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## REWARD

### Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa (REWARD)

West African countries have experienced frequent incidents of violent conflict. Although the causes of state fragility and political instability in the region are deeply rooted and structural in nature, there have been occasions when large-scale violence and instability have been sparked by elections or election-related processes. Despite best intentions embodied in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and the Conflict Prevention Framework, violence is still commonplace during elections in the region. Conflict early warning and response are therefore seen as critical conflict mitigation priorities by West African governments.

The Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa (REWARD) activity is part of a broader U.S. Government initiative, the Early Warning and Response Partnership (EWARP) that was announced at the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit in August 2014. The objective of EWARP is to bolster the capacity of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network to monitor, gather, analyze and disseminate threat information to its 15 member states to support peace and security in the region.

In support of this objective, REWARD will address critical gaps in the conflict early warning and response systems of ECOWAS. REWARD has a two-tier approach:

- (1) Work with the ECOWAS Commission for Political Affairs Peace and Security (CPAPS) to enhance conflict early warning and response systems to reduce the risk of violence in the 15 ECOWAS member states; and
- (2) Support national and local stakeholders in targeted countries to mitigate electoral violence triggers before they escalate into violence.

REWARD will provide technical assistance to reinforce the capacity of the ECOWAS directorates within CPAPS to collect and analyze conflict-risk data, develop strong recommendations, and improve response strategies and sharing of information within ECOWAS member states and with other relevant actors.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen ECOWAS' response to early warning recommendations
- Improve the ability of national and local stakeholders to respond to electoral violence triggers in targeted countries

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Providing ongoing support to CPAPS through a series of workshops for ECOWAS Directorates including Foundations of Integrated Early Warning and Response, Introduction to Countering Violent Extremism, and Conflict Analysis
- Conducting country risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVAs) in the 15 ECOWAS Member States, in collaboration with the CPAPS Early Warning Directorate
- Completed the first pilot CRVA in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2016 with Mali and Liberia scheduled before the end of 2016
- Conducted an electoral security assessment in May 2016 ahead of the December 7 General and Parliamentary elections in Ghana to inform grant making initiatives for civil society organizations that would help to mitigate electoral violence across the country
- Supporting at least 14 Ghanaian non-governmental organizations to conduct electoral conflict prevention programming around Ghana's 2016 national elections

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

### GOAL

Enhance early warning and response systems to reduce the risk of violence in West Africa

### LIFE OF PROGRAM

September 2015 – March 2020

### TOTAL USAID FUNDING

U.S. \$ 20.5 million

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

15 ECOWAS Member States; with focus on elections in Niger, Ghana and Sierra Leone

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Creative Associates International (Creative), lead implementer, with:

- Fund for Peace
- Karuna Center for Peacebuilding