

Juvenile and Humanitarian Response in Conflict Environment: Borno State Juveniles in Perspectives (2015-2021)

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Abstract

This paper titled “Juvenile and Humanitarian Response in Conflict Environment: Borno State Juveniles in Perspectives (2015-2021)” sets out to examine Humanitarian Response to juveniles in Borno State, Nigeria, from 2015 – 2021 as well as to identify the character and dynamics of vulnerability faced by juveniles in Borno State, Nigeria and to also examine the impact of conflict on juveniles in Borno within the study period. Other objectives are to identify the challenges militating against delivering Humanitarian Response to juveniles in Borno State within the study period and finally recommend strategies to improve humanitarian response to the juvenile in Borno State. This paper attempts to give an in-depth understanding of humanitarian response to juveniles in Borno state, Northeast Nigeria. From the analysis of this paper, it has been deduced that there have been humanitarian responses to Juveniles in Borno state but they are not adequate. The paper used the Human Needs theory as its theoretical underpinning. The methodology of research is qualitative and it involved data collection through secondary sources mostly desk base review like academic search engines, journals, books, official gazettes etc. The data show that humanitarian response/aid primarily provides shelter, food, medical care, and other necessities but does little on the mental health, emotional and psychological state of the juveniles. Nevertheless, the findings showed that humanitarian response is faced with some challenges of funding and increase in displacement as a result of conflicts leading to increase in juveniles in IDP camps and foster homes in Borno state. The paper finally recommended among other things that stakeholders and vulnerability mapping be carried out to know all the humanitarian actors operating and also ascertain the right needs of the juveniles in Borno State, Nigeria. Proper coordination mechanisms be put in place for all stakeholders to work with, this is with a view to knowing who is doing what, when, where, this is to avoid duplicity of efforts and misplacement of resources as well as provision of adequate security measures in place in all the IDP camps in Northeast with a view to providing ‘access’ to humanitarian workers providing aid to victims and Learning/Safe Spaces in all the IDP camps be provided with adequate education facilities and learning aids.

Keywords: Juvenile, Humanitarian, Humanitarian Response, Conflict, Children

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Although conflicts have existed for as long as recorded human history, the first and second world wars signalled a rise in conflicts on a worldwide scale. As a result, the State had exclusive use of force before and throughout the wars, a legal strategy for preserving territorial integrity (Leander, 2004; Civic & Miklaucic, 2011). Weitz (2007) demonstrated how the State's propensity for imperialism, power struggles, and intense nationalism sparked the weapons race's singularity. This war effort also required a strong military, which governments undoubtedly saw as a priority by allocating money only for the goal of building armies and preparing military reserves to face off against other countries (Weitz, 2007).

Since the end of the cold war from 1945–1990, the conflict has taken on a new dimension by becoming increasingly intrastate (Gleditsch, 1996). When he pointed out that there had been 164 armed confrontations between 1945 and 1995, 126 (or 77 per cent) of these were domestic, Holsti (1997) brought these dynamics into focus. He continued, even a sizable portion of the remaining 23% of wars was started as internal conflicts. Paramilitary forces, guerrilla organisations, ethnic militias, vigilante squads, and even criminal gangs frequently participate in these internal armed conflicts as much as regular uniformed soldiers do. These wars are no longer fuelled by imperialist goals but rather by social pressures and instability, such as unequal wealth distribution, job insecurity, rising unemployment, demographic change, and environmental degradation. These cause social unrest, polarise society, and fuel political conflict in certain nations while fuelling violent conflicts and conflict resolution in others (Renner, 1999)

The 19th century witnessed the world war I and after it ended, the League of Nations was created by the Treaty of Versailles which later became the United Nations. In 1945, the UN ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for the first time establishing an international precedent for international intervention during both civil and international conflict (Marks 2006) and at this period, multiple UN organisations like the World Health Organisations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were also created. Mackintosh (2000) stated that the period after the

World War II witnessed unprecedented growth of more than 200 non-governmental organisations within a period of time and with this, humanitarian aid became more technical and the focus shifted from Europe to third world countries. This character of post-cold war conflict against the background of increasing democratisation of the State and society has challenged the capacity of the State to protect its citizens and also increased the vulnerability of vulnerable groups. These vulnerable groups include but are not limited to children (Broadly defined), juveniles and women and these vulnerable group of persons need special protection from the State and Non-State Actors. These actors operating in the humanitarian field operating with the guidance of the Humanitarian Principles and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are supposed to provide protection or intervention for vulnerable persons. This birthed the humanitarian response to persons in conflict environment. Viljoen (2012) opined that the post-World War II era also gave rise to a new international order as governments were encouraged to protect their citizens in peace and war times as it is an obligation that is linked to international law.

In Nigeria, the spate of communal, ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts has adversely affected such vulnerable groups (Denis, 2020). Indeed, no conflict situation has demonstrated the heightened vulnerability of juveniles in Nigeria more than the terrorist/insurgency operations of Boko Haram in the contemporary history of Nigeria.

