

Global Efforts in Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis of Internally Displaced Persons in North Eastern Nigeria, 2009-2021

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Abstract

This article examined global efforts to address the humanitarian crisis of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in north-eastern Nigeria from 2009 to 2021. This period has been marked by escalating violence from Boko Haram and associated militant groups, resulting in one of the most significant displacement crises in the world, with millions forced from their homes. The paper clearly outlined the critical roles of international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and regional partnerships in delivering emergency aid, healthcare, shelter, and livelihood support to those in need. It highlights key initiatives and decisively addresses challenges, including security risks and logistical barriers, while evaluating the tangible impact of these efforts on affected communities. The necessity of local engagement and the integration of protection mechanisms into humanitarian responses are underscored as vital for achieving lasting solutions. The analysis unequivocally demonstrates the need for coordinated international and local strategies to enhance resilience and confront the root causes of displacement. Ultimately, the paper asserted that sustained global commitment and effective collaboration are essential for alleviating the humanitarian crisis and ensuring long-term recovery in north-eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: Humanitarian Crisis, Internally Displaced Persons

Introduction

North-eastern Nigeria has been significantly impacted by armed conflict, particularly due to the insurgency of Boko Haram and related groups since 2009. This violence has led to one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the region, resulting in millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). As of 2021, about 3.1 million individuals remain displaced, facing dire conditions that include food insecurity, lack of healthcare, and insufficient shelter. This article provides an overview of global efforts to mitigate this crisis during the specified period, highlighting key interventions, challenges, and the role of various stakeholders (Rasheed, 2022).

The emergence of Boko Haram and its violent insurgency against the Nigerian government disrupted lives and communities, forcing many people to flee their homes. Climatic factors, economic instability, and limited access to basic services have compounded the crisis. As the situation escalated, the humanitarian impact grew, prompting a response from the international community (Rasheed, 2022).

The numerous severe crises that Nigeria has faced in the past and continues to experience have forced a substantial portion of its population to leave the country. Nigeria, which boasts the largest population and economy in Africa, is confronted with an escalating population of over 180 million. Consequently, the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria cannot be disregarded. Since 2009, Nigeria has been plagued by a violent Islamic insurgency led by the extremist group Boko Haram, resulting in substantial casualties and mass displacement (Rasheed, 2022).

Various factors converge in Nigeria, such as terrorist activities, environmental conditions, and ethnic and religious conflicts, leading to a dire humanitarian situation involving internal displacement. Boko Haram's insurgency has had far-reaching consequences for Nigeria's political landscape, security, and business environment. Boko Haram has caused the loss of numerous lives and forced a significant number of people to flee their homes in search of safety. This indicates that unless immediate action is taken to stop the insurgents, more individuals will be uprooted. The most distressing aspect of this situation is the unimaginable suffering endured by these vulnerable and innocent groups in their new locations (Rasheed, 2022).

Furthermore, the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is exacerbated by the circumstances they face, which subject them to additional psychological trauma and socio-economic hardships. Those IDPs who have sought refuge in nearby communities are forced to start anew in their host areas, where they are left to fend for themselves, making their situation even more difficult (Rasheed, 2022).

As a result, the IDPs are treated as outsiders by both their new towns and the host communities. Regrettably, they experience severe socio-economic challenges, such as hunger, housing insecurity, unemployment, societal prejudice, sexual harassment, child labour, early marriage, and teenage pregnancies. Additionally, they encounter obstacles such as intimidation, humiliation, and social exclusion. All these adversities hinder the government's efforts to advance the country, leading to persistent declines in Nigeria's development index and necessitating immediate attention. Strategies must be developed to address the needs of IDPs in the Northeast, alleviate their suffering, and enable them to actively contribute to the nation's socio-economic development (Rasheed, 2022).

In Nigeria, a combination of factors, including terrorist activities, dire environmental conditions, and ethnic and religious violence, contributes to a humanitarian disaster, resulting in internal displacement. The insurgency of Boko Haram has had detrimental effects on Nigeria's politics, security, and business. According to Rider (2012), it is a brutal and highly destructive phenomenon, explicitly targeting the Northern regions of Nigeria, particularly the North-Eastern states of the country. The consequences of these difficulties are far-reaching.

The young individuals who could have contributed to the country's economic growth are no longer employed in their host communities (Rasheed, 2022).

To gain a deeper understanding of the causes and effects of human displacement, this paper examines global efforts to address the Humanitarian crisis of Internally Displaced Persons in North-eastern Nigeria, 2009-2021.

Conceptual Review

Some concepts in this work need clarification: Insurgency, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Security, and Boko Haram.

Concept of Insurgency

Insurgency is a distinct phenomenon characterised by its distinctiveness, individuality, dynamics, and effects across different societies. Powell and Abraham (2012) define insurgency as violent action by individuals or groups to resist or oppose the enforcement of laws, challenge government authority, or engage in insurrection.

