

Boko Haram terrorism and the burden of managing internal displacement in Nigeria: Is the end in sight?

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Abstract

Boko Haram terrorism has since its inception in 2009 claimed the lives of over 20,000 people and caused the displacement of about 3 million following violent attacks on communities and the destruction of social structure and economic livelihood opportunities for communities. Since the number of displaced persons resulting from the activities of Boko Haram is on the increase, efforts are being intensified by both the state and non-state humanitarian actors to manage the crisis that results from this displacement. Despite these efforts, very few results have been achieved. This is largely a result of problems that bedevil the Nigerian state, namely (i) inadequate resources to finance humanitarian programmes for the internally displaced persons (IDPs), (ii) poor data management system, (iii) clash of responsibilities among humanitarian delivery agencies and institutions and (iv) the lack of policy support and poor implementation of provisions of other frameworks. Utilising systems theory, the study investigates the efforts of state and non-state actors in managing Boko Haram-induced internal displacements and the effectiveness or otherwise of managing the IDPs in Nigeria. It is found that the management of IDPs in Nigeria remains poorly handled owing to the above factors. Relying on the secondary method of data collection, the study also found that prolonged Boko Haram terrorism increases the possibility of internal displacements. Based on these findings, the study concludes that the government should quicken the process of policy adoption and implementation on IDP to serve as a legal framework for the management of IDPs in Nigeria, as well as develop a robust mechanism of data management to enhance the administration of humanitarian support.

Keywords: Boko Haram, terrorism, internal displacement, humanitarian actors, IDPs, policy

Introduction

Boko Haram activities, especially since 2009 have led to the death of over 35,000 people including policemen, soldiers, and civilians (Onuoha, 2013; UNDP Report, 2021), with over 2,151,979 people displaced in Abuja, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Nasarawa, Taraba and Yobe states. Of the huge number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Northeast, about 95.3 percent occurred as a result of the activities of Boko Haram, while a smaller number, about 4.6 percent, resulted from other factors such as communal clashes or natural disasters (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, 2016). The International Organisation for Migration 2016 report has it that 97 percent of the displacements were due to the Boko Haram crisis and this was followed by 3 percent who were displaced due to communal clashes in the areas assessed. Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states accounted for the majority of the people displaced due to the conflict" (DTM Round 12 Report for Oct 2016, p. 3). Activities of Boko Haram have continued to threaten Nigeria's corporate existence, thereby creating an atmosphere of insecurity.

While it may appear logical to posit that the country has not witnessed any other major incidence of displacements of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) magnitude,

Nigeria in the past years has experienced religious, communal, political, and militant crises that caused internal displacements. Almost all the regions of the country have been affected by one form of crisis or the other, causing mass displacements. The conflict between Tiv/Alargo/Jukun/Hausa in Nasarawa, the Tiv and Tiv in Gboko Benue State, the Ife and Modakeke conflict in Osun State, Urhobo/Ijaw and Itsekiri in Delta State. The Kano/Kaduna Sharia riot and many other crises have at different times resulted in countless number of internal displacements.

The generation of IDPs took a dangerous turn with the emergence of Boko Haram and its violent campaign against the Nigerian state. Boko Haram unleashed terror on communities and individuals over the years has caused massive displacement of people. The picture painted above, by far surpassed other pockets of displacement including that of the civil war period where over 1 million were displaced (Daudu, 2014, p. 287). The period between the civil war and the ongoing Boko Haram activities would have been enough for preparation for the effective management of IDPs, should such a need arise. Conversely, the country has continued to battle with one form of crisis or another leading to massive displacement of people. Displacement

comes with its peculiar challenges bordering on sanitation, accommodation, protection of IDP rights, provision of security, healthcare, resettlement, education, and economic sustenance among others. This paper examines the Nigerian government's role in the management of IDPs in Nigeria. The paper is anchored on a qualitative approach, while its analysis is based on postulations of systems theory.

Conceptualising terrorism, insurgency, and internal displacement

Terrorism

The concept of terrorism has been given different interpretations and meanings, depending on geography or national ideology. For instance, what is perceived as terrorism from the interpretation of the advanced countries of the West such as the United States may be perceived differently in other clans. Hence, in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terror attack on the Pentagon and other strategic targets in the U.S., terrorism as a concept was redefined and given a somewhat global scope that follows the U.S. conception of the term. This was followed by a global war on terror that was declared by the then U.S. President Bush. With this, the U.S. tried to galvanise international support for its prosecution of global terrorism.

