

### CAMPUSES AND CONFLICT IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN:

#### Violent Extremism and the Politics of Religion in Higher Education

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of conclusions from RESOLVE's 2017-2019 Lake Chad Basin Research Initiative. The project assesses the role of the state, civil society, and other non-state actors in shaping the political divides over the role of religion in education and community and state responses to extremism in Chad, Nigeria, and Cameroon. Given the youthful base of Boko Haram and other violent extremist movements, policymakers have asked whether universities might either incubate or counter extremism. Discussions with stakeholders and a critical review of the literature revealed a need to test prevailing assumptions about the relationship between education, religion, and violent extremism. To learn more about the research methodology and detailed findings, please refer to the RESOLVE Research Report by Alexander Thurston: *Campuses and Conflict in the Lake Chad Basin: Violent Extremism and the Politics of Religion in Higher Education*.

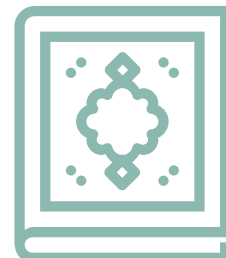
#### Educational Environments



- » Different types of educational environments, including Qur'an schools and private religious universities, do not inherently encourage extremism.

#### External Influences

- » External influences and study abroad programs are reshaping what it means to be an intellectual and a religious authority in the Lake Chad region but do not necessarily increase extremism.



## Boko Haram Insurgency



- » The Boko Haram insurgency will continue to disrupt life in the Lake Chad Basin. Ending the conflict will require efforts in multiple areas, not only the security sector.

## Relationship to VE

- » Key to understanding the higher education sector's relationship to violent extremism, is understanding how those on campuses and in communities view their own relationship and the relationship of government policies, to violent extremism.



## Key Takeaways

- » Significant, in-depth research is needed to more fully explore how higher education in Lake Chad Basin has evolved, the extent to which its history has shaped current structures, and what, if any, impact these dynamics have had on violent extremism in the region.
- » Moving forward, analysts might explore who sets research agendas on campuses, what factors are driving increased interest in Islamic studies among students, how university research is disseminated, what research reaches the widest audiences, and how on-campus debates, conferences, and research are affected by politics, religion, and conflict.
- » Additionally, there is need for greater attention to gender dynamics in understanding how conversations about Islam play out on campuses and how international influences from beyond the Middle East impact the higher education system.

## RESOLVE Network

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RESOLVE is housed at the U.S. Institute of Peace, building upon the Institute's decades-long legacy of deep engagement in conflict affected communities.

RESOLVE would like to thank the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for its generous support for RESOLVE's Lake Chad Basin Research Initiative. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the RESOLVE Network, the U.S. Institute of Peace, or any entity of the U.S. government.



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