According to the Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency (2012:6), insurgency is a prolonged political-military struggle aimed at undermining or ousting a legitimate government or occupying power, while exerting control over a territory's resources through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organisations. Moore (2017) describes insurgency as a rebellion against an established government or authority using nonviolent resistance, often manifesting as a long-lasting violent conflict in which ideologically aligned groups seek to overthrow or significantly alter the political or social order through sustained violence, subversion, social disruption, and political activism.

To study the impact of insurgency, former President Goodluck Jonathan placed the states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa under a state of emergency in May 2013. For this study, these states are categorised as conflict-affected and compared to Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba, which are referred to as non-conflict states. Yobe has been the state most affected by the Boko Haram issue, both in terms of the conflict itself and the resulting displacement of people. Approximately 13% of the infrastructure damage in the north-eastern region, amounting to US\$1.2 billion, has occurred in Yobe. Since January 2016, the major towns in Yobe and many villages in 15 out of the 17 local government areas (LGAs) have been inaccessible due to operations conducted by the Nigerian security forces (UN Joint Multi-Sector Assessment 04/2015) (Rasheed, 2022).

In May 2013, the province was declared a state of emergency as Boko Haram conducted attacks and gained control over certain areas within the state. However, access to Yunusari is occasionally hindered by Boko Haram assaults originating from Gujba and Gulani LGAs, which remain inaccessible. Reports in June indicated an increase in Boko Haram raids, particularly in Yunusari and surrounding villages (Rasheed, 2022).

Gombe state serves as a host for internally displaced persons (IDPs) but has not experienced direct Boko Haram violence since the suicide attacks in July 2015. The majority of the 26,600 IDPs reside in Akko, Gombe, Funakaye, and Yamaltu LGAs.

The state's infrastructure has suffered damage, and existing facilities are strained due to the presence of IDPs (Oxfam, 2016). Bauchi and Taraba have witnessed relatively few Boko Haram attacks and are primarily concerned with hosting IDPs. However, they accommodate a smaller IDP population compared to other north-eastern states, maintain good accessibility throughout the state, and provide shelter to some IDPs. Presently, 30,000 IDPs from Bauchi and 13,000 from Taraba, along with an additional 33,000 and 34,000 IDPs displaced internally due to inter-communal conflict and natural disasters, are residing in both states (IOM DTM, 2016; Rasheed, 2022).

Concept of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The concept of internal displacement often excludes situations where people are compelled to move due to environmental disasters, development projects, and infrastructure schemes. The UN's definition of internally displaced persons (IDPs) addresses this limitation by stating that IDPs are individuals who are forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers due to armed conflict, internal strife, systematic human rights violations, or natural or artificial disasters within their own country's territory (UN, 2014, p. 12). The United Nations Guiding Principles provide a working definition that attempts to rectify this deficiency by defining IDPs as people or groups who are forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residences, particularly to escape armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border (Sheikh, 2015). Considering these insights, internally displaced persons can be understood as individuals or groups who are compelled to flee their homes or habitual dwellings due to armed conflict, internal strife, systematic human rights violations, as well as natural or artificial disasters involving one or more of these factors, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. The focus should be on the coercion that drives their displacement, the human rights abuses they face as a result of being displaced, and the lack of protection available to them (Olukolajo, 2014).

Furthermore, it is important to recognise the conditions under which an internally displaced individual ceases to qualify as such. According to common understanding, internal displacement ends when displaced individuals voluntarily return to their homes or successfully integrate into society elsewhere. However, returning home alone does not necessarily indicate the end of their internal displacement. When determining the conclusion of internal displacement, multiple factors should be considered beyond whether a return or relocation has occurred (Olukolajo, 2014).

Concept of Security

Security refers to the state of being free from potential harm or resistance to unwanted coercive changes inflicted by others. It encompasses various fields, including military defense, surveillance, and safeguarding national and human rights (including child rights). One can perceive security as the absence of threats to acquired values and the absence of fear that such values will be targeted (Alex, 2013). The concept of security extends beyond the protection of societal values and involves addressing internal and external challenges and threats through the use of military forces (Nwolise, 2012).

Richmond (2012) argues that the contemporary understanding of security has shifted from a focus on the state to a more people-centric approach, where the well-being of the population serves as a yardstick for security. He advocates measures to mitigate the adverse effects of poverty, unemployment, armed conflicts (including disease, hunger, and refugee crises), and human rights abuses on individuals. These factors pose significant threats to human security.

Concept of Boko Haram

Boko Haram has adopted various names to disguise its activities. These names include *Ahl al Sunnah wa al-Jama'a'ala Minhaj as-Salaf*, which translates to "People of the Tradition of the Prophet and the Group according to the Salafist Method," and *Jama'at Ahl al-Sunnah li Da'wah wal Jihad*, meaning "Community of the People of the Tradition for Preaching and Holy War" (Brinkel & Ait-Hid, 2012). It has also been referred to as the Nigerian Taliban and Yusuffiya Movement (Solomon, 2012). The term "Boko Haram" was coined by Maiduguri residents due to Mohammed Yusuf's anti-Western preaching, as a play on words for "Book Haram" (Jacob & Akpan, 2015). Okami (2013) defines Boko Haram as originating from the Hausa word "Boko," which symbolises "Western education," and the Arabic word "haram," which

allegorically means "sin." Loosely translated from Hausa, the name signifies "Western education is forbidden" (Okemi, 2013: 2).