While the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sees terrorism as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives, Enders and Sandler (2012) agree that terrorism, therefore, is the unlawful use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political goals. One thing that appears clear in their postulation is that terrorism is an unauthorised use of force to intimidate the government and coerce it into accepting what the terrorist wants. In the case of Nigeria, Boko Haram constantly applies force to coerce the Nigerian state into ceding parts of its territory to the terrorists whose interest is to govern according to the interpretation of Islamic law.

Again, Whittaker (2007) sees a terrorist as a person who is fundamentally an altruist, who is willing to die fighting for others in a course he/she believes is right; while this belief could be real or imaginary, it must be what the terrorist or its organisation represents. Violence can occur without terrorism, yet terrorism cannot occur without violence or the threat and fear of violence. This emphasises that violence or threat of violence is a key weapon used by terrorists. Terrorism needs certain

preconditions to survive and that involves political instability, oppressive regime, and pervasive poverty among other conditions. This vicious cycle of poverty and desperation are the preconditions for violence which are seen as a means of expressing grievances and deprivations. Shelley and Picarelli (2005) agree that the combination of these factors produces conditions that favour a group's resistance to constituted authority using violence as an instrument.

Insurgency

Unlike terrorism, there is no universally agreed definition of insurgency. Some writers use terrorism and insurgency interchangeably as though both mean the same thing. Obene (2015) in describing insurgency, asserts that, while terrorism makes use of violence which targets mostly civilian population to create fear and achieve political, social, or even religious goals, insurgency seeks to subvert or displace the government and completely or partially control the resources and all government apparatus and even population of a given territory using the instrument of force including terrorism. In this context, insurgency has a political motive and intent and its end product is usually to control the state's political structure by overthrowing the existing status quo through the use of force. Obene (2015) succinctly clarified

the distinction between terrorism and insurgency. This distinction emphasises insurgents' drive to change political structure through violent means. This position was supported by the U.S Department of Defence report which sees insurgency as a protracted violent conflict in which one or more groups seek to overthrow or fundamentally change the political or social order in a state or region through the use of sustained violence, subversion, social disruption, and political action (US Department of Defence, 2001).

Similarly, Obiakor (2015) places Boko Haram activities in Northeast Nigeria within the scope covered by Obene (2015), though his work did not associate insurgency with any political intent. He sees the persistent insurrection by Boko Haram as a rebellion against the state since most of its demands conflict with the laws of the land. Although non-state actors are also liable to international humanitarian law, it is difficult for them to identify these belligerents in conflict unlike the state actors and this creates more problems for the global community. It is against this background that state parties use all legitimate means, both kinetic and non-kinetic in a counter-insurgency operation to suppress such subversion. In this context, state actors are sometimes alleged to have violated

human rights in counter-insurgency operations just like the case in Northeast Nigeria. This is largely because of a lack of clarity in identifying belligerents in such operations as the adversaries could easily dissolve into the community. In dealing with such a crisis, the government needs to win the hearts and minds of the local populace by addressing those grievances that could generate a support base for the group. However, Boko Haram in Nigeria is typified in Obiakor's description. The group uses terrorist tactics and other forms of violence to control the political structure of the region and extend such to other parts of the country. This paper, therefore, submits that terrorism as an act is one of the tools used by insurgents to instill fear in the populace and subsequently subvert government and control the resources of the state.

Internal displacement

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN-OCHA) guiding principle on displacement and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) provides valuable practical guidance to governments, other component authorities, intergovernmental organisations, and NGOs in the

management of internally displaced persons. The documents provide broad definitions of internal displacement. The two documents share a common position in explaining what is referred to as IDP. This has come to be generally accepted by major stakeholders. The guiding principles as well as Article 1 (k) of the Kampala Convention (2009, p. 3) sees internally displaced persons as:

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

Similarly, Krasner (1999) and Goodwin-Gill (2017) integrated the components covered under the UN guiding principles in explaining IDPs, though they were silent on the voluntary and economic triggers of IDPs. They see IDPs as persons or groups of persons that had reasons to leave their homes with little or no preparation for such sudden and massive dislocation as a result of armed conflict,

internal strife, systematic violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, within their territory.

Thus, it is worthy of note that the African Union fully adopted the UN conceptualisation of IDPs in its convention for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). The convention was adopted in 2009 by the African heads of state, but it is yet to be domesticated within the ambit of the Nigerian legal system (Ochoche, 2016). However, although Nigeria has not domesticated the convention, it has articulated a national policy on IDP which was approved by the Federal Executive Council in September 2021 and Launched in March 2022, delineates responsibilities among agencies of the government responsible for the management of IDPs. Both the Kampala Convention and the NPI fully adopted the UN stand on IDP, and they reasonably cover the broad spectrum of the persons referred to as IDPs.

