

**FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN NIGERIA: AN
ASSESSMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE OF NIGERIA TO THE IDP CRISIS
(2015-2025)**

BY

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JULY, 2026

TITLE PAGE

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE(B.Sc.) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.**

SUPERVISED BY : DR. AMADI CLETUS O.

JULY, 2026

DECLARATION

I, Ogar Maria-Theresa Okpowu, declare that this research project titled "Foreign Policy and Internal Displacement in Nigeria: An Assessment of the Diplomatic Response of Nigeria to The IDP Crisis (2015-2025)" is my original work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Amadi Cletus and has not been submitted in whole or in part to any institution for the award of any degree or certificate. All sources used in the study have been duly acknowledged.

OGAR MARIA-THERESA OKPOWU

DATE

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that this research project titled "Foreign Policy and Internal Displacement in Nigeria: An Assessment of the Diplomatic Response of Nigeria to The IDP Crisis (2015-2025)" was carried out by Ogar Maria-Theresa Okpowu with the matriculation number GOU/U22/IRE/553. The work has been examined and approved by the department of Political Sciences and International Relations, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, as meeting the requirements of the Department and the University for the award of a bachelor degree (B.Sc.) in International Relations.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, whose unfailing grace and mercy sustained me throughout this academic journey. I also dedicate this work to my parents, Dr. Thomas Ogar and Mrs. Helen Ogar for their endless support, encouragement, sacrifices, and prayers. Finally, this project is dedicated to all internally displaced persons whose experiences inspired the relevance of this study.

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I return all glory, honour, and praise to Almighty God for granting me the strength, wisdom, resilience, and grace to successfully complete this project work. Without His unending mercy and guidance, this achievement would not have been possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ADF	African Development Fund
AES	Alliance of Sahel States
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
AU	African Union
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
BAY States	Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States
BH	Boko Haram
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
NCFRMI	National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHF	Nigeria Humanitarian Fund
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SRR	Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VOA	Voice of America

ABSTRACT

Internal displacement continues to be a key humanitarian and foreign policy challenge in Nigeria. This study looks at foreign policy and internal displacement in Nigeria by assessing the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons (IDP) crisis from 2015 to 2025. The study used documentary and ex post facto research designs as well as depended on secondary data from government policy documents, United Nations reports, African Union as well as ECOWAS records, humanitarian databases, academic journals, as well as institutional publications. The data were studied through qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis, guided by Responsibility to Protect as well as Liberal Institutionalism. The findings reveal that Nigeria has used bilateral donor engagement, multilateral humanitarian diplomacy, regional security cooperation, and policy structures to respond to the IDP crisis, but these efforts have remained to a large extent reactive as well as institutionalised with weak depth. The study further found that regional cooperation through the MNJTF, African Union, and Lake Chad Basin structures has created partial conditions for return, although ECOWAS instability, donor fatigue, funding decline, institutional division, as well as delayed domestication of the Kampala Convention have reduced effectiveness. The study concludes that the diplomatic response of Nigeria has not produced durable solutions at the scale required. It recommends that internal displacement should become a strategic pillar of the foreign policy doctrine of Nigeria.

Keywords. Internal displacement, foreign policy, diplomatic strategies, regional cooperation, Responsibility to Protect, Liberal Institutionalism, Nigeria, Lake Chad Basin.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Internal displacement continues to be one of the largest humanitarian challenges of the twenty-first century because it touches millions who run from harm yet stay within their country. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre recorded about 75.9 million internally displaced persons across the world by the end of 2023, and conflict as well as violence as well as disasters stood as the main causes (Ps andPhilipose, 2024). The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement explains that internally displaced persons are individuals or groups forced to leave their homes to avoid war or violence or human rights abuses or natural or human-made disasters without crossing an international border (Phuong, 2017).

Beyond this, refugees receive protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention but internally displaced persons depend on their governments for safety and those governments in many cases lack the will or power to protect them. Mooney and French (2015) states that protection rests with states but sovereignty on many occasions blocks outside help such that so many internally displaced persons remain unsafe with little hope or rights. Africa bears the heaviest burden since nearly one-third of all displaced persons live there due to long wars and unstable politics, as well as growing environmental stress. Holzer (2020) wrote that the Kampala Convention of the African Union of 2009 became the first regional treaty to protect displaced persons by demanding that states prevent forced movement and guarantee safe return or local integration.

Still this commitment is still far from reality because nations such as Somalia and South Sudan as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo continue to face large waves of displacement caused by war as well as ethnic conflict. Cohen and Deng (2016) describe African displacement as

complex since it links armed struggles with ecological as well as development pressures. The Lake Chad Basin stands as a clear example of where climate change and poverty as well as insurgency have combined to produce one of the worst humanitarian crises in Africa leaving millions uprooted despite interventions by the Multinational Joint Task Force as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission (African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2018).

In the same way, Nigeria faces a key displacement crisis and ranks among the largest in Africa with about 3.6 million internally displaced persons by 2024, making it one of the highest worldwide. The violent campaign of Boko Haram since 2009 remains the leading cause of this situation (Gwadabe et al., 2018). Mukhtar et al. (2020) showed that armed conflict causes 99.9 percent of displacement in the Northeast, and Borno State alone holds 83 percent of all internally displaced persons there. Beyond the Northeast, the farmer and herder clashes in the Middle Belt have forced many to flee as drought as well as shrinking farmlands fuel competition for land as well as water (Erundu, 2025). Banditry and kidnapping in the Northwest have also destroyed villages in particular in Zamfara, Katsina, as well as Kaduna States. Ezeabasili (2025) confirmed that between 2019 and 2023 rising insecurity drove rural families away from their homes. The humanitarian effects are deep since displaced persons face hunger and lack health care as well as education, while women as well as children endure gender violence as well as trauma (Ekoh et al., 2022; Mmahi, 2016).

In addition, foreign policy represents the approach and action a nation adopts to handle its relations with other states or global organisations in pursuit of national goals. In developing nations such as Nigeria foreign policy seeks a balance between internal needs and external expectations. Tuggar (2025) stated that the foreign policy of Nigeria stands on five constitutional pillars which include national interest and African unity, as well as global peace as well as respect for international law.

As the most populated country in Africa and its largest economy, Nigeria sees itself as a regional leader through ECOWAS as well as the African Union. Obasi (2024) stated that the old Afrocentric stance of Nigeria once centred on anti-colonial cooperation has now shifted toward internal security and displacement challenges. Hence, the link between foreign policy and internal displacement becomes important since Nigeria relies on regional partnerships as well as international aid to handle domestic crises while protecting its image abroad.

The connection between internal displacement and foreign policy has both theoretical as well as practical meaning. Betts and Loescher (2021) stated that forced migration changes how states behave as well as interact because it shapes peace as well as diplomacy within as well as beyond regions. Displacement can trigger border tensions and human rights criticism just as the Syrian war reshaped the dealings of Turkey with Europe as well as the Rohingya crisis damaged the global standing of Myanmar. The battle of Nigeria with Boko Haram has in the same way pushed it to cooperate with Chad, Niger, and Cameroon through the Multinational Joint Task Force (African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2018). Bellamy and Dunne (2016) through the Responsibility to Protect doctrine added that when states fail to defend citizens, they invite foreign concern as well as pressure which may lead to intervention. As a result, how Nigeria manages displaced persons becomes not just an internal affair but also a key factor that determines its foreign relations and aid opportunities.

At the global level, the structure for protecting internally displaced persons has grown stronger yet its success depends in most cases on political commitment. The 1998 UN Guiding Principles designed by Francis Deng created the first global model defining rights and duties toward IDPs (Mooney, 2005). Although not binding in law, it inspired the 2009 Kampala Convention which Kolawole (2014) described as a key African step in making state responsibility enforceable.

Nigeria ratified this treaty in 2012 and developed a National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons updated in 2021 (Nigeria Federal Government, 2021). Imoisi et al. (2023) even so stated that weak implementation still leaves many displaced persons without protection. Organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization of Migration (IOM) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) continue to fill these gaps, as well as OCHA (2023) stated that about 7.9 million people in Borno, Adamawa as well as Yobe depend on humanitarian assistance.

Yet, challenges persist because weak institutional systems and corruption limit progress. Bukar (2012), Akujobi and Awhefeada (2021) showed that the legal of Nigeria as well as funding systems remain not enough even though partners like USAID provide strong support (United States Agency for International Development, 2020). Regional plans such as the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum support cooperation across borders but recent political tensions within ECOWAS caused by military regimes in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso have slowed these initiatives (International Crisis Group, 2024). Adeleye and Aremu (2023) as well as Oghuvbu as well as Okolie (2020) concluded that without proper accountability as well as active diplomacy Nigeria will keep struggling to close the divide between written policy as well as effective action. As a result, this study studies foreign policy and internal displacement in Nigeria by assessing the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria faces one of the most serious internal displacement crises across the world with about 3.5 million internally displaced persons recorded by the end of 2024 making the nation one of the top ten countries with the highest number of displaced people (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024). The Boko Haram insurgency that began in 2009 has claimed more than 600,

000 lives and between 2021 as well as 2023 alone 17, 139 deaths were recorded (European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, 2025). By November 2024, there were about 2.3 million internally displaced persons across Nigeria and 2 million of them were in Borno as well as Adamawa as well as Yobe States while 1.3 million were displaced in the North-West as well as North-Central through banditry as well as communal clashes (International Organization for Migration, 2024).

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2025) reported that 7.8 million people in the States will need support in 2025 and 3.6 million of them are in acute need. This point 33 million Nigerians are expected to face food insecurity during the 2025 season and more than 1 million children under five years face severe acute malnutrition. Although Nigeria ratified the African Union Kampala Convention in 2012 and revised its National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons in 2021 as well as continues to partner with the Multinational Joint Task Force as well as the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum as well as the African Union to combat insecurity as well as displacement (Nigeria Federal Government, 2021; African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2018; African Union Commission, 2025) progress has been slow.

In addition, between September and November 2024, internally displaced persons numbers in the Northeast dropped by only 0.1 percent as well as 1.24 million Nigerians remain cut off from aid. This point of insecurity while 70 percent of health services and 50 percent of nutrition support in the affected States have closed leaving 40 percent of 2.3 million children as well as women without basic care (International Organization for Migration, 2024; Humanitarian Outcomes, 2019; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2025). Regional instability has further worsened the crisis since the withdrawal of Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS

in January 2024 reduced joint security coordination as well as threatened the work of the Multinational Joint Task Force (International Crisis Group, 2024).

Adeleye and Aremu (2023) stated that poor coordination as well as weak funding as well as lack of lasting plans limit progress while Imoisi et al. (2023) found that policy commitments on few occasions become reality leaving internally displaced persons exposed to rights violations. The 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan reduced its funding request from 910 million dollars to 298 million dollars which represents a 67 percent drop reflecting donor fatigue (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2025). Yet most studies such as Gwadabe et al. (2018) and Imoisi et al. (2023) have focused on humanitarian as well as legal issues without examining the diplomatic strategies of Nigeria in addressing the crisis.

As a result, this study studies foreign policy and internal displacement in Nigeria by assessing the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis as well as it seeks to answer the following research questions.

1.3 Research Questions

How has Nigeria employed diplomatic strategies in answering to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025?

How has the regional cooperation of Nigeria with neighboring countries and international organizations addressed internal displacement?

How have political, institutional, and funding constraints affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The central aim of this study is to study foreign policy and internal displacement in Nigeria by assessing the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis. The specific goals are as follows.

To evaluate how Nigeria has employed diplomatic strategies in answering to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025.

To evaluate how the regional cooperation of Nigeria with neighbouring countries and international organisations has addressed internal displacement.