The people affected by conflict in Borno State, Nigeria have endured hardship and displacement over the years. The conflict has eroded living conditions, especially for children, who are experiencing protection issues when trying to secure their basic needs such as food, shelter, and access to healthcare. In some cases, some of them experience sexual and gender-based violence in a way that no child should. The impact of COVID-19 and climate change is further deepening the sufferings of the people affected by this conflict. They were successful, hardworking farmers, artisans and tradesmen, who were robbed of their livelihoods and their homes. In every conflict situation, especially one that has to do with ethnic and religious differences, there is often a considerable impact on those displaced and

affected. Therefore, in every conflict situation, a humanitarian response is essential for those affected from one place to another, seeking safety and protection. Displaced children often succumb to even further challenges while seeking a safe space. In 2017, USAID emphasised the need for juveniles to have a safe space due to Boko Haram's continuous abduction of the children who were used to execute suicide bombings (USAID, 2021). The widely publicised attacks by Boko Haram led to transitions of IDP camps in Borno State. The dire need for increased humanitarian assistance came in 2014 with the kidnapped Chibok girls by Boko Haram. This sparked the global #BringBackOurGirls movement across the world. It demonstrated the credible vulnerability of persons, especially juveniles, in conflict, displacement and the need to protect such vulnerable groups.

The fluctuating food prices have further destabilised the already alarming food security situation. As a result, thousands of children are at risk of becoming severely malnourished, especially during the lean season, which will have a detrimental effect on their future development (O'Connor et al., 2021). The UN Secretary-General for Humanitarian and Relief Coordinator, Mr Martin Griffiths, observed that about 70,000 people live in a camp built for 25,000 people and none of them knows the day when they will be able to go home, and this is more traumatising for children.

Children in this environment face many problems ranging from gender base violence, child labour, child abuse, sex, educational displacement loss of home, the become child-headed-family, mental disorder, amongst others. Juveniles are sometimes deprived of their physical, mental and psycho-social, emotional and psychological needs most time, lack access to humanitarian aid. Many studies have been conducted on its effectiveness, but no paper has been written on humanitarian response to juveniles in Borno state. This makes this paper invaluable to humanitarian and relief response as it aims to bridge the gap between children and humanitarian response in Borno State, Nigeria from 2015 – 2021.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As the conflict between the Government of Nigeria and Non-State Armed Groups in North-East Nigeria continues, the people in the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (referred to as the BAY states) continue to face widespread insecurity and ongoing military operations, damaged infrastructure, tattered local economies, loss of livelihoods and gross violations of their human rights by all parties to the conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic and ever deteriorating global food security equally exacerbated the already precarious conditions, leaving a projected 8.4 million people across the BAY states in need of humanitarian assistance and intervention. Among them, 4.2 million people live in Borno state alone with around 1.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) out of the 2.2 million persons displaced across the three North-Eastern BAY states, (UNHCR, 2020).

This humanitarian crisis in Borno State still remains one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world. To date, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is only 24 percent funded. Out of the 1.1 billion USD requested funding, a large majority of sectors remain largely underfunded, forcing response partners to prioritize interventions in communities ranked highest on the severity scale. Despite this funding shortfall, 126 humanitarian actors continue the work to respond to the most acute needs. Together, they delivered some form of humanitarian assistance to 2.4 million people within the period under study, accounting for 44 per cent of the estimated people targeted. However, if this deficit continues, a number of life-saving programmes across BAY states will have to scale-down or shut down completely, (UNHCR, 2020)..

The UN's top humanitarian official in the country Matthias Schmale informed that **severe hunger is affecting 4.3 million people** in Nigeria's Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. The number of children under five at risk of life-threatening severe acute malnutrition has doubled in one year to reach 700,000. Describing the situation in the region, Mr. Schmale said: "I have been to Borno and the other two states several times, I've seen mothers fighting for lives of their **malnourished children** in nutrition stabilization centres." The children he

spoke to complained about being **hungry for days**. “Those of us who are parents must imagine what it’s like when you cannot ensure your children have enough to eat,” he emphasized.

The challenge is that despite all the resources and interventions from both Humanitarian partners and Government towards people in the conflict state of Borno, most of these responses are not targeted at children specifically. Instead, the humanitarian response in this area targets IDPs broadly-conceived. According to UNICEF (2022), the lack of comprehensive institutionalized child protection mechanisms in Nigeria prior to the insurgency has limited the availability of children protection services or policy targeted towards children. The invisibility of children at risk and lack of support to keep the families together are increasing the challenges faced by vulnerable children. Children’s unsupervised living conditions are the highest risk of depravation of their basic needs, safety, development and dignity (UNICEF, 2022). There is no system related data on unaccompanied children which has led to child abuse, child armed soldiers, traffic and all forms of abuse against the children.

