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INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria's North East region is one of the most prominent, multi-faceted and complex humanitarian crises region experiencing various levels of insecurities. Such unbridled level of security breaches continue to produce avalanche of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by the days that are currently facing dire humanitarian crises which are increasingly creating obstacles for the achievement of most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. Of critical importance in these Sustainable Development Goals that have been seriously hampered by various conflicts and insecurities in the country are the Health-related goals of 1-No Poverty, 2- Zero Hunger, 3-Good Health and Well-being, 4-Quality Education, 6-Clean Water and Sanitation and 16-Peace, Justice and Strong Institution. This paper adopts a qualitative method based on secondary data sourced from newspapers, government documents, internet resources and extant scholarly works. The study traced the making of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria to trilogy of unresolved diverse conflicts, bandits and terror attacks in the country. The study further examined how these violent episodes have constituted obstacles to achievement of SDGs particularly as it concerns the health and welfare of the people that have been so displaced from their places of abode in the country.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons; Conflicts; Health; Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

Most parts of Nigeria are currently experiencing various levels of insecurity arising from unresolved conflicts such as herders and farmers and ethno-religious crises, bandits operating in various ungoverned or low-governed spaces, Boko Haram, and related terrorist groups attacks. Meeting the needs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) people who have been forced from their homes but are still within their national borders is essential to successfully fulfilling the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is against this background that this paper seeks to examine how these various levels of insecurities have affected internally displaced persons, especially in the North East region and how it has constituted a hindrance to the achievement of sustainable development goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 16 particularly as it concerns the health and welfare of Internally Displaced Persons. This is

important in a region with enduring humanitarian concerns to uphold peace, human welfare and well-being, justice and equality. In doing these, this paper is further divided into five sections. The first among them introduces the work; the second focuses on conceptual clarifications; the third examines the present conditions of Internally Displaced Persons in Northeastern Nigeria; the fourth focuses on the implications and effects of Covid-19 on IDPs in Northeast Nigeria. In contrast, the fifth section provides measures taken to protect IDPs according to the SDGs and a concluding thought on the subject matter.

Conceptual Framework of Analysis

Displacement is simply seen as a situation where people are forced to leave their place of habitual residence. Persons who fall into this category are

called "Displaced Persons" (Mohammed, 2016). Under international law, displacement is conceptualised as persons or groups of persons who have been compelled or obligated to flee or to have cause to leave their homes or place of habitual residence in particular, due to or to be saved from the effect of armed conflict, violations of human rights, situations of generalised violence, natural or man-made disasters, to another place considered relatively safe either within their national borders (as Internally Displaced Persons) or travel across an internationally recognised state border (as Refugees) (Itumo and Nwefuru, 2016). These definitions show that the involuntary movement of people is in two categories: internal and external displacement.

Article 1 (L) of the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) defines Internal displacement as:

The involuntary or forced movement, evacuation or relocation of persons or groups of persons within internationally recognised state borders (African Union 2009).

Internal displacement, therefore, involves the forced movement of persons within a state's borders, referred to as "Internally Displaced Persons". In understanding who Internally Displaced Persons are, the most accepted definition is the one coined by the former Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Francis Deng, who was instrumental in the compilation of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The 1998 UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement defines an internally displaced person as:

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border (UNGPID 2001: Para. 2).

Unlike Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) legally remain under the protection of their home governments because they are within a state border, even though those governments might be the cause of their flight (Mohammed, 2016). The causes of internal displacement are numerous. Obiakeze

and Onuoha (2016) identified the following: Conflict-Induced Displacement, which entails the forceful displacement of persons due to armed conflict, including civil war, insurgency and generalised violence in which the state authorities are mostly unable or unwilling to protect them. Development-Induced Displacement includes people that are displaced as a result of them being compelled to move because of policies and projects implemented to enhance development in the community. Examples are large-scale infrastructure projects such as dams, roads, ports and airports. Disaster-Induced Displacement includes people displaced as a result of natural hazards, such as hazard-induced disasters (floods), Environmental Change (deforestation), and human-made disasters (industrial accidents).