To study how political, institutional, and funding constraints have affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds importance for both theoretical and practical reasons. In theory it adds to academic literature on forced migration and humanitarian diplomacy in developing nations by addressing the gap identified by Betts as well as Loescher (2021) who stated that few studies explore how states integrate displacement concerns into foreign policy. In practical terms, it will assist policymakers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission for Refugees as well as Migrants as well as Internally Displaced Persons by revealing how diplomatic strategies can improve coordination as well as attract humanitarian support. Regional institutions such as ECOWAS and the Lake Chad Basin Commission can also draw from the findings to improve structures for handling cross-border displacement. In addition international humanitarian organisations and donor agencies will find the research useful in aligning their aid strategies with the diplomatic goals of Nigeria to ensure coherent responses that protect displaced populations as well as support durable solutions.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study centres on foreign policy and internal displacement in Nigeria with attention to the diplomatic efforts of Nigeria in addressing the internally displaced persons crisis. The analysis covers how diplomatic strategies have been used between 2015 and 2025 as well as how regional cooperation has shaped outcomes through institutions such as the African Union as well as ECOWAS. In a clear manner, it focuses on Nigeria and its neighbouring Lake Chad Basin countries Niger, Chad, as well as Cameroon as well as interactions with international bodies like the United Nations.

The research faced certain constraints yet these were reduced through practical approaches. Time was limited for gathering wide diplomatic data across ten years so the researcher concentrated on key milestones supported by existing publications. Access to classified diplomatic records was restricted so official policy documents and reliable international reports were used instead. Financial challenges limited fieldwork but online archives and institutional databases provided enough evidence. Although some specialised materials were unavailable through the school library the study drew on reliable academic and institutional sources that supplied broad information for analysis.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

Internal Displacement Internal displacement refers to the forced movement of Nigerian populations within national borders due to armed conflict in particular the Boko Haram insurgency banditry and communal violence resulting in their loss of homes as well as livelihoods while remaining under Nigerian sovereignty as well as requiring protection as well as support.

Foreign Policy Foreign policy refers to the official strategies of Nigeria, diplomatic engagements and bilateral or multilateral actions undertaken to address the internally displaced persons crisis

through securing international support, supporting regional cooperation as well as fulfilling international obligations between 2015 as well as 2025.

Diplomatic Role Diplomatic role refers to the specific functions, strategies and actions undertaken by the government in particular the of Nigeria Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as related agencies in engaging with international organisations, neighbouring countries as well as bilateral partners to secure support, coordinate responses as well as advocate for solutions to the internally displaced persons crisis.

Regional Cooperation Regional cooperation refers to the cooperative engagements of Nigeria with Lake Chad Basin countries Niger, Chad, and Cameroon as well as participation in regional organisations such as ECOWAS as well as the African Union, as well as involvement in multilateral structures like the Multinational Joint Task Force as well as the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum to through collective action address internal displacement as well as related security challenges.

Humanitarian Assistance Humanitarian support refers to the emergency relief protection services and development support provided to the internally displaced persons of Nigeria through international organisations, bilateral donors, as well as Nigerian government agencies including food security, shelter, healthcare education as well as livelihood programmes.

Durable Solutions Durable solutions refer to long-term strategies implemented by the government of Nigeria and international partners to help internally displaced persons rebuild their lives through voluntary return, local integration or resettlement in safe environments with restored livelihoods as well as access to necessary services.

Multinational Joint Task Force MNJTF The Multinational Joint Task Force refers to the regional military coalition operating under African Union mandate through which Nigeria works with

neighbouring states to conduct counter-insurgency operations to enhance border security as well as create conditions for the safe return of internally displaced persons in the Lake Chad Basin region.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) The International Organization for Migration refers to the main intergovernmental migration group with a working partnership with the Nigerian government with partner institutions for the task of tracking displacement data with emergency humanitarian support with migration management plans created for the needs of internally displaced persons in conflict affected zones.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refers to the UN refugee protection agency with a widened role within this study which includes protection support with shelter provision with public support for internally displaced persons inside Nigeria where government capacity remains weak.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs refers to the UN humanitarian coordination body with duties that include the organisation of global and local relief work in Nigeria with the management of crisis impact information with resource mobilisation through structures like the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan created for displaced groups.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Migration

Migration means the movement of people from one place to another within or across borders for better life or safety from danger. Ps and Philipose (2024) stated that migration may be voluntary or forced depending on whether people move by choice or by need. Voluntary migration happens when people relocate to seek education or jobs or business while forced migration occurs when people avoid war or persecution or disaster. Betts and Loescher (2021) stated that modern migration in many cases mixes economic as well as humanitarian reasons because poverty as well as conflict as well as climate stress now drive movement together. Migration can be internal when people stay within their country or international when they cross into other lands. In Nigeria internal migration flows in most cases from insecurity as millions have left the Northeast and Northwest due to violence as well as fear (Kareem, 2022).

Many also move from rural to urban areas as jobs fade and farmlands degrade. Migration may follow legal paths through borders or illegal ones through unguarded routes. The main types include seasonal labour travel and family relocation as well as sudden displacement after natural disasters. The migration of Nigeria has grown into both a local and foreign policy issue since large population shifts influence national security as well as regional peace. Aleinikoff and Zamore (2019) stated that nations must protect migrants as well as displaced people through safe mobility as well as international cooperation. Hence migration in Nigeria stands not just as a social process but as a foreign policy concern that demands shared global management (International Organization for Migration, 2024).

2.1.2 Displacement

Displacement means the forced movement of people from their homes because of war or violence or abuse or disaster. Cohen and Deng (2016) defined internally displaced persons as people who flee yet stay within their country instead of crossing borders. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement hold that IDPs keep all legal rights without bias or restriction (United Nations, 1998). Displacement may last in a clear manner when people return soon or remain long when no solution is found for years. In Nigeria it appears in many forms such as conflict displacement from the Boko Haram war and farmer as well as herder clashes as well as flood or drought displacement from climate change.

Holzer (2020) stated that the Kampala Convention gives Africa a binding rule that demands prevention and protection for the displaced. Displacement happens through attacks or raids or natural disasters that force people away from home. It causes loss of shelter and income as well as community life which increases poverty as well as dependence on aid. The case shows of Nigeria that displacement disrupts security and growth since the long crisis in the Northeast has ruined farming as well as schooling as well as health care (Thurston, 2017). Women and children suffer the worst as they face abuse as well as trauma as well as poor living support (Kolawole, 2014). Seeing displacement through its causes and impact helps in building stronger protection as well as reintegration plans (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2025).

2.1.3 Foreign Policy

Foreign policy means the plans and actions a state uses to deal with other countries to defend its goals as well as support development. Weiss and Daws (2018) described it as how nations project their internal aims outside for peace as well as progress. Foreign policy works through different means such as bilateral talks, regional cooperation and aid partnerships. The foreign policy grew

of Nigeria from an early Afrocentric base built on African unity and liberation to a modern focus on economic ties as well as leadership in the region (Tuggar, 2025).

The tools include negotiation, trade deals, peace missions and participation in world bodies. Main elements of the foreign policy now of Nigeria cover security cooperation and humanitarian response as well as economic development. Wyatt (2019) pointed out that today foreign policy must handle human suffering under the duty to protect principle. The displacement crisis of Nigeria has pushed it to use diplomacy to attract relief and to coordinate with neighbours against cross-border threats (United States Agency for International Development, 2020). Through embassies and summits as well as multilateral bodies Nigeria turns its domestic problems into global discussion points for aid as well as collaboration. As a result foreign policy serves as both shield and bridge connecting national welfare with shared global action.

2.1.4 Diplomatic Role

Diplomatic role means the tasks and duties a nation carries out through its representatives to advance interests as well as solve global issues. Stavropoulou (2016) stated that diplomacy involves representation and negotiation as well as peaceful problem solving among nations. Diplomacy may work one-on-one between two states or within large organisations of many members. Its forms include economic diplomacy for trade, cultural diplomacy for national image and humanitarian diplomacy for crisis response. In internal displacement diplomacy becomes important because it joins negotiation and public support with global cooperation for aid. The diplomatic role of Nigeria in this crisis shows in its drive to secure donor help and to coordinate at regional level through ECOWAS as well as the African Union (Obasi, 2024).

Mooney and French (2015) said that states hold the main duty of protection but when they cannot handle alone diplomacy must extend that help. The Ministry of Nigeria of Foreign Affairs stands

at the centre of these efforts by linking with UNHCR and OCHA to design shared strategies (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020). These actions appear in policy public support within the African Union and dialogue with donors as well as regional cooperation through the Lake Chad Basin Commission. As a result the diplomatic role connects internal governance with international support ensuring that national needs align with global humanitarian goals.

2.1.5 IDP Crisis

An IDP crisis represents a national emergency caused by massive internal displacement that exceeds state capacity and requires global help. Phuong (2017) described it as a condition where large populations remain trapped within their country but face life-threatening insecurity. Key traits of such crisis include its size and length as well as the wide need it creates for relief. The IDP crisis involves of Nigeria about 3.5 million people by 2024 caused by insurgency in the Northeast and by violence in the Northwest as well as Middle Belt (European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, 2025). Its results include food lack affecting 33 million Nigerians, weak health systems and more than one million children suffering acute hunger (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2025).

The response system covers government agencies and regional coalitions as well as global NGOs that deliver aid. Yet deeper problems appear in forms of gender violence and trauma as well as loss of income (Olufadewa et al., 2022). The crisis operates within domestic and regional levels since it influences the foreign relations of Nigeria as well as cross-border security (International Crisis Group, 2024). The cooperation of Nigeria through the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum and the Multinational Joint Task Force shows how a local crisis becomes an international agenda (Zulum, 2025). Still poor funding and weak coordination remain obstacles to progress (Oghuvbu

and Okolie, 2020). As a result the IDP crisis stands as a multidimensional issue that merges humanitarian, protection and diplomatic needs requiring long-term as well as joint action.

2.2 Thematic Review

2.2.1 Nigerias Diplomatic Strategies in Responding to the IDP Crisis

The work of Nigeria with international humanitarian agencies forms an important part of its diplomatic answer to the displacement crisis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2020) recorded that Nigeria entered into organised partnerships with UNHCR and IOM as well as OCHA to handle aid for displaced people across the Northeast as well as Northwest. These partnerships include joint technical operations and needs assessments as well as shared response systems meant to improve delivery of relief as well as protection. The Nigeria Emergency Handbook outlines how government agencies and humanitarian bodies cooperate through defined procedures for data sharing as well as resource mobilisation to enhance coordination in the field (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020).

In addition, the diplomatic campaigns of Nigeria for external aid have produced uneven results. The United States Agency for International Development (2020) stated through its Country Development Cooperation Strategy that Nigeria has joined several donor forums and humanitarian pledging events to raise funds for displacement recovery. Yet, serious funding gaps remain as the 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan received far less than projected needs. Although key partners such as the United States and the United Kingdom as well as the European Union have offered considerable help, total resources still fall short of what is required to support millions of affected citizens (United States Agency for International Development, 2020).

In addition, Nigeria has used global and regional meetings as avenues to bring attention to the Lake Chad Basin crisis. Tuggar (2025) described how Nigerian diplomats presented statements at

the UN General Assembly, Security Council sessions, and regional summits to highlight the human as well as security toll of displacement. Through such forums Nigeria has tried to connect its humanitarian emergency with global debates on terrorism and climate insecurity. By doing so, it seeks to frame the IDP crisis as a common responsibility and a cross-border concern requiring regional solidarity (Tuggar, 2025).

Beyond this, visits by high-ranking international officials have brought visibility and short-term involvement. The United Nations Security Council Informal Expert Group (2024) made a mission to Borno State to meet officials, humanitarian staff, and displaced families. These visits fostered dialogue between global decision-makers and communities in distress as well as may shape funding as well as policy direction. Yet the long-term effect of such missions remains uncertain as several commitments made during these visits have not been in full met (United Nations Security Council Informal Expert Group, 2024).

