

Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) 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, PRAWA has remained actively engaged in the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) through both national-level collaboration and international participation. At the country level, PRAWA consistently contributed to the activities of the Nigeria Working Group, supporting dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and coordination among stakeholders on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

As part of our capacity-building efforts, PRAWA integrated the Voluntary Principles into its human rights training programmes for security agencies. These trainings focused on promoting rights-based approaches to security provision, strengthening accountability, and enhancing the understanding of security personnel on the intersection between human rights and operational conduct.

At the global level, PRAWA participated in the 2025 VPI Annual Plenary and contributed to the implementation review processes for members, demonstrating our commitment to transparency, peer learning, and continuous improvement within the Initiative.

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

Over the reporting period, PRAWA undertook deliberate efforts to strengthen transparency in its support for the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, both internally and externally.

Internally, PRAWA has continued to integrate the Voluntary Principles into its programme design, implementation, and reporting processes. This includes documenting activities that promote human rights-compliant security practices, embedding the Principles into training curricula for security agencies, and ensuring that programme staff are aware of and aligned with VPI standards. Regular internal reviews and knowledge-sharing sessions have also been used to track progress, capture lessons learned, and promote consistency in the application of the Principles across different projects.

Externally, PRAWA has promoted transparency through its active participation in the Nigeria Working Group, where it contributes to open dialogue, information sharing, and collective reflection on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles. PRAWA also shares insights from its field activities, including training engagements with security agencies, to support broader stakeholder understanding of practical implementation approaches.

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

During the reporting period, PRAWA actively engaged in dialogue with other participants of the Voluntary Principles Initiative through both national and international platforms. At the national level, PRAWA participated in the Nigeria Working Group. This key multi-stakeholder forum brings together government, civil society, and industry actors to advance the implementation of the Voluntary Principles. Through this platform, PRAWA contributed to discussions on practical implementation, shared lessons from its programme activities, and engaged in collaborative approaches to addressing emerging security and human rights challenges.

At the international level, PRAWA maintained consistent engagement with the broader VPI network by regularly attending the monthly NGO Pillar meetings. These meetings provide a platform for civil society organisations from across different regions to exchange experiences, share good practices, and discuss common challenges in implementing the Voluntary Principles. PRAWA's participation in these sessions has strengthened peer learning and reinforced its contribution to collective advocacy and knowledge-sharing within the Initiative.

In addition, PRAWA participated in the 2025 VPI Annual Plenary, where it engaged with a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments, companies, and fellow NGOs. This provided further opportunities to contribute to global discussions, reflect on implementation progress, and identify priorities for strengthening the Initiative.

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.

During the reporting period, PRAWA undertook a range of activities to raise awareness of and promote understanding of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights among both internal and external stakeholders.

Internally, PRAWA continued to integrate the Voluntary Principles into its programme frameworks and staff engagement processes. Programme staff were sensitised on the relevance of the Principles and encouraged to apply them in the design and delivery of activities, particularly those involving security sector engagement, human rights training, and policy advocacy. This has helped to ensure a consistent organisational approach to promoting rights-based security practices.

Externally, PRAWA embedded the Voluntary Principles into its capacity-building initiatives for security agencies, using training platforms to enhance awareness and understanding of the Principles and their practical application. These engagements focused on strengthening respect for human rights in security operations and reinforcing accountability and professionalism among security personnel.

In addition, PRAWA leveraged its 2025 regional research on the mapping of private security governance in the ECOWAS region as a strategic opportunity to promote the Voluntary Principles. Through engagements with policymakers and relevant stakeholders across the region, PRAWA assessed existing levels of awareness and understanding of the Principles while also advocating for their adoption as a framework for improving human rights compliance and strengthening good security practices within the private

security sector.

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.

During the reporting period, PRAWA made deliberate efforts to engage and facilitate the participation of non-member civil society organisations (CSOs), affected communities, and other relevant stakeholders in activities related to the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI), including workshops and broader engagement platforms.

PRAWA played a convening role by facilitating a strategic engagement between the VPI Secretariat and the OMCT Torture Index, creating an opportunity to explore areas of collaboration and strengthen linkages between global human rights monitoring mechanisms and the Voluntary Principles framework. This engagement contributed to expanding awareness of the Initiative among non-member organisations and identifying potential entry points for deeper collaboration.

In addition, PRAWA has continued to engage extractive industry actors, advocating for increased private sector participation in the Initiative. Through these engagements, PRAWA promotes the value of the Voluntary Principles as a practical framework for managing security and human rights risks, while encouraging companies operating in high-risk environments to align with VPI standards.

At the community level, PRAWA has remained at the forefront of promoting awareness and inclusion of affected communities in discussions around security and human rights. We maintain a dedicated WhatsApp platform that connects host community representatives, enabling them to share information, raise concerns, and report issues related to corporate conduct and security practices. This platform serves as an accessible and continuous channel for community voices to be heard and for real-time engagement with civil society actors.

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.

PRAWA has been actively involved in advocacy initiatives to encourage the Government of Nigeria to formally join the Voluntary Principles Initiative. As part of these efforts, PRAWA collaborates with other stakeholders within the Nigeria Working Group and the NGO Pillar to raise awareness of the relevance and benefits of the Voluntary Principles as a framework for improving security governance, strengthening human rights compliance, and enhancing accountability in interactions between security actors and extractive industry operations.