Conflict-induced displacement is one of the major causes of displacement in the Northeast of Nigeria in the form of insecurities from herders and farmers and ethno-religious crises, bandits operating in various ungoverned or low governed spaces or from Boko Haram and related terrorist attacks with triple effects of producing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and other forms of displacement. In simple terms, Nicholson (1992) sees conflict as a state of disagreement or hostility between two or more individuals, which depicts that they have conflicting views about the same issue in pursuing conflicting goals. Stagner (1967) describes conflict as a situation in which two or more individuals desire limited goals, each striving to acquire and perceiving the other to be a barrier to acquiring such purposes. Gurr (1970) interprets conflict as the open coercive interactions of contending collectivities and a situation where a minimum of two individuals strive simultaneously to acquire the same set of scarce resources. In politics, conflict is more explicitly defined. In this viewpoint, Coser (1956) describes it as contention over values and claims to inadequate status, power and resources in which the opponents aim to neutralise and eradicate their rivals. Taking a different viewpoint, Otite (2001) opines that conflict may not necessarily signify a state of overt aggression or extreme hostility. This is further buttressed in his definition of conflict as a normal process of interaction that may lead to a win-win outcome if parties try to transform the situation. This signifies that conflict can be of a low intensity which hasn't escalated to an outblown war and can still be prevented, or of a high intensity which is the practical manifestation of war.

Kett and Rowson (2007) believe that factors which

include extreme poverty, scarce natural resources and income inequalities, ethno-religious sentiments among many others can trigger social conflict. Also, countries that rely heavily on the production of one or a small number of natural resources for the majority of their economic output and inequality among individuals (the elites and the poor) tend to be more prone to conflict; for instance, in Nigeria the emergence of Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Boko Haram, bandits operating in various ungoverned or low governed spaces among many other groups were as a result of the impartial control and unequal distribution of natural resources which escalated into various conflict in the Northeast and South-South region of the country.

According to Raleigh and Dowd (2013), ungoverned spaces connote physical territory and non-physical policy space in which effective state sovereignty and governmental control are absent. This implies that in such spaces, the state is absent; such absence results in a lack of effective governance and can lead to the rise of conflict and other forms of insecurity. Rabasa, Steven, Peter, Kim, Theodore, Jennifer, Kevin, and John (2007), in their view, see the ungoverned territory as an area in which a state or government encounters significant challenges in establishing control, in which the central government's authority does not extend to these areas thereby serving as a breeding ground for terrorism, insecurities and conflict. Risse (2011) further emphasised that ungoverned spaces or limited statehood are parts of a country in which the central authority (governments) cannot implement and enforce rules and decisions or in which the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence is lacking.

Ungoverned spaces are more paramount in many regions across the world, including African territories; Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, South Sudan, Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region and Palestine, among others, where terrorist groups and international forces are controlling some part of their territories. These countries are witnessing various forms of insecurity as a result of the inability or unwillingness of the governments to perform certain functions and the collapse or the absence of state authority. These forms of insecurities are numerous such as banditry, civil war, terrorist activities, arms and drug smuggling and piracy, among others leading to the displacement of persons and high humanitarian crises, which are

increasingly creating obstacles for the achievement of most of the Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs) in the countries across the world.

Sustainable Development is attained when a country fulfils the basic needs of the citizenry. It calls for integrating economic growth, social development, security and environmental management as interdependent pillars for long-term growth and development (Bobadoye, 2015). The Brundtland Report of 1987 gave rise to the concept of Sustainable Development through the United Nations Development Committee headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland. The report defined Sustainable Development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to the report, Sustainable Development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a better life. It bolsters the fact that development in any country must be sustainable to cater to future generations.

