

THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND THE WAY FORWARD: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are usually forced to flee or leave their homes, particularly in situations of armed conflict. They are displaced within their national territories and are generally subject to heightened suffering and vulnerability in many cases. It is also essential to state that the issue of internal displacement has become prominent because of the realisation that peace and reconstruction in conflict-ridden societies depend on the effective settlement and reintegration of displaced persons. Nigeria is a country that has a history of conflicts and displaced people. There has been a challenge in finding lasting peace through the employment of conflict resolution techniques and also the challenge of catering for the welfare of internally displaced persons in the country. However, peace and development without taking into account the settlement, return, and reintegration of IDPs. These desirable objectives are proving quite difficult in Nigeria as many challenges confront the government, policymakers, and humanitarian NGOs in providing the IDPs with their rights and needs. Some of the challenges can easily be overcome while some are more tasking requiring concerted efforts and massive resources to overcome. The aim of this article is to highlight the significant challenges confronting IDPs and provide some solutions to these challenges. In adopting the doctrinal method in discussions, the article finds that enormous challenges abound that confront IDPs in Nigeria, and it finds that there is the need for the government to find urgent solutions to the challenges of IDPs for the wellbeing of IDPs.

Keywords: IDPs, Conflict, Nigeria, Challenges, Government

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Introduction

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation. It is rich in many mineral resources like crude oil, gold, iron ore, tin, uranium, coal reserves, and other minerals. Still, it has a large number of people of its over 200 million population in abject poverty.² The poverty problem in Nigeria has been worsened by waves of insecurity and conflicts over its 59-year post-colonial history. This situation has resulted in creating hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons within and outside the country, thereby placing the country in an uncertain future.³ Before the coming of the British, intertribal and interfaith wars had, on many occasions, caused IDP and refugee problems.⁴ The inherited colonial structure left behind by the British did not bring about lasting peace, as there were tensions among in regions of the country. By the mid-1960s, Nigeria had witnessed numerous violent communal conflicts.⁵ The first of these conflicts was seen in Western Nigeria when Obafemi Awolowo and Ladoke Akintola parted ways. The conflict led to the declaration of a state of emergency to forestall the series of conflicts in the western region.⁶ The next crises took place in Kaduna after the assassination of Ahmadu Bello in a bloody coup led by Kaduna Nzeogwu in January 1966. The events that followed this led to the civil war of 1967-1970, essentially between the Ibos and the

2 John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2013) 10–11.

3 Emmanuel Ike Udogu, *Nigeria in the Twenty-First Century: Strategies for Political Stability and Peaceful Coexistence* (Africa World Press 2005) 208.

4 Robert Sydney Smith, *Warfare & Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial West Africa* (Univ of Wisconsin Press 1989) 28.

5 Theresa U Akpoghome, 'Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria and the Kampala Convention' (2015) 18 *Recht in Afrika* 58, 61.61. ",plainCitation": "Theresa U Akpoghome, 'Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria and the Kampala Convention' (2015)

6 *ibid.* 416 internally displaces persons currently. It did an overview of the Kampala Convention and other relevant laws in Nigeria. This is necessary because the article discovered that the Kampala Convention has not been domesticated in Nigeria although it has been ratified. The implication of this is that the Convention will not be applicable until it has been domesticated in line with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution. A critical examination of the relevant agencies involved in the management of internal displacements forms part of the discussion. Their roles and challenges were highlighted by this article. It concludes by encouraging the government to domesticate the relevant laws and to adequately fund the relevant agencies. This will help in achieving durable solutions to displacements. The article suggests that the root causes of displacements in Nigeria should be tackled and that government policies that engender arbitrary displacements should be challenged and concludes by noting that curbing internal displacements should be a collective effort on the part of the government and its agencies, nongovernmental organizations, non-state actors and individuals. ",container-title": "Recht in Afrika", "DOI": "10.5771/2363-6270-2015-1-58", "ISSN": "2363-6270", "issue": "1", "journalAbbreviation": "Recht in Afrika", "language": "en", "page": "58-77", "source": "DOI.org (Crossref

rest of Nigeria.⁷ The Maitasine Crises, the Boko Haram Crises, and other conflicts in the North Central region and other regions have plagued Nigeria ever since, resulting in many IDPs.

