of the National Peace Council with experience in conflict resolution and peace building operate in each region and district. The Ministry of Interior has a Peacebuilding Support Unit to coordinate the collaboration of government agencies with the infrastructure for peace components and provides technical and administrative support.

Together, the national, regional and district peace councils form an early warning network to alert to the potential for violent conflict as well as an early response network to prevent conflict from escalating. The National Peace Council hosts a website that monitors conflict in different regions of the country and provides a 'conflict map' of key divisive issues.[68] Ghana's local peace committees are the first resort if conflicts break out at the local level. If tensions escalate, regional peace teams are sent in to mediate and facilitate communication to address underlying grievances. If these efforts cannot stop the threat of violence, regional teams call upon national level diplomats and parliamentarians to get involved. The Ghanaian military intervenes only as a last resort, when they then have the legitimacy and support from other leaders who consent to military action.[69] The international community touted this as an example of atrocity prevention, illustrating the type of infrastructure needed for the prevention element in the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).[70]

In 2007, when community groups in the suburbs of Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana, had clashed over the construction of a water pipeline, the Northern Region Peace Advisory Council successfully intervened to stop the violence and mediate a settlement. Local Peace Councils use mediation to address conflicts over land, religion, social and political issues.

The NPC sponsors peace education activities. For example, on one occasion one hundred youth from all the regions in the country were trained to become Peace Advocates within their communities. The NPC also sponsors capacity building programmes for the three main political parties to strengthen their capacities to manage diversity and conflicting political, religious, economic, tribal and land interests.

Even though Ghana is West Africa's most stable democracy, chieftaincy-related conflicts and the discovery of oil led sparked political tensions leading up to the 2008 elections. The National Peace Council (NPC) played a major role in ensuring peaceful elections in 2008 by enabling interparty dialogue, helping to establish a code of conduct for political parties and their candidates, promoting voter education and public value in peaceful elections. When tension broke out in the streets after the media announced initial election results that only 50,000 votes separated the winner and the loser, the NPC helped to arrange for both candidates to go on television to ask their supporters to go home, to reject the use of violence, and to support a smooth transfer of power through discreet meetings with stakeholders that defused considerable tension.

Kenya: A National Peace Council

The roots of Kenya's electoral violence are deep. Following colonialism, the British favoured some tribes with political positions and ownership of large tracts of land. Other tribal groups, punished by the British for their rebellion and insurgency against British authority, continue to perceive a system of injustice. Every election is an opportunity to either affirm or challenge post-colonial tribal dominance.

Kenya has a robust civil society highly trained in conflict prevention. Teams of civil society Kenyan peacebuilding experts have been mediating conflicts in other African countries since the 1980s. With several dozen Kenyans with higher degrees in conflict transformation and peacebuilding, multiple institutions and initiatives are always underway to prevent violence and foster a just peace.

For example, since the mid-1990s, the Kenyan National Council of Churches mobilises clergy from across the country at every election to preach against the use of violence and put up public billboards condemning electoral violence. Other Kenyan NGOs, in partnership with UNDP, have trained Peace Teams as immediate responders to deescalate public violence. Still other Kenyan NGOs use mobile phone networks and social media to enable the public to quickly report outbreaks of violence to security authorities and civilian peace team responders.

The challenge:
National elections lead to potential violence.

Theory of change:
Create local, regional and national capacity for early warning and immediate response from skilled mediators and peace teams.

In 1995, the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, developed by Somali women's groups, became a model for imagining a whole of society approach to human security in Kenya. This Wajir District Peace Committee had brought peace to one Kenyan district near the border with Somalia by mediating between elders of different clans while working with representatives of formal authority. The Kenyan government's District Commissioner who was chairperson led the Peace and Development Committee. The Committee also included Members of Parliament, the heads of all government departments, military and police, representatives of the various peace groups, religious leaders, and Kenyan NGO. The Committee representatives planned and designed the Committee's activities. The Peace and Development Committee held broad consultations in twelve regional "Stakeholders Validation Workshops" between the government and non-state actors, involving all relevant ministries, including the military and police, academia, development partners, regional organisations, CSOs, women, youth groups, communities, private sector and local authorities.