Boko Haram is an Islamist group that operates in North-East Nigeria and gained prominence in 2009 through its clashes with Nigerian security forces, resulting in the death of its leader, Mohammed Yusuf (Mohammed, 2014). The group recruits' members through indoctrination, utilising the internet to spread its ideologies, and conscripting escapees from prisons during their jailbreak operations (Onuoha, 2014). The sect attracts disillusioned youths, unemployed graduates, educated individuals, and even influential figures (Onuoha, 2010).

Following the departure of the sect's founder, Abubakar Lawan, for further studies in Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Yusuf became the leader in 2002 after being selected by a group of clerics (Onuoha, 2014). Subsequently, Yusuf expelled the clerics who had chosen him, accusing them of corruption and misinterpreting the Quran (Onuoha, 2014). Yusuf's preaching resonated with unemployed youths from Yobe and Borno states, as well as Chad and Niger. It was around this time that the group became known as the Yusufiyya movement (Onuoha, 2014).

Insurgency and Displacement in Nigeria

Nigeria has experienced a disturbing escalation in violence resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, and forced displacement of individuals based on their religious or ethnic backgrounds. It is crucial to acknowledge the detrimental impact of terrorism on both public health and the Nigerian economy. The insurgency has severely devastated the nation's economy and caused significant damage to educational institutions (Abdulrahman & Zuwaira, 2016).

The repercussions of insurgency, particularly displacement and societal unrest, have had a profoundly negative effect on Nigeria's political landscape. In 2014 alone, approximately 140,000 people were compelled to abandon their homes in the northern region of Nigeria due to attacks on communities, states, and villages (Abdulrahman & Zuwaira, 2016). In recent times, the rise in insurgency poses a threat to global peace, with no country immune to violent crimes such as hostage-taking, armed robberies, bombings, and killings (Olufemi & Olaide, 2015). The pervasive nature of insurgency makes it the greatest danger to international security today.

Insurgency escalated in 2010, with extremist groups carrying out bombings in schools, police stations, churches, and mosques, as well as engaging in the abduction of women. Notable incidents include the kidnapping of over 250 schoolgirls in Chibok town, Borno state, and the abduction of 110 schoolgirls in Dapchi, Yobe state (Salkida, 2012). Despite the government's declaration of war on terrorists and the subsequent escalation of efforts in 2012 and 2013, which led to a state of emergency being declared in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states, Boko Haram continues to unleash devastation on innocent citizens. As a result, millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been forced to flee their homes in the north-eastern part of Nigeria to seek safety from Boko Haram attacks (Adamu & Rasheed, 2016).

Nigeria currently holds the unfortunate distinction of having the highest number of displaced people in Africa and ranks third globally, following Colombia and Syria. It is crucial to note that Boko Haram is responsible for two-thirds of the IDPs in Nigeria, accounting for 91.98% of all cases, with riots (7.95%) and natural disasters (0.6%) contributing to the remaining cases (Mohammed, 2017).

Reasons for Displacement in Nigeria

The leading causes or reasons for internal displacement in Nigeria include armed conflict between states or non-state actors, violence, artificial disasters, climate change, ethno-religious conflicts, insurgency, natural disasters, and development initiatives. (Adamu and Rasheed 2016). The discussion of the causes of displacement will continue in this vein.

Insurgency

Odusanya (2016) asserts that terrorism, insurgency, genocide, conflict, persecution, and political instability are common causes of internal displacement. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) claims that since Boko Haram's attacks resumed in 2009, over 20,000 people have died, and countless girls and women have been abducted. Minors have been used as suicide bombers. According to Oriakhi and Osemwengie (2012), attacks by insurgents in Nigeria have destroyed property worth billions of Naira, resulting in the loss of lives, lost revenue, damage to infrastructure, and more.

Since Boko Haram's worldwide emergence in 2011, the group's attacks have resulted in numerous fatalities, injuries, and hardships to people's lives and property in the North. The insurgency has carried out bombings, kidnappings, thefts, murders, and attacks on homes, businesses, and educational institutions. By designating itself as a sovereign state, the terrorist group also took control of numerous towns. (Hassan, 2016).

The killings committed by the Hausa-Fulani Herdsmen are also to blame for the emigration from Nigeria. As a result of this, Nigeria rose to the third-most terrorised country in the world. (Ludovica, 2015).