Additionally, insecurity and resultant restrictions occasionally imposed by the Borno State Government on movements make humanitarian responses and interventions both dangerous and difficult. Humanitarian actors cannot reach an estimated 1.1 million people in need who reside in inaccessible areas, while humanitarian operations mostly focus on the state capital, Maiduguri, and garrison towns in Local Government Areas (LGAs). As displaced, returning and host communities are all experiencing critical needs across all sectors, the inaccessible areas in Northern Borno, where food security levels are likely to have reached famine levels, are of highest concern.

2.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Study by Ahmet Efe on 'A Problem Analysis over Humanitarian Aids Issues Based on Aid Principle and Methodology of Donors Dependency and Post Development Theories' examines aid coordination among national and international aid agencies in the search for more effectiveness and

efficiency in delivering development assistance. He observed that coordination always seems cumbersome when it comes to donations and charity issues from international, national, regional and local scales. One of the findings is that lack of coordination not only spoils market resilience in the recipient country but also hampers ecosystem and investment climate that make developing countries more and more-aid dependent. The Study's theoretical frameworks are dependency and post-development theories. Other findings from the Study show that ownership of development priorities by developing countries focuses on results only without focusing on the process. The need for inclusive development partnerships should be encouraged, and transparency and accountability from government and non-state actors in humanitarian activities should be promoted. The study further recommended that international humanitarian organisations focus on local capacity development and contribution to local market resilience and a sustainable national ecosystem for self-reliance in the long term.

In another study by Akinola, Adeoye on 'Foreign Aids in Africa: From Realities to Contradictions' explained that Africa has witnessed many civil crises, political instability and civil war, which impedes her development projects and fuels Africa's dependency syndrome. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in the 1990s, Africa had more wars than the rest of the world combined (Akinola, 2012). This is partly responsible for a series of economic maladies that rocked the African continents hence the rationale for foreign assistance. The Study notes that few will deny there is a clear moral imperative for humanitarian and charity-based aid to step in when necessary, such as during the 2004 tsunami in Asia. Aid-supported scholarships have helped many girls attend school and ameliorate financial strain on the government, supply of treated mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria, anti-polio drugs to preserve the society from extinction, and technical aids, significantly during elections to help consolidate civil rule in Africa. The findings showed that the in-flows of aid provided easy wealth for the State, which makes the government rely exclusively on donor countries without approach to State's economic prosperity. Many African countries have neglected the act of neither

raising taxes nor devising adequate revenue-generating formulas. The Study recommended that African countries explore opportunities to raise capital markets in non-traditional markets such as the Middle East and China. Also, Western countries can help Africa's cause by discouraging the financial crimes committed by African political elites, evident in the transfer of the State's wealth to banks in Switzerland and another haven. There is increasing evidence to suggest that the deaths of 2.5 million children could be prevented each year through simple community-level humanitarian response interventions.

The Study of Akinola Olojo on 'Humanitarian Aid in Nigeria's North East: Helping or Hurting in 2019 observed that ten years of Boko Haram's violence had turned Nigeria's northeast into a conflict hotspot for humanitarian aid organisations. These groups help alleviate the symptoms of crisis, but dealing with the root causes remains the job of Nigeria's government and can no longer be neglected (Olojo, 2019). The Study asserts that about two million people have been displaced in Nigeria's Northeast, and the humanitarian situation is worsened by the adverse impact of climate change. The urgency of the situation remains high, and several aid organisations have helped to address the difficulties communities face. Internally displaced people's camps are also dotted with humanitarian agencies (Olojo, 2019). A finding from the Study shows that in 2018, Maiduguri hosted at least 150 non-governmental organisations involved in humanitarian work. Some of these organisations were challenged by state authorities over accountability issues. More than half operated without legal registration with supervisory agencies such as Corporate Affairs Commission. Following warnings, most have complied but not without suspicion regarding the authenticity of their humanitarian motives (Olojo, 2019). The Study recommends that proactive policymaking is needed to reinforce the State's capacity to address the societal challenges when aid organisations eventually leave.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Due to the pragmatic philosophical foundation of this study, a qualitative method of data analysis was

adopted. Secondary data tools that were deployed include text books, scholarly journals, archival materials, online resources (internet, academic search engines), newspapers and magazines, official government statistics, annual reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Annual Reports from International Organizations such as the U.N, and official documents, and statistical updates from humanitarian organisations and journals. These secondary data sources enabled the research gain insight into responses to juvenile in the conflicts in the Northeast. The secondary was analysed through content analysis as they are qualitative data collected through thematic analysis method. One of the advantages of this method of analysis is its theoretical freedom (Kerlinger & Lee, 1999).

3.1 The Human Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow (1954:7) and John W. Burton popularised the theory (1990: 9). This theory agrees that the fundamental cause of most intractable conflicts was people's need to meet their needs, which can be met at an individual, group, or societal level. The primary premise of this idea is that human beings require certain essentials to exist and achieve some level of well-being in any aspect of Life. Moreover, these necessities are referred to as (fundamental) human requirements. As a result, the human needs theory contends that the lack of alternative options to address the needs of people or groups is what leads to violence or conflict.