However, there appear to be some areas of consensus among these positions on IDPs. This paper will also tow this part by seeing the IDPs as victims of conflict, and natural or man-made disasters who flee their comfort zones in search of a more

secure location without crossing international boundaries.

Theoretical explanation – Systems theory

The analysis of this study is anchored on the premise of the system theory. The theory deals with complexities from the perspective of the whole. Life's difficult questions both at individual, group, or state levels are answered by dissecting the subjects into parts with the idea that they are easier to study and understand. Popularised by David Easton in the 1950s, the theory tries to relate politics and governance to a system that receives input and feedback. (Anifowose & Enemu, 1999). Thus, this study looked at the relationship between Boko Haram terrorism and internal displacement in Nigeria. Such a relationship exists in a systematic pattern, hence the need for a systematic approach to dealing with it. The international and national frameworks place the management of IDPs within the domain of the state. In Nigeria's context, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), an institution of the government is, by the Act establishing it, saddled with the responsibility of leading other humanitarian actors in the field of managing humanitarian emergencies in the country systematically. The activities of the armed forces and other sister security agencies in combating Boko

Haram terrorism are based on laid down rules and conducts, while the humanitarian agencies that manage and provide for the IDPs as well, operate based on established frameworks in administering aid to IDPs. Ochoche (2016) further contends that the lack of application of policy on IDPs in its management attempt, accounts for the poor coordination among humanitarian stakeholders, particularly, governmental agencies.

Additionally, the systems approach reveals that the Nigerian military, regional joint forces, civilian joint task force, and humanitarian agencies work together as sub-systems in the overall spectrum of provision of aid and assistance to the affected population. This has led to the containment, deterrence, or response to security threats posed by Boko Haram. The successful containment of the activities of Boko Haram terrorists within communities in the Northeast as seen recently is largely traceable to this coordination and network of the political system.

For the system of managing IDPs to be effective, there is the need for collaboration and coordination among all the actors in the field of combating Boko Haram terrorism and protecting and

providing for the displaced people. Coordination means they must work together, with each sub-system complementing the other. It is assumed that if the right frameworks like the UN guiding principles, Kampala Convention, national policy on IDP, and constitutional provisions on the use of Armed Forces to aid civil authority is applied in suppressing insurrection, better results would be achieved. If all these are not effectively utilised in an integrated manner in Nigeria, the overall objective of the counter-terrorism/ insurgency and management of IDPs will not be attained.

If one or more of the institutions responsible for the provision of such humanitarian support or assistance to IDPs fail, it will in one way or the other affect the efficiency of the entire system. Therefore, the management of IDPs in a country that is still battling with prolonged terrorism remains a big conundrum.

From this perspective, the systems theory offers insights into the nature and dynamics of the management of Boko Haram-induced internal displacement in Nigeria. In this context, it provides a connection and network of functions and responsibilities of all actors that function in coordination and collaboration in addressing managerial issues. Given the

ongoing crisis, the appropriation of the theory suggests that the sub-optimal performance of any or all relevant institutions (sub-systems) critical to providing safety and humanitarian assistance will compound the challenge of IDP management in Nigeria.

The activities and impact of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria

J'ama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiWal-Jihad –that is people committed to the teachings of the Holy Prophet and Jihad) popularly known as “Boko Haram” began operation in Northeast Nigeria in 1995 as a movement calling for the practice of pure Islam with a longer aim of enforcing it in the state, particularly in the Northeast where it started (Onuoha, 2013). The group has since evolved into a formidable terrorist organisation with regional spread, especially in the Lake Chad area of West and Central Africa. It has over the years killed thousands of people, while many more are displaced.

The group has over the years adopted different strategies in its operations, ranging from violent protests to hit-and-run attacks, drive-by shootings, community raiding, planting of IEDs, and suicide bombing. Presently, it is notoriously known for kidnapping for ransom including school children and women, bomb-making and use, attacks

on military formations and security posts, targeted assassination, and mass killing among others. Scholars like Onuoha (2013) contend that Boko Haram emerged in the mid–1990s, though, very little national and international attention was paid to it until July 2009 when it provoked a short-lived anti-government uprising in five states in Northern Nigeria. The group has since then gained international notoriety, spread its operational base, enlarged its membership, improved its access and use of weaponry, and forged alliances with other transnational terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State. The ambush and killing of Brig Gen Dzarma Zirkusu and three other soldiers on 13 November 2021 by ISWAP lay credence to the audacious activities of Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria. ISWAP, though a splinter group from Boko Haram, has recently struggled for dominance, and both groups occasionally fight for supremacy and territorial control.