Natural Disasters

Drought, desertification, and natural disasters are three factors that force people to leave their homes in Nigeria. Due to the River Niger's overflow along its Nigerian shores, thousands of IDPs are relocated. In Nigeria alone, natural disasters displaced over 60,000 people in 2015, according to a January report by the National Emergency Management Agency. On September 17, 2018, NEMA declared a national catastrophe in the states of Kogi, Anambra, Katsina, Kaduna, and Delta (Sanni, 2018), causing thousands of people to be displaced and over 100 fatalities. Additionally, the substantial environmental harm caused by oil production, transportation, and research can be linked to displacement (Sanni, 2018).

Because of this, life has become intolerably difficult for residents of oil-producing regions, particularly the Niger Delta, and many have been forced to leave their homes. Ogoni people have been forced to object to the ongoing environmental degradation by Shell and other oil companies (Sanni, 2018).

Developmental Projects

Displacement in development projects is the forcible evacuation, relocation, or removal of people and the rooting of communities from their usual residences to make way for development projects. This can only be orchestrated by a private actor or the state (Ahmad, 2018); it happens when roads, railroads, dams, hydroelectric power projects, natural resource extraction, agricultural investment, and so on are built.

Resource Struggle

Conflict over resources and hydrocarbon exploitation is another factor contributing to IDPs in Nigeria. There are no global statistics on the number of people who fled their homes due to resource extraction. Since oil spills can contaminate drinking water and damage farmland, people have left their homes and land in search of better places to live. (IDMC, 2016). The issue of resource control in the Niger Delta region has led to conflict between government security forces and militants known as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which was formed in 2005 after the union of several groups (Sanni, 2018).

Ethno-Religious Clashes

Nigeria is home to over 250 different ethnic groups, which has led to conflicts and occasionally violent conflicts that have forced people to flee their homes. In Nigeria, the two most practised religions are Islam and Christianity. There have been more clashes between Muslims and

Christians in Nigeria since the twelve northern states adopted Sharia law in 2000, which has led to thousands of internally displaced people IDPs (Ahmad, 2018).

Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons

Nigeria is facing various challenges on a national scale, particularly with the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast region, specifically in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states. The insurgency has resulted in significant loss of lives, destruction of property worth billions of Naira, and prolonged disruptions to economic and business activities (Ahokegh, 2013). The security situation in northern Nigeria has been severely compromised, causing uncertainty among the population regarding their safety and property (Bamidele, 2012).

The Boko Haram insurgency has also had negative repercussions on Nigeria's international image, leading to a campaign of defamation and the misperception of Islam (Aro, 2013). Moreover, the insurgency has caused food shortages in the Northeast region, as many farmers have fled their homes and are now residing in IDP camps without engaging in agricultural activities (Olojo, 2013).

The abduction of women and girls by Boko Haram, their forced "marriages" to fighters, and their abuse have been widespread. The infamous case of the Chibok schoolgirls, with many still held captive, triggered the "Bring Back Our Girls" campaign both nationally and internationally (Blanchard, 2015). Instances of kidnapping, suicide bombings, and attacks on schools, police stations, churches, and mosques have been prevalent, causing immense suffering.

Displaced people in Nigeria face numerous challenges, including violations of their human rights. Overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions in IDP camps pose health and safety risks, and the lack of privacy and adequate facilities exacerbate the situation (Adewale, 2016). In addition to health issues, education is severely affected, with schools being destroyed, children being kidnapped, and a lack of quality education in IDP camps (Abdulazeez, 2016). The protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is a legal concept that necessitates the establishment of a national framework to uphold their rights. Nigeria, as a signatory to the Kampala Convention, has the responsibility to protect IDPs within its territory by providing for their basic needs and ensuring their safety (AU, 2009). However, the government's efforts are hindered by bureaucratic challenges, departmental conflicts, and corruption, which affect the effective implementation of humanitarian aid and support (Oduwale & Fadeyi, 2013).

The ongoing conflict in the BAY states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe) is expected to continue causing displacement, poverty, and violence in 2021. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to violence, abduction, and sexual assault (GBV). Inadequate living conditions in IDP camps and settlements contribute to gender-based violence and other challenges faced by IDPs (Mmahi, 2016). The operational environment remains highly volatile, impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid and putting relief workers at risk (Dunn, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the humanitarian response, with movement restrictions and insecurity hindering access to essential services and livelihood opportunities for IDPs and host communities. As a result, more IDPs will rely on humanitarian assistance in 2021 (Adewale, 2016).

The Nigerian government must address the needs of IDPs, strengthen legal frameworks, combat corruption, and collaborate with international partners to provide adequate protection and assistance to displaced persons.

Responsibility to Protect Displaced Persons in Nigeria

Protecting Displaced Persons is a legal concept that relies heavily on creating a national legal framework that upholds the rights of displaced people. It is a key sign of national accountability and a key tool for realising that responsibility. States hosting IDPs have been urged by a UN resolution to improve their legal and domestic frameworks. Article 5 (1) of the

Kampala Convention (2009) states that the government at the national level should take primary responsibility and duty to make provisions for humanitarian and protection assistance to IDPs within its control, without discriminating against any individual based on religion or ethnicity.