At the final point, research shows ongoing difficulties that weaken the diplomatic outreach of Nigeria for aid. Oghuvbu and Okolie (2020) discovered that coordination gaps as well as bureaucratic control as well as sovereignty issues in many cases slow down cooperation between Nigerian authorities as well as humanitarian partners. Their findings show that while Nigeria engages foreign actors for help, sensitivities about national control and disagreements over access have on some occasions strained trust. They also stated that global donor fatigue caused by many long crises has reduced attention to the humanitarian needs of Nigeria. As a result, although diplomatic public support remains active, external commitments have not always turned into consistent financial or technical support (Oghuvbu and Okolie, 2020).

The approval of Nigeria of the Kampala Convention in 2012 marked a key diplomatic commitment to protect internally displaced persons. Holzer (2020) wrote that this treaty reshaped the approach

of Africa to displacement by placing full responsibility on states to prevent forced movement and protect affected people. The later revision of Nigeria of its National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons in 2021 brought these regional commitments into national law. This policy step followed diplomatic consultations with the African Union and knowledge sharing among member states that had begun implementing the the principles of Convention (Holzer, 2020).

Even so, applying humanitarian protection through diplomacy has shown difficult. Nigeria Federal Government (2021) recognised in its revised policy that though it sets out clear standards for safety and welfare of IDPs, turning those standards into real actions demands strong coordination among ministries as well as international partners. The report admitted that humanitarian access remains limited in many conflict zones due to insecurity and administrative restrictions, meaning that diplomatic talks continue to shape how relief operations proceed on the ground (Nigeria Federal Government, 2021).

Experts argue in the same line that IDP protection has not gained a firm place in the wider foreign policy direction of Nigeria. Tuggar (2025) found that officials refer to humanitarian challenges in many cases yet displacement appears as a central concern in diplomatic planning on limited occasions. Government addresses as well as foreign policy briefs place greater focus on peace and regional cooperation while displacement issues receive lower attention. This gap shows that the external policy goals of Nigeria are not aligned in full with its internal humanitarian responsibilities (Tuggar, 2025).

At the regional level humanitarian diplomacy becomes joined with conflict resolution in a clear form. The African Union Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (2018) created a Stabilisation Recovery as well as Resilience Strategy that links relief with peace as well as development. This structure shows a shared diplomatic understanding that displacement response

must address insecurity alongside poverty in one combined plan. Participation by Nigeria in this regional initiative points to a shift toward joint approaches that connect humanitarian support with long-term stabilisation and development (African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2018).

Even so key weaknesses continue to delay the implementation of these humanitarian commitments. Alemika (2015) examined the displacement policy of Nigeria and identified low funding poor capacity corruption in aid handling as well as limited political will as root problems. The study found that Nigeria had adopted strong policies and practiced diplomacy yet many displaced Nigerians continue to lack adequate help or protection. This reality reveals the gap between diplomatic commitments of Nigeria and its performance on the ground. It shows that the country must strengthen accountability and build effective partnerships for diplomatic gains to create real change for displaced persons (Alemika, 2015).

2.2.2 Nigerias Regional Cooperation in Addressing Internal Displacement

The formation of the Multinational Joint Task Force stands as an important regional measure for confronting the Boko Haram insurgency and its displacement effects across the region. Thurston (2017) traced the MNJTF from its first structure in 1998 to its reorganisation under African Union approval in 2015. The force brings together troops from Nigeria Chad Niger Cameroon and Benin for the shared task of fighting Boko Haram as well as Islamic State West Africa Province. Its mandate includes military action civilian protection and secure passage for humanitarian work in displacement affected areas. Thurston showed that the MNJTF developed from a common view that the insurgency had crossed borders and required a regional answer in place of separate national responses (Thurston, 2017).

Reviews of MNJTF operations present mixed results for peace and recovery. The African Union Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (2018) assessed the force as well as found that it retook large territories from insurgents in Borno State as well as border zones. These gains broke enemy routes and networks while security improved in some towns. As another finding the review showed that battlefield progress did not end danger because militants shifted tactics through bomb attacks and raids on soft targets. This change left many areas unsafe and delayed the return of displaced families (African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2018).

Regional security work faces deep problems that reduce the overall impact of the MNJTF. The International Crisis Group (2024) examined political tension in ECOWAS and stated that the exit of Niger from ECOWAS in January 2024 along with Mali as well as Burkina Faso weakens cooperation. The report showed that these divisions restrict intelligence exchange border patrols and supply lines for MNJTF operations. One more limit comes from shortage of funds because member states struggle to support troops equipment and logistics. These problems raise doubt about the future of regional security cooperation without reform (International Crisis Group, 2024).

In addition, research on the link between the military and humanitarian actors points to coordination gaps. Stavropoulou (2016) studied civil and military interaction in crisis zones as well as found that although the army can open space for aid workers through area stabilisation, conflict may arise when military control conflicts with humanitarian neutrality. In the Lake Chad Basin, aid groups have warned that close alignment with military forces could reduce access to civilians in insurgent-held regions. Finding balance between security aims and humanitarian values demands sustained dialogue between MNJTF leaders as well as aid agencies (Stavropoulou, 2016).

At the final point, the future of regional cooperation depends on political unity and flexible planning. Obasi (2024) stated that lasting peace in West Africa requires renewed solidarity as recent divisions in ECOWAS threaten existing defence systems including the MNJTF. The creation of the Alliance of Sahel States by Niger and Mali as well as Burkina Faso shows how new blocs may compete with older structures. Obasi advised that effective regional coordination must rest on political reconciliation and collective focus on both armed threats as well as root causes such as poverty as well as social exclusion (Obasi, 2024).

Regional humanitarian structures by ECOWAS and the African Union provide structured systems for handling displacement across the Lake Chad Basin. The African Union Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (2018) designed the Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience to connect humanitarian relief with security as well as development. The structure seeks to ensure that support and peace efforts as well as reconstruction work together instead of acting in a clear manner. It stresses regional responsibility sharing and joint funding plans as well as policy harmony so that countries can face displacement as one collective crisis rather than isolated national problems (African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2018). In the same way, cross-border humanitarian cooperation presents complex diplomatic and practical issues. One comparative study examined internal displacement management in Nigeria alongside Cameroon. It found that the two countries use separate relief coordination systems. Agreements for joint assessments and shared data exist. Yet progress remains uneven because national priorities differ while resources are limited. Cross-border aid delivery faces insecurity strict procedures and different protection standards. This weak link reduces the value of regional agreements in practice. The study shows that regional policy structures may exist on paper while routine cooperation remains difficult (Eweka and Olusegun, 2016).

Regional burden-sharing remains a central challenge. Bukar (2012) argued that Nigeria carries the largest cost because it hosts millions of displaced citizens while neighbouring states receive limited support through regional systems. The study noted that ECOWAS alongside Lake Chad Basin discussions on financial or logistical sharing have produced few results. This creates a dual burden for Nigeria as host of IDPs while it serves as lead security actor under the MNJTF. The role strains fiscal capacity because partner compensation remains too low (Bukar, 2012).

The Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum at sub-regional level offers a useful flexible model of cooperation. Zulum (2025) stated that the forum supports peace as well as reintegration through agreements such as the Borno Declaration. That declaration commits governors from affected areas to voluntary return and community rebuilding. The forum brings leaders from Nigeria Chad Niger and Cameroon into one space for knowledge sharing along with common project planning. Zulum stated that its strength rests in localised diplomacy with greater speed than national bureaucracies. The model depends on political continuity and funding support (Zulum, 2025).

Limits within regional institutions restrict the reach of these structures. The International Crisis Group (2024) stated that ECOWAS alongside the Lake Chad Basin Commission lack adequate manpower funds and technical skill for coordination goals. Rival national agendas with periodic disputes weaken collective action because each state places domestic concerns above joint effort. The report concluded that the institutional design of these structures supports cooperation in theory. This means that a strong framework has not produced a strong field result. Their real effect remains low without stronger capacity and shared political will (International Crisis Group, 2024).

2.2.3 Political, Institutional, and Funding Constraints Affecting the Diplomatic Response Of Nigeria to the IDP Crisis

Agency coordination remains one of the major obstacles to effective displacement management in Nigeria. Olanrewaju et al. (2019) examined insurgency alongside the invisible displaced population and showed that weak alignment among state institutions reduces the general response. The study recorded overlapping functions among the National Commission for Refugees Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons the State Emergency Management Agencies the military as well as several ministries. This overlap creates repeated work weak communication and waste of scarce resources. Records gathered by these bodies in many cases conflict which delays relief delivery and creates unclear policy action. Because of these gaps displaced families face hunger poor shelter and limited protection despite the presence of many agencies (Olanrewaju et al., 2019).

Tension between government authorities and humanitarian partners remains a serious limit on field operations. Amnesty International (2015) documented cases in which aid workers faced strict access restrictions in conflict zones of Northeast Nigeria. The group reported that heavy security screening long approval procedures and concerns about national sovereignty made it hard for humanitarian teams to reach people in need. These disputes in some cases became open disagreement over independence of action. Aid organisations defended neutrality while authorities stressed control. Such strained relations weaken diplomacy because international donors hesitate to release funds when access is limited and accountability remains unclear (Amnesty International, 2015).

In addition, weak institutional capacity continues as a steady obstacle. Alemika (2015) studied policy response to internal displacement and stated lack of trained personnel as well as not enough logistics across agencies. The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons works with limited funds as well as lacks the infrastructure to coordinate national activities. At the state level the emergency agencies face similar shortages that delay relief

when new displacement occurs. These weaknesses prevent national policies and diplomatic commitments from becoming visible improvements for displaced people (Alemika, 2015).

Beyond this, lack of accountability reduces the credibility of the humanitarian programmes of Nigeria. Mmahi (2016) found evidence of corruption in aid management including diversion of food and relief items as well as the creation of false beneficiary lists. The research also exposed poor oversight and few consequences for those who misuse humanitarian funds. These governance failures worsen the suffering of displaced communities and erode the confidence of donor nations that demand transparent as well as responsible use of resources. Loss of trust among donors damages the image of Nigeria in international negotiations for aid (Mmahi, 2016).

The distance between policy design and implementation remains a major problem. In the revised National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons Nigeria Federal Government (2021) accepted that a complete policy structure exists while poor funding and weak political will continue to block results. The report showed weak coordination between federal and state levels because IDP protection standards differ across the country. Policy for this reason stays closer to a statement of intent than an operational tool when enforcement and dedicated financing remain weak. This gap between commitment and action creates doubt among partners about the capacity of government to fulfil its diplomatic as well as humanitarian commitments (Nigeria Federal Government, 2021). Severe lack of funds continues to limit humanitarian work for displaced Nigerians. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2025) reported that the the 2025 Humanitarian Response of country Plan was reduced from nine hundred and ten million dollars to two hundred as well as ninety-eight million dollars. This reduction of about sixty-seven per cent means that agencies can only focus on the most urgent needs leaving millions without food, health care, education, or safe housing. The lack hits women and children hardest because protection as

well as nutrition programmes face the deepest cuts (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2025).

Donor fatigue has become a major barrier to sustained foreign support. Kareem (2022) explained that a fifteen year crisis in the Northeast has reduced the interest of long standing donors. Emergency needs in Ukraine and Sudan as well as Gaza have pulled global attention from Nigeria while shifting funds to other crises. Donor governments face domestic pressure to cut external spending during periods of economic strain. This struggle over limited resources has made it difficult for Nigeria to maintain foreign commitments at the level needed for humanitarian needs (Kareem, 2022).

Over-dependence on foreign funding has become a threat to support continuity. Oghuvbu and Okolie (2020) argued that most IDP care funds come from international donors while domestic budgets provide a small share. This reliance leaves the response system exposed to external shocks when international aid declines. The study noted that the economy of Nigeria can support greater domestic funding but political choices have kept humanitarian aid at a low level of priority. Without stronger internal financing displacement programmes in Nigeria remain weak with deep dependence on external goodwill (Oghuvbu and Okolie, 2020).