Sustained attacks, destruction of infrastructures, and killing of innocent people have become a common activity of the group thereby causing loss of lives, internal displacements, destruction of farmlands and other economic activities as well as depletion of revenue for the government and households. This is made

possible by the sect's links with other transnational terrorist groups such as Al Shabaab, Al Qaeda in the Magribs (AQIM), and the Islamic State (BBC, 2015; Sani, 2011).

In a recent report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), deaths resulting from Boko Haram attack, mostly from Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states have increased from about 20, 000 people in 2016 (Musa & Olaniyi, 2017) to about 35, 000 in 2021 (Premium Times, 2021). The report further referred to about 314,000 deaths that were indirectly linked to Boko Haram attacks in the affected states. It holds that in each death from the Boko Haram attack, about 9 other people, primarily children would have also lost their lives as a result of lack of food and other economic means of survival, making it a total of about 350,000 deaths since the crisis began in 2009. Its transformation from the pre-Yusuf pacifist era to what has become a formidable regional terrorist group, reveals the speed and scale with which the threat has evolved. Conditions that favored its growth and expansion include the existence of ungoverned spaces, a population that is largely sympathetic to the terrorist course, a weak security environment, corrupt and oppressive system of governance in Nigeria. These

factors are common among states where terrorism thrives.

The humanitarian impact of Boko Haram terrorism on internally displaced persons

Boko Haram terrorism over the years developed different tactics in its operation against the state. Though the sect started as a pacifist movement with limited scope and operational space, the group in later years grew to become not just a formidable threat to the Nigerian state but to other affected countries. It continued to change its tactics and strategy until a time it developed and perfected the use of IEDs and other locally-made bombs. These weapons have an immediate as well as long-term impact on the physical and psychological well-being of the affected population. Most of the IDPs were forced to abandon their families, homes, and means of livelihood with little or no information as to where their new abodes were to be located. The majority of them left their homes with nothing and so lacked the necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter, hence the need for urgent humanitarian intervention to mitigate the impact and effect of their experience in their place of displacement or settlement. The physical and psychological trauma associated with their ugly experience in the theatre of battle left much to be desired, hence the need to provide their

immediate needs such as food, shelter, and security among others.

Boko Haram activities have over the years caused thousands of deaths, displacement, and destruction of property. In 2014 alone, about 6,644 people died as a result of Boko Haram activities, a number that surpassed that of ISIS which killed 6,073 in the same year; Boko Haram forged an alliance with ISIS in March 2015 (Delman, 2015). The

strategy of attacking soft targets like schools, churches, and mosques using IEDs and other lethal weapons by the group exacerbates the humanitarian challenges confronting the IDPs. The destruction of economic livelihood and critical infrastructures as a result of constant invasion and destruction of communities has complicated the possibility of return, resettlement, and reintegration of the affected population.

Table 1: Boko Haram-induced displacements in Nigeria from May 2014

S/N	Date	No. of Refugees	Countries	No. of IDPs	Source
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1	11, Feb 2016			70,000 IDPs in Dikwa IDP camp	Punch, 11 Feb 2016
2	2013 - Jan 20, 2015	About 1 000 000 out of which 25,000 moved to Cameroon alone	Cameroon, Niger, and Chad		Reuters of Jan 20, 2015
3	6 Oct 2015			19,000 IDPs	Punch 6, 2015
4	Jan 2015	About 13,000 flee from Baga in Borno State alone	Isolated island in the Lake Chad area		Reported by IOM
5	5 March 2015	16,000 flee to Cameroon bringing the total no. in Cameroon to 66,000	Cameroon		Punch, Mar 5, 2015

6	14 April 2015	About 800,000 children alone fled their homes while about 14,000 were killed since the BH attacks started in 2009	Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, and within Nigeria		Vanguard 14 April 2015
7	Jul 7, 2015			Nigeria, 3 rd highest no.of IDPs	The leadership of 7 July 2015
8	19 Jun 2015	As of June 19, 2015, about 200,000 Nigerian refugees	Chad Cameroun and Niger	1.5 million IDPs in Nigeria	NCFRMI
9	1 July 2015			120,000 IDPs in 22 LGAs of Borno State	NAN, Daily Trust
10	May 2013 - Dec 2014	87,000 out of which 25,000 were children	Niger		News 23