By implication of Article 5 (1) of the Kampala Convention, Nigeria, being a signatory to that agreement, has the sole responsibility to protect (R2P) Displaced Persons within its territory by providing basic needs and protecting citizens who have become homeless due to internal conflict and natural disaster (AU, 2009) (Ahmad, 2018).

Children's needs are not considered during armed conflict, as is the case in Nigeria, where children are abused and used as suicide bombers, child soldiers, and sex slaves, and their education is abruptly discontinued. In response to the plight of internally displaced people, Mmahi (2016) argues that internal displacement in Nigeria affects people's education, health, nutrition, emotions, and other aspects of their lives. It also contributes to family breakdown.

In Nigeria, there is no institution tasked explicitly with meeting the needs of IDPs; instead, coordinators are in place. The government's commitment to R2P Displaced Persons in Nigeria is adversely affected by bureaucratic bottlenecks and departmental strife within collaborating and cooperating agencies (Ahmad, 2018).

The government's efforts to achieve its R2P Displaced Persons in Nigeria are significantly hampered by corruption. The poor humanitarian condition in the nation among IDPs is linked to the government's management and disbursement of humanitarian funding as well as its failure to completely implement the "Kampala Convention" on displaced persons through logistical, resource, and legal means. As seen in some of the internally displaced persons' shelters in Nigeria, supplies given to IDPs for humanitarian reasons are occasionally diverted by organisations and sold for personal gain. Oduwole and Fadeyi (2013) assert that the national government contributes funds only to IDPs' welfare and is unconcerned about whether those funds are used wisely to fulfil their needs (Sanni, 2018).

Olagunju (2016) asserts that the Nigerian government lacks the necessary machinery to handle the problems faced by internally displaced people at the federal, state, and local levels. At the same time, Soji Adeniyi notes that inadequate funding for the state and emergency management agency, insufficient health sector amenities, weak legislation, lack of data management and credible databases, and overpopulation are among the issues hindering effective emergency management in Nigeria (Olagunju, 2016).

The humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's North-Eastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (the BAY states) is expected to continue unabated in 2021: the continuing conflict will continue to affect millions of people in 2021, subjecting them to displacement (new or continued), impoverishment and risk of violence. Boys and young men run the risk of being coerced into enlisting in the military or having their membership in armed organisations suspected by authorities. Civilians are frequently killed and injured because of the use of explosive ordnance, including when such weapons are used in densely inhabited areas. The operational environment is still extremely tumultuous, particularly in Borno State, where all the major supply lines are now dangerous due to the potential for attacks by non-state armed groups (NSAGs), as well as from unexploded ordnance and improvised landmines. The COVID-19 pandemic has expanded humanitarian needs and complicated responses. Movement restrictions and insecurity continue to impede IDPs, returnees, and host communities' ability to obtain essential services, livelihoods, and land for farming and grazing. This implies that more IDPs will rely on humanitarian aid to survive in 2021 (Ahmad, 2022).

National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

The policy establishes a framework for national responsibility to prevent and protect citizens, as well as non-citizens in some instances, from arbitrary and other forms of internal

displacement. It aims to address their assistance and protection needs during displacement and to facilitate their rehabilitation, return, reintegration, and resettlement after displacement. The policy is guided by principles that govern humanitarian assistance and the implementation of sustainable solutions in situations of internal displacement in Nigeria (Ahmad, 2018).

The National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria adopts a human rights-based approach and incorporates relevant international conventions, treaties, and protocols on internal displacement. It draws extensively on guidance from international and national frameworks on the prevention of internal displacement, as well as on the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons. Key references include the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), the UN Guiding Principles on internal displacement, and the Sphere Minimum Standards for Humanitarian Assistance, which significantly influence the direction of this policy. Ahmad, (2018).

Without disregarding other existing frameworks and policy guidelines for the protection and assistance of vulnerable populations, this policy specifically aims to address the following: I. All causes of internal displacement are outlined in Section 1.3 of this Policy.

- i. All groups of internally displaced persons, including those with special needs and vulnerabilities, as well as host communities.
- ii. All the needs of internally displaced persons, encompassing their assistance and protection needs, are to ensure the full realisation of their human rights.
- iii. All phases of displacement, including pre-emergency and relief phases, as well as recovery phases such as rehabilitation, reintegration, return, and resettlement, thereby creating conditions for sustainable solutions.
- iv. All levels and branches of government, from local to state and federal levels, including all ministries, departments, and agencies responsible for guaranteeing the rights of internally displaced persons and adequately meeting their assistance and protection needs.
- v. All affected areas by promoting humanitarian space, facilitating coordination, and ensuring safe and secure access for all state and non-state humanitarian actors to internally displaced persons, regardless of where internal displacement has occurred within the country, even in territories not directly controlled by conflicting parties, whether they are state or non-state actors.
- vi. All the rights of internally displaced persons as provided for in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, international human rights and humanitarian laws, and other relevant instruments that safeguard their fundamental freedoms and entitlement to a life of dignity.
- vii. The overall goal of this policy is to strengthen institutional mechanisms and frameworks to realise the rights, dignity, and well-being of vulnerable populations. This includes preventing the root causes of internal displacement, mitigating its impact, and achieving sustainable solutions to internal displacement in Nigeria.