Over the years, IDPs in Nigeria have faced many challenges. These include poor housing in IDP camps, hunger, a gross violation of their rights, and many more challenges. In response, various stakeholders, governments, civil society organisations and regional bodies, have made efforts to address these challenges. Efforts have also been made to confront the structural factors that trigger forced displacement. Many of these challenges are borne out of socio-economic, political, and cultural issues, which have increased the rising discontentment and instability in the country, and IDPs are only victims of a broken society where little or no efforts are made to resolve the country's problems. These issues are what this article discusses. The article is primarily focused on discussing the challenges of IDPs and the solutions to challenges. It also concludes that more needs to be done to ease the plight of IDPs in Nigeria.

Definition and Conceptual Clarification of Internally Displaced Persons

Any attempt to define the term 'internally displaced persons' (IDPs) brings up some complex, interrelated issues. One of the difficulties encountered in establishing a more systematic approach to the plight of internally displaced people is the debatable nature of the concept itself.⁸ If there is to be a special legal regime for IDP's, then its beneficiaries would have to be clearly defined and identified.⁹ Any definition would need to avoid the twin pitfalls of being overly all-encompassing or constricted. The former case tends

⁷ *ibid.* 416 internally displaces persons currently. It did an overview of the Kampala Convention and other relevant laws in Nigeria. This is necessary because the article discovered that the Kampala Convention has not been domesticated in Nigeria although it has been ratified. The implication of this is that the Convention will not be applicable until it has been domesticated in line with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution. A critical examination of the relevant agencies involved in the management of internal displacements forms part of the discussion. Their roles and challenges were highlighted by this article. It concludes by encouraging the government to domesticate the relevant laws and to adequately fund the relevant agencies. This will help in achieving durable solutions to displacements. The article suggests that the root causes of displacements in Nigeria should be tackled and that government policies that engender arbitrary displacements should be challenged and concludes by noting that curbing internal displacements should be a collective effort on the part of the government and its agencies, nongovernmental organizations, non-state actors and individuals.,"container-title":"Recht in Afrika","DOI":"10.5771/2363-6270-2015-1-58","ISSN":"2363-6270","issue":"1","journalAbbreviation":"Recht in Afrika","language":"en","page":"58-77","-source":"DOI.org (Crossref

⁸ Marguerite Contat Hickel, 'Protection of Internally Displaced Persons Affected by Armed Conflict: Concept and Challenges', *RICR/IRRC* (2001) p 699.

⁹ *ibid*

to employ the concept concerning all those people who have moved within their own country for reasons that are not entirely voluntary.¹⁰ This includes, for example, changes of residence induced by environmental and industrial disasters, as well as the forcible relocation and population distribution programme which governments often employ to counter security threats and to implement large-scale development projects.¹¹ In this case, practically anyone would qualify as an IDP. Thus the definition of internal displacement generally excludes from its scope those situations in which people are obliged to move as a result of environmental disasters, development projects, and infrastructural schemes.¹² For although such people often suffer from material and psychological hardship, they may also continue to benefit from the protection of the state, and may even receive some form of compensation from it.¹³ Better still, the term should be limited to people who have left their usual place of residence in the context of involuntary movements, and in circumstances similar to that of refugees.¹⁴ However, care must be taken to ensure that any definition adopted is not extremely constricted so as not to leave too many people outside the protection net. In that case, the very purpose of having a separate legal regime would be lost. A special legal regime would also need to address the question as to when an individual ceases to be a displaced person.¹⁵ At present, there is no internationally agreed definition of who is an internally displaced person. Achieving one is essential both for the development of accurate statistics and information and for comprehensive and coherent action.¹⁶

The U.N.'s working definition of IDPs is phrased thus:

... persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or

10 *ibid*

11 Abdulrahman Adamu and Zuwaira Haruna Rasheed, 'Effects of Insecurity on the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Nigeria: Prognosis and Diagnosis' (2016) 16 *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: F Political Science* 7, p 3.

12 Samson Adesola Adesote and Akin Ola Peters, 'A Historical Analysis of Violence and Internal Population Displacement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2011' (2015) 2 *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, p 5.

