

# CAPTURING PEACE 2021-2025

Tearfund Nigeria's Peacebuilding Impact in  
Photovoice



# Everyone deserves a place to *feel safe and heard*

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Rooted in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Freedom of Religion and Belief, JISRA contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies) and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).

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# THE JOURNEY SO FAR



Since 2021, Tearfund has been the coordinating organization for the JISRA consortium in Nigeria to promote peacebuilding and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) across the country in communities affected by religious tensions and violence.

Operating in Plateau and Kaduna states in Nigeria, Tearfund's work under the JISRA programme has centered on empowering local actors, faith leaders, youth, women, and community-based organizations, to become champions of peaceful coexistence and defenders of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). In Kaduna State, Tearfund and its partners have engaged communities across Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Jema'a, Kajuru, Kaura, and Zangon Kataf LGAs. In Plateau State, interventions have taken place in Jos North, Bassa, Bokkos, and Barkin Ladi LGAs. Through interfaith dialogues, community healing sessions, media advocacy, and coalition-building, we have witnessed hope rekindled in places once scarred by violence.

This report captures more than activities; it reflects lives changed, perspectives broadened, and relationships restored. Each photo and story within these pages is a testament to what is possible when people of different faiths unite around a shared vision of peace, dignity, and freedom.

As we close this phase of the journey, we remain deeply committed to sustaining the momentum of peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria and beyond. The legacy of Tearfund lives on in the communities, networks, and changemakers it has empowered.

Through interfaith dialogues, community-led initiatives, policy advocacy, and coalition-building, we have witnessed hope rekindled in places once scarred by violence.

As the program concludes in 2025, this publication presents a visual and narrative reflection of JISRA's impact in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the role Tearfund and its partners have played in building bridges, restoring trust, and enabling communities to live peacefully together across religious and ethnic divides.



**REGINA AFIMO**

Country Director,  
Tearfund Nigeria

# JISRA AT A GLANCE



**JUDE LIKITA**

Country Coordinator,  
JISRA Nigeria

The Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) is a global interfaith peacebuilding initiative to promote Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda. JISRA brings together faith-based and civil society organizations to address religious intolerance, violence, and marginalization, especially in conflict-prone regions like Plateau and Kaduna states in Nigeria.

Using inclusive dialogue, community action, and advocacy, JISRA supports young people, women, religious leaders, and local authorities to become agents of peace. Through the JISRA pathways, the project challenges harmful narratives and builds bridges across religious and ethnic divides.

Since 2021, JISRA Nigeria has:

- Facilitated interfaith dialogues and used JISRA manuals in interfaith sermons to change harmful norms and narratives existing within these divides and Faith.
- Integrated community-led initiatives through the Participatory Grant-Making (PGM) and action plan implementation.
- Inclusion of women and youth in decision-making processes, e.g, traditional councils, mosque and church committees.
- Advocated for policies that promote FoRB inclusivity and social cohesion in conflict affected communities in Nigeria

## \* JISRA'S PATHWAYS

JISRA's work is grounded in three pathways that together foster freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), social cohesion, and inclusive communities:

