

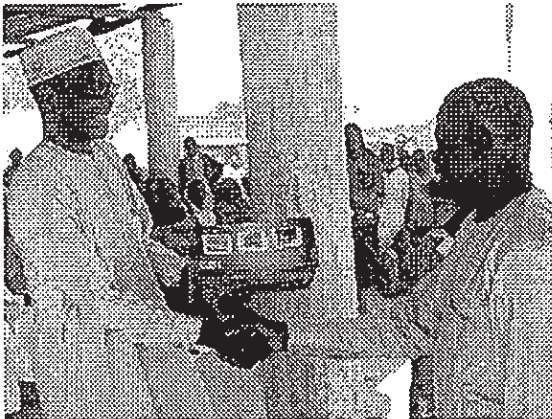


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SUCCESS STORY

Live public CVE debates in Chad create discussion platform for taboo topic of Boko Haram attacks



An official in Oum Hadjer awards a radio/mp3 player to one of a winning participant in the Live Public Debates



A local women weighs in on the problem of Boko Haram during a PDevII Live Public Debate in Ati

Since the Chadian military announced their intention to support a regional front against Boko Haram, attacks along the border and even within the capital city of N'Djamena have grown increasingly frequent. However, while the threat of violence is a constant concern in citizen's minds, it is not on their tongues: the issue is rarely discussed in public, and is instead relegated to fearful conversations behind closed doors.

USAID/PDevII's recent Live Broadcast Public CVE Debates sought to give voice to citizens' fears and outrage, unifying Chadians against violent extremism by bringing the topic of extremist violence to the forefront of public dialogue. Hosted and broadcast live from March 28th to April 29th by seven radio partners in Mao, Nokou, Moussoro, Bol, Ati, Faya, and Oum Hadjer, the live debates featured guests who represented traditional, religious, civil society and political leadership. Each program included a live interactive debate in one of the Chadian languages between leaders and experts in CVE, an open floor portion inviting contributions and opinions from the listening public, and a message delivered by a moderate religious leader. The debates saw the attendance of over 1,400 men, women and youth, five of whom were awarded mp3 players at the conclusion of the debate in recognition of their contributions, as well as calls from 226 citizens (including 44 women) who followed the live radio broadcast from their homes and workplaces.

Discussions ranged from the recent kidnappings, murders and attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram, to finding local solutions to insure that extremism does not find a foothold in Chad. The Mayor of Ati called on women in particular to watch over their children who may be frustrated or have violent tendencies, to keep them from being radicalized. Like all the leaders who participated, the Secretary General of North Kanem condemned the actions of Boko Haram as heinous crimes against religion, human rights, and decency, saying: "I assure you that no religion permits violence, certainly not Islam, which is a religion of peace, tolerance and forgiveness. So let us all be vigilant while we face this threat by people with evil intentions and extreme ideologies." The impact of the debates was best captured in a comment from a listener in Nokou, who said that "people have been afraid to even say the name 'Boko Haram' because we feel like its bad luck and they'll come kill you. But this debate, where everyone is talking about Boko Haram in the open, has destroyed that superstition and fear that we have for Boko Haram."

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