Goals No 1-No Poverty, 2- Zero Hunger, 3-Good Health and Well-being, 4-Quality Education, 6-Clean Water and Sanitation and 16-Peace, Justice and Strong Institution of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 emphasised promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies through ending poverty, hunger and violence, internal strife, asymmetric warfare, prompting good health care services, providing clean and sustainable water and sanitation for all, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions at all levels, and increasing access to justice (UN SDG Report, 2019).

The UN Sustainable Development Goals 2020 has shown that various countries, both developed and developing countries, are facing health-related crises that have severe negative consequences for attaining sustainable development goals by 2030. As of June 20th, 2020, around 463,000 people worldwide have died from the Covid-19 Pandemic, which has not only affected economic activities but has led to an increase in the poverty rate and hunger, among many others. Therefore, countries need to strengthen the resilience of their health system and prevention programmes as well as address and eradicate conflict, other forms of violence, and insurgency activities, among others which are seen as a setback to attaining Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG Report, 2020).

Internally Displaced Persons in Northeastern Nigeria: Present Conditions

The Boko-Haram conflict in the northeastern region has lingered for over a decade since its emergence in 2002. The conflict has, among many other forms of insecurities such as Fulani/herders crises, ethnic/religious crises as well as the presence of ungoverned spaces, produced a total number of 2,184,254 IDPs and more, damaged health and sanitation infrastructure, made large inaccessible swathes of the internally displaced population and has had significant disease control implications among many other implications in the northeast region and Nigeria as a whole (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 36 Report, 2021).

One such implication is the destruction of health facilities in the Northeastern states of Nigeria. Two-thirds of health facilities have been damaged by the conflict, forcing health workers to flee and clinics to be shut down; this results in people seeking medical care in other neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon, thereby adding to the pressure on limited health facilities in the host state (Omilusi, 2016).

In addition, the northeast remains highly endemic for diseases because IDPs are at risk of epidemic-prone diseases like cholera, measles, meningitis and viral hemorrhagic fevers such as Lassa and yellow fevers. At the same time, malaria continues to be the disease IDPs are more prone to, as it accounts for over 50 per cent of cases, especially during the rainy season. This is due to various issues such as limited access to essential health care, vulnerabilities related to displacement and congested living conditions. Recent estimates from the Health and shelter sectors show nearly 475,000 people in highly crowded camps. This will make many of the prescribed global WHO measures difficult to implement given the conditions where IDPs are located or residing (OCHA, 2021; WHO, 2021). The situation is further worsened by unsafe water, inadequate hygiene and sanitation services linked to long-term structural deficiencies, as well as a general weakening of resilience in affected communities. Women and children, in particular, are left increasingly susceptible to disease outbreaks. Some 4,890 cases of measles were reported in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States to date in 2020 (as of 8 November for Borno and 31st October for Yobe), a decrease of 78 per cent from 2019. The Covid-19 pandemic remains a major public health concern in the northeastern states. As of 9th May 2021, 2,870 were reported in the BAY states, with 79 deaths. In the BAY states, 66 per cent

of the cases were in Borno and 25 per cent in Adamawa (NCDC, 2021).

In 2018, cholera outbreaks affected 18 LGAs in the BAY states, recording 10,571 cases. In addition, 1.5 million people are considered at risk and require cholera prevention interventions, further compounding the ineffectiveness of preventive measures (Humanitarian Response Strategy, 2019). The outbreak of Covid-19 in such living conditions could lead to higher transmission rates.

Furthermore, insurgent activities have been identified as an obstacle to sustainable development. The country's resources that should be used to achieve the growth of other sectors of the economy are being diverted to strengthen the country's security system. For instance, the one billion Naira of the 2017 budget was requested by President Muhammadu Buhari to purchase equipment for fighting Boko Haram in the Northeast (Agency Report, 2018; Omilusi, 2016).

