



**AFRICA CENTER  
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**



## **SECURITY AND STABILITY: THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA**

**AUGUST 2024**

### **BIOGRAPHIES**

#### **Speakers**

**Ivor Ichikowitz** is the founder of the Ichikowitz Family Foundation (IFF), a South Africa-based organization dedicated to advancing the principles of active citizenship through the preservation of Africa's heritage, environmental conservation, and youth empowerment. IFF's ethos is to develop the next generation and the ones that come after, through education to build empowerment and ensure the preservation of South Africa's natural treasures and the stories and histories of those who helped the country transition from the world's pariah to an international beacon. In 2020, the IFF commissioned the most comprehensive survey of Africa's youth, the African Youth Survey 2020, covering 14 African countries and interviewing over 4,000 youth. The purpose of this annual study is to provide a roadmap for governments, policymakers, investors, and young people across the continent, who will be the world's largest source of human capital, consumers, entrepreneurs, and innovators of tomorrow.

The Ichikowitz family has also been active in the war against poaching which has been decimating Africa's natural resources. The IFF has funded a pioneering and unique anti-poaching academy where rangers are trained and equipped to tackle rhino, elephant, and pangolin poaching. The foundation has donated aircraft and K9 units to South Africa's Kruger Park and Gabon's National Parks, setting up Gabon's Anti-Poaching Rapid Reaction Force in the process to protect the endangered forest elephants.

Ivor's businesses operate on four continents and across multiple sectors, he earned his BA in Drama from the University of Witwatersrand.

**Achaleke Christian Leke** is a youth peacebuilding and violent extremism expert from Cameroon with 16 years of experience. Achaleke has implemented over 600 community and global projects to advance youth empowerment and participation in peacebuilding. In recognition of his leadership and experience with youth, peace, and security, Achaleke was appointed to serve as African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace, representing the Central Africa region 2022-2024. Achaleke currently serves as the Executive Director of the Local Youth Corner Cameroon (LOYOC). His work on providing educational, mental health, and



livelihood support for children and those affected by Boko Haram and other armed groups in Cameroon has become a model within the country. And his facilitation of youth-led community dialogues in the conflict-hit Anglophone regions is shaping youth participation in the peace process in Cameroon. He has successfully incorporated community approaches, firsthand experiences, and research into his work which has positioned him as a global expert for several national and international organizations.

Achaleke has earned several national and international awards including the 2023 Canada Human Rights Award, on behalf of LOYOC; the Luxembourg Peace Prize in 2018; and 2016, Commonwealth Young Person of the Year, recognized by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

He holds an MSc in International Development: Conflict Security and Development from the University of Birmingham.

**Ms. Phyllis Muema** is currently the Executive Director of Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE), a non-governmental organization in Kenya that works on countering violent extremism in close partnership with the security sector. Phyllis is a local practitioner in CVE with 9 years of experience designing projects that respond to violent extremism drivers, building local capacities for community groups and civil society. Phyllis played a role in the development of the Draft Kenya National Peacebuilding and Conflict Management policy, and the Draft National Counter radicalization strategy and is a member of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum where she has provided community perspectives to Countering Violent Extremism. Phyllis is a guest speaker on the role of civil societies in confronting Terrorism at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies and was a member of the steering committee on Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERV).

Phyllis is a Social Development Expert and holds a postgraduate diploma in human and natural resources and in peacebuilding and conflict management from the Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC). She also holds a senior management certificate from the Kenya School of Government.

**Mutaru Mumuni Muqthar** is a practitioner of preventing/countering violent extremism and Executive Director for the West Africa Centre for Counter-Extremism (WACCE). His work focuses on the underpinnings of radicalization and violent extremism to implement effective national and regional counterterrorism strategies and policies. His work has helped to deepen local understanding of radicalization and violent extremism in West Africa. He has empowered more than 9, 600 youth and community leaders as peace ambassadors in building resilience against conflicts and violent extremism in West Africa. Mutaru frequently serves as a conference speaker and guest lecturer to several institutions in Ghana and abroad. Among several other awards, Mutaru is a recipient of the *African of the Year*



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*Award (2018)*, the youngest recipient at the time, for his impactful work in preventing violent extremism in Africa. He is also an alumnus of the Africa Center's Emerging Security Sector Leaders program, the Mandela Washington Fellowship (2016), the Aspen Institutes' ASF Scholar's program (2018), and serves as a mentor for youth career and professional development.

Mutaru holds an MA in International Terrorism, Global Crime, and International Security from Coventry University and a BSc in Business Administration from Ashesi University.