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WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY JOURNAL

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FOREWORD FOR MAIDEN EDITION OF WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY JOURNAL

Women are disproportionately affected in conflict situations due to gender inequalities. Despite playing important roles in grassroots peace building, their voices are consistently under represented in formal conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building processes. If we are to ensure sustainable peace, women's engagement is critical. Women are essential actors in their communities, though, often seen as victims, they are powerful agents of change and possess superb skills for building peace. The global community recognizes this, thus, passed the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 on October 21, 2000. Since then, nine complementary resolutions recognised as the women, peace and security agenda have been passed by the United Nations Security Council.

Nigeria has domesticated the UNSCR 1325 through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs with the development and launching of two National Action Plans (NAP). The first lasted from 2013 to 2016, while the second lasted through 2017-2020. The third one is being developed. The NAP's priorities are hinged around strategic pillars namely: Prevention, Participation, Protection, Promotion and Prosecution. Since the domestication of the NAP, remarkable progress has been made, women continue to contribute significantly to peace building in their communities. Meaningful contribution of women to peace and security process is important, this can be achieved through effective and accurate documentation.

The mission of the women, Peace and Security journal is to promote the contributions of women to peace and security processes in Nigeria and across Africa. It aims to realise this by

documenting qualitative and quantitative information based on facts from women, peace and security interventions in Nigeria; providing a platform to share information and best practices on implementation of Nigeria's NAP on UNSCR 1325 and other women, peace and security related issues; and, providing dependable reference materials for academic discourse on WPS agenda

The Women, Peace and Security journal is mutually published by two reputable organizations, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Nigeria) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Nigeria) who have been working assiduously to ensure the advancement of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Nigeria. The journal will be published bi-annually.

I encourage you to identify with the journal as it is an outstanding piece that will strengthen your engagement and contributions to the implementation and achievement of outcome of Nigeria's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security



Dame Pauline K. Tallen, OFR, KSG
Honourable Minister of Women Affairs
Federal Republic of Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

We write with great pleasure to introduce you to the maiden edition of the Women, Peace and Security journal in Nigeria. The WPS Journal. Conceived by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the women program of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP Nigeria). The collaboration to produce this journal is in response to an identified gap, dearth of literature on women peace and security.

Globally, women have been identified as vulnerable in the face of myriads of violence that pervade the world. In spite of their vulnerability, women's voices have persistently been subjugated and under-valued when lending their voices to peace and security discourse. The systemic exclusion of women in peace processes especially in decision-making continues to raise global concerns on the need for women's enhanced capacities to address the effects of violence on them. Concerns have also been broached on the necessity of strengthening structures and systems for equitable leadership towards engendering conflict management, transformation, and sustainable peace. Women's contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding is imperative cannot be overstressed. Experience shows that, when women's voices are heard and heeded, critical priorities that would otherwise be ignored or left out of peace processes are often reflected and effectively managed.

It is in recognition of this that the United Nations Security Council adopted the resolution 1325 on October 31, 2000. This global landmark resolution recognizes the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and calls for their participation in peace processes, protection of women in war and peace, and prevention of conflicts and prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence. Since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, other complementary resolutions have been adopted to address the gaps identified in UNSCR 1325. Collectively referred to as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, the corresponding resolutions are -UNSCR 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019). The UNSCR 1325 is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 and 16 which promote gender equality, peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all, effective and accountable institutions.

Nigeria domesticated UNSCR 1325 with the first and second National Action Plans (NAP). The first lasted through 2013-2016 and the second lasted through 2017-2020. The development of the third NAP is however ongoing, it is being steered by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development with support from INGO and local CSOs.

In 2018, the Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Nigeria) and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Nigeria) with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) began implementation of projects geared towards **"Enhancing Participation of Women in Peace and Human Security in Nigeria"** and other detailed women, peace and security initiatives. The projects strengthened the gender component of peacebuilding while also promoting inclusive human security. So, in accordance with WILPF and WANEP's recognition of importance of

documenting experiences and using research work to promote knowledge and awareness, it became necessary to record the high-quality information founded on facts garnered from the series of activities implemented during the project including related Women, Peace and Security interventions in Nigeria. Based on these reasons, WILPF Nigeria and WANEP Nigeria resolved to publish a biannual Women, Peace and Security (WPS Journal).

The WPS Journal will document qualitative and quantitative information based on facts from women in theory and practice, peace and security interventions in Nigeria; provide a platform to share information and best practices on implementation of Nigeria's National Action Plan (NAP) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and other women, peace and security related issues. In addition, it will provide dependable reference materials for policy and academic discourse on the WPS agenda.

We anticipate that the WPS journal will significantly promote the contributions of women to peace and security processes in Nigeria through evidence-based research.

Bridget Osakwe
National Network Coordinator
WANEP-Nigeria

Joy Onyesoh
International President
WILPF

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

The ***Women Peace and Security Journal (WPS Journal)*** is a bi-annual publication jointly published by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP Nigeria) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Nigeria). The journal focuses on the Nigerian context and is designed to be an important reference on the subject matter for stakeholders within the West Africa sub-region and beyond.

CALL FOR ARTICLES: Women Peace and Security Journal (WPS Journal)

The Editor of the Women Peace and Security Journal (WPS Journal) invites interested scholars and practitioners to submit manuscripts for consideration in the journal.

Why a Journal on Women Peace and Security?

During the past 21 years since the United Nations passed the UNSCR 1325, evidence of significant contributions by women in Nigeria and across Africa have been noted and documented. The global community welcomed the further strengthening of the Resolution through 9 subsequent Resolutions during the period. Nigeria on her part domesticated UNSCR 1325 with the first and second National Action Plans (NAP). The first lasted through 2013-2016 and the second lasted through 2017-2020. The NAP was designed with the expectation to advance the work of Government and stakeholders around key

WPS principles and strategies (the 5 'P's) including: Prevention, Participation, Protection, Prosecution, and Promotion. Today, by virtue of the progress made through the NAP implementation, Nigeria has a WPS policy 'road map' and WPS infrastructure in place. During the past 8 years the peace and security policy architectures of Nigeria have witnessed the impact of the WPS Agenda as relevant policies and legislation at the national level and in some states are now in place thanks to the commitment of diverse stakeholders.

Jointly inspired by a commitment to promote the contributions of women to peace and security processes in Africa through evidence based research, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP Nigeria) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Nigeria) have introduced the WPS Journal, to be published bi-annually. The objectives for the Journal are, to: document qualitative and quantitative information based on facts from women, peace and security interventions in Nigeria; provide a platform to share information and best practices on implementation of Nigeria's NAP on UNSCR 1325 and other women, peace and security related issues; and, provide dependable reference materials for policy and academic discourse on the WPS agenda.

At national, state, and local levels the contributions of women in Nigeria across the 5 key stages of the peace process continue to gain recognition. It is time to begin to document the positive impact recorded so far. This is where the role of a WPS Journal fits in so well.

Acceptable topics and requirements

- ◆ Authors are invited to submit articles that document the key contributions of women in the peace process wherever the evidence can be identified, including in areas of: conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict resolution and post-conflict processes, or cross-cutting issues.
- ◆ Original submissions will be accepted for publication provided that they have not been previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere.
- ◆ Acceptable articles will be those that document in clear, inspiring, and truthful manner the contributions to peace and security by individual women or a group of women in Nigeria.
- ◆ Articles that present a case study of how an organization or business operating in Nigeria worked with a woman or a group of women to positively impact the peace and security landscape in the spirit of UNSCR 1325 may be considered for publication.
- ◆ Articles to be submitted for consideration may cover any topic under the theme of Women, Peace and Security (WPS), should be relevant to the Nigerian context, and may not exceed 5,000-7,000 words.
- ◆ The articles submitted must be in MS Word format. All submissions will be peer reviewed and the decision to publish will be based on the result of the review process.

All authors who submit articles will be informed of the decision regarding their submission.

Direct all or articles to wps.journal.ng@gmail.com or contact the Editor on +2348066559669.

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DISCLAIMER

This document is jointly produced by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP Nigeria) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Nigeria). The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not represent the views and opinions of the publishers.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES BY INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

It has been observed within the last decade that, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have spent more time in the IDP camps and host communities than ever in history. As part of the host communities, these displaced persons rely heavily on environmental resources such as land, water and firewood for their sustenance. This reliance many times exposes them to conflict with members of the host communities, most especially women, who are traditionally known to be caregivers in their homes. This paper therefore, interrogates the link between the conflicts / violence that women face in host communities and access to land, water and particularly firewood, which is their main form of

cooking fuel. Key informant interviews (KIIs) are used as instrument for data collection and data analyzed descriptively. The study indicates that the complex and interlinking nature of GBV across the main contexts explored are multifaceted, long lasting as well as having impact on the quality of life as well as constrain women's ability to participate meaningfully in and benefit from development and transformation processes. The research therefore recommends among others the need to develop gender-sensitive conceptual frameworks and methodologies that specifically focus on women and violence in relation to conflict and displacement as well as policy considerations for addressing gender issues relating to environmental conflicts.

Introduction

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons displaced from their ancestral homes by violent crises who have not crossed an international border to find safety. Available statistics show that of the 79.5 million people forcibly displaced by conflict in the world, 45.7 million are found in Africa and 2.73 million are in Nigeria (UNCHR, 2020; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2021). Studies have shown that IDPs are experiencing longer periods of displacement in host communities, in transit and in camps

(Banki, 2004; Zetter 2011; Loescher & Milner 2012). And above two-thirds of IDPs worldwide have been in displacement for more than five years (Brookings Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2007).

As part of the community, IDPs are affected by and engaged in the process of daily struggle for survival which in many developing countries, rely heavily on environmental resources such as food from plants (land), water, wood for cooking, heating, and building. Studies demonstrate that there are direct links between environmental pressures and gender-based violence (IUCN, 2020).

Meanwhile, the gendered division of labour in most countries ensure that women in their traditional roles as care givers in households, interface with environmental resources and face difficulties, environmental conflicts and indirect deprecations wrought by violent conflict (Brittain 2003, cited in Barnett and Adger 2007; Lubkemann 2008; Chimni 2009; Agier 2011). Therefore, globally and especially in countries with increased presence of IDPs, the degradation of nature, competition over increasingly scarce resources and environmental crime in addition to poverty exacerbate gender-based violence (IUCN, 2020).

Methodology

To explore the perspectives and responses of IDPs (especially women) in Benue state. 21 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in Abagena community which hosts one of the

biggest IDP camps in the state and also has several of the IDPs resettled within the community. Of the 21 interviews conducted, 9 were women living in the camp while the other 12 were drawn from the host community. Responses from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed descriptively. All interviews conducted with in-camp displaced persons were done with the permission of camp authorities while those conducted in the host community were done with the consent of the community leader. Measures were taken to ensure the security, confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents. To this effect, the names of respondents in the interviews are not their original names.

Conceptual Issues

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is used to capture violence that occur as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society (Bloom. 2008). According to UNHCR, GBV refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.

GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity. It is rooted in

structural gender inequalities, patriarchy, and power imbalances. GBV is typically characterized by the use or threat of physical, psychological, sexual, economic, legal, political, social and other forms of control and/or abuse. GBV impacts individuals across the life course and has direct and indirect costs to families, communities, economies, global public health, and development.

This kind of violence comes in the form of sexual abuse, including rape and sexual abuse of children by family members; forced pregnancy; sexual slavery; traditional practices harmful to women, such as honor killings, burning or acid throwing, female genital mutilation, dowry-related violence; violence in armed conflict, such as murder and rape; and emotional abuse, such as coercion and abusive language. Trafficking of women and girls for prostitution, forced marriage, sexual harassment and intimidation at work are additional examples. It must be stressed that such violence not only occurs in the family and in the general community, but is sometimes also perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities. Gender-based violence happens in all societies, across all social classes, with women particularly at risk from men they know.

