the key gaps has to do with the problem of coordination. A number of activities are being undertaken, but many of the activities are not coordinated, which leads to duplication and repetition of programmes and projects. For example, the RPCs undertake a number of implementing programmes from donors and CSOs/NGOs. They implement these programmes at one point or another. Sometimes, the programmes run in parallel. At other times, these programmes appear to be similar. There is no coordination of their activities. There is a need to coordinate these programmes in order to achieve the most effective results. This can be done by the RPCs or CSOs. The duplication of programmes does not lead to the desired results and does not lead to cooperation from local communities that benefit from these programmes.

Mediation interventions, unlike conflict prevention, early warning systems and peacebuilding, are not being covered very well. Not so many of the organisations, especially at the community level and the district level, focus much on mediation as a strategy. There is a need to strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders as mediators, which requires specialised training. To ensure that issues are dealt with within communities, there are inter-community mediation committees to resolve conflicts and train community members on mediation skills. With the exception of efforts in some regions being made by USAID/LRI, not many communities have mediation committees and skills on mediation There appears to be a lack of mediation structures at the district level, which could easily help in resolving issues that occur. Instead of bottom-up approaches to resolving conflicts, emanating at the community level, many interventions appear to be top-down approaches.

Another major gap identified is that the district level lacks adequate structures for dealing with conflicts. A number of organisations are trying to set up peace committees and mediation structures, but this is not enough. There are many district-level structures that are not adequate enough to handle many conflicts due to capacity issues. Harmonising all the donor programmes and policies will be helpful in dealing with conflicts. Before making interventions, it is always better to do a comprehensive conflict analysis. However, this appears to be missing in the programming and frameworks of many organisations. Undertaking conflict analysis will help make responses to conflicts faster. And while at the district and regional levels, there has been a high interest by government officials in dealing with the issues of conflict prevention, especially in dealing with violent extremism, the attitude of top-level government officials at the national level appears to be unenthusiastic. National level officials do not seem to have so much interest in dealing comprehensively with the VE, mediation and peacebuilding. They see efforts to deal with VE as being overly exaggerated. They are not really concerned about the key issues, especially about recruitment into violent extremist groups and dealing with it from the roots. Their response has only focused on security rather than dealing with this systemic problem holistically. This is quite problematic.

ONE OF THE KEY GAPS HAS TO DO WITH THE PROBLEM OF COORDINATION. A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN, BUT MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES ARE NOT COORDINATED, WHICH LEADS TO DUPLICATION AND REPETITION OF PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE STUDY SOUGHT TO ASSESS GAPS, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROGRAMME AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS OF CSOS, DONOR AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES (NPC/RPCS) IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACEBUILDING, EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AND MEDIATION STRUCTURES IN NORTHERN GHANA AND ITS BORDER AREAS. THE STUDY USED A QUALITATIVE APPROACH COMPRISING ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS FROM KEY IN-TERVENTIONS MADE BY DONOR AGENCIES, CSOS/NGOS, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND GO-VERNMENT ORGANISATIONS. THE STUDY ALSO USED INTERVIEWS WITH KEY PEOPLE IN ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING GIZ, COGINTA, USAID/LRI, THE EU DELEGATION TO GHANA, WANEP-GHANA AND THE FIVE RPCS IN NORTHERN GHANA.

The study found that a number of interventions are being made in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, early warning and prevention of VE. These interventions are spread across many sectors within northern Ghana. In terms of conflict prevention, a number of measures such as peace education, the setting up of peace committees and awareness creation on preventing VE are being used. In the area of peacebuilding activities, the RPCs and regional advisory committees have engaged parties involved in conflicts in mediation activities aimed at building peace. They are implementing donor-funded projects at the district and local levels. In early warning, WANEP, together with the RPCs, has undertaken a number of interventions aimed at ensuring that early warning systems are built. They identify potential conflict issues and recommend that the appropriate authorities give the necessary response to prevent escalation. Some of the diplomatic missions, such as the Embassy of The Netherlands in Ghana, also engage in early warning activities.

Whilst the study identifies the fact that a number of interventions, especially preventing violent extremism, are working and progress is being made in educating people and creating awareness on dealing with VE, key gaps and needs still remain. One gap is the coordination gap, where agencies undertake a number of programmes without proper coordination. Due to poor coordination of interventions in northern Ghana, some activities are duplicated. The coordination gap makes it difficult for comprehensive solutions to be brought to conflicts. There is a need for such challenges to be addressed. The study also found that aside from financial constraints, the need for contingency funding for emergencies is important in responding to conflicts in northern Ghana. Further, there is a need to ensure the proper engagement of national-level stakeholders in the programming and interventions at the district and regional levels. While the RPCs, district assemblies and agencies like NCCE are making efforts to build networks with donor agencies and CSOs/NGOs in building peace, a number of the top-level national actors, especially the security ministries and top government agencies, seem not to be interested. There appears to be a disconnect between what is being done at the local level and efforts at the national level, particularly when it comes to conflict prevention and dealing with violent extremism. Proper harmonisation of the activities of donor funding agencies in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and VE is key to ensuring peace and preventing conflict and VE.