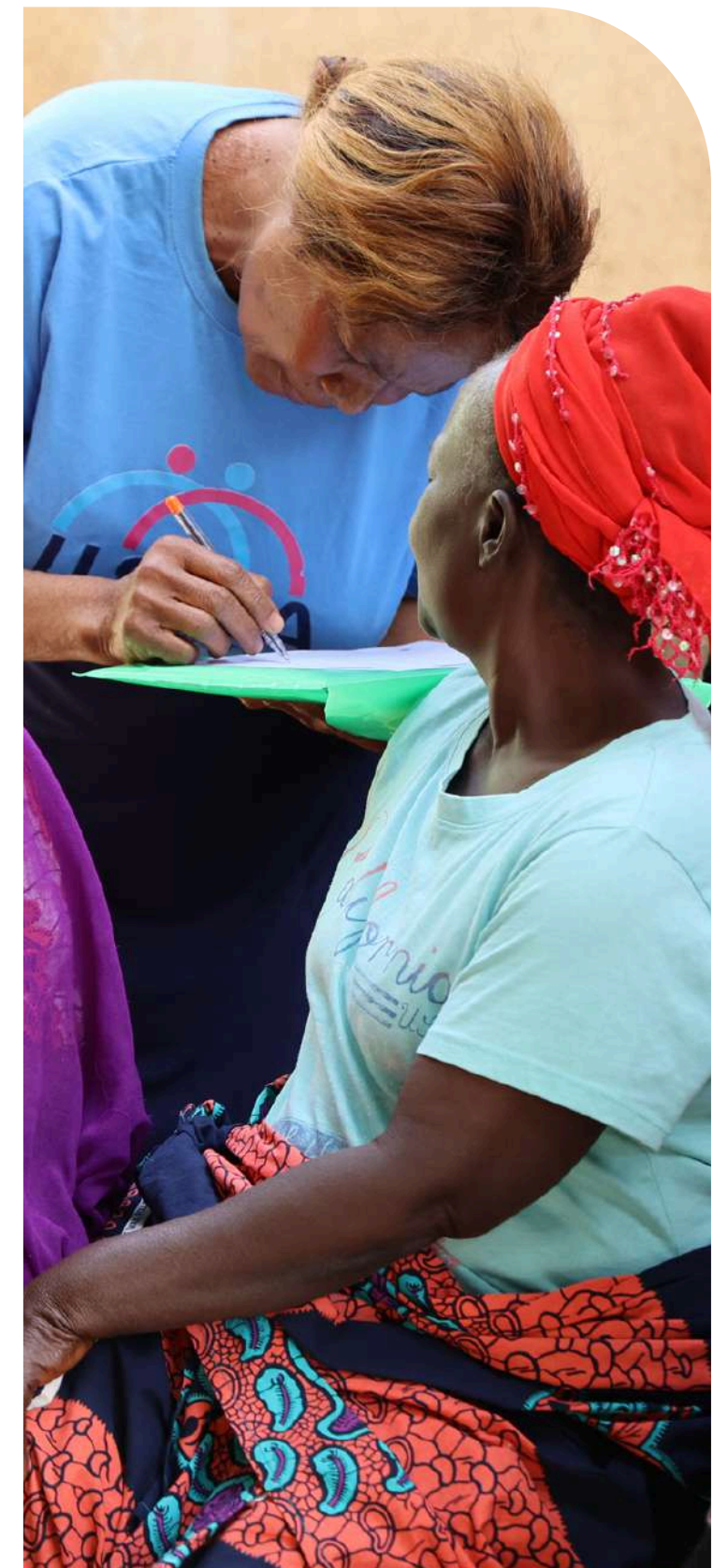
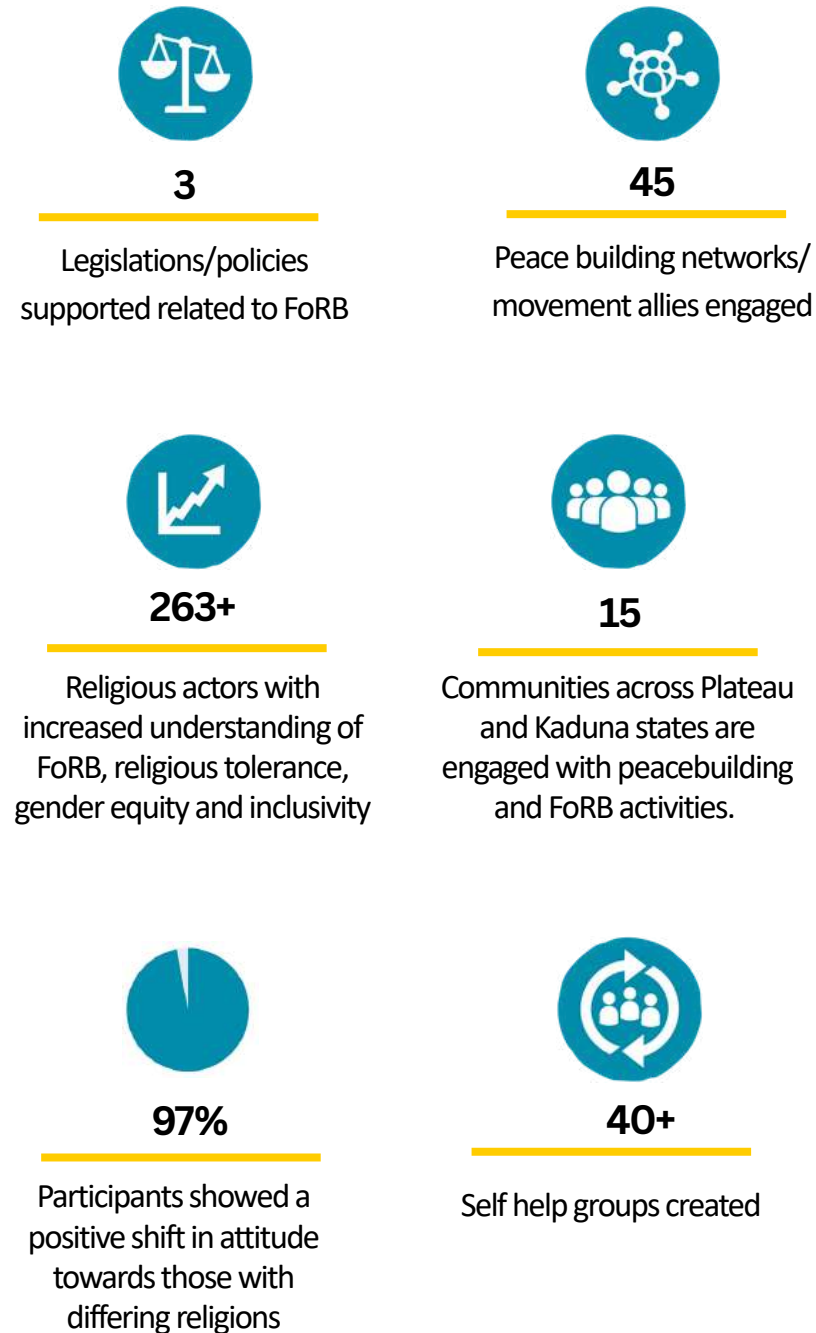
- **Intra-religious Pathway:** This involves working closely with religious actors within the same faith tradition to deepen their understanding of inclusion, promote tolerant attitudes, and equip them to address social issues affecting their communities.
- **Inter-religious Pathway:** This facilitates collaboration between religious actors of different faiths to address shared grievances, mediate conflict, and build bridges through interfaith dialogues and campaigns that promote peace and FoRB.
- **Extra-religious Pathway:** This pathway amplifies the voices of communities by supporting religious leaders and civil society organizations to participate in policymaking, advocate for human rights, and influence laws and security frameworks that uphold FoRB.