According to the theory, violence frequently arises when persons seek knowledge, respect, and care for their needs. According to the notion, these needs include necessities like food, water, and shelter as well as biological wants like participation, identity, comprehension, and acknowledgement. Although there were many human needs theorists, this study is grounded within the framework of Abraham Maslow's (1954) and John W. Burton's (1990) theories. Humans, by nature, require several essential items to thrive, according to this belief. On this note, the theory blames the instability that has ravaged Northeast Geopolitical zone and its harmful consequences on the government's failure to provide basic facilities and security to the people.

Maslow and Burton go on to say that successful human growth and development require physical and non-physical factors, as well as those that humans are intrinsically motivated to achieve (Sandra, 2003). These necessities have been seen to include more than just food, water, and shelter. In his theories, Maslow had previously recognised and arranged those basic human requirements in a hierarchical order. Each need, according to him, has a definite hierarchy or order of fulfilment.

The human needs hypothesis is based on the idea that society's progress requires a certain level of safety or security. As a result, such advancement is dependent on stability and the absence of fear and worry; self-esteem – is the desire to be seen as strong, competent, and capable by oneself and others. It also includes the desire to know that one's actions have an impact on the environment; personal fulfilment, i.e., the desire to achieve one's full potential in all areas of life without psychological, physical, political, or civic constraints; the ability to make choices in all aspects of One's Life; and access to distributive justice. That is the need for a community's resources to be distributed fairly among all members and also the need for enabling environment for members to meet their yearnings and aspirations, however, all these are not available in Borno state as a result of the protracted conflict in the area. Furthermore, this has also led to deviant behaviours by juveniles as well as others who go through other means of meeting their needs either by joining the Boko Haram groups or other violent extremist groups.

3.2 Children's Protection Policies

In humanitarian efforts, child protection focuses on preventing and responding to family separation and creating support networks for children by providing them shelter and other basic needs thereby giving them a sense of protection and security. Children's rights in modern international politics are a combination of broad human rights concepts and individual rights specific to the needs and circumstances of people under 18. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was established in 1989 by the UN General Assembly. It contained rights from all generations and 'classes' of human rights, spanning civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights, in its 41 substantive

articles. The UNCRC undoubtedly forms the backbone and primary normative reference in international social policymaking relevant to children, even though it is one component of a more extensive child rights regime composed of a wide range of international laws, organisations and cooperative structures (UNICEF, 2012).

All children must be safeguarded and protected from abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect. Article 19 of the UN Convention on child rights guarantees children's protection within and outside the home. In the context of a relationship of responsibility or power, child abuse and child maltreatment are all forms of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, or commercial exploitation that cause actual or potential harm to the children's health, survival, development, or dignity. All of these were approved by the UN General Assembly in 1959, creating a global framework for children's rights. The passage of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the most ratified human rights treaty, revolutionised children's lives worldwide and established an international consensus on childhood (UNICEF, 2019).

In 2009, the European Union (Lisbon) formally vowed to support protecting children's rights in all of the EU's internal and external actions. The Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular, articles 23 and 24), the International Covenant on Socio-Economic and Cultural Rights (in particular, article 10), and the statutes and pertinent documents of specialised agencies and international organisations all recognise this as a domesticated version of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which the General Assembly adopted on November 20, 1959.

The Organization of African Unity's Assembly of heads of state and government adopted the declaration on the Rights and Welfare of the African Children during its sixteenth ordinary session in Monrovia, Liberia, from July 17 to 20, 1979. This document recognised the need to take appropriate action to advance and protect the rights and welfare of African children while also noting with concern that the majority of African children's circumstances continue to be dire due to distinctive factors. Article 22 of the charter's section on armed

conflicts states that parties to an armed conflict that affects children shall agree to uphold and ensure the upholding of the rules of international humanitarian law and shall further ensure that no child shall directly participate in hostilities and, in particular, refrain from recruiting any child (African Union, 2012). According to the charter, a child is under the age of 18.

The law protecting all children's rights in Nigeria is called the Child's Right Act of 2003. The Child's Right Act has been domesticated by 31 of the federal union's 36 states. Children were considered as anybody under the age of 18 by the CRA of 2003 (National Human Rights Commission, 2022). The Child's Rights Act of 2003 stipulates that children have the right to life, a name, a family, a private life, dignity and leisure, participation in cultural activities, health care, and education. With the adoption of the CRC in 2003, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was domesticated, extending to children the human rights granted to citizens of Nigeria under the 1999 Constitution (Ogunniyi, 2018). The Child's Right Act, which consists of 278 separate sections, stipulates that, wherever a kid is involved, their best interests must take precedence to provide the child with the bare minimum of protection. The Borno State Child Protection Bill was enacted by the Nigerian state of Borno on August 8, 2022, making it the 31st state to domesticate the Child's Right Act (UNICEF, 2022).

