

## Sojourners in their own Lands; Internally Displaced Persons as Complicated Emergencies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria.

Ezeonwuka Innocent-Franklyn  
Dept. of History and International Studies  
Renaissance University Ugbawka, Enugu State

**Abstract :** *The condition and treatment of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria has not only been a neglected issue since independence, but openly beckons for organized attention. As a sovereignty, Nigeria has witnessed several man-made and natural disasters, including emergencies which has one time or the other triggered off massive population movement and desperate journeys. When people leave their abode against their will, many a times it is in search of security, and when such groups cluster in makeshift camps, their need for food, shelter, security, health and information increase by the day. In order to achieve orderliness in a disordered situation, detailed and proactive attention must be carried out by professionals (private and governmental), so as to drastically minimize casualties and complications. In the same way Internally Displaced Persons could be quartered in camps and taken care of, they could either become viable espionage instruments aiding terror networks, or equally face harassment, infections, rape, kidnapping among other ills, hence the need to adequately scrutinize, organize protect and oversee designated IDP camps in Nigeria. Research work into the place of IDP camps in the life of the vulnerable in Nigeria demands deep-seated interest in the down trodden. To obtain such a picture, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted, not without recourse to detailed primary and secondary information. One thing is clear; Nigeria has come of age among the committee of nations, hence it behoves on it to adequately care for the lives and properties of its citizenry.*

**KEYWORDS:** Emergency, Vulnerable, Human Right Abuse, Humanitarian, Insurgency

### INTRODUCTION

Internally Displaced Person as a terminology and a concept has not only globally attracted enormous attention in recent times, but appears to consistently beckon for realistic understanding, most especially on the part of African governments and nationalities. When individuals or groups are forced or obliged to leave and remain away from their homes though within the borders of their own countries, they could be referred to as internally displaced<sup>1</sup>. Here lies the difference between the Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees, who are equally involuntarily displaced, but across internationally recognized state borders. Displacement is simply the end result of desperation, which is an urgent horrific incidental occurrence in human life, which results in response to widespread violence, armed conflict, persecution, natural and man-made disasters, and large scale development projects.

The reactionary chain effects of displacement on local populations, authorities and host communities cannot only be devastating, but may relatively violate the Human Rights of those affected, since the subsequent loss or inaccessibility to homes, lands, livelihoods, personal documentation, family members, and social networks negatively affect the ability of the Internally Displaced Person (IDPs) to assert and enjoy an entire range of fundamental

rights<sup>2</sup> Obviously, Internally Displaced Persons immediately become dependent on others for basic needs such as shelter, food, water and medical attention, hence their vulnerability may be complicated by increased barriers to accessing healthcare, education, employment, economic activities, and electoral politics in their areas of refuge or sojourn<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the longer displacement continues, the greater the risk that traditional family and social structures break down, leaving Internally Displaced Persons to depend on outside aid, and the vulnerable amongst them, to economic and sexual exploitation.

It is poignant to observe that since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations Organisation has played a dominant role by, facilitating domestic responses for internal displacement through the humanitarian assistance provided by its various specialized agencies, with due reference and conformity to detailed identified guidelines and international laws which govern all states responses to displacement. It was in this respect that Dr Francis Deng, representing the United Nations Secretary General, was appointed in 1992, with a mandate to compile definite normative international standards for addressing internal displacement: This resulted in the eventual tabulation of and presentation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to the UN

Commission on Human Rights in 1998. These principles reflect and are consistent with International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian law, and even prescribes in greater detail, guarantees relevant to the displaced that remain implicit in the more abstract prescriptions of these bodies of law. The importance accorded to this by many national governments spurred the various Heads of States and Governments assembled in September 2005 in New York World summit, to endorse this document as an important international framework for the protection of Internally Displaced Persons. Consequently, in tandem with emergent protocol obliging signatory states to enact national legislations incorporating these Guiding Principles in their legal frameworks, the African Union, the Organization of American States and the Council of Europe did pressure their member States to adopt, apply and incorporate these Guiding Principles into their domestic laws and policies<sup>4</sup>.

The responsibilities of states on their internally displaced citizens remain premised on two key tenets:

- (a) Sovereignty entails not only the right of each state to conduct its own affairs, but also the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and assistance without discrimination to its population, including the Internally Displaced, in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law<sup>5</sup>
- (b) While those displaced within their own country remain entitled to the full protection of rights available to the population in general, displacement gives rise to particular vulnerabilities on the part of those affected. Therefore, and in order to ensure that the displaced are not deprived of their human rights, states are obligated to provide special measures of protection and assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, that correspond to these vulnerabilities, in order to ensure that Internally Displaced Persons are treated equally with respect to non-displaced citizens<sup>6</sup>.

It may be clarified that these two tenets, clarify and reflect existing rules on internal displacement simply, instead of creating new obligations. Moreover in view of the need to prevent, mitigate and end arbitrary displacement, relevant standard principles based on existing internationally accepted humanitarian and human rights laws remain profusely used to cover all phases of displacement even down into post-displacement phase. The United Nations Guiding Principles include:

1. Internally Displaced Persons shall enjoy in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law, as

do other persons in their country. They shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced.