To build on Wajir District Peace Committee's successes in reducing violence, in 2001 the Kenyan government established a National Steering Committee (NSC) on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management. The Office of the President, through the NSC, embarked on a process towards the development of a national policy on peacebuilding and conflict management in 2004.

Kenya's 2007 electoral violence was a test for these prevention efforts. Once violence began, some warned of the potential for mass atrocities, mirroring those that had taken place in Rwanda. As pockets of severe violence between tribes supporting competing political candidates mounted, the Kenyan infrastructure of local peace committees, mobile phone reporting, trained local peace teams, religious leadership, and responses from the Kenyan military and police complemented by UN and African Union diplomacy created a "whole of society" response that was able to quell the violence. Yet still 1,500 people were killed and an additional 300,000 displaced during the elections. Kenyans determined that more needed to be done to prevent violence.

Photo 40: Women peace forum in Kenya.
Photo Credit: CC/Flickr Institute for Inclusive Security

After the establishment of the 2008 National Accord and

Reconciliation Act, the government decided to create District Peace Committees in all of Kenya's districts given the wide consensus among researchers and observers that the peace committees have successful reduced violence and enabled dialogue to address conflicts, especially in the pastoralist areas. The Kenyan government also set up four commissions to address the causes and consequences of electoral violence. The Office of the President published the National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, including the lessons learned from the Post-Election Violence of 2008, at the end of 2011. However, the efforts to address the root causes of Kenyan's grievances had not been addressed by 2013.

In preparation for another round of potential electoral violence in 2013, a variety of Kenyan organisations mobilised to prevent violence again. The Uwiano platform brought together the government's National Cohesion and Integration Commission with the National Steering Committing on Conflict Management, the UN Development Programme and Peace-Net, a civil society network of more than 500 Kenyan NGOs. Uwiano set up an extensive campaign via media and mobile phone texting to provide citizens with a way of providing early warning signs or reporting violence and to match requests for help with appropriate response mechanisms including civilian rapid response teams as a first resort and to the military and police as a last resort.[71] The Uwiano Platform prevented over a hundred incidents of potential violence in the volatile Rift Valley region alone.

The underlying tensions between tribal groups in Kenya still exist and may even be increasing over time.[72] While prevention efforts successfully convinced people to reject violence as a method for obtaining justice in the short term, the broader grievances regarding land distribution and political power still fuel anger. The international community, actively waging a counterterrorism campaign in east Africa with the help of the current Kenyan government, has shied away from pressing for deeper political and land reforms needed to address the drivers of conflict. The International Criminal Court trials, while attempting to provide a sense of justice, may actually become the trigger for future violence if the ICC trials favour one tribe or another.

West Africa: Early Warning and Early Response

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is a civil society-based peacebuilding network operating across West Africa. WANEP collaborates on peace and security programme with the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) and the African Union. Its multi-stakeholder approach recognises the need to focus at the policy level as well as community peacebuilding. WANEP is the civil society partner of ECOWAS in the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Early Response Network (ECOWARN). WANEP has trained ECOWAS staff in early warning and conflict assessment, negotiation, mediation and dialogue skills as well as community engagement and civil-military coordination.

WANEP founded and now runs the West African Early Warning and Early Response Network (WARN) as one of its conflict prevention mechanisms. It aims to improve human security in West Africa by monitoring and reporting socio-political situations that could degenerate into violent and destructive conflicts. WARN informs policy makers on options for response on one hand and WANEP's response strategies on the other hand. The WARN programme of WANEP is the forerunner of the ECOWARN.

ECOWARN's regional focus has led to a complementary National Early Warning System (NEWS). NEWS is setting up community-based conflict monitoring systems with local monitors to produce conflict and peace assessment reports, early warning reports, and policy briefs which are widely disseminated to CSOs, governments, intergovernmental bodies, partners, and

The challenge:
Violence in one part of the region can spill over to violence in other parts.

Theory of change:
Create local, national, and regional capacity for early warning and immediate response from skilled mediators and peace teams.