Environmental Resources

Environmental resources refer to any material, service, or information from the environment that is valuable to society. This can refer to anything

that people find useful in their environs, or surroundings. Food from plants and animals, wood for cooking, heating, and building, metals, coal, and oil are all environmental resources. Clean land, air, and water are environmental resources, as are the abilities of land, air, and water to absorb society's waste products. The environment provides a vast array of materials and services that people use to live. Often these resources have competing uses and values. A piece of land, for instance, could be used as a farm, a park, a parking lot, or a housing development.

Some resources are renewable, or infinite, and some are non-renewable, or finite. Renewable resources like energy from the sun are plentiful and will be available for a long time. Finite resources, like oil and coal, are non-renewable because once they are extracted from the earth and burned they cannot be used again. These resources are in limited supply and need to be used carefully. Many resources are becoming more and more limited, especially as population increases and industrial growth place increasing pressure on the environment. Some resources that were once taken for granted are now becoming more valuable. These include but not limited to water supply for bathing, washing clothes, drinking water, fishing, and as a toilet. Where people have only one water source and many needs in order to live, the demands that they place on these resources seriously affect the health and quality of life for all the people, but all of the needs must be met in some way.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) may be referred to as persons who have been displaced by natural disasters or conflicts from their homes and traditional support structure and have not crossed the border of their countries. They are victims of various kinds of injustices, violent confrontations perpetrated by their own government or others against them. Internally Displaced Persons are mostly victims of the inhumanity of man against man. They are victims of various kind of injustices or violence confrontations, perpetrated by either their own government against them or by others, such as, communal clashes, terrorism, riots, religious conflicts, natural disasters and so on.

Host Communities: Host communities refers to a group of people who share a common identity, such as geographical location, class, and ethnic background. It also connotes the locals who receive, welcome, and provide the visitors leisure, cultural knowledge through experiences and activities. It could also refer to communities that accept fleeing refugees from war-torn areas who accept them and give the basic necessities of life like shelter, food and clothing among others.

Causes of Gender Based Violence

The causes of Gender Based Violence are multiple and complex, but gender discriminatory norms and unequal balance of power between girls, women, boys and men are the overarching root causes. According to Fergus and Van't Rood (2013), there is no single factor that can explain why some people or groups are at higher risk of

Gender Based Violence than others. The ecological framework clearly shows how interpersonal violence is the outcome of interaction between many factors at the societal and individual levels. Traditional attitudes towards men and women around the world help perpetuate the violence. Stereotypical roles in which women are seen as subordinate to men constrain a woman's ability to exercise choices that would enable her end the abuse.

Njenga (1999) avers that financial insecurity is the most prominent cause out of quite diverse ones. Njenga (1999, p.6) opine that:

if a man cannot establish his authority intellectually or economically, he would tend to do so physically. Another cause is the image created by the society which portrays a man to be viewed as being strong, educated, creative, and clever while a woman is the opposite of all these traits. The way parents bring up their children, which create disparity between boys and girls, also is a source of gender-based violence in later life. When a boy grows up, knowing that he is not supposed to wash his own clothes, cook or help in the house, if he grows up and gets married to a woman who comes from a home where duties are equally shared between girls and boys, this can create tension that might lead to violence.

On the other hand, Bitangaro (1999) argued that the causes of gender based violence and particularly violence against women as being deeply rooted in the way society is set up, cultural beliefs, power relations, economic power imbalances, and the masculine idea of male dominance.

Gender Based Violence in Conflict Situations

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is more likely to occur within violent conflict-affected areas due to the heightened vulnerability of the population and the culture of impunity. GBV not only harms the mind and body of affected individuals but also creates elevated psychological and social barriers to seeking help (Booth, 2003).

In past decades, the relationship between gender-based violence (GBV) and armed conflicts has received much international attention. The impact and implications of violence against women have led to numerous attempts to address accountability and impunity issues through processes that include access to justice mechanisms. Despite efforts to address issues of GBV in conflict and post-conflict areas and to raise awareness of these issues, GBV continues to be a major problem (Akinyode-Afolabi, 2003).

Ahmad (1989), added that in many conflict settings throughout the world, women continue to experience gender-targeted violence, such as rape, sexual slavery, and a host of other human rights abuses, as part of military campaigns and as a result of the breakdown of community norms

which tend to accompany armed conflicts. They experience violence at the hands of government actors, non-state militaries (including rebel forces and dissidents), community members, and even, tragically, the peacekeeping forces that are sent to protect them and restore order. Furthermore, women remain vulnerable to violence following an armed conflict, as research indicates a strong rise in domestic violence, sex trafficking, and forced prostitution in post-conflict areas (Benwari & Igwesi, 2009). In addition, the needs of women who are victims of GBV are either overlooked or inadequately addressed by transitional justice mechanisms, including truth commissions, war crimes hearings, and reparation schemes.

GBV in conflict and post-conflict areas can take many forms including rape, slavery, forced impregnation/miscarriages, kidnapping/trafficking, forced nudity, and disease transmission, with rape and sexual abuse being among the most common (Bitangora, 1999). Rape in conflict settings is often violent and brutal, frequently involving gang-rape and rape with foreign objects such as guns and knives. In addition to rape, sexual abuse is also prevalent, particularly in the forms of forced nudity, strip searches, and other publicly humiliating and violating acts. These acts and other acts of sexual violence, such as forced impregnation or forced abortions, are often part of an intentional strategy of war, used to destabilize the civilian population and violate the honor of the opposing force (Ajayi, 2007). Abduction and slavery are also frequent forms of GBV in conflict areas, where civilian girls

and women are kidnapped by raiding military or rebel forces and taken back to the soldiers' camp to provide both sexual and domestic services (Bloom, 2008). Such actions are sometimes disguised as a marriage, despite international definitions which suggest that such 'marriages' should be regarded as crimes of enslavement (Burge & Espino, 1990).

Post-conflict societies also experience practices of GBV, especially against women. Indeed, rape and other forms of sexual violence have been cited as major factors in undermining post-conflict peace processes especially in IDP Camps. It is relatively common for a society to experience an increase in trafficking, forced prostitution, domestic violence, and rape following a major conflict (Fergus Vant Rood, 2013). Some of these issues, particularly domestic violence and trafficking, may reach higher levels after the conclusion of a conflict than were experienced by the society during the conflict. The post-conflict rise in incidents of domestic violence, for example, has led to speculation of a relationship between these forms of GBV and the availability of small arms, an increased tolerance of violence within society, and the head of households having been engaged in military violence during the conflict.

For much of modern history, GBV during armed conflict and in post- conflict settings was simply thought of as an unfortunate but unavoidable part of war. It was widely held that GBV during conflicts resulted from the pent-up sexual energy of the soldiers, and that the acts were primarily random incidents of frustration and violence caused by

individuals (Watts, 2018). Recently, however, new views have been submitted as explanations for the high prevalence of GBV during armed conflict.

One view suggests that sexual assault is intentionally used during armed conflict as a tool of war, contributing to the intentional destabilization, humiliation, and degradation of a population (Ibori, 2008). GBV is an attack on the individual security of a person, not just on their virtue or honor, and such acts can create an atmosphere of fear and submission within a population. Under this explanation, GBV in conflict settings has been referred to as part of a "campaign of terror," (CLO, 1992), and it has been emphasized that the patterns of GBV in conflict areas are not simply the random choices of individuals as was previously claimed.

Along these lines, GBV during conflict is also an assertion of power by the perpetrators, and it is used as a method of reprisal by indirectly attacking the opposing military force, particularly if the opposing military force feels a duty to protect the citizens being attacked (Watts, 2018). As a military tool to gather information and determine loyalties, many women are often accused of sympathizing with the opposing force. In these situations, GBV is often used as an act of torture, as armies know such violence produces both psychological as well as physical harm, further destabilizing the local population and mentally traumatizing civilians (World Bank, 2019).

Furthermore, after claiming a village or new territory, military units often view women's bodies as "spoils of war" and see rape as a standard

practice of war earned

by the victorious army. Numerous reports have also shown that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees fleeing a conflict area, especially women and children, are more vulnerable to violence, both by members of armed forces and by civilian populations (WRC, 2011). The large number of IDPs that result from severe conflicts can therefore be linked with increased incidences of GBV in IDP camps and host communities.

The nexus between GBV and access to Environmental Resources in Host Communities

All over the world, across environmental sectors as elsewhere, varied gender-based violence is employed as a form of socioeconomic control to maintain or promote unequal and gendered power dynamics relating to the ownership of, access to, uses of, benefits derived from and control over natural resources. The potential for violence is particularly augmented in the face of stressors where the control over increasingly scarce or degraded resources and livelihood opportunities results in higher tension, increased negative coping strategies and reduced resilience for families and communities. For example, Gender-based violence is used to maintain discriminatory status quo related to land, property rights, and access to other environmental resources and provisions. Women who make up more than fifty percent of the IDP population in Nigeria they are forced to survive on less than \$ 780 per day (US

\$1.42) as their livelihoods are largely reliant on goodwill donations from charity. Consequently, due to overlapping vulnerabilities related to economic security and protection, many find themselves at risk of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps and host communities. Domestic violence and other forms of GBV take place during typically gendered tasks such as collection of water and firewood. Ngodoo, a respondent in Abagena community of Benue state recalled that, many of us, women and girls came to the camp without children, but if you look around, most of us got pregnant here, all in a bid to survive.

Furthermore, Wijdekop, (2017), notes that, where the enforcement of the rule of law is limited, GBV abuses are used to enable illicit and illegal activities through sexual exploitation and/or to exert control over communities. As Indigenous communities are often on the frontlines of defending their territories and resources from extractive projects and corporate interests,

many IDPs face intersecting and reinforcing forms of gender-based violence. Evidence and experiences in the context of land and natural resources show that GBV is often employed as a way to maintain these power imbalances, violently reinforcing sociocultural expectations and norms and exacerbating gender inequality.

Moreover, gender-differentiated roles related to land and resources can also put women in a more vulnerable position to suffer GBV while carrying out daily responsibilities, as seen in firewood and water collection activities (Sommer et al., 2015;

Wan et al., 2011). Access to and control over natural resources are also often a source for sexual exploitation, as seen inland tenure when authorities suggest or demand sexual favours for land rights (Matsheza et al., 2012); when male fishers demand sex-for-fish from women fish buyers and processors (Béné & Merten, 2008); or where male supervisors in natural resource industries sexually harass and abuse women, punishing those who do not submit by relegating them to dangerous work or limiting hours if their advances are denied (UN Women, 2018). Another respondent, Terkumbur, revealed that, within the camp and the host community (Abagena), there is a practice of 'Kwambe sa Kwambe' (loosely translated as 'You scratch my back, I scratch yours' in the Tiv language). A situation where women and girls are made to exchange sex for provision and access to food and other supplies.

Gender-based discrimination in social, cultural, legal, economic and institutional frameworks affects the ability of women and girls to equally and safely participate and lead in environment-related activism and organizational work and programming. These barriers reinforce gender inequality in actions to defend, protect, conserve and benefit from the environment. In these contexts, GBV is used to assert power imbalances and, at times, violently discourage or stop women from speaking out for their rights, working toward or benefiting from a safe and healthy environment (Barcia, 2017; Facio, 2015).

