


Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Insurgency and Humanitarian Conditions in IDP Camps in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The world is currently faced with the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Africa and Middle East has the highest figure of IDPs. Nigeria tops the list of countries with largest population of IDPs in Africa. The Boko Haram insurgency has made Nigeria one of the flash points of high concentration of IDPs. Anchored on forced /involuntary migration theory, using primary and secondary data gathering techniques, the study examines insurgency and conditions of IDPs camps in Nigeria, focusing on NYSC camp in Girei Local Government, Adamawa State. The study finds that the condition in NYSC IDP camp is deplorable as IDPs lack access to basic essentials of life. The study recommends among others the need for the government to be more committed to the welfare of IDPs and also curb corruption of government officials in the camp as this has worsen the already deplorable condition of IDPs.

KEYWORDS

Boko Haram, Humanitarian Condition, Insurgency, Internally Displaced Persons, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The issue of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is one of the global problems. According to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban KI-Moon (2014 cited in Eweka and Olusegun 2016), displacement is one of the major humanitarian crises the world is faced with. Moreover, Eweka and Olusegun (2016) aver that there are about 33.3 million IDPs in the world; 15 million of IDPs are in Africa, and 9 of the 24 countries with the highest rate of displacement are within Africa. The implication of this scenario is that, the continent of Africa has the largest number of IDPs in the world. It is chagrin to also discover through recent studies that Sub-Sahara African countries have the highest distribution of IDPs in Africa. In fact, between 2013 and 2014, there were 12.5 million IDPs in Sub-Sahara Africa, amounting to one-third of the world's total (as a result of civil strife and intractable conflicts within the continent (Joshua and Olanrewaju, 2017).

The Global Report on Internal Displacement (2017) reveals that as at 2016, new displacement caused by conflict and violence were 6.9 million, primarily in the Sub-Sahara Africa and Middle East. And, Out of this figure, it is noteworthy, that Nigeria accounted for about 3,300,000 IDPs as at March 2014, leading in the list of top countries with the largest population of IDPs in Africa, followed by Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan in that order.

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In Nigeria's case, quite a number of factors are responsible for the internal displacement. They include: natural disaster like flood, ethnic conflicts, religious conflict, attack by herdsmen, and insurgency by Boko Haram group. For instance, IDP Protection Strategy (2015) listed the following as causes of displacement in Nigeria; fierce clashes between Fulani pastoralists and Tiv and other farmers; and communal and religious violence.

While some of the notable areas of displacement flash spots in Nigeria are Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa and Zamfara, Boko Haram insurgency is the major cause of the forceful movement of people out of their homeland. Thus, it can be extrapolated from the report of Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (2014) that activities of insurgent group (Boko Haram) make Nigeria the largest displaced population in Africa, and the third largest in the world behind Syria and Columbia. Similarly, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) August 2016 shows that 89.74% of the displaced population was caused by insurgency. With the prevailing situation in Nigeria, has the country been able not only to set up IDP camps but provide a management system that did not compromise the minimum human welfares and dignity? The importance of these as a litmus test of a responsive and responsible government motivates this research with the main objective of appraising the conditions of IDPs in their camps with NYSC camp in Girei Local Government, Adamawa State, as focus of the study.

The next section after the introduction, is the review of literature while the theoretical framework for the study follows. The link between Boko Haram insurgency and IDP and the management of IDP camps in Nigeria were discussed. Immediately after the aforementioned, is the research method, data presentation and analysis and lastly conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Insurgency as a concept is difficult to define. The reason for this is predicated on the fact that it is often used interchangeably with terrorism. In this regard, Moriss (2005) contends that while insurgency and terrorism quite frequently appear as synonyms, the existing definitions do more to confuse rather than clarify the issues. Implicitly, neither the government nor academics agree on suitable definitions for both terms. Thus, it is difficult to distinguish between insurgency and terrorism because both employ almost the same method, more importantly, using force and threats to coerce their target audience. In fact, both groups could threaten, injure, kill civilians and employees of government deploying similar means.

Furthermore, the confusion surrounding the concept is exacerbated by the position of Schmid and Jongman (1988), and Hoffman (2006 cited in Assaf, 2015) that terrorism usually does not endeavor to hold or seize territory; and does not exercise governance or direct control over a population at the local or national level. However, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) often referred to as a terrorist group acquired territory in Iraq and Syria before they were dislodged; ditto Boko Haram which is tagged a terrorist group in Nigeria.

For instance, some of the territories held by Boko Haram in 2015 before they were liberated by the Nigerian military span across 13 Local Governments within three states. They are: 9 Local Government Areas in Borno State- Abadam, Bama, Dikwa, Gwoza, Kala-Balge, Mafa, Marte, Mobbar and Ngala; two Local Government Areas in Adamawa State- Michika and Madagali and another two Local Government Areas in Yobe State- Gumbi and Gulani.

Furthermore, the insurgents had also established a partial control in parts of Borno State, comprising Askira Uba, Chibok, Damboa, Gubio, Guzamala, Jere, Konduga, Kukawa, Magumeri and Mungono (Idris and Anwar, 2015). As such, the authors' dispute Schmid and Jongman (1988) and Hoffman views judging by the Syria and Nigeria's experiences making a contradiction of perspectives amongst scholars about the concept of terrorism an ongoing debate.

Be that as it may, it can be extrapolated from the works of Durairaj, (n.d), Schmid and Jongman (1988), Moriss (2005) and Assaf (2015) that terrorism and insurgency coexist, complement, substitute

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