Nigeria faces a multitude of challenges, from Boko Haram’s activity in the north, to militant group threats to the country’s stability in the middle belt, to the unresolved tensions in the Niger Delta in the south. These risks are renewing and exacerbating tensions in multiple sections of the country as political parties jockey for position ahead of the 2015 elections.

The United Institute of Peace (USIP) provides education, grants, training and resources to those working for peace in Nigeria.

**Women Preventing Extremist Violence (WPEV):** This project is designed to increase women’s agency, influence and engagement in strengthening community-level resistance to violent extremism. Through a training program and facilitated dialogues, USIP staff are working with in-country partners to bring together select women civil society leaders and security representatives in an exploration of the local drivers of violent extremism, and potential strategies for prevention.

**Northern Nigerian Governors Symposium:** USIP hosted a Northern Nigerian Governors’ Symposium in March 2014, with 13 of the 19 invited northern governors participating in a three-day session on economic, political, social and security matters specific to the north. The Symposium brought together key stakeholders and created a rare forum for information sharing and networking with representatives of a strategic region that is difficult for many to access.

**Working with the Interfaith Mediation Centre:** Working with the Inter Faith Mediation Centre in Nigeria, USIP has made significant contributions to religious peace in various parts of Nigeria and has produced two instructive DVDs about the methodologies of religious peacebuilding.

**USIP’s grants program increases the breadth and depth of the Institute’s work by supporting peace-building projects managed by non-profit organizations.**

**Participatory Early Warning Support for More Effective Responses to Religious Conflict in Plateau State:** This project aimed to increase the conflict prevention capacity of local peacemakers in Plateau State, Nigeria – a site of cyclical ethnic and religious violence. Using SMS and mobile phone technology to collect information on threats of violence, the Plateau Peace Practitioners Network analyzed and responded to emerging conflict before it escalated.

**Creating a Forum for Debate:** This project promoted a participatory process by which politically marginalized communities in the waterfront areas of Port Harcourt could collaborate with government officials on urban development issues. In order to stem violence that could occur as a result of a potential large-scale demolition on the waterfront, the program held participatory meetings with community members and government officials, and then created a radio forum for debate.
USIP PUBLICATIONS

USIP staff and experts regularly publish in-depth reports as well as short, timely policy briefs that offer policymakers, practitioners and scholars a distillation of expert research, lessons learned and policy recommendations from USIP’s work around the world. Recent publications focusing on Nigeria include:

**Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram?** (2014): Drawing on the results of a 2013 study in six northern Nigerian states, this report addresses the question of how youth are radicalized and recruited into armed groups and what the Nigerian government and other interested actors can do to prevent it.

**What’s Next for Security in the Niger Delta?** (2013): The Nigerian government’s 2009 amnesty of militants in the Niger Delta dramatically reduced the violence that had plagued the region and restored pre-insurgency levels of oil production. However, many of the problems that sparked violent confrontations remain unaddressed. This Special Report draws on the views of many sectors of Nigerian society to gauge whether peace on the delta can be sustained.

**Midterm Challenges in Nigeria** (2013): This report discusses how Nigeria’s leaders can take stock of the conflict resolution mechanisms in place to deal with the political divide between north and south, and Muslim and Christian, in an effort to prevent electoral violence in 2015.

**What is Boko Haram?** (2012): The group Jama’atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda’Awati Wal Jihad, known the world over as Boko Haram, is an extremist Islamic sect in Nigeria that has created havoc across the north of the country and in the capital, Abuja. This report addresses the range of conflicting narratives that have grown up around Boko Haram and suggests how the group can be contained.

USIP EVENTS

USIP frequently hosts events, bringing together thought leaders, scholars, experts, policy makers and elected officials to discuss peacebuilding efforts around the world and analyze current affairs. Recently, USIP hosted several events focusing on current affairs in Nigeria:

**Africa and America: Partners in a Shared Future**: In July 2014, National Security Advisor Susan Rice drew attention to Africa’s progress in the past two decades and its possibilities for economic growth, good governance and long-term stability in a speech at the U.S. Institute of Peace on the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.


**Nigerian Dilemmas**: In June 2013, USIP hosted a conversation discussing two Special Reports: one by Aaron Sayne, entitled “What’s Next for Security in the Niger Delta,” which focused on the unfolding situation in the Niger Delta, and the other, “Midterm Challenges in Nigeria” by John Paden, which looked at the run-up to the elections and the need to examine whether mechanisms for avoiding conflict are sufficient.