A low level of localisation leaves national capacity weak. The International Organization for Migration (2025) showed that ten per cent of total humanitarian funds reach local Nigerian organisations despite global commitments to increase local participation. Many donors fear weak financial control as well as choose large international organisations as funding channels. This practice blocks local NGOs as well as community groups from building skill and stable capacity. Stronger local actors would help Nigeria create a home-grown humanitarian system with less reliance on foreign intermediaries (International Organization for Migration, 2025).

The absence of long-term planning restricts progress toward lasting recovery. The European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (2025) found that Nigeria treats displacement as an emergency after more than fifteen years. Humanitarian agencies focus on relief rather than development which leaves many displaced people dependent on aid without lasting livelihoods. The report stressed that movement from relief to recovery requires the integration of humanitarian funding with development funding through coordinated diplomacy involving donors as well as domestic ministries. Without this shift the cycle of dependency will persist while durable solutions for displaced Nigerians will remain difficult (European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, 2025).

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Theory

The Responsibility to Protect Theory was introduced in 2001 through the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty led by Gareth Evans as well as colleagues who reacted to global failures in Rwanda as well as the Balkans. Evans (2008) described R2P as a new way of viewing sovereignty that gives states the duty to protect their citizens from genocide and war crimes as well as ethnic cleansing as well as crimes against humanity. The 2005 UN World Summit later used this theory as a global standard for preventing and addressing humanitarian crises. R2P stands on three main pillars which include the duty of the state to protect its population, the role of the international community in helping states fulfil this duty, and collective international action when states fail to do so (Wyatt, 2019). The concept treats sovereignty as responsibility rather than privilege and favours prevention as well as diplomacy before force. Critics argue that R2P has been applied in a clear manner and on some occasions used to justify political interference. Yet for the displacement crisis in Nigeria the theory provides a moral and legal frame that connects

national duty with global responsibility. Wyatt (2019) stated that R2P supports external support when state capacity is weak but also creates tension between sovereignty and international involvement. It as a result explains the dual status of Nigeria as both protector of its citizens and beneficiary of global humanitarian support while highlighting diplomacy as the bridge between responsibility as well as support.

2.3.2 Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism developed from the ideas of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye who sought to explain cooperation among states despite the absence of world government. The analysis of Keohane of international regimes showed that institutions help states act through collective action in an anarchic world by lowering costs and building trust. Weiss and Daws (2018) stated that liberal institutionalism holds that rational states seek joint benefits through shared rules as well as norms. Institutions reduce uncertainty in international relations by monitoring compliance and by creating places where states can negotiate. Liberal institutionalism gives greater attention to absolute gains and cooperation than to the power struggles stressed by realism. It explains that state conduct can be shaped by stable expectations created through institutions. Some critics argue that institutions may fail to overcome major power inequalities or conflicting interests in any real sense. Despite this criticism liberal institutionalism helps explain how Nigeria works with ECOWAS the African Union and humanitarian agencies in response to internal displacement. These bodies coordinate action while setting norms that influence state practice. The Multinational Joint Task Force and regional stabilisation structures show that shared institutions can respond to complex crises. This limitation remains because Obasi (2024) argued that continuing political tensions within ECOWAS reduce the effectiveness of such cooperation. In this way liberal

institutionalism explains the strengths as well as the limits of institutional cooperation in the humanitarian and security responses of Nigeria.

2.3.3 Humanitarian Diplomacy Framework

Humanitarian diplomacy grew in the late 1990s and early 2000s as scholars as well as practitioners studied how humanitarian work interacts with politics. Stavropoulou (2016) studied field operations and stated that humanitarian diplomacy involves public support, negotiation, as well as coordination between humanitarian as well as political actors. It covers actions such as promoting humanitarian law, securing access to civilians, and raising global awareness for aid as well as protection. The structure recognises that diplomacy remains necessary for humanitarian work even while keeping independence and neutrality. Even so, it also admits that political interests can blur humanitarian goals and restrict access. Mooney and French (2015) stated that while states have the main duty to protect their people, diplomacy becomes important when internal resources are not enough. In Nigeria this theory explains ongoing dialogue between government and humanitarian organisations over access, safety, as well as aid delivery. It also explains the participation of Nigeria in global platforms where it seeks support while keeping control of national affairs. The structure highlights both the necessity and the tension of diplomacy in humanitarian action, showing how Nigeria balances sovereignty with the need for external support in protecting its displaced citizens.

2.3.4 Complex Interdependence Theory

Complex interdependence theory introduced by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in the 1970s challenged the traditional realist idea that military power dominates world politics. Keohane and Nye stated that states as well as societies are now linked through multiple channels that go beyond official diplomacy. Weiss and Daws (2018) stated that the theory has three main ideas which are

the existence of many channels of contact beyond governments, the equal importance of non-military issues such as welfare as well as humanitarian concerns, as well as the reduced role of military force among interdependent actors. It shows that countries are connected in ways that create both cooperation and vulnerability. Critics note that interdependence may not in full apply in to a high degree militarised environments and can overlook power differences between states. Yet the theory provides useful insight into the displacement problem of Nigeria which crosses borders and involves both state as well as non-state actors. It helps explain how internal displacement in the Lake Chad Basin links security, environment, and development issues across Nigeria, Chad, Niger, as well as Cameroon. The African Union Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (2018) confirmed that solving displacement requires joining humanitarian as well as security as well as development actions across multiple states. Hence complex interdependence explains why Nigeria cannot rely only on military means but must engage in coordinated humanitarian and diplomatic efforts with partners.

2.3.5 Regime Theory or International Regime Framework

Regime theory developed through the work of Stephen Krasner, Robert Keohane, and Oran Young who studied how states create cooperative systems in specific global issues. Krasner defined regimes as sets of principles and norms as well as rules that shape how states behave within issue areas. Hathaway (2021) stated that regimes help states coordinate by reducing uncertainty and establishing expectations for cooperation. The theory assumes that shared norms can guide behaviour even when enforcement is weak. It acknowledges that powerful states in many cases lead regime creation but once established regimes may continue beyond their founders through institutional practices. Critics question whether regimes in a real sense cause cooperation or in

simple terms reflect pre-existing interests. The international protection regime for displaced persons includes the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Kampala Convention, and related humanitarian norms. The engagement of Nigeria through ratifying the Kampala Convention and adopting national IDP policies shows regime influence in shaping domestic behaviour. Holzer (2020) stated that the Kampala Convention transformed African displacement policy by setting binding duties on member states. Regime theory as a result explains how international norms shape the policy decisions of Nigeria and justify international support. Even so, it also shows that without enforcement and accountability regimes alone cannot secure effective protection for displaced persons.

2.4 Empirical Review

Kareem (2022) carried out a study titled Trends in Forced Displacement Due to Conflict from 2009 to 2021 A Decade Forecast for Effective Humanitarian Emergency Response System in Nigeria. The study sought to analyse displacement patterns and to forecast future humanitarian demands for better emergency planning. It used quantitative forecasting approaches drawing data from the Displacement Tracking Matrix and other humanitarian records across twelve years. The findings showed a steady rise in forced displacement with sharp seasonal differences and concentration in the Northeast. The research projected that without peacebuilding displacement would continue to rise. Kareem concluded that Nigeria must build stronger early warning systems expand humanitarian funding and link conflict resolution with relief planning to handle the crisis with effectiveness.

Olufadewa et al. (2022) studied mental health among displaced youth in Northern Nigeria. Their work examined the psychological experiences of young internally displaced persons as well as the kinds of support they required after violence. The study relied on qualitative interviews with youth

who lived in camps and host communities. The findings showed that exposure to violence and loss created deep emotional trauma with depression anxiety as well as post-traumatic stress disorder among many young people. Access to mental health care remained at a very low level across the affected settings. The authors concluded that humanitarian agencies should treat counselling and mental health interventions as core parts of relief work rather than optional services.

Kunnuji et al. (2024) presented a brief on the humanitarian needs of forced rural-to-city migrants in North West Nigeria with attention to mental health vulnerability. The research assessed humanitarian gaps as well as mental health risks among persons displaced by banditry who had moved into urban areas. The authors used surveys and group discussions across Kaduna as well as Katsina states. The study recorded poor living conditions unemployment as well as a lack of organised support. Mental health problems were common because several respondents described lasting trauma as well as hopelessness. The study concluded that aid programmes should reach displaced people in cities by combining mental health care with livelihood support and coordination between aid workers as well as local governments.

Eweka and Olusegun (2016) compared displacement management systems in Nigeria as well as Cameroon. Their study examined policy approaches institutional systems and humanitarian coordination practices across both countries. The researchers used a comparative review of policy papers together with interviews involving government officials as well as aid workers. The results showed that both countries had national IDP policies but implementation stayed weak because coordination was poor and funding remained low. Limited accountability also reduced the strength of protection outcomes. The study concluded that displacement management requires stronger national agencies steady funding as well as collaborative partnerships with humanitarian actors to improve protection.

Olanrewaju et al. (2019) investigated Insurgency and the Invisible Displaced Population in Nigeria A Situational Analysis. The study examined the condition of displaced persons outside formal camps who were missing from official records in several response systems. Through document review key informant interviews and on-site observations in the Northeast the researchers found that most displaced people lived with host families who received little humanitarian support. Weak data systems and poor coordination created unequal distribution of assistance. The study concluded that displacement response should include host communities as well as stronger tracking systems so invisible populations can be recognised in humanitarian planning.

Fischer (2021) analysed Farmer Herder Conflicts in Nigeria published in the African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review. The objective was to identify drivers and impacts of farmer herder clashes that lead to displacement. Using qualitative approaches with interviews from affected areas the research found that shrinking grazing lands population pressure and religious differences fuel violence while easy access to small arms worsens it. The study concluded that lasting peace requires reforms in land management, adoption of climate adaptation strategies, and investment in community dialogue to prevent conflict as well as mass displacement.

Ezeabasili (2025) studied Climate Induced Conflict and Displacement in Nigeria A Case Study of Farmer Herder Clashes published in the African Security Review. The aim was to link environmental change with violence and forced migration. Field data from Benue Plateau and Taraba showed that desertification as well as water scarcity push herders southwards causing competition for farmland as well as triggering violence that drives thousands away from their homes. The study concluded that government must adopt climate adaptation and resource governance reforms as part of national displacement policy because security responses alone cannot address environmental drivers of conflict.

Mukhtar, Rose, and Choy (2020) published research in the Scientific Malaysian Research Journal on profiling forced migrants in Northeast Nigeria. The goal was to describe socio economic and demographic features of displaced persons to guide aid targeting. Using surveys from four hundred households across Borno and Adamawa the study found that women as well as children make up the majority of displaced persons as well as that most households face severe poverty as well as limited access to education as well as income sources. The researchers concluded that humanitarian programmes must include gender equality education and livelihood empowerment to improve living conditions of displaced populations.

Alemika (2015) presented Internal Displacement in Nigeria Policy Challenges at a conference organised by the Norwegian Refugee Council and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. The aim was to study how policy weaknesses limit effective displacement management. Using policy analysis of legal and institutional structures the researcher found key problems including poor coordination, corruption in aid distribution, as well as weak institutional commitment. The study concluded that Nigeria must increase funding, improve institutions, and enforce accountability to turn written policies into real protection for displaced citizens.

Oghuvbu and Okolie (2020) studied Response Systems to IDPs Crisis in Nigeria The Humanitarian Imperative Perspective published in the Journal of Danubian Studies as well as Research. The objective was to evaluate how well humanitarian systems address displacement challenges. Using interviews with aid workers and displaced persons supported by documentary evidence the study showed that despite necessary relief efforts responses remain underfunded as well as poorly coordinated. Government institutions lack the strength to handle large scale emergencies without foreign help. The researchers concluded that Nigeria needs to mobilise domestic resources, build

strong national systems, and link relief operations with long term development to achieve durable solutions for internally displaced persons.