This analysis reveals the complex and interlinking nature of GBV across access to and

control of natural resources and environmental pressure and threats. Gender inequality is pervasive across all these contexts. National and customary laws, societal gender norms and traditional gender roles dictate who can access and control natural resources, often resulting in the marginalization of women compared to men. Threats and pressures on the environment and its resources amplify gender inequality and power imbalances in communities and households coping with resource scarcity and societal stress. Across contexts, expressions of GBV maintain societal and cultural gender inequalities and norms, forming a feedback loop to the detriment of livelihoods, rights, conservation and sustainable development. GBV is a systematic means of control to enforce and protect existing privileges around natural resources, maintaining power imbalances that create tensions within families, between communities and among involved actors. Furthermore, where the enforcement of the rule of law is limited, GBV abuses are used to enable illicit and illegal activities through sexual exploitation and/or to exert control over communities. It is important to note that, IDPs who have resettled in host communities are grossly vulnerable in terms of access to resources. Majority of the IDPs in Abagena community and indeed, in Benue state are farmers who have fled their ancestral lands in rural areas thereby, losing land and productive assets and are faced with a sudden shift towards non-agricultural sources of livelihood. However, several others have continued

to look out for avenues by which they can continue with their farming activities. One of such avenues available to IDPs within the host community and neighbouring communities is access to land for farming through land leasing. Some members of the host community and neighbouring communities give out land on lease to the IDPs for their farming activities. Usually, the practice is, a fixed amount for a number of lines of farm. In the event that the displaced persons cannot afford the payment in cash, they have the option of barter; where the land owner agrees to give out a portion of land to the displaced persons to farm and at the end of the farming season, the displaced persons give part of the crops harvested to the land owner. One of our respondents, Gabriel Awen revealed that, for women who cannot afford cash payment for land lease, the land owners in most cases take their payment through forceful sex with the women. Others also give the women very tough conditions and when they are unable to meet up, they are made to surrender their bodies in order to save the day.

Similarly, is the issue of access to firewood, which is their main source of cooking fuel both within the camp and in the host community. Since women do not own land in their host communities, they have limited options as to accessing firewood. One of which is to buy from the sellers while the other option is to seek access from the land owners in the host community. Another respondent, Dorcas Antyam revealed that, this is where many women yield to the practice of 'Kwambe sa Kwambe' as they have no other

option of cooking available to them. Dorcas noted that, several women, detested this practice but had no option but to give into it. Regarding access to water, our respondents revealed that, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) has provided and maintains boreholes within the camp to provide water both to the IDPs and members of the host community. Therefore, access to water is not a problem to the community.

It is clear from the foregoing that, access to environmental resources in IDP camps and host communities remains a major factor for gender based violence, especially among displaced women.

Conclusion

Women are key environmental managers and consumers. Their vast knowledge about the environmental resources they use is key to sustainable development. Sustainable livelihoods have direct links to women and their access to natural resources such as water, firewood, medicinal plants, wild foods and agricultural land. The effects of these crimes on women are multifaceted and long lasting they include; increased perception of fear leading to post-traumatic stress disorders (psychological, emotional and spiritual damage; (Garcia-Moreno 1998; Perry, Potgieter and Urmilla, 2010) health implications, social isolation and exclusion. These effects impact on the quality of life as well as constrain women's ability to participate meaningfully in and benefit from development and transformation processes. Also, expressions

of GBV uphold societal and cultural gender inequalities and norms, forming a feedback loop to the detriment of livelihoods, rights, conservation and sustainable development (Camey, Sabater, Owren & Boyer 2020). There is therefore, a need to develop gender-sensitive conceptual frameworks and methodologies that specifically focus on women and violence in relation to conflicts and displacement. A multi-conceptual and interdisciplinary framework which examines the spatial, economic, social and political dimensions.

Furthermore, policy considerations for addressing gender issues relating to environmental conflicts need to be considered and should include recognizing that environmental conflicts and the violence associated with these types of conflict are not gender neutral. It is clear that females experience a more heightened and widespread fear of violence and vulnerability associated with environmental conflicts that constrains their mobility, livelihood strategies and opportunities as well as level of participation in peace-keeping and decision-making processes.

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HYBRIDISATION OF SECURITY

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1. Introduction

Hybridity is the interlink or overlap between formal and informal systems. Most times, they exist at various levels and are embedded. The informal procedures, a combination of actors and processes, live side by side with legally established structures and systems, thereby influencing practices and policies within different sectors¹, including the security sector. Within the context of security provision, hybridisation is characterised by diverse and competing authority structures, sets of rules, and logics of order and combines elements of state-centric and non-state-centric models, stemming from local indigenous traditions. In other words, hybridisation straddles the state and non-state boundary and maintains complex, fluid, and constantly changing intense interactions and relationships, resulting in a considerable variety of peace, security, and justice providers within a given political order.²

¹ Hybridisation is not limited to the security sector – you can see the face of it in education, health, religion, etc.

² See, for instance, Böge, Volker, Hybridization of Security, Reflection Group Think Piece No. 5, FES Publications on Peace and Security, 2015. Available at <https://www.fes.de/reflection-group-monopoly-on-the-use-of-force-20/think-pieces/artikel/think-piece-no-5-hybridization-of-security>

Formal state institutions are defined as those structures grounded in the organisational and bureaucratic order derived from the constitutional and legal architecture established (and perpetuated), e.g., by the sovereign government, such as constitutions, laws, decrees, as well as corresponding administrative structures such as legislatures, ministries, the rule of law institutions, political parties, and so on. In contrast, informal systems, which refer to practices that are not constituted or regulated by state law and operate outside state institutions or procedures³, are based on implicit rules and unwritten understandings. They reflect socio-cultural routines and norms and underlying interactions among socio-economic classes (for instance, caste systems) and communities (such as different ethnic groups).

The essence of these informal institutions or practices, some of which include neighbourhood watch and community vigilante groups, ethnic and religious militia, can be summarised as follows: (1) actors share a common set of expectations; (2) they rely on simple forms of reciprocity; (3) rules are unwritten but understood by each actor; (4) exchanges are non-specified in terms of time; (5) they are implemented through unofficial channels and often with no particular attention to detailed objectives or methods; and (6) they rely on enforcement by

³ Lawrence, Michael, Towards a Non-State Security Sector Reform Strategy, Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) SSR Issue Papers No. 8, 2012.

informal actors in case of a breach of the perceived agreement. To summarise, the word “formal” refers to codified institutions and the word “informal” refers to non-codified institutions.

The value of historical and sociological institutionalism lies in recognising that these distinctions (between the formal and informal) are hardly Manichaeian. Many institutions operate alongside or within formal political institutions and are at play in decision-making processes and public policies, much informally. Recently, several scholars have proposed analysing and understanding political orders in the Global South using the concept of ‘hybridity’⁴. The concept of ‘hybridity’ is meant to capture the interpenetrations of different social spheres and the subsequent interactions between the formal state apparatus on the one hand and informal institutions on the other hand (cf. literature review below). This concept, which entails the propagation of hybrid actors, type of armed groups that sometimes operate in concert with the state and sometimes compete with it, is generally promoted to explain more accurately the pluralistic reality of the context beyond the state-centric and often state-centric understanding of governance, which underlies most of the public strategies and policies promoted by international donors and

⁴ See for instance Boege, V.; Brown, A. M.; Clements, K. and Nolan, A., ‘On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: What is Failing – States in the Global South or Research and Politics in the West?’, in M. Fischer and B. Schmelzle (eds), *Building Peace in the Absence of States: Challenging the Discourse of State Failure*, Berghof Conflict Research, Series No. 8, Berlin, 2009.

policymakers, particularly in peacebuilding processes. Hybrid actors depend on state sponsorship and benefit from the tools and prerogatives of state power, but at the same time enjoy the flexibility that comes with not being the state.⁵

Historically, the colonial era in Africa was characterised by the dualism of the state, in which the state security actors coexisted with non-state traditional institutions of governance and security. This was the situation mainly because the colonial States were too remote and too artificial to meet the aspirations of Indigenous populations. Yet, the new state élites in independent Africa also reinforced this dualism by maintaining the remoteness, under-resourcing and artificiality of the state, as disillusioned segments of the population disengaged themselves from the formal post-colonial state.⁶

This social disengagement reinforces creating a 'parallel universe,' which offers an alternative outlet for addressing needs that are not met by the legal state.⁷ This applies very much to security needs. The failure of the post-colonial state to meet the widespread demand for protection has reinforced the recourse to informal channels of security. This has created a hybrid situation where

⁵ Thanassis Cambanis, et. al., *Hybrid Actors: Armed Groups and State Fragmentation in the Middle East*, New York, Century Foundation, 2019.

⁶ Azarya, Victor and Naomi Chazan, 'Disengagement from the State in Africa: Reflections on the Experience of Ghana and Guinea,' in Peter Lewis (ed.), *Africa: Dilemmas of Development and Change*. Boulder: Westview, 1998.

⁷ Hills, Alice, 'Warlords, Militia and Conflict in Contemporary Africa: A Re-Examination of Terms,' *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 8(1), 1997, 35-51.

the hybrid actor, is a type of armed group that sometimes operates in concert with the state and sometimes competes with it.⁸

In African countries like Libya, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the North Eastern Part of Nigeria that are coming out of conflict, hybridity helps understand the security systems because customary, clan and non-formal institutions are often the only ones trusted by the community and have access to conflict areas. They are responsible for delivering security and providing resilience to the community, thus making them pivotal in rebuilding and reconstructing the state.

The authority of State structures should be over the entire state; however, this is found not to be the reality because the influence of the state, most often tends to be limited to specific urban areas and their peripheries⁹, although there are instances as evident in the States in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, where the authority and development is also absent even in the urban areas.¹⁰ As a result, traditional or customary non-state institutions and structures play significant roles in the everyday lives of the people. These institutions and structures adapt to new circumstances, which indicates their resilience

⁸ See Renad Mansour and Peter Salisbury, "Between Order and Chaos: A New Approach to Stalled State Transformations in Iraq and Yemen," Chatham House, September 9, 2019. Available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/between-order-and-chaos-new-approach-stalled-state-transformations-iraq-and-yemen>

⁹ Herbst, Jeffrey (2014) *States and Power in Africa; Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁰ Nordstrom, Carolyn *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*, California: University of California Press, 2004

and capacity to ensure effective service delivery to the communities and people they serve.

The interface between the formal and non-formal, which creates hybridity, can be seen at various levels. For example, traditional (non-formal or customary) structures exist, such as extended families, tribes, village elders, etc., and play a pivotal role in the socio-economic reality of the communities where they are found, particularly in the rural, urban poor or periphery areas, including security provisioning and job creation. In Nigeria, for instance, informal security institutions serve as a means of employment creation, particularly for the youth. Both Private Security Organisations (PSOs) and community vigilante groups provide full-time employment.¹¹ It is worthy of note that hybridity is also present within political and social organisations in Nigeria. This can be seen mainly at the local and regional levels.

These non-formal mechanisms infiltrate State structures and vice versa. When engaging with the state they assume an ambiguous framework that allows them to take advantage of its resources, functions, and outlook. In contrast, they could still go ahead to maintain their rules and practices. In turn, formal institutions – aware of their tenuous control – may rely on informal structures to achieve their objectives in practice.

¹¹ Ogonnaya, Maurice, "Non-State Security Actors in the South-East Zone of Nigeria." In *Non-State Security Actors and Security Provisioning in Nigeria*, edited by Chirs Kwaja, Kemi Okenyodo, and Val Ahmadu-Haruna, Abuja: Cephass and Clems Nig. Ltd for Partners West Africa-Nigeria (PWAN), 2017, pp.49-66.

In addition to material resources and networks, each relies on the other as a source of legitimacy.¹² The point being made here is that, although hybrid actors depend on state sponsorship and benefit from the tools and prerogatives of state power, they also enjoy the flexibility not being the state and not being responsible for governance. Hybrid actors are distinct in the way that they not only serve a security function, but also play a role in politics and economics—that is, hybrid actors assume some of the functions and autonomy of a state. Hybrid actors seek to harness and control some, but not all spheres of the state's authority. Those that survive over many years tend to penetrate the state and carve out official fiefdoms within its architecture. They engage in war, diplomacy, politics, and propaganda. They build and maintain constituencies, providing not just security but also services and ideological guidance. Though all hybrid actors have some relationship with an external patron, they are more than mere proxies, and have some latitude to make their own policies and decisions.¹³

Importance of hybrid system arrangements
The globalisation of security¹⁴ has made it

¹² Englebert, Pierre "Africa: Unity, Sovereignty and Sorrow", Lynne Rienner, 2009.