2. National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction
3. Internally displaced persons have the right to request and to receive protection and humanitarian assistance from these authorities. They shall not be persecuted or punished for making such a request.
4. Certain internally displaced persons such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of households, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, shall be entitled to protection and assistance required by their condition and treatment, which takes into account their special needs.
5. All authorities and international actors shall respect and ensure respect for their obligations under international law, including human right and humanitarian law, in all circumstances, so as to prevent and avoid conditions that might lead to displacement of persons.
6. Every human being has the inherent right to life which shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life.
7. Every human being has the right to dignity and physical, mental and moral integrity.
8. In no case shall internally displaced persons be taken hostage
9. IDPs shall be protected against discriminatory practices of recruitment into any armed forces or groups as a result of their displacement. In particular, any cruel, inhuman or degrading practices that compel compliance or punish non-compliance with recruitment, are prohibited in all circumstances.
10. In particular, IDPs have the right to move freely in and out of camps or other settlements.
11. All Internally Displaced Persons have the right to know the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives.
12. IDPs, have the right to seek safety in another part of the country, the right to leave their country; they right to seek asylum in another country, the right to be protected against forcible return to or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk.
13. All IDPs have the right to an adequate standard of living

14. All wounded and sick IDPs, as well as those with disabilities shall receive to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention they require, without distinction on any ground other than medical ones. When necessary, IDPs shall have access to psychological and social services.
15. Every human being has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
16. Attacks, or other acts of violence against internally displaced person who do not or no longer participate in hostilities are prohibited in all circumstances.

IDPS shall be protected in particular, against:

- (a) Direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence, including the creation of areas where in attacks on civilians are permitted;
- (b) Starvation as a method of combat;
- (c) Their use to shield military objectives from attack or to shield, favour or impede military operations;
- (d) Attacks against their camps or settlements; and
- (e) The use of anti-personnel landmines<sup>7</sup>

### Theoretical Framework

Inadequate security, in the face of life threatening conditions spur human populations into spontaneous migrations, in search of peace and basic human needs. Just as national and man-made factors and actions could lead to insecurity and emergencies, lack of attention coupled with lackadaisical attitude on the part of the authorities could cumulatively not only endanger the life of vulnerable groups, but lead to calamity and national underdevelopment. The crux of the matter is the maintenance of security, hence Emergency and Security theories remain the basic link in carrying out this study.

Prabhakaran Paleri in his book *National Security, Imperative and Challenges*, was of the view that the measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threat to the apparent well-being of its people, by balancing all instruments of state policy through adequate governance, indexed by computation, empirically or otherwise, does not only provide national Security, but equally extends to global security<sup>8</sup>, through dialectical variables.

In tandem with Realist beliefs, theorists like Drabek, Max McEntire, Salter and Ross documented certain factors that mostly constrain response effectiveness to disasters and emergencies, which include terrorist attacks, national and man-made disasters, plane crashes and conflicts.<sup>9</sup> Political process not only allocate values

in a society, but equally distribute vulnerability among the population, hence hazards in which ever form, be it economic, social lapses, political powerlessness and marginalization among others, remain the major component factors which make people prone to vulnerability<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, a lack of professionalism among emergency managers, as well as poor harmonization and synergy between the displaced population and emergency providers, add to the promotion of risks, hazards and vulnerability during emergency situations, hence these can potentially downplay abilities at security management.

Undoubtedly, emergency situations require commitment, liability and capability, hence emergent behaviours from well-intentioned first responders (untrained volunteers), during search and rescue operations, may either complicate, injure or kill victims who need help, unintentionally. Whereas incorrect perceptions could influence susceptibility during emergencies, bureaucratic order sometimes delay equitable attention or response. Consequently, the issue of policy-making, preparedness and ingenuity, is of utmost importance, so as to enable emergency providers to bequeath care and protection to the desperately displaced.

Again, when laws are instituted based on public opinion, less visible but more common form of vulnerability maybe neglected. For example, people appear to be more concerned today about their vulnerability to terrorism than to flooding and erosion. In the same way, when the government pays more attention and preference to expert advice than to public opinion, hostility may reverberate in the form of riots and terrorist attacks. However, the salient convergence decimal at this juncture remains thus; since many variables interact to produce disasters, a reduction to vulnerability could be obtained, if the government prioritises its policies on security matters, applies tact and action in the use, application and synthesis of intelligence information. Only then could precision be promoted in emergency management, hence saving life and time.

Conclusively, the Nigerian Federal Emergency Management Agency(FEMA), stipulated that the following guidelines could enhance and ensure proper emergency management: Recognition or identification of risks, ranking or evaluation of risks, resource controls and reaction planning, reporting and monitoring of risk performance, and reviewing the management framework.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of whatever parlance the issue of the Internally Displaced Persons is viewed from, the focal importance of information and communication in emergency management is never in doubt. Be that as it may, this study considers an Internally Displaced Persons as one desperately seeking safety within the confines of a particular sovereignty, whose citizen he is, due to life-

threatening emergencies like riots, war, terror, infernos, environmental mishaps, accidents, intentional large scale developments and national disasters.