IN TERMS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION, A NUMBER OF MEASURES SUCH AS PEACE EDUCATION, THE SETTING UP OF PEACE COMMITTEES AND AWARENESS CREATION ON PREVENTING VE ARE BEING USED.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the reviews and analysis, we recommend the following:

DONORS/CSOS

The following recommendations are made for donors and CSOs:

1. **Dealing with the coordination gap**. The coordination gap can be dealt with by providing technical support to the RPCs and CSOs/NGOs to harmonise peacebuilding, early warning and activities aimed at dealing with issues of violent extremism. The harmonisation of peacebuilding activities must include the ministries, the NPC, RPCs, CSOs/NGOs and donor groups to avoid duplication of projects and ensure real results of peacebuilding projects.

2. **Use of contingency funding mechanisms**. There is a need to deal with the funding gap. This can be addressed by setting up contingency funding opportunities which provide flexible budget lines at project/programme level for programmes that respond to emergencies. This should not allow for misuse of funds and corruption but provide an opportunity to deal with the challenges of responding to emergencies that occur in the course of building peace and preventing violent extremism. The funding gap can also be dealt with by donors and the EU coordinating the establishment of a dedicated national fund for peacebuilding independent of state control.

3. **Focussing on early warning and response systems and mechanisms**. Future funding should be directed into early warning and response systems and mechanisms that will consist of reports and detection of early inter-ethnic complaints, arms mobilisation, young people joining VEOs and other issues. District Peace Advisory Councils and mediation structures at the local level can take on these roles. This can be done using a common platform for reporting using mobile technology to speed up information flow.

NPC/RPCS

The following recommendations are made for NPC/RPCs:

1. **Establishment of a steering committee**. It is important to allow for a high-level engagement with key stakeholders, especially at the national level, in implementing peace programmes. This can be done by establishing a steering committee for the application of the law and the peacebuilding strategy. The EU, WANEP and the National Peace Council could initiate engagement with the ministries and agencies responsible for defence, security and the interior to ensure that they all become part of programmes and interventions that are aimed at dealing with violent extremism, preventing conflict, building peace and mediation.

2. **Strengthening existing structures and establishing new ones**. There is a need to help build peace committees at the local level. They would include the use of local systems to respond to conflicts and empower chiefs, traditional authors, women groups and youth groups to be integral parts of peacebuilding. Where there are no structures, new peace committees need to be created and where they exist, there is the need to strengthen existing peace committees. These peace committees need to be inter-ethnic, multidimensional and multifaceted, involving people of all genders, ethnicities and ages to ensure a comprehensive approach to dealing with conflict. The peace committees that have already been established are good, but they are not involved enough. Some of the peace committees do not care for ethnic diversity. Therefore, involving people from other ethnic groups will help deal with conflicts effectively. Funding should therefore focus on building bottom-up mediation structures.

3. **Use of local approaches and knowledge in dealing with VE**. The NPC and local NGOs should use local based approaches, which are very important in countering VE. Local people should be involved through local awareness campaigns, local sensitisation and education using local knowledge and approaches. This can be done by developing local VE strategies managed by traditional councils and local authorities.

4. **Establishment of dialogue platforms at the local level**. There is a need to establish dialogue platforms to ensure continuous peace and systems that can deal with VE and build sustained community peace. At the local level, there is a need to create dialogue platforms where people are allowed to express their views and engage in dialogues as a way of dealing with conflicts and grievances. These dialogue platforms can be managed by the RPCs and local CSOs with funding from donor groups and the ministries. Donor agencies should therefore focus on programmes and frameworks for dialogue at the community level.

REFERENCES

Agyekum, H. A. (2021). Monkeys play by sizes: the reconstruction of military hierarchy in Ghana's armed forces. Africa, Volume 91(Issue 5), 874-892. doi:10.1017/S0001972021000620.

Anamzoya, A. S. (2016). Managing chieftaincy and ethnic conflicts in Ghana. Accra: Woeli publishing.

Aubyn, F. K. (2021). The Risk of Violent Extremism and Terrorism in the Coastal States of West Africa: Assessing Ghana's vulnerabilities, resilience and responses. Conflict Trends, 2021(3), 14-21.

Bob-Milliar, G. M. & Paller, J. W. (2018). Democratic Ruptures and Electoral Outcomes in Africa: Ghana's 2016 Election. Africa Spectrum, 53, 5-35.

Bukari, K. (2022). Violent farmer–herder conflicts in Ghana: constellation of actors, citizenship contestations, land access and politics. Canadian Journal of African Studies, 57(1), 115-137.

Bukari, K. N., Bukari, S., Sow, P. & Scheffran, J. (2020). Diversity and Multiple Drivers of Pastoral Fulani Migration to Ghana. Nomadic Peoples, 24(1), 4-31.

