

Internally Displaced Persons and Emerging Security Challenges: an Assessment of the Bakassi Refugee Camp in Cross River State, Nigeria

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A b s t r a c t

The sudden rise in the numbers of internally displaced persons in Nigeria has become an issue of national concern. Many Nigerians have been displaced as a result of natural disaster, ethnic-religion conflicts, communal clash, the ruling of the International Court of Justice, as in the case of ceding Bakassi in Cross River State to the Republic of Cameroon and the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East has increased the number. States of the federation are not immune as they have suffered one form of disaster or the other and people have been displaced from the original homes. This unhealthy situation, if not properly managed will lead to criminality and a new breed of insurgent groups in the country. This paper is therefore designed to examine current trends in the rise of IDPs and consequent security challenges in Nigeria. The study adopts the Frustration-Aggression theory of John Dollard, Leonard Berkowitz and Aubrey Yates (1962) is adopted to explain and predict the variables of the study. Exploratory research technique is employed and data are generated mainly from secondary sources. This necessitates the use of the qualitative technique in analysing the data. Findings show that IDP camps may become a breeding ground for criminality, insurgency, sexual abuses and another form of social vices, and this constitutes security challenges for the country. The study advocates for a model to integrate displaced persons into the society.

Keywords: *Internally displaced persons, Security, Frustration-aggression, Criminality, Insurgency*

Background to the Study

Insecurity no doubt has retarded development in all ramifications in Nigeria and investors are scared away. The primary function of any responsible government is to provide security for lives and property and welfare of their people are taken seriously. Insecurity in any environment constitutes a threat to lives and properties, hinders economic activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, and in turn, retards the human and economic development of that nation. Nigeria is in a serious danger and looking at the position insecurity has put the giant country in Africa, a situation where there is an increasing number of refugee camps in the country, with inadequate strategies for resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The economic, social and environmental challenges posed by internal displacement in the country affects every facet of human life, the states and the nation in general. It suffices to note that between 2009 and 2015, the Federal Government, States, Local Governments, Private Organizations and individuals have spent over 3trillion naira in the course of ameliorating the effects of insecurity on the IDPs, rehabilitations and reconstructions of those properties destroyed resulting from the insecurity in Nigeria especially in the north (Bassey, 2017).

Empirical studies have established that despite efforts of the United Nations, its organs and other non-governmental organizations collaborating with the government of Nigeria to ameliorate the conditions of IDPs and rehabilitate the victims, there are daunting challenges confronting victims of terrorist attacks in Nigeria. It is admitted further by Olawale (2015) that there's a wide gap of commitment to the welfare, security and rehabilitation of IDPs from the federal and state authorities (Afegbua, 2010, Azazi, 2011, Olawale, 2015). The case of Bakassi refugee resettlement camp in Cross River State is an emerging concern. This unhealthy situation, if not properly managed will lead to criminality and a new breed of insurgent groups in the country. Advancing strategic efforts to address this trend is the focus of this study.

Methodology

This study is an explorative one hence it benefits solely from secondary data which were obtained from existing literature and relevant governmental as well as non-governmental data banks.

Theoretical Discourse

The study adopts the Frustration-Aggression theory of John Dollard, Leonard Berkowitz and Aubrey Bates (1962) is adopted to explain and predict the variables of the study. Frustration is the "condition which exists when a goal-response suffers interference," while aggression is defined as "an act whose goal-response is an injury to an organism (or organism surrogate)." According to Freud's early psychoanalytic theory, many of our actions are determined by instincts, particularly the sexual instinct. When expression of these instincts is frustrated, an aggressive drive is induced. Later some theorists broadened this frustration-aggression hypothesis to the following claim: whenever a person's effort to reach any goal is blocked, an aggressive drive is induced that motivates behaviour to injure the obstacle (person or objects) causing the frustration (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, Daryl & Hoeksema, 1993).

Frustration-aggression produces aggression; aggression never occurs without prior frustration (Wiggins, Wiggins & Vander, 1994). Frustration creates anger, which may in some people generate aggression, especially in the presence of an aggressive cue (Myers, 1996). It leads deviant behaviours. Refugees in Bakassi are faced with a lot of challenges with least to aggression and frustration. It ranges from poor health, education, loss of social identity, family and communal life to dehumanization of men, women and children especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as an instrument of war. There is deepening hunger, starvation and poverty, which leads to criminality as a survival strategy.

Literature Review

Displaced persons are those who have been forced or obliged or flee to have cause to leave their home or place of habitual residence in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural or human made disaster (Ladan, 2012). These people when within their own border are referred to as internally displaced persons and if (they) cross an internationally recognized state border are called refugee (OCHA, 2003; UN, 2004). The definition of IDPs has two major components which are the coercive or involuntary character of the movement and the fact that such movement takes place between national border (Durosaro and Ajiboye, 2011).

On the other hand, security is a concept that is prior to the state and the state exists to promote that concept (Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2013 cited in Olabanji and Ese, 2014). Security is the prime responsibility of the state (Hobbes, 1996). The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specifically states that “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary concern of the government” (FRN, 1999). It is not an exaggeration to state that the constitutional responsibility of Nigerian government to provide security for her subjects has in one way or the other failed due to the inability of the government to provide a secured and safe environment for lives and properties and even that of economic activities.

The alarming rate of insecurity in Nigeria has increased; the crime rate and terrorist attacks in different parts of the country leaving people in the north is an unpalatable situation by rendering them homelessness. The term security according to Akin (2008) is the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons' influences and nations. It is the existence of condition within which people of the society can go about their normal activities without any threat to their lives and properties. Igbuzor (2011), it demands safety from chronic threats and protections from harmful disruption.

Security, however, can be described as stability and continuity of livelihood, predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm, safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance of knowing that one is wanted, loved, accepted and protected in one's community or neighbourhood and by people around (Ibrahim and Azubuike, 2014).

To reduce crime rate, the Federal Government of Nigeria passed the Anti-Terrorism ACT in 2011, Installation of Computer-Based Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV), in some parts of the country, enhancement of Surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring potential attacks, strengthening of the security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (Azazi, 2011). Despite these measures and efforts, the insecurity in the north and other parts of the country, the emerging trend in Bakassi has, however, remained unchanged and unabated.

Most IDPs in Nigeria flee to neighbouring communities that are relatively safe, usually taking refuge in temporary shelters such as public buildings, schools, and places of worship among others; having been deprived of their homes and sometimes their land and livelihoods (Olukolajo, 2014). UNCHR discovered that 91.4% of IDPs displaced 2014 live with their relatives while 7.6% lives in camps (UNCHR, 2014). Despite the little proportion of the camp residing IDPs, their state of welfare and preparation for reintegration into the society remains important. These displaced persons are catered for either by family, governmental/non-governmental organisations or a combination of both. While the needs of the displaced vary depending on their former status and intensity of their displacement, central to displaced persons are shelter, food and security (Olukolajo, 2014).

The growing level of violent attacks in Northern Nigeria has unavoidably led to the increase in the number of displaced persons in Nigeria. Due to the siege laid by an extremist in Northern Nigeria, well over a million Nigerians are displaced and live in IDP camps in their own country. There are varying statistics about the number of Nigerians living in IDP camps; according to the Displacement Tracking Index published in February 2015, 1,188,018 IDPs, consisting of 149,357 households were identified in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and the Yobe States alone. In addition to this, another 47,276 IDPs, comprising 5910 households were identified in Plateau, Nasarawa, Abuja, Kano and the Kaduna States, according to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). In total, 1,235,294 IDPs were identified in Northern Nigeria, while the highest number of IDPs is in Borno State with 672,714, followed by Adamawa State with 220,159 and Yobe State, 135,810 (Olawale, 2015).

He added that the IDP population is composed of the following:

- a) 53 percent women and 47 percent men;
- b) 56 percent of the total IDP population are children of which more than half are up to 5 years old, while 42 percent are adults;
- c) 92 percent of IDPs were displaced by the insurgency;
- d) The majority of the current IDP population was displaced in 2014 (79 percent);
- e) The IDPs come mainly from Borno (62 percent), Adamawa (18 percent) and Yobe (13 percent);
- f) 87 percent of IDPs live with host families, while 13 percent live in camps (Olawale, 2015).

IDPs are faced with a lot of challenges. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of documentation and little or no accurate census data on. This affects development planners and economic activities in general. Nigeria has a lot to consider faced with increasing number of IDPs camps in the country.

Ceding Bakassi in Cross River State to the Republic of Cameroon

Bakassi is a peninsula on the Gulf of Guinea. It lies between the Cross River estuary, near the city of Calabar in the west, and the Rio del Rey estuary on the east. It is governed by Cameroon, following the transfer of sovereignty from neighbouring Nigeria as a result of a judgment by the International Court of Justice (ICJ Reports, 2002). On 22 November 2007, the Nigerian Senate rejected the transfer, since the Greentree Agreement ceding the area to Cameroon was contrary to Section 12(1) of the 1999 Constitution (Terry and Harm, 2003). Regardless, the territory was transferred to Cameroon on 14 August 2008 (ICJ Reports, 2002).

Geographically, the peninsula lies between latitudes 4°25' and 5°10'N and longitudes 8°20' and 9°08'E. It consists of a number of low-lying, largely mangrove covered islands covering an area of around 665 km² (257 sq mi). The population of Bakassi is the subject of some dispute but is generally put at between 150,000 and 300,000 people (Nowa, 2004). It has a rich economic landscape. Bakassi is situated at the extreme eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea, where the warm east-flowing Guinea Current (called Aya Efiat in Efik) meets the cold north-flowing Benguela Current (called Aya Ubenekang in Efik). These two ocean currents interact, creating huge foamy breakers which constantly advance towards the shore, and building submarine shoals rich in fish, shrimps, and a wide variety of other marine life forms. This makes the Bakassi area a very fertile fishing ground, comparable only to Newfoundland in North America and Scandinavia in Western Europe. Most of the population make their living through fishing (Nowa, 2004).

Bola (2002) disclosed that the peninsula is commonly described as "oil-rich", though in fact no commercially viable deposits of oil have been discovered. However, the area has aroused considerable interest from oil companies in the light of the discovery of rich reserves of high-grade crude oil in Nigeria. At least eight multinational oil companies have participated in the exploration of the peninsula and its offshore waters. In October 2012, China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation announced it had discovered new oil and gas resources in the Bakassi region (Bola, 2002).

Nigeria and Cameroon have disputed the possession of Bakassi for some years, leading to considerable tension between the two countries. In 1981 the two countries went to the brink of war over Bakassi and another area around Lake Chad, at the other end of the two countries' common border. More armed clashes broke out in the early 1990s (ICJ Reports, 2002). In response, Cameroon took the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 29 March 1994. The ICJ delivered its judgment on 10 October 2002, finding (based principally on the Anglo-German agreements) that sovereignty over Bakassi did indeed rest with Cameroon. It instructed Nigeria to transfer possession of the peninsula but did not require the inhabitants to move or to change their nationality. Cameroon was thus given a substantial Nigerian population and was required to protect their rights, infrastructure and welfare.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News (2010) informed that after the Court Judgment, Nigeria began to withdraw its forces, comprising some 3,000 troops, beginning 1 August 2006, and a ceremony on 14 August marked the formal handover of the northern part of the peninsula. The remainder stayed under Nigerian civil authority for two more years. However, on 22 November 2007, the Nigerian Senate passed a resolution declaring that the withdrawal from the Bakassi Peninsula was illegal. The government took no action and

handed the final parts of Bakassi over to Cameroon on 14 August 2008 as planned, but a Federal High Court had stated this should be delayed until all accommodations for resettled Bakassians had been settled; the government did not seem to plan to heed this court order. The consequences of this action are the establishment of a resettlement camp for the people in Akpabuyo local government area and the loss of economic, “oil-rich” area and large agricultural land space, which was a major contributor to the economy of the area, state and nation at large.

Displaced Bakassi Indigenes and Emerging Security Challenges in Nigeria

Displaced Bakassi indigenes are camped in dilapidated and overcrowded classrooms in Akwa Ikot Eyo Edem village, Akpabuyo local government area of Cross River State. Feeding is my major challenge, health centres without drugs, no education and economic opportunities. Interactive session with the displaced group reveals the concerns below,

In spite of what many would describe as a kind gesture from the government, the “resettled” returnees described themselves as “political orphans.” General Coordinator of the two centres, Prince Aston Joseph, said, “I hate to hear that we have been resettled. They provided over 2,800 households with 343 mini-flats and they call that resettlement. “Bakassi people are fishermen and we marry more than one wife and give birth to a large number of children. They allocated us empty houses with no facilities. The only property given to each household is a single bed.

“Can you imagine how a family with between eight to 15 children will share a bed? When we moved in here in 2010, they only fed us for three months and since then, they abandoned us. “No food, no rehabilitation, no resettlement. Their talk of empowerment is untrue. They only brought forms for skill acquisition and we filled and returned to them but we haven't heard from them ever since. None of the skill acquisition programmes has been implemented here.”