Food shortages have been one of the dire needs of IDPs in the Northeast region of Nigeria. The 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview estimated about 5.1 million people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states are food insecure and facing food crises, emergencies or famine situations. The worst affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa account for 3.7 million people in dire need of food security. In IDP camps, food continues to be the greatest unmet need, with large numbers of IDPs reporting food as their greatest need. At the same time, those living in host communities cite farming as their predominant source of livelihood, which continues to be hindered by the Military Security constraints, Boko-Haram and Fulani/Farmer's herders Conflict (Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2018). The outbreak of Covid-19 and its related effects has further worsened the food security situation by impacting the livelihoods and income sources of already vulnerable households and contributing to significant increases in food prices. For instance, between March and September 2020, the cost of a minimum expenditure basket in Maiduguri Metropolitan council increased by over 47 per cent.

Armed Conflict, Insecurity, Ungoverned Spaces and Internally Displaced Persons: The Nexus and Implications on Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

Ungoverned territories or spaces are bedrocks for the foundation of the growth and occurrence of terrorism, insecurities and conflict, among others

which later lead to the killing and displacement of millions of persons. It is seen as an area in which a state or government faces significant challenges in establishing control or a situation where the state is absent, where the central government's authority does not extend to these areas, thereby resulting in a lack of effective governance in those areas, and can therefore lead to the rise of conflict and other forms of insecurities (Rabasa, Steven, Peter, Kim, Theodore, Jennifer, Kevin, and John, 2007; Raleigh and Dowd, 2013).

Clunan and Trinkunas (2010) buttress a similar viewpoint as they opine that the existence or appearance of ungoverned spaces is a reflection of the decline in the effectiveness of the state as a political and social construct to the citizenry. They also noted that lack of governability and Conduciveness give rise to various insecurities within ungoverned spaces. Rabasa, Steven, Peter, Kim, Theodore, Jennifer, Kevin, and John (2007) further asserts that entropy and civil conflict can lead to an increase or evolution of the existence of ungoverned spaces. States often view conflict and other forms of insecurities as threats because of their potential to provide havens (territories) for organised crimes, terrorist movements and insurgencies, narcotics trafficking; illegal arms trafficking; and proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) materials and weapons., money laundering, illicit trafficking and proliferation networks to thrive.

Inclusively, various countries are witnessing diverse forms of insecurities due to the inability or unwillingness of governments to perform certain functions and the collapse or the absence of state authority in ungoverned spaces. These forms of insecurities are numerous such as banditry, civil war, terrorist activities, displacement and humanitarian crises, arms and drug smuggling, piracy, and refugee flows among others which threaten national security and regional stability in many regions across the world, especially African territories of which Nigeria is not left out of this menace. The multiple occurrences of conflicts (Fulani/herders crises, ethnic/religious crises etc.), the Boko Haram terrorist attacks as well as the presence of ungoverned spaces, especially in the northern part of the country, serve as a breeding ground for various levels of insecurity to thrive which has further resulted into the killings and massive displacement of persons in the regions and also resulted into diverse implications for the northeast region and Nigeria as a whole.

One such implication is the destruction of health facilities in the northeastern states of Nigeria. Two-thirds of health facilities have been damaged by the conflict, forcing health workers to flee and clinics to be shut down; this resulted in people seeking medical care in other neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon, thereby adding to the pressure on limited health facilities in the host state (Omilusi, 2016). Also, the attacks of Boko Haram destabilised and restricted the duties of aid workers and downgraded the efficiency of security personnel in the region, as seen in the March 1st 2018, attack on Rann, Borno State, which killed eleven people, including three humanitarian workers and seven security personnel. In addition, the northeast remains highly endemic for diseases, including diarrhoea, due to various issues, including limited access to essential health care, vulnerabilities related to displacement and congested living conditions.

The situation is further worsened by unsafe water, inadequate hygiene and sanitation services linked to long-term structural deficiencies, and a general weakening of resilience in affected communities. Women and children, in particular, are left increasingly susceptible to disease outbreaks, including cholera. In 2018, cholera outbreaks affected 18 LGAs in the BAY states, with a total of 10,571 cases. In addition, 1.5 million people are considered at risk and require cholera prevention interventions (Humanitarian Response Strategy, 2019).