### Nigeria's IDPS in Retrospect

Insecurity, in the form of socio-political instability, religious extremism, eco-terrorism, environmental and natural disasters, has continued to dot the pages of Nigeria's history since 1960s. With due reference to the dramatic 'wild wild' western political eruptions of the 1960s, the Igbo Pogrom in the Northern parts of Nigeria, and the penultimate Nigeria-Biafra Civil war, no other single incident of complex emergency in Nigeria has debilitatingly sustained as the *Boko Haram* insurgency, in terms of its humanitarian consequences. With faceless, intransigent and malignant leadership the *Boko Haram* sect has since the last five years continued to wage a campaign of terror on both the civil population and the Nigerian state.

Nonetheless, it may be recalled that in the 1965 political imbroglio, the United Progress Grand Alliance (UPGA) triggered off protests and riots in certain places in Nigeria, which led to loss of lives and properties, hence leading to the displacement of about 6,000 persons.<sup>11</sup> Again, apart from the reactionary effect caused by the unplanned massive exodus of the Igbo from the Northern parts of Nigeria down to the East sequel to the 1966/67 pogrom, the Nigerian Civil war which lasted 30 months actually led to the death of more than two million people, while displacing over four million Nigerians.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, one may not forget the notorious and sustained *maitatsine* riots and killings in Kano and environs of the 1980s. While many Nigerians were either maimed or killed, others got displaced as their properties got burnt. Along the same pedestal, in 2001, there was conflict between the Fulani, Tiv and Jukun ethnic nationalities in Taraba, Kogi and Benue states, the contentions issue was land. As brutal as it was, many lives and properties were lost, while indigenous populations were displaced, before the army finally came in to restore peace.

Scattered throughout the different geographical zones of Nigeria at one time or the other, were notable conflicts and upheavals, which took detailed tolls on human lives and properties, hence unleashing unguarded and unprepared human migrations. In this respect lies the protracted *Modakeke* and *Omoboriowo* Crisis in the West, the *Aguleri/Umuleri communal clashes* in the Eastern part of Nigeria, and the Northern and Southern Kaduna skirmishes that was tainted with religious garb.

Furthermore, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigeria has continued to witness the depredations of the *Boko Haram* terrorist sect. Operating from the North Eastern parts of Nigeria since 2002 this radical

Islamic sect has remained responsible for the death of over 20,000 people and the displacement of over 2.3 million people<sup>13</sup>. It is disheartening to observe that the displaced people were not officially taken care of until 2009, when the Federal government set up camps in different places to take care of them. Regardless of this, Nigeria's terrorism profile continued to degenerate sequel to the gruesome and total consequences of the reckless use of explosives, automatic weapons, suicide bombers and dexterous manoeuvres by the terrorists. On the other hand, the governments counter offensives through aerial bombardments and un-precise locational shellings of suspected terrorist sanctuaries, not only endangered citizens, but sometimes exposed them to the double dangers of either being decimated through friendly or enemy fire, hence fueling casualties and fatalities. The resulted corollary to this scenario was an unprecedented humanitarian crisis with colossal effect on public safety and human security.

In the same light, though with cautious observation, this study cannot overlook the recent upsurge of the Fulani herdsmen attacks in the whole of Nigeria. As incidentally scattered as the cases may occur, these herdsmen have continued to inflict bizarre destructions on both lives and properties of many communities. They appear to perfect in nocturnal attacks, which leave gory tales in their trail, hence some villages remain deserted after such attacks. Agatu Community in the Benue/Plateau states still remain one of the hottest spots of such mayhem. Currently sustaining and operating a viable intelligence and proactive commando unit, who have perfected the use of sophisticated weaponry and asymmetrical attacks under the cover of darkness. Survivors of such attacks in communities and farm settlements in fear, embark on desperate migrations<sup>14</sup>.

Since independence, Nigeria has witnessed several severe flooding incidents and disasters. One may recall that in August 1980, a more devastating flood occurred in Ibadan, causing damages to properties. Over 300 lives were lost and about 50,000 people were rendered homeless. In 1988, there was another flood disaster in Kano, which took about 146 lives, and rendered about 3,000 people homeless.<sup>15</sup> Added to the many flooding incidents unrecorded and recorded in the country, the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, specifically Benue and Kogi in 2012, recorded great loss of lives, properties and farmlands, while about 30,000 people were rendered homeless. Effort at educating and creating awareness on the Nigerian populace as regards preventing, containing and the management of flooding has remained largely ephemeral.