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in January 2007 developed the National Guidelines and Standard of Practice on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Nigeria. This SOP was launched to respond to the orphans and vulnerable children crisis by providing safety net support to affected children outside their immediate families. The main purpose of the OVC is to create an environment where all stakeholders support quality in providing care, support and protection to orphans and vulnerable children in the country. The Standard Operating Practice is to provide minimum standards in quality of services and activities related to all areas of care, support and protection of orphans, and vulnerable children that are socially and culturally acceptable, in accordance with the Federal Government of Nigeria policies, international instruments and internationally accepted best practices. Also, the guidelines will

enhance collaboration and strategic partnership among stakeholders and affect referral and coordination. The guiding principle of this SOP is based on the best interest of the child, equal opportunities with other children, a family-centred approach, child participation, community participation and ownership (OVC, 2007).

Inter-Agency Cooperation on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is a collaboration which involves activities to raise awareness of the community on PSEA and their right to assistance without exploitation or abuse. It is the responsibility of all UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs in Nigeria to ensure that a safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible complaints system is established so that all potential complainant knows where and how to submit a complaint. SOP aims to prevent and respond to SEA committed by UN, IGO and NGO personnel by establishing a joint response system to ensure coordinated and effective responses to potential SEA cases in Nigeria.

Another SOP is the Violence against Children Survey (VACS) by the National Population Commission of Nigeria, with technical guidance provided by UNICEF in 2014. The Violence against Children Survey (VACS) in Nigeria was the first in Nigeria and West Africa. VACS aim to provide information that will guide policies and strategies to prevent, identify, and respond to violence against children. Violence against children negatively affects their cognitive development, including language deficits and reduced cognitive functioning.

The Borno State Child Protection Law is the governing body that recognises children's rights to education, health, and protection from all forms of abuse in Nigeria's Borno region. The Child's Right Act, passed by the federal government in 2003, is also being domesticated. Akinwumi (2010) also includes the Children Act 1989 (as modified), The Education Act 2002, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and Keeping Together of Safeguard Children 2018 in her list of laws protecting children's rights. International organisations such as the Christina Noble Children Foundation, Save the Children International, UNICEF, OAU, PLAN International, World Vision, International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR), Child Right International Network (CRIN), ECPAT

International, Defence for Children International (DCI), Humanium, and WE Charity have also improved international child policies and procedures.

In Borno state, the Standard Operating Procedures for prevention and response to gender-based violence, referred to as the humanitarian operation, were initiated in November 2015 and approved in April 2016. This Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was developed to facilitate joint referral pathways for women and children at risk in humanitarian operations, including reception centres, camps and host communities where the IDPs live. It was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, IRC, IMC, IOM, DRC, FIDA, Save the Children, MSF, NEMA, SEMA, Action Aid, NUT Borno State, BOWDI, WOWICAN, FOMWAN and NCWs. The guiding principle for children states that if the decision is taken on behalf of the child, the child's best interests shall be the overriding guide, and the appropriate procedures should be followed. The members agreed to update the SOP bi-annually to meet the changing dynamics of response to crises in Borno state.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview of Humanitarian Services in Borno State

As humanitarian partners struggle to reach the targeted population fully, the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria continues to rank among the world's most complex humanitarian crises (OCHA, 2022). Lack of money, ongoing instability or restrictions on movement continues to be some primary motivators. Additionally, several regions remain inaccessible to partners in humanitarian efforts, reducing the total humanitarian footprint. According to O'Connor, Betancourt, and Enelamah (2021, p. 28), sectors have been forced to prioritise communities and clients who are typically the highest on the severity scale due to a lack of money.

However, despite the allocation of resources, many people, especially children, are still in dire need and

have received little to no humanitarian aid, as life-saving initiatives have not been prioritised. However, because life-saving programs have either been scaled back or shut down entirely, many individuals, especially juveniles still in dire need, are left with little or no humanitarian help. Globally, humanitarian response to juveniles is faced with some challenges of increasing conflicts whereby more children have been taken to the IDPs. In Syria, the number of children needing humanitarian assistance is on the rise, increasing 27% from 2020 to 2021, with 6.1 million children affected. The escalation of the 11-year-old conflict in the Syrian Republic has driven a severe economic crisis, worsening the impact of intensified regional hostilities, mass displacement, and the effect of the covid-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2022). Following the 2014-2017 conflict, Iraq displaced over 6 million people, 1.8 million were children, and 12% were orphans (UNICEF, 2021).

According to O'Connor et al. (2021, p. 30), Nigeria has the fifth-highest death toll worldwide from armed conflict, mainly as a result of the operations of the Boko Haram insurgency, with more casualties than in previous significant episodes in Africa. In addition, Nigeria has the highest number of children recruited for roles in conflict, accounting for 74 per cent of the growth in the number of children living in conflict zones globally over the past ten years to over 100 million in 2018 (O'Connor et al., 2021). Non-state actors frequently violate the minimal requirements for protecting juveniles in humanitarian circumstances. In order to secure the protection of these kids, there is also a generally low degree of coordinated reaction.