Note. Monitored and Compiled by the Researcher

In other instances, the IDP and refugee camps have become targets of attack by the Boko Haram terrorist group (Vanguard, 2015; Nations, 2016) and in some cases, even the government security operatives erroneously bombed an IDP camp at Rann, a community in Kalaballege Local Government area of Borno State killing about 112 IDPs (Punch News

online, 2017). The incident took place on 17 January 2017. The Defence Headquarters, in explaining the incident in Rann, blamed it on the inappropriate marking of IDP settlements, leading to a false interpretation of an unexpected gathering of IDPs for an adversary. It, therefore, advised that IDP camps/ settlements should be properly marked to

avoid such mistakes. Nigeria certainly is not alone in this kind of unfortunate incident. In 1976, for example, Moroccan forces bombed IDP camps in Western Sahara, while in 1995 Bosnian Serbs attacked a Bosnian refugee camp south of Tuzla, killing seven people (UNIDIR, 2008). Sudan is also known for indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets including IDPs with bombs creating more

precarious humanitarian conditions for the IDPs (McGrath, 2000).

For instance, the table below shows day-by-day attacks on IDP and refugee camps by the Boko Haram terrorist group between September 2015 to September 2017, the period that such attacks were at their peak. (Vanguard, 2015, Nation, 2016):

Table 2: Boko Haram suicide attacks on IDP/refugee camps, May 2015 – Sept. 2017

S/N	Date	Place	No of Death	Description	Rmks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1	20/5/2015	Yola, Adamawa	7	The first suicide attack on IDP camp at Malkohi	
2	10/10/2015	Baga, Sola, Chad	37	Attack on a refugee camp in Chad	
3	9/11/2015	Fotokol, Cameroon	5	Attack on Nigerian refugee loaded in a truck	
4	22/11/2015	Maiduguri, Nigeria	8	Suicide bombers detonated explosives where IDPs are being screened	
5	28/1/2016	Kerala, Cameroon	6	Suicide bombers targeted public housing IDPs	
6	10/2/2016	Dikwa Nigeria	58	Suicide bomber bombed IDP camp	
7	20/4/2016	Banki, Nigeria	8	2 Suicide bombers targeted an IDP camp at Banki	
8	7/5/2016	Gonori, Nigeria	7	IED detonated at IDP returnee route at Gonori	
9	4/7/2016	Mongunu, Borno State	3	Attack outside an IDP camp in Mongunu	
10	29/10/2016	Maiduguri, Borno	5	Attack in Bakassi IDP Camp	

11	11/11/2016	Maiduguri	1	Boko Haram agent tried to enter Muna Garage IDP screening camp	
12	31/1/2017	Double Cameroon	3	A suicide bomber attacked an IDP camp near Mora	
13	24/2/2017	Maiduguri, Nigeria	2	The suicide bomber tried to enter the Banki IDP camp but was neutralised by troops	
14	22/3/2017	Maiduguri, Nigeria	8	5 suicide bombers tried to coordinate an attack in Muna Garage IDP Camp	
15	20/5/2017	Maiduguri	4	Boko Haram attacked 12 IDPs who went outside Dalori IDP camp in Maiduguri	
16	29/5/2017	Nguro, Nigeria	5	Boko Haram agent attacked and killed an IDP with a knife	
17	18/6/2017	Maiduguri, Nigeria	2	2 suicide bombers attacked Dalori IDP camp	
18	30/6/2017	Diffa, Niger	4	2 female suicide bombers attacked a refugee camp in Diffa	
19	23/7/2017	Maiduguri, Nigeria	5	A male and a female suicide bomber targeted a camp in Dalori	
20	29/7/2017	Dikwa, Nigeria	14	2 suicide bombers attacked IDPs in Dikwa	
21	15/8/2017	Konguga, Nigeria	30	3 female suicide bombers attacked IDP camp in Konguga	
22	1/9/2017	Banki, Nigeria	18	Boko Haram attacked returnees from Minawao	
23	8/9/2017	Ngala, Nigeria	7	Boko Haram fired at RPGs who were in IDP camp	
24	20/9/2017	Daima, Nigeria	9	Boko Haram attacked IDPs that left the camp	
		Total	256		

