



Project - “ADALCI”

The Human Rights Support Mechanism

Improving Niger Human Rights (NHR) and access to justice

The security situation in Niger has become increasingly volatile since 2012, with the country facing significant spillover effects from the Boko Haram insurgency in the eastern region of Diffa, and the Malian crisis in the western regions of Tahoua and Tillabéri. This insecurity and lack of resources to address it fuels mistrust and divisions between and within communities, making people all the more vulnerable to violent extremist groups that capitalize on fundamental grievances to exacerbate these divides.

Search for Common Ground (Search), in close collaboration with the American Bar Association (ABA) and Pact, is implementing a 4 years consortium project, financed by Freedom House through the Human Rights Support Mechanism funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project “Adalci” (fairness) **strengthens justice pathways to reduce vulnerability to violent extremism (VE) by improving tools to address the core grievances that fuel extremism** in the country's three main hotbeds of instability: Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabéri.

The consortium also collaborates with existing national and local peace infrastructures, including the “Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix” (HACP), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the “Commission National des Droits de l’Homme” (CNDH), peace committees, local authorities and justice actors, civil society organizations, traditional chiefs, and local mediators.

IMPROVING LOCAL MEDIATION CAPACITIES

In Niger, customary authorities are part of the formal state apparatus and serve as an entry point into the justice system for people living in rural areas. In particular, traditional chiefs play a crucial role in the conflict resolution and mediation system because of barriers to access formal justice and deep-rooted social customs.

Search for Common Ground (Search) is one of the largest peacebuilding organizations in the world. Our mission is to transform the way that the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions. In Niger since 2011, our programs focus on youth engagement and violence prevention in rural, peri-urban, and urban environments in all seven regions of the country.



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Therefore, our first objective is to **strengthen the capacity of traditional chiefs and other local mediation mechanisms in resolving disputes within and between communities** to reduce grievances and the lure of violent extremist organizations as a means of obtaining justice and revenge. To do so, Search provides traditional chiefs and local mediators, including religious, women, and youth leaders, with training in negotiation, mediation, and dialogue facilitation. Using their new skills, these mediators organize community dialogues on mediation systems and processes to gather community views and advance conflict resolution. We also assist **150 peace committees (PCs)** in monitoring progress in resolving these conflicts and provide them with small grants to support other local peace initiatives.

Finally, we establish **multi-stakeholder platforms** to strengthen the links and collaboration between community mediators, traditional leaders, and justice system actors. These platforms allow all stakeholders to clarify each other's roles and identify synergy and proactive engagement opportunities to respond more effectively to conflict.

FACILITATE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR CITIZENS

Populations in areas prone to violent extremism still have limited access to grievances and redress mechanisms. Therefore, we empower them to navigate the legal system and facilitate access to resolve their disputes. Therefore, we strive to provide communities with the means to better navigate and access the legal system to resolve their disputes.

Through a **legal awareness campaign**, we inform citizens of their legal rights and available enforcement mechanisms. Our participatory radio programs, including roundtables, talk shows and radio dramas, contribute to building community confidence in the state's judicial institutions and open dialogue on ways to address violations related to violent extremism. To also reach communities without radio access, Search conducts entertaining field activities, such as participatory theater performances and the broadcast of short films.

Parallely, ABA ROLI strengthens the representation of the judicial system, its capacity to resolve cases, and its access to citizens through, among other things, the establishment of **regional justice hubs, mobile legal aid clinics, case management systems, and trained magistrates** acting as focal points.

ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS RELATED TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) plays a key role in changing perceptions of impunity and lack of accountability for human rights abuses and violations. Similarly, civil society organizations are key actors in advancing the protection of human rights and access to justice for victims.

Through **training and small grants**, ABA ROLI therefore strengthens the capacity of CSOs to conduct evidence-based advocacy for justice and accountability, and to **effectively report and seek redress for human rights violations related to violent extremism**. Our partner is also providing additional training to the CNDH to strengthen its capacity to investigate and monitor these violations with appropriate redress powers. Simultaneously, through its legal awareness campaign, **"Know Your Rights"**, Search informs citizens about the existing means to obtain redress for human rights violations.