13 Eni Aloba and Synda Obaji, 'Internal Displacement in Nigeria and the Case for Human Rights Protection of Displaced Persons' (2016) 51 *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization* 26. Policy and Globalization 26.", plainCitation: "Eni Aloba and Synda Obaji, 'Internal Displacement in Nigeria and the Case for Human Rights Protection of Displaced Persons' (2016

14 Promod Nair, 'Towards A Regime For The Protection Of Internally Displaced Persons' (2001) 10 *ISIL Year Book of International Humanitarian and Refugee Law* 4-10.

15 Hickel, *op cit* 701.

16 Eneanya Nduka Augustine, *Handbook of Research on Environmental Policies for Emergency Management and Public Safety* (IGI Global 2018) 107.

unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country.¹⁷

The quantitative and time qualifiers in this definition make it unduly narrow. Restricting internally displaced persons to those forced to leave 'suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers would exclude serious cases of internal displacements such as in Colombia, where the displaced often flee in small numbers, making them less conspicuous; or in Iraq, where the government organised the uprooting of Kurds for years in the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁸ In Nigeria, there is evidence to show that IDPs massively move to places considered safe and not necessary in droves.¹⁹ The term 'forced to flee' is also narrow. Their governments have forcibly moved countless numbers in Burma, Iraq, and Ethiopia on political and ethnic grounds: they did not flee,²⁰ nor did Bosnian Muslims forcibly expelled from their homes in Banja Luka and other areas of Bosnia on ethnic and religious grounds. Such persons should explicitly be included as internally displaced.²¹

United Nation Guiding Principles affords a working definition which has tried to cure this deficiency. It defines them as:

People or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee their homes or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed internationally recognised state borders.²²

Considering the above observations, the internally displaced can be seen as persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee, or leave, their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, internal strife and systematic violations of human rights, as well as natural or man-made disasters involving one or more

17 *ibid*

18 Hickel, *op cit* 706–707.

19 Nduka, *loc cit*.

20 Roberta Cohen and Francis M Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Brookings Institution Press 2012) p 17. "plainCitation": "Roberta Cohen and Francis M Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Brookings Institution Press 2012)

21 *ibid*

22 UN Secretary General, 'Analytical Report of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons' (1992) E/CN.4/1992/1 11 United Nations <<http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/137260>> accessed 9 May 2020.

of these elements, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.²³ What should make internally displaced persons of concern should be the coercion that compels their movement, their subjection to human rights abuse as a result of this evacuation, and the lack of protection available to them?²⁴

As to when an internally displaced person ceases to be displaced also needs clarification. Conventional wisdom would have it that the voluntary return of the displaced to their homes or their reintegration elsewhere marks the end of internal displacement.²⁵ But if protection is mainly lacking in these areas and other people occupy their land and homes, can internal displacement be said to be over? In Nigeria, for instance, groups of internally displaced persons voluntarily transported back to their home areas found that they could not remain there because all infrastructure had been destroyed, and they had no means of sustaining themselves²⁶. The mere act of return, therefore, did not end their internal displacement. Determining when an internal displacement is ended should go beyond merely registering whether return or relocation has taken place. It should include whether the returns or relocations are reasonably viable and whether basic security and survival are assured. Internally displaced people in Nigeria have been exposed to more direct physical threats. In some cases, camps and settlements for displaced persons have been the target of attacks by the insurgents.²⁷

Unlike refugees, who have fled across a border and are therefore no longer under the protection of their country of origin, IDPs are still citizens of their country. Their government is legally responsible for their protection and welfare. IDPs do not always end up in camps – the majority are taken in by host families, some find temporary shelter on the move, and others may settle in urban areas.²⁸ IDPs often move several times during their displacement.²⁹ These varied and dynamic patterns admittedly create challenges for tracking IDPs, and as a result, figures are based on estimates. The

23 UNHCR, 'IDP Definition' (UNHCR Emergency Handbook, 2020) <<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/44826/idp-definition>> accessed 9 May 2020.

24 UNHCR, *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: A Manual for Law and Policymakers* (Brookings Institution Press/ University of Bern 2008) 1–10.

25 Brookings Institution, *When Displacement Ends: A Framework for Durable Solutions* (Brookings Institution Press/ University of Bern 2007) 9–11 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2007_durablesolutions_full.pdf> accessed 9 May 2020.

26 *ibid*

27 Management Association Resources Information, *Emergency and Disaster Management: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (IGI Global 2018) p 1336.