Finally, there's a **Cross-cutting pathway** that encourages advocacy activities to be coordinated to ensure women and youth are meaningfully represented in leadership and decision-making spaces.

# Key Achievements

- Capacity Strengthening for Media Practitioners in Kaduna and Plateau: The Role of Media in Interfaith Relations and Peacebuilding
- Capacity strengthening for Partners and project participants on Advocacy, Communications and Social Accountability
- Capacity Strengthening on the Village Savings and Loans scheme
- Honoured Survivors of Religious Violence in August 2024
- Round table discussions and Dissemination of policy recommendations with legislators, traditional rulers, diplomats, academicians, government, peace practitioners and the general public
- Fostered Dialogue and Interfaith Understanding by creating platforms during notable international days throughout the year (youth, women, peace and FoRB international days)
- Publication and Resource Sharing of articles in a peace journal
- Webinar: The role of faith leaders and legal frameworks for advancing FoRB in Nigeria
- Sporting events as innovations to engage with the media and also promote interfaith harmony and cohesion
- Networking, alliance building and partnerships with INGOs, Government and NNGOs
- Establishment of interfaith networks at the community level
- Integrated community-led initiatives through the Participatory Grant-Making (PGM) and action plan implementation
- Inclusion of women and youth in decision-making processes (traditional councils and church committees)
- Change in harmful cultural norms and practices; women included in the sharing of family inheritance
- Use of JISRA manuals by Muslim and Christian religious leaders during sermons
- Co-organized a Parallel event for CSW 69 Beijing 30+ themed 'Faith, Empowerment, and Equality: A Conversation with Women and Young Women of Faith'
- Influenced the Nigerian Parliament on constitutional matters to prioritise four key areas: **traditional institutions, gender, security and religious freedom**

# Impact Data



## Since 2019, Tearfund has supported:

- 250,000+ Direct beneficiaries
- 1,000,000+ Indirect beneficiaries
- 246 Interfaith dialogue forums
- 60,070 Individuals in peacebuilding trainings
- 133+ Communities with peacebuilding activities

# BREAKING BARRIERS

Constance Onye-Ezeugbo was one of the women who attended JISRA's inclusive training on leadership, advocacy and peacebuilding, where she learned about the importance of women's voices in governance.

Inspired and equipped with new skills, Constance took action. She led advocacy efforts, engaging the traditional council and male leaders to push for greater female inclusion. Through dialogue and persistent engagement, she made the case for women's representation in leadership, highlighting how balanced decision-making would benefit the entire community.



In Zaruma, as in many Nigerian communities, leadership and decision-making were dominated by men, leaving women without representation or a voice in matters affecting their lives.

Recognising the need for gender inclusivity, JISRA, through its local partners, introduced leadership and gender equality training programmes in Zaruma. These sessions aimed to equip women with the knowledge, confidence and skills to participate in leadership and decision-making.



**‘Before JISRA, only men were involved in decision-making in my community. Through JISRA's advocacy efforts, I became the first woman included in the stakeholders in the community. Now, we are 16 women.’**

**Constance Onye-Ezeugbo**

Woman Leader, Zaruma, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria

# HOPE IN HARMONY



**Davou Raphael**

Catechist of St. Peter and Paul Church Council, Congo-Russia

**‘Even as a religious leader, my understanding of key issues was limited. But through JISRA's capacity-building workshops, I've gained deeper insight into the sanctity of life, peace, justice, love, forgiveness, and respect for all.’**

**Davou Raphael**

Catechist of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Congo-Russia, Jos

Interfaith relations in Congo-Russia community were strained. It was common for individuals to throw stones at the church building simply because it shared a boundary with the neighboring Muslim community. JISRA has improved Christian-Muslim relations in the community, once marked by tension. The local mosque now responds positively to church invitations, and Muslim youths even join Christians in protecting the church during Sunday services—a remarkable shift in a once-hostile environment.

Using the JISRA training manual during Bible studies, youth and women in St. Peter and Paul Church, Congo-Russia, now better understand gender equality, peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution. The church also took a bold step in October 2023 by appointing Mrs. Mary Peter Mandu as the first female chairperson of the church council—a position previously held by men for decades.



**Mary Peter Mandu**

Chairperson of St. Peter and Paul Church Council, Congo-Russia

# BUILDING INTERFAITH BRIDGES



**Mallam Abubakar Musa Salihu - Imam of Zankan Community & Reverend Yohanna Bitrus - Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kaura LGA at an Interfaith Sermon which holds in their community on the 3rd Sunday of every month using the JISRA Interfaith Manual.**  
Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



**Members of Zankan Community gather after their monthly interfaith sermon session, held every third Sunday of the month. Using the JISRA manual, Christian and Muslim leaders take turns delivering sermons—if a Christian leader preaches this week, a Muslim leader leads the next week—fostering mutual respect and understanding across faiths.**  
Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

# PROMOTING INCLUSIVE CULTURAL PRACTICES



Ishaya Pam is a community leader of Rafiki Community in Bassa LGA, Plateau State. After participating in a JISRA workshop on harmful cultural practices, he decided to include his two daughters in the family inheritance. His four sons initially resisted and argued that it was anti-cultural. Ishaya gave his sons time to reflect rather than forcing the issue.

A few months later, Ishaya gathered his four sons and two daughters for a heartfelt discussion. He explained his reasons for wanting to share the inheritance equally, emphasising the importance of gender equality and fairness. After a serious deliberation, his children agreed.

Word of Ishaya's decision spread through the community, and he faced criticism from some elders. One friend expressed disappointment, but Ishaya took the time to explain the lessons he had learned from JISRA about equality and respect for all genders.

Inspired by Ishaya's conviction, his friend decided to follow suit, gathering his children and ensuring his daughters received their rightful share of the inheritance.

**Ishaya Pam includes his daughters in land inheritance, challenging harmful traditions and promoting gender equality.**

Rafiki, Bassa LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria.



**Alhaji Buhari Adamu Jama'a - District Head of Gidan Waya, institutionalized the inclusion of women leaders in traditional council meetings, challenging gender norms and giving women a voice in decision-making processes.**

**Through JISRA, he also introduced a nonviolent conflict resolution model, ensuring that communal issues are first addressed through the traditional council before escalating to security agencies.**

Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

# RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS



**Markus Achai, Village Head of Manchok Community, was deeply affected by a 2014 attack by unidentified herders. The trauma resulted in hatred, even making him reject "fura de nunu", a local milk delicacy associated with the herders. Training on forgiveness and reconciliation transformed Markus' mindset. When herders later destroyed his crops, he chose not to retaliate but forgave them. Today, Markus enjoys fura de nunu and mediates peace among community members.**  
Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



**Anya Sani, a 40-year-old Christian woman from Congo-Russia, Jos North, once harbored deep resentment after losing her brother in the 2008 Jos crisis. Her grief turned to hatred, even affecting how she treated Muslims at her food stall. But through Tearfund/SUWA interreligious peacebuilding workshops, Anya experienced a change of heart. She began serving all customers equally, earning the affectionate nickname "Mother" from Muslims in her community.**  
Congo-Russia, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria.

# GENDER INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION



**‘Women were almost sidelined in my community, but with the coming of JISRA, women now actively participate at the traditional council and political levels. Personally, my level of communication and relationship with people of other faiths has increased because of JISRA.’**

**Benardette Julius Bakura**  
Manchok, Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



**Alice Abba, a women's leader in Zankan, Kaduna State, Nigeria, speaks out freely and expresses her views in a monthly interfaith gathering in her community.**

# BUILDING INTERFAITH HARMONY THROUGH VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOANS ASSOCIATION (VSLA)



‘There have been other benefits from the VSLA aside from the financial help. It has helped in uniting us as we come to meet each other as people of different faith groups.’

**Martha Isa**

Manchok Community, Kaura LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.



Martha Isa winnows sunflower seeds – a business she started through JISRA’s Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) initiative.

# PATHS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY



**Mallam Garba Sale is the Ward Head of Baiya Arewa in Gidan Waya District, who resolved farmer-herder clashes in his community using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methodology. Garba's brother (now deceased) recognised the urgency to make peace and made a monumental decision to allocate a portion of his land as a new grazing route, ensuring that herders could move freely without disturbing farmlands. Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria.**



**Ardo Bako Abubakar of Dutsen Kura, Bassa LGA, builds a path for peace by preventing reprisal attacks and fostering unity among religious groups. By welcoming both Christians and Muslims to shared celebrations, he models the power of interfaith harmony in healing divided communities.**

# JISRA Nigeria Activities



## Interfaith Football Match Fosters Unity Across Faiths

Christians and Muslims came together for an interfaith football match to symbolize acceptance, freedom of religion or belief, and peaceful coexistence across faith lines. The event showcased how sports can bridge divides, foster dialogue, and strengthen unity in diverse Nigerian communities.



Sports as a platform for dialogue in peacebuilding and social cohesion



# JISRA Nigeria Events



World Interfaith Harmony Week in collaboration with Kaduna State Peace Commission - February 2025



2025 Strategic Planning with Kaduna State Peace Commission



Capacity Strengthening on the Role of Media in Interfaith Relations and Peacebuilding



2025 Strategic Planning with Kaduna State Peace Commission

# JISRA Nigeria Events



International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief held in Abuja



Roundtable on the Role of Security Actors in Peacebuilding



Recipients of Recognition Plaques for Peacebuilding efforts as victims or survivors of FoRB-related incidences.



Roundtable on Just and Peaceful Societies: State Police as the Sentinel of Peace in Nigeria



# Policy Influencing



Taiwan International Religious Freedom Summit  
- Promoting Legislative Action in FoRB



International Day of Tolerance Celebration to promote FoRB



Launch of Report on State Policing in Plateau State



Elections Advocacy



# CAPACITY STRENGTHENING



VSLA training for communities in Plateau State



Capacity Strengthening on the Role of Media in Interfaith Relations and Peacebuilding



Media workshop for print, TV and social media networks in Plateau State



2025 Strategic Planning with Kaduna State Peace Commission

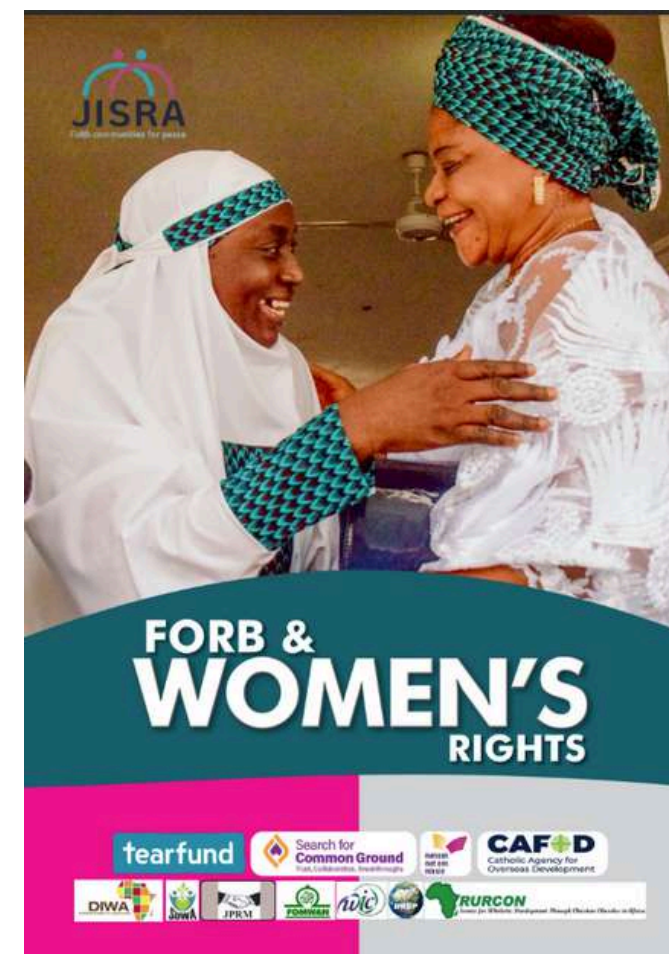
# JISRA Nigeria's Lobby & Advocacy Impact



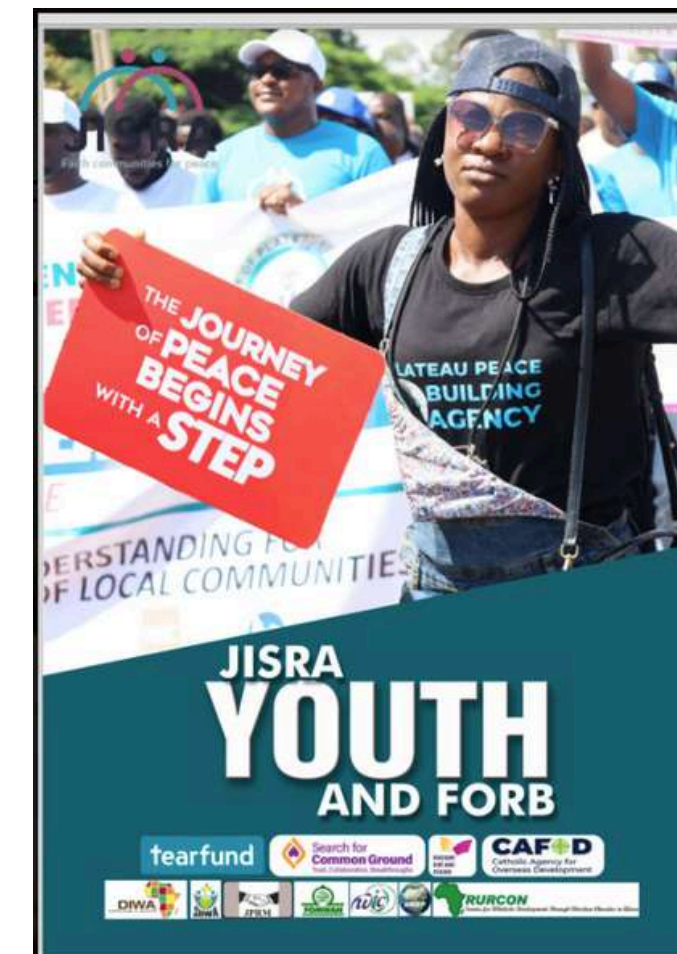
Report on State Policing in Plateau State



Case Study on Peacebuilding and Women's Inclusion



Fact Sheet on FoRB and Women's Rights



Fact Sheet on Youth and FoRB



## Peacebuilding

Tearfund fosters peace and promotes Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) by empowering communities through interfaith dialogues, grassroots peacebuilding, and capacity building.

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