This study would be incomplete without due attention and consideration of the continued environmental problems complicated by both desertification in Northern Nigeria and deep-gully erosions in the East. These ecological disasters



have continued to evict families and communities from their various historic abodes. Detailed population overactivity on particular areas over a long period of time may account for the gully menace in the East, while on the other hand, in the North, the extent and severity of desertification, coupled with its progression, still lacks proper documentation. However, it is estimated that the country is currently losing about 351,000 hectares of its landmass to desert conditions annually, and such conditions are estimated to be advancing southwards at the rate of about 0.6km per year. Affecting mostly 10 Northern states, this accounts for about 73% out of the estimated total cost of about US \$5.110 billion per annum which the country is losing arising from environmental degradation. Subsequently, according to informed accounts this has led to the displacement of about 2,000 persons due to the fact that water, safe and arable lands are scarce<sup>16</sup>

The Lake Chad's aquatic attributes has for thousands of years supported and sustained diverse human settlements, economy, social conviviality and intergroup relationship, more so as it borders Nigeria and a host of other African states. According to demographic authorities, this large expanse of water which has accrued dependants over the ages, has been facing sustained drying up to the extent that by 2016, 90 percent of its previous surface mass has shrunk. The source went on to state that about 15 billion dollars is needed to resuscitate it from designated East African Rivers<sup>17</sup> Come to think of it, since the onset of this anomaly, herdsman, fishermen and farmers including their families whose source of income and livelihood solely rests on this lake, finding it increasingly difficult to eke out a living there, have continued to migrate out of this zone in trickles and droves.

Migration is routinely associated with crisis, though movement within a country could as earlier on noted, be triggered by a heterogeneous set of circumstances. Migration and displacements have continued to define the 21<sup>st</sup> century more than any other single issue. Though massive global mobility is not the subject of this study, one cannot deny the accompanying deep seated psychological trauma of desperately vacating from one's home/homeland even as a mundane necessity. Regardless of the cause of displacement and incipient migration, those concerned are confronted with a variety of nagging issues and challenges – resettlement, acceptance, belonging, security, survival, exclusion, exploitation, information, health care among others. Livelihood crisis, public insecurity and human right abuses not only create human casualties and fatalities, but breed desperation, which force population displacement and refugee debacle.

Undoubtedly, as has been stated earlier on, the level and rising crescendo of global migrations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has never been equaled in human

history. The combined effects of global economic downturn, environmental, climatic and ecological challenges, including recalcitrant regional warfares and terrorist infernos appears increasingly catastrophic. Nigeria has gotten more than its fair share of such challenges, whereby majority of its population are not only living below the poverty line, but remain unemployed, hopeless and easily indoctrinated into abject terrorism or eco-militancy. The repercussions of such violence, as well as governments counter offensive on the livelihood of the affected states have been disastrous. Owing to public security volatility in these states, normal productive, agricultural and commercial activities have often been constrained. The enforcement of curfews and emergency rule have restricted movement and communications in a manner that hampered social and economic activities. In addition, the fear of attacks by the insurgents often drove many people in the community into hiding. Brock couldn't have put it better when he observed that the ban on the use of motorcycles, the massive destruction of infrastructure and telecommunication facilities, the frequent attacks on markets and businesses, including the imposed short business hours irked many to relocate to other safer parts of the country, bringing down incomes and increasing poverty levels<sup>18</sup>

The killing of non combatant populations (women, children and civilians) by the insurgents, coupled with the high-handed arbitrariness exhibited by the Nigerian military in dealing with these terrorists, remain veritable records of human right abuses and crimes against humanity. The impunity of the insurgents have often been greeted with immense crudity and reign of terror wherein the insurgents and the security forces are equally culpable. This creates not only a psychological trauma on the part of the protected unarmed citizen, but a dangerous enigma, hence leading to preferred recourse to desperate relocation.

Based on a recent United Nations Humanitarian Commission on Refugee (UNHCR) report, no fewer than 5,000 people have been displaced in the North East region of Nigeria as a result of the raging insurgency, while it went on to assert that more than 10,000 Nigerians did cross into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger<sup>19</sup>. On the same pedestal, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) indicated recently that a total of 16,470 Nigerians remain displaced mainly sequel to conflicts, ethno-religious crisis and emerging terrorism.<sup>20</sup> It is really incontestable that unfolding security breaches in the country – the persistent spate of *Boko Haram* attacks and the spreading desperados of the fulani herdsmen have been largely responsible for the progressive increase of the population of Internally Displaced persons (IDPS) in recent times. No thanks to the recent September 2016 fearful earth tremors that shook large portions of both Kano and Kaduna states. Though Nigeria has not yet recorded its first

earthquake crisis, but it may not require professional seismologists to confirm that such a disaster is more than near. Meanwhile, these latest earth tremor have succeeded in stirring up fear and mass relocations of some inhabitants of this zone.

Displacements and migrations in Nigeria have over the years created political, social, economic and health hazards both on the part of the displaced and their host communities, sometimes leading to social tensions, violence and criminality. The education of both the children at the host community and those of the displaced have been greatly affected. While the former may have their schools used as *ad hoc* camps for displaced persons, the latter may not get a chance to further their education for a very long time; as long as the crisis persists. A distinction must be made between perceptions, fears and the actual insecurity levels against displaced persons or *vice-versa*. Cases of violence and crime include rape, theft, robbery, culture group altercation and discrimination, and the involvement of some so-called displaced persons in espionage activities. A scenario sometimes results with insurgent groups and militias resort to targeting both the displaced and host populations.

Furthermore, apart from the paucity of basic social amenities and the IDPs limited access to such, sequel to their vulnerable state, enormous pressure on accommodation, jobs and the market prices of consumptive commodities affect and motivate host communities, who could resort towards maltreating and subjugating them as infidels. The precarious state of IDPs in Nigeria has persistently degenerated over the years with the addition of aggregated influx from fresh disasters resonating from diverse zones. Poor sanitation, environmental condition, malnutrition even in the camps have rather exposed women, children and the pregnant ones to the ravages of cough, Catarrh, malaria, Typhoid and Tuberculosis. Giving credence to this, recently, the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) reported thus:

*Hundreds of children and women of IDPs in Borno state still suffer malnutrition, even though the state has been receiving more humanitarian support 475,000 women and children around the lake Chad region risk severe acute malnutrition due to drought and the six years of violence by the Jihadist Boko Haram group. Of this population, 19,000, mostly from Bornu, the*

*heartland of insurgency, risk death*<sup>21</sup>

As if to buttress this ongoing calamity clearly, a health support group Doctors without Borders (*Medicine Sans frontières*-MSF) had by June 2016, alerted the world to the plight of the malnourished children at Bama IDP camp, having discovered 152 children with severe malnutrition and 310 very sick people just within two days of random checks.<sup>22</sup>

One may have to pause at this juncture to historically reflect on the emergent and indigent behavior and character of the Nigerian government over the years since independence. Even at the extreme height of gross displacement, morbidity and mortality of Eastern Nigerians during the civil war, the federal government spared not even any passive idea in trying either to provide and secure camps for the children, women and non combatants displaced by the war, or catering for their feeding and health challenges. This willful indifference, officially supervised by the then finance minister-Obafemi Awolowo in practicalising 'hunger as a weapon of war strategy' stifled all internal and external relief efforts aimed at the 'Biafran enclave' and infectious disease, kwashiorkor and malaria took a heavy toll on the children, the elderly and pregnant mothers.

It is on record that the practice of organizing IDP camps, and the establishment of a professional agency imbued with the sole task of managing emergencies in Nigeria were fallouts of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

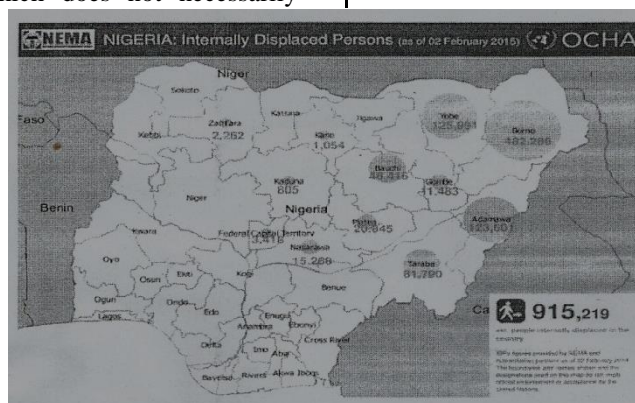
The National Emergency Relief Agency (NERA) dated from 1976, was expanded by Decree 119 of 1993 and mandated to collect and distributed relief materials to disaster victims. However, it would be recalled that the Federal Government did setup an inter-Ministerial body in 1990 to address natural disaster reduction strategies in line with the United Nations International Decade for National Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), which finally re-echoed in the Hyogo framework of Action (2005-2015). NERA got transformed to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and was mandated to adopt disaster management mechanisms in distributing emergency relief materials to victims of natural or other disasters, while assisting in the rehabilitation of such victims where necessary.<sup>23</sup> While collaborating with the various State Management Agency (SEMA) the Red Cross and a host of other local, private and international relief and rehabilitative groups, NEMA is mandated to provide short term assistance, usually for the first two to four weeks of displacement to 'victims of disaster'.<sup>24</sup> Here lies the major lacuna in NEMA law which affects the Agency's legal capacity and authority in managing IDPs. Since IDP management remain part and parcel of disaster management cycle – Prevention, mitigation, Preparedness, Responses and Recovery, and as IDPs are products of natural and man-made

disasters, referring to Internally Displaced Persons as mere 'victims of disaster' by an officially established national agency, appears bereft of holistic care, understanding and involvement on the part of the government with regards to the citizenry.

The fact remains that disaster management system in Nigeria is still very nascent and its inadequacies become apparent after major disasters, as in the case of the 2012 flooding, whereby *ad hoc* arrangements were put in place to just recover the victims, while a national comprehensive legal framework directed towards preventing displacement and minimizing its effects and duration were never considered; hence no bilateral coordination mechanism exists between any two neighboring states and even local governments. Given Such quagmire, the Red cross Society, Civil Society Organizations (CSOS) and Faith- based groups helplessly step in to provide immediate short-term succour, which does not necessarily

contribute to the longer term reconstruction of lives and livelihood. The sad sequel remain that majority of IDPs are hosted by relatives or local communities who bear most of the burden of assisting them.<sup>25</sup>

Between 2007 and 2010, NEMA stepped up the establishment of IDP camps mostly in the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria driven by the heightened *Boko Haran* attacks in that region. Under-secured and poorly-administered, these camps got exposed to periodic disorderliness, riots and they became strategic havens for espionage activities against the State, and human rights abattoirs. According to NEMA, as at January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, there were 981,416 IDPs in Nigeria of which 868,23 were in the Northern East. While 107,997 IDPs were in camps in Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba states, 802,148 were being hosted by some communities. Meanwhile, 66,087 of this numbers were people displaced by natural disasters.



