

Assessing the Humanitarian Challenges Facing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) on Camps in Maiduguri, Borno State

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Abstract: Internally Displaced Person camps in Borno State, Nigeria were centres accommodating Nigerians who had been forced to flee their homes but remain within the country's borders. Displaced persons camps in Maiduguri accommodated from 120,000 to 130,000 people, while those in local government areas ranged above 400,000. There were over two million displaced person in the State. The research was conducted in 7 official camps and 2 unofficial camps. The 7 official camps comprises of Bakassi camp, Moduganari Stadium IDPs camp, EYN camp IDP camp, NYSC IDPs camps, Teachers village IDP, Madinatu League camp, the two unofficial camps are the Farm centre IDPs camp, and Saint Hillary IDPs camp. The research intent to use multistage sampling techniques to sample the IDPs on camp and use simple random sampling to sample NGO officials and Government officials. Some of the IDPs on official camp have returned to their communities but have returned back to their camps because their communities are still not safe while those whose communities are still not safe are still on camps in Maiduguri. The IDPs are now facing abject poverty, shortage of food stuffs, water, shelter, poor living condition as relate to hygienic environment, lack of quality healthcare services, and security situation on camps in Maiduguri.

Key words: Humanitarian, Internally Displaced Persons, & Camps

Introduction

The war against insurgency is still on in Nigeria and may take long period of time before it will completely overcome, their mode of attack and emerging threat to people in the North East sub-region. It is the worse threat faced by the state authorities and public, especially in the Northeast region. Ability to overcome this threat post according to Ojo, (2006), challenge to the Nigerian military. Issues relating

to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Issues relating to food provision, poverty, and employment are very critical and an indispensable part of the every state and society's security. Without the three nothing positive and sustainable can be achieved in terms of wealth, security and prosperity Seer, (1979) asserted that development can only take place if unemployment and poverty are addressed to national security and development according to Robert McNamara perpetuation of poverty is the herald of unrest, internal unrest, violence and the escalation of extremism and noted that without development, there would be no national security. Poverty basically involves lacking what is necessary for material well-being of an individual (World Bank, 2002) and Nigeria is already hit by poverty as more than 112.519m of its 167m people are living in abject poverty. This is tied to unemployment, which has also by the 2nd quarter of the same year, 2015 (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS Reports, 2014, 2015) unemployment and poverty are directly linked and are so pronounced thereby making them a threat to Nigeria national security as those battalions of unemployment numbering about 75.9m (mostly youth) many of whom are in the North –East region could be and or had been forcefully and voluntarily recruited by Boko Haram, indulge into drug abuse, crime and many other acts threatening to Nigeria's national security.

Internally displacement is one of the greatest tragedies of our time and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are among the most vulnerable of the human family United Nation (UN) office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2004). This is because the intensity of internally displacement, arising from different factors, which include violent conflicts, man-made and natural disasters, has become a global problem. In fact, in the past few years, reports of internally displacement have increased around the world, bringing about a change from large –scale refugee flows to amplified internal displacement. The internal displacement of civilians and their need for human rights protections remain one of the vital human right concerns of the post – Cold War era (Kalin, 2010). This is because the end of the Cold War marked a historical shift in the nature of warfare as well as the form of displacement hitherto witnessed. War fare metamorphosed into a form in which combatants are unknown sub state actors waging war against the state. Notwithstanding, armed conflicts today are targeted against civilians.

Evidence from the post- Cold War era shows that most intrastate conflicts occurred in Africa and Nigeria have contributed immensely to the global displacement figure. Internal Displacement in Nigeria has been driven over the past few decades by general violence, human right violations, and natural hazards International Committee of Red Cross, (2009). Currently, the insurgency by Boko Haram has been the major cause of displacement after the Nigeria Civil War of 1967 – 1970. The Boko Haram insurgency began in 2002 but gained momentum in 2009 when the war spread in Northern Eastern Nigeria namely Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba State.

Holistically, the destination of IDPs both within and outside Nigeria are the host communities, IDPs camps, safer neighboring countries outside the country of displacement. Thus, violence by the sect intensified, human rights violation increased civilians were forced to flee to other areas in search of security both outside Nigeria as

refugees and within safer communities and camps in Nigeria as IDPs (NEMA, 2015). Caux, H. (2013) observes that most IDPs live within communities, whereas the displaced persons who flee to safer countries to take refuge there.

Generally, the effects of internal displacement are multifarious and dispossess the concerned persons of their employment, home, and security. Victims of displacement are at the risk of arbitrary detention, enforced conscription, human trafficking, sexual assault, loss of suitable healthcare, deprivation of food, loss of education opportunities and other cruel effects of displacement (Adekola, *et al.*, 2019). Literature has, however espoused the unequal effects of displacement on men, children and women (Abimbola, *et al.*, 2012). Less attention has been given to the discriminatory treatment of IDPs in host communities arising from the neglect of the government towards providing humanitarian aids to IDPs in host communities against the government's presence in formal camps. This research seeks to find out why the IDPs in government camps are selling their food stuffs. While other segment of people within the camps are starving and are crying for help.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey approach was adopted for collection of data. Questionnaires for 30 educated IDPs were administered and also interviewed some of the respondents, especially the illiterate ones based on the notion of the Internally Displaced Persons. The interview offered the researcher the chance of clarifications on issues of concern to the researchers and also ask salient questions as follows –up to probe for more information.

The researcher randomly selected 300 participants from all the camps based on age 15 - 55 years (women and men). The researcher interviewed some of dignitaries attached to IDPs camps especially NEMA boss, National Commission for Refugees, Migrant and Internally Displaced Persons. Also preliminary investigation and information obtained from key informant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the above responses received from the respondents, it is very clear that the people are facing the challenges of poor sanitary condition, lack of good shelter conducive for living, lack of good drinking water and access to good healthcare services. Within the camp, to alleviate the situation, Non-Governmental Organisations, offer medical services to the people facing traumatic condition and frustration because of the situation they find themselves. Most of these IDPs live in bitterness due to painful separation from their spouse, families and loved ones.

IDPs response on food is still not encouraging, some of the IDPs complained of poor feeding arrangements and lack of nutritious food for themselves and their children. Such form of feeding they said can affects their health and that of that their children. They also complained that only one type of food item they consume. They appeal to government to come to their aid and supply them with complete balance diet.

A rapid assessment of health services provided in the camps was conducted. The assessment was conducted using a tool adapted from the multi-cluster assessment and

Strengthening Integrated Delivery of HIV/AIDS Services. (SIDHAS) health facilities assessment tool. The tool explored themes such as HIV/AIDs, general health condition of IDPs, water sanitation and hygiene. The assessment leads to promote health condition of the IDPs.

The security on the camps is really encouraging having the highest responses all the camps have security men and women of Army, Police, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and hunters all with the aim of enhancing security on all the camps.

The response of the IDPs on education was also very poor, they are of the view that their children have been going to school before the insurgency erupted and the militants affects schools the IDPs especially parents have almost lost hope for their children education and sometimes their children on the camp are receiving informal education especially religious instructions.

Formal education sector is struggling to cope with the responsibility of educating IDPs and returnees students in overcrowded, poorly maintained school buildings where teachers are often poorly qualified or irregular paid and class sizes large. Water Sanitation and Hygiene facilities including access to portable drinking water are often lacking or insufficient in schools and have been identified as a barrier to attendance by families for both boys and girls(19% and 18% respectively), especially children living with disabilities. There are large number of out of school children and youth who are unable to access formal education because they are over –age or have missed too many years of education and government-provided alternative education opportunities are few. This leaves large numbers of learners without any access to opportunities to develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills or access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Even though NGO- provided alternative education classes may provide learners with vocational classes may provide learners with vocational and education opportunities, however, formal government recognition of these classes are not guaranteed and classes may not lead back to formal education because of lack of transition mechanisms and school capacities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the IDPs have been suffering from lack of enough food, lack of water for some camps, lack of quality healthcare services, poor sanitary conditions which in turn affect them and their children on camps. They are also facing financial problems that is why they sometimes sell their non – food items in order to buy what they need. The IDPs are also facing the problem of lack awareness in terms of information about what is happening around them and worldwide.

RECOMMENATION

1.The greatest good that will be done to displaced persons in Nigeria is only to protect, eliminate them but to introduce counseling to all IDPs, who will counsel them in all areas of living like appointment, marriage, family and social areas.

2. The fundamental human rights of all citizens should be maintained at all times. Agreed that the environment may be engulfed in violence, it is no ground to violate the rights of people.
3. Government should ensure that where reliable material are sent to IDPs those materials should not be diverted for other use.
4. Adequate security mechanism should be put in place at the camp sites to relax the apprehensive minds of the IDPs where they are.
5. It is imperative to speedily recover and rehabilitate men, women and children in these camps to facilitate proper integration of IDPs back into their various social structures, thereby eliminating tendencies of social vices.
6. The House Committee of on IDPs and the National Assembly as a whole should embark on legislative processes that will lead to the domestication of African Union Convention for the protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. This treaty reinforces the state's Primary responsibility to protect the rights and well-being of people forced out of their homes due to conflict, violence, disasters and human rights abuse.
7. To provide the IDPs with entrepreneurship skills that will make them self-reliance and provide them with financial assistance that will make them establish themselves especially on business of Hairdressing, Soap making, Catering, Interior decoration, Tailoring Embroidery and Knitting designs for women and girls and Carpentering Furniture making, Aluminum, Welding, /Computer repairs for men and adolescents (boys).

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