# USAID Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa PROGRAM (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). 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 through 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.

(2) Support national and local stakeholders in Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali and Togo to mitigate electoral violence triggers before they escalate into violence.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen ECOWAS' response to early warning recommendations.
- Improve the ability of national and local stakeholders in Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali to respond to electoral violence triggers.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

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

- Promote peaceful interactions and alternatives to violence within the political processes surrounding the general elections in Niger (2016), Ghana (2016), Sierra Leone (2018), Mali (2018) and Togo (2020).

- Completed electoral security assessments in five target countries to identify gaps and inform grant making initiatives for civil society organization (CSOs) that would help to mitigate electoral violence across the country.

- Support civil society organizations and engage with community members, political candidates and their supporters, including women and youth, in "hotspot" areas to advocate against political violence around the elections.

- Raise public awareness and promote civic understanding of the political processes surrounding the elections.

- Empower youth through education, engagement in peacebuilding activities, dispute mediation, and political dialogue over conflict.

- Empower women's political participation in politics, as party officials, candidates, and other aspects of public life.

- Conduct outreach programs through engagement with traditional leaders to provide objective information to voters.

- Support media campaigns on peaceful elections and conduct training for journalists on covering electoral violence.

## 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 for strengthening early warning and early response. Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali and Togo for election conflict prevention activities.

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Creative Associates International, lead implementer, with:
- Fund for Peace, and
- Karuna Center for Peacebuilding

### POINT OF CONTACT

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