Bukari, K. N., Sow, P., & Scheffran, J. (2019). Real or Hyped? Linkages Between Environmental/Climate Change and Conflicts – The Case of Farmers and Fulani Pastoralists in Ghana. In M. Behnassi, G. Himangana, & O. Pollmann (Eds.). Human and Environmental Security in the Era of Global Risks. (pp. 161-185). Springer.

Bukari, K. N. & Guuroh, R. T. (2013). Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Peacebuilding in the Bawku Traditional Area of Ghana: Failure or Success? Research on Humanities and Social Sciences. 3(6), 31-41.

Chin, M., Gharaibeh, S., Woodham, J. & Deeb, G. (2016). A National Strategic Framework for Countering Violent Extremism in Jordan. Journal of International Affairs, 69(2), 115-134.

Eze, C. B. & Frimpong, O. B. (2020). Contributions of Early Warning to the African Peace and Security Architecture: The Experience of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). In T. McNamee & M. Muyangwa (Eds). The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners. (pp. 181-194). Springer International Publishing.

Ghana News Agency. (2023). Over 4,000 Burkinabes seek asylum in Bawku West District.

Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2004). Democratic reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress. Lynne Rienner Pub. (5-27).

Institute for Economics and Peace. (2023). Global Terrorism Index 2023. Sydney: IEP.

Issifu, A. K. (2017). Role of Civil Society Organizations in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Ghana. Journal of interdisciplinary conflict science, 3(1), 1.

Issifu, A. K. (2016). Corporate Responsibility in Peace building, Conflict Prevention and Development: The Role of the Mining Sector in Ghana. Journal of Interdisciplinary Conflict Science, 2(2), 2

Kendie, S. B., Bukari, K. N., Appiah-Boateng, S. & Osei-Kufuor, P. (2023). Social Network Dynamics of Fulbe Communities in Northern Ghana. USAID/LRI.

Kendie, S. B., Osei-Kufuor, P. & Boakye, K. A. (2014). Mapping Conflicts in Ghana. Accra: National Peace Council, (2014).

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. (2022). The jihadist threat in Northern Ghana and Togo: Stocktaking and prospects for containing the expansion. Bonn: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Kotia, E.W. & Aubyn, F. K. (2013). Building National Infrastructures for Peace in Africa: Understanding the Role of the National Peace Council in Ghana. Kennesaw State University, GA.

Midodzi, P. F. (2013). Assessing the effectiveness of the alternative dispute resolution mechanism in the Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict in the Volta region of Ghana. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Coast).

Nolan-Haley, J. (2015). Mediation and Access to Justice in Africa: Perspectives from Ghana. Harvard Negotiation Law Review 21, 59.

Oloo, A. (2010). Capacity Building and Training for Peace Operations and Conflict Resolution in East Africa. Briefing No 17, June 2010. Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

Onuoha, F. C. (2014). Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram? US Institute of Peace.

Osei-Kufuor, P. & Bukari, K. N. (2022). Civil society organisations, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in northern Ghana. Oguaa Journal of Social Sciences, 10(1), 1-17.

Owusu Nsiah, I. (2020a). Ghana's 2016 Elections: An Overview of Selected Relevant Background Themes. Journal of African Elections, 19, 112-135.

Prah, P. K. W. & Chanimbe, T. (2021). Ghana's Readiness to Combat Terrorism: Strategies of Security Institutions. The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs, 23(3), 367-399.

Rein, C. (2015). Enhancing Peace and Security in Africa through Institutional Cooperation. Contemporary Security Policy, 36(2), 267-295.

Slade Shantz, A. F., Kistruck, G. M., Pacheco, D. F. & Webb, J. W. (2020). How Formal and Informal Hierarchies Shape Conflict Within Cooperatives: A Field Experiment in Ghana. Academy of Management Journal, 63(2), 503-529.

UNDP. (2022). Peace and Development Analysis in Ghana: Policy Brief. Accra: UNDP.

UNDP. (2023). Journey to extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement. New York: UNDP.

UNDP. (2023). Vulnerability Assessment on the Threats of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Northern Regions of Ghana. Accra: UNDP.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Sabina Appiah-Boateng (Research fellow at the Department of Peace Studies, School for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana)

Dr. Patrick Osei-Kufuor (Senior Research fellow at the Department of Peace Studies, School for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana)

LEGAL NOTICES

Funded by the European Union

REcAP NETWORK

The REcAP network is an interactive platform for regional cooperation, bringing together organisations and experts in peacebuilding and preventing conflicts and violent extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin.

Implemented by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the REcAP Network project has been designed to respond to capacity gaps and limitations to collaboration between peacebuilding experts, policymakers and, practitioners and to improve the impact, progress, and sustainability of peacebuilding research, policy and practice.

www.recapnetwork.org

REcAP
NETWORK
RESEARCH & ACTION FOR PEACE