2.5 Summary of Literature and Gap

The body of literature reviewed shows that internal displacement in Nigeria has drawn strong academic attention across humanitarian, policy, and diplomatic dimensions. Scholars such as Kareem (2022) described the growing scale of displacement while Alemika (2015) identified deep protection and policy gaps that weaken national response. Olufadewa et al. (2022) exposed the mental health burden on displaced youth and Oghuvbu as well as Okolie (2020) highlighted weak coordination between government as well as humanitarian actors. Thurston (2017) studied regional security cooperation through the Multinational Joint Task Force while the African Union Commission and Lake Chad Basin Commission (2018) explored regional structures linking security as well as humanitarian action. Together these studies confirm that displacement in Nigeria continues to be one of the the longest of continent and most complex humanitarian challenges.

Yet several research gaps remain unresolved. The first gap lies in the lack of integrated analysis connecting the diplomatic strategies of Nigeria with its humanitarian and security actions. Many studies have treated these themes in a clear manner without examining how diplomacy combines both to improve national and regional response. The second gap concerns the limited evaluation of the engagement of Nigeria with international partners. Although some works note donor contributions and policy reforms, few have measured the effectiveness of diplomatic negotiation in sustaining long term humanitarian support from global as well as regional partners. The third gap appears in the weak exploration of political dynamics within ECOWAS and the problem of

donor fatigue which both influence the ability of Nigeria to keep external commitment to its displacement crisis.

These identified gaps create the foundation for this study which seeks to study the diplomatic role of Nigeria in addressing internal displacement between 2015 and 2025. The study as a result adds to bridging the divide between humanitarian research and diplomatic analysis by exploring how foreign policy, international cooperation, as well as regional relations interact to shape the protection of displaced persons within Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study depends on two key international relations theories that explain the diplomatic role of Nigeria in answering to internal displacement. These are the Responsibility to Protect Theory and Liberal Institutionalism. Each provides a lens through which state responsibility and collective international action can be understood. Together they explain how the diplomatic efforts balance of Nigeria national sovereignty with global humanitarian obligations and how institutions support cooperation to handle shared challenges.

3.1.1 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Theory

The Responsibility to Protect Theory first appeared in the 2001 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty report developed by Gareth Evans as well as colleagues. Evans (2008) described R2P as a new idea of sovereignty that makes protection of citizens the primary duty of states. The Theory gained official support at the 2005 United Nations World Summit where member states accepted that sovereignty carries responsibility and not just authority R2P stands on three pillars. The first gives states the main duty to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The second requires the international community to assist states through capacity building and humanitarian support. The third permits collective action through diplomatic and peaceful means when a state fails to protect its people (Wyatt, 2019).

The principles of R2P emphasise prevention and shared duty rather than intervention alone. The theory assumes that sovereignty brings moral and legal obligations as well as that international help should improve rather than replace national capacity. Wyatt (2019) stated that scholars have

debated its fairness since it is on some occasions applied in a clear manner or used to justify regime change. Yet supporters believe it has built stronger norms for civilian protection and made humanitarian action more coordinated. Later writers such as Thomas Weiss and Alex Bellamy expanded its meaning as well as use showing how it remains relevant for guiding state conduct during crises.

This study uses R2P because it in a direct way relates to the protection of displaced persons and explains why international aid becomes necessary when a the capacity of state is overstretched. It presents Nigeria as both responsible for protecting its citizens and entitled to request support when unable to meet that duty alone. The first pillar defines the duty of Nigeria to protect its 3.5 million displaced people, while the second supports its diplomatic search for aid, technical help, and funding. R2P also explains the active role of Nigeria in regional cooperation where shared action becomes necessary in addressing crises beyond one the control of state. Its preventive nature further connects with the efforts of Nigeria to address the causes of displacement such as insurgency and farmer herder conflicts. Through this theory, the study interprets the diplomacy of Nigeria as both a moral and strategic response to protection responsibility within the tension between sovereignty as well as global cooperation.

3.1.2 Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal institutionalism emerged through the writings of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye as a challenge to realist ideas about power competition. The studies of Keohane of international regimes showed how institutions help states cooperate in an anarchic system by creating shared rules and expectations. Weiss and Daws (2018) stated that liberal institutionalism views states as rational actors that pursue national interests through cooperation because institutions reduce costs, increase trust, as well as make negotiation easier. The theory sees cooperation as creating absolute

gains for all parties rather than relative power shifts. It has expanded through related ideas such as complex interdependence and regime theory which study how cooperation works across different global issues.

Liberal institutionalism assumes that institutions matter because they provide platforms for information sharing and establish norms that regulate behaviour. They encourage states to follow shared procedures and to reach outcomes that serve mutual interest. Critics doubt whether institutions in a real sense change behaviour or merely reflect existing power relations. Realist writers argue that strong states control institutions, while constructivists believe that shared ideas and values play greater roles than rules alone. Nonetheless, later scholars such as Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink have shown that institutions can support human rights as well as humanitarian cooperation through norm building as well as coordination.

This study treats liberal institutionalism relevant because it explains how regional and international bodies help Nigeria respond through diplomacy to its displacement crisis. ECOWAS, the African Union, and United Nations agencies create systems for cooperation, reduce negotiation costs, as well as define norms for protection under agreements such as the Kampala Convention. These institutions make burden sharing possible through joint appeals and coordination forums that connect Nigeria with donors as well as aid partners. The Multinational Joint Task Force gives a clear example of institutional collaboration because shared threats that cause displacement are handled through a common structure. For this reason Liberal institutionalism helps this study assess the strength of these structures as well as the limits produced by weak capacity political rivalry and resource gaps among member states. This point explains why Nigeria continues to invest diplomatic energy in institutional partnerships despite persistent coordination challenges.

3.1.3 Applicability of the Theories

Responsibility to Protect and Liberal Institutionalism have complementary roles in explaining the diplomatic approach of Nigeria to internal displacement. Responsibility to Protect sets the moral as well as legal base of state and international obligations while Liberal Institutionalism explains the systems used to carry those duties out. R2P shows why Nigeria must protect its citizens as well as why it seeks help when national strength is not enough. Liberal Institutionalism shows how ECOWAS the African Union and UN agencies organise that help through connections across humanitarian security diplomatic efforts. Together they explain the practice of Nigeria of bilateral negotiation with donor countries, participation in multilateral structures, and cooperation with humanitarian institutions. They also shed light on the main obstacles facing the diplomacy of Nigeria, as R2P exposes sovereignty tensions that limit external support, while Liberal Institutionalism shows how weak institutional systems and political divisions limit cooperation even when shared structures exist.

3.2 Hypotheses

The alternative forms of the hypotheses are:

1. Nigeria has with effectiveness employed diplomatic strategies in answering to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025.
2. The regional cooperation of Nigeria with neighbouring countries and international organisations has to an adequate degree addressed internal displacement.
3. Political, institutional, and funding constraints have affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis.

3.3 Research Design

This study uses both documentary and ex post facto research designs to explore the diplomatic role of Nigeria in addressing internal displacement from 2015 to 2025. Documentary research design focuses on the careful study of existing literature and published materials to answer specific research questions (Weber 2017). It fits this study because diplomatic practice is expressed through written statements, policy documents, and institutional reports. The design allows structured review of government publications, policy declarations, humanitarian reports, and diplomatic communications that reflect the responses of Nigeria to displacement. Ex post facto design studies past events to analyse relationships between variables without direct manipulation (Creswell and Creswell 2018). It suits this study because the diplomatic actions on of Nigeria displacement have already occurred across the ten-year period and can as a result be studied from a past-focused view. The combined use of both designs allows detailed analysis of documentary evidence while keeping analytical order. This approach supports examination of how diplomatic actions, regional cooperation structures, and humanitarian policies evolved as well as interacted to shape displacement outcomes. It also provides the methodological value needed to interpret evidence with objectivity and to connect the diplomatic decisions of Nigeria with their humanitarian effects.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection followed a documentary approach and depended through secondary sources alone on secondary data relevant to the diplomatic response of Nigeria to internal displacement within the ten-year frame. The secondary data were obtained from existing government policy documents, the National Policy on of Nigeria Internally Displaced Persons, foreign policy speeches, ministerial briefings, and reports from the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants as well as Internally Displaced Persons. Other sources included ECOWAS structures, African Union strategies, United Nations humanitarian response plans, donor policy documents, and reports from

UNHCR, IOM, as well as OCHA. Further secondary materials included academic journal articles, in a clear manner books, policy briefs, and institutional research from organisations such as the International Crisis Group. No primary data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, or field observation. Selection followed three criteria. Relevance to the the research questions of study, credibility of the issuing institution, and temporal coverage between 2015 as well as 2025. Access to documents came through official government websites, international databases, academic repositories, and institutional libraries. Content analysis guided the extraction of information related to diplomatic strategies, cooperation systems, and policy outcomes (Bryman 2016). The use of this documentary approach ensured systematic coverage of evidence while allowing triangulation across multiple reliable sources to enhance reliability and validity.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed qualitative documentary approaches for interpreting evidence taken from the selected materials. At the opening stage the documents were arranged by time order before they were placed under themes that matched the research objectives. These themes covered diplomatic strategies regional cooperation implementation challenges. Thematic analysis helped the study identify repeated patterns relationships trends across the period under study (Bryman 2016). Content analysis was applied to policy statements humanitarian reports diplomatic communications so the study could draw clear points on the strategies used as well as the results achieved. Comparative reading of several sources supported triangulation and cross-verification of findings. The interpretation focused on how Responsibility to Protect and Liberal Institutionalism explain the diplomatic choices of Nigeria as well as institutional partnerships. It also considered how both theories explain regional engagements within the study. The analysis examined the divide between formal commitments and real implementation. It assessed how far

the diplomatic efforts of Nigeria mobilised international support as well as improved regional coordination. The study gave attention to structural challenges such as coordination gaps limited funding institutional weaknesses that continue to affect policy effectiveness. This analytical approach supports a stable reading of the evidence and gives a clear logical base for the conclusions of the study.

3.6 LOGICAL DATA FRAMEWORK

Research Question	Hypothesis	Major Variables of the Hypothesis Independent (X) Dependent (Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables	Method of Data Collection	Source of Data	Method of Data Analysis
RQ1: How has Nigeria employed diplomatic strategies in responding to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025?	H ₁ : Nigeria has effectively employed diplomatic strategies in responding to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025.	X = Nigeria's diplomatic strategies (bilateral engagement, multilateral participation, humanitarian diplomacy, policy frameworks) Y = IDP crisis response outcomes (humanitarian assistance secured, international support mobilised, protection frameworks established)	Bilateral donor engagement; multilateral participation; humanitarian diplomacy; policy development; amount of humanitarian assistance secured; extent of international support mobilised; protection frameworks established	Documentary method	Foreign policy statements, ministerial speeches, government reports, United Nations agency documents, donor strategy papers, diplomatic communications, policy documents, humanitarian response plans	Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis
RQ2: How has	H ₂ : Nigeria's	X = Regional cooperation	Multinational Joint	Documentary method	ECOWAS documents,	Qualitative content

Research Question	Hypothesis	Major Variables of the Hypothesis Independent (X) Dependent (Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables	Method of Data Collection	Source of Data	Method of Data Analysis
Nigeria's regional cooperation with neighbouring countries and international organisations addressed internal displacement?	regional cooperation with neighbouring countries and international organisations has adequately addressed internal displacement.	mechanisms (MNJTF, ECOWAS frameworks, AU strategies, Lake Chad Basin initiatives, humanitarian coordination) Y = Displacement response effectiveness (security outcomes, humanitarian coordination, burden-sharing, durable solutions)	Task Force operations; ECOWAS and AU initiatives; Lake Chad Basin coordination; humanitarian coordination; security outcomes; burden-sharing; return, reintegration, and durable solutions		African Union reports, MNJTF operational reports, Lake Chad Basin Commission strategies, United Nations Security Council briefings, regional summit communiqués, humanitarian coordination documents	analysis and thematic analysis
RQ3: How have	H ₃ : Political,	X = Political, institutional, and	Political tensions;	Documentary method	Government reports,	Qualitative content

Research Question	Hypothesis	Major Variables of the Hypothesis Independent (X) Dependent (Y)	Empirical Indicators of Variables	Method of Data Collection	Source of Data	Method of Data Analysis
political, institutional, and funding constraints affected Nigeria's diplomatic response to the internally displaced persons crisis?	institutional, and funding constraints have affected Nigeria's diplomatic response to the internally displaced persons crisis.	funding constraints (political tensions, institutional fragmentation, donor fatigue, coordination gaps, funding shortfalls and policy implementation gaps) Y = Nigeria's diplomatic response to the IDP crisis	funding shortfalls; donor fatigue; institutional weaknesses; policy-implementation gaps; humanitarian access restrictions; coordination problems	using secondary data	humanitarian needs assessment, funding appeal documents, coordination meeting reports, academic studies, civil society reports, international organisation evaluations	analysis and thematic analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 The Diplomatic Strategies of Nigeria in Answering to the Internally Displaced Persons Crisis (2015-2025)

The years from 2015 to 2025 make up a decade of focused yet in structural terms uneven diplomatic effort by Nigeria to tackle one of the most long-lasting internally displaced persons (IDPs) crises on the African continent. This section sets out data on the scale, and course of displacement, the nature of the bilateral of Nigeria, as well as multilateral diplomatic engagements alongside the policy, as well as institutional tools developed within that period. The data come from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Humanitarian Response Plans (2019-2025), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Annual Results Reports alongside relevant policy tools including the National IDP Policy of Nigeria (2021). The tables in sub-sections 4.1.1, and 4.1.2 give the factual base on which the analysis that follows is built.

