

RESPONDING TO THE PLIGHT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA



**CENTRE FOR INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**MacArthur
Foundation**

PREFACE

One of the dire consequences of the ranging insurgency in the north east of Nigeria is the uprooting millions of people from their homes and communities. Several towns and indeed whole local government in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States have been taken over by the Boko Haram insurgents who maltreat the citizens and kill them for no reason. Thousands have been killed and the killing occurs almost on a daily basis. As a result, people have had to flee to places where they consider safe. The crisis has created a huge number of internally displaced people (IDPs) , with some living in emergency camps set up by governments while the greater majority are embedded within their host communities without formal government recognition and there support and assistance.

Official statistics indicate as at the end of November, there were more than six hundred thousand IDPs registered in the three states. This represents only a small fraction of the totality of IPDs created by the insurgency, the majority of who are living in camps outside these three states or embedded within host communities across the country including in the three states.

Having been uprooted from their homes, and without any means of livelihood, IDPs are vulnerable. Their plight is multidimensional as this report indicates. They live in adhoc camps lacking in basic necessities of life such as conveniences, decent sleeping places and shelter, they have virtually no access to healthcare facilities and personnel while their security is perilous, especially as several of the camps in both Borno and Adamawa States have been attacked by the insurgents a number of times. In addition, because of the inability of the government counter-insurgency to secure passage to the camps, it is very difficult to deliver relief materials to them. The education of their children has been disrupted while they themselves have been virtually politically disenfranchised as it is not clear how and where they could vote when elections hold in the coming weeks. In fact, INEC has not been able to deliver to them their permanent voter cards.

The report highlights these plights, bringing out also the gaps in governments' handling of the management and administration of IDPs in the country. It also offers a series of recommendations which, when implemented would address not only the current problems of the IDPs also help to make sure that there are more responsive and capacity-enhanced institutions and instruments to meet the need of IDPs in the country. It is our hope that governments and other stakeholders will work to implement these recommendations as well as others that will seek to ease the problems of IDPs. In addition, it is our desire and hope that the report itself will spur all well meaning Nigerians to redouble the efforts to overcome the challenges that the Boko Haram insurgency has posed to the people and government of the country.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CITAD will like to acknowledge and thank MacArthur Foundation which graciously provided support for the publication of this Policy Brief. We wish to thank Raji B Boye of the Department of Political Science, Yobe State University, who did the original draft for the policy brief. This was further worked upon internally. We also acknowledge Prof. Kamal Aliyu of the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University, Kano who did the language editing. Finally we acknowledge the creativity and untiring efforts of Sufyan Lawan Kabo of the Media and Creative Unit of CITAD for the design work of the document.

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INTRODUCTION:

Internally displaced persons (IDPs), according to the United Nations working definition, are “persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country.” It is evident that internally displaced persons are generally more vulnerable, because they lack, in most cases, national and international protection and assistance.

Becoming displaced within one's own country does not confer special legal status on the same. IDPs remain citizens or habitual residents of a particular country and continue to be entitled to enjoy the rights available to the population as a whole. However, because of their special situation, specific needs and the heightened vulnerability that flow from the fact of being displaced, they are entitled to special protection and assistance. However, majority of IDPs are not even recognized because of lack of government presence in their locations of refuge.

The current waves of IDPs in the Northeastern Nigeria were consequent to the killings resulting from activities of the Boko Haram insurgency. The insurgency killing started in Maiduguri, when members of the Jama'atu Ahlil Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, later known and called “Boko Haram”, staged violent attacks on the security formation in July 2009.

From September 2010 through to 2013, the strategy of the insurgents' attacks was towards the security personnel, prominent individuals, religious personalities and village /ward heads, whom they attacked and killed on a “hit and run” basis. This later metamorphosed to the use of explosives and other sophisticated weapons to attack Police stations, banks and market places ostensibly for the recoument of arms and funding for their operations.

By May 2013, the youth in Maiduguri, tired of the double tragedy of Boko Haram and JTF attacks, decided to form and enlist themselves into vigilante groups known as *Civilian JFT*. Their operations are to expose and apprehend members of the Boko Haram insurgent group, as well as assist the JTF in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgent group. In Yobe State, it was more of a community cooperation, when the JTF in Damaturu, Potiskum, Nguru and Gashua releases some mobile phone numbers for the purpose of emergency calls to supply information regarding the whereabouts and plans of the Boko Haram. The communities were able at that point to muster the courage to give information pertaining the movement and operation of the insurgent group members, an effort that saw the Boko Haram routed out of the major cities of Maiduguri Damaturu, Potiskum and others.

However, since their escape into the rural areas, especially the Sambisia game reserve, the Boko Haram had time to strategize. They shifted from attacking individuals and institutions to communities and villages. Their attempts to re-enter Maiduguri and Damaturu were, however, thwarted on several occasions. Following this failure, they decided to invade and annex small communities in Borno and Yobe states. The middle of the year 2014 saw the extension of the insurgency to Adamawa State. This has been sustained with devastating consequences. Since most of the insurgents' attacks went without any challenge from the security personnel, they continued to advance, leading to the capture of big townships prominent among which are Damboa, Gwoza, Chibok, Uba, Bama, Kukawa, Baga, Damask, Ngala and Gomboru, Mafa, etc. in Borno State. In Adamawa State, the insurgents raided and annexed Michika, Uba, Bazza, Madagali, Gulak, Gombi, Hong, Mubi and Maiha among others while in Yobe State, two local government areas (Gujba and Gulani) came under their control.

The main repercussion of these annexations of townships is that the residents could not dare to remain in the towns for fear of the draconian/authoritarian rule of the Boko Haram, where summary execution of people was taken as routine. The insurgents' control was firmly established in Bama, Gwoza, Mubi, Gujba, Goniri and in many smaller villages. By November, 2014, an estimated 18 local governments had come under their control. Consequently, this swelled the numbers of IDPs with people who were initially managing with friends and relatives.

THE DIMENSION AND MAGNITUDE OF IDPS IN ADAMAWA, BORNO AND YOBE

The number of IDPs resulting from the Boko Haram insurgency is very large and is still on the increase. By 25th November, 2014, the North-East Zonal Coordinator of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) announced the registration of 678,713 IDPs across the three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the figures by state. It shows that Adamawa State has 160, 198, Borno State 402,039 and Yobe State 116, 536 IDPs. However, while in Adamawa and Borno, there are formally/officially established camps accommodating some of the IDPs, in Yobe State there is not a single camp officially created for the purpose of catering for the needs of IDPs. Instead, the IDPs, mostly from Buni Yadi, Gujba, Goni and Michika are scattered across twelve local government areas in the state.

S/N	State	Camp	Nos. of IDPs
1	Adamawa state	Nyako Housing Estate	3,205
2		Yola NYSC camp	4,412
3		Maikoli	658
4		COCIN Church/EYN Yola	1,476
5		Federal Poly, Yola	836
6		Damare, Yola	3,272
7		St. Teresa s Catholic Cathedral, Jimeta.	29, 106
		Others	117,233
8	Borno state	NYSC camp	5,587
9		Eccleziya Yan uwaa Nigeria Church, Wulari Maiduguri	9.021
10		Govt, Girls Sec Sch., Biu	2,250
11		Govt, Girls Sec Sch., Yerwa	5,681
12		Govt. College, Maiduguri	7,500
13		Govt. Girls College, Maiduguri	6,000
14		Government Secondary School, Maiduguri	3,352
15		Chad Basin, Maiduguri	5,336
16		Sanda Kyarimi Secondary School, Maiduguri	1,003
17		Army Primary School II, Maiduguri.	2,000
18		Ngomari Gana Primary School, Maiduguri.	2,700
19	--	Mashamari Primary School, Maiduguri	7.400
20		Govt, Arabic Teacher College	6,945
21		Others	339,264
22	Yobe	The IDPs in Yobe state were scattered across 12 local government of Fika, Potiskum, Nangare, Fune, Jakusko, Bade, Nguru, Damaturu Tarmuwa Karasuwa, Bursari and Machina	116, 536

Source: NEMA

Table 1 shows a breakdown of IDPs in various camps in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states
 NB: Others represent those IDPs that are staying with friends and relatives in the host community.

The exact number of IDPs cannot be established, because many have not aligned themselves to NEMA, SERA and other NGOs registration, as they preferred to stay in the host communities like everyone else. There are also many other camps in other states such as Kano, Kaduna, Kebbi, Bauchi, etc. with thousands in them while large numbers are dispersed within these states.

THE PLIGHT OF IDPS

The IDPs in the northeast face a number of problems that have turned their situation into a major humanitarian disaster. Key among these problems they face include:

- a. *The Breakup of Families and Trauma:* Displacement breaks up families and severs community ties. It also weighs down on the people, creating psychological problems. With no employment and access to means of livelihood, the displaced people are particularly vulnerable to violence. These special needs have often been ignored in situational approaches. As a consequence, the internally displaced frequently suffer the highest mortality rates in humanitarian emergencies and the prevalence of communicable diseases, psychological, depression and nostalgia, especially when the home they were returning to remained empty and destroyed. In other cases, they were grappled by fear of the return of violence from their tormentors.
- b. *Security and safety:* The IDPs are only waiting for more or another round of displacement. A reason for this was the fact that the causes of their displacement from the homes were not remedied and this resulted from the spate of attacks from the insurgency who used the fleeing as a source of annexation of their homes for further pursuit and grabbing more territories. This case was very clear in the central and part of southern Borno and the northern part of Adamawa states, where people fled from Gwoza and Izghe to Limankara only to be driven to Shuwa, Madagali and Michika in Adamawa State, while their stay at Mubi could not guarantee their security/safety needs. No doubt security for IDPs is very fragile and sometime almost non-existing. In the camps, their security is based on skeletal services of the security men mostly at the entrances to the camps. Apart from physical security of the persons, there is psychological insecurity and the fear of their stay, which, by all means, seems longer than temporary.
- c. *Food and nutrition:* The IDPs suffer from the non-availability of food requirements. While the IDPs in camps are mostly recognized and usually taken into consideration for care and the distribution of food and other items. Those embedded in host communities are left to depend on relatives and other members of the host

communities who themselves are under stress. The IDPs in camps are dependent on the government for the provision of their day to day food requirements. These were being met at the initial stage of their camping. However, as the stay becomes prolonged and more as IDPs arrived at the camps, there have been serious short falls in the rations. In Maiduguri, this has led some people to look for other alternatives, such as requesting some of their relatives to supply their day to day nutritional requirements. The food and other nutrition needs are usually rationed and in most case always out of stock. There is also lack of coordination, as most of these items are distributed by the individual donors who do it without adequate information about distribution channels. Additionally, there is the problem of the inability to secure the passages to the camps which makes it difficult to ferry food and other relief supplies there. The inadequacy of food has resulted in the malnutrition of people, especially children. It has left them easily susceptible to all diseases.

- d. *Shelter:* Even for the limited number of IDPs that are registered and camped, there are serious challenges, as many of them are sleeping in the open with all the hazards and lacking in privacy. The majority are accommodated in a make-shift place, such as school classrooms and NYSC camps. The camps lack or have insufficient facilities. In most cases, there are no toilet/latrine facilities and no waste disposal units, and the health facilities are makeshift. The inadequate conveniences result in compounding health problems.
- e. *Education:* No provision is made for the educational needs of the IDPs in the camps. Indeed most of the camps are schools that have been closed and converted to IDPs camps. Education is non-existing not only for them but even for the host communities because the infrastructural facilities meant for educational purposes have been converted to accommodate the IDPs. Moreover, one of the main targets of the insurgents is the school of which over 200 have been attacked in the past. This not only affects the IDPs but also denied the children of the host communities from attending school.
- f. *Healthcare:* At the beginning, consulting rooms were established among the immediate emergency requirements to manage the influx of IDPs in the early camps in Borno and Adamawa. However, as the number of IDPs keeps increasing, this has become inadequate and incapable of coping with their needs. There are inadequate qualified personnel to attend their health needs. In Borno State, for instance, it is one doctor going round the entire twelve camps, and there is no ambulance for emergency conveyances of the seriously sick. In Adamawa, the absence of

- g. *Political disenfranchisement:* Most of the IDPs barely escaped with their lives. For elections to be free and fair, only voter card carrying persons can vote. It would appear that IDPs would be politically disenfranchised on a number of grounds. First, since they have been uprooted from their communities, they have not been able to either collect their PVC or register. Many of them are camped far away from their homes. Second INEC itself is at a loss as to how they can vote even if they were to receive their PVCs. Third, it is not clear if the security would allow for the holding of elections in the some of the areas were the IDPs are camped.

THE CURRENT POLICY/APPROACH BY GOVERNMENT ON IDPS

The current government policy and approaches to IDPs are derived from the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa adopted by the special summit of the Union held in Kampala, Uganda, on 22nd October 2009, known as the Kampala convention of 2009.

The policy reads in part:

This policy provides a framework for national responsibility towards prevention and protection of citizens, from incidences of arbitrary and other forms of internal displacement, meet their assistance and protection needs during displacement, and ensure their rehabilitation, return, re-integration and resettlement after displacement. The policy was said to be based on human rights-based approach and its principles. The stated intention of the policy was to accommodate as much as possible the provisions of existing international conventions, treaties and protocols on internal displacement, and guided by the dictates of international humanitarian and human rights laws (National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, 2012).

The policy, therefore, without prejudice to other existing frameworks and policy guidelines for protection and assistance of vulnerable populations specifically seeks to address:

- a. All the causes of internal displacement, as identified in Section (1.3) of this Policy.
- b. All the groups of internally displaced persons, including those with special needs and vulnerabilities including host communities.

- c. All the needs of internally displaced persons, including assistance and protection needs thereby ensuring the realization of the full range of their human rights.
- d. All the phases of displacement, including pre-emergency and relief phases to recovery (rehabilitation, re-integration, return and resettlement phases), thereby creating conditions for durable solutions.
- e. All the levels and arms of government from the local to state and federal levels, including all ministries, departments and agencies of government charged with diverse responsibilities for guaranteeing the rights of internally displaced persons and adequately meeting their assistance and protection needs.
- f. All the affected areas by opening up the humanitarian space, as well as facilitating, coordinating and ensuring safe and secure access by all state and non-state humanitarian actors to internally displaced persons, irrespective of where internal displacement has occurred within the country, including territories not directly under the control of conflicting parties, be they state or non-state actors.
- g. 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 related instruments relevant for the protection and assistance of IDPs, and which guarantee their fundamental freedoms and claims to a life of dignity.

However, NEMA an agency with special responsibility to coordinate the activities of the IDPs is yet to fully embrace the policy guideline of the federal republic of Nigeria. According to a NEMA document:

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established via Act 12 as amended by Act 50 of 1999, to manage disasters in Nigeria. It has been tackling disaster related issues through the establishment of concrete structures. The agency mission is to coordinate resources towards efficient and effective disaster prevention, preparation, mitigation and response in Nigeria. While its Vision, was to build a culture of preparedness, prevention and response along with community resilience to disaster in Nigeria (NEMA, 2013).

The Act vested in the NEMA the authority to manage disasters in Nigeria. According to the enabling law, the Agency shall, among the other things, (a) Formulate policy on all activities relating to the disaster management in Nigeria and co-ordinate the plans and programmes for efficient and effective response to disasters at national level, (b) Monitor the state preparedness of all.

The approaches to IDPs in the northeastern states of Nigeria are based on the cluster method, where the NEMA, SERA, Security agencies, international organizations, Non-governmental Organizations and Inter-Faith organizations collaborate to give assistance to the IDPs. However, this approach is being implemented differently from state to state. For instance, Adamawa and Borno state established camps to accommodate some of the IDPs in designated locations where they could be monitored. Yobe State has no formally or officially established IDPs centers. The IDPs in the state are scattered across the twelve (12) local government areas of the state and occasional relief distributions are given to them by the SERA, FADAMA II, lots of Civil Society Organizations, etc.

Managing the IDPs camps equally differed from Adamawa and Borno state. While in Adamawa State the effective and strong participation of the NEMA were felt, the reverse is the case in Borno State, where the presence of the Borno SERA is more significantly felt. This might not be unconnected with the politicization of caring for IDPs. This is because the authority at states and federal level are trying to use assistance rendered to the IDPs to campaign for the forthcoming elections. This was glaring in Yobe State where the relief materials bear the symbol of Alliance of Progressive Congress, while NEMA/Federal assistance is being coordinated by PDP loyalists in the state. This politicization of IDPs plights might be the reasons why some IDPs in Adamawa (Madagali, Bazza, Gulak and Michika) rejected the relief brought to them by the All Progressive Party (APC), telling the state's chairperson that their needs are not foods and other relief materials, rather they need peace and security and seriously wanted to go back home.

In addition to the above, both the federal and the state governments usually stopped at the initial relief assistance offered, a situation which has shifted the burden of the IDPs in states to the host communities.

GAPS AND SHORTCOMINGS

There are so many limitations in the management of IDPs in the wake of insurgency in Northeastern states. A key factor to this is the overwhelming numbers of IDPs. A situation where an entire township is uprooted is so common that there is simply no capacity to accommodate and management them. There are gaps in the indices of secured IDPs. These include:

1. The fact that the functions of most of the agencies (NEMA, SERA, etc.) saddled with the responsibilities of caring for the IDPs have only emergency mandate. Whenever crisis becomes prolonged their

supplies got exhausted and the continuous taking care of the IDPs becomes difficult. For instance, some IDPs have been in camps for the past two years. In addition, so many of them have been displaced more than three times. Yet, the situations that led to the initial displacement are yet to be remedied

2. The lack of proper coordination between state and federal government agencies with responsibilities in addressing managing IDPs issues in the country
3. The inability of government to create or establish a humanitarian safe corridor that would ensure the free passage of relief materials to IDPs camps
4. The insufficient capacity of the relief agencies to deal with the size and magnitude of the IDPs resulting from the Boko Haram insurgency
5. The inability of government to leverage the partnership of CSOs and other philanthropies that would assist in addressing some of the needs of the IDPs
6. The politicization of the care of IDPs by both state and general governments
7. The fact that education services are not well factored in the legal framework of the laws establishing the various relieve agencies in the country
8. The lack of standing infrastructure, such as permanent camps, sufficient professional personnel at the relief agencies, etc that would be used for IDPs
9. The shifting of the burden of the care of IDPs after the initial phase to host communities who find themselves under stress, which creates a climate in which IDPs appear to be unwelcome by the host communities
10. Inadequate funding of the various relief agencies, which makes it difficult for them to respond swiftly to the needs of IDPs

Recommendations

Governments

1. Governments should depoliticize their current approach to responding to the needs of IDPs.
2. There should be better coordination and the realignment of operations to make the pooling of resources more effective.
3. Governments should increase funding for relief and emergency operations to be able to care for the increasing number of IDPs.
4. Should provide basic facilities to care for the shelter, health, educational and recreational needs of IDPs.
5. Governments should support efforts by INEC to find solutions to the political disenfranchisement of IDPs.
6. Governments should provide medical facilities, drugs and personnel in both the camps and in communities that have IDPs embedded in them, which will help to reduce the burden for healthcare facilities in these communities.
7. Efforts should be made to increase security around and in camps, as well as in other places where IDPs are located as they are extremely vulnerable.
8. Support the recruitment and deployment of psychologists and counselors and other professionals to address the rising cases of trauma in the camps.
9. Intensify efforts to defeat the insurgents, so that IDPs can return to their homes.
10. Support economic empowerment programmes in the camps, so that IDPs can engage in economic activities that will not only restore self-dignity to the IDPs, but also reduce the burden of maintenance the camps by government.
11. Ensure that cases of human rights abuse and violence are promptly investigated and redressed.
12. Develop strategies to trace the dispersal of IDPs, so as to document them and develop appropriate responses to their plight.
13. Undertake comprehensive visits to neighboring countries where many Nigerians are currently living as refuse in and outside camps with a view to mobilizing support and assistance to them and, if possible, bring them back home.

14. The Nigerian government should make concerted efforts to rehabilitate, reintegrate and compensate the victims of insurgency. It is no hidden fact that thousands of people in the North-East are displaced and are presently staying in public schools, Churches, Mosques, camps, etc. as IDPs. Apart from the marshal plan suggested above that is a long term agenda in line with the July 31, 2014 launch of the Victims Support Fund in Abuja by President Goodluck, urgent short term measures must be taken. The victims need to be rehabilitated and reintegrated back to their communities.
15. The government should work out a compensation plan to assist victims that lost properties in the crisis. These measures will enhance national unity because they will boost patriotic fervor in the benefitting victims.
16. Remedying their security challenge demands and the reinforcement of security agents and the services at the camps.

National Assembly/State legislatures

1. Audit all relief and emergency operations to ensure that funds are judiciously used and producing the desired results in responding to the needs of IDPs.
2. Support legislative initiatives that will address the political disenfranchisement of IDPs.
3. Ensure the compliance with the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, including aligning, if possible, the NEMA ACT to with the provision of the Convention.
4. Undertake the review and possible amendment of the laws establishing the appropriate relief and emergency organizations.

Communities, Philanthropies, foundations and other corporate citizens

1. Support government's efforts aimed at responding to the needs of IDPs both in and outside of camps.
2. Continue the mobilizing, collection, relaying and distribution of relief materials to IDPs both in and outside camps.
3. Initiate economic empowerment programmes in camps to support the restoration of self-dignity among IDPs.

4. Advocate for the need to find a solution to the political disenfranchisement of the IDPS.
5. Monitor and document cases of human rights abuse in camps.
6. Establish camps in communities that have IDPs embedded, so as to help to cater for the needs of those undocumented IDPs.
7. Philanthropies, foundations and other corporate citizens should engage communities both in their community resilience programmes and creating skill acquisition opportunities that will serve to under-cut the recruitment base of the insurgents since they draw their membership largely from unemployed youth.
8. Philanthropies, foundations and other corporate citizens should also support efforts at mobilizing relief materials as a matter of urgent humanitarian need response.



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CITAD (www.citad.org) is a capacity building civil society organization whose activities covers research, advocacy, training and publicity in all arrears of ICTs. Its vision is; a knowledge-based democratic society free of hunger while its mission is; using ICTs to empower citizens for a just and knowledge-based society that is anchored on sustainable and balanced development.

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