



## LAWYERS ALERT NIGERIA

### THE REPORT ON

**THE GENERAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE  
COMMUNITY POLICING COMMITTEE IN KATSINA-ALA LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
BY LAWYERS ALERT NIGERIA WAS HELD ON THE 16<sup>TH</sup> OF AUGUST, 2023 AT  
DOMUS PACIS RESOURCE CENTRE.**



**Figure 1: Group photo of the stakeholders at the general stakeholders meeting and CPC inaugural meeting organized by Lawyers Alert Nigeria in Katsina-Ala. Image by Tyowua Grace (LA, Media)**



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Community Policing initiative, spearheaded by Lawyers Alert Nigeria aims to address security challenges in Benue State, Nigeria through a rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability. Regarding the security issues, particularly in the context of pastoralist-farmer conflicts and inter-ethnic disputes especially fueled by factors like water shortages and cattle rustling.

In response to these challenges, the project proposes the establishment of community-oriented policing with links to local police forces. The initiative seeks to proactively address the root causes of conflict and social disorder by fostering collaboration between law enforcement and communities through problem-solving techniques. This approach involves setting up Community Policing Committees (CPC) to facilitate dialogue and cooperation.

The underlying guiding principles include gender inclusion/equality, participation, accountability, transparency, rights sensitization, empowerment, and cooperation. By emphasizing these principles, the initiative is set to empower both duty-bearers and rights-holders to fulfil their respective roles effectively.

At the heart of the initiative, Lawyers Alert aims to build a duty bond committee that is all-encompassing and inclusive to benefit a broad spectrum of society, including women, children, youth, People with Disabilities (PWDs), and men from diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds.

In that regard, the Lawyers Alert meeting themed “General Stakeholders meeting and the inauguration of the Community Policing Committee” was held with a total number of 58 attendees in Katsina-Ala at the Catholic Diocese of Katsina-Ala Domus Pacis resource centre on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Joint Responsibility in Securing the Community through Community Policing:



In an era marked by evolving security challenges and the imperative for community trust in law enforcement, the concept of community policing emerges as a pivotal approach to strengthening collaboration between communities and police forces. Recognizing the need for a change in the tactics and techniques in security sector governance, the meeting was focused on implementing community policing in conflict-prone regions, specifically Katsina-Ala local governments. By targeting this area, the goal is to reestablish public confidence in policing structures and processes while fostering a robust collaborative spirit.

The essence of community policing lies in the shared commitment of both law enforcement agencies and local communities to ensure safety and maintain order. In Katsina-Ala, where conflict has strained community relationships and tested the efficacy of policing mechanisms, the implementation of community policing serves as a beacon of hope for restoring trust and harmony.

Lawyers Alert is a catalyst for change, whose active involvement in Katsina-Ala is paving the way for transformative security practices. The establishment of a diverse committee, composed of 20 members encompassing women, youth, the Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Security Civil Defense Corps, People With Disabilities (PWDs), traditional rulers, religious leaders, and local government representatives, stands as a testament to the inclusive nature of this endeavour. This committee formation in Katsina-Ala showcases the unwavering dedication to reinvigorating security strategies with community insights, culminating in a more responsive and effective policing model.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The meeting seeks to:

- Collectively reaffirm the commitment of all the stakeholders to the community policing initiative by coming together as a unit.
- Inaugurate the community policing committee as part of the project's mandate



## **METHODOLOGY**

The meeting followed a pre-planned agenda developed by Lawyers Alert to suit the essence of the gathering. It was shared among the stakeholders to enable everyone to stay abreast of the order of events and meetings.

During the opening, the word of Prayer was delivered by Fr. Joseph Torhor (Chaplain at the College of Education Katsina-Ala) Representative of his Lordship, Very Rev. Fr Isaac Bundepuun Dugu, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina-Ala. A welcomed address was soon after given by the director of programs Mr. Mom Lazarus on behalf of Lawyers Alert.

A keynote address was delivered by various representatives of the factions present at the meeting. The persons included the representative of the DPO of the Nigeria Police Force division in Katsina-Ala, The NSCDC, the Youth, women, religious leaders and the traditional leaders.

Under the phase for a paper presentation on joint responsibility in securing the community (community policing), Fr. Clement Ugoh presented the paper. In his paper, the priest spelt out the individual responsibility of all the stakeholders in the collective efforts. An interactive session was held to that effect, where all stakeholders deliberated and asked questions on the concept of community policing and what it entails for their community and respective roles in the initiative.

In the same vein, the Community Policing Committee launch was coordinated by S.P Ozobulu Esq and Mr Polycarp Esq who spearheaded the swearing in and oath of allegiance of the CPC. The CPC was made up of representatives of the various stakeholders at the meeting which included, youths, Benue Volunteer Guards, traditional rulers, religious leaders, the NPF and NSCDC.

A discussion and interactive approach were used during the meeting to address basic concepts of ‘Community policing’.

## **OUTPUT**

The attendees and the Lawyers Alert team delved into the multifaceted aspects of the community policing initiative, exploring its principles and anticipated impact in the local government/region.



Thus, it was concluded that, by merging the strengths of communities, CPC and law enforcement, community policing forges a path toward a safer, more harmonious future in Katsina-Ala. Most importantly, at the end of the meeting, the stakeholders' major concerns and issues relating to community policing in Katsina ala and what it entails for them were addressed.

## **OBSERVATIONS/LESSONS FROM THE MEETING**

The following were observed:

- Stakeholders were caught in a cycle of blaming each other for issues relating to security in the local government, creating an unproductive cycle of finger-pointing. Moreso, some attendees lacked the basic knowledge of the concept of community policing.
- There is a possibility that other members of the community or public may be unaware of the ongoing project and collaboration in Katsina-ala due to different reasons.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the above observations, it is recommended that:

The stakeholder, most especially the CPC should be engaged in individual capacity analysis and capacity building. This approach will enable them to grasp the scope of community policing, develop actionable plans of operations, and role as the CPC. Secondly, I.E.C. materials should be developed and given to stakeholders to paste/paste around their offices to capture the attention of other people unaware of the project. This can widen the reach of the project and create publicity for the organization.

## ***Appendixes***





Figure 2: Picture showing the swearing-in of the CPC in Katsina-Ala



members.

Figure 2: Group photo of the newly sworn-in CPC



Figure 4: The Director, Mom Lazarus delivering the welcome address.



Figure 4: S.P Ozobulu Esq coordinating the CPC inauguration.

Figure 4: S.P Ozobulu Esq





delivering a speech during an interactive session

Figure 5: Traditional Ruler



paper on Joint responsibility in securing the community.

Figure 6: Rev. Fr Clement Ugoh presenting the





Figure 7: Traditional rulers present at the meeting