4.1.1 Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomatic Engagements

The table below maps the course of displacement in north-east Nigeria from 2015 to 2025 by placing estimated IDP populations alongside matching Humanitarian Response Plan requirements, funding coverage rates. This set of longitudinal data is necessary to any judgement of whether the decade of Nigeria of diplomatic work for humanitarian financing has produced returns of a matching size. It draws on OCHA Humanitarian Response Plans, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 47 (June 2024), UNHCR Annual Results data to give a full picture of the crisis scale against which diplomatic outcomes must be measured. The funding coverage column in particular

is the key analytical variable because it turns diplomatic activity into its direct humanitarian consequence.

Table 1: IDP Displacement Trends in North-East Nigeria and Humanitarian Response Plan Funding Coverage (2015-2025)

Year	Est. IDP Population (NE Nigeria)	People in Need (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States)	HRP Requirement (USD)	HRP Coverage Rate
2015	2.4 million	~8.5 million	N/A	N/A
2017	1.8 million	~8.5 million	\$1.05 billion	~55%
2019	2.0 million	7.7 million	\$848 million	~52%
2021	2.2 million	8.7 million	\$1.0 billion	~56%
2022	3.0 million	8.4 million	\$1.1 billion	~62%
2023	2.5 million	7.9 million	\$926.5 million	~56%
2024	2.3 million	7.8 million	\$926.5 million	21% (June 2024)
2025,	~2.3 million	7.8 million	\$900 million	Ongoing
Sources: OCHA (2024); OCHA (2025); UNHCR Annual Results Report Nigeria (2024); IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 47 (2024).	Sources: OCHA (2024); OCHA (2025); UNHCR Annual Results Report Nigeria (2024); IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round	Sources: OCHA (2024); OCHA (2025); UNHCR Annual Results Report Nigeria (2024); IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 47 (2024).	Sources: OCHA (2024); OCHA (2025); UNHCR Annual Results Report Nigeria (2024); IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 47 (2024). ,2025	Sources: OCHA (2024); OCHA (2025); UNHCR Annual Results Report Nigeria (2024); IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 47 (2024).

Year	Est. IDP Population (NE Nigeria)	People in Need (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States)	HRP Requirement (USD)	HRP Coverage Rate
,2025 figures as of January 2025.	47 (2024). ,2025 figures as of January 2025.	,2025 figures as of January 2025.	figures as of January 2025.	,2025 figures as of January 2025.

The data in Table 1 show a troubling structural pattern. The IDP population of Nigeria has stayed above 2 million throughout the study period with only small absolute reductions in spite of over a decade of diplomatic engagement, and humanitarian response. The funding coverage column is the most important point because it exposes a worsening trend that stands as a direct indictment of the diplomatic public support structure of Nigeria. The OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024) recorded that by mid-June 2024 only 21% of the \$926.5 million HRP requirement had been received, which was a collapse from 56% in 2023. This outcome was not accidental because it reflects a combined failure of sustained donor relationship management, the structural absence of displacement as a formal pillar within the foreign policy theory of Nigeria alongside an emerging pattern of global donor fatigue that Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) (2025) identifies as systemic. The evidence as a result makes a clear distinction between Nigeria engaging through diplomacy, which it in a clear manner has done, and Nigeria engaging at the level of effectiveness the crisis requires, which the data show it has not done.

A close examination of the evidence further shows that the bilateral diplomatic engagement of Nigeria with key donor states, which are in the main the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the European Union has produced meaningful yet in structural terms weak humanitarian returns. UNICEF (2024) records a significant growth in partner networks in 2024 with international non-governmental organisation (NGO) partnerships rising from 17 to 50, national NGO partnerships rising from 26 to 52, which points to growing bilateral facilitation through diplomatic channels. UNHCR (2024) also records that joint European Union-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (EU-UNHCR) funding for the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund was obtained for 2024, and 2025 with pilot local integration projects in Adamawa, as well as Yobe states. Yet these real achievements do not change the core finding in Table 1, which is that the total outcome of a decade of diplomatic engagement is 7.8 million displaced persons, and affected community members still in need of humanitarian assistance funded at only 21% of documented need, which makes the argument that the diplomatic strategies of Nigeria have been effective in absolute terms impossible to defend on this evidence.

4.1.2 Policy and Institutional Frameworks for Humanitarian Response

The diplomatic standing of Nigeria in international forums depends in part on the strength of its domestic policy structure for protecting internally displaced persons. The table below maps the key milestones in the IDP policy development of Nigeria, Kampala Convention implementation from 2009 to 2025. This chronological data tool is designed to make visible a gap that sits at the centre of this the argument of section, which is the distance between formal international commitments, and their domestic operationalisation. Each milestone in the table is assessed against its implementation status, which shows a consistent pattern of ratification without domestication that has in a material way reduced the diplomatic position of Nigeria with international partners

over the study period. The data come from UNHCR, Tribune Online (2025), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog (2022) alongside the Daily Trust.

Table 2: Nigeria IDP Policy and Kampala Convention Implementation -- Key Milestones (2009-2025)

Year	Milestone / Instrument	Significance	Implementation Status
2009	AU Kampala Convention Adopted	First legally binding continental treaty on IDP protection	Adopted -- not yet ratified by Nigeria
2012	Nigeria Ratifies Kampala Convention (17 April 2012)	Formal acceptance of IDP protection obligations under international law	Ratified -- domestication pending
2012	Draft National IDP Policy Revised to Align with Kampala Convention	Policy alignment with international norms; framework for coordination	Draft -- not formally enacted
2021	Revised National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons	Updated policy incorporating humanitarian principles; improved coordination mandate	Policy adopted -- no legislative backing
2024-25	Kampala Convention Domestication and Enforcement Bill	Provides enforceable domestic legal framework for	Passed House of Representatives; before Senate (May 2025)

Year	Milestone / Instrument	Significance	Implementation Status
		Kampala Convention obligations	
2025	UNHCR-Nigeria House of Representatives Collaboration Framework	Five-pronged cooperation covering joint response, capacity building, climate-displacement mapping	Engagement ongoing; no formal agreement concluded
Sources: UNHCR (2022); Tribune Online (2025); ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog (2022); Daily Trust (2015); Nigeria Federal Government (2021).	Sources: UNHCR (2022); Tribune Online (2025); ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog (2022); Daily Trust (2015); Nigeria Federal Government (2021).	Sources: UNHCR (2022); Tribune Online (2025); ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog (2022); Daily Trust (2015); Nigeria Federal Government (2021).	Sources: UNHCR (2022); Tribune Online (2025); ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog (2022); Daily Trust (2015); Nigeria Federal Government (2021).

Table 2 exposes a structural implementation deficit that runs across the full study period. Nigeria ratified the Kampala Convention, which is the first, and only legally binding continental treaty on IDP protection, in April 2012. As UNHCR (2022) confirms, the Convention sets out the obligations of state, and non-state actors, guides national-international coordination for IDP protection. Yet Table 2 shows that by May 2025 thirteen years after ratification the domestication bill had only passed the House of Representatives, and was still waiting for Senate concurrence. This is not a minor administrative delay because the ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog

(2022) is clear that states which ratify, but do not domesticate international displacement instruments produce a credibility gap that weakens their advocacy in international forums since partner organisations, and bilateral donors treat domestic legal frameworks as a precondition for programming investment, which in the context of this study means Nigeria's thirteen-year domestication gap has in a direct way limited the institutional depth available to support its diplomatic claims.

This position is complicated by the acknowledgement that the revised National IDP Policy of 2021, the active domestication bill of 2024-2025 represent genuine institutional progress. Tribune Online (2025) reports the Nigerian Deputy Speaker framing domestication as a moral obligation by stating that a law that lives only on paper whilst lives remain in danger is a failure of both governance, and grace. This statement signals political will at the legislative level. Yet the important question is whether political will at the legislative level can make up for over a decade of structural enforcement absence, whether international partners who have stated the implementation gap in Table 2 will treat the domestication bill as a genuine shift in the institutional capacity of Nigeria, or as a late normalisation of a commitment that was long overdue. The evidence points to the latter interpretation as the more defensible position, and shows that the diplomatic value of the domestication process will only be in full realised when the legislation is enacted, as well as put into practical effect.

4.1.3 Test of Hypothesis One (H1)

Hypothesis One (H1). Nigeria has with effectiveness employed diplomatic strategies in answering to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025.

On the basis of the evidence in sections 4.1.1, and 4.1.2 this study finds that H1 must be in a clear manner accepted. Nigeria has in a clear way employed diplomatic strategies through bilateral partnerships with donor states, active multilateral engagement with UNHCR alongside OCHA, and IOM, high-level participation in UN Security Council briefings, as well as formal participation in regional IDP structures alongside development of a National IDP Policy. These strategies have produced documented humanitarian outputs including expanded partner networks, joint funding tools alongside IDP registration programmes. Yet the evidence in Tables 1, and 2 together shows that these strategies have not been effective at the scale the crisis requires. The persistent collapse in HRP funding coverage, the thirteen-year domestication gap for the Kampala Convention alongside the structural absence of displacement as a formal foreign policy priority each show that the diplomatic engagement of Nigeria has been reactive, irregular, in institutional terms under-resourced,. This point the null hypothesis that Nigeria has not employed diplomatic strategies is too strong, and the finding is one of partial in structural terms weak effectiveness that forms this the first substantive contribution of study.

4.2 Regional Cooperation in Addressing Internal Displacement

The response of Nigeria to the IDP crisis has never been a task for the national level alone. The cross-border nature of the north-east insurgency, which is rooted in the activities of Boko Haram, and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) across the Lake Chad Basin has in a necessary way drawn Nigeria into regional institutional structures. This section presents, and analyses data on two principal systems, which are the Multinational Joint Task Force, as well as the wider regional structures of ECOWAS, as well as the African Union. The data draw from the African Union (AU) Peace, and Security Council Chairperson Report (2025), the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) MNJTF Evaluation (2023), Amani Africa

(2025) alongside the International Crisis Group (2024). The analysis studies whether these cooperative systems have in an adequate way addressed the conditions for displaced the return of persons, or whether structural limitations have held outcomes to a level that falls short of adequacy.