Furthermore, the insurgency and activities of banditry in northeast Nigeria have caused a widespread humanitarian crisis in the northeast, which has impacted the lives of millions of Nigerians, particularly women and children. In 2019, 7.1 million people (2.3 million girls, 1.9 million boys, 1.6 million women and 1.3 million men) needed humanitarian assistance in north-east Nigeria due to the Boko Haram crisis in its tenth year. The crisis has also resulted in massive and widespread abuse against civilians, including killings, rape and other sexual violence, abduction, child recruitment, burning of homes, arbitrary detention, and the use of explosive hazards, including deliberate attacks on civilian targets. Recently, 1.8 million persons are internally displaced, and new displacement continues due to various forms of insecurity (Humanitarian Response Strategy, 2019).

Another implication of the attacks of Boko Haram, banditry activities, Fulani/farmer herder's crises, and other forms of conflicts has devastated economic

activities in the region. It has specifically distorted the economic fortunes of Maiduguri, a city known to be one of the commercial centres in Western Sudan since the period of Trans-Saharan trade. The Maiduguri Monday Market, the biggest market in the city, has been affected by the persistent killings and bombings as many shop owners fled the city. Mass relocation of migrants, tourists, indigenous groups and investors relocate to safer areas in other parts of the country; in this situation, foreign direct investment is reduced, investment becomes unattractive to investors, and existing companies relocate to other safer states. Also, the insurgents' and bandits' threats to road transportation have restricted the movement of people, disrupted the supply of goods and hindered access to basic services, and raw farm produce (Iweze, 2011; Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro, 2013). A decade into the crisis, the protracted nature of displacement has eroded coping mechanisms, significantly weakened resilience, and heightened vulnerabilities. In Borno State, many affected populations remain dependent on assistance to meet their basic food needs due to ongoing hostilities and insecurity. Freedom of movement was restricted by the communities' inability to engage in livelihood and income-generating activities. In many areas across Borno State, market and trade routes continue to be disrupted due to insecurity and impassable roads during the rainy season.

Also, the insurgent attacks have affected the educational system in the region. Boko Haram attacks have stood as an obstacle to the development of the educational system. The Islamic militants have serially attacked schools, killing hundreds of students, kidnapping of students as hostages and destroying facilities in educational institutions in various parts of the northeast region continue to undermine that region's educational system, thereby hindering national development. The kidnap of 276 Chibok School Girls in Maiduguri in April 2014 and the Dapchi School Girls in Yobe State in 2018 have made schools shut down their academic programmes for security reasons and have drastically reduced those seeking admission into schools. It is on record that in 2015, over 500 teachers lost their lives, and 19,000 were displaced in different states of the northeast region. As a result of the increased attacks of Boko Haram on education, all schools in Borno State were closed from the 14th of March 2014, and roughly 253,000 children were out of school in 2013-2014.

At the end of 2014, Adamawa, Yobe and Borno States, Universal Basic Education Authorities reported a total of 338 schools destroyed. Also, posting of youth corps members for their one-year mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to the Northern part of the country is denied though some of them redeploy to other safe states as there is the fear of them losing their lives to these incessant attacks of Boko Haram, this undermines the core mandates of the 1973 Act of NYSC. These showcase the effect of these attacks on the educational sector in the region and in Nigeria as a whole (Omilusi, 2016; Shaba, 2015). To date, Boko Haram has perpetrated attacks on villages in the northeast to forcefully abduct young girls and women to occupy diverse roles to foster their terrorist goals. This is seen in the abduction of 110 Dapchi School Girls on the 19th of February, 2018 in Yobe State and the abduction of 317 Zamfara School girls in Jangebe Zamfara by bandits in February, 2021, among many others, thereby fostering a continuous increase in the recruitment of the female gender into violent activities (The News, 2021).