This policy aims to achieve the following specific objectives

- i. Establish a comprehensive and gender-responsive framework that ensures national responsibility coordination and collaboration in protecting, assisting, and implementing other humanitarian interventions related to internal displacement in Nigeria.
- ii. Define the obligations, responsibilities, and roles of various government agencies, non-state actors, including communities, civil society organisations, armed groups, international humanitarian and development partners, and any other relevant entities, in preventing internal displacement and ensuring the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Nigeria.

- iii. Promote and safeguard the fundamental human rights of all internally displaced persons in Nigeria, ensuring their unrestricted access to protection and assistance, free from discrimination.
- iv. Emphasise the Government of Nigeria's commitment to fulfil its obligations as a state party under international treaties, conventions, and protocols on humanitarian law and human rights protection in situations of emergencies and internal displacement, with particular attention to the Kampala Convention.
- v. Establish accountability for state and non-state actors, including individuals, armed groups, multinational corporations, and other entities whose actions or inactions directly or indirectly result in the arbitrary displacement of vulnerable populations in Nigeria.

Humanitarian actions should encompass assisting affected individuals in asserting their rights and accessing remedies such as legal recourse, compensation, or property restitution. It also involves aiding individuals in recovering from and overcoming the physical, psychological, social, or economic effects of abuse. In line with this policy, it is essential to ensure the protection of host communities from harm and unfavourable behaviour by internally displaced persons (IDPs) or other aggressors who target them. At the same time, they fulfil their role as host communities to IDPs. The state has a responsibility to safeguard host communities in the event of attacks by IDPs or their aggressors, which may include taking legal action against the responsible IDPs or aggressors, among other measures (Ahmad, 2018).

How has the Nigerian government responded to the IDP situation in the North-East

In reaction to the IDP crisis, the Nigerian government has taken both proactive and reactive measures. It has been proactive due to the ongoing development of measures to counter insurgents. On the other hand, it includes the various tactics considered in strategising; in the case of Nigeria, this is primarily militaristic (Enjeta, 2021).

In an interview with Christian Aid, Mr Jacob Attah said that the IDP issue has been managed; however, more needs to be done to address the situation. So far, in the North-eastern part of Nigeria, there has been a severe displacement of IDPs, and at this point, it has become too much for the government to handle, which, as it is, is the first time a problem of this nature has occurred in Nigeria. As a result, international organisations have stepped in; UNICEF, UNOCHA, Save the Children, PLAN International, Mercy Corps, Christian Aid, and many other agencies have come to support the Nigerian government. So far, owing to the massive displacement, making food, shelter, and other provisions available and accessible has proved very difficult. Presently, however, with the arrival of several IGOs, the stress is beginning to ease, and NGOs are gaining strength, having been able to provide accommodation, food, healthcare, and other needs of the IDPs (Enjeta, 2021).

The humanitarian issue has been addressed at different levels, but one question remains: how effective are these responses, both nationally and internationally? On the government's part, the responses have been ineffective. There have been several issues that point to this fact and show why they have not been as effective as needed. One is the change in government; each government comes in with new ideas and different strategies for addressing the issues on the ground, and responses become slow. Also, there have not been well-defined laws and the structures have not been fully developed, for example, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is supposed to be the agency coordinating unit and responding to the problems of the IDPs; in most cases however, they have been slow due to finances and logistics issues and the nature of the response is such that the problems of the IDPs are not being addressed sufficiently. It is worth noting that the displaced persons, because of this insurgency, number about 2.5 million people, which is an overwhelming number for any government to

handle. Feeding is of utmost importance, as most camps feed IDPs only once a day (Enjeta, 2021).

Sanitation and hygiene are also significant issues; it has been reported that there are cases of displaced persons suffering from malaria, cholera, dysentery, and other diseases due to the poor hygiene in the camps, some resulting in the death of displaced persons. Rehabilitation and assurance of hope by the government also seem to be lacking. Thus, IDPs become vulnerable due to these apparent government failures. Most people have become traumatised and emotionally damaged, and the deaths of close ones still haunt them. The government has not adequately addressed all of this. The government has provided vocational training for the people, but this is not always accessible and is not available in all camps. There have also been cases reported where some of the items given to IDPs, or which should have reached them or their communities at the end of the day, do not get to them or are being sold. This does not mean that responses are ineffective, but rather that there are defective mechanisms in the delivery of those services. Furthermore, the government responses can be divided into three categories: The local Government, the state government, and the federal government (Enjeta, 2021).

