

REPORT OF A 3-DAY WORKSHOP ON THE PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY DIALOGUE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING FOR SHARE AND TSARAGI COMMUNITIES ORGANISED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION (IPCR) AND THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) HELD AT KAKANFO INN AND CONFERENCE CENTRE, IBADAN FROM 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY TO 1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE, 2017.



Participants at the three-day workshop in Ibadan, Oyo state

## 1.0 Background

In furtherance of its mandate for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organised a workshop on Promotion of Community Dialogue, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding for *Share* in Ifelodun Local Government Area and *Tsaragi* in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara state from 30<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2017. The workshop is predicated on the reports of the Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) of Nigeria. The reports of the SCA in 2002/2003 and its update in 2007, 2012/2013 and 2016, identified a number of conflicts in Kwara state, among which is *Share-Tsaragi* communal conflict.

*Share* and *Tsaragi* communities are located in the North territorial zone of Kwara state. The communities share common social amenities as light, water and hospitals etc. They also share the same physical features and have no distinct boundaries or demarcations, except just that the inhabitants of *Share* are Yoruba while those of *Tsaragi* are Nupe. A first time visitor to *Share-Tsaragi* will hardly notice any demarcation between the two towns as it requires less than one minute to cross from one side to another. There is also an appreciable level of socio-cultural integration between the two communities such that most natives can speak both Nupe and Yoruba languages, the two prominent languages spoken in the area.

But there is violent conflict between *Share* and *Tsaragi* over the boundaries of the two ethnic communities. Both claimed lands far into what each side believed to be boundaries. There is also a case of disputed tenancy and landlordship strengthened by symbols of migratory history and settlement. There is a serious contention between *Share* and *Tsaragi* over which community is the first original settler in the area. In line with Edward Azar's classification, this conflict can be classified as a local social conflict (Azar, 1990). This is because of the enormous threats to human lives and stability, and large scale human suffering the conflict portends. The conflict also had structural, economic, political and resource implications

A number of violent clashes have been recorded - 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 1978; year 2000; 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2008 (the bloodiest ever); 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2015; and recently on August 4, 2016 a young man alleged to have been of *Share* extraction shot and killed five farmers of *Tsaragi* extraction which heated up the polity in the state and stalled both formal and informal peace processes being made by both the government and elites on both sides of the conflict. So far, the *Share-Tsaragi* communal conflict

have resulted in the loss of many lives and the destruction of properties worth millions of naira. *Share* invited the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC), the militant group of the Yoruba south while *Tsaragi* involved the Nupe hunters. Also geo-political dimension of the crisis is growing. While the *Share* is calling on the attention of the Yoruba in the south, *Tsaragi* is drawing the attention of the Hausa in the north of the country.

As it stands, ethnic sentiment is running deep in this crisis. It was once reported in the Daily Trust of February 10, 2010, that *Tsaragi* Elites travelled to Kaduna State and held a press conference in Arewa house where they alleged that the Kwara State Government was planning to take part of the land belonging to the north with the intention of ceding it to the south. That is, the state government was planning to take the land of the Nupes from the north and to give it to the Yorubas in the south. Propaganda was also used that the Yorubas are fighting the Nupes.

Mutual suspicion, hatred and animosity are trailing the crisis, and the elites and youths on both sides are inflaming the embers of the crisis. Groups are still nursing the pains and feeling hurt of the crisis. The communities have now separated markets, places of worship, schools, etc, unlike as in the past. The conflict has been characterized by episodic clashes leading to killings and destruction of valuables on both sides.

Sadly, each episode of the conflict comes in to scuttle or set back processes of reconciliation which are initiated either by the government or by the people. Between 1976 and 2015, there had been six reports of judicial commissions of inquiry into the crises and in the aftermath of the December 19, 2015, clash, the state government went a step further to implement some aspects of the White Paper on the last commission. But these efforts to reconcile the two communities is making little or no impact given the thickness of enemy-images mutually held at the communal and individual levels in the two communities. Reconciliation efforts by the current government of Abdul-Fatah Ahmed no matter how altruistic are being seen as partial by the *Tsaragi* people who hold the view that as a native of *Share*, the governor will and 'is doing everything to favor his community.

The workshop therefore brought together major stakeholders from *Share* and *Tsaragi* communities, who participated in interactive and technical sessions that were designed to promote community dialogue and peacebuilding. The workshop was attended by 35 representatives from each of the two communities; security agencies; Civil Society and Peace Practitioners such as

Peace Heritage Foundation, Trios Human Development Foundation, Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan; Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP); and the Alara of Aramoko Ekiti, HRM Oba (Dr) Adegoke Olu Adeyemi.

## **2.0 Workshop Objectives**

The main objective of the workshop is to strengthen relationships and facilitate dialogue between *Share* and *Tsaragi* communities thus promoting peaceful coexistence. It is to specifically:

- create an avenue for positive peace, where the status quo does not escalate into further violence and war
- repair damaged relationships and lessen the likelihood of further conflict
- Provide avenue for *Share* and *Tsaragi* people to share information on best practices for peace, including lessons learned on past violent conflicts as well as assessment of their relevance to the enthronement of peace in their communities, and
- Establish communication networks to facilitate cooperation between groups in the communities – women, youth, associations, etc – for mutual support, early warning and early response.