4.2.1 The Multinational Joint Task Force and Lake Chad Basin Structures

Table 3 presents the operational milestones of the MNJTF between 2015, and 2024 by placing major operations alongside their documented IDP, and returnee impacts. This data instrument is built to allow an assessment of whether military regional cooperation has created the conditions needed for displaced persons to return in a durable way, or whether security gains have been outpaced in a consistent way by the humanitarian, and development investments needed to sustain them. The data draw from the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) Chairperson Report (January 2025), the ACCORD MNJTF Effectiveness Assessment (2023), the Africa Defense Forum (2024) alongside Amani Africa (2025). Readers should note that the IDP returnee figures represent movements that were facilitated under security conditions created by the MNJTF, and are not settled durable returns with access to livelihoods, and services.

Table 3: MNJTF Operational Milestones and IDP/Returnee Impact (2015-2024)

Year	Operation	Key Outcomes	IDP / Returnee Impact
2015	Initial Re-Activation	AU PSC mandate authorised; four-sector structure established across Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria	Insurgent territorial reduction; conditions for first-phase returns
2021	Operation Sharan Fage	22 BH/ISWAP fighters neutralised; 20+ towns and villages cleared	Partial humanitarian access restored; local IDP return facilitated
2022	Operation Lake Sanity	BH strongholds cleared; Abubakar Dan Buduma eliminated; 4,000 civilians freed; 2,225 fighters surrendered	200,000 IDPs and refugees returned (September 2021 to April 2022)
2024	Operation Lake Sanity II (April to July)	340 BH associates arrested; 884 fighters surrendered Jan to Nov 2024; IEDs neutralised; anti-aircraft equipment recovered	3,800 IDPs returned to Kukawa and communities; 2,306 refugees returned to Banki town, Nigeria
Sources: AU PSC Chairperson Report	Sources: AU PSC Chairperson Report	Sources: AU PSC Chairperson Report	Sources: AU PSC Chairperson Report

Year	Operation	Key Outcomes	IDP / Returnee Impact
(January 2025); ACCORD (2023); Africa Defense Forum (2024); Amani Africa (2025); ACCORD (2023).	(January 2025); ACCORD (2023); Africa Defense Forum (2024); Amani Africa (2025); ACCORD (2023).	(January 2025); ACCORD (2023); Africa Defense Forum (2024); Amani Africa (2025); ACCORD (2023).	(January 2025); ACCORD (2023); Africa Defense Forum (2024); Amani Africa (2025); ACCORD (2023).

The data in Table 3 show that the MNJTF has produced in a clear manner significant yet in structural terms incomplete operational results over the study period. The AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025) confirms that Operation Lake Sanity II, which ran from April to July 2024, led to the arrest of 340 persons connected to Boko Haram, the surrender of 884 fighters between January, and November 2024 alongside the facilitated return of over 3, 800 IDPs to communities within the MNJTF Area of Operation. The ACCORD evaluation (2023) also records the longer-term trend from a peak of 8, 119 terrorist attacks, and fatalities in 2015 to a decline contributed to by combined MNJTF operations that brought incidents down to 1, 894 by 2021. These are contributions of real importance to the conditions for displaced the potential return of persons.

Yet the evidence is not conclusive because these military gains have not been turned in a systematic way into durable solutions for displaced persons. The AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025) is clear that whilst communities have been cleared of insurgent presence, and displaced persons have returned, most of these communities received little, or no form of humanitarian assistance, as well as urgent action to improve returnee livelihoods remains outstanding. This exposes a fundamental structural strain because the MNJTF is set up to create security conditions yet the humanitarian,

and development investments needed to make those conditions durable have not followed. In addition to this, Amani Africa (2025) records that IEDs accounted for about 60% of MNJTF casualties in 2024, the absence of anti-drone technology leaves the Force in a position of operational weakness against the changing surveillance tactics of Boko Haram,. This point that even where diplomatic will for sustained regional engagement exists, capability constraints make the security conditions produced weak rather than permanent.

4.2.2 ECOWAS and African Union Cooperation Mechanisms

In addition to the MNJTF, Nigeria has engaged the broader regional institutional structure of ECOWAS, and the African Union as cooperative systems for addressing displacement. Table 4 gives a comparative evaluation of the five principal regional tools in operation during the study period, which are the MNJTF alongside the Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery, and Resilience, the ECOWAS Cooperative Structure alongside the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum, the Kampala Convention. Each tool is assessed across its mandate scope, displacement outcomes alongside current operational status. This comparative data tool is designed to make visible the gap between the ambition of the regional institutional structure, and its on-the-ground delivery with particular attention to the ECOWAS rupture of January 2025 as a structural disruption with direct consequences for displacement governance. Data come from Amani Africa (2025), the International Crisis Group (2024), VOA News (2025) alongside UNHCR (2022), and AU PSC records.

Table 4: Regional Cooperation Instruments -- Comparative Assessment of Mandate, Outcomes, and Status (2015-2025)

Instrument	Establishing Body	Mandate Scope	Outcomes on Displacement (2015-2025)	Current Status / Limitations
Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)	Lake Chad Basin Commission / AU PSC	Counter-insurgency; security; facilitate humanitarian access	200,000+ returns (2021-22); 3,800 IDPs facilitated (2024); insurgent territorial reduction	Active -- constrained by IED threat, funding gaps, Niger withdrawal
Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience (RS-SRR)	AU / Lake Chad Basin Commission	Security-humanitarian-development nexus; governance; reconstruction	Phase II entered 2024; structural framework established; limited field translation	Ongoing -- implementation underfunded and coordination gaps persist
ECOWAS Cooperative Framework	ECOWAS	Regional integration; free movement; democratic governance; security cooperation	Historical coordination on border management and intelligence sharing; IDP movement facilitation	Weakened in a severe way -- Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso withdrew 29 January 2025
Lake Chad Basin Governors	Sub-regional (Nigeria, Chad, Niger,	Cross-border security; IDP return; livelihoods;	Borno Declaration produced targeted commitments; 5th Forum (Jan 2025)	Active -- constrained by political pressures from

Instrument	Establishing Body	Mandate Scope	Outcomes on Displacement (2015-2025)	Current Status / Limitations
Forum / Borno Declaration	Cameroon Governors)	rapid sub-regional commitments	called for Lake Chad island security	AES withdrawal from ECOWAS
Kampala Convention (AU Framework)	African Union	Legal standards for IDP protection; state obligations; non-state actor responsibilities	34 national IDP instruments developed in Africa; Nigeria policy framework influence	Nigeria ratified 2012 -- domestication bill pending Senate (2025)
Sources: Amani Africa (2025); International Crisis Group (2024); AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025); UNHCR (2022); VOA News (2025); The Conversation (2024).	Sources: Amani Africa (2025); International Crisis Group (2024); AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025); UNHCR (2022); VOA News (2025); The Conversation (2024).	Sources: Amani Africa (2025); International Crisis Group (2024); AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025); UNHCR (2022); VOA News (2025); The Conversation (2024).	Sources: Amani Africa (2025); International Crisis Group (2024); AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025); UNHCR (2022); VOA News (2025); The Conversation (2024).	Sources: Amani Africa (2025); International Crisis Group (2024); AU PSC Chairperson Report (2025); UNHCR (2022); VOA News (2025); The Conversation (2024).

Table 4 makes visible in a structural way what the narrative analysis alone cannot show in full: the regional institutional landscape available to Nigeria for managing displacement has narrowed in a considerable way over the study period rather than expanded. The five instruments mapped represent different levels of mandate ambition from the MNJTF's operational counter-insurgency focus to the normative legal framework of the Kampala Convention. The critical observation is that three of the five instruments now carry significant status qualifications because the ECOWAS framework is in a severe state of weakness, the RS-SRR is underfunded in its implementation phase alongside the Kampala Convention remaining without domestic enforcement in Nigeria. Only the MNJTF, and the Governors Forum remain in operational activity without critical structural constraints.

The most significant entry in Table 4 from an analytical standpoint is the present status of the ECOWAS Cooperative Structure. On 29 January 2025 Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso made a formal withdrawal from ECOWAS as documented by VOA News (2025) alongside the International Crisis Group (2024). The UN Office for West Africa, and the Sahel (UN News, 2024) warned that this withdrawal would be damaging to regional relations all round with the UN Special Representative stating that the three states would be giving up key benefits including regional integration, freedom of movement alongside security cooperation, as well as an integrated regional economy. The consequence for the displacement diplomacy of Nigeria is direct because Niger shares a border of over 1, 600 kilometres with seven Nigerian states whilst about 80% of its trade is conducted with Nigeria (The Conversation, 2024), which means the withdrawal disrupts intelligence-sharing, border coordination, humanitarian access infrastructure that have in past years intersected with displacement dynamics in ways that no bilateral arrangement can in a full way replace, and in the context of this study the ECOWAS rupture stands as the most serious

external structural constraint on the regional cooperative capacity of Nigeria for displacement management.

4.2.3 Test of Hypothesis Two (H2)

Hypothesis Two (H2). The regional cooperation of Nigeria with neighbouring countries, and international organisations has addressed internal displacement in an adequate way.

On the basis of the evidence in Tables 3, and 4 the null hypothesis cannot be rejected in full, as well as H2 is in a clear manner rejected. Regional cooperation through the MNJTF has in a clear way contributed to conditions for displaced the return of persons with 200, 000 returns documented in 2021-2022, 3, 800 IDPs facilitated in 2024 alone alongside the RS-SRR, and Kampala Convention representing structures that are sound in their architecture. Yet the evidence does not support the conclusion that these systems have in an adequate way addressed internal displacement in terms of producing durable solutions for the 2.3 million displaced persons recorded at end-2024. Military gains have not been turned in a systematic way into humanitarian results. The ECOWAS political rupture has in a structural way reduced the most significant cooperative tool for border security, and intelligence coordination. Regional burden-sharing remains in a state of deep imbalance, which means the standard of adequacy established by H2 has not been met.

4.3 Political, Institutional, and the Diplomatic Response of Funding Constraints Affecting Nigeria

Sections 4.1, and 4.2 together have shown that the diplomatic engagement of Nigeria is real yet in structural terms weak, as well as that regional cooperation has produced genuine, but incomplete returns. This section studies how political, institutional, and funding constraints have affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the IDP crisis by tracing the internal governance constraints alongside the external political, as well as economic pressures that together weaken the diplomatic

approach of Nigeria. Tables 5, and 6 give the quantitative base for this section by covering the humanitarian funding gap, as well as the donor contribution declines in that order. Together they turn what might otherwise appear as a general governance critique into a measurable argument that is grounded in evidence.

4.3.1 Institutional, Funding, and Coordination Challenges

Table 5 sets out the annual humanitarian funding gap for Nigeria’s BAY states response from 2021 to 2025 by placing HRP requirements alongside funding received, estimated gaps, and coverage rates. This data instrument is designed to put a number on the operational consequence of institutional fragmentation alongside the domestication gap identified in sections 4.1.1, and 4.1.2. The funding gap is not simply a financial measure because it is a direct indicator of the distance between documented displacement needs, and the humanitarian system’s capacity to respond, which makes it a proxy for the cumulative effectiveness of Nigeria’s diplomatic resource mobilisation. Data come from the OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024), the OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan (2025), the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024) alongside the Global Humanitarian Overview (2025).

Table 5: Nigeria Humanitarian Response Plan -- Annual Funding Gap Analysis (2021-2025)

Year	HRP Requirement	Funding Received	Funding Gap (Est.)	Coverage Rate
2021	\$1.00 billion	~\$560 million	~\$440 million	~56%
2022	\$1.10 billion	~\$682 million	~\$418 million	~62% (highest in period)
2023	\$926.5 million	~\$519 million	~\$408 million	~56%
2024 (to June)	\$926.5 million	\$194.4 million	~\$732 million	21% (sharp decline)
2025	\$900 million	Ongoing (NHF: \$15.9m as of Aug 2025)	Est. >\$700 million	Targeting 2.8 million persons
Sources: OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024); OCHA HRP (2025); Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); Global Humanitarian Overview (2025).	Sources: OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024); OCHA HRP (2025); Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); Global Humanitarian Overview (2025).	Sources: OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024); OCHA HRP (2025); Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); Global Humanitarian Overview (2025).	Sources: OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024); OCHA HRP (2025); Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); Global Humanitarian Overview (2025).	Sources: OCHA Humanitarian Funding Overview (2024); OCHA HRP (2025); Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); Global Humanitarian Overview (2025).