¹³ See Cambanis, Thanassis, et. al., Hybrid Actors: Armed Groups and State Fragmentation in the Middle East, A Century Foundation Book, 2019.

¹⁴ See Nnoli, Okwudiba. National Security in Africa: A Radical New Perspective. Enugu: Pan African Centre for Research on Peace and Conflict Resolution (PACREP), 2006; Ogbonnaya, Maurice, "Informal Security Sector and Security Provisioning in Nigeria: Trends, Issues and Challenges" In Varin, C., and Onuoha, F.C. (eds.), Security in Nigeria: Contemporary Threats and Responses, London: I.B. Tauris Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, pp.203-224.

imperative for the non-formal security structures to adapt further and become more responsive by closing existing gaps created by the disconnect between the state and its citizens¹⁵ because the social contract between them has been eroded over time. The State and political elites have been unable or unwilling to deliver on the public services of law, order, and security.¹⁶ The gap has widened across many spheres, particularly in security and policing, which are now being filled by non-formal security and policing providers. In some cases, non-formal actors have proven to be more effective, more legitimate, and more capable of providing basic services than states themselves.¹⁷

The fragile and unstable environment in many countries across the globe poses general security challenges, the most important of which include the increase of communal conflict, widespread violent crime, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and failure of state institutions (including those of security, justice, and the rule of law) to guarantee access to justice but also safety and security of livelihoods.

Hybridity in Africa and other parts of the world is a reality. Governance in Africa is a hybrid between the State institutions that are not always the most legitimate due to their weak relationship with the broader populace and the non-formal or

¹⁵ There are various reasons for the disconnect, including the artificiality of the State from inception or gap created because of conflict.

¹⁶ DIFD, *The Politics of Poverty: Elites, Citizens and States*, 2010.

¹⁷ Blair, Robert A., and Pablo Kalmanovitz. 2016. "On the Rights of Warlords: Legitimate Authority and Basic Protection in War-Torn Societies." *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 428–40.

traditional institutions. The inability of the state to meet the security needs of its citizens has created a lacuna which non-state actors non-state actors are now serving.

Security is the heart of state sovereignty; hence it stands out. The friction between the legitimacy of African state institutions and the legality of the traditional institutions must be effectively captured. It is crucial to reformulate security sector governance from the point of view of the state and society.

Lessons from hybrid security system arrangements

Key criticisms against non-formal security mechanisms are lack of oversight, inclusiveness, strict operative mode, and human rights infractions. For instance, in public opinion polls conducted across the region in the Middle East, respondents often claim that they would prefer to be ruled by government or state authority than by a non-state actor.¹⁸ The oversight mechanisms of these structures, either internally or externally, are not transparent. This makes it a bit challenging to understand their accountability systems. Could the accountability systems be more nuanced, and is there a need to study the non-formal security and policing structures to understand the oversight and

¹⁸ Mansour, Renad and Salisbury, Peter, *Between Order and Chaos: A New Approach to Stalled State Transformations in Iraq and Yemen*, Chatham House Middle East and North Africa Programme, September 2019.

accountability frameworks?

Gender Issues

Hybrid security structures are not insulated from the patriarchal dominance that has permeated formal security mechanisms. In some contexts, this patriarchal structure is reinforced by law, religion, and social groups' cultural values. The importance and value of accommodating cultural norms and values are unfortunately at odds with advancing women's rights. Indirect suffrage electoral systems, which affirm the historic clan system in Somalia limit the ability of women to maximise the impact of the female vote. A similar dynamic exists in efforts to accommodate customary judicial systems, which may be more accessible and enjoy more public confidence but may also be more prejudiced towards women. Women's secret societies can also be as gender-biased as men. It is important to note that there can be tensions in the day-to-day regulation of social norms and security of certain groups that could be tagged vulnerable or marginalised, such as persons living with disabilities and members of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) communities. Most times these tensions are conducted with the support of religious institutions and further legitimised by traditional authorities – enforcement could be conducted by the non-formal security or policing structures they control.

The Role of Hybrid security systems in preventing/escalating conflicts

Some of the non-formal security and policing structures that exist have their roots in ethnic, tribal, or religious structures. Where this exists, the groups are dominated by a particular ethnic, tribal or religious group; they could negotiate their terms of participation in the state because of their ability to use violence against the state itself, and/or against persons outside their group. From the outset, these groups compete with the state because they can provide security where the state fails to do so. On the one hand, the competition between formal and informal systems is a source of tension and conflict and can undermine state authority and legitimacy. It can also lead to practices such as "forum shopping" where people involved in a lawsuit have their legal case heard in the court thought most likely to provide a favourable judgement. On the other hand, this competition serves to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each side. Therefore, even partners of the formal security sector should look closely at the informal security sector to understand from its success what it is that people are seeking (and not finding) in the formal security sector. In summary, some of these groups have learnt to instrumentalise violence as well as the provision of security to their advantage. This model, however, carries the challenges of regional and ethnic equilibrium, thereby undermining the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force and this is the greatest risk to the "hybridisation" of security. However, the

adaptability of the non-formal security structures makes hybridisation relevant to conflict prevention, peace, and security processes.¹⁹ On the other hand, the allegiance of the non-formal security or policing structures makes them less desirable because it could create an oppressive non-inclusive system for those that are 'outside' the circle either by belonging to different ethnicity, religion, community, or gender. For example, in Burkina Faso the typology of hybridity is divergent and depends on the specific group one is looking at.²⁰ non-formal structures have been known to exacerbate ethnically motivated violence. This is because when the hybrid actor is unable to take over the state, it begins to develop different mechanisms to maintain its capability, legitimacy, and power, even without full integration. This process includes keeping one foot in the state and one foot outside it.

Role of state-based security approaches in the reoccurrence of conflicts

One of the particularly negative means by which the state co-opts informal or traditional security actors is to employ them as illegal proxy forces in conflict. This problematises the role of the state

¹⁹ Lawrence, Michael, "Towards a Non-State Security Sector Reform Strategy", CIGI SSR Issue Papers No. 8, 2012; Krasner, Stephen, and Thomas Risse, "External Actors, State-building, and Service Provision in Areas of Limited Statehood", *Governance* 27(4), 2014, 545-567.

²⁰ *Initiative Securite Locale* (Local Security Initiatives or LSI in english) is the official designation by the state referring to diverse groups including the Koglowego (multiethnic but predominantly Mossi security volunteers which emerged in the wake of the 2015 coup d'etat), Roughta (Fulani livestock protection fraternities) and the Dozo (ritual hunter fraternities).

as the arbiter of national and international laws which it does not follow. It also problematises security as far as proxy forces are less accountable for their conduct than national forces, and the state may simply deny a relationship. The international community is sometimes hesitant to contradict this position in the context of politically sensitive peace processes or circumstances in which the state may realistically lose to insurgents or both. As implied above, there is also no certainty that State proxy forces will remain loyal to the state, particularly in contexts in which they were contracted due to the state's inherent military weakness.

This is linked to the growing importance of movements and formations which are results of globalisation. They take the form of warlords, militias taking over ungoverned spaces, gangs being set up and funded by politicians or elites, ethnic-based protection groups, etc. These identified typologies of non-formal security or policing groups explore opportunities of getting embedded in non-state traditional institutions or vice versa because they understand the political economy based on violence. Some studies have clearly explained why non-formal structures of law, order and justice prefer a status-quo, continued violence, and chaos in violent conflicts because simply they benefit from it economically, monetarily, and politically. These structures use their leverages intelligently and strategically.²¹

²¹ Carbonnier, Gilles, *Humanitarian Economics: War, Disaster and the Global Aid Market*, Hurst, 2015.

These networks are explored and exploited by local, regional, or transnational criminal actors, for example, as illustrated in Nigeria, Somalia, Middle East etc.

Highlights of Lessons Identified

Key things that have become apparent over time are that there is still inconclusive documentation of the hybrid security system because of a lack of in-depth cultural understanding and knowledge as well as because hybridity is evolving and adapting to the fluid contexts in which²² hybrid systems operate. The socio-political environment in which they operate has a profound influence on their functions, mandates, systems, and operational culture.

In Africa, countries emerging from conflicts like Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have better institutionalised hybrid structures in their security and justice spaces. They were able to achieve this through political and international support.

We have seen that actors that do not fit into the western concept of state, security, education, health, etc., are often neglected and termed undemocratic or detrimental to peacebuilding, safety, and security provisioning. Moreover, as most development and security partners are themselves (inter-)governmental or government-funded, their primary cooperation is with the host government. Working with non-state actors in the

²² Blair, Robert A., International Intervention, and the Rule of Law after Civil War: Evidence from Liberia, *International Organization* 73(2): 2019, 365–98; Blair, Robert A., *Peacekeeping, Policing, and the Rule of Law after Civil War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

field of security, therefore, poses a challenge to their (legal) *modus operandi* unless explicitly requested and flanked by the host government. There is a limited understanding of the role of traditional authorities and their systems. This is in addition to the formal rejection of traditional systems although informal relationships and practices between both formal and informal institutions continue. There is a need to acknowledge and accept the capacity and legitimacy of non-formal security and policing mechanisms – it is important to determine how best to engage them (as is done with formal security and policing mechanisms, despite their shortcomings).

The population, including individuals representing the formal institutions, do not care about who maintains their everyday peace – they do not see the formal or non-formal security or policing structures as mutually exclusive or independent of each other. Research shows that many citizens view formal and non-formal actors as complements rather than substitutes.²³ They have found a way of navigating the intricate web of these structures by determining the one that best suits their needs at each point in time – for them the primary thing is the maintenance of peace; this is achieved by constant negotiation of interests, which can lead to the development of a framework for the peaceful conduct of conflicts beyond the traditional model. However, there is

²³ Niagale Bagayoko, Eboe Hutchful & Robin Luckham, *Hybrid security governance in Africa*, 2016.

the need to link hybridisation to understanding how best to engage with informal structures, including which concrete instruments and tools can be developed to face emerging, new and hybrid threats, such as disinformation, and cyber support for violent extremist groups.

Opportunities for engagement

Despite the challenges, hybridity presents some opportunities²⁴ in post-conflict situations, for example, it helps to bring about new forms of statehood, peace, and security provisioning. Although there is no evidence to show that it has found new tools to address hybrid threats, such as disinformation and cyber-attacks, it has, however, provided support to address violent extremism.²⁵ Non-formal actors can also help ensure effective service delivery, especially in rural environments,²⁶ and can even serve as partners in state-building processes in conflict and post-conflict settings.²⁷

Efforts to improve coordination and communication between formal and non-formal security and justice providers have been shown to reduce the risk of violent conflict and prevent the re-emergence of illegal armed actors in areas where the state is weak.²⁸ It has been raised earlier

²⁴ In countries across the Middle East and North Africa, political opposition networks, local communities, and identity groups (including, for example, Salafi and jihadist groups) provide basic services that existing states have failed to supply.

²⁵ International Crisis Group, "Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante Groups Fighting Boko Haram." Africa Report N°244, February 23. Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group, 2017.

²⁶ Baldwin, Kate, *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

²⁷ Mukhopadhyay, Dipali, *Warlords, Strongman Governors, and the State in Afghanistan*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

²⁸ Blair, Robert, Manuel Moscoso, Andrés Vargas, and Michael Weintraub. 2021. "After Rebel Governance: A Field Experiment in Security and Justice Provision in Rural Colombia", SSRN Scholarly Paper 3815789, July 27, 2021, <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3815789>.

that the social contract within most of the colonised States particularly in Africa is faulty – and should be renegotiated to address some of the deep-seated grievances which are the root causes of tension and conflicts.