28 UNONCHA, 'What Is Internal Displacement?' (UNONCHA, 2019) <https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM_InternalDisplacement_English.pdf> accessed 9 May 2020.

29 *ibid*.

Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimates that in 2008 there were at least 2,583,000 IDPs in Nigeria due to conflict.³⁰ Many more millions were displaced as a result of natural disasters, including in the context of climate change, or large-scale development projects such as dams.³¹ What is known is that the number of IDPs around the world is rising, and having fled their home without time to pack food, belongings, or identity papers, and in circumstances of severe trauma and violence, displaced people can be particularly vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.³²

The Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria

Internationally, IDPs are classified as special kinds of persons in conflict situations. The challenges of internally displaced persons in Nigeria are many.³³ The lack of solutions to these challenges have, over time, adversely affected Nigerians and national development. Not all the challenges shall be mentioned and discussed, but there shall be a focus on significant challenges. The following are some of the challenges faced by IDPs in Nigeria.

Accommodation/ Housing

The accommodation of IDPs has been a serious challenge. The most common types of accommodation or housing used by IDPs in Nigeria are schools and government buildings.³⁴ Others include tents and bunkhouses. Shelters for IDPs in Nigeria are insufficient, and most times, are not durable and prone to bad weather, as many have been damaged or destroyed.³⁵ A report shows that many IDPs live in churches, mosques, town halls, abandoned and uncompleted buildings and where available, other forms of makeshift camps which are grossly inadequate and unsuitable for accommodating the surge in displaced populations.³⁶ These shelters are not as a result

30 IDMC, 'Global Internal Displacement Database' (*Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC)*, 2020) <<https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>> accessed 9 May 2020.

31 *ibid.*

32 'What Is Internal Displacement?' *loc cit.*

33 Grace W Akuto, 'Challenges of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria: Implications for Counselling and the Role of Key Stakeholders' (2017) 5 *International Journal of Innovative Psychology and Social Development* 23.

34 *ibid* 24.

35 International Organization for Migration, 'Nigeria: IOM Builds Quarantine Shelters in IDP Camps as Conflict-Affected Borno State Records First COVID-19 Cases' (*ReliefWeb*, 24 April 2020) <<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-iom-builds-quarantine-shelters-idp-camps-conflict-affected-borno-state>> accessed 19 May 2020.

36 Humanitarian Needs Organisation, 'Nigeria 2015 Humanitarian Needs Review' (*ReliefWeb*, 2015) <<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HNO%20Nigeria%20-%20Final%20version%20>

of government effort but as a result of the individual's effort to survive.³⁷ The shelters are often overcrowded and unsuitable in terms of water and sanitation facilities, cooking, and privacy, especially for women. There is often no proper waste management and electricity. This explains the regularity of hygiene based epidemics in camps.³⁸

Insecurity

The prevalence of insecurity in the country's internally displaced people has become very problematic. Women and girls are being raped daily as a result of insecurity in the camps. Youths indulge in drug abuse, smoking, and other criminal activities.³⁹ Besides, women and children remain the most vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.⁴⁰ There have also been reported instances of rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage, infant marriage, sexual diseases, and uncontrolled birth occasioning high infant and maternal mortality in makeshift IDP camps in Nigeria.⁴¹ The needs of children are not prioritised in armed conflict situations, and this is the case in Nigeria. Children are being exposed to an enhanced risk of abuse, forceful conscription by insurgents as child soldiers, suicide bombers, sex slaves, and abrupt discontinuation of their education.⁴² Their lives change in a different direction of malnutrition, inadequate amenities needed for their survival.⁴³ According to NEMA, there are over 750 unaccompanied and separate children.⁴⁴ Most of the school-age children in states like Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe have many out of school children as a result of insecurity.⁴⁵ The destruction of schools and indiscriminate killing of students and teachers by Boko Haram insurgents has left many schools deserted and deprived children of their right to education. Most of the displaced persons are camped in schools, thereby interrupting learning and other school activities.⁴⁶ The education of displaced victims is virtually non-existent in some

15March%202015.pdf> accessed 19 May 2020.

37 *ibid.*

38 *ibid.*

39 Eneanya Nduka Augustine, *Handbook of Research on Environmental Policies for Emergency Management and Public Safety* (IGI Global 2018) 116.

40 *ibid.*

41 *ibid.*

42 Graça Machel, *The Impact of War on Children: A Review of Progress Since the 1996 United Nations Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* (C Hurst & Co Publishers 2001) 1–10.