Map1

Showing the density of Displaced Persons in Nigeria Courtesy,NEMA.

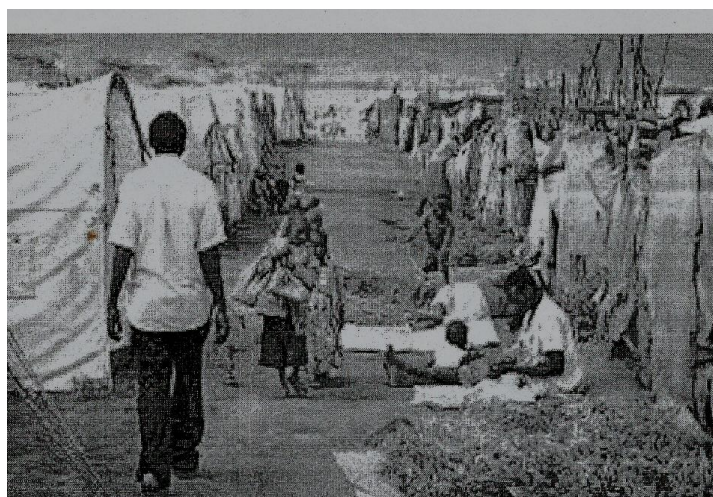


Fig 1. Poorly Structured and maintained IDP camp in Adamawa State ([www.dailystructure.com](http://www.dailystructure.com))





**Fig 2: Dilapidated IDP camp structure in Borno state ([www.thisdaying.com](http://www.thisdaying.com))**



**Fig 3: Flood incident in Ibadan (courtesy [www.vanguardng.com](http://www.vanguardng.com))**

Available and reliable information confirm that NEMA in conjuncture with some state Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) currently manages 22 IDP camps in the Northeast. The majority of IDPs live in informal settlements, or settlements within host communities, while many of them are hosted by private individuals who opened their homes to IDPs in an impressive solidarity effort. One of such include Baba Jura Alkali, a renowned private businessman in Borno state who has for long accommodated more than 200 IDPs in his residence, providing for their essential needs for some months, before NEMA officials stepped in.<sup>26</sup> However corruption and unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks exhibited by camp administrators and government official have continued to remain a snag in the proper care of IDPs<sup>27</sup>.

The immense deep seated challenges emanating from these IDP camps scattered in these North Eastern states, including those located within Abuja, spurred many national, international and private/personal interventions and philanthropic assistance. Such include- the UNICEF under the

United Nations, USAID, the Red Cross Movement, Body Enhancement Foundation, Nasrul – lahili-faith society (NASFAT) and Dangote Foundation, amongst others. Apart from sponsoring Support and Training missions that readily nurtured staff/personnel (volunteers) to man outreach clinics, the various State Primary Health Care Development Agencies (SPHCDA) undertook interventionist and curative Services, immunization regimes, vitamin A supplementation, de-worming, screening for malnutrition, HIV counseling and Testing. In Adamawa alone, while HIV testing and counseling reached 2,170 IDPs out of which 61 tested positive and were referred to the secondary health facilities, antenatal care service reached 418 pregnant women, while 177 women delivered assisted by skilled birth attendants<sup>28</sup>.

This study would physiologically remain historically disabled if no mention is made of the intransigent mayhem and inferno which has for long taken hold of the Nigeria's middle belt region. The Benue-Plateau cuesta, with Jos, Agatu, the indigent Birom, Fulani and Hausa



settlements/communities passing as the epicenters, have continued to witness tactile and toughed ethno-religious and demographic based wanton destruction of lives and properties. It is disheartening to note that, government at which

ever level has continued to perform below average, in either containing the crisis or taking care of the many displaced people. Resort is always made to *ad hoc* faith-based camps and the Nigerian army cantonments for the safety of the displaced.

Table 1: Available Data on population caseload of IDP's in Adamawa State

LGA	LGA BASE	IDP Caseload	Caseload (%)
Madagali	1,3514,2	31316	
Michika	1,552,38	5772	
Mubi North	1,515,15	2152	
Mubi South	129,956	3586	
Gombi	114,761	9389	
Yola North	196,197	5460	
Yola South	199,675	5346	
Fufore	363	363	
Lamurde	2339	2330	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,085,186</b>	<b>66,826</b>	<b>6%</b>

Table 2: Available Data on population caseload of IDP's in Yobe State

LGA	LGA BASE	IDP Caseload	Caseload (%)
Damaturu	16281	16281	
Postisum	11988	11988	
Fune	4042	4042	
Fika	3659	3659	
Gujiba	15226	15226	
Tarmuwa	3540	3540	
Gashua	10172	10172	
Geidam	11446	11446	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>771368</b>	<b>76,354</b>	<b>9%</b>

