

Response Capacity of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to Crises of Existence: Challenges of Insurgency-displaced Persons in North-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

The crisis of existence and challenges of insurgency-displaced persons in the North-eastern Nigeria have assumed colossal calamities, including loss of lives and intense sufferings, despite the coordinated response of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) with other stakeholders. This study aimed at assessing the response capacity of NEMA to the plights of the affected persons in North-eastern Nigeria. The study utilized a mixed research designs, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A sample size of 500 respondents was purposively selected in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. While, quantitative data were generated through (8) Key Informant Interview (KII) using snowballing sampling technique. The findings revealed that the response of NEMA towards ameliorating the plights of the insurgency-affected persons included documentation of their profiles, Need Assessment Inquiry, distributing relief materials, re-union of missing victims with family members, and provision of prerequisite training to relevant disasters responders. The study found that the operational capacity of NEMA is characterized by strong management and coordinating capacity, strong operational synergy with other disaster responders. While insufficient logistic and funding capacity, corruption among NEMA officials and weak legal response capacity impeded the operational performance of NEMA the study concluded that NEMA has strong operational capacity but weak legal foundation to ameliorate the plights of the IDPs. The Study recommended improved funding of the Agency and enactment of IDP-specific constitutional roles to enhance maximum amelioration of the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: Plights; Insurgency Displaced Persons, North-eastern Nigeria

Introduction

In recent years, the act of insurgency has become an acute reality across the world. Many countries have witnessed both internal and external subversive activities of insurgent groups, who violently confront constituted authorities for one reason or the other (Adamu and Rasheed, 2016). For instance, the insurgency war in Yemen between the Houthi insurgents and the government led to humanitarian disasters, including over 100,000 deaths and displacement of more than 2,000,000 people (International Red Cross, 2018).

The rise of violent extremism groups remains one of Africa's most pressing security challenge as the continent has been ravaged by terrorist activities. Most notable of the insurgent sects in North Africa is the Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) which has a working alliance with the global Al-Qaeda network (Imasen, 2014). While in East Africa, violent extremist attacks are carried out intermittently by militant religious groups. In the West and Central Africa sub-regions, the Boko Haram insurgency has ravaged virtually all the countries within the Lake Chad region, especially Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun and Niger, which led to the death of over 100,000 persons with properties worth over \$6 billion destroyed (Relief Web, 2020).

The Boko-Haram sect has a firm base in the North-eastern states of Nigeria with Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States as the epicenter of insurgents destructive activities. The Boko Haram has carried out devastating attacks on different segments of the socio-economic life of Nigerians, especially those living in North-eastern Nigeria. Apart from creating a mass scenario of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), insurgency has also generated 177,000 refugees in neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and the Niger Republic (Reliefweb, 2020).

In particular, the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria have become a formidable challenge with intense human sufferings, including hunger, insecurity, and death, among other growing humanitarian crises (Ashley, 2020). Conversely, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has primarily been responsible for the coordination of the stakeholders efforts at curtailing the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria since 2009 (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). Despite their efforts, intense suffering persists in many IDP camps in North-eastern Nigeria. It is for this reason that this study examines the response capacity and challenges of NEMA to the plights of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The crisis confronting insurgency-displaced persons have assumed a disturbing phenomenon in North-eastern Nigeria. Though NEMA continues to intervene as primary responder to the plights of the displaced persons with the provision of relief materials and resettlement packages. The agency also coordinates the activities of other responders to the plights of the IDPs, including the security agencies, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and international donor agencies. Despite the above central roles of NEMA in the direct and indirect management of the IDPs, the present living condition of displaced persons is still very worrisome.

Despite the central role of NEMA in responding to the plights of insurgency displaced persons, no critical studies have been carried out to examine the response capacity of the

agency to the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria, a gap this study intends to bridge.

Objectives of the Study

It is to assess the response capacity of NEMA to the plights of insurgency- displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria. Others are to:

- i. identify the plights of insurgency-affected persons in North-eastern Nigeria;
- ii. examine the operational response of NEMA to the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria; and
- iii. appraise the contributions of NEMA in ameliorating the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria.

Review of Literature

Insurgency and Internally Displaced Persons in North-eastern Nigeria

According to Raji *et' al* (2021), the plights of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria have become a formidable global challenge with overwhelming disastrous implications for human development. Such Challenge include hunger, insecurity, and death, among other growing humanitarian crises (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). As noted by the authors, Since 2009, North-eastern Nigeria, which consists of six states that include Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba has largely been challenged by internal displacement crisis as the States continue to remain the epicenter of insurgent activities in North-eastern Nigeria since 2009.

During the peak of the crisis, the south-wards expansion of the Boko Haram activities culminated in the invasion of Madagali and Michika Local Government Areas of Adamawa State. Mubi, the capital of the Mubi Local Government Area and the second-largest commercial town in the State was temporarily overrun and occupied by the insurgents. The palpable fear led to a mass exodus of IDPs into Yola; the Adamawa State capital where they took refuge in seven camps while others reside within the host communities. The insurgent threat also led to the forced closure of the Adamawa State University, Mubi (Samuel, 2020). According to International Committee of the Red Cross (2016), there are more than 2,000,000 displaced persons across the Northeast along 120,000 Nigerian displaced refugees from the area to the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger in 2018. The DTM (2020) Round 33 Report put the number of internally displaced persons in the Northeast states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, and Taraba at 2, 118,550 cutting across 436,058 households as of August 2020 (Ashley, 2020).

One of the implications of the phenomenon of insurgency is human displacement, which still remain one of the most tragic experiences of the victims having disrupted their socio-economic stability through loss of homes, jobs, and family members. While establishing the relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and internal displacement in Nigeria, Ajijola (2017) found that since the insurgents began their campaign of terror against the Nigerian state in 2009, several people across North-eastern Nigeria have been forced to flee their homes to safer places, the outcome of which is an unprecedented humanitarian crisis for the country. The author observes further that apart from being displaced physically from their ancestral homes, IDPs have also been displaced psychologically, emotionally, and socio-economically, which

often leads to traumatic distress for the victims.

The Assessment Capacity Project (ACP) (2018) identifies eight potential risks that every insurgency displaced person faces. These include landlessness, which removes the main foundation upon which the displaced productive capacity, denial of commercial activities and livelihoods of dependent, especially in the rural area where the livelihood of many residents is based on the agricultural produce; thus, reducing their chance of tension-free life. Joblessness is another fundamental feature of insurgency displacement as job loss is very high among the displaced population. Job loss among the IDPs is essentially noticeable in both the rural and urban sectors, especially among those who are self-employed as agricultural laborers or industrial workers. Loss of shelter or homelessness is a major feature of displacement, such loss of a family's home along with their cultural heritage often results in alienation and social status deprivation. Forced displacement leads to loss of access to common property resources, including pastures, forested lands, water bodies, quarries, and agricultural land, community schools, which serve common and collective purposes for the displaced in their natural habitats.

NEMA and Disaster Management in Nigeria

The performance of NEMA in managing disasters in Nigeria over the years has also come under intense scrutiny. A critical segment of the society; the Civil Liberty Organization of Nigeria contends that NEMA has not performed optimally in the discharge of its statutory functions while NEMA claim to be doing its best relative to available resources (Akujobi, 2016). NEMA's efforts towards disaster prevention and mitigation in the views of Ajijola (2015) are grossly hampered by underfunding and lack of technical competence, while also noting that lack of awareness and education about disasters are part of the causal factors of victim's vulnerability. The author suggests that NEMA should build a culture of disaster prevention and mitigation with effective mechanism to identify all potential hazard areas in Nigeria. He observes further that most safety regulations, including building codes, clearing of drainages and water ways, traffic regulations, environmental protection and health safety measures are hardly enforced by NEMA in Nigeria. Similarly, Ajah (2011) observes that NEMA is not ensuring the implementation of many of the regulations and laws meant to improve disaster mitigation in Nigeria noting further that safety regulations relating to building codes and high rise buildings, among others, are not been optimally enforced. Adewole (2011) posits that poor coordination during response activities is one major problem confronting NEMA. As noted by the author, during the flood disaster of 2012 in Nigeria, many responding organizations were working at cross purposes due to poor coordination of assigned responsibilities to save lives and property.

Ajijola (2017) posits that the greatest challenge facing NEMA is how to bridge the gap between relief and recovery. As noted by the author, victims of disasters whose means of livelihood were ruined are usually left to fend for themselves after the initial response relief is provided while most communities whose infrastructures were damage remain unattended to for years unending. Adamu and Rasheed (2016) observes that NEMA lack the capacity to deliver on its responsibility of monitoring the state of preparedness of other stakeholders due to lack of interest and enthusiasm of many stakeholders towards training on disaster

management and their unwillingness to be coordinated, there is also the problem of poor funding of training programs and government inconsistency in disaster management policies, posits the author. Annan (1999) counsels that while the costs of disaster prevention have to be paid in the present, its benefits lie in a distant future. Though the benefits of disaster prevention are not tangible; they are the disasters that did not happen. The author notes further that a comprehensive country-wide threat and vulnerability assessment is fundamental to building a culture of disaster prevention and mitigation in Nigeria.

What has been distilled from this review is that insurgency appeared to have been responsible for internal displacement in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria and that the IDPs are facing series of challenges in the camp while lack of optimal capacity for effective coordination of the activities of the numerous responders to the plights of the IDPs, inadequate training of NEMA on search and rescue missions and poor equipment, among others, are the bane of optimal responses to the needs of the IDPs by NEMA in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Structural Theory as its theoretical framework of analysis. The Structural theory as expanded by Rose (1998) and Paul (2003) explains the immediate and underlying factors which directly or indirectly lead to human displacement from their natural habitat. As noted in the theory, while political, economic, and social factors are critical factors responsible for the displacement of people, structural factors, including conflictive inter-group politics, lack of social justice, weak state institutions, and discriminatory political institutions, bitter religious and inter-tribal acrimonies and inter-group fragmentation are largely responsible for human displacement. Other structural factors for mass displacement include national security challenges, internal and cross-border criminality, and insurgency. The author also identified demographic factors such as environmental pollution, deforestation, drought, and natural disasters as key factors for human displacement. Other sources of demographic-induced displacement are overpopulation, natural disaster, weak economic opportunities, and non-integrated social institutions, which put pressure on human settlement. As noted by Rose (1998), some of these factors, especially violent political competition, natural calamities; such as famine and drought, inter-tribal acrimony, internal and cross border criminality, among others, often lead to forced displacement while socio-economic factors, especially weak employment opportunities and overpopulation could lead to voluntary displacement.

Arguing specifically on the structural politico-economy and power relations factors for insurgent induced internal displacement, Paul (2003) finds that there is a weak structural relationship between the government, the governed and socio-political and economic institutional structures put in place for achieving citizens' personal and group development aspirations. The author posits further that once conflict has amplified up to the crisis level between the government and the governed or among the governed, it often raises other social calamities, including the proliferation of arms, socio-economic dislocation, intense hardship, destruction of lives and property, the devastation of infrastructural facilities and human displacement, which leads further to human sufferings. And that the sustained conflict does prevent conflict victims, especially the internally displaced to get maximum relief assistance from disaster responders who are sometimes attacked by the belligerent fighters through land

and air strikes leading to more epidemic disasters, including diseases because of overcrowded conditions in the IDPs camps.

The structural theory is apt and relevant for this study because the Boko Haram insurgency, which has led to the continued rise in the number of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria, is a by-product of poor governance and religious extremism, which is largely unregulated by the government. The theory offers deep insight into the interlocking factors that sustain insurgency and IDPs in Northern Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted mixed research design, which consisted of the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Thus, 3 In-depth interview (IDI) were conducted with insurgency displaced persons, 2 Key Informant Interview (KII) were conducted with key officials from NEMA, 2 KII were conducted with high-ranking traditional rulers, 3 KII with relevant security agencies manning the IDPs camps in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. The qualitative method provided a first-hand information on the plights of insurgency-affected persons and responsibility of NEMA towards the victims While, a total of 500 samples were selected across the three States using purposive sampling technique. Secondary data such as books, online materials, newspapers and documentaries were consulted to compliment the primary data. Data derived from questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis, while the data obtained through KII and IDI were analyzed using content analysis to identify trends and patterns relevant to the research objectives.

Results and Discussions

Plights of insurgency-displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria

In response to the question on the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in the North-eastern Nigeria, the data derived from the questionnaire shows that there are numerous plights facing insurgency displaced persons as shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' View on the plights of insurgency displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria;

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Displacement from natural place of abode	Neutral	8	1.6
	Strongly Disagree	35	7.2
	Disagree	92	18.8
	Strongly Agree	221	45.2
	Agree	133	27.2
Total		489	100.0
Loss of means of livelihood	Neutral	6	1.2
	Strongly Disagree	20	4.1
	Disagree	26	5.3
	Strongly Agree	257	52.6
	Agree	180	36.8
Total		489	100.0

Psychological depression from death of close relatives	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly Disagree	32	6.5
	Disagree	51	10.4
	Strongly Agree	285	58.4
	Agree	116	23.7
Total		489	100.0
Gender based Violence	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly Disagree	35	7.2
	Disagree	65	13.3
	Strongly Agree	294	60.1
	Agree	90	18.4
Total		489	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 1 shows that 354 respondents (72.4%) agreed that the plights of insurgency affected persons revolves around displacement from natural place of abode, 127 respondents (26%) disagreed while 8 respondents (1.6%) was neutral. In addition, 437 respondents (89.4%) agreed that the plights of insurgency-affected persons were lost of means of livelihood. In addition, 46 respondents (9.4%) disagreed and 6 respondents (1.2%) was neutral. The table also confirmed that 401 respondents (82.1%) agreed that the plights of insurgency-affected persons were psychological depression from loss of close relatives, 83 respondents (16.9%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral. More so, 384 respondents (78.5%) opined that the plights of insurgency-affected persons were gender based violent, 100 respondents (20.5%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral.

In support of the quantitative data on the plights of insurgency displaced persons in the North-eastern Nigeria, a respondent asserts that:

Displacement has drastically affected the living conditions and social cohesion of the affected population and communities. Many individuals and families fled from insurgency and lost all their productive assets, homes, and possessions. Particularly, the education system was affected as many Schools were damaged and destroyed, and teachers were threatened and in some cases killed

IDI/ IDPs/Maiduguri/ Borno State/ June, 2024

In similar vein, another respondent narrated the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in the camp, as he put it:

Some of the female inmates in the IDPs camp are lured by the stakeholders and strangers from outside with little financial token for sexual gratifications while there are incidences of outright rape in some instances. Shortage of accommodation is a major plight confronting us. In fact, many of the camps are not adequately fit for human shelter. The recent flood disaster has compounded our plights as more people are moved into the camp.

IDI/ IDP/ Damaturu/ Yobe State/ March, 2024

Above narration affirmed that the plights of insurgency displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria are multi-dimensional in nature.

Specific Intervention of NEMA towards ameliorating the plights of insurgency displaced persons

Table 2: shows the respondents' views on the specific contribution of NEMA towards ameliorating the plights of the insurgency-displaced person in North-eastern Nigeria

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
profiling and documentation of insurgent victims and their needs	Neutral	7	1.4
	Strongly	31	6.3
	Disagree	78	16.0
	Strongly	248	50.7
	Agree	125	25.6
	Total	489	100.0
re-integration of missing insurgency victims with family members	Neutral	7	1.4
	Strongly	30	6.1
	Disagree	39	8.1
	Strongly	229	46.8
	Agree	184	37.6
	Total	489	100.0
Distribution of relief materials to insurgent victims	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly	22	4.5
	Disagree	51	10.4
	Strongly	335	68.6
	Agree	76	15.5
	Total	489	100.0
Providing training to disasters responders	Neutral	9	1.8
	Strongly	59	12.1
	Disagree	39	8.1
	Strongly	295	60.3
	Agree	87	17.7
	Total	489	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 2 shows that 373 respondents (76.3%) agreed that NEMA intervened in profiling and documentation of the population of IDPs towards ameliorating the plights of the IDP in North-eastern Nigeria, 109 respondents (19.3%) disagreed while 7 respondents (1.4%) was neutral. In addition, 413 respondents (84.4%) agreed that NEMA intervened in re-integration of missing insurgency victims with family members were NEMA contribution, 69 respondents (14.2%) disagreed and 7 respondents (1.4%) was neutral. The table also revealed that 411 respondents (84.1%) agreed that NEMA intervened in amelioration the plights of the IDPS by distributing

relief materials, 73 respondents (14.9%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral. More so, 382 respondents (78%) opined that NEMA intervened by providing training to relevant disasters responders on how to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs 98 respondents (20.2%) disagreed and 9 respondents (1.8%) were neutral. While confirming the findings on Table 2, a respondent assert that:

NEMA has carried out in collaboration with the State Emergency Management Agencies within the North-east, the registrations of the IDPs in the camps, from where about two million inmates were registered as of 2019. The Agency also provided telephone facilities in the camps for IDPs to make contacts with their relatives for possible reintegration with missing relatives. **(KII/ Camp Commander/ Maiduguri-Borno State/July, 2023)**

In the area of palliative distribution, another respondent confirmed that:

In terms of ameliorating the plights of IDPs through palliative support to reduce hunger and food shortages, NEMA has so far released Eight Hundred Million (N800, 000,000.00) Naira to supply food items to the IDPs in the North-east while the distribution is ongoing. Part of the money was used by NEMA to purchase 200,000 bags of maize, 50,000 bags of rice and 250,000, a bag of millet for distribution to the IDPs camps in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, with Borno, allocated more than half of the food items because of a larger concentration of the IDPs in the state. **(KII/ Red Cross Volunteer/ Maiduguri-Borno State/April, 2023)**

A respondent who works with NEMA confirmed the increase in food ratio to the IDPs. According to him:

We have critically assessed the food needs in the camp and the complaint of the inmates and what we have done is to double what we were earlier given to the IDPs. What we are giving them now is 8.4kg as against the 4.5kg they were collecting. The standard practice all over the world is 10.6kg so I think we are not doing badly in that regard **(K11/Female/NEMA Officer/Madagali-Adamawa State/ June,2023)**

In his rating of NEMA in the area of palliative support, an interviewee opines that:

NEMA has been supporting us in diverse areas. In the area of accommodation, the agency constructed over 3,000 tents to bridge the shortfalls in the make-shift apartments offered to the inhabitants by state government to accommodate more IDPs. NEMA has been providing drugs to major Hospitals in North-eastern Nigeria for the Treatment of Victims of Insurgency (TVI) free of charge. Also, NEMA has been assisting inmates by enthroning skill empowerment programs to prepare them for

post-camp resettlement through relevant skills training and providing them with working tools. (KII/IDP/Maiduguri-Borno State/July, 2023)

The above findings confirm that NEMA has made credible input towards the amelioration of the plights of the IDPs with a reasonable measure of satisfaction.

Table 3: Shows respondents' views on the response capacity of NEMA to the plights of insurgency-displaced persons.

Variables:	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
strong management coordinating capacity	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly	58	11.9
	Disagree	70	14.3
	Disagree	144	29.4
	Agree	212	43.4
	Total	489	100.0
Strong Legal capacity	Neutral	4	0.8
	Strongly	45	9.2
	Disagree	64	13.1
	Strongly Agree	116	23.7
	Agree	260	53.2
	Total	489	100.0
strong Logistic capacity	Neutral	8	1.6
	Strongly	57	11.7
	Disagree	82	16.8
	Strongly Agree	158	32.3
	Agree	184	37.6
	Total	489	100.0
strong funding capacity for operations	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly	43	8.8
	Disagree	52	10.6
	Strongly Agree	276	56.4
	Agree	113	23.2
	Total	489	100.0
strong operational synergy with other disaster responders	Neutral	6	1.2
	Strongly	44	9.0
	Disagree	65	13.3
	Strongly Agree	143	29.2
	Agree	231	47.3
	Total	489	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 3 indicates that 356 respondents (72.8%) agreed that the operational capacity of NEMA was characterized by strong management coordinating capacity, 128 respondents (26.2%) disagreed, while 5 respondents (1%) was neutral. In addition, 376 respondents (76.9%) agreed that NEMA has Strong Operational Legal capacity, 109 respondents (22.3%) disagreed and 4 respondents (0.8%) was neutral. The table also revealed that 342 respondents (69.9%) agreed that NEMA operates on strong logistic capacity, 139 respondents (28.5%) disagreed and 8 respondents (1.6%) were neutral. More so, 389 respondents (79.6%) agreed that NEMA is premised on strong funding capacity for operations, 95 respondents (19.4%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral. Table 3 equally revealed that 374 respondents (76.5%) agreed that NEMA has a strong operational synergy with other disaster responders, 109 respondents (22.3%) disagreed and 6 respondents (1.2%) were neutral.

While confirming the strong management coordinating capacity of NEMA, an interviewee affirmed that:

By coordinating the activities and support of voluntary organizations and other emergency responders engaged in disaster relief operations in North-eastern Nigeria, NEMA has been able to maximally harness resources to rescue many insurgency victims (**KII/ Red Cross Volunteer/ Maiduguri-Borno State/April, 2023**).

Conversely, an interviewee points out the coordinating challenges of NEMA, which serves at its operational weakness as he opines that:

Though NEMA is strong at coordinating the efforts to ameliorate the plights of insurgency victims in North-eastern Nigeria, the Agency is also challenged by the weak coordinating capacity of due to its inability to adequately coordinate other responders for the optimal management of the IDPs. For instance, the distribution of relief materials to the IDPs is the primary responsibility of NEMA officials; this responsibility is often hijacked by security personnel to enable them to divert the resources. (**KII/Civil Society Activist/Damaturu-Yobe State/December, 2023**)

Another interviewee asserts further that:

Although NEMA has developed several Response Plans to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs in the North-East, these plans are rarely subjected to pilot tests, at least in one camp, to confirm their efficacy and get responders acquainted with their roles, and internalize their standard operating procedures for the optimal benefits of insurgency-affected victims. **KII/Civil Society Activist/Damaturu-Yobe State/December, 2023**

An interviewee revealed the inadequate legal capacity of NEMA to respond to the plights of the insurgency displaced victims, as he contended that:

While NEMA has adequate legal coverage to respond to national disaster generally, there is no provision in the constitution that focused its activities on the IDPs specifically. Thus the Agency has a relatively weak legal foundation along difficult operational terrains. Within the confines of legal ambit, the IDPs live within the borders of their own country while the responsibility for their protection and assistance rests on their national government, unlike the refugees whose protection is guaranteed in international law. However, due to the lack of precise and codified domestic laws to protect the IDPs in Nigeria, their protection has been incoherent, fragmented, and on an ad-hoc basis. (**KII/ IDPs Camp Commander/Yola-Adamawa, November, 2022**)

The findings confirmed that NEMA has the capacity to ameliorate the plights of insurgency displaced persons but such capacity is not strong enough to eliminate their total calamity from the insurgency experience.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study shows that the Boko Haram insurgency was primarily responsible for internal displacement in North-eastern Nigeria with tremendous negative impacts on the victims many of whom are currently displaced as refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). This finding confirms Fatile (2015) and Raji, *et, al* (2021) earlier discoveries that insurgency currently account for 98 percent of displacement in North-eastern Nigeria. It is quite evident from this finding that insurgents need to be contained to ensure the safety of the inhabitants of North-eastern Nigeria.