Note. Adapted from ISS policy brief report

Boko Haram and the burden of managing internal displacement

The foregoing discussion reveals that increasing violence by Boko Haram terrorism has triggered massive population displacement in the Northeastern part of Nigeria, in particular. The number of people displaced increased significantly, though, in recent times, the government's effort at containing the crisis has reduced the number of displaced people. Albert (2016) asserts that Boko Haram has killed about 20,000 people and displaced an estimated 2.5 million people mostly women, children, and the elderly across affected states. As the number of people killed by Boko Haram increased from about 20,000 figure as of 2015 to about 35,000 in 2020 (UNDP Report, 2021), the number of those displaced as a result of Boko Haram activities decreased from an estimated 2.5 million as of 2015 (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round Report, 2015) to an estimated 1.8 million in 2020 (UNDP Report, 2021). The reduction in the number of IDPs suggests that the government's counter-terrorism operations are pushing Boko Haram attacks to remote locations. This implies that the group is still very much potent and constantly changing its operational strategies. If the government does not neutralise the group, shortly, it may

spring fresh surprises and cause more fatalities including mass killings and displacements due to its potential to wreak havoc.

Ochoche (2016) opined that in Nigeria, current estimates place the proportion of IDPs staying in host communities at 90 percent, in the absence of designated camps. One immediate outcome of this is that humanitarian assistance does not reach the majority of the IDPs due to difficulty in obtaining accurate data on IDPs by government and humanitarian agencies. This is so because generally, assistance is usually targeted at recognised IDP camps because they are more visible, more organised, easier to reach, and have more media presence. Of the victims of this violence, women, children, and the elderly have been the most affected. In this regard, the challenge before Nigeria and humanitarian actors managing the Boko Haram-induced displacements becomes that of protection from all forms of harm, using a rights-based approach in providing for their needs. The preceding section will look at the Nigerian government's efforts in addressing these challenges through the application of international and national frameworks.

Nigeria government and the application of the international frameworks in the management of internal displacement

One of the fundamental roles of government in any society is the protection of lives and property as well as the provision of a conducive environment for people to lead healthy lives and realise their full potential (Fatile & Bello, 2015). The African Center for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD) complemented Fatale and Bello's claim by indicating that the government has the primary responsibility to protect IDPs at the local, state, and federal levels (UN, 2011). This is corroborated in the IDMC report of 2010 on Nigeria, which focuses on how local, state, and federal governments intervene to assist the IDPs by acknowledging that the national responsibility to respond to displacement is domiciled with the local governments. However, the state or federal governments are invited if the local governments are unable to cope.

Accordingly, Article 3 of the Kampala Convention, provides, among others, that state parties shall ensure assistance to internally displaced persons by meeting their basic needs, ensuring that individuals responsible for acts of arbitrary displacement are held responsible by domestic and international laws, and designating an authority

responsible for coordinating activities aimed at protecting and assisting IDPs.

Under the convention, the state parties are obliged to develop early warning systems in areas of potential displacement and it placed the primary responsibility for the provision of protection and humanitarian assistance on the state. Significantly, Article 11 provides that state parties shall create satisfactory conditions for voluntary return, local integration, or relocation and that IDPs must make a free and informed choice on whether to return, integrate locally, or relocate (Kampala Convention, 2009).

Aside from the levels of intervention designed by the Nigerian government toward addressing internal displacement, other measures that have given birth to efforts of different agencies to ensure that the plight of IDPs are adequately addressed have also been put in place. These include launching of a national policy on IDPs, the creation of the Northeast Marshall Plan (NEMAP) to support emergency assistance, economic reconstruction and development, the creation of the Victims Support Fund (VSF), the formation of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Intervention (PCNI), and the creation of Northeast Development Commission (NEDC) among

other interventions. These agencies provide healthcare, food, shelter, education, potable water, and security for IDPs.

This is not to say that the Nigerian government has done enough as regards the plight of the IDPs. It is revealed that the Nigerian government has abdicated its primary responsibility of protecting its population in distress several times. Authorities in the field of displacement such as Adebowale (2013) have faulted the contributions of the Nigerian government in managing IDPs. They accused the government of only focusing on the provision of the immediate needs of IDPs while underplaying the longer-term protection issues. Unfortunately, even the little efforts at the onset of the displacement are not sustained as the victims are soon left on their own.

By the provision of the UN guiding principles and the Kampala Convention on internal displacements, the government, being the primary responder to issues of emergency, has more roles to play and it must take full responsibility. For instance, the guiding principles 1 – 30 provide comprehensive applications to be adhered to, to effectively protect, provide, and manage IDP challenges. The major provisions of the guiding principles are highlighted thus:

1. All rights and privileges should be enjoyed by any other citizen without any form of discrimination;
2. IDPs have the right to demand and request protection and humanitarian assistance from national authorities without fear of persecution or victimisation. This is applied to all categories of IDPs especially, unaccompanied minors, expectant women, elderly among others;
3. International actors have the responsibility to prevent and avoid conditions that might lead to the displacement of persons;
4. Authorities are to put measures in place to prevent displacement, and where it exists, its adverse effects shall be minimised including the provision of accommodations and other needs;
5. Special measures are to be put in place to avoid the displacement of Indigenous peoples, minorities, peasants, pastoralists, and other groups with a special dependency or attachment to their lands;

6. IDPs should be protected against starvation, all forms of attack or violence, genocide, murder,
7. arbitrary execution and abduction/ detention resulting in death;
8. Protection against rape, torture, mutilation, inhuman treatment, gender-specific violence, forced prostitution, and all forms of slavery including child labour;
9. Displaced children shall not be allowed under any condition, to take part in hostilities by recruitment into any armed groups as a result of their displacement;
10. IDPs have the right to move freely in and out of their camps or settlements or to seek safety in another part of the country or leave the country, seek asylum in another country, and protection against forceful return or resettlement;
11. The government shall ensure adequate standards of leaving for IDPs which include unhindered access to essential food and potable water, basic shelter, appropriate clothing, and essential medical services and sanitation with special attention to the health needs of women;
12. Authorities concerned shall ensure that IDPs, especially, children have access to education which shall be free and compulsory at the primary level. Education and training facilities shall be made available to IDPs, whether in camps or not, as soon as condition permits;
13. All humanitarian assistance shall be carried out by the principles of humanity and impartiality and without discrimination. Humanitarian assistance meant for IDPs shall not be diverted for political or military reasons.

Similarly, these are also in alignment with the provisions of the Kampala Convention, which takes direction from the UN-OCHA guiding principles on internal displacement. The national policy on internal displacement has also adopted major aspects and provisions of these international documents, including definitions. Domestication of these principles, and frameworks, and full implementation of a national policy on IDP for Nigeria would place the government legally and morally

responsible for fulfilling its obligation as a state actor in the management of the IDP crisis. This would put the government accountable for dealing with both the IDP challenges and the Boko Haram terrorism that precipitated it. Arguably, provisions in these frameworks such as erecting sufficient camps equipped with necessary facilities such as sanitary, education, skill acquisitions, and agriculture among others would in no doubt support the lives of the IDPs sustainably. In the event the government falls short of this, the IDPs would exercise their rights by placing demands on the government. The government has rather focussed on the provision of IDPs' immediate needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. This has implications for both the IDPs and the government.

Challenges confronting the Nigerian state in the management of internal displacement

Several challenges have negatively affected IDP management in Nigeria. These challenges are complex and overlapping. However, some of the challenges discussed include corruption, overlapping IDPs' management institutional mandates, stereotyping by host communities, poor or inaccurate data on displacement, among others. A good number of these IDPs end up in private homes, abandoned and

uncompleted buildings, and self-made make-shift shelters due to the absence of organised camps with the requirements for a standard IDP camp. Some of these requirements provided in the UN guiding principles and the Kampala Convention on IDPs have been largely discussed in the penultimate paragraph. However, it is important to mention among others, the importance of schools for IDP children, skill training centers, places of religious worship centers, space for farming activities, and security and human rights of the displaced population. Various frameworks place state actors, in this context, the federal government of Nigeria, as the primary responders to issues of emergency. The government of Nigeria performs this responsibility through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other national institutions, as encapsulated in the National Policy on IDP (Premium Times, 1 September 2021; Radio Nigeria, 23 March 2022). They are supported by international organisations like the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Medicines without Border (Médecins sans frontières) and the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID) as well as local humanitarian organisations.

This brings to mind that the victims of Boko Haram terrorism hardly receive the conscious assistance needed to pull through their ordeal. This is the experience of the Boko Haram- IDPs who lost almost everything to the crisis and thus needed a kind of support from the government. This support will be better provided when it is backed by legislation. Anything short of this would place them in a position of weakness and vulnerability (Durosaro & Ajiboye, 2011; Kangiwa, 2012; Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016). The succeeding paragraphs dwelt on some of the key challenges confronting the Nigerian state and other humanitarian actors, in the management of IDPs.

Overlapping IDP management

institutions: The needed collaboration and cooperation between agencies of government as well as among other humanitarian actors involved in managing IDPs appear to be overlapping. For instance, NEMA has been serving as the lead agency for the management of humanitarian emergencies, while the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), is by its mandate saddled with the responsibility to manage IDP-related

crises. NEMA has been more visible at all levels (local, state, and federal) possibly because they are more involved in managing disasters such as floods, drought, and fire incidents among others with their associated displacement. NCFRMI's mandate is more streamlined and restrictive, hence the need for coordination and collaboration for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. The recently created Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development (FMHADMSD) has a broad, generic, and clear mandate. However, this may not be sufficient to deal with IDP-related humanitarian needs. There has been no clear demarcation as to who does what and how. The establishment of FMHADMSD is expected to form the needed coordination mechanism to deal with hitherto gaps in the above two government agencies.

