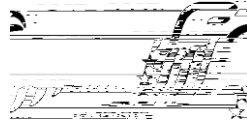


THE
CARTER CENTER



Carter Center Observations on Local Peace Committees

6 November 2009

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a review of Carter Center Long Term Observer (LTO) findings on Local Peace Committees (LPCs) from June – October 2009. The report is offered in the spirit of cooperation and respect, with the hope that its findings will be of use to the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and its partners.

Overall, the Center has found:

Since July-August 2009, reports indicate that LPCs face multiple challenges and in the majority of districts they are either not functioning well or are largely inactive.

Findings regarding LPCs were somewhat more positive in June-July 2009. This could be related to the fact that LPC secretaries were in place at that time, but cannot be concluded with certainty. Some reports were also received indicating a correlation between the change in government in May 2009 and problems in the functioning of the LPCs.

During the period of observation, the main task that LPCs have concentrated on is the process of compensation to conflict victims, or “interim relief.”¹ LPC members, though seemingly aware of their broad ToR, are reportedly reluctant to take on activities beyond reviewing applications for interim relief and are waiting for specific instructions from the central level to be handed down.

There are a few examples (such as Udaypur, Dadeldhura, and Dailekh) where LPCs appear to have had successes, particularly in regards to peace and security in the districts. These examples merit further investigation, as they could provide insight into “best practices” that could be shared with other LPCs around the country.

Overall, the main challenges faced by LPCs include: inter-party disputes over LPC composition, commonly over leadership; perceived lack of support from the government; lack of funds; and lack of clarity among LPC members about their role.

The Carter Center lists eight recommendations in this report which may potentially help support more effective LPC functioning. Overall, our recommendations center on putting LPC Secretaries swiftly in place, higher levels of communication and support from the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) to the LPCs, greater support from political parties for LPCs, increased training and funds for LPCs and LPC members, and greater awareness raising efforts. Finally, the Center believes that it will be

¹ This term can be confusing, but is most often used by LPC members to describe the financial compensation being distributed by the government. (For example, 1 lakh for families of the deceased, etc). TCC observers understand that this is called “interim relief” because of the possibility that families may get additional relief during the truth and reconciliation process.

once the constitution is written means that each party is eager to have one of its own steering the process. Additionally, it does not appear in some districts that top-level local party representatives are actively participating in LPCs. In cases where the LPC would be a conflict resolution mechanism, the lack of top-level participation from local party members could hamper its legitimacy or ability to effectively resolve disputes.

Finally, there are some examples (such as Morang and Kailali) o

such as monitoring and supporting PLA reintegration. The Carter Center understands that the process to put LPC Secretaries in place is ongoing and commends these efforts.

2. Dedicated LPC staff responsible for providing administrative and operational support could promote regular LPC functioning. It seems challenging for the LPC secretary alone, or with support from already overstretched district administrative office staff, to ensure the regular functioning of the LPC. A contingent of dedicated staff could provide assistance coordinating member schedules, meeting agendas, and keeping minutes and managing financial matters.
3. Clear directives and support from the MoPR could also help guide effective LPC functioning. At least some LPCs view themselves as directly carrying out Ministry instruction and they are interested in receiving more guidance/advice from the Ministry, including for explanation of their mandate, for staff, for financial support, and for which areas to prioritize. In the absence of direct Ministry instructions, there is lit

ANNEX: LPCs in districts visited from June – October 2009

EASTERN REGION

In **Morang**, the LPC has been established but is reportedly relatively inactive, and waiting for further instructions from the government. Some representatives of the Muslim community complained that they were not represented in the LPC. (July and August 2009)

In **Jhapa**, the LPC was established about six months ago and, according to one source, was reportedly dissolved shortly thereafter due to disagreements arising at the central government level. However, others claim that the LPC does exist but is simply not very active. Overall, the level of awareness of the LPC among common citizens is very low, according to Carter Center observers. (August 2009)

In **Udayapur**, the LPC was established a year ago, but is not meeting due to financial problems. Funds have reportedly been frozen since the change in government and the LPC is unable to pay the rent of its office building. The LPC was dealing with victim compensation; how to rebuild structures destroyed during the conflict; and establishing memorials to conflict victims. In positive news, the LPC reportedly had some success in bringing the Kirat Janawadi Workers Party into negotiations over forced donations from VDC secretaries and development budgets and incidents of threats/extortions had declined slightly after the talks. (September 2009)

In **Saptari**, the LPC was established four months ago, but it rarely meets. So far, it has discussed budget allocation and compensation for the victims of the Madhesi Andolan. (October 2009)

In **Siraha**, the LPC has been established though it is not functioning, primarily due to inter-party quarreling, but also reportedly due to a lack of staff, and a lack of funds. Three meetings have been called, but only one has been held to date as parties have not been interested in coming together. (October 2009)

In **Panchthar**, TCC teams visited the district twice. On the first visit, there was positive feedback about the LPC. It had been established and had allegedly had a notable success in resolving a conflict between the Maoists and the Nepali Congress in Yangman VDC. However, a subsequent visit three months later indicated that after the LPC Secretary contract expired and was not renewed, the LPC became inactive. (July and October 2009)

CENTRAL REGION

In **Kavrepalanchowk**, attempts to set up an LPC stalled due to tensions between political parties. Other parties felt that the Maoist candidate for coordinator was involved in war atrocities and this damaged the credibility of the LPC. Additionally, when the Maoists and the NC were leading the LPC, they allegedly provided compensation only to their own party cadres. (June 2009)

In **Lalitpur**, the LPC exists but is reportedly not very active. The formerly royalist parties are also reportedly excluded from participation. Civil society complained that the LPC was dominated by the political parties, but were still optimistic that the LPC could be useful in the future. Parties also meet outside the LPC in all-party meetings convened by the CDO. These APMs helped defuse a problem in Chapagaun VDC after heavy clashes between locals and police. (July 2009)

In **Dolakha**, the LPC had an office, a Secretary, and 22 members but was not functioning due to an inability to agree on who will be the coordinator. The CDO convened a meeting to resolve the issue, but no consensus was reached and fourth months later the LPC was still not functioning. The dispute over the Coordinator position is due to the belief that the coordinator of the LPC can direct funds to his or her party cadres who were victims during the war. (July 2009)

In **Parsa**, the LPC office has been opened but the LPC has reportedly not been established. There are reports that party leaders do not have time, disagree on the functioning of the LPC, and that local officials are too busy. According to one source, no one seems to be interested in the LPC, and they do not really understand its purpose. (August 2009)

In **Dhanusa**