Conversely, it is evident that the intervention of NEMA has helped to ameliorate the suffering of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria in collaboration with other relevant responders. Thus, NEMA contributed by profiling and documenting the IDPs and responded to much of their needs by re-integrated and re-united missing insurgency victims with family members, distributing relief materials, and provided training to relevant disasters responders on how to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs. Despite these relative achievements, NEMA has been finding it increasingly difficult to manage the plethora of IDP crises due to logistic and financial problems that essentially borders on their large numbers and scarcity of resources to adequately fund the IDPs projects by NEMA. As found in the study, NEMA, needs N4 billion quarterly to take care of the IDPs in the three affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, out of which N1.1 billion are made available quarterly for the purpose. This amount is grossly inadequate. NEMA sources much of its IDPs funding from non-governmental organizations but the economic recession, which was largely caused by the COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria and global economic meltdown, has dwindled funding by donor agencies. The above unfavorable trends leave NEMA in financial limbo most of the time to adequately care for the IDPs thus confirming the presumption that NEMA has no sufficient financial capacity to adequately ameliorate the sufferings of the IDPs. This finding corresponds with Ajijola (2015)

who found that NEMA's efforts towards disaster prevention and mitigation are grossly hampered by underfunding and lack of technical competence.

The capacity of NEMA to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs is also challenged by weak coordinating capacity of the Agency due to lack of effective coordination of the efforts of the numerous responders by NEMA for proper management of the IDPs. NEMA responders include local and international relief agencies, security agencies, and medical personnel but sometimes, many of these responders encroach into NEMA's areas of responsibilities while abandoning their primary roles due to improper coordination of duties. For instance, the distribution of relief materials to the IDPs is the primary responsibility of NEMA officials; this responsibility is often hijacked by security personnel for primordial motives, including diversion of relief materials. Although NEMA has developed several response plans to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs in the North-east, these plans are rarely subjected to pilot tests, at least in one camp to confirm their efficacy and get responders acquainted with their roles to enhance the internalization of their standard operating procedures. This position aligns with the submission of Adewole (2011) who posits that poor coordination during response activities is one major problem confronting NEMA.

NEMA is also bedeviled by training and logistic problems. Many of the responders are hardly trained on rescue operations. Thus, inadequate training of responders on search and rescue missions and other requisite skills are challenging to the success of NEMA in its task of responding to the plights of the IDPs. The current standard of NEMA's operational equipment is very low to respond adequately to the plights of the IDPs. The agency needs well-equipped mobility, including helicopters, vehicles, and communication gadgets, among others, for quicker responses to rescue operations in the camps, most especially in Gwoza and Konduga camps where the Boko Haram fighters still lay siege to attack relief workers and divert relief materials for their use.

Other critical factors that were responsible for weak responses of NEMA to the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria as found in this study include weak legal foundation. Within the confines of legal ambit, the IDPs live within the borders of their own country while the responsibility for their protection and assistance rests on the government. However, due to the lack of precise and codified domestic laws to protect the IDPs in Nigeria, their protection has been incoherent, fragmented, and on an ad-hoc and humanitarian basis without any specific constitutional mandate for NEMA to specifically focus on the IDPs. These non-protective legal gaps have worsened the intractable position the IDPs have found themselves as citizens as the capacity of NEMA to effectively manage internally displaced persons is mainly limited to providing short-term solutions on the humanitarian ground rather than legal.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the Boko Haram insurgency was primarily responsible for internal displacement in North-eastern Nigeria and that the displacement created serious crisis of existence and challenges of survival for the victims. The study equally concluded that NEMA has contributed a lot to the de-escalation of the immense suffering of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria. However, though the agency has recorded reasonable measure of achievements in

managing the plights of the IDPs in the affected areas, it currently has no optimal operational response capacity to perform these tasks due to the protracted nature of the insurgency and limited funding of its operations. The agency is also incapacitated by legal, coordinating, logistics, and operational inhibitions. The study therefore concluded that NEMA is in the best position to ameliorate the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria if adequately supported by relevant laws and specific operational legal mandates to tackle the plights of the insurgency displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the optimal response of NEMA to the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria. NEMA should be legally mandated to specifically focus on the amelioration of the plights of the IDPs and the agency should be well equipped, trained, and financed by relevant stakeholders, including the federal and state governments to curtail the current challenges facing the IDPs in the camps.

The NEMA should harmonize the operations of all agencies working with it for better coordination and optimal performances while stiffer penalties, including long term imprisonment, should be meted out to any responder caught diverting relief materials meant for the IDPs by the concerned authorities to serve as deterrence to others.

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