Lack of accurate data on IDPs in Nigeria:

The absence of comprehensive data on IDPs has made it difficult for humanitarian actors to obtain credible data on IDPs for planning and administration of relief materials. Comprehensive data that segregates it based on age, causes of displacement, gender, and location would help the intervening agencies in prioritising the needs of the IDPs and structuring

interventions. This has made it difficult to plan interventions that specifically target vulnerable groups and address their needs. The absence of an accurate dataset to track displacement and possibly manage its associated challenges affects or determines the nature of the response to IDPs' needs in camps, particularly where other categories of IDPs such as 'economic/greener pasture seeker' IDPs are equally housed. Poor database on IDP in Nigeria has also prevented the exchange of information among humanitarian stakeholders, resulting in duplication of efforts with adverse effects on the humanitarian response to IDPs' needs (Clementina, 2016).

Delay in adopting a national policy on displacement: Nigeria has recently launched a policy on displacement. In the past, this was not so, despite the huge IDP crisis confronting the nation. Nigeria relied on a draft policy since 2009, which lacked enforcement because it was not assented to by the appropriate authorities. The policy was revised in 2012, approved in September 2021 by the Federal Executive Council, and launched in March 2022. (Premium Times, 2021). The national policy on internal displacements would provide overarching guidance on state response to IDP management as well as serve as a

platform for all relevant actors in the humanitarian and development circle to have a delineated role, thereby contributing to the effort of addressing the humanitarian challenges confronting the nation. This suggests a commitment on the side of the government to deal with the issue. The delay in adopting a national policy on displacement has been a major bane in the management of IDPs. The policy provides a legal ground for the IDPs to place a demand on the government, should it fail in its statutory responsibility.

Recommendations

Given some of the challenges and deficits in the management of IDPs in Nigeria, the following recommendations, if implemented, will improve effective coordination and service delivery

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADSD), and all the key actors and stakeholders should ensure full implementation of the national policy of IDP launched in 2022. This would remove overlaps and delineate responsibilities for effective management of IDP challenges in Nigeria. Thus, while the implementation of the policy is expected, constitutional provision on the protection

of lives and property of citizens which forms their fundamental rights, should be respected and provided by the government. By implication, IDP needs should be viewed as fundamental rights which need to be provided.

2. The federal government of Nigeria through relevant agencies should conduct a mapping of conflict, disaster, and economic-induced displacement in Nigeria beginning from 2009 to build datasets of all categories of displaced people. This will help in tailoring their needs based on their peculiarities.

3. There is a need for the government of Nigeria to prioritise the building of IDP camps in the affected states to meet the standard provided by the UN Guiding Principles and other frameworks on displacement. If IDPs are accommodated in standard camps with the necessary provisions such as schools, space for farming activities, medical care, and skills, among others, data on displacement would be better managed. Alternatively, those IDPs in unrecognised camps should be relocated to other standard camps in other parts of the country.

Conclusion

Boko Haram terrorism has remained the leading cause of internal displacement in Nigeria since 2009. As a result of the

ongoing insurgency, internal displacement poses humungous challenges beyond what state actors alone can handle. This is because Boko Haram-induced displacement has reached the level of humanitarian emergency. Management of IDPs is a complex process that needs a multidimensional approach involving several actors – both national government and non-governmental actors.

The paper identified the implementation of the recently launched national policy on IDP as a major consideration for the holistic management of IDPs in Nigeria. The delay in adopting a national policy on IDPs resulted in a support gap for IDPs. Other considerations that limited the capacity of government agencies to effectively manage IDPs are poor funding, poor coordination of humanitarian efforts, and the absence of centralised data on IDPs among others.

Going by the provisions of international frameworks such as the UN- OCHA guiding principles on displacement and the Kampala Convention which delineates the state's responsibility in the management of IDPs, the government must step up efforts and take full responsibility for providing and protecting IDPs irrespective of where they are. The government's reluctance to recognise

some of the IDP settlements for reasons of their location does not remove the fact that they are part of the affected population that needs protection just like those accommodated in government-recognised IDP camps. A coordinated

effort is therefore needed to tackle the IDP crisis to avoid slipping over to another round of displacement that would create more humanitarian and security challenges.

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