43 *ibid.*

44 Eneanya Nduka Augustine, *Handbook of Research on Environmental Policies for Emergency Management and Public Safety* (IGI Global 2018) 109.

45 Human Rights Watch, "They Set the Classrooms on Fire": Attacks on Education in Northeast Nigeria' (*Human Rights Watch*, 11 April 2016) <<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/04/11/they-set-classrooms-fire/attacks-education-northeast-nigeria>> accessed 19 May 2020.

46 *ibid.*

camps.

Poor Health Care

As an essential element of national security, public health not only functions to provide adequate and timely medical care but also track monitor and control disease outbreaks,⁴⁷ especially in IDP camps. The Nigerian health care system is broken and needs to be fixed, especially in regards to the health of IDPs. Access to health care in Nigeria, generally the North East, in particular, is severely constrained for both the IDPs and host communities as a result of the destruction of health care facilities and health care workers.⁴⁸ The outbreak of disease daily increases among IDPs in camps. There is also the case of a lack of access to vaccinations, an increase of cholera cases among IDPs is seriously on the rise. More ailments are undiagnosed as there are no health checks carried out in these camps.⁴⁹

Food Distribution, Hunger, Starvation, and Acute Malnutrition

Poor distribution is another challenge in IDP camps. Some IDPs have access to food distribution every day while others receive irregular food distribution. On the other hand, some IDPs never receive food distribution. Malnutrition in the conflict areas continues to rise as there is limited access to food in this situation.⁵⁰ This is mainly because no actual statistics of IDPs exist in Nigeria, as not all displaced persons are accounted for.⁵¹ For those persons who have the resources, at the occurrence of violence, although they become displaced by the attaining circumstance, however, they migrate to other places where there are peace and stability with their available resources. Other IDPs flee to the homes of their extended families or friends in other parts of the country.⁵²

47 Menzibeya Osain Welcome, 'The Nigerian Health Care System: Need for Integrating Adequate Medical Intelligence and Surveillance Systems' (2011) 3 *Journal of Pharmacy & Bioallied Sciences* 470."plainCitation": "Menzibeya Osain Welcome, 'The Nigerian Health Care System: Need for Integrating Adequate Medical Intelligence and Surveillance Systems' (2011

48 Oluwakemi C Amodu, Magdalena S Richter and Bukola O Salami, 'A Scoping Review of the Health of Conflict-Induced Internally Displaced Women in Africa' (2020) 17 *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

49 SD Taylor-Robinson and O Oleribe, 'Famine and Disease in Nigerian Refugee Camps for Internally Displaced Peoples: A Sad Reflection of Our Times' (2016) 109 *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine* 831.

50 WHO, 'Global Hunger Continues to Rise' (*World Health Organisation*, 11 September 2018) <<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/11-09-2018-global-hunger-continues-to-rise---new-un-report-says>> accessed 21 May 2020.

51 Nduka, *Handbook of Research on Environmental Policies for Emergency Management and Public Safety* (n 15) 110.

52 Van Peter W Arsdale, *Forced to Flee: Human Rights and Human Wrongs in Refugee Homelands* (Lexington Books 2006) 100.' Forced to Flee uniquely looks at the 'pre-flight' environment and the

All these factors make it nearly impossible to obtain an accurate number of displaced persons in Nigeria. IDPs also suffer from hunger, starvation, and malnutrition. Over the years, many IDPs have received solidarity from well-meaning Nigerians, international government, and agencies. Donations in terms of food, water, and other relief materials have been made to this effect. The World Food Programme reports that many children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and also many children are at risk of dying if not reached with treatment.⁵³ It was also discovered that money and food and other relief materials donated to take care of displaced persons were being diverted.⁵⁴ Cases of malnutrition and deaths continue to rise. Thus, the lack of adequate nutrition affects one's health and causes diseases, especially among more vulnerable children.

