

# Human Rights & Conflict Resolution Centre



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## 2020 END OF YEAR REPORT

Narrative Report

### ABSTRACT

This concise report builds on the first quarter report for 2020 which was submitted in May of this year; whilst summarizing the activities and initiatives of the year in view.

### HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER (HRCRC)

2020



ST PATRICK'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Dear Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees,

Rev. Fr. Kevin O'Hara (SPS),

St. Patrick's Missionary Society,

Season's Greetings from HRCRC Abakaliki.

This concise report builds on the first quarter report for 2020 which was submitted in May of this year; whilst summarizing the activities and initiatives of the year in view.

## Introduction

The beginning of the year was marked with a lot of promise especially for funding from development partners and donor agencies. Also this year, there was the plan to revamp the activities of Centre, reorganizing the Board of Trustees, and ultimately find a sustainable source of funding for the Centre; all this especially against the backdrop of the retirement and eventual departure of Fr. Kevin from Nigeria. However, the advent of COVID-19 thwarted these plans. Furthermore, the nationwide #ENDSARS protests and attendant effects made the realization of these plans unattainable this year.

However, still with a second wave of COVID-19 slowing brewing, we can count on the idea of the impossibility of the shock and surprise that greeted the initial outbreak to venture that the coming year will be better, and thus better positioned for the attainment of the aforementioned objectives and aspirations.

Currently, HRCRC has a direct staff strength of Nine (9) – The Acting Executive Director, a lawyer, a corps member (Lawyer) and a Security man; these four get monthly stipends directly from St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPS). Others are a registrar, three chartered mediators and one lawyer.

Two other lawyers, and three students on Industrial Training also volunteer with the centre.

## Administration and Departments

We have tried to retain albeit informally the administrative structure of the Centre. Informally because, as stated above, all but four members of the Centre can safely be characterized as staff with a humble monthly stipend from St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPS), whilst others are more volunteers than staff. This puts a huge strain on the Executive Director in trying to

both run the administration of the Centre, participate in activities, whilst thinking of ingenious initiatives to motivate the other staff cum volunteers to continue the work.

It is very pertinent to note at this point once again that these staff cum volunteers have not received any salaries or remuneration for over four years. However, their dedication to duty, continuous presence in the office, attending to cases, and their humane and selfless dedication to the human and peace cause is indeed inspirational.

Thus, current admin structure is

Ag. Executive Director: George Etamesor

HOD Peace Building and Conflict Resolution: Moses Ekeke

HOD Women and Children: Eva Okafor

HOD Access to Justice: Chioma Ikegbunam Udeh Esq



There is also a standby contracted financial administrator, who is not a workaday member of staff – as she does not participate in the everyday business of the Centre; she is however activated when the need arises, such as funded projects.

In the year 2020 ending, despite the potent hullaballos that characterised the year, HRCRC registered a total of **206** new cases; further delineated by department below:

Access to Justice	87
Women and Children	58
Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution	61
Total	206

It is pertinent to note that over **80%** of these cases came in from the indigent of the society. Also, there are many other spontaneous cases that were acted upon on the spur of the moment without the formality of registration and thus there are no records of these in the office.

## COVID 19

The global pandemic affected every sphere of human existence and HRCRC was not left out. In collaboration with global efforts at mitigating the spread of the virus, HRCRC put a lull in all our retail activities; whilst activating all active branches to start a weekly sensitization campaign on COVID 19 in their respective communities.



*Sensitization during COVID 19, with NHRC, Media and others*

Also, in the peak of the pandemic in Nigeria, other measures that discourage gatherings, especially for cases in the office, was discouraged and spaced out so as to allow for physical distancing. Use of Masks was made mandatory and retail services were reduced to the essentials.

However, the lockdown had an opposite effect on our services as cases in the office as cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence increased and victims besieged our office daily.

## Activities and Initiatives

Whilst retail services continued unabated and even more intense, HRCRC intensified our virtual campaign against the prevalent issues of the times – COVID-19, Sexual and Gender Based Violence SGBV, Harmful Practices, amongst others. These were done on our Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram and URL pages.

However, recognising the fact that the primary target of our messages are not virtual, we also intensified our grassroots campaigns employing our branches and local volunteers.

## Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development

Whilst our activism and activities have brought us into the limelight as well as brought scrutiny on our activities, it has also estranged the Centre from some key partnering government agencies. Whilst HRCRC is has notably become one of the foremost reporters and consultants for SGBV cases in Ebonyi State to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the State Ministry of Women affairs is offended at the moment that HRCRC called them out and issued a statement on their being redundant and not effective. Thus, they passively refuse to attend to our concerns, letters or requests. We are however encouraged that our voices are heard.

## Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025

The last Strategic Plan for HRCRC expires this year – 2020. Thus the need for a new one for the next five years became imperatively urgent. Thankfully, the visit of the Development Officer for St. Patrick’s Missionary Society, Mr. Austin Anyio provided an opportunity to plan for the next five years; especially as the Centre has continued to experience a drought of funds. A copy of the final draft will be made available before it is formally approved and adopted by the Centre.

## Agriculture



In the course of planning and re-strategizing for the next five years, the visit of Mr. Austin Anyio also saw HRCRC proposing to diversify into agriculture as a way of raising funds for self-sustainability, fund raising for the retail activities of the Centre and stipends for staff and volunteers, and for empowerment of the youths as a primal fundamental preventive measure to conflict.

Details of these are available if requested.

## State Judicial Panels, Politics and the Forum for NGOs

In the wake of the #ENDSARS protests, Ebonyi State also constituted a Judicial Panel of Inquiry to investigate Human Rights abuses by the police and other security agencies. CSOs were supposed to be part of the constitution of said Panels. HRCRC is still widely regarded as the



foremost Human Rights NGO in the state and as such logically expected to be part of the panel.

However, this was denied us due to cheap politicking, and especially because we publicly refused to be part of a forum of NGOs that is a tool in the hands of the present state government; and also because HRCRC public declared her non-political and non-partisan stance and thus neither in support or against certain political moves by the governor – such as his decamping to the opposition party.

## Branches

HRCRC branches have continued to be one of our greatest assets as they continue to be our direct links and reach to the grassroots. We make it imperative that they are included and involved in all our plans, initiatives and projects.



However, the pandemic caused certain moves to revitalise the branches be put on hold. However, outside regular monthly meetings and branch visitations, we have despite the pandemic initiated moves for meetings to hold rotationally on different communities / branches. Also, we have initiated a monthly mini-project which is agreed on in the monthly meeting and executed on all branches across the State. This is to ensure maximum impact.

## Partnerships and Collaborations

We have appreciate the numbers and the togetherness for a these values challenges groups and



continued to strength in dignity in just cause. Whilst sprout certain especially from organisations

without sincerity of purpose, it is still our firm conviction that it is the best way to go in activism and development work today.

Thus HRCRC has continued to sustain existing relationships and forge new ones for the cause.



The Nigerian Police Ebonyi State Command especially, the NSCDC, the SSS, Nigerian Correctional Service have remained irreplaceable partners.

The Ebonyi State office of the National Human Rights Commission, other CSOs such as the Child Protection Network CPN, HURIDE, DIG Foundation, Youth for Human Rights International and her subsidiaries in Ebonyi, amongst others have been and are still worthy collaborators in the cause. Unity FM 101.5, EBSU FM, Citizens Advocate Newspaper, People's Guide Newspaper, and other virtual news mediums have helped in publicity of our activities and statements at little or no cost.

In collaboration with these organisations and entities, many programs and initiatives which we embarked on during the year ran easier and more successful. Some of these are contained in the photo gallery below:



*Before and after photos of an unknown child rescued from a garbage site with life threatening injuries*





Figure 1 A girl Child physically abused by her guardian got justice and free education through our intervention



Figure 2 Another victim of traditional practice that abuses the human rights of victims got justice and abolition of said practice through our intervention

**EBONYI**

**SOCIAL MEDIA:  
A TOOL FOR  
ADVOCACY**

**George Etamesor**  
Ag. Executive Director  
Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Center (HRCRC)

Friday, December 11, 2020  
11:00 AM

**UNITY FM**

PARADIGM INITIATIVE DIG DIOG UNITY 08147114324 08156568580 @EINigeria @ParadigmHQ OfficeOfTheCitizen www.ele.ng

**EBONYI**

**TOPIC OF DISCUSSION  
HUMAN RIGHTS: THE ISSUE  
OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION  
AND HATE SPEECHES IN NIGERIA**

*Guest*  
Mr. George Etamesor  
Ex. Director, Human Rights  
and Conflict Resolution  
Center, Abakaliki.

