

# African Law Foundation 2025 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 year.

Over the past year, AFRILAW actively participated in all NGO Pillar calls and National Working groups of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI), as well as implementing a training workshop using the VPI Guidance on Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders in Nigeria.

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

AFRILAW shares and communicate its projects and programmes with its partners and across the organization's website and social media platforms. These efforts enhance transparency both internally and externally, while also supporting the implementation of the Voluntary Principles.

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

AFRILAW collaborate and partners with the National Secretariat of the National Working Group and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in implementing related programmes activities including engaging with Media organizations and other civil society organizations (CSOs).

## Procedures

### 4. Provide a summary of the findings of the verification process.

AFRILAW recently became a full member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) and has not yet participated in any of the verification processes.

## 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.

African Law Foundation in line with her efforts to raise awareness and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles implemented the Extractive Host Communities and Environmental Human Rights Defenders Training Workshop in partnership National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nigeria Working Group on the VPs (NWGPs) and Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) with funding support from Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI) through Environmental Defenders Collective (EDC).

The Training Workshop was held on Wednesday July 30, 2025 for 30 human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders selected from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in Owerri, Imo State which is one of the major oil and gas producing states in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The Training Workshop will be declared open by the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The aim and main objective of the training workshop was to raise awareness, train and sensitize human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria on Voluntary Principles and the Guidance Tools on corporate responsibility to respect and protect human rights defenders in extractive industries. Some of the key achievements of the workshop include;

1. About 30 human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria were sensitized and trained on relevant principles and guidance for respect and

protection of human right defenders.

2. Increased knowledge and understanding of relevant principles and guidance for respect and protection of human right defenders among human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
3. Increased awareness of Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPIs)'s Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders, UNGPs and its Guidance for Business in relations to Human Rights Defenders and Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI)'s Corporate Zero Tolerance Policies and Procedures on Committing to Protection of Human Rights Defenders among human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
4. Increased advocacy for protection of human rights defenders particularly environmental human right defenders in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
5. Increased respect and protection of human rights defenders particularly environmental human right defenders by extractive industries and key stakeholders in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
6. Decrease in cases of abuse and violation of rights of human rights defenders particularly environmental human right defenders in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## **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.**

AFRILAW recently became a full member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) and has not yet participated in any of the Annual Plenary Meeting or workshops.

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

AFRILAW through its Extractive Host Communities and Environmental Human Rights Defenders Training Workshop implemented in partnership National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nigeria Working Group on the VPs (NWGPs) and Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) with funding support from Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI) through Environmental Defenders Collective (EDC) has promoted efforts to promote the adoption of the Voluntary Principles into relevant government corporate policies as well as international standards. The training workshop raised awareness on the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPIs)'s Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders, UNGPs and its Guidance for Business in relations to Human Rights Defenders and Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI)'s Corporate Zero Tolerance Policies and Procedures on Committing to Protection of Human Rights Defenders among human rights defenders particularly from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria starting with Imo State, and train and sensitize them on the Voluntary Principles and the Guidance Tools.

# **Country Implementation**

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

The African Law Foundation (AFRILAW) is a Law, Justice and Development organisation. AFRILAW engages in a range of initiatives including policy advocacy, capacity building, legal aid services, campaigns, and awareness-raising to promote the rule of law, protect human rights, ensure access to justice, and advocate for peace and human security. These efforts encompass various activities such as community development and mobilisation, research and documentation, consulting and technical services, as well as fostering partnerships, network building, and coordination. AFRILAW also addresses a wide range of other topics, such as gender justice, public health, drug policy reform, anti-corruption, refugee and migration issues, poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, access to justice, peacebuilding, constitutional and justice sector reform, minority and disability rights, international criminal justice, business and human rights, economic and social rights, and democratic governance.

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

AFRILAW in implementing its projects and programmes conduct and monitor risk assessments for potential human rights violations. This is done through mapping out high risk areas, partnering with State Security Agencies in emergency cases, using cover stories while conducting investigations and documentations. Also ensuring anonymization and confidentiality of victims and survivors.

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

Currently, AFRILAW in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nigeria Working Group on the VPs (NWGPs) and Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) is strengthening policies, procedures and guidelines related to the implementation of the Voluntary Principles through capacity building and awareness raising and ensuring compliance of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPIs)'s Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders, UNGPs and its Guidance for Business in relations to Human Rights Defenders and Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI)'s Corporate Zero Tolerance Policies and Procedures on Committing to Protection of Human Rights Defenders among human rights defenders particularly from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, training and sensitizing them on the Voluntary Principles and the Guidance Tools.