The UNICEF Children Protection Strategic Plan started a shift from prevention and response to a survive and thrive framework that is based on the right of self-determination and the right to participation enshrined in the international covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Children in order to address the gaps in humanitarian response to children (O'Connor, 2021). For children impacted by the conflict, the SAFE model of child protection promotes a more person- and rights-centred analysis by drawing from both human security and human rights frameworks (Bakken & Rustad, 2018). This approach emphasises individuals who are affected and may help with local problem-solving.

The juvenile protection system's effectiveness in handling conflict instances is also largely unknown. Little is known about how young people disclose violence or behave when they need support, although studies indicate that young people who are orphans tend to confide in themselves or their peers more often. Due to this, juvenile delinquency has been affected by interpersonal disruptions, emotional abuse, community violence, and high levels of violence. Currently, attempts to stop child abuse involve strengthening reporting procedures by enabling victims to report abuse through confidential disclosure rather than through customary reporting procedures. The techniques, however, have not worked. For instance, Chibok, a city in Borno State, reported a physical abuse prevalence of up to 90% for children, with a sexual abuse incidence of 4% for boys and 13% for girls., including a sexual abuse rate of 4% for boys and 13% for girls in 2015 (Agbiboa, 2017).

4.2 Humanitarian Responses from Government Actors (State Actors)

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is legally responsible for disaster response across Nigeria, while state and local governments have specialised agencies that manage affairs within their domain. Established by Act 12 as amended by Act 50 of 1999 for disaster management in Nigeria, NEMA did not take action when Boko Haram's activities commenced in north-eastern Nigeria in 2009, leaving many homeless and helpless. The agency, and indeed the Federal government's conspicuous absence continued until 2015 when agitation began to emerge from different quarters. By this time, the humanitarian situation in the region had worsened making it impossible for these agencies to intervene (Chidume, Nwosumba, & Osioma, 2018). As at 2018, the number of IDPs stood at 1.8 million (2019; Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2018). By 31 July 2019, the number had increased to 1,980,036 (UNHCR, 2019) and stood at 1,900,000 in June 2020. According to the DTM Nigeria (2017), the Nigerian government through NEMA and SEMA has to some extent addressed the humanitarian needs of the affected people in north-eastern Nigeria especially with respect to food. Chidume et al. (2018) noted that NEMA provided several relief items and support services to affected areas, including visits by its officials to affected

areas, bereaved individuals, community leaders and District Heads and IDP camps. The agency also organised several meetings and workshops to train corps members and secondary school students in selected schools on disaster management. These efforts were carried out in collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as SEMA, local governments, community leaders and NGOs. However, the DTM Nigeria (2017) stated that the government's efforts to address the situation in the region were sorely lacking, it noted that when the Boko Haram crisis began, Nigeria was experiencing an economic boom. As such, it could have been expected that the government would take the lead through well-planned and carefully implemented policy initiatives and the allocation of sufficient funds, and by providing the disaster management experts required for a comprehensive humanitarian response. Aside from the financial constraints confronting NEMA, the rivalry between NEMA and SEMA impeded NEMA from effectively fulfilling its mandate. Murtala and Abubakar (2017) state that NEMA and SEMA's limited response in north-eastern Nigeria is due to poor communication and coordination between the federal and state governments. They add that governance in Nigeria is characterised by fragile and limited inter-governmental coordination. The state governments favoured a situation where the federal government through NEMA and the humanitarian organisations liaised with them through the SEMAs for a coordinated humanitarian response in the troubled areas. As a result of this, they rejected decisions reached at the federal level between NEMA and the humanitarian organisations, especially when their input was not considered

While this power play between the two tiers of governments continued, the situation in the affected areas worsened. Murtala and Abubakar (2017) also noted state governments' unpreparedness to tackle the menace of Boko Haram in the region. SEMAs across the region had low capacity to respond immediately to the unfolding humanitarian crisis because they had no specific budget allocation and can only make requests as the occasion demands. However, the federal government insisted that the status quo remains because the state governments have often been accused of misappropriation of funds and lack of transparency and accountability. More specifically, the federal government noted

that there have been reports of corruption, diversion of humanitarian aid and misuse of power by state governments. Moreover, as an office under the Ministry of Special Duties, SEMA staff members are drawn from states' civil services and do not have the necessary training and experience for engagement in humanitarian activities. This is reflected in their activities in the various camps. They do not know how to coordinate and manage an IDP camp, food distribution or protection monitoring and are unfamiliar with the operating procedures of international humanitarian organisations (Nnadi, Ezeani, & Nnadi, 2020).

In summary, there is heavy reliance on assistance from state and non-state actors for humanitarian responses in the troubled region and in the various IDP camps. Through its Commission, the Northeast Development Commission (NEDC) has intervened to some extent. According to Odufowokan (2021), the NEDC redeemed 23 billion Naira from the sum of 55.92 billion Naira pledged by donors for the safe School initiative. They also appropriated one billion Naira counterparts funding for the same purpose in the 2021 Appropriation Act. The sum of five billion was appropriated in the 2022 supplementary budget for the Northeast. Notwithstanding, the sum of 12 billion Naira was appropriated in the 2021 Appropriations Act as Federal Initiative for the Northeast region.

In November 2019, the newly established Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development organised a workshop for senior government officials and representatives of various aid agencies to improve civil-military cooperation (CISEC) in humanitarian intervention in north-eastern Nigeria. This was seen as a very laudable move by the Ministry for actors in the field, however, it was perceived not to have met its objectives as indicated by some actors. Unfortunately, this only resulted in strict procedures and control measures for aid agencies (Human Right Watch, 2020)

4.3 Humanitarian Responses from International Actors and Non-Governmental Organizations (Non-State Actors)

Historically, international humanitarian NGOs have played a key role in conflict zones that suffer

humanitarian crises. They are usually at the forefront in such zones and in saving lives at the expense of their own. International state actors, mainly developed countries also respond to humanitarian crises by sending relief materials and funds to alleviate suffering. Since the Boko Haram violence started in 2009, various international humanitarian organisations have been active in north-eastern Nigeria, particularly in the different IDP camps. According to OCHA (2017), '90 humanitarian organisations have provided aid to 4.5 million people, including nearly 2 million people who are reached monthly with food assistance and over 4 million people who received out-patient or medical health services. Different countries, international organisations and concerned individuals have also made donations in the form of cash or kind. The bulk of the funds available for humanitarian missions in the region are donations by international state actors, NGOs and concerned individuals that are targeted at dislodged communities and displaced persons. Odufowokan (2016) notes that the World Bank has donated 800 million US dollars, and Aliko Dangote and other concerned individuals donated 6.5 million naira, while the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) donated 248 million US dollars. Australia offered support to the tune of 9 million Naira, the United States government 200 million dollars, and 750 million naira was received from Saudi Arabia (Odufowokan, 2016). Food items donated included grains such as millet, maize, ground nut, sorghum and cowpea, clothing such as dresses for women and children and shelter in the form of tents. The United Kingdom tops the list with a donation of \$US 5,193.523 million while the International Organization for Migration (IOM) gave the least at \$59,750 million. The total sum reveals the enormous support that the humanitarian crisis in the region has attracted from both international and local agencies.

4.4 Challenges of Humanitarian Intervention in Borno State

Humanitarian crises attract the attention of humanitarian and aid organisations through medical responses and relief materials. However, the major actor plays the crucial role of collaborating and co-ordinating responses in the troubled zone. Through its agencies such as NEMA and SEMA and

subsequently the North East Development Commission (NEDC) and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and Social development, the Nigerian government is responsible for co-ordinating the humanitarian responses of both international actors and NGOs in north-eastern Nigeria. There are however some challenges to this response, some of which includes;

4.4.1 Lack of coordination and partnerships between the government and aid agencies

Prior to the creation of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, NEMA and Borno state SEMA were not really performing their roles of providing relief materials as well as co-ordinating the efforts of different stakeholders and distribution of relief in the border communities and IDP camps. Although many NGOs were willing to help, they were impeded by the lack of a coordinated response from the Nigerian government. An NGO representative noted that it was a 'perfect storm' for humanitarian agencies to access areas that needed support (CORE, 2020). According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview (2014), many IDPs had to stay in unofficial shelters, unfinished sites and makeshift accommodation, as well as in unofficial camps. These shelters were not under the purview of the government but were made available by small local organisations.

4.4.2 A lack of a framework to track and monitor displaced persons especially Juveniles

Due to the lack of a clear mechanism to track and monitor displaced people living with host communities and families, it was difficult to plan humanitarian assistance. Displaced people including juveniles were thus found sheltering in mosques, churches, town halls, abandoned and incomplete buildings, and makeshift camps which are grossly insufficient and unsustainable as the population constantly increases (Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2014). This reveals the fragility of the country as it was not able to perform its role even when support was made available by various concerned stakeholders such as governments and NGOs.

4.4.3 Perceived genuineness of intention aid agencies and NGOs

How genuine and accurate do we believe in the aid agencies and NGOs' intention! In 2019, two major NGOs, Action contre la Faim and Mercy Corps were ordered to shut down their activities in north-east Nigeria after the government perceived them of aiding and abetting terrorism by supplying food and medical supplies to Boko Haram (Wintour, 2019). After high-level negotiations and external diplomatic support, they were allowed to resume operations. UNICEF was asked to shut down its operations at a certain point, which negatively affected the distribution of relief items to the displaced in various communities and IDP camps. In some cases, the authorities in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe diverted relief materials, while in others, the collection points were too far away (CORE, 2020).

4.4.4 Inter-Agency rivalry among State-Actors

Again, rather than working together for a co-ordinated response, NEMA and SEMA engaged in a power tussle as both parties believed that they should be responsible for the implementation of the budget. While NEMA believes that it is the only statutory body for emergency response in the country, SEMA asserts that it is on the ground and has a better understanding of the terrain. The power struggle resulted in relief funds and material being misappropriated and diverted into private coffers (Famulusi & Oshomoh, 2018; Nnadi et al., 2020). It is for this reason that the respondents noted that most of the relief came from NGOs rather than the Nigerian government. This brings to bear the assertion by DFID (2005) on state fragility rings true in this case as the Nigerian government is seen not to provide adequately for her citizens at this time.

4.4.5 The poor state of the border communities and IDP camps

The establishment of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Disaster Management and Social Development offered an opportunity to revamp the system for a more coordinated response in north-eastern Nigeria. However, CORE (2020) noted that the process of fashioning a common approach has

been fragmented and politicised and that a common platform for the humanitarian response in the region has not yet materialised (CORE, 2020). This is evident in the poor state of the IDP camps and border communities. Due to the huge number of IDPs in the region, there is fierce competition for limited resources such as water, food and temporary shelter (Lenshie & Yenda, 2016). The scarcity of these essential needs at Nigeria border communities has led to what can be termed a secondary displacement of the IDPs in the region.

4.5 Human right abuses

There have been reports of violations of the human rights of women and children who constitute a significant proportion of IDPs. This is a violation of the Kampala Convention which commits states to the creation of improved living conditions for IDPs. There have also been reports of malnutrition in the IDP camps (Ojeme, 2016) and of food items and other relief materials being diverted by camp officials for their personal use and that of elites (Faluyi, Khan, & Akinola, 2019). In Yobe State, two traditional rulers were sanctioned for diverting food items meant for IDPs (Joel, 2016). Some government officials have been accused of repackaging and diverting grain donated for the IDP camps, especially rice (Haruna, 2016) and it is also alleged that a few NGOs sourced financial aid from international donors under the pretence of providing humanitarian assistance to the IDPs (Salau, 2016), however, after this getting this aid do not provide corresponding response required of them.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper attempts to give us an in-depth understanding of humanitarian response to juveniles in Borno state, Northeast Nigeria. In Nigeria, the spate of communal, ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts has adversely affected such vulnerable groups. Indeed, no conflict situation has demonstrated the heightened vulnerability of juveniles in Nigeria more than the terrorist/insurgency operations of Boko Haram in the contemporary history of Nigeria. Reports by humanitarian and other agencies such as UN

OCHA, UNICEF, Save The Children, UNHCR, UNFPA, OXFAM, USAID, DFID, PWAN Plan International, etc. have demonstrated the intensity, frequency and character of vulnerability to which juveniles are exposed in the country, especially in the North Eastern Borno state of the country. This paper therefore, explores the humanitarian response to juveniles in North Eastern Nigeria using Borno state as a case study.

From the analysis of this paper, it has been deduced that there has been humanitarian responses to Juveniles in Borno state though there is no coordination as it was observed by the researcher that both State and Non-State actors have no one line of direction. The humanitarian response/aid primarily provides shelter, food, medical care, and other necessities but does little on the mental health, emotional and psychological needs of the juveniles. Nevertheless, humanitarian response is faced with some challenges of increased displacement whereby more children are taking to the IDPs camps and foster homes. As a result, some people, especially women and children, resort to harmful coping mechanisms such as child abuse/molestation, labour, gender base violence survival sex amongst others.

After a careful analysis of the subject matter and the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Stakeholders mapping be carried out to know all the humanitarian actors operating in Borno State, Nigeria. The 'whole of society approach' be adopted in planning protection of juvenile. All critical stakeholders be involved in planning the protection that will be given to juvenile in any conflict environment. Federal and State and LGA authorities should plan with humanitarian actors who can support them in ensuring that juveniles in Borno state have access to basic social services in IDP camps and Holding Centres before their reintegration.
- ii. Vulnerability Mapping of the juveniles be conducted to ascertain the type of protection needed by juveniles in armed conflict environment especially Borno State, North East Nigeria.

- iii. Proper coordination mechanisms be put in place for all stakeholders to work with, this is with a view to knowing who is doing what, when, where, to avoid duplicity of efforts as well as misplacement of resources.
- iv. Institutional Strengthening, existing protection policies/mechanisms, such as the National Human Rights Commission Protection Monitoring Project, Child Right Act (CRT), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Declarations, Protocols amongst others be strengthened and monitoring mechanisms be enhanced to evaluate how juveniles are treated in Borno state and Northeast at large.
- v. State and Non-State actors should improve in meeting the urgent needs of the IDPs in the camp, such as supply of food items, water purifiers, water storage containers, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) mosquito nets, bathing soaps, washing detergents, dignity and delivery kits. This will go a long way in meeting the needs of the juveniles as well.
- vi. Security measures should be put in place in all the IDP camps in Northeast with a view to providing 'access' to humanitarian workers providing aid to victims and Learning/Safe Spaces in all the IDP camps should be provided with adequate education facilities and materials such as chairs, tables, black board to support learning among the juveniles.
- vii. The Armed Forces and civilian JTF be properly sensitised on child protection or handling of juveniles in conflict environment, and human rights to prevent any abuse or violation of the rights of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- viii. Finally, emphases should be geared to prevention of conflict, areas of discontent be identified and nip in the bud before its escalation into full blown conflict.

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