*Host*  
Opoke Steve, ESQ,  
Legal Practitioner and  
Human Development Activist

**Radio Station**  
**UNITY FM**  
101.5

**Date: Friday, 7th August  
2020  
Time: 11:00 - 12:00noon**

**Host: REX EZE  
KENRICK IJEOMANTA  
AJAH CHIMA OLIVER**

**TO PARTICIPATE CALL:**  
**08147114324  
08156568580** | **@DIGNIGERIA**

**CID** **BIG** **UNITY FM**



Media Campaigns and Sensitizations on UNITY FM, Radio Nigeria, 101.5, Abakaliki





*Advocacies to different bodies, groups, organisations and parastatals on pressing societal issues such as rape, SGBV, Harmful practices, amongst others.*



Sensitization Campaigns to communities, schools, indigents, women and offices as well as roadworks in Abakaliki metropolis





*Building Peace in Conflicting Communities, monthly HRCRC Branch state-wide meeting at the office complex, and HRCRC and partners commemorating the World Human Rights Day – 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.*



### National Open University of Nigeria – Peace Studies

With an arrangement with the National Open University of Nigeria NOUN, Abakaliki campus Peace Studies Department, the first set of IT students have completed their attachments with the Centre and we are expecting a new set at the beginning of the New Year. We hope to formalize these arrangement and build on the opportunities that it presents.

Notably, every volunteer or employee of HRCRC signs up to the Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy of St. Patrick's Missionary Society SPS.

### Looking Forward

As the Centre continues to adapt to confront the challenges posed by today's society, we are comforted by the possibility of positive change and the opportunities present. Whilst we do not relish in conflicts and the flagrant rights abuses in Nigeria, they however present opportunities for our interventions. However, a major constraint to achieving this vision of ours is **Funding**.

Therefore, as we try to reposition the Centre for maximum impact to society in the coming year 2021, we propose the following; some of which will be explained better or presented in the next *BoT* meeting.

- Renew our Corporate Affairs Commission CAC certificate with all the attendant requisites
- Apply and get a Tax Identification Number (TIN) and EFCC clearance

- Reconstituting the Board of Trustees to be more actively involved and concerned in the workaday affairs and running of the Centre.
- Annual Fund Raising events
- Peer to peer funding
- Diversifying into agriculture – Apiary, fishery and greenhouse for a start
- With approval, selling off some old office equipment to facilitate buying more modern and workable ones.
- Partnerships with donor agencies and international NGOs such as ActionAid Nigeria.

Furthermore, as hinted in prior reports, the proliferation of Human Rights Organizations in the State has led to some unhealthy competition on the field. While this in itself is no excuse to throw in the towel, - as we have continued to distinguish ourselves in our conducts laced with dignity and integrity – it however suggests other areas of our expertise that can be explored. Therefore, we will work to ensure that the Centre this year becomes a State Recognised Centre for Conflict Resolution.

### Inventory

The inventory of HRCRC remains same as in the last report and in the audited accounts of 2019 save for some depreciations. Despite the paucity of funds, we have tried to maintain the facilities of the Centre.

We thank Fr. Kevin O’Hara SPS, and St. Patrick’s Missionary Society – West African District – for the gift of another car – a 2012 KIA Sportage – to the Centre. HRCRC now has three reasonably workable vehicles; a Toyota 4 Runner, a Toyota Corolla and a Kia Sportage. While this addition will significantly facilitate our work, it however puts further strain on our already strained finances. This is because they are all old cars in constant need of maintenance and repairs.

Also, the renovation of the Centre by St. Patrick’s Missionary Society in 2017 helped both save the building as well as give the Centre a facelift. However, maybe due to the ground formation of the area, huge cracks are becoming noticeable on the walls of the building again. The ground movement has also so far resulted in a fallen drainage system and broken windows. We have managed to fix some of the very minors of these defects and damages.



Whilst our perimeter fencing on the South-eastern part of the building remains down, the fencing on the North-eastern part of the Centre (directly covering the juju mountain) is bent and threatening to cave in. Thus we intend to get a security dog to aid the security man in his duties in the coming year.

The Centre currently has three laptop computers, all old and weary. Whilst the number is largely inadequate for the Centre, their weariness makes it harder to computerise our activities.

### Conclusion

We continue to be deeply grateful to Fr. Kevin O'Hara SPS, and St. Patrick's Missionary Society for their unrelenting support and maternal care for the Centre and her activities. We further congratulate Fr. O'Hara once again for the Irish Presidential Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his work in Peace Building, Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in Nigeria.



We thank all our partners and collaborators and especially Board Member Christopher Okorie; and the Ebonyi State office of the National Human Rights Commission for his unwavering and unrelenting support and concern.

We look forward to a more productive year 2021 filled with prospects for change and growth for HRCRC especially, for Nigerian and the world over.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Warmly,

  
**George Etamesor**  
Ag. Ex. Director, HRCRC  
30 / 12 / 2020