The impact of the crisis on the education system has also been severe, leaving generations of children without opportunities to learn and even more vulnerable. Since the conflict erupted in 2009, 611 teachers have been killed, 19,000 teachers displaced, 910 schools damaged or destroyed, and more than 1,500 schools forced to close. As a result, an estimated 900,000 children have lost access to learning, while 75 per cent of children in camps do not attend school. Seventy per cent of girls of primary school age are out of school in Borno State - the highest percentage in the country. Of those who do attend, 72 per cent are unable to read upon completion of grade six, while Borno State has the lowest literacy rates at only 35 per cent of female and 46 per cent of male adolescents (Humanitarian Response Strategy, 2019).

In addition, people staying in this region have continued to witness gross human rights abuses, severe violations of their rights according to international humanitarian law, and an infringement of their fundamental human rights of freedom of association and movement according to the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The 2015 United Nations Annual Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) outlined different areas in which Boko Haram has violated human rights and international humanitarian law right from the onset of their attacks

in 2009. The massive killings of over 200,000 civilians, both young and old, comprising of women and children, have been recorded since 2009; the abductions of young boys for indoctrination into the sect ideology and underage girls for sexual exploitations, forced marriages, forced pregnancies and forced religious conversion; also different forms of torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment of civilians; and the destruction and appropriation of properties to gain control over the territory and to prevent the rehabilitation of the affected victims back into the society, all have a significant effect on the future of citizens and the economy of Nigeria at large.

Furthermore, insurgent activities have been identified as an obstacle to sustainable development. The country's resources that should be used to achieve the growth of other sectors of the economy are being diverted to strengthen the country's security system. For instance, the one billion Naira of the 2017 budget was requested by President Muhammadu Buhari to purchase equipment for fighting Boko Haram in the Northeast (Agency Report, 2018; Omilusi, 2016).

Looking at the implications of the rise of the poverty rate in the country, before 2009, northeast Nigeria was plagued with high levels of poverty, and inequalities, including gender, underdevelopment, unemployment, poor governance, political marginalisation, weak justice systems and ecological degradation. In 2018, Nigeria overtook India as the country having the largest poor population. At the end of May 2018, research suggests that Nigeria had about 87 million people in extreme poverty, compared with India's 73 million. The situation is worsening by the day as extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, while poverty in India continues to fall by 31. In addition, Nigeria ranks 152 out of 187 on the Human Development Index (HDI), which is well below the average for sub-Saharan Africa (Humanitarian Response Strategy, 2019).

Furthermore, Internally Displaced Persons in this region are often unable to meet their needs as they continue to need health, protection, food, and shelter, among many others. The most severe and acute needs across these multiple sectors are concentrated in the areas of the ongoing Boko-Haram Conflict and areas hosting large numbers of IDPs which are located in all Local Government Areas of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. In the area of the health sector, IDPs are mostly at risk of

epidemic-prone diseases like cholera, measles, meningitis and viral hemorrhagic fevers such as Lassa and yellow fevers, while malaria continues to be the disease IDPs are more prone to as it accounts for over 50 per cent cases, especially during the rainy season. Food shortages have been one of the dire needs of IDPs in the Northeast region of Nigeria.

The 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview estimated about 3.9 million people in the six states are food insecure and facing food crises, emergencies, or famine situations. The worst affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa account for 3.7 million people in dire need of food security. The conflict in the region has hindered cultivation, cattle rearing and fisheries which used to account for 80 per cent of the livelihoods and are now primarily limited to secured areas of the states and catering for less than 15 per cent of the population. In IDP camps, food continues to be the greatest unmet need, with large numbers of IDPs reporting food as their greatest need. At the same time, those living in host communities cite farming as their predominant source of livelihood, which continues to be hindered by the Military Security constraints, Boko-Haram and Fulani/Farmer's herders Conflict.