Lamenting the toll of hunger on the Bakassi indigenes, secretary of the returnee association in the two resettlement centres, Linus Asuquo-Essien, said one of them died of starvation in September. The deceased, 38-year-old Edet Archibong, was said to have been complaining of starvation for weeks and had been living on food donations from his co-returnees. “We complained to the Bakassi Local Government officials and the state government about the state of affairs with Archibong but they did not respond. People were tired of fending for him so he was left alone. “At a point he took ill and his condition deteriorated in August. Those people who used to support him thought he had Ebola and everyone distanced themselves from him. The government officials refused to come and we lost him in the process. “We requested that the government people should arrange for his burial, but they refused to heed our call. We had to procure gloves and we did the interment ourselves,” Asuquo-Essien explained at the site where Archibong's remains were interred.

The response of the Federal government has been slow. Already channelled resources have raised issues of corrupt practices. Last year, the internally displaced people of Bakassi have called on the Federal Government to investigate the disbursement of N37. 5 Billion it paid to Cross River State between November 2012 and February 2017 over the ceding of their territory to Cameroon, and the transfer of the oil well in the area to Akwa Ibom State. Recently, the Chairman of the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), Alhaji

Aliyu Mohammed, during a courtesy call on the state governor, Professor Ben Ayade, disclosed that the federal government had given N37.5 billion to the state over the loss of its 76 oil wells to Akwa Ibom State after Bakassi was handed over to Cameroun (Bassey, 2015).

Bassey noted further that, on the relief materials that were allegedly diverted, the camp leader accused some of the politicians from the state of toying with their well-being. The Cross River State Government said it remained committed to providing the displaced Bakassi indigenes with “mass care” and prioritising their “basic needs”. Officials at the Governor's Office, however, noted that it was true that the displaced Bakassi people housed in schools-turned camps in Akpabuyo Local Government Area had stopped receiving food and other relief materials since September. This raises concern for the future of the vulnerable young population. Some of the emerging security concerns in the camp include;

1. Health: Many reported health hazards are those associated with overcrowding, poor accommodation, inadequate and unsafe water supply, sanitation and waste disposal challenges including poor sewerage systems, under-nutrition, and the paucity of water, poverty, and poor food quality. High concentrations of people in camps of displaced refugees can be particularly disastrous. According to the World Health Organization, inadequate shelter and overcrowding are major factors in the transmission of diseases with epidemic potential such as acute respiratory infections, meningitis, typhus, cholera, scabies, etc.
2. Disruption of family and communal life. This is one of the most painful effects of the displacement in Bakassi. During the ceding and violent attacks by the Cameroon soldiers, which forced the indigenes to leave their community, most houses and properties were destroyed, looted or burnt down.
3. There is paucity of social amenities, including absence of primary or secondary schools in the camp. Consequently, children among the resettlers do not go to school as of the time of this study. Increased cost of Governance: Managing displaced persons in Nigeria has forced the government to deploy high volume of the nation's resources.
4. It will lead to insurgency and criminality. Youngsters in displaced camps are vulnerable insurgent groups. It is a fight for survival. It is an attempt to take up their destinies in their hands, hence the government and society has failed them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In no small measure, the rising concern of insecurity in Nigeria is a threat to lives and properties, hinders economic activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, and in turn, retards human and economic development of that nation. Nigeria is in a serious danger and looking at the challenges of managing displaced persons. The paper suggests as follows;

1. Government must design an integrated framework to cater for the need of displaced persons in Nigeria. The framework must be monitored and periodically assessed to ensure that intended goals are achieved. This must be done fast and urgently,

especially in Bakassi as it is in the north east region affected by Boko Haram insurgency.

2. To overcome insecurity in Nigeria, there is need for intelligence gathering and surveillance so that law enforcement agents could be proactive and reasonably predict potential crime with near perfect accuracy rather than being reactive.
3. Government should accelerate the pace of creating enabling environment with relevant social, economic, and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth to provide gainful employment, high level of educational facilities and medical care for the people.
4. Importantly, since most problems associated with Nigerian society from independent are politically and religiously motivated, the government should ensure that emoluments of the political office holders are compulsorily reduced. Their powers and influences also should be discouraged and the high academic standard should be taken seriously to those that seek to hold public offices politically.

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