Psychological Trauma and Bitterness

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are among the most vulnerable people in the world today. As a result of conflict-induced forced displacement, they are prone to psychological, emotional, and mental health and issues.⁵⁵ There is the prevalence of psychological trauma among IDPs and also socio-demographic factors associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among IDPs.⁵⁶ Most IDPs in Nigeria are

factors contributing to human rights violations therein. It is due to these abuses that many people flee their homelands. Author Peter W. Van Arsdale presents first-hand fieldwork conducted over a 30-year span in six refugee homelands ranging from Sudan to Bosnia. This expert research bridges the emergent refugee and human rights regimes, while addressing theories of obligation, justice, and structural inequality. Van Arsdale also deftly tackles the difficult ideas of compassion, suffering, and evil, and introduces the concept of 'pragmatic humanitarianism.' *Forced to Flee* is a comprehensive study that should be of great interest to scholars and practitioners of anthropology, sociology, social work, political science, and environmental studies. "ISBN": "978-0-7391-5506-6", "language": "en", "note": "Google-Books-ID: tfd5AAAAQBAJ", "number-of-pages": "239", "publisher": "Lexington Books", "source": "Google Books", "title": "Forced to Flee: Human Rights and Human Wrongs in Refugee Homelands", "title-short": "Forced to Flee", "author": [{"family": "Arsdale", "given": "Van Peter W."}], "issued": {"date-parts": [{"2006", "8", "4"}]}, "locator": "100", "label": "page"}, "schema": "https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}

53 Chinyere Theresa Nwaoga, Anuli B. Okoli and Favour C. Uroko, 'Self-Acclaimed Religious Terrorism, Refugee Crisis, and the Plight of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria' (2017) 8 *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 191.

54 *ibid.*

55 Elijah Mirona Getanda, Chris Papadopoulos and Hala Evans, 'The Mental Health, Quality of Life and Life Satisfaction of Internally Displaced Persons Living in Nakuru County, Kenya' (2015) 15 *BMC Public Health* <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4527222/>> accessed 21 May 2020.

56 Taiwo Lateef Sheikh and others, 'Psycho-Trauma, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Symptomatic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Internally Displaced Persons in Kaduna, Northwestern Nigeria' (2014) 5 *Frontiers in Psychiatry* <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4162378/>> accessed 21 May 2020. Northwestern Nigeria\uc0\u8217} (2014

traumatised and frustrated because of the situation they find themselves. The most frequent psycho-traumas are the destruction of personal property, forceful evacuation from homes, and witnessing of violence against others.⁵⁷ Consequently, many of the IDPs live in bitterness due to painful separation from their spouses, families, and loved ones.

Lack of Education

Education is described as the aggregate of all processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviour which are of a positive value to society.⁵⁸ Education enables individuals to acquire appropriate knowledge, values, and skills for personal development and also contributes meaningfully to the development of society.⁵⁹ Education was also declared a basic human right for every individual in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and has been reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966.⁶⁰ The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990 and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, among other international and regional human rights instruments, also confers the right to education.⁶¹ IDPs in Nigeria face the challenge of educating their children or family members because they are always in transit or forced to flee their homes. School attendance is usually dependent on many reasons but, very importantly, the security of the child. The present state of insecurity in Nigeria has been traumatic for children as they are forced to flee from their homes in fear, to witness killings, or to live as displaced persons or refugees. As a result of the incessant attacks on schools, school children, and teachers, over one million children have been forced out of school, while their teachers have also been forced to stay away from school.⁶² Some schools have been forced to shut down, and the deserted school buildings have been converted into shelters for internally displaced persons.

57 *ibid.* a post election violent conflict in Northern Nigeria led to resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs)

58 Fafunwa A. B, *History of Education in Nigeria* (Allen and Unwin London 1974).

59 *ibid.*

60 Klaus Dieter Beiter, *The Protection of the Right to Education by International Law: Including a Systematic Analysis of Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 2006) 86.

61 *ibid.*

62 Aisosa Jennifer Isokpan and Ebenezer Durojaye, 'Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency on the Child's Right to Education in Nigeria' (2016) 19 *Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 1.