Effects of Covid-19 on IDPs in Northeast Nigeria

The effects of COVID-19 on IDP in the northeast may not be seen as many of its victims may die before they are diagnosed and recorded accordingly as there is overcrowding in IDPs camps, limited capacity and space for testing, insufficient testing kits and insufficient essential equipment in health centres, limited and inaccessible healthcentres, the inaccessible population in conflict-prone areas. Before COVID-19, 35 per cent of health facilities in the affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) were damaged due to the conflict. Of the 2,631 health facilities in BAY states, 23 per cent are either damaged or 12.4 per cent non-functional, while only 11.4 per cent are partially functional. This greatly strains the functional facilities as the Covid-19 pandemic remains a major public health concern in the Northeastern states. As at 9th May 2021, 2,870 were reported in the BAY states, with 79 deaths. In the BAY states, 66 per cent of the cases were in Borno and 25 per cent from Adamawa. The sparse coverage of COVID-19 testing of IDPs in the BAY states and the low reliability of estimates of morbidity and mortality means the actual number of cases is almost certainly much higher than the reported number (NCDC, 2021; OCHA, 2021)

The impact of an outbreak of COVID-19 on the food security and nutrition situation in the North-East affected populations that previously were not part of humanitarian targets and increased the number of vulnerable persons in need of the mitigation measures such as the lockdown and closure of the border. The COVID-19 outbreak severely hampered the capacity of humanitarian actors to serve affected communities by impeding supply chains and resulting in fatal delivery delays to the people in need of humanitarian relief.

The effects of COVID-19 on the Peace and Security conditions in the North-East could be catastrophic as it further erodes an already fragile social fabric and undo the gains made in deepening foundations for peace and stability in the region. Violent extremist groups have used moments of disasters or epidemics to enhance their recruitment through propaganda to exploit marginalised portions of the population. In addition, Covid-19 outbreaks in strategic military camps could pose significant security risks as they could weaken military capabilities and present opportunities for non-state armed groups to expand their areas of influence. Furthermore, the lockdown might disrupt peacebuilding efforts by humanitarian and security actors in this fragile context. The spread of COVID-19 into the communities and the restrictive measures to contain it will most likely disrupt these interventions with the likelihood of relapse into violence.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that underlying factors in the northeast, such as high levels of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, inequality, underdevelopment, and the ineffectiveness of government in ungoverned spaces, among many others, were a driving force to the emergence of various levels of insecurities ranging from ethnic/religious violence, political violence, Fulani/herdsmen clashes and Boko Haram Insurgency; and this further led to the massive

displacement of people both internally and externally, the destruction of lives and properties, the collapse of economic activities, the destruction of health facilities and the educational system among many other sectors of the region. In addition, the study reveals that the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has further hindered the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, as measures taken by the Federal Government, which include restriction of movements, closure of border, travel bans to and from high-risk countries with community transmissions of COVID-19 among others have had diverse socio-economic implications (NCDC, 2021).

In line with this, the Nigerian government's initiative in response to the acute humanitarian needs of IDPs in the Northeast was through the creation of an advisory body, the Presidential Committee on the Northeast Initiative. This body is meant to streamline support to the IDOs through holistic efforts backed by robust fundraising. The Federal Government, through the office of the Vice President, initiated two projects to foster and educate children who have become orphans due to the insurgency. Phase one of the projects has just been completed for eight thousand young children housed and schooled, while the second phase is ongoing. Inclusively, there should be a collective and collaborative effort by both local and international humanitarian agencies working around collective outcomes to collectively reduce risk, vulnerabilities and the needs of IDPs in the region (International Peace Institute, 2018).

In conclusion, IDPs should be increased testing and vaccination, which will invariably lead to more cases being identified and more IDPs being protected from the Covid 19 virus. There should also be continued efforts to expedite the procurement of additional kits, including the 10,000 kits provided by the United Nations, which is still ongoing. Measures also should be taken by the Federal Government to step up funding of the healthcare system to address the twin effects of the conflict and the Covid-19 pandemic.

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