Country Implementation

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

With support from International IDEA, PRAWA is implementing a project focused on advancing access to justice by strengthening the role of paralegals and institutionalising paralegal training within tertiary institutions. This initiative is designed to build a sustainable pipeline of trained justice actors who can provide legal support to underserved and vulnerable populations, thereby addressing gaps in legal representation and promoting fair outcomes within the justice system.

As part of this effort, PRAWA has trained community-based paralegals to provide basic legal assistance, facilitate referrals, and support individuals in navigating the justice system. This has contributed to

increased legal awareness at the grassroots level and improved access to remedies for marginalized groups.

In addition, PRAWA has conducted capacity-building programmes for key justice sector stakeholders, including judicial officers and members of parole boards. These trainings have focused on promoting human rights standards, improving decision-making processes, and strengthening accountability within the administration of justice.

Through these combined interventions, PRAWA is contributing to the strengthening of legal institutions, enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of justice delivery, and reinforcing the rule of law in the contexts in which it operates.

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

During the reporting period, PRAWA contributed to efforts aimed at conducting and monitoring risk assessments for potential human rights violations, particularly within the security sector.

PRAWA was engaged as part of a group of organisations mandated by the Government of Nigeria to investigate allegations of human rights violations within the Nigerian Police Force. Through this process, PRAWA supported the identification, documentation, and analysis of patterns of abuse, helping to highlight systemic risks and institutional gaps that contribute to violations.

This engagement provided an opportunity to assess human rights risks in policing practices, including the use of force, detention conditions, and accountability mechanisms. PRAWA's role also involved contributing to recommendations aimed at mitigating these risks, strengthening oversight, and promoting compliance with national and international human rights standards.

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

PRAWA has integrated the Voluntary Principles into its training and engagement programmes with security agencies, with a focus on reinforcing rights-based approaches to security operations. These trainings support improved understanding of human rights obligations and encourage the adoption of operational practices that are consistent with the Voluntary Principles, including the appropriate use of force, respect for human dignity, and accountability in security provision.

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.

With respect to public security actors, PRAWA delivered targeted human rights training and capacity-building programmes for security agencies, including police officers and members of oversight and correctional institutions such as parole boards. These engagements focused on improving understanding of human rights standards, lawful use of force, detention practices, and accountability mechanisms. PRAWA also contributed to broader reform and oversight processes, including engagement in government-led initiatives to investigate alleged human rights violations within the Nigerian Police Force, thereby supporting institutional reflection and corrective action.

In relation to the private security sector, PRAWA has undertaken advocacy and engagement efforts aimed

at strengthening awareness of the Voluntary Principles and encouraging alignment with international standards on security and human rights. As part of its regional work, including the 2025 mapping of private security governance in the ECOWAS region, PRAWA engaged with policymakers and stakeholders to assess regulatory frameworks and promote improved governance of private security actors.

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

PRAWA participated in the Nigeria Working Group and the global NGO Pillar meetings, where members regularly share updates on implementation progress, challenges, and commitments. Through these platforms, PRAWA supported peer learning and constructive scrutiny by contributing insights from its programming and encouraging consistent adherence to the expectations of VPI membership, particularly in relation to integrating the Voluntary Principles into security and human rights practices.

PRAWA also took part in the 2026 VPI Annual Plenary, including the NGO implementation review process. This engagement provided an opportunity to assess progress by members, reflect on gaps in implementation, and reinforce the importance of transparency and accountability in upholding the commitments of the Initiative.

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.

A key lesson is the importance of sustained, multi-level engagement in advancing awareness and implementation of the Voluntary Principles. PRAWA's experience through the Nigeria Working Group, global NGO Pillar meetings, and community-level engagements demonstrated that progress is most effective when dialogue is continuous and inclusive, bringing together government, civil society, industry actors, and affected communities. However, a recurring challenge remains the uneven level of awareness and understanding of the Voluntary Principles among key stakeholders, particularly within parts of the private security sector and among some policymakers.

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).

During the reporting period, PRAWA undertook a range of initiatives and activities that contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights defenders (HRDs), in line with the VPI Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Human Rights Defenders. These efforts are primarily embedded within PRAWA's broader human rights, justice sector, and security governance programming.

PRAWA's work with affected communities and civil society actors includes providing safe platforms for expression and reporting of human rights concerns. Through its community WhatsApp network for host communities, PRAWA enables individuals and local representatives to share information on rights violations, security-related incidents, and corporate or state conduct in a structured and moderated environment. This platform helps reduce isolation of community actors and provides a channel for early identification of risks faced by individuals raising concerns, including potential human rights defenders.

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.

PRAWA consistently engaged in ICWG meetings and related activities, contributing to multi-stakeholder dialogue among government representatives, civil society organisations, and industry actors on the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Nigeria. Through these engagements, PRAWA shared insights from its field-level programming, including human rights trainings for security agencies, community engagement initiatives, and research on private security governance in the ECOWAS region.

As part of its contribution to the ICWG, PRAWA provided in-kind support through technical input into discussions on human rights risks in the security sector, as well as by facilitating knowledge sharing on community perspectives and security-related grievances gathered through its field networks.

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).

During the reporting period, PRAWA integrated gender considerations and the needs of vulnerable groups into its programming on security and human rights, in alignment with the VPI's guidance on operationalising the Voluntary Principles through a gender and vulnerability lens.

A key element of PRAWA's approach is its community-based engagement work, which includes structured platforms that enable women and other vulnerable groups in host communities to safely report security-related concerns and human rights issues.

In our capacity-building trainings with security agencies, PRAWA incorporates gender-sensitive human rights training modules that emphasise the protection of women, children, and other vulnerable populations in security operations.