Lack of Knowledge of Rights and Human Rights Abuses

There is a lack of understanding of the rights of IDPs as set out in the U.N. guiding principles on Internal Displacement and the Kampala Convention.⁶³ These rights include the right to life, freedom of movement, association, the dignity of the human person, personal liberty, right to private and family life, and other vital rights. This challenge is owing to widespread illiteracy among IDPs and even, surprisingly, some government officials. There are also cases of human rights abuses in IDP camps, usually by government officials, soldiers, and even humanitarian workers.⁶⁴ Incidents of human rights abuses include torture, rape, cruel and inhuman treatment in IDP camps.⁶⁵ There are reported cases of people arriving in the recaptured towns in Northeastern Nigeria to seek safety had often been treated with suspicion by the Nigerian military.⁶⁶ In some cases, female IDPs alleged that they saw their family members being blindfolded and taken away by the army, and they were not seen again for a long time.⁶⁷

Lack of Good Water, Poor Waste Management, and Lack of Electricity

Shelters for IDPs in Nigeria are usually poorly constructed owing to underfunding and lack of available funds. Many IDP settlements in Nigeria are more or less a cluster of temporary shacks and makeshifts without the necessary utilities for normal daily livelihood.⁶⁸ There is a lack of clean water, poor waste management, and lack of electricity in IDP shelters, thereby making their lives very difficult. These situations explain the regularity of hygiene-related epidemics in camps and total darkness in camps.⁶⁹ Thus, because of the overcrowded nature of IDP camps, it becomes difficult for the IDPs to access good water for cooking and sanitation facilities.

63 African Union, African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (“Kampala Convention”), 23 October 2009, Art. 3-11. See also the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 22 July 1998, ADM 1.1, PRL 12.1, PR00/98/109.

64 Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Senthana Selvarajah, *Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding: Critical and Global Perspectives* (Springer 2019) 142.

65 *ibid.*

66 Amnesty International, “‘They Betrayed Us’: Women Who Survived Boko Haram Raped, Starved and Detained in Nigeria” (Amnesty International 2018) AFR 44/8415/2018 9.

67 *ibid.* 9–10.

68 Osagioduwa Eweka and Toluwanimi Oluwakorede Olusegun, ‘Management of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Comparing Nigeria and Cameroon’ (2016) 10 *African Research Review* 193. plainCitation: “Osagioduwa Eweka and Toluwanimi Oluwakorede Olusegun, ‘Management of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Comparing Nigeria and Cameroon’ (2016)

69 Umar S.S, Suleiman M.S and Magaji R.A, ‘Assessment of Health Risks amongst Vulnerable Groups of Internally Displaced Persons in Pompomari Camp, Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria’ (2018) 4 *African Journal of Arts and Humanities* 92–95.

The Way Forward

The article has so far highlighted the challenges of IDPs. These challenges are not exhaustive as there are more challenges than the ones mentioned above that confront IDPs. The question remains as to what the solutions to these challenges are. Some solutions are discussed below.

The rights of IDPs cannot be compromised or breached in any form. There is, therefore, the need to respect and protect the human rights of IDPs. National security cannot supersede human rights.⁷⁰ Therefore, there also is a need to conduct counter-insurgency operations in a manner that upholds the rule of law and abide by international human rights standards. There should be professionalism on the part of the military to minimise collateral casualties and damage to livelihoods. There is a need for legislation on IDPs as the absence of a law and policy framework that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities hampers the coordination of humanitarian and development efforts to mitigate the effects of displacement on children. Local legislation on IDPs should also be complemented with other reforms like proper implantation, good governance, social justice and other factors.

The right to have quality education is a basic right, and providing education in emergencies does provide life-saving information, protect children from trafficking, recruitment by armed groups, and psychosocial trauma.⁷¹ In the long term, education can promote peace and post-conflict reconstruction and help young people develop the skills and qualifications that will equip them to live meaningful lives after the conflict ends. There is, therefore, the need for the government to provide more education for IDPs, most especially children. Basic amenities should also be supplied in IDP camps.

The emotional, social, and physical development of IDPs is significant. Most especially, children in IDP camps need to be in satisfactory psychological and mental conditions, which directly affects their general development. It also determines, to a large extent, the type of adults they will become. There is, therefore, the need to provide enough medical

70 Michaelene Cox, *Negotiating Sovereignty and Human Rights: Actors and Issues in Contemporary Human Rights Politics* (Routledge 2016) 229–230. This volume discusses some of the most important current and emerging human rights issues. It takes stock of the initiatives, policy responses and innovations of past years to identify some of the challenges that will likely require bold and innovative solutions. The contributors focus on actors and/or issues that are outside the mainstream of international human rights politics; the chapters address issues that have only emerged as an important part of the international human rights agenda and generated much advocacy, diplomacy and negotiations since the end of the Cold War. These issues include: the International Criminal Court, the norm of Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

71 Unesco, *Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction* (UNESCO 2010).

personnel, psychologist, psychiatrists in IDP camps to cater to the health needs of IDPs. Also, efforts should be made by the government to invest in all children to provide their future wellbeing. The absence of comfortable shelters, good food, electricity, and clean water are also prevalent in IDP camps. There is, therefore, the need to vote for more funds for the comfort and wellbeing of IDPs in their camps. Funds can be got from national budgetary allocations and donations from well-meaning individuals and international bodies.