## **11. Describe your efforts to engage with or support engagement with the public security sectors and/or private security sectors in the countries where you work.**

AFRILAW is known to engage with the public and private security sector in Nigeria. In 2018, AFRILAW emerged as a highly experienced national NGO by initiating the first-ever national development project on private security governance and reform and responsible private security services in Nigeria through the implementation of the Baseline Study on Private Security Governance in Nigeria Project (2018-2019). Since then, together with its partners, AFRILAW has implemented other development projects and programmes, which have resulted in the production of various publications, such as the Baseline Study (2019), a guide on governance challenges (2021). AFRILAW partners and provides support to PSCs in Nigeria and promotes the responsible provision of security services, engaging PSCs on human rights and ethics training; and promoting PSCs joining and becoming Members of ICoCA and obtaining ICoCA certification. In 2022, AFRILAW in partnership with ICoCA and in collaboration with Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), MSS Global UK and NSCDC launched and implemented the Nigeria Responsible Private Security Companies Training Programme in this regard.

AFRILAW, in collaboration with ICoCA and DCAF, initiated and executed in 2023 the ground-breaking "Private Security and Elections in Nigeria Project." Implemented in collaboration with NSCD and ALPSPN, the project aimed to garner recognition and support from election policymakers and stakeholders for private security involvement in the 2023 Nigerian elections 2023. It also sought to establish a road map for effective private security governance and regulatory reform in the electoral process in alignment with international norms. The project involved several activities, including the organisation of 4 Regional Sensitisation Workshops on Private Security and the 2023 Elections across the country, of 2 National Stakeholders' Forums on the same topic in Abuja, and the training and engagement of 10 CSOs to monitor and assess private security services in 10 States.

The project was the first-ever implementation of an initiative involving the participation of PSCs in Nigeria's electoral process. It led to increased awareness and support for the official engagement of PSCs in elections from key stakeholders, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Office of the National Security Adviser to the President (ONSA), and approximately 100 PSC representatives received training on good private security governance. The project also resulted in the adoption, production, and dissemination of a Resolution on Good Private Security Governance during the 2023 Election in Nigeria, which guided regional sensitisation workshops for PSCs. Additionally, a monitoring and assessment report was publicly presented to relevant stakeholders following the first-ever CSO monitoring and assessment of private security services during the elections.

AFRILAW holds a unique distinction as the sole national NGO in Nigeria to have obtained an official Letter of Partnership (LOP) from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the industry regulator. Additionally, AFRILAW has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Association of Licensed Private Security Practitioners of Nigeria (ALPSPN), the industry association devoted to advancing private security governance and reform in the country. Notably, AFRILAW's Executive Director is the sole Civil Society Organisation (CSO) member of the National Private Security Industry Law Reform Committee, which was instituted by the NSCDC in 2021. This esteemed position highlights AFRILAW's influential role in shaping policy and driving positive change in the private security sector of Nigeria.

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

Not Applicable

## **Lessons, Effective Strategies, Innovative Approaches, and Additional Reporting**

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

AFRILAW is leading the efforts to promoting the the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPIs)'s Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders, UNGPs and its Guidance for Business in relations to Human Rights Defenders and Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI)'s Corporate Zero Tolerance Policies and Procedures on Committing to Protection of Human Rights Defenders among human rights defenders particularly from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

AFRILAW also plans to advance the Voluntary Principles by conducting trainings and capacity building workshops for Private Security Companies (PSCs) on the VPI.

**14. Human Rights Defenders - Describe initiatives, policies, procedures, programs, and/or activities related to the protection of human rights defenders, as set in the VPI's "Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders" (a copy is available on the VPI website's Resources page).**

Sequel to the incessant attacks on human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders fighting against business-related abuses AFRILAW initiated the he Extractive Host Communities and Environmental Human Rights Defenders Training Workshop in partnership National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nigeria Working Group on the VPs (NWGPs) and Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) with funding support from Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI) through Environmental Defenders Collective (EDC). The Training Workshop was held on Wednesday July 30, 2025 for 30 human rights defenders particularly environmental human rights defenders selected from extractive host communities, media organizations and civil society organizations in Owerri, Imo State which is one of the major oil and gas producing states in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

**15. Participation in In-Country Working Groups - Describe your participation in the In-Country Working Groups, for example: which ICWGs you participated in this year, and information on in-kind support/contribution.**

None

**16. Gender - Describe specific initiatives, policies, and/or procedures that address the needs of gender and vulnerable groups in the provision of security, as set in the VPI's "IGT companion Tool – Operationalizing the Voluntary Principles Through the Lens of Protecting and Respecting the Unique Needs and Rights of Women and Other Disadvantaged Groups" (a copy of this tool is available on the VPI website's Resources page).**

AFRILAW adopts Gender Transformative Approach in the Implementation of all Project and Programme activities. Topics like Gender Perspectives and Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse(PSEA) by PSCs are included during the training workshops. AFRILAW is also gender focused and women human right defenders are actively engaged to participate in programmes.