Furthermore, looking at NEMA, for example, and building capacity not just for the agency but for several agencies involved. The security agencies, the police, and the civil defence. They need to look at how holistically we can address the emergency. It may happen in another part of the country; how do you know the address? This is where cooperation, collaboration, and communication come in. There should be a central mechanism for sharing mapping and information so that people know what experience they have had in emergency response, humanitarian crises, security situations, and so on. Also, ensuring the resources of larger organisations are channelled to areas of critical need. In addition, the psychological components where people are provided with psycho-social services so that they can move on with their own lives are needed for this issue to become a thing of the past (Enjeta, 2021).

Insecurity is also a significant issue. The officials interviewed at PLAN International and NEMA emphasised safety; some of the camps are relatively safe, but not safe enough. Some camps have proven to be safer than others. The camps are relatively safe, as there are currently over 1.8 million people living in them across the country. On the other hand, however, a point to note is that there have been reported cases of rape and assault of women, girls, and people with disabilities, as well as other vulnerable groups, by some international organisations delivering aid to the camps. Some of the camps are still very porous, and anybody with ulterior motives can easily gain access and cause havoc without encountering opposition. Members of the Boko haram sect have been able to achieve entrance, plant bombs, and destroy lives and property. Sometimes these IDPs are said to have had to protect themselves by taking turns in keeping watch. Their efforts have often proven futile. Regarding feeding, the director of Relief at NEMA said during the interview that the World Food Programme (WFP) has stepped in to ensure that meals given to IDPs contain a set number of nutrients to prevent malnutrition in the camps.

From the interview, one thing is sure: the Nigerian government is doing its best. This, however, is not enough, and international organisations can only work with what the government has on the ground. The government is working, but due to the nature of politics being played and the self-interests of specific individuals whose only aim is to make money out of this IDP situation, these efforts are sabotaged. It is said that some of these individuals do not want the crises to end soon. The government continues to work despite the odds, even amid challenges. It is believed that with a more robust system that fosters due checks and processes, more successes would be recorded. The government has only been able to respond within its capabilities, and although it has driven the process, coordinated donors, and pulled resources together, it still faces many challenges (Enjeta, 2021).

The respondents at the Kuchingoro IDP camp in FCT felt that if the government did enough to ensure their safety, they would return home, as many had farms and menial jobs to fall back on. According to the spokesperson, this was their first IDP camp. According to reports, the majority of the displaced had employment, including one who was a commercial driver, and many were farmers, but they are now unemployed. Only a few remain in menial occupations, such as commercial drivers and okada riders, while the majority are unemployed. Some said they would return to Borno if the government could put a stop to the Boko Haram insurgency. They say they have not returned because "the road is not free from the insurgents". They decided that if the insurgents were defeated, they would rebuild their villages themselves.

Discussion of Findings

How the International Community has responded to the IDP situation in the North-East United Nations Initiatives

The United Nations has spearheaded various initiatives to address the needs of IDPs in north-eastern Nigeria. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has coordinated response efforts and mobilised resources for humanitarian aid. Regular appeals for funding have been launched, urging member states to contribute to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which outlines the requirements to provide life-saving assistance to those affected.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Numerous NGOs, both local and international, have been instrumental in providing aid and support to IDPs. Organisations like Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) have delivered medical care, while others, such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), have focused on education and livelihood assistance. These organisations often work in challenging conditions but are vital in delivering immediate support to the displaced populations (Bamidele, 2021).

Regional Collaboration

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) have also been working to stabilise the region and address the causes of displacement. Initiatives aimed at enhancing security and promoting peacebuilding have been essential in creating a conducive environment for humanitarian work (Bamidele, 2021).

Funding and Resources

International funding has been a critical lifeline for humanitarian efforts. Various donor countries and organisations have provided financial support to implement programs for food aid, shelter, and healthcare. However, funding gaps have often hindered the ability to meet all urgent needs. The Senior Program Coordinator, MEAL, at Christian Aid, Mr Jacob Attah, said that looking back over past years, the international community has achieved a lot. In terms of fundraising, money donated, and relief, the international community does a whole lot. WFP, in association with NEMA, has ensured that children receive meals with nutritional content to prevent malnutrition.

In summary, there have been responses, but they have not been as effective as they should be. The responses have been slow, but given the large number of displaced persons, it is notable that significant resources are needed to achieve maximum impact. During the oral interview at NEMA Mr. Walson (Deputy Director of the Relief department, NEMA Abuja), Mr Adeniyi (assistant. Director of Human resources NEMA Abuja), Mr. Evans (assistant. Director of Relief NEMA Abuja) agreed that the capabilities of the government and NGOs to curtail the issue as well as how equipped they are to do so were discussed with the following findings; firstly, the government cannot do it alone. The government needs billions of dollars to

rehabilitate the communities that the IDPs will be returning to. Additionally, these international organisations can help immensely, but they need the government to step up coordination and security efforts for maximum impact. Also, the government needs the intervention (funding, relief, etc.) of more multinational actors like the United Nations to enhance their operations on the ground (Bamidele, 2021).