There is a need for urgent and well-coordinated intervention by the government in the insecurity situation in the country. This can be effectively achieved by community participation through community policing, government-sponsored dialogue with community members and active coordination of intelligence by government agencies. The present situation in northeastern Nigeria, the northcentral, and other parts of Nigeria are unacceptable. There are certain causes of such problems. It has been alleged that one cause is a covert protraction of the situation by government and other interests for religious, political and socio-economic reasons; hence being complicit in the ongoing issues.⁷² Thus, the Nigerian government needs to take proactive steps to end the ongoing insurgency in the northeastern part of the country and continuous conflicts in other regions like the northcentral part of the country so that there can be peace in the country. The use of the military in fighting the insurgency is commendable. Still, there is a need to pursue a broader strategy that addresses the economic and social origins of the crisis. Also, the prevalence of poverty and unemployment and low level of education among Nigerian youths, especially in the north, is a potential for insecurity, as the youth population is a potential weapon in the hands of the insurgents.

There is a need for the country to conduct a complete and transparent overhaul of all public service institutions.⁷³ There is so much, especially as regards the state of IDPs. Therefore, it is recommended that available state agencies and commissions of inquiry like Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), and others should be further funded by government and more focused on investigating, trying, and punishing corrupt officials who engage in corrupt practices. However, in the discharge of their duties, they should be made transparent, upholders of human rights and apolitical, and not agencies

⁷² See Grace O Okoye, *Proclivity to Genocide: Northern Nigeria Ethno-Religious Conflict, 1966 to Present* (Lexington Books 2014) 215. See also Africaideas, 'Government of Nigeria Is Complicit on Christian Killings' (*Africa Forum - Africa Research - News View weekly*, 12 July 2019) <<https://www.africaresearch.org/government-of-nigeria-is-complicit-on-christian-killings/>> accessed 23 October 2020.

⁷³ The Transparency International 2019 Corruption Index rates Nigeria 146 out of 180 countries. This is a very poor score on the index. See Transparency International, 'Nigeria' (*Transparency.org*) <<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/nigeria>> accessed 23 October 2020.

used by political actors for witchhunts. While this is a noble endeavour, the process would be costly and challenging; it would go a long way to creating trust and credibility in the Nigerian government, and society at large.

Conclusion

The article has so far discussed some challenges of IDPs in Nigeria. The insecurity situation and other related disasters in contemporary Nigeria have forced a large number of Nigerians to be vulnerable and susceptible to all forms of exploitation, abuse, neglect, and many rendered homeless in the northeastern and other parts of the country.⁷⁴ As has been mentioned in this article, there are so many challenges confronting IDP camps that need urgent solutions to ease the sufferings of IDPs. The current figure or number of IDPs camps across the country shows that the federal, states, local governments, and the host communities are all suffering from the effect of insecurity in the country, particularly in the north-east.⁷⁵ Insecurity in any enviro constitutes a threat to lives and properties, hinders economic activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, and in turn, retards human and economic development of that nation. Moreso, more attention should be focused on the situation of IDPs as depriving them of basic rights to housing, food, medicine, and other necess would be fair to people who find themselves in situations they never envisaged or are responsible for.

Despite the efforts of the Nigerian government, faith-based organisations and other NGOs to address some of the basic needs of these IDPs, their rights and opportunities to accessing healthcare services, education, employment, economic activities, and information for participation in the decision making affecting their lives is still limited. Hence, there is, besides other solutions, the need to have a legal framework that will ensure easy access and opportunities for the IDPs. The National Policy on IDPs is a welcome development, but its lack of legal effect makes it less desirable.

74 Mellissa Simbisai Mlambo, 'Boko Haram and Nigerian Insecurity: Religion and the Failure of Governance as Causal Factors' (MA in Security Studies, University of Pretoria 2017) 44–54.

75 *ibid*

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