The data in Table 5 reveal a worsening structural trend of considerable analytical concern. Whilst the 2022 coverage rate reached a relative high of about 62%, by mid-2024 this had collapsed to 21%, which means less than one quarter of documented needs were funded. The Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024) gives detailed institutional context for this collapse. This point total NHF contributions of \$19.3 million in 2024 represent only 3.5% of total HRP funding against a Grand Bargain target of 15%, which is a shortfall that has forced a limiting of the number of partners per allocation, a reduction in the number of projects implemented, and has in a direct way cut the geographic reach of the humanitarian response. This evidence challenges in a fundamental way any reading of the diplomatic strategies of Nigeria as effective because effectiveness must in the end be measured not in the sophistication of engagement, but in the humanitarian coverage delivered to displaced persons in need.

Within the country this funding collapse is made worse by institutional division. UNHCR (2024) notes that it worked alongside the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons to register 27, 000 displaced persons, secure land documents for 500 families, which implies that even basic registration requires UN agency involvement because national institutional capacity is not in structural terms enough. Overlapping mandates between NCFRMI, and NEMA, state emergency management agencies produce wasted resources alongside inconsistent protection outcomes that reduce donor trust whilst only 10% of humanitarian funds flow to national, as well as local organisations (OCHA, 2024), which confirms that the localisation agenda that would build lasting national capacity, as well as reduce dependence on expensive international intermediaries remains in a state of important underdevelopment as a direct consequence of institutional coordination failure.

4.3.2 Political Tensions and Donor Fatigue

Table 6 sets out individual donor contributions to the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund from 2021 to 2024 by recording both the monetary values, and the percentage change between the funding peak of 2022, and the most recent reported year of 2024. This donor-level breakdown is essential to the analysis because it shows that donor fatigue in Nigeria’s humanitarian context is not spread in a uniform way, nor is it in its entirety the result of global competition for resources since it is shaped by a combination of domestic governance concerns, bilateral relationship dynamics alongside sovereign budget decisions that Nigeria’s diplomatic approach has only in part engaged. Data come from the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024) alongside the ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).

Table 6: Key Donor Contributions to the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (2021-2024) -- Annual Values and Trend

Donor	2021 (USD)	2022 (USD)	2023 (USD)	2024 (USD)	% Change 2022-2024
Germany	~\$8.5m	\$12.4m	\$3.26m	\$5.63m	-55%
United Kingdom	~\$3.0m	~\$3.1m	\$3.09m	\$3.22m	+4%
Sweden	~\$2.5m	~\$2.8m	\$2.39m	\$1.45m	-48%
Norway	~\$3.0m	~\$3.5m	\$3.19m	\$1.69m	-52%
Switzerland	~\$1.0m	~\$1.2m	\$1.1m	\$2.28m	+90%
Luxembourg	~\$0.5m	\$0.91m	\$0.11m	\$0.27m	-70%
NHF Total Contributions	~\$22m	~\$29m	\$18.2m	\$19.3m	-34%
Sources: Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report	Sources: Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report	Sources: Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report	Sources: Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report	Sources: Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report	Sources: Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report (2024); OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Fund Annual Report

Donor	2021 (USD)	2022 (USD)	2023 (USD)	2024 (USD)	% Change 2022-2024
(2024); ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).	(2024); ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).	(2024); ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).	(2024); ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).	(2024); ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).	(2024); ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025).

Table 6 puts numbers on the donor fatigue that the aggregate HRP figures in Table 5 point to, but do not explain. Germany, which has been in the past the leading Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF) contributor, dropped from \$12.4 million in 2022 to \$5.63 million in 2024, which is a 55% reduction in two years, whilst Norway reduced its contribution by 52% over the same period, Sweden by 48% alongside Luxembourg by 70%. The NHF Annual Report (2024) places Germany's 2024 figure at still less than half its 2022 level in spite of a partial recovery from its 2023 collapse to \$3.26 million. The ALNAP Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2025) places this within a systemic global trend because nine of the top twenty humanitarian donors had announced ODA budget reductions for 2025, Nigeria received more than 75% of its 2024 humanitarian funding from donors that have since announced cuts, which represents a structural diplomatic vulnerability that Nigeria's approach has not in an adequate way addressed.

A important limitation here is that the donor fatigue argument must not be allowed to cover up the own contribution of Nigeria to the problem. The ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog (2022) identifies sovereign control instincts as a persistent constraint on humanitarian access. This point states handling internal displacement in many cases treat the crisis as a domestic security matter

rather than a protection issue requiring open access, which produces trust deficits with international partners that in a direct way weaken public support for increased donor commitment, and this has in periodic episodes characterised the management of Nigeria of humanitarian access in Borno State. In addition to this, the NHF Annual Report (2024) acknowledges that reduced NHF funding has diminished the flexibility of the Fund, which has cut rapid response capacity in the areas of largest need, and this consequence is at least in part traceable to accountability, as well as governance concerns that no amount of diplomatic engagement can substitute for internal reform. The evidence as a result supports the argument that the challenges facing the diplomatic approach form of Nigeria a cycle of reinforcement. This point governance failures reduce donor trust whilst reduced confidence shrinks resources, diminished resources limit capacity alongside weak capacity producing governance failures, which means breaking this cycle is the fundamental prerequisite for effective displacement diplomacy.

4.3.3 Test of Hypothesis Three (H3)

Hypothesis Three (H3). Political, institutional, and funding constraints have affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis.

The null hypothesis for H3, which states that political, institutional, and funding constraints have not affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the internally displaced persons crisis, is rejected in a clear way. The evidence across Tables 5, and 6, the analysis in sections 4.3.1, as well as 4.3.2 is wide, as well as covers multiple dimensions. HRP funding coverage collapsed from 56% in 2023 to 21% by mid-2024 whilst NHF contributions represent only 3.5% of total HRP funding against a 15% target. Germany, Norway, Sweden alongside Luxembourg each reduced contributions by between 48%, and 70% over the 2022-2024 period whilst institutional division between NCFRMI, NEMA, state agencies produces inconsistent protection outcomes that reduce donor trust alongside

the Kampala Convention remaining without domestic enforcement for thirteen years after ratification. The ECOWAS political rupture of January 2025 has in a structural way reduced key regional coordination tools, displacement remains in a structural way absent from the core foreign policy doctrine of Nigeria, which together confirm H3, and demonstrate the effect of these constraints through the persistent gap between 7.8 million displaced persons, as well as affected community members in need alongside a humanitarian system funded at less than one quarter of documented requirement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study looked at three principal questions concerning the diplomatic engagement of Nigeria with the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025. The findings are set out below in correspondence with each research question.

1. Nigeria has employed diplomatic strategies in answering to the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025 through bilateral partnerships with key donor states, active multilateral engagement with UNHCR alongside OCHA, and IOM, formal participation in UN Security Council briefings alongside ratification of the African Union Kampala Convention, as well as development of a National IDP Policy. These strategies have produced documented humanitarian returns including expanded partner networks, joint EU-UNHCR funding tools alongside IDP registration, and resettlement programmes. Yet the effectiveness of these strategies has been limited in a structural way by the absence of displacement as a formal pillar within the foreign policy doctrine of Nigeria, the failure to domesticate the Kampala Convention into enforceable domestic law for over thirteen years alongside a pattern of reactive rather than strategic engagement. HRP funding coverage collapsed from 56% in 2023 to 21% by mid-2024, which confirms that diplomatic public support has been insufficient to sustain donor commitment at the scale required by the crisis.
2. The regional cooperation of Nigeria with neighbouring countries, and international organisations has produced genuine yet incomplete outcomes in addressing internal displacement. The operational record shows of The MNJTF that regional military cooperation has created conditions needed for displaced the return including 200 of persons, 000 returns

facilitated during 2021-2022, 3, 800 IDPs returned in 2024 through Operation Lake Sanity II alongside the AU Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery, and Resilience providing a sound multilateral structure. Yet the conversion of military gains into durable humanitarian solutions has been with consistency incomplete while the formal withdrawal of Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso from ECOWAS on 29 January 2025 has in a structural way reduced key cooperative tools. Regional burden-sharing remains in a state of deep imbalance with Nigeria bearing a disproportionate share of displacement costs relative to the cooperative support available.

3. Political, institutional, and funding constraints have affected the diplomatic response of Nigeria to the IDP crisis in reinforcing ways. These constraints include structural institutional division between NCFRMI, NEMA, state-level agencies that produce inconsistent protection outcomes alongside NHF contributions accounting for only 3.5% of the HRP requirement against a 15% Grand Bargain target. Germany, Norway, Sweden alongside Luxembourg each reduced NHF contributions by 48% to 70% between 2022, and 2024 whilst sovereignty-access tensions have in periodic episodes restricted humanitarian partner operations in Borno State, the thirteen-year Kampala Convention domestication gap alongside the exclusion of displacement from the core foreign policy of Nigeria structure have all contributed to a structural cycle of reinforcement. This cycle operates so that governance failures reduce donor trust whilst reduced confidence shrinks resources, diminished resources limit institutional capacity alongside weak capacity reproducing governance failures, which constrains the diplomatic response regardless of specific improvements at the tactical level.

5.2 Conclusion

This study shows that the diplomatic engagement of Nigeria with the internally displaced persons crisis from 2015 to 2025 reflects both the commitment, and the structural limitations of contemporary displacement diplomacy in Africa. Seen through the lens of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, Nigeria carries a clear primary obligation to its displaced citizens, which is an obligation it has acknowledged in a formal way yet has not discharged in a full way whilst through the structure of Liberal Institutionalism, regional institutions such as the MNJTF, and ECOWAS have provided important cooperative architecture yet their effectiveness has been reduced by political division, funding deficits, the prioritisation of military over protection-centred solutions. The diplomatic strategies of Nigeria occupy a weak middle ground in structural terms where formal engagement has not produced the institutional depth, sustained donor commitment, durable solutions that the scale of the crisis demands.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the three findings presented, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Nigeria should incorporate the management of internal displacement in a formal way as a strategic pillar within its foreign policy doctrine through the establishment of a dedicated diplomatic portfolio for displacement within its representations to the United Nations, and the African Union. This repositioning would turn the engagement of Nigeria from reactive crisis diplomacy into sustained public support, which would allow the country to keep donor commitment across humanitarian cycles. In a concurrent way, the domestication of the Kampala Convention through full Senate concurrence, and presidential assent should be given priority as an immediate diplomatic credibility measure that gives international partners enforceable legal guarantees for the protection of displaced persons.

2. Nigeria should work for a structural reform of the the mandate of MNJTF to link military operations with humanitarian programming in an explicit way so that territorial clearance is followed in a systematic way by funded development, and protection interventions through a dedicated humanitarian annex to MNJTF operational planning. At the same time, Nigeria should lead diplomatic efforts to establish a formal bilateral security, and humanitarian cooperation agreement with Niger outside the ECOWAS structure given the 1, 600-kilometre shared border, the important cross-border dimensions of the displacement crisis. The Alliance of Sahel States withdrawal has produced a cooperative governance gap that bilateral diplomacy must in part fill.
3. Nigeria should set up the National Humanitarian Trust Fund that was signalled in the Renewed Hope agenda with transparent governance structures, independent auditing alongside ring-fenced contributions from federation account allocations, which would in a direct way reduce the structural vulnerability produced by the current dependence on a small number of international donors who have announced ODA cuts. At the same time, a rationalisation of overlapping institutional mandates between NCFRMI, NEMA, state emergency management agencies should be made mandatory with in a clear way defined primary responsibility for IDP registration alongside protection, and durable solutions vested in the NCFRMI. This would address the coordination failures that at the same time reduce practical effectiveness, and erode donor trust.

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