According to an official in NEMA interviewed, "One thing that caught my attention when I visited Borno last year is the fact that if this situation is not properly handled, we will have a forgotten generation of Nigerians in the North-East—forgotten in the sense that many young children have been orphaned. Many more will have to grow up in a survival setting. Hundreds of thousands of children will not receive a basic education. Hundreds of thousands of children will pass away due to malnutrition. The ones that survive, many years from now, if care is not taken, if the government and all other actors do not intervene effectively, can come back to haunt us" (Bamidele, 2021).

The International organisations are better equipped than the government. The IGOs support the government, which is taking the lead, but the IGOs are more cooperative, well-planned, and organised to carry out this humanitarian response. Respondents at the Kunchigoro IDP camp in the FCT expressed enthusiasm, saying that international organisations visit their camp to provide food and relief materials. They also said that, on several occasions, well-meaning residents of Abuja have come to assist them financially and with relief materials. Six out of the ten IDPs were Christians, while the other four were Muslims. They claim that most of the support they get is from NGOs and foreign Countries. They were once visited by representatives from Germany who installed streetlights for them. This happened about three years and some months ago. However, most of these no longer work due to poor maintenance (Bamidele, 2021). They acknowledged receiving assistance from people in Abuja as well. Additionally, they stated that the Nelson Mandela Foundation provided them with a training facility where their ladies could learn different trades. One of the IDPs mentioned that two of his siblings were now refugees in Cameroon because of the insurgency, as he lamented being separated from his family (Bamidele, 2021).

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) team also responded appreciably to the humanitarian crisis in the north-east. The team published its report, which identified approximately 2.1 million IDPs in 13 states. Of this total, nearly 1.9 million IDPs captured through the DTM assessment have been displaced by the terrorist group Boko Haram. This number accounts for 89 per cent of the total population. The majority of the IDPs are identified in Borno (1,446,829), followed by Adamawa (163,559) and Yobe (135,442) (Bamidele, 2021).

Challenges

Despite the concerted efforts, several challenges have impeded effective intervention:

- i. Insecurity: Ongoing violence from insurgent groups hampers access to affected populations, making it difficult for humanitarian workers to operate safely.
- ii. Coordination Difficulties: The involvement of multiple agencies and organisations can lead to fragmentation in response efforts, resulting in inefficiencies and overlaps.
- iii. Funding Constraints: While international funding has been crucial, the humanitarian appeal has often faced shortfalls, limiting the scale of assistance.

Successes

Despite these challenges, there have been notable successes in international efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis:

- i. Community Resilience Programs: Initiatives focused on building the resilience of displaced communities, including skills training and livelihood support, have contributed to recovery.
- ii. Health Interventions: Vaccination campaigns and the provision of essential medical services have improved health outcomes for IDPs, especially children.
- iii. International Awareness: Global attention to the plight of IDPs in north-eastern Nigeria has increased, fostering advocacy and solidarity.

What impact have these international interventions had on the well-being and prospects of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North-Eastern Nigeria

International interventions, particularly by organisations like UNICEF, UNOCHA, Save the Children, PLAN International, Mercy Corps, and Christian Aid, have contributed to improving the well-being of IDPs. They have provided essential assistance, including food, shelter, healthcare, and relief materials. The World Food Programme (WFP) has worked to ensure that meals provided to IDPs contain the necessary nutrition to prevent malnutrition. Collaborative efforts are essential to avoid resource duplication and ensure a more effective response (Galtimari, 2020).

International interventions have had a positive impact on the well-being of IDPs in North-Eastern Nigeria by providing essential assistance. However, various challenges, including funding, coordination, security, and governance issues, continue to affect the effectiveness of these interventions. More efforts are needed to address the psychological needs of IDPs, improve coordination, and ensure a more accurate assessment of the situation (Galtimari, 2020).

Conclusion

This paper examines global efforts to address the Humanitarian Crisis of Internally Displaced Persons in North-eastern Nigeria, 2009-2021. The humanitarian crisis of internally displaced persons in north-eastern Nigeria is a complex issue requiring ongoing international commitment and coordinated action. From 2009 to 2021, global efforts have aimed to provide relief and support to millions affected by conflict. Moving forward, it is crucial to address the root causes of displacement, enhance security, and ensure sustained funding and resources to support IDPs. Collaboration among international organisations, local governments, and affected communities will be vital in fostering resilience and achieving lasting solutions for those displaced by violence.

The violent activities of Boko Haram have led to a significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region. These individuals have been forced to leave their homes in search of safety, particularly in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states. In conclusion, the root cause of Boko Haram's operations lies in societal deficiencies across social, cultural, economic, and political spheres. The IDP issue, primarily caused by Boko Haram, has had a profound impact on Nigeria, especially in the North-East. The Nigerian government has taken steps to address this crisis through various organisations, but there is room for improvement. International support has also played a role. It is important to emphasise that the IDP issue should be viewed as both a national and international concern. The paper recommends establishing a dedicated United Nations branch, similar to the one focused on refugees, to give this matter the recognition it deserves.

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