## **3.0 Workshop Proceedings**

### **3.1 Opening Ceremony**

The ceremony was attended by the Executive Governor of Kwara state (represented), Director General, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (represented), representatives of UNDP, Commissioner of Police Kwara state; the Director, Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Prof. Isaac Olawale Albert; traditional rulers of *Share* and *Tsaragi* (represented), and Dr. (Mrs) Hanathu Ibrahim, among other dignitaries

In his welcome address, the Director General of Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) Prof. Oshita Oshita represented by Barr. Gabriel Jiya decried the rise of violent conflicts and clashes in Nigeria ranging from boundary conflicts to farmers-herders conflicts and inter-communal clashes among others. According to him, almost every region in Nigeria has one form of conflict or the other. In many instances, these conflicts often lead to violent confrontations and

clashes between parties. He said the workshop was organized as a result of the SCA reports which identified the *Share-Tsaragi* communal conflict. He noted that although conflict is normal, the violence component must be strongly discouraged.

The resident representative of the UNDP in Nigeria represented by Dr Takwa Zebulon, (the UNDP Peace and Development Advisor) noted that Nigeria is strategically important to the United Nations hence every effort must be put in place by all citizens to realise the nation's potentials. He said this time is the right time to talk peace due to the Ramadan fast. According to him, violence is an obstacle to development, and hence must be discouraged. Building and sustaining peace must be done by the local people and must be made to be sustainable. He noted that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are pillared by peace because everything in the SDGs are peace components for different people. He noted that change happens at the local level, therefore if peace must happen, it must come from the local level. According to him, "the UN believes that by strengthening Nigeria's capacity in peace, incidences of violent confrontations will be reduced to the barest minimum".

The Commissioner of Police Kwara state represented by DSP Ajayi Okasanmi, Force Public Relations Officer, remarked that in his interface with the traditional rulers of the two communities, it is obvious that they desire peace. He noted that violence has retarded development in the area. He thanked UNDP and IPCR for organising the program hoping that it will bring peace to the affected communities.

In his remarks, Director, Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Prof. Isaac Olawale Albert thanked UNDP and IPCR for organising the workshop. He commended IPCR for its increased interest in ensuring peace in the country. He challenged participants to work together towards preventing violent conflicts in the communities. Prof. Albert said participants must take full advantage of the workshop and determine to end the conflict as this is the key to ending the conflict thereby writing their names in gold.

In the messages by the Olukpako of *Share* represented by Chief Dotun Philips, and His Royal Highness, the Ndakpotwo of *Tsaragi* represented by Alhaji Mohammed Kudu Ndako, the efforts of the IPCR and UNDP to restore peace to Share-Tsaragi is laudable and highly appreciated. Dr

(Mrs) Hannatu Ibrahim, MFR emphasised the need for peaceful coexistence between the two communities.

Declaring the workshop open, the Executive Governor of Kwara state Alhaji (Dr) Abdulfatah Ahmed represented by Deacon Leke Ogungbe, Deputy Chief of Staff, began his speech with a biblical quotation “as much as it lies on you, live in peace with all men” He said there is no identifiable difference between *Share* and *Tsaragi*. Taking a cursory look at crises in Nigeria, he outlined various forms of inter-communal conflicts noting that all these has hindered development in the country. The governor challenged participants to make use of the workshop and dialogue so as to bring about peace. He stated that until people get emotional, the required lasting peace may be elusive. “The governor is a son of both communities, born to a particular family in *Share* but grew up knowing both communities as one. And he has stated that no one will move an inch for the other. God has created you to live together in that environment and so shall it remain”, he concluded. He then declared the workshop open.

### 3.2 Workshop sessions

The sessions were carried out through presentations; verbal and visual illustrations; group discussions and de-briefs; and spot-light sessions and demonstrations which bordered on the following:

1. Nature and character of conflict – general perspective analysis
2. Communication and conflict, and the factor of perception
3. Conflict and third party intervention. A third party can never settle a conflict unless both parties agree to maintain the peace. National Boundary Commission, white papers, court judgements, etc may stand in the way of resolving the conflict.
4. Cost of conflict (gains (?); losses etc)
5. Tolerance as a pre-requisite for peace. Discussions centred on the UNESCO declaration of 16<sup>th</sup> November every year as International Day of Tolerance. According UNESCO, “In a world of diversity, tolerance is a prerequisite for peace, it is also a lever for sustainable development as it encourages the construction of more inclusiveness and create resilient societies that are able to draw on the ideas and the creative energy of people”.
6. Analysing the *Share-Tsaragi* conflict. Questions such as what has your community lost as a result of the crisis; what has your community gained from participating in the crisis; draw

the map of your community showing the boundary and other landmarks; and what will make your community people happy, were asked.

7. Obstacles to *Share-Tsaragi* conflict resolution, and
8. Early warning and Peacebuilding structures for *Share-Tsaragi* communities

#### 4.0 Key Comments

- Satan visited us in *Share* and *Tsaragi* and brought conflict but now God in His infinite power has put in place a process to restore peace and we are thankful
- The founders of the two communities loved themselves and chose to live together. We can't at this point drive each other away
- The landmarks of *Tsaragi* and *Share* are one. God joined the two communities together so nothing will separate us.
- Cordial relationship existed between *Share* and *Tsaragi* communities before the first outbreak of violence in 1978
- We have not gained anything from the conflict. The economy of the two communities have suffered since the beginning of the crisis
- Civilisation and activities of bastard children are responsible for the disaffection between and among members of the communities.
- It is absurd that people who have lived together for years will suddenly be happy to eliminate their neighbour. In order to tolerate each other, the two communities must view each other with the eyes and innocence of a child.
- Peace requires concerted efforts by parties in conflict and there is no small effort or big effort in making peace. There is no prize for peace.
- It takes a generation of people to bring peace. The present generation of *Share-Tsaragi* communities must take up the challenge to hand over a peaceful community to the next generation.
- The communities must deliberately take a decision to trust each other. It is time to say, "Enough is enough".
- The traditional rulers are the unifying factors in the community, therefore they must decisively embrace peace jointly. They should nurture peace and stand by peace.

## 5.0 Findings

At the end of the workshop, the following were the key findings and lessons learnt:

- The negative impacts of the cycle of violence in the affected areas caused by boundary dispute has been worsened by elite conspiracy, stiff competition and undue favouritism. All these has eroded social fabrics in the communities.
- Both communities have experienced loss of lives, wanton destruction of public and private properties i.e cars, houses, farmlands, churches, schools, health centres, mosques.
- The orgy of violence persists because the two communities have not determined to pursue sustainable peace through tolerance, developing early warning and response systems and engaging in direct dialogue and negotiation to resolve the conflict.
- Despite past efforts such as Judicial Panels of Enquiry, Court Injunctions, and interventions by third parties, the conflict continues to linger.
- The parties have shown genuine willingness to resolve the conflict between them.

## 6.0 Resolutions

After careful deliberations, participants resolved as follows:

1. Participants resolved to immediately set up a nine member steering committee to translate decisions at the workshop into action.
2. Participants resolved to commemorate *Share-Tsaragi* Peace Day on November 11<sup>th</sup> of every year.
3. Participants resolved to establish *Share-Tsaragi* Peace and Development Forum and design a community Development Plan.
4. The Community Development Plan is to be unveiled on the International Day of Peace (21<sup>st</sup>, September, 2017). X
5. Participants resolved to set up *Share-Tsaragi* Peace and Development Fund. The Fund is to be launched to kick-start peace building and development projects in the affected communities.
6. Participants called on IPCR, UNDP and other development partners to consider follow-up activities such as monitoring, evaluation, dialogue and other forms of support to the communities.

7. Participants encouraged establishment of early warning and response systems to prevent outbreak of violence.
8. Participants resolved to work for peace against the backdrop of massive destructions and loss of lives occasioned by the conflict which has not benefitted anyone.
9. Participants identified unemployment as part of the causative factors in the conflict, thus advised government to create jobs and support new peace processes initiated by participant, IPCR and UNDP.
10. Participants thanked UNDP and IPCR for organising the workshop and pledged to be peacebuilders in their communities.

**6.0 Setting up of an Interim Committee of Share-Tsaragi Peace Development Committee:**  
Participants agreed to have a nine member committee. One person each from the palace, representative of market women, youths and religious leaders. A non-governmental organisation member will be integrated into the committee to make the number nine. The members are as follows:

*Share community:*

1. Alhaji Ganiyu Ajibola
2. Chief Adedotun T. Philips
3. Madam Iyabo Maleek
4. Alhaji Ganiyu Bolaji

*Tsaragi community*

1. Mohammed Kudu Ndako
2. Deacon Joseph Shaaba
3. Mohammed S. Umar
4. Shaaba Alhaji Mariam

**NGO Representative in the Committee**

1. Pastor Ade Bodunde

**7.0 Conclusion**

Realising the dangers of violent conflicts, participants from the two communities committed themselves to genuinely work for peace in their communities. Furthermore, the workshop training

has further enhanced the capacity of participants for conflict management, mediation and negotiation through dialogue as well as equipped them to speak on tolerance and peaceful coexistence among their community members.

#### 8.0 Recommendations

Deriving from issues identified in the course of the workshop, the following recommendations are made:

1. Advocacy and awareness campaigns as further necessary or follow-up actions should be undertaken by IPCR. A visit should be paid to the governor of Kwara state and the *Share-Tsaragi* communities
2. IPCR should organise a Peace Rally for the communities
3. IPCR leadership should also pay a courtesy visit to the President of the Nigerian Senate in view of his interest in poultry value chain. *Share-Tsaragi* is the gateway to the Shonga farms where a multi-million naira poultry project is proposed for implementation by the Kwara state government through the Shonga Farms Holdings Limited. *Crisis in Share-Tsaragi* will negatively impact on the agricultural business in Shonga and its environs.
4. IPCR and UNDP should closely monitor the peace process so as to use it as a success case study model and look out for the possibility of practical intervention of this nature in other parts of country.