

### **The State of Secularism in Chadian Higher Education:** Testing Perceived Ties to Violent Extremism

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 Brief by Remadji Hoinathy and Daniel Eizenga: *The State of Secularism in Chadian Higher Education: Testing Perceived Ties to Violent Extremism*.

#### Socio-religious Divisions



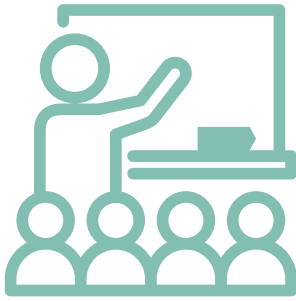
- » Debates about the secular character of the state and the role of religion in the public sphere in the Lake Chad Basin reveal important socio-religious divisions in higher education.

#### Education Enrollment

- » The rate of higher education enrollment in Chad is lower than in neighboring Cameroon and Nigeria. Those who do attend university form an elite cadre with greater opportunity and access to positions in policy creation and governance.



## Religious Organizations



- » Despite the state's secular oversight of higher education, non-state religious organizations wield significant influence over certain components of Chad's higher education system.

## Bilingual Divisions

- » Higher education in Chad is committed to bilingualism and is subject to divisions between French and Arabic that frequently correspond with religious identifications. Government policies that support bilingualism and are perceived as promoting one religion over others risk exacerbating religious tensions.



## Key Takeaways

- » The state should not promote religious symbols and to refrain from incorporating religion into public life, as outlined in the laws of the republic.
- » Higher education policy should seek to separate linguistic questions from religious considerations.
- » The state should maintain neutrality in the regulation of religious issues and higher education curricula in both Arabic and French.
- » Policymakers, practitioners, the government, and actors within the realm of higher education should pay closer attention to the rise of religious fundamentalism and support research on its continued rise in public debates on and off campus.
- » Higher education institutions should remain environments for the open debate of ideas and aim to improve cross-cultural interactions to overcome linguistic and religious divisions on campuses. Efforts to improve interactions should target students, faculty members, and administrators of higher education.

## RESOLVE Network

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