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COMMUNITY PEACE INITIATIVES NETWORK

ZOOM MEETING REPORT

Topic: Tackling Kidnapping in Nigeria, Enhancing security to safeguard the lives of Nigerians.

Date: 22nd February, 2024.

Venue: Zoom

Duration of Meeting: 2 Hours

Meeting Moderator: Ms. Deloraine Dennis.

Total Number of Meeting Participants:

18 Participants.

Executive Summary:

Background:

Kidnapping incidents have been on the rise in Nigeria in recent years, targeting a wide range of victims including civilians, government officials, foreign nationals, and even schoolchildren. Both urban and rural areas are affected, with kidnappings occurring on highways, in residential neighborhoods, and in remote areas. The Nigerian government has taken various measures to address the issue of kidnapping, including deploying security forces to affected areas, implementing anti-kidnapping laws, and establishing specialized units within law enforcement agencies to combat the crime. However, challenges such as corruption, inadequate resources, and limited capacity continue to hinder the effectiveness of these efforts. And it is in line with this that The AOCPIN convened a dialogue on “**Tackling Kidnapping in Nigeria, Enhancing security to safeguard the lives of Nigerians**” The session which is the third edition of the AOCPIN’s **PANEL** (Peace Advocacies Network for Education and Leadership) series involved a diverse group of participant and panelist to discuss and propose solutions.

Objective: The goal of this zoom session is to address the “ root cause of kidnapping, implement strategies to redress the challenges, educate and empower community members to play an active role in proactive measures within their neighborhoods, and explore support to victims and affected communities”.

Panelists: The panelists were critically selected to reflect a balanced view of the stakeholders which involved “**Maj. Omoajor Ogedoh** the Key Speaker is a highly experienced Security/Risk Management Consultant and Master-Trainer, specializing in Military Special Force Operations and Corporate Security for 8 years, with expertise in Humanitarian Security and Executive Protection.

Mr Salaudeen Hashim, a seasoned Program Director at CLEEN Foundation, doubling as a Defense and Security expert and counterterrorism practitioner, currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the Nigeria Defence Academy. With over a decade of experience in defense and security matters. And our moderator **Ms. Deloraine Dennis** , a seasoned development professional and skilled project manager/researcher, with a passion for moderating meaningful dialogues.

Historical Context and Current Challenges: The dialogue opened with the moderator giving a brief background on the background of the case study “kidnapping”, the speakers highlighted the difference between criminal and terrorist attacks stating that “criminal attacks were disorganized and not focused however terrorist attacks were focused”.

Root Causes Analysis: some root causes stated includes: grievances, dissatisfaction, perceived injustice, state actions, poverty, ungoverned spaces, proliferation of arms, political enablement, economic downslide, lack of collaboration, lack of acknowledgment.

Recommendations:

A substantial portion of the discussion focused on pinpointing deficiencies in policies and crafting practical suggestions. These key points underscored the urgent need for action in addressing the issue of kidnapping.

- Decentralization of post post and government centers: The speakers suggested that “redistributing or dispersing the functions and operations of government offices and government facilities away from a centralized location to various local or regional centers can create more employment and thereby reduce the state of insecurity in the country.

- promotion of security at all areas (food, human):The promotion of security in all areas, including food and human security, creates a safer environment for individuals and communities, making it more challenging for kidnapers to operate and ultimately contributing to the prevention of such crimes.
- Development of joint military inter border doctrine: A joint doctrine provides a framework for rapid response to security threats, including kidnapping incidents. Military forces can establish protocols for sharing information and conducting joint operations to respond swiftly to reports of kidnappings, increasing the chances of apprehending perpetrators and rescuing victims.
- Increase international support especially funding for security: getting funding for security initiatives encourages countries to collaborate on joint operations and border security measures. Enhanced cooperation enables more effective monitoring of movement across borders, reducing opportunities for kidnapers to evade capture by crossing into neighboring territories”.
- Establish accurate data base: One of the participants “Mr Benard Ekobay, added that “a comprehensive database allows authorities to monitor kidnapping trends, patterns, and hotspots accurately. By analyzing this data, law enforcement agencies can identify high-risk areas, vulnerable populations, and modus operandi of kidnapers, enabling them to deploy resources strategically and proactively prevent kidnapping incidents”.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the discussion highlighted critical areas where policy and action need to focus to effectively combat the issue of kidnapping. The recommendations put forth, including the decentralization of post and government centers, the promotion of security in all areas, the development of a joint military inter-border doctrine, increasing international support and funding for security, and establishing an accurate database, present a multifaceted approach to addressing the complex challenges of kidnapping. These strategies

emphasize the importance of creating employment opportunities, enhancing overall security, fostering international cooperation, and utilizing data-driven approaches to prevent and respond to kidnapping incidents. By implementing these recommendations, there is a significant potential to reduce the incidence of kidnapping, improve public safety, and secure a more stable and prosperous environment for all. **Mr. Omoajor, Mr Salaudeen and Mr. Benard Ekobay's** insights underscore the urgency and feasibility of these measures, calling for concerted efforts from all stakeholders to turn these proposals into action.