Fostering a more permissive and accepting environment for the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPs) within Ghana is the principal goal of the Fund for Peace (FFP) program, implemented in partnership with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Ghana). The project aims to support the formation and rollout of the Ghanaian VPs National Implementation Plan, build the capacity of an informed local civil society, particularly on critical human rights issues that impact both men and women, and to develop a sustainable multi-stakeholder forum that can collectively create the conditions necessary for effective VPs implementation.

Since July 2015, our 18-month program has focused on building the awareness and capacity of civil society — including local community members and civil society organizations (CSOs) — about the VPs, as well as more broadly peacebuilding and conflict prevention in extractives-affected communities of Ghana. This included developing pilot programs in four regions, to facilitate training, then dialogue that encourages constructive engagement between local government, communities, and companies. The activities aimed to help local stakeholders address grievances transparently, and ensure public and private security forces are acting responsibly and proportionately.

Equipped with the knowledge and tools to monitor issues relating to security and human rights in these communities, as well as seeking to identify conflict drivers related to extractives, our program has provided civil society with a platform to better mitigate violence and potential for security force abuses in communities. This will feed into national level multi-stakeholder roundtables, designed to establish a practical working group of stakeholders to further VPs implementation across Ghana.

This briefing of Quarter Three 2016 (Q3) provides updates on the first national level roundtable staged in Accra—bringing together representatives from the four pilot regions in July 2016.

This brief summarizes the key project updates for the quarter relating to the Voluntary Principles in Ghana undertaken by FFP in local partnership with WANEP-Ghana. The project implementation is focused in the four key regions highlighted in the map above. This program is a U.S. Government funded initiative, provided by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Democracy, Rights and Labor.

For further information on our program, please contact FFP or WANEP-Ghana:

**FFP**

Fund For Peace, Washington D.C.

Hannah Blyth

Program Manager

E: hiblyth@fundforpeace.org

T: +1 (202) 233-7940 ext. 223

W: www.fundforpeace.org

**WANEP-Ghana, Tamale**

Albert Yelyang

National Network Coordinator

E: avelyang@gmail.com

T: +233 3720 98747

W: www.wanep.org
First National-Level VPs Dialogue
Establishing a national platform

One of the most valuable parts of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, is its ability to convene diverse stakeholders to find common ground on key human rights and security issues. This constructive engagement centers on the shared interests of government, company and civil society of promoting sustainable security and development within communities. For the company—reduced security risks mean a stable operating environment for their project to succeed. For civil society, it offers a chance to promote peace and prosperity for communities, while also ensuring their rights are protected. And for the government, it supports the objectives of both citizen protection and peaceable economic growth.

While in theory these interests align, the reality on the ground is often very different. Communities and their representatives can feel aggrieved, distrusting of companies and government, and commonly as if they have not seen the project’s prosperity benefit their community or region, or that their concerns not taken seriously. By contrast companies or government may see the side of violence, crime and hostility from local actors that impact the safety of their personnel and assets, and jeopardize their operations.

Establishing that mutual trust takes time. However, through clear rules and support to create a platform where constructive engagement can begin — sustained dialogue has the potential to address many of the underlying conflict dynamics.

This program sought to achieve this through the creation of local dialogue platforms in Upper East, Western, Brong-Ahafo and Ashanti regions. For many stakeholders, it was the first time they had sat in a room all together with local leadership, government, company, CSOs and media, to talk about the issues facing them around the extractives sector. Discussions during the local dialogues staged in February and May 2016, were framed within the context of a forum of addressing security and human right concerns. The underlying conflict drivers also informed discussion, highlighting issues such as environmental degradation, compensation, unemployment and land disputes which can be triggers for violence.

Using the information shared in the local dialogues, the July 2016 roundtable provided a forum for representatives from the four regions to voice concerns and issues at a national level. It also represented an important opportunity for different communities, government stakeholders and mining, oil and gas companies to connect and share lessons learned and best practices. To provide a more national-level perspective, were stakeholders from the Government of Ghana including the Petroleum Commission, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Jus-

Key Issues Raised from Each Region
Major conflict drivers identified during the national roundtable

**Brong-Ahafo Region**
- Youth unemployment and competition for skilled labor positions
- Site incursions by Galamsey; eliciting security responses from deployed public security
- Perceived in-access to complaints structures by community members

**Western Region**
- Dispute over government distribution of oil revenues to coastal communities and Western region
- Youth unemployment and access to education
- Limited community engagement by some companies operating in the region

**Upper East Region**
- Disputed MoU between community and company relating to implementation of development projects
- Environmental degradation; both from illegal mining (Galamsey) and perceived by communities
- Underground tunneling by Galamsey; causing security and environmental concerns to communities and company workers

**Ashanti Region**
- Street violence and criminality
- Disenfranchised youth; high rates of unemployment
- Site incursions and use of explosives by Galamsey; causing site security implications
The Roundtable included company representatives from the four regions including AngloGold Ashanti, Eni, Newmont, Shanxii Mining, and Tullow Oil, as well as the Ghana Chamber of Mines and private security provider G4S. Also in attendance were local leadership from youth, women and religious groups as well as WANEP and the Ghana News Agency. A total of 30 participants were involved at the event, which was staged at the Fiesta Hotel in Accra on July 28th, 2016.

During proceedings, local representatives from the company, community and government in each region provided updates on key issues affecting their local areas. Across the regions, commonality was found in the propensity of underlying issues having the potential to escalate into conflict and violence, and result in security response and use of force incidents. This was considered more of a challenge than any human rights abuses being actively committed by security forces, which was seen as a follow-on effect.

At the stage where a security situation escalates and there is a response by public security—the need for training and communication between companies, police and military was highlighted. One example raised was the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between mining companies and the Ghana Army which was negotiated by the Chamber of Mines in 2014 which focuses on VPs. There remains an ongoing issue surrounding the MoU at the Obuasi mine site in the Ashanti region, where a company-government dispute is currently before international arbitration. Despite this, it was noted that the parties have continued to communicate and coordinate on some security measures.

Nonetheless, the coordinated approach amongst the Chamber's membership with respect to formal agreements with public security (CHRAJ), the Ghana Army, Navy and Police, and Ministry of the Interior.

Success Story: Coverage of the National VPs Roundtable

The approach to involving local journalists in our regional activities has ensured that the knowledge around the VPs has been carried through to the national and international media. This approach was continued at the national level roundtable in July, with media representatives invited to be part of the discussion. Coverage of the event reinforced positive messaging around the VPs framework as well as highlighting key issues such as underlying conflict drivers of youth disenfranchisement, illegal mining practices and environmental degradation.

As part of our program’s objective to contribute to overall learning and development of best practices on VPs, we circulated a summary to key community, government and company stakeholders both within Ghana and wider international community.

The approach to involving local journalists in our regional activities has ensured that the knowledge around the VPs has been carried through to the national and international media. This approach was continued at the national level roundtable in July, with media representatives invited to be part of the discussion. Coverage of the event reinforced positive messaging around the VPs framework as well as highlighting key issues such as underlying conflict drivers of youth disenfranchisement, illegal mining practices and environmental degradation.

The approach to involving local journalists in our regional activities has ensured that the knowledge around the VPs has been carried through to the national and international media. This approach was continued at the national level roundtable in July, with media representatives invited to be part of the discussion. Coverage of the event reinforced positive messaging around the VPs framework as well as highlighting key issues such as underlying conflict drivers of youth disenfranchisement, illegal mining practices and environmental degradation.
security, provided an example of best practice for the oil/gas companies in the Western region who work with the Ghana Navy and Airforce, as well as Naval Police.

Discussion highlighted the need for companies to better engage with communities from the beginning of a project lifecycle, and managing community expectations about employment opportunities, compensation, and livelihoods, as well as security arrangements. With new oil/gas projects coming online in the Western region, community concerns were raised about planning for sustainable livelihoods, including investing in youth skills and education. Similarly, the disputes in the Upper East regarding the company provision of funds for development projects, rather than sums of revenue to traditional leadership, remains ongoing.

A second follow-up dialogue intended to narrow the focus to a policy discussion of security and human rights issues, and review the Ghana Government VPs National Action Plan, will be staged in October 2016.

Increasing Public Awareness
Promoting security and human rights throughout Ghana

The program’s website is underway, with completion due in coming months (see box below). The website will be a key resource for companies, communities and government alike on the VPs and how they can get involved. The website will also have a reporting portal, enabling local stakeholders to submit incidents relating to VPs-related conflict—for review and follow up by WANEP-Ghana, as part of their broader organizational work on conflict early warning/response, and peacebuilding.

As part of the Ghana Government’s commitment to become a member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative, they have developed a National Action Plan (NAP) which will help deepen VPs awareness and buy-in from civil society, companies and government at different levels. During the national roundtable in July, what became apparent was the need for robust consulta-

Upcoming Activities
Taking place next quarter are the following project activities:

- Second national level VPs dialogue in Accra on October 20th, 2016
- Circulation of summary and recommendations from the national roundtable to a wider public audience
- Sustainability planning for post-program continued multi-stakeholder VPs in-country process.

Development of www.ghanavps.org

A central ‘knowledge hub’ for security and human rights content is an important part of this program’s objective to deepen knowledge and share best practices within Ghana. It also provides an opportunity to showcase to other global partners the strides Ghana has made in implementing the VPs, since joining onto the international initiative in 2014. The website—whose url will be http://www.ghanavps.org—is in the final stages of testing, with launch anticipated to be next quarter. It will showcase publicly available content on VPs resources, tools, as well as reporting functionality for stakeholder to report incidents to WANEP-Ghana to integrate into their early warning and response systems. It aims to encourage engagement on the VPs by all stakeholder groups - not just companies implementing the guidelines, but also how civil society and government can get involved.
About Us
The Fund For Peace

The Fund for Peace (FFP) is an independent, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) non-profit research and educational organization founded over five decades ago, headquartered in Washington D.C. FFP works to prevent conflict and promote sustainable security by building relationships and trust across diverse sectors and by developing innovative technologies and tools.

WANEP-Ghana

Established in 2002 as a non-profit, nonpartisan civil society organization, WANEP-Ghana has a network of over 130 grassroots civil society organizations across the country, and is engaged in a wide range of education, peace and conflict research, gender-based (including women, youth and vulnerable groups) peacebuilding, and human security early warning and response activities.