

International Alert 2024 Annual Report

Commitment to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

1. Describe how you have engaged in the Voluntary Principles Initiative over the past years.

In 2024, International Alert participated in the Voluntary Principles annual plenary and NGO pillar meetings.

2. Describe efforts to increase transparency, both internally and externally, regarding your efforts to implement or support implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

Through our 2024 annual report, International Alert will report publicly on the various ways we are working on security and human rights through our country and global programmes, especially in the Horn of Africa and DRC.

3. Describe any efforts to engage in dialogue with other participants of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

International Alert is a member of the global Business and Conflict Community of Practice, working alongside other participants of the Voluntary Principles Initiative. We led a lessons-learned session on company partnerships with communities at the 2024 annual meeting of the Business and Conflict Community of Practice in Geneva.

Additionally, International Alert is a strategic partner of the African Business and Human Rights Forum, where we led a session on conflict-affected settings at the 2024 forum.

PROCEDURES

4. Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process as outlined in the NGO Pillar Verification Framework.

N/A

Promotion of the Voluntary Principles

5. Describe your efforts to raise awareness of and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles with both internal and external stakeholders.

We share experiences and impact to help others learn from work that is happening at a local level and inform policy makers' thinking. We have drawn from the experience of change in our Business for Human Rights programme to inform our advocacy at an international level. This programme has strengthened adherence to human rights in the extractives and renewable energy industries in conflict-affected parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda.

Drawing on learning, Alert led a panel session at the Third African Business and Human Rights Forum, with UNDP and the UN Global Compact to build momentum and advance peace and human rights by businesses in conflict affected settings, including security and human rights considerations. This session shaped the Forum's concluding call to action and commitments by governments, companies and civil society to strengthen responsible business conduct in Africa and beyond.

6. Describe efforts to engage and facilitate participation of non-member CSOs, affected communities, and other relevant stakeholders in the Annual Plenary Meeting or workshops.

International Alert led a scenario exercise on conflict analysis for participants of the Annual Plenary Meeting. This helped build understanding of conflict analysis for effective implementation of the VPs and UN Guiding Principles.

7. Describe your efforts to promote adoption of the Voluntary Principles into relevant government of corporate policies, as well as international standards and/or guidelines.

Our Business for Human Rights project has fostered positive change in the Horn of Africa, thanks to our conflict-sensitive accompaniment, advice and training for companies. For example, a gold mining company in Ethiopia has initiated company-community engagement by establishing a committee composed of local government, community leaders and companies that fosters dialogue, discusses grievances, and addresses potential conflicts within the community. Following consultations between the company, the community and the local government, the mining site was able to be demarcated.

In Uganda, capacity-building on Business and Human Rights (BHR) and conflict sensitivity have significantly strengthened the ability of oil companies in the Albertine Region - specifically in the districts of Buliisa, Kibbuube, and Hoima - to engage more effectively with project affected persons (PAPs) on critical BHR issues. Dialogue platforms between local CSOs, TotalEnergies and its subcontractor, Living Earth Uganda resolved to enrol the PAPs in a food support initiative, providing essential dry rations such as maize flour, beans, and cooking oil. Similarly, as a result of dialogue platforms, PAPs who had disputed the initial valuations of their properties for the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) underwent re-evaluation, leading to revised compensations that better reflected the true value of their losses and met their expectations.

In Kenya, Base Titanium has established Community Development Agreement Committees (CDACs) in areas such as Msambweni, Lunga Lunga, and Likoni in Kwale County. These committees, formed in collaboration with local communities, are instrumental in identifying development priorities and ensuring that community voices are integral to decision-making processes. Additionally, while preparing the closure of its mining operations in Kwale County, supported the communities to advocate for a transparent and inclusive post-mining land use committee.

COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION

8. Describe efforts to strengthen the rule of law in the countries where you work.

In Nepal in 2024, building on many years of International Alert's transitional justice projects, ten additional local governments adopted municipal-level policies to support conflict victims (bringing the total to 12), following Alert's engagement – helping to embed transitional justice into local government.

International Alert's DRC and Rwanda teams have been working on access to justice, helping cross-border communities understand their rights when they cross the border and access legal support services. The project has tracked down missing family members who have been incarcerated, ensured access to appropriate representation during legal cases, and helped to identify and secure the release of 180 people detained irregularly in DRC. This has restored the faith of some cross border communities in the justice system and offers community members an alternative to illegal approaches to seeking justice such as violence. As with many aspects of peacebuilding, these are the results of long-term engagement.

9. Describe efforts to conduct and monitor risk assessments for potential human rights violations in the areas where you work.

As a peacebuilding NGO, International Alert does not directly monitor human rights violations, but we do conduct conflict analysis and human rights impact assessments to inform our work. In 2024, this included Ethiopia, DRC, Kenya and Uganda.

10. Describe your efforts to strengthen policies, procedures and guidelines related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

As part of our peace economies work, International Alert advocates to change in the global and national systems that control trade in minerals, since this can have a direct impact on the risks of conflict, security and human rights on the ground. In 2024, we saw the fruit of this with the first gold export from a pilot mine site in DRC with 'blue mines' certification, an innovation to help exporters to responsibly source and sell gold even in generally unstable areas in the Great Lakes region - supporting communities' livelihoods without contributing to conflict. This was the result of years of close work with the government of DRC and Society Artisanal Sarl, an international exporter. Our work was recognised by the Paris Peace Forum (PPF) in November 2024, when our project was selected as one of ten focus projects for the PPF's Scale-Up programme (SCUP). As part of the SCUP programme, Alert and partners will receive one-year of strategic guidance and mentorship from globally recognized PPF experts to improve its results and global influencing strategy for greater respect of international due diligence standards and responsible sourcing of minerals from the DRC.

12. Describe efforts to hold Voluntary Principles participants accountable for upholding their roles and responsibilities as members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Through our Powering Peace Through Climate Action project in Nigeria, representatives of security agencies and other government institutions are on the project's Advisory Committee. Their participation has led to increasing awareness of effective strategies for addressing natural resource-related conflicts and communities' vulnerabilities to climate security risks. Situational reports by Nigeria's military operation (Operation Whirl Stroke) on Agatu, Benue State, where Alert's integrated peacebuilding and climate project is implemented, highlight a reduction in the number of incidence of violent natural resource related conflicts between the Egba and Ologba ethnic groups who have been in conflict for over a decade.

LESSONS AND ISSUES

13. Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization.

International Alert's organisational strategy prioritises global work on 'peace economies' - building on our long track record working on responsible business practice. This includes ambition to expand our support to investors and businesses in navigating risks and implementing standards (including on security and human rights), while having a positive impact on peace.