It is also worth noting that while uniform, national, republican forces remain the modern international norm, it is not the only model.²⁹ Models of inclusive local recruitment and local service, which capitalise on customary and ethnic loyalty within the unit, while maintaining loyalty to the state at the level of the officer corps merit examination. This model fits more easily with security forces, due to the localised nature of law enforcement, but it merits examination for defence forces as well. While there are *pros* and *cons* of absorbing regional militias -intact- into State service vs absorption into and dispersal throughout purely uniform republican services, legitimate and legal co – option is without question preferable to the state shoring up security and defence deficiencies by hiring non-state armed groups as illegal proxy forces.

It is not enough to simply dismantle irregular and customary force structures which emerged to perform security and policing functions without addressing the fundamental dynamics and deficits that generated them in the first place. Decisions about these structures and their functioning must

²⁹ Perhaps the best-known historic model of co-opting traditional security and defence institutions by the State is the British regimental system, in which local units, with relative ethnic homogeneity, unique customs and a sound relationship with local populations, were absorbed intact. This was as true of Scottish Highland Regiments as it was for South Asian Gurkhas, and comparable national examples are still found in many commonwealth nations today.

respond in some way to both demands for security and order from below and for state needs from above. These decisions and the associated processes will be crucial to the evolution of any future state sanctioned security structures.

Liberia and Sierra Leon provide good models where non-formal security and policing mechanisms were integrated into the formal security structure. Liberia also has Peace Huts. The Peace Huts started after 14 years of war throughout the country. These spaces provide conflict resolution and mediation services to disputing community members. Peace huts are modelled on the century-old Palava Hut system used to address disputes but were run mostly by men. Liberian women adapted this system to suit their needs in establishing gender-sensitive transitional justice and security sector reform processes.

In Nigeria, the transformation of the security landscape is currently characterised by the emergence of grassroots security actors, with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), vigilante and neighbourhood watch groups playing key roles in this process, either working as stand-alone entities or jointly with State security actors. The CJTF in the northeast region of Nigeria is in the front-line role in the battle against insurgency and is officially recognised and supported by the state as a key actor that complements the work of the armed forces and police. The current spate of insecurity necessitated the formation of state-level and regional security structures at the sub-national levels, with the establishment of

Amotekun in the south-west³⁰, and *Ebube-agu* in the south-east, which are funded directly by the governments of the respective regions, outside the federal government that otherwise has the exclusive mandate for the provision of security services. In the case of the state-level structure, Operation Rainbow currently functions as a security agency funded by the Plateau State Government, with personnel drawn from the security organisations under the control of the Federal Government, in strong partnership with community-level neighbourhood watch groups that provide local intelligence for response activities³¹.

The situation in Somalia also provides a classic example of the process of hybridisation regarding the Somali custom of *abbaan*, which typifies the traditional system of governance where security is provided for outside travellers, merchants and migrants moving through clan territory. This system of hybridisation of security dates to the precolonial era and today it has been reinvigorated following the collapse of the Somali state and the proliferation of international aid workers in need of safe passage³². This situation was further underscored by the fact that:

³⁰ Yahaya, U.J and Bello, M.M., An Analysis of the Constitutional Implications of Southwest Regional Security Initiative: Amotekun, *African Scholar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(6), 2020, 161-192.

³¹ Kwaja, Chris, State Response to Violent Conflicts in Plateau State, Monograph Series 2, Directorate of Research and Planning, Governor's Office, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, 2014.

³² Menkhaus, K., Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Somalia, CSG Papers, 2016, Available in https://secgovcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NSSPs_in_Somalia_April2016.pdf

“Communities that have been cut off from effective state authority—whether out of governmental indifference to marginal frontier territories, or because of protracted warfare, or because of vested local and external interests in perpetuating conditions of state failure—consistently seek to devise arrangements to provide for themselves the core functions that the missing state is supposed to assume, especially basic security.”³³

Another key example from the Somali context is the Somali Police *Darwish* concept.³⁴ The model, fully endorsed by the international community, as outlined in the National Security Architecture and the New Policing Model takes progressive steps to co-opt locally trusted traditional clan-based security providers, within their home territory at a sub-Federal level as a form of police with some paramilitary capabilities. While still in the initial stages of implementation and not without challenges; the question of majoritarian-minoritarian clan composition, appropriate vetting/screening and universal Police Basic Recruitment Curriculum training, and standard

³³ Menkhaus, K., Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoiler, State Building and the Politics of Coping, *International Security*, 31(3), 2007, 74–106, Winter.

³⁴ The term *Darwish* is variable in its use, some academic sources use it as an umbrella category including all Federal Member State forces, while others limit it narrowly to units of local or federal *gendarme*. For purposes here we refer specifically to; “units of the Somali Police [which] are traditionally well accepted security providers and are foreseen in the setup of security organizations at a Federal and State level, as mapped out in the National Security Architecture and Somalia’s new Policing Model”. UNSOM (2019) Somali Police *Darwish* Concept.

concerns over misconduct³⁵. Despite this, however, even critics of a model of co-opting clan militias project their potential in terms of community policing and counterterrorism³⁶ the incidence of clan militias outside any chain of government control or accountability.

Other examples of where hybridity has worked in Africa are:

1. Rwanda exhibits a remarkable achievement in the preservation of peace and order by employing neighbourhood militias called "Local Defense Forces" that work closely with the police.
2. Ethiopia incorporated traditional leaders into a consultative council of regional governments beyond the elected regional council.
3. In Somaliland, tribal practices and institutions were integrated into the peacebuilding process; for example, through the election of traditional elites from their respective clans into the Somalia Federal Government in 2012. Although controversial, Somalia continues to favour a clan representative model in which clan elders elect parliament which in turn elects the President. This follows the legacy of the 4.5 methods introduced in 2000 during the peace and reconciliation conferences in Arta,

³⁵ Adam Day, Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace; How militias and paramilitary groups shape post conflict transitions*, Case 3 The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Djibouti. Under this system, Somali communities were divided into four major and one-half clans (the half being a concession to collective minoritarian clans) as far as power-sharing i.e., representation in the House of the People and other government structures.

This coexistence allowed for state institutions and local communities to work together to establish legitimate political systems to facilitate peace and state-building processes³⁷.

Hybrid actors are pivotal drivers of conflict and governance challenges in the Middle East and North Africa. They arose in response to states' failure to provide security or services but now are primary in efforts to re-establish authority³⁸. Non-state actors are used decisively in shaping the power struggles between major state powers in this region, for example, in Iran, Libya and Saudi Arabia. The relationship between the Iranian Government and Hezbollah shows how regional powers continue their antagonism through their relations with a non-state proxy and the trans-border activities of such groups.³⁹ This also shows that a non-state actor can be a challenger to one state and a partner to another. Hybridity has also

³⁷ Daniel G. Kebede, The hybridization of state security governance for peacebuilding and state-building in Somalia. The Southern Voices Network: Research Paper No 2, 2014.

³⁸ <https://www.panoramas.pitt.edu/larr/violent-nonstate-actors-and-emergence-hybrid-governance-south-america>

³⁹ See for example, Schroeder, Ursula C., Fairlie Chappuis, Deniz Kocak, Security Sector Reform and the Emergence of Hybrid Security Governance. *International Peacekeeping*, 21(2), 2014, 214-230.

worked in Iran, where they have played the role of state sponsorship in the creation and evolution of hybrid actors and have enjoyed singular success in partnering with such groups.⁴⁰ Hybrid actors may be the single greatest impediment to the reconstitution of state authority, having established themselves as an enduring feature of the landscape in the Middle East and North Africa.

In Libya, local armed forces were pivotal to the 2011 revolution which ousted former President Gaddafi. Transitional authorities established after the initial state collapse financed the creation of new brigades as sources of security, initiated disarmament programmes and transferred armed groups into newly created state structures. Despite these attempts major control challenges arose which gave rise to inter-group rivalries and a scramble for scarce resources. This led to some groups diversifying their sources of income beyond state control transforming Libya's economy into one shaped by conflict with grave consequences of state control its political landscape. In a bid to address these challenges, the Warrior Affairs Commission (WAC) was established to reintegrate armed groups into state-controlled structures to eliminate terrorism. This did not work because too many factors hampered its effectiveness. Most of the former rebels did not want to sever ties with their regional communities. The revolutionary brigades were given better welfare, weapons, and equipment packages than those provided through

⁴⁰ Cambanis, Thanassis, et. al. *Hybrid Actors: Armed Groups and State Fragmentation in the Middle East*, A Century Foundation Book, 2019.

this programme.

Risks of engaging with hybrid security arrangements

To engage with non-formal security or policing organisations, a thorough risk assessment should be conducted. A summary of some of the risks are as follows⁴¹:

1. Upsetting relationships and power balances between central state agencies and local/non-state actors as well as among local actors.
2. Inadvertently creating or reinforcing extortion rackets or otherwise reducing local people's security (for example, human rights violations, oppressive ethnic/tribal/gender/other social relationships, conflict economies or organised crime) in the effort to make local/non-state security providers self-sufficient.
3. 'Damaging a good thing' – overwhelming small-scale local/non-state actors with an influx of substantial amounts of funding and associated reporting requirements.

In addition, a thorough analysis of potential opportunities so far in the development of security sector governance and reform should be conducted. This is because although there are challenges related to the existence of informal actors, networks and norms, there are also opportunities.

⁴¹ Maria Derks, Improving Security and Justice through Local/Non-State Actors. *Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Chingendael'*, 2012.

Conclusion

Going forward, it is best to proceed with caution by exploring the following possible areas of engagement identified in recent studies⁴²:

1. Map out the informal actors of the security sector and their role, as well as informal norms, solidarities and networks rooted in the official security and justice institutions.
2. Endeavour to build capacity in these informal actors to orient their activities in the security and justice sector and their interface with the formal security institutions of the state toward support and not as a hindrance to SSG.
3. Help in developing empirically grounded programs and policies to address the impact of hybrid security orders on the security and entitlements of citizens, on vulnerable and excluded people and communities. There needs to be a better understanding of how and for whom oversight mechanisms work in situations where parallel channels of influence and informal networks determine the allocation of resources and security provisions.
4. Help in the design of oversight as well as monitoring and evaluation processes (formalising indicators considering informality).

⁴² Bagayoko, Niagale, Eboe Hutchful and Robin Luckham, Hybrid Security Governance in Africa: Rethinking the Foundations of Security, Justice and Legitimate Public Authority, Conflict, *Security & Development*, 16:1, 2016, 1-32.

Finally, engagement with hybrid security mechanisms could provide a powerful analytical tool to unravel governance in Africa. The analysis of hybrid security governance could provide new and refreshing insights on networks and alliances and on competition, tensions, and conflicts within African defence and security services, which may help explain some difficulties in implementing SSR processes⁴³.

It could also show how formal and informal systems tend to overlap, interrelate, and interpenetrate at complex levels, states and informal networks have not been seen as mutually exclusive but considered as embedded in each other. Some African countries like Niger have tried to cope with “informalization” dynamics by officially and legally recognising the role played by customary institutions. Liberia and Sierra Leone have put in place measures to encourage the inclusion of gender dimensions in security sector reform processes which if absent, might contribute to undermining the foundation of the principle of men’s and women’s equality ⁴⁴.

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⁴³ Ibid.

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COMMUNITY WOMEN PEACE ARCHITECTURE DIALOGUE, JOS -SOUTH, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

Olutoyin Falade

Innovative Strategy for
Human Development

Introduction/Background

The project is titled Community Women Peace Architecture Dialogue, which is a monthly dialogue meeting of women leaders at the Local Government Area of Jos-South in Plateau State. This will offer women leaders with common issues (Sexual Gender-Based Violence, security, economic, social-water/sanitation, health, political) have a platform to discuss and proffer solutions/interventions to them. This is to bridge the gap of community platforms that most of the women do not have access to and cannot talk when present. It will enhance the collaborative strategy for women to deal with common issues and interests.

