



PREVENTING TERRORISM IN PEACEKEEPING THEATRES IN AFRICA

NIGERIA COURSE REPORT

26-30 NOVEMBER, 2018



Introduction

International peacekeeping remains a critical framework for managing conflicts and thereby, bringing about peace and political stability in post-conflict countries. In this regard, while ensuring that civilians and vulnerable populations are protected in mission theatres, measures to protect and preserve the lives of peacekeepers is equally important. Ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers constitutes a significant effort in sustaining peacekeeping missions and restoring countries back to the path of peace, stability and development. However, the changing nature of conflicts today, and the mutating threat of terrorism is increasingly exposing peacekeepers to danger, necessitating the need for a critical rethinking of training content used for peacekeepers. In responding to the critical need to ensure that peacekeepers are able to adequately protect themselves in volatile peacekeeping missions a one year project on 'Improving Response Capacities to Terrorism in Peacekeeping Theatres in Africa' project was conceived to give peacekeepers the skills to respond proactively to terrorism in volatile missions. A series of activities ensued including a scoping study, regional seminar on the topic, an LDD and also the first pilot course at the KAIPTC. Following from this the first mobile training event was held at the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership Peacekeeping Centre in Jaji, Kaduna from the 26-30th November, 2018. The project is sponsored by the Japanese government with technical support from the UNDP with the KAIPTC as the implementing partner.

Aims and Objectives

The 5 day course sought to contribute to enhancing the operational effectiveness of peacekeepers in Africa against terror attacks through research and training. It further sought to contribute to an improvement in the training curricular of pre-deployment training given to peacekeepers.

Selection of Participants

Participants were sourced solely from Nigeria, to that end invitation letters were dispatched to the police and military institutions in Nigeria requesting for 34 personnel who were in charge of peacekeeping pre-deployment training in their respective institutions. Eventually 31 personnel turned up comprising of 5 women and 26 men. The percentage of men vs women continues to be a source of concern to the project and a sign of larger inequalities in gender mainstreaming efforts within the security sector. The MLAI PKC was instrumental in coordinating the names of the personnel to the KAIPTC. These came from a cross section of agencies and states. For instance personnel came from as far north as Maiduguri others from Port Harcourt, Jos, Lagos, Abuja, Kwara, Calabar and Kaduna. The agencies were the police, army, air force and navy. Altogether there was a good blend which allowed the cross fertilization of experiences and ideas.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony for the course was held at the MLAILPKC. The UNDP representative Melody Azinin reiterated the timeliness of the project in focusing on a very important but dicey topic within the peacekeeping ambit. She further urged participants to take advantage of the rich expertise and retain skills that would save them in the long run. Mr John Pokoo from the KAIPTC welcomed participants and outlined the history of the project and the hope that the training curricular would be incorporated into existing training at the various institutions. A group photograph was then taken with the Commandant of the MLAI PKC

Course Proceedings

The course agenda was structured to highlight critical issues in preventing terrorism in peacekeeping theatres informed by the scoping study of the 8 countries done ahead of the project as well as the Learning Design and development workshop which then produced the modules. As

such it focused on 6 key areas. The first provided a broad overview of Terrorism in peacekeeping Theatres and sought to transfer pertinent knowledge on the concept of terrorism and its related history and manifestations. Based on the field research upon which the modules were based and during which interviewees had expressed a lacuna in the knowledge of what actually terrorism was, this session was important in giving broad brush strokes focusing on the west African context and especially the Mali context and further unpacking the various militant and jihadist movements in Mali and the role played by a variety of actors. The second module focused on mine awareness and Improvised Explosive Devices – IEDs. This was really a critical area of concern as a poor awareness and appreciation of its nature had contributed significantly to casualties in peacekeeping missions. Thus participants were led by seasoned military and police experts who explained to them the nature of the deadly land mines and IEDs and how easily the latter could be obtained and hence its regular use and lethality.

Legal and Strategic frameworks took the next place as it was important for participants to be aware of the various legal and strategic frameworks in place for terrorism and counter terrorism. To this end the UN, AU and ECOWAS frameworks were touched on as well as the dilemmas inherent in the UNs which did not allow peacekeepers to directly engage with terrorism. Following from this, the fourth module dealt with Information Gathering and Intelligence Sharing Strategies. The role of intelligence was emphasized as key as a matter of life and death and participants were taken through the evolution of intelligence in UN Peacekeeping as well as their role as sensors in the organization capturing information which could be critical to their lives. Gender issues were also mainstreamed in the course as the fifth module focused on Women, Peacekeeping and Terrorism. It sought to transfer knowledge and increase the awareness of participants of vulnerable groups in countering terrorism as well as the role women could play in counter terrorism efforts. Finally a scenario based aspect equipped participants with knowledge and skills in mediation in complex situations, detainee handling, incident scene preservation, mine awareness and ambush and counter ambush drills. To this end exercises were held off the class room and demonstrations mounted to give participants a first- hand feel of realities in the field through the topics.

Facilitators

The course had 8 facilitators from Ghana and Nigeria. Out of this number, four were researchers from the FAAR, one from the GAFSC and three from Nigeria, one from the University of Ibadan and the other two from the security services. This resulted in a rich sharing of experiences and expertise from both academia and practitioners on the field. The Collaborative problem based learning method was used to guide participants into sharing experiences and arriving at a mutually acceptable conclusion through enquiry and brainstorming exercises. However due to the short nature of the time, not many class exercises could be done. Feedback at the end of the course indicated that participants were impressed with the depth of knowledge and practice of the facilitators.

Closing Ceremony

The five day course came to an end on Friday November, 30th with representation of the deputy commandant of the KAIPTC Brig. Gen Irvine Aryeetey, and the deputy Comandant from the MLAIPKC Brig. Gen. Eyong. Certificates were handed to deserving participants after which the deputy commandant of the KAIPTC thanked the MLAIPKC for their excellent hosting and collaboration whiles urging participants to use the knowledge gained to improve their response to terrorism in peacekeeping theatres. A class representative.also expressed gratitude to the KAIPTC and MLAIPKC for the course and promised on behalf of his colleagues to use the knowledge and skills learnt.

Evaluation

The comments gathered from participants indicated that the course was timely. The modules were relevant and were well delivered by the facilitators. The objectives of the course were also met as well as their expectations. However they wished the course could be stretched to another

week to give them more in-depth information. They felt confident that they could share the information gathered with their colleagues.

Challenges

The following are some of the challenges identified during the course;

Female Participants: Only 5 female participants were trained, this continues to be a challenge and must be addressed in the long to medium term. The numbers remained the same as the previous training in Accra.

LMS difficulties: despite the best efforts of the organizers, less than 45% of the participants were able to complete the LMS evaluation hence data could not be generated on the overall progress of the course. This was due to the fact that the system went completely off on the two days before the course ended hence only 20 participants had the opportunity to evaluate the courses. An informal evaluation was however done to solicit comments from members.

Recommendations

Nomination of female participants. To address the issue of gender balance, the invitation letter to some countries must specify the exact numbers of female participants needed for the course.

LMS challenges: More easy options including off line services should be explored to enable participants evaluate easily and on time.

Overall the response and enthusiasm displayed by the participants indicates the high need of the course to be run in West Africa. It is recommended that more of such courses are organized to fill the gap in training on terrorism and peacekeeping issues.

Conclusion

Apart from the few challenges outlined, the course was run successfully. All sections at the KAIPTC gave the needed administrative support. Interactions with participants revealed the need

for more of such training programs to be held in the sub-region especially in the context of rising extremism and terrorism in the sub-region.

Gallery of classroom, field scenarios and closing ceremony pictures