Table 3: Available Data on population caseload of IDP's in Borno State

LGA	LGA BASE	IDP Caseload	Caseload (%)
Gwoza	288446	16117	
Bama	278353	13484	
Mobbar	116631	2350	
Damboa	249298	20540	
Konduga	190951	35810	
MMC	4991	4991	
Kaga	3496	2086	
Mafa	3496	3496	
Biu	7040	7040	
Jere	51,720	1864	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,199,222</b>	<b>106,098</b>	<b>11%</b>

**Statistical Data culled from – National Commission for Refugees Migrant and internally displaced persons (NCREMID), Released 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014. IDP Assessment in Nigeria**

<http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025>

**Conclusion**

For Nigeria to catch up with the committee of developing nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, providing for, and maintaining the security of its citizens, most especially that of the Internally Displaced, must be addressed, and made to fall in with globally accepted standards and etiquette. From 1960 till the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, subsequent governments have done little or nothing to cater for them. Even when nothing was done during the civil war, when hostilities seized, the so called response by both the government and concerned organizations through the three 'R' (reconstruction, rehabilitation and restitution) was largely neither here nor there. The following years of riots, communal land disputes, ethno-religious crisis, oil spillage, desertification, deep -gully erosion menace and flooding, eco-terrorism and militancy led to the forceful movement of indigenous Nigerian nationals in desperation for a temporal secure abode.

This scenario continued and appear to have climaxed with the emergence of terrorism as a medium of insurgency and warfare in 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. Specifically it was not until 2009 that the government began to implement proactive policies meant to at least ameliorate the sufferings of the many displaced Nigerians. Statistics show that there were over 1.9 million displaced persons in Nigeria as at 2014<sup>29</sup>. About 25 camps were established nationwide to cater for these people, and the ugly sequel remains the lack of insecurity, disorderliness, poor medical and humanitarian services and inadequate social amenities prevalent therein. Some camps were exposed to terrorist attacks, while in others a litany of human rights abuses, lack of freedom of movement and communication helped in lowering these vulnerable group into a deplorable state. One of the IDPs in one of the camps located in Bornu, recounted how they were even prevented from listening to or using radio sets, handsets, while the authorities later went on to mandate telecom networks to disconnect designated and adjoining masts, just to aid 'security operations'; devoid of any consideration of their own plight<sup>30</sup>

This is expected when ineffective, inadequate laws and policies are still allowed to drive the operational thrust of NEMA and its accruing responsibilities.

**Recommendations**

Any responsible and responsive government owes it as its primary duty to provide protection and assistance to IDPs within its jurisdiction, devoid of any discrimination on an account of their predicament. Based on the complexity of the

challenges posed by the crises of internal displacement, working in partnership with regional and international bodies is essential to ensure standard, compliance and effective response.

Consequently, technocrats and policy makers who drive the Nigerian government must allow themselves to be driven and tutored by the all engaging humane principles inculcated into and known as the United Nation Guiding Principle for Internally Displaced Persons globally. Besides acknowledging the IDPs rights to be protected against acts of violence, torture cruel and degrading punishments, including anti-personnel landmines, this principle equally articulates their right not to be arbitrarily displaced, specifying minimum guarantees acceptable when displacement is inevitable. Certain categories of displaced persons – unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons may require special attention.<sup>31</sup> NEMA officials should be ready to work and synergize with local and state (SEMA) personnel's towards according IDPS civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, to vote and to be voted for, and the need to provide them with the legally stipulated long-term options of 'voluntary return in safety' and dignity, or resettlement in another part of the country with reintegration assistance provided, such that they enjoy equal access to public services available.<sup>32</sup>

While applying all available measures towards preventing and mitigating volatile conditions that may compel populations to flee, the government must continue to create national awareness and build general consensus. The importance of keeping and working with accurate data in IDP locations is immense. Age, gender, and other key identity indicator remain guiding operational indices that would guide camp administrators and care givers in carrying through their tasks.

The federal government should blaze the trail and pressure the various state governments in adopting new laws, or revising existing legislations which falls short of the United Nations Guiding Principles on IDPs. By so doing, a national policy or plan of action may not only emerge, but the law enforcement agencies (military, police, among others) would adopt and manifest actions respecting the rights of IDPs, and equally be ever ready to investigate reports of violations to their rights in Nigeria. Finally, engaging displaced persons in consultations, and building upon their skills is something often overlooked, but critical to an effective response. The participation of women in IDP campactivities and allotting certain

responsibilities to them could help to reduce their vulnerability to sexual extortion and violence.

All in all, the various governmental agencies imbued with the task of monitoring disasters and confirming its signs before they come, should brace up and be able to understudy available signs and symptoms, to preempt successfully, in order to either mitigate, control and contain disasters successfully, be it natural or man-made. Apart from flooding, Nigeria is steadily stepping into the turbulent current of demographic and environmental disaster - the steady desert drift and the land tremors from the North, the detailed land and environmental degradation creating deep gully erosions in the South. The Nigerian Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP),

which is a World Bank assisted agency, maintaining an office in every state of the federation should seriously engage in monitoring and gathering data more so, now that official information indicate that 30 out of 36 states are currently under serious erosion challenges<sup>33</sup>. On the other hand, it appears that the Nigerian Seismic Agency are either only operating in the Delta oil fields and not in other parts of Nigeria. The Nigerian, security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) should be made to operate dutifully under the emergency and security arm of governance, for it is in serving, protecting and caring for civilians more so those displaced that their task resonates actually. The NSCDC should borrow a leaf from what is obtainable in other advanced countries.

## ENDNOTE

1. Emi Mooney, "the concept of Internal Displacement and the case for Internally Displaced Persons as a category of concern" *Refuge Survey Quarterly* 24, No. 3 (2005): p. 9-26
2. Extract from the 2005 World summit Outcome document (A/RES/60/1), paragraph 132, as well as, for example, A/RES/62/153(2007), Paragraph 10, and A/HRC RES/6/32 (2007, paragraph 5.
3. International conference on the Great lakes Region "Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced persons," (30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2006), Article 6.3. See ([www.kglr.org](http://www.kglr.org)).
4. D. Fisher, Guide to International Human Right Mechanism for Internally Displaced persons and their Advocates, 2006 available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/projects/idp/2006guidebox.aspx>
5. IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Right and relational Disasters, 2006, available at: <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/document/working/otherDocs/2006/ASCNaturalDisasterGuidelines.pdf>. Accessed 9/6/2016
6. Brookings – Bern Project on Internal Displacement, when Displacement ends: A framework for Durable solutions, 2006, available at: [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2007/~|media/files/rcrreports/2007/09/displacementends/2007durable\\_solutions.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2007/~|media/files/rcrreports/2007/09/displacementends/2007durable_solutions.pdf). Accessed 9/6/2006.
7. U.N., Guidelines and Principles of Internally Displaced Persons, 1999.
8. Paleri, Prashakaran. *National Society: Implications and challenges* New Delhi: Tata McGraw hill, 2008, p.521
9. Google: *ReseD.Bulla*, [www.socialtheoryhttp://socialstructure](http://www.socialtheoryhttp://socialstructure). Accessed 20/4/2014
10. Google: Rosert Merlon, *www. Socalthoeryhttp://socialstructure* Accessed 20/4/2014
11. K. Luiday. 'How Biafra pays for the war' *Venture: journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau*, Landon 21(3): 26-7, 1969p.3
12. T. Fashola et al, *History of Nigeria in the 20th century* Longman Publishers' Lagos, 1991 p.34.
13. C. Bartolotta, *Terrorism in Nigeria: The Rise of Boko Haram* (The World Policy Institute) Greenwich, T: JAI Press, 2011 p.20
14. I. F. Ezeonwuka and Austine Igwe "Emerging challenges in Nigeria's National Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the Fulani Herdsmen Menace" *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol. 4, issue 5, April 2016 pp. 204-215
15. A.O. Ayoade, "Notes on the Recent Flood Disaster in Ibadan, Nigeria" *SavannaJournal*, vol.II. No. 4 (1981) p.4
16. UN-Habitat, *Cities and Climate change: Policy Directions* Global report on human settlements 2011 (Abridged Edition) UN Habitat, Earthscan, London
17. Extract of Information gathered from Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), monitored from Purity Frequency modulated station (FM) Awka, during 7am News, 10/9/2016
18. J. Brock, "Boko Haram; Between Rebellion and Jihad" *DailyTrustNewspaper*, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 p.10
19. UNHCR 2013 Report, <http://theeagleonline.com.ng/news/bokoharamsecurity-humanitarian-conditions-deterioratingunhcr>. Accessed on Nov. 20th, 2013.
20. B. Alkassim, NEMA: 16,470 Nigerians in Displaced Persons Camps, "Daily TrustNewspaper, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013, p.10
21. The Daily sun Newspaper. "The Lifeline, malnutrition Persists in Borno IDP camps, by Timothy Olarewaju. Friday, Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>, 016 pp.36-37
22. The *Daily SunNewspaper*, already cited.



23. National Emergency Management Agency, Cap. 34 section 6 (2) laws of the federation of Nigeria, 2014
24. <http://nemanigeria.com/> Accessed on 10/9/2016
25. Online – *nema already cited*
26. Extract of 9pm International News on Aljazeera News network, monitored from Awka, Anambra State on 18/9/2016
27. Extract of information gathered from an interviewed NEMA official-Musa Muhammed (incomplete identity sought for security reasons). Place of Interview – ABC Bus terminus, Utako, Abuja. 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2016
28. <http://blogs.unicef.org/2015/06/06/born-in-a-displacement-camp-in-north-east-nigeria/>
29. Internal Displacement Monitoring (centre (IDMC), May 2014  
<http://www.internaldisplacement.org/> Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> oct.2015.
30. Extract of information from interview conducted on an IDP in Government College Biu, Maiduguri Camp, (Isah Dan Kwabah, Age 67 from Baga Community. Bornu State) Date of Interview- 10/7/2016.
31. Google-United Nations-Guiding-Principles-Internally-Displaced-Persons. [http.org](http://www.unhcr.org/). Accessed 20/8/2016
32. *United Nations Guiding Principles Already cited.*
33. *Premium Times Newspaper* '30 Nigerian States Underflood Disaster?' by Babahude Ojo 24<sup>th</sup> Sept., 2016, p.8.