The project, Community Women Peace Architecture Dialogue is focused on women leaders in the local governance structure of Jos-South LGA, which is the capital and government seat of Plateau State. Plateau State is an agricultural state, one of the food basket areas with many of the women practicing subsistence farming, while

**Keywords: Dialogue, Violence, Security,
Women**

others do local work on the men's farms for a living. In recent times, the insecurity across the country such as kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, armed robbery, and banditry has not excluded Plateau State. Many of these women, their husbands and children are experiencing hardship due to security, socio-political and economic issues. Also, many of these women and their children are not spared the experience of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence that is on the increase in Nigeria.

Many platforms for dialogues on such issues do not bring in these women to air their views or share their experiences. Where some of them are allowed, they are not given the opportunity to talk. For example, when the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and other groups are negotiating with government, some of these women are not allowed to be a part. Most of the time, the women always protest after violence has broken out, putting on black clothes, sitting and crying in public. Also, a recent assessment on women in mediation and dialogue was carried out by UN Women in year 2021 in Kaduna and Plateau States, which reported that there is no women dialogue platform where security and peace is the sole discussion.

Using the tree model, root causes of the treatment given women in these communities revealed culture, marginalization, poverty, distrust and negative perception. Others are injustices, economic deprivation, ignorance, ethnic, prejudice and intolerance, corruption, poor

governance e.t.c.

Project Objectives

The following objectives were set for this project:

- To create a safe space for women to dialogue and give them a voice on peace and security in their communities without fear.
- To move women from being reactionary to being proactive. Rather than appearing in black clothes and crying on the roads, women should take action before violence breaks out.

Methodology

The stakeholders that are involved in this process are the Ministry of Women Affairs, LGA officials, traditional rulers, FBO leaders, etc. Partner organizations include Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA), Ministry of Women Affairs, Jos-South LGA and Search for Common Ground. The parties are women leaders who are affected and who attend to such issues in their communities, such as wives of traditional rulers (Ardos and Mai-angwas), Imams and Pastors' wives, Market Women Leaders, Political Parties' Women Leaders, etc. This process involved mapping twenty strategic key women stakeholders in the LGA.

The activity is a One Day Monthly Dialogue Meeting for three hours, which holds in the LGA Secretariat Hall or any other partner location for a duration of three (3) months and will be their contributions; which is their support to the project.

Dialogue facilitation is the strategy which will entail mapping of stakeholders to be engaged;

advocacy visit to some of the key stakeholders like the Chairman of the LGA, some traditional rulers, FBO leaders, etc. An agenda was drawn to guide the discussion each month which will be facilitated by the facilitator with support of any of the partners' staff representative, which can assist in building her capacity to hold such dialogues after the pilot. At each meeting, the women were to develop an implementable action plan within one month to report in the next monthly meeting. A Monthly report was submitted to Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) at the end of each month's meeting for the three months pilot period. The project was implemented on the platform of Innovative Strategy for Human Development, a non-governmental organization in Jos, Nigeria under the leadership of Olutoyin Falade as one of the requirements for her completion of a 10-month training on Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation. The training involved 30 women across five English-speaking countries in West Africa – Ghana, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Cameroon and Nigeria organized by Mediators Beyond Borders International, USA.

The following indicators were set to measure if the objectives were achieved:

- Women participate freely sharing personal and community issues around peace and security in Jos South at meetings
- Joint problem solving by women on issues shared by them
- Increased number of Women sharing community issues and proffering solutions/

interventions

- Development and implementation of action plans
- Reporting in the next meeting which action plan was implemented either individually or jointly
- Sharing of new ideas, knowledge and skills each woman is gaining from this interaction.
- What changes are seen in their community from the moment they have engaged in the Dialogue process through involvement in other community engagement.

Activity Implementation

The dialogue meetings for the pilot period held in May, June and July 2021 with invitation letters sent two weeks ahead of the set dates and a reminder through WhatsApp or text messages to the participants. Each meeting lasted for three (3) to four (4) hours between 9am to 1pm. The agenda drawn before the meeting were reviewed by the participants for additions or subtractions and if deemed acceptable, the meeting of the day was conducted. Ground rules were set with emphasis on confidentiality regarding any matter agreed amongst the participants. The facilitator led the group on context analysis and update to reveal any dynamics that changed, identifying also the actors/parties, causes, threats, etc. They prioritized the context analysis in order of urgency, importance and life threatening, which led them to make recommendations or proffer solutions to them. Incidence reports of occurrences were shared at the meetings. In doing this, the women

highlighted the actions to be taken by themselves and identified other stakeholders that could respond or who had the mandate to respond. Women security agents participated, so security issues could be taken up immediately.

The women dialogue has more women and with just 3 men in the entire 3 months meeting – Innovative Strategy for Human Development (ISHD) Staff and Director General of PPBA. The women had mixed religious background – traditional religion, Muslim and Christian; the age range was between 23 and 65 years; there was also a good mix of ethnicity of Plateau indigenes and other groups from other part of the country such as Igbo, Yoruba, and people from the South-South zone.

Issues Identified at the Dialogues

The issues identified were the following:

- Cultism
- Drug Abuse
- Rape
- Robbery
- Kidnapping
- Influx of illegal migrants
- Sexual and Gender-based violence
- Burning of farms
- Farmer-Herder Conflict

Project Outcomes

The following were the outcomes of these activities:

- The women understood more of conflict analysis and how it helps them to analyze

their context so as to identify threats in their community, so they freely contributed in this regard.

- The women realized they can take steps to prevent or mitigate any incidence that could lead to loss of lives and properties.
- The WhatsApp platform created is still used to share information on peace and security in their communities and Plateau State
- The ease of sharing information and engaging government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) representatives without moving out of their comfort zone as the platform created links with the Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and the PPBA.
- The women sent letters to the Executive Governor of Plateau stating their observations and recommendations made, such as enforcing the Law that bans commercial motor-cycles from operating in the State as it was used in many crimes. The government responded within three (3) months through the State Police Command announcement on enforcement of this law. The women were happy and realized that their voices matter in the affairs of the State.
- During each month's dialogue meeting the women drafted action plans which were required to be carried out before the next meeting.
- The women decided to continue to hold their meetings if the PPBA will continue to provide

the space for the meeting, even without the transport fare.

- The women identified volatile areas in their communities, planned advocacy visits to traditional rulers and brought back reports to the monthly meetings.
- Because of the contribution of this project Jos-South did not witness the violence that occurred in Bassa LGA and spilled to Jos-North in August and November, 2021.

Challenges

The project experienced some challenges as follows:

- Buy-in of Jos-South L.G.A & Ministry of Women Affairs could not be elicited for the timeframe as expected.
- Venue for the meeting could not be secured from the expected sources; the PPBA, however, came to the rescue
- Women did not keep to time of commencement of the meeting; one particular month's duration reduced to two and half hours for the hall to be used for another meeting.

Lessons Learned

The following lesson were learned in the course of this project:

- The difficulty in getting the buy-in of the Jos South LGA Executives and Ministry of Women Affairs of Plateau State. Letters for advocacy visits were sent to them, the LGA requested

for the NGO to register there even with her status with Corporate Affairs Commission. The Ministry did not attend the meeting, but on enquiry it has also required the NGO to register with the Ministry.

- Very young girls who visited people's houses to beg for food were found to in fact be spies for some groups while some of them were engaged in sex-for-money with the men around.
- Some laws of the State Government, such as planting of maize in residential areas is forbidding. It was said it aided criminals like kidnappers hide under it to rape women there.
- The women are ready for this kind of engagement as they embark on advocacy visits on their own and brought back reports.

Recommendations

The following actions are recommended:

- Plateau State Government should look into streamlining the registration of NGOs in the State, so that it will encourage partners to implement projects without hitches.
- This project can be adopted by the PPBA or any other NGO in the State. ISHD can also look for more funding to continue and extend to other LGAs
- This project can also be replicated in other states of Nigeria where there is no such platform.
- The link between non-state and state actors should be encouraged and supported by all

stakeholders.

Conclusion

The project though in its pilot stage can be continued and extended to other LGAs as women are key stakeholders in the communities and, when enlightened on conflicts, violence, and early warning and response, can add value to the process and results.

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**A SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SEXUAL BASED
VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENT GIRLS
DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN IN
GBAJIMBA AND NAKA INTERNALLY
DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS IN BENUE
STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This report is a summary of an extensive micro-level research focusing on an analysis of practices, norms and policies regarding the incidence of sexual based violence against girls. The research was conducted in 2021 across a cross section of communities of internally displaced persons in two Local Government Areas of Benue State, namely Guma and Gwer-West. The report seeks to identify the beliefs, attitudes and socio-cultural norms and practices that are associated with sexual based violence against girls in the research locations. The report further explains the main predisposing risk factors of sexual abuse against

girls and their effects on them. The report also analyses the gaps in service delivery for the survivors of sexual violence. The social context of the research was, the COVID- 19 pandemic. The study was a part of an ongoing project supported by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and implemented by the Sexual Offenses Awareness and Response Initiative (SOAR Initiative). The CORAFID Centre for Innovation and Research was the technical partner with responsibility for data analysis and the report writing.

Background

Corona virus (COVID-19), the second pandemic of the 21st century, at the time of this research was already in its fourth wave with the additional evolving risks associated with the omicron variant. COVID-19 has infected over one-hundred million persons around the world and claimed over two million lives (Mallah, 2021). In Nigeria, 217,058 confirmed cases were documented with 2,981 deaths recorded, while in Benue State 1,907 cases were confirmed and 25 deaths recorded as at December 12, 2021¹. The first case of the virus was reported in Nigeria in March, 2020 but is

¹ The figures cited for Nigeria including Benue State in this report are valid as at 5.17 PM on December 12, 2021 and are drawn from the official site of the NCDC, NCDC Coronavirus COVID-19 Microsite, <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng>.

reported to have originated in Wuhan, China.

Nigeria has had its own share of the deadly pandemic including lockdown in major states like Abuja and Lagos with some level of restrictions observed in Benue State as well. UN OCHA, (2020) reported that even before the outbreak of COVID-19, the (humanitarian crisis) situation was severe; it was characterized by forced displacement, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), particularly against women and girls, and included rape. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) reportedly have suffered exploitation and abuse at the hands of security forces mandated to protect them as well as at the hands of neighbours and intimate partners. At the start of 2020, children specifically faced multiple protection risks, including the risk of sexual exploitation, homelessness and dependence on negative coping mechanisms (early marriage, child labour and begging) due to poverty. That is to say, that the crises have been in existence and COVID-19 made a bad situation worse for the girls and women population through acts of sexual and gender-based violence.

The lockdown came with many reported cases of abuse of women in homes and institutions. The cases of rape, assault and other acts of criminality associated with sexual and gender-based violence were reported. Obinna (2021) quoted Ayande of ActionAid Nigeria who said that COVID-19 lockdown propelled a significant surge in domestic violence around the world. ActionAid Nigeria reportedly witnessed an alarming increase in reported cases of rape and killing of women

and girls. Between March and June (2021), 299 cases of violence against women and girls were documented across seven states, 51 of which were cases of sexual violence involving minors between ages 3 and 16. The Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS), an arm of Child Protection unit of the Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Lagos State reported that 2,154 child abuse cases were reported in the state in 2020 as a result of COVID-19. Sexual defilement topped the record with 1,005 cases. A report by the Lagos State Government's Domestic and Gender Violence Response Team revealed that there was 60 percent increase in sexual violence as a result of COVID-19.

In the following lines we present an executive summary and the key conclusions of the baseline assessment that produced this report. While this leaves out important details of the original research because of the page limit for this publication, we do hope that the objective, methodology, key findings, the discussion and key conclusions are adequately presented to enable the reader appreciate the overall importance of the study.

Executive Summary

The baseline assessment was conducted with the objective to generate evidence for strengthening the design and implementation of activities and interventions on the *Strengthening Communities-in-emergency situations to address sexual based violence against girls, within the COVID 19 pandemic context, in Benue State*. The specific

research objectives were: first, to identify the beliefs, attitudes and socio-cultural norms and practices regarding sexual based violence against girls in Naka and Gbajimba IDP camps in Benue State; second, to understand the main risk factors which predispose adolescent girls to sexual abuse, and the consequences/effects on girls, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; and, third, to identify gaps in service provision for survivors of sexual violence, including in community-based prevention and response systems in the project area, particularly within the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding support came from the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. CORAFID Centre for Innovation and Research was the consulting organisation for the research. Sexual Offenses Awareness and Response Initiative (SOAR Initiative) is the implementing organisation and was also responsible for the data collection. Data collection was done through well articulated processes by volunteers recruited and coordinated directly by the implementing organisation, SOAR Initiative.

The findings revealed the set of beliefs, attitudes, norms and practices relevant to the study; the main risk factors that predispose adolescent girls to sexual abuse and their effects were identified and interpreted and as well the service gaps.

Some of the key findings revealed that knowledge of COVID-19 was high in the communities studied and more than half of all the respondents (Gbajimba, 64%; Naka, 60%)

believed that the level of adherence by the displaced persons to the established guidelines was high throughout the study area. The lockdown was associated with extreme household hunger and poverty, with 78 per cent of the respondents in Gbajimba and 70 per cent of those in Naka describing their condition at the time as unbearable. The restriction of movement during the lockdown itself had impact on livelihood outcomes for the IDPs. Between 51 percent of the respondents in Naka and 56 per cent of those in Gbajimba reported negative livelihood outcomes during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The study found that the COVID-19 lockdown was associated with increased experience of violence in the IDP camps and host communities, including domestic aggression and rape, which 72 percent of respondents in Naka and 86 percent of those in Gbajimba believed actually increased during the lockdown.

The experience of violence was perceived to be different for the boys and the girls, because of how boys and girls are perceived in the community. While the girls were believed to experience sexual harassment and discrimination, the boys tended to be subjected to more of forced and exploitative labour. The boys also perceived hunger as a form of violence, which all the children said they experienced. Some of the factors associated with the disparity in treatment between boys and girls, men and women, were: perceived superiority of the males relative to the female members of the community and the tendency for a person's gender to determine the type of abuse to which they

were subjected. Thus the power dynamics were male dominated as the knowledge gap between male and female members in the camps was rather wide; similarly an unfair and negative perception toward the female folks persisted and was evident from the responses received during the data collection phase.

While the perception of gender bias and violence during the COVID-19 lockdown was rated as low in the study area with 65 per cent and 61 percent of all the respondents in Gbajimba and Naka respectively indicating that gender bias was low in their community, contrariwise, no less than 34 percent of the respondents in Gbajimba and 66 percent of those in Naka perceived that gender disparity was in fact high or unbearable in the community. Majority of the respondents also believed that narratives, attitudes and beliefs encouraging and promoting sexual violence against girls were dominant in the community. The vividness with which the school children, about 92 of them, presented the scenario of violence against girls in their schools meant that many of them had primary or secondary exposure to the violent incidents.

The study revealed that the affected populations - children and adults, male and female, those in the camp and those in the host communities - differed significantly with regard to their perception and interpretation of violence. They also differed with regard to their understanding of basic human rights and their legal entitlement to protection against all forms of violence under the law.

The men in the IDP camps may have displayed a level of idleness or lack of what to do more than their female counterparts during the lockdown. The study revealed that most of the men were perceived as idle or less busy and tended to seem super-active, sexually, and often impatient or angry in their dealings with their intimate partners. This was evident particularly in the case of men who had teenage girls as spouses. The teenage mothers who participated in the research frequently reported that their men demanded for a lot of sex and that they raped and physically assaulted their wives and other girls, both within the camps and elsewhere in the community. Some of the locations where sexual violence occurred were well known, but some were rather unexpected - e.g. along the way, around water wells, around the market, at drinking joints, in dilapidated structures, around the bathroom areas, etc.

The respondents demonstrated significant level of understanding of the offence of rape and were almost unanimous in their answer that any man who raped a girl was to blame for the crime. But some respondents also identified societal factors that may create room for rape to occur. According to them, poverty, general hardship, the protracted armed herdsman attacks on unarmed citizens, and the fact of being forcefully displaced were some of the root and proximate causes of rape. In this case, the measures to address the crime of rape would seem to include population-wide sensitization, prosecution of offenders and justice for the abused, but also must include societal

level interventions to address the root and proximate factors that encourage rape and other sexual offenses.

The overall availability and accessibility of services to address rape were rated as moderate. Community based responses were available but some restraining factors existed in the community that made it difficult for girls to report sexual violence, such as the status of the offenders and the parental responses. It was not uncommon for rapists to go scot-free, especially if they were influential members of the society. At other times, a girl that was raped was punished, deprived of educational opportunities, mocked, and made to feel like she was the guilty one after all, or given in marriage to the man that raped her or any other man, if she became pregnant. Consequently, up to 54.2 per cent of school children at Gbajimba believed that girls were not safe in their school, with 52.4 per cent actually stating that they themselves did not feel safe in their schools.

In the event that a girl suffered sexual violence and needed help, the study found that 53.3 per cent of all the students who responded at both Gbajimba and Naka believed that such a girls would not access adequate support, with 16.3 percent more indicating that they were not sure if adequate support was accessible. Actually, girls who experienced rape had received support ranging from medical care, counselling, police involvement, and financial support, while some of them were married off to the rapist or another man. The case handling practices were found to be community based and supervised by traditional

leaders. Standard, professional support services including case management, legal support, prosecution of offenders were, however, missing. Thus girls who experienced sexual violence received minimal support but were some times further harmed in the process while the offenders did not have to face the due legal process.

The study identified options for addressing the inadequacies of available support services. Some child protection and safeguarding measures and standards were recommended for integration with existing services in the community, so that girls who experienced or were at risk of experiencing sexual violence could be better served. The study recommended the need for full implementation of legal instruments that protect the human rights and dignity of girls.

The study revealed an interesting area for future research that is deemed to be of high policy and academic relevance, which is to investigate and explain the factors behind the successful investment on the part of the small proportion of the IDPs, between 2 per cent and 5 per cent in all, who reported positive outcomes on their livelihood activities during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Methodology

The study utilized qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. It involved desk review and field research conducted at Guma and Gwer West Local Government Areas (LGA) of Benue State. The study locations were the IDP camps located at Gbajimba (i.e. Gbajimba Main Camp

and the Gbajimba Camp Extension) and the Naka IDP Camp in Guma and Gwer-West LGA respectively. Data collection took place at both the IDP camps and in the host communities through the use of questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KII). The persons interviewed included internally displaced women, men, adolescent boys, adolescent girls, adolescent mothers, students and camp officials. The micro-level research approach was applied because of the advantage it affords, which is to enable contextually appropriate analysis of practices, norms and policies and to facilitate contextually relevant design interventions.

Research Conclusions

Knowledge of Corona virus is high in the community

In all the communities studied, all the respondents in the studied locations indicated an appreciable level of knowledge regarding corona virus. They also indicated very good understanding of all the key guidelines established by the NCDC. Majority of them believed that the level of compliance among the displaced households was high during the lockdown.

The lockdown negatively impacted livelihood outcomes among the displaced households, with a few positive outcomes

The IDPs experienced increased household hunger and poverty, which in the case of 70% or more of them, the condition at the time was

described as 'unbearable'. The level of hardship was thus too much for them to bear. The IDPs had lost most or all of their household wealth as a result of their displacement and had since then depended mostly on daily earnings to provide for their families. Consequently, the restriction on movement during the lockdown caused more than half of the people to report negative livelihood outcomes. The relevant authorities in charge of the IDPS needed to have taken the specific facts regarding these people into consideration and should have acted based on accessible evidence, but the study did not indicate that this happened.

However, a small proportion of the IDPs reported positive outcomes on their livelihoods, although it is not clear why this was the case. Perhaps some of those who reported positive or highly positive outcomes on their livelihoods may include those who took advantage of the opportunity to learn a new trade including the production and sale of hand sanitizers and other products that were deemed essential at the time. This is an area that requires further research as the findings will help to highlight the mix of livelihood practices that could have created varied outcomes for the IDPs.

Perception of violence and its interpretation differ significantly among the displaced persons

The study found that 72%-86% of the study participants in Naka and Gbajimba believed that domestic aggression and rape increased during the lockdown. However, violence itself and the

interpretation of its impact differed depending on who was doing the narrative, with a percentage of the respondents denying the existence of violence during the lockdown altogether. It was also found, based on perception analysis, that some persons are capable of interpreting certain acts of violence as non-violence. Thus, the boys were less likely to believe that they were subjected to any form of violence, except hunger, while many adults, particularly the women, denied observing any acts of violence perpetration. There was also the important finding that experience was an important factor in the interpretation of violence. Thus, adolescent mothers who were likely to be subjected to frequent acts of sexual violence were more likely to acknowledge the occurrence of violence in the camps, compared to the adolescent girls and adolescent boys who did not witness or experience it directly. It is important, therefore, for managers of humanitarian response services and SGBV responders to engage in scientific research to determine the existence and level of sexual violence in a community to determine their policy response, as random observation or sheer personal opinion may not be adequate to establish the level of exposure to violence in a community.

Level of education determines perception and interpretation of violence including SGBV

While the statistical evidence confirmed a high level of the incidence of sexual and other violence within and outside the IDP camps, it was found that among the children, those in school were

more likely to recognize the various dimensions of violence including sexual and gender based violence, compared to their peers who were not in school. This reveals the importance of providing education to people on the nature and phenomenology of violence including sexual violence, to enable people recognize it when it occurs, and to act appropriately

The Corona Virus lockdown increased the incidence and severity of violence against girls

The study found that the lockdown occasioned a significant increase in violence against girls. Adolescent mothers and adolescent girls experienced the worst forms of the violence, which included sexual molestation, rape, child marriage, and other patterns of exploitation. Between 80 per cent to 90 per cent of all respondents reported the occurrence of violence, with 40 percent at Gbajimba and 30 percent of those in Naka indicating that the level of violence was high or very high.

This finding is consistent with revelations from a couple of assessments conducted a year or two earlier by CORAFID on behalf of the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (Benue SEMA). The assessments showed that while violence was reported in the camps, a proper system for preventing and responding to the violence was lacking.

The level of hardship most people experienced was unbearable and

excruciating

Between 70 per cent of the respondents in Naka and almost 80 per cent of those in Gbajimba rated the level of hardship that they had to endure during the lockdown as unbearable. This way, the study revealed that circumstance and context played a key role in determining how people experienced or interpreted their experience. It was interesting to note that while the respondents disagreed about the level of violence in the community during the lockdown, all but 10 percent agreed that the level of hardship that they had to face during the lockdown was unbearable, with the 10 per cent who disagreed in fact insisting that the level of hardship was excruciating.

The key lesson from this important finding is, that the burden of sexual violence against girls during the lockdown was overbearing on all those who experienced it, particularly the adolescent girls and adolescent mothers who lived in the camps or in the host communities. But the hardship that they experienced, which most of them rated as 'unbearable', was part of structural violence. The research participants tended to rate the pain inflicted by direct, inter-personal, violence lower than they rated the pain caused

by structural violence². This is significant. The particular situation in question required a systematic approach to addressing the problem of violence in the IDP camps and host communities, but as the study revealed, this was lacking.

There is widespread awareness regarding the offense of rape in the community

The study revealed that most people in the community are aware that rape is an offense and none of the research participants was willing to excuse the perpetrator of rape. They blamed the occurrence of rape, as presented in the case study used for the research, on the misuse of alcohol and physical strength against the girl (Dooshima), because of her vulnerability.

Many people, however, went beyond the actual

² The concept of 'structural violence' is an interesting one and requires some explanation. Structural violence describes a sociological reality that was first conceptualized in a 1969 article by sociologist Johan Galtung titled "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research". The concept refers to violence, or harm, that people experience as a result of a social institution or social structure preventing people from meeting their basic needs. Institutions and societal structures exist to serve certain purposes, they are not neutral by their nature and can, at some point, begin to negatively impact people's lives, especially by creating conditions of inequality characterized by unequal life chances for the people. Inequality may manifest by way of unequal access to resources or opportunities and this can extend to conditions where those who benefit from the situation begin to actively exploit it by making those already disadvantaged by the inequality to serve their needs without commensurate reward. The condition of inequality becomes more or less permanent when certain traditions and socio-cultural norms that promote the status quo are reinforced and maintained across generations of people. In the context of this research, issues of gender inequality, acceptance of the disparities conducive for the perpetration of SGBV, unwillingness to uphold, equally, the rights of all members of society - men, women, girls, children; these are elemental manifestations of the negative principles that uphold structural violence in a community. Other manifestations of structural violence specific to the context of this study can include the tacit, symbolic or express approval of sex crimes, culture of silence in face of violence against women, girls and children, tolerance of conditions that have kept the displaced households away from their original habitations while an elite group of 'experts', businesses, and 'interveners', grow richer as a result of the suffering of the displaced population, etc. Structural violence is believed to be widespread in society and acts invisibly to kill far more people than other forms of violence.

act of rape to identify societal factors that created room for such crime to occur. They identified poverty, general hardship in the community, the protracted armed herdsman attacks on unarmed citizens, and their resultant displacement as the root and proximate causes. This means that while education on the crime of rape is required, the problem of rape is not expected to be addressed simply by teaching people about it; societal level interventions to address the root and proximate factors including policy making and preventive as well as responsive measures to address rape are also required. Such interventions must aim to enhance knowledge while modifying attitude and building skills among violence prevention actors and violence management actors.

Children are expected to understand and manage situations that put them at risk

The study revealed that a minority of community members understood that girls have a role to play in minimizing their exposure to sexual molestation including rape. An important provision in the Child's Right Law emphasizes the role of adults as 'duty bearers' and that of children as 'rights holders'. This means that it is the duty of the adult to ensure the protection of a child from all forms of abuse. This legal provision does not, however, deny that children can have a role in helping the adults around them protect them better. Children can do so by speaking up, reporting, and avoiding locations and occasions that they recognize as risky or threatening. This is also why the participation rights of children are

emphasized in the Child's Rights Law alongside their rights to survival, development and protection.

Many people wrongly believe that a girl of 14 years has the capacity to consent to sex

The study revealed that it is not unexpected for a girl of 14 years to have engaged in previous sexual activity in the study area. That is also why 'adolescent mothers' are identified in the study, with some of them both married and living with their spouses in the camp or host community. For this reason, some people believe that the man in the case study, Terkaa, should have negotiated sex with 14-year-old Dooshima, the girl in the case study, rather than to have raped her. While this line of reasoning appears culturally appropriate in the environment where the study was conducted, it actually promotes illegality against the girls. This also exposes the knowledge deficiency in two key areas - knowledge regarding child development and knowledge regarding the impact of rape on a child.

The findings in this study, therefore, call attention to the need for the massive education of citizens regarding provisions of relevant legislation and scientific evidence about the impact of rape on girls and children, and as well on the need for partnership with traditional and government authorities to ensure that negative cultural norms and cultural practices are abandoned, while appropriate laws and public policy should be strengthened to ensure the full protection of girls and all children.

Clarity regarding various types of sexual abuse/sexual activity is high in the community

An attitude of denial exists with regard to awareness of other forms of sexual abuse/sexual activity in the community. But the study uncovered that sexual violence had been occurring in the community in its diverse forms, including sexual molestation, child marriage, sexual exploitation, forced sexual activity, child prostitution, and transactional sex. While some of this evidence has been highlighted by newspaper articles and in previous research in the State, the magnitude of occurrence has not been acknowledged by government official sources. Consequently, the problem has not been given adequate attention and no state-wide system exists to adequately tackle the menace of sexual violence.

It is possible, however, that Government and key stakeholders have underestimated the risk of exposure of girls to sexual violence on account of lack of data regarding its diverse forms and frequency of occurrence. But this can only encourage the perpetrators to continue to feed on Government's inaction, thus very likely increasing the level of exposure of women and girls to sexual violence in the State.

Camp leaders are aware of the occurrence of sexual violence but tolerate it

The study confirmed that camp leaders were aware of incidents of sexual molestation and rape in the

camps and the host communities. However, the action of camp managers did not go as far as addressing the root causes - the lack of privacy in the camp and failure to address all security risks that left the people vulnerable to harassment and abuse. The prevention of sexual and gender based violence may not have been prioritized by the authorities managing the IDP camps. This situation appears to mirror the macro level neglect of issues of SGBV in the State where, although relevant laws exist that punish sexual crimes, those laws are not fully implemented nor are adequate systems in place to prevent and respond to rape and other forms of SGBV. Also, at the camps and in the host communities, no system or effective mechanism was found that addressed issues of rape and other sexual offenses.

Girls tend to blame themselves when they are raped or sexually abused

Girls in the community were found to blame themselves when they were sexually abused. For some reason, the girls especially tended to believe that their physical appearance caused the boys and men to commit sexual violence against them. It is not clear why this is an entrenched belief in the communities where the study was conducted, but the belief is strong and wrong, it is misguided and capable of exonerating the violent abusers of girls and women while making the victims seem like the wrongdoers.

This belief and any attitudes that support it need to be countered through appropriate education and value re-orientation of the people.

While education will serve to inform and increase knowledge on the subject, value re-orientation can be achieved through the abandonment of all negative traditional beliefs and practices while also ensuring to implement in full all relevant laws that address sexual offenses.

Services to address sexual violence against girls are inadequate, poorly accessible

The study revealed that some measure of services to address sexual violence existed but were believed to be inadequate. We believe that this indicates poor commitment on the part of the relevant authorities who have the responsibility to see to the safety and protection needs of the girls. This is probably why child marriage was found to be high in the community as a result of teenage pregnancies, yet regarded as a solution to rape, rather than as part of the problem in the community.

Child marriage is treated as a solution to the problem of rape rather than an abuse of human rights

The study found that child marriage is widely accepted as a solution to the high incidence of teenage pregnancies. Child marriage is in fact treated as a respectable cultural norm among the people.

It is a curious reality that after 15 years of the Child's Rights Law coming into force in the State, and about 3 years of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law coming into force in the State, cultural norms and practices that are antithetical

to established standards continue to dictate the manner of handling sexual violence in the State, especially in the study area.

This problem can, however, be addressed through constructive engagement with the custodians of the cultural traditions and modern law and order, through a commitment to implement the superior standards, which, at any rate, are contained in extant national legislation and international covenants that bind Nigeria.

A human rights based perspective or human rights informed approach to rape is missing

When exposed to rape, girls are not treated as deserving of their full human rights, and because of this many girls tend to keep their pain and trauma to themselves. The dominant belief system in the community has fueled the perpetration of rape and sexual crimes against women and girls, as literature in the state and elsewhere abundantly has demonstrated. The findings in this study thus confirm the findings in similar studies.

However, a strictly human rights based approach informed by international standards is required to be able to end impunity for perpetrators of rape. While commitment with regard to the strictness of this requirement appears to be lacking in the State, laws do in fact exist that can enable this approach, viz the Child's Rights Law and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law. Relevant policies such as Child Protection Policy and the National Standards for Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable

Children, also exist in the State and should be implemented in full.

Girls do not feel safe from sexual violence in the IDP community and most of them cannot access adequate support when they experience sexual violence

The study confirmed that girls generally do not feel safe in the community. The feeling of lack of safety is compounded by the fact that adequate support services are also lacking and, sometimes, girls who experienced sexual violence have been further harmed in the process while the offenders enjoyed impunity. This is a disturbing reality for women and girls and ought to be one of the topmost priorities for the justice sector as society is already well provided with adequate laws and policies that require only to be enforced and implemented in full. Extant literature more than once revealed that this is the case in Benue State.

A lack of the feeling of safety on the part of girls, or indeed anybody, can trigger a number of psycho-social issues and this is not good for the security and wellbeing of the girls, nor of their families.

Risk of underestimating the crime of sexual violence in the face of protracted violent armed attacks

The study found that none of the respondents liked the idea of sexual violence; the adolescent mothers and girls actually detested the experience. Yet, when asked to describe what safety looked like, the girls described it as the

absence of physical harm and they described freedom from violence as freedom from Fulani herdsmen attacks.

This element of the data indicates that as a result of the protracted experience of violent conflict in the region, people are not able to aspire to experience, and in fact enjoy, positive peace. Their highest aspiration is to experience negative peace characterized, in this case, by the absence of physical harm and the cessation of violent attacks on unarmed community members.

However, to attain peace and security, communities need something better than negative peace. The existing challenge presents an opportunity to develop conflict transformational approaches and the cultivation of a culture of peace, as an option to overcome present hurdles to a sense of sustainable peace and security in the study area.

Female participation on available child protection committees is largely nominal, their contribution minimal

At all the IDP camps assessed, female representation and participation on existing child protection committees was found to be poor. Involvement of females in committees that protect children can have significant impact for girls who seek support services because fellow females will understand the issues differently from the way most men can. This has potential for increased opportunities for timely information about risks and threats, which can feed into better, more accurate plans to prevent and respond to

sexual violence against girls. The professional input of an understanding female service provider can also have enhanced impact on the perceived approachability of the service providers. With such female representation missing in both IDP communities, girls may continue to interact with service providers that they feel perceive them negatively. It is, therefore, important to address the imbalance in female participation and representation on child protection committees.

Some local ideas for ending rape and the sexual abuse of girls are fraught with pitfalls

Some of the local ideas for hopefully ending sexual violence against girls are fraught with pitfalls that can work effectively against the safety and welfare of girls and women. For example, some adolescent mothers believed that men should practice polygamy as an acceptable option to preventing sexual violence against girls. This assumption is not grounded in sufficient evidence, because communities where polygamy is practised are not entirely free of rape and sexual violence. Research evidence shows that the factors that contribute to sexual violence go well beyond the number of sex partners that a man can have as men and women are known to rape even their own spouses. Some level of capacity building is required to enable community members develop better, evidence-based, ideas to ending rape and sexual violence in their communities.

Rape and sexual violence in IDP communities is associated with factors that increase girls' vulnerability

The study found that the problem of rape and sexual violence may be associated with some socioeconomic conditions that cause or increase vulnerability among girls. For example, some of the girls that were found to be most vulnerable to rape, early marriage, and other forms of sexual violence were found to be from poorer background, lacked financial power, and lacked regular family support. The research identified the need to tackle poverty and joblessness and offer training and mentoring programmes for girls. It also identified a need for measures and systems to protect and safeguard girls and recommended that moral development be encouraged as a way to empower girls and young men to live respectable and guarded lifestyles. All of these recommendations highlight the importance of the standard operating procedures contained in the National Service Standards cited earlier in this report.

People who experienced or witnessed sexual violence have dependable ideas regarding knowledge gaps that put girls at risk of sexual violence

A number of suggestions were made by the respondents regarding what to include in training packages aimed at empowering girls to manage any risks of sexual violence against them. The adolescent mothers suggested that training packages should include information to enable the girls keep themselves safe, such as avoiding

aimless movement and visitations, to avoid accepting gifts and solicitations that put them at risk of abuse, and to avoid staying in private places without company. The adolescent boys suggested the need for sex education, education about alcoholism and substance abuse, and moral education about the need to have your own spouse and avoid extramarital relationships. The women who responded reinforced the suggestion to include information on moral education and information about self-care practices.

The study also sought feedback on information that the men required in order to keep women and girls safe in the camps and in the communities. While feedback from the adolescent mothers was missing, the adolescent girls made a number of suggestions including the following: inform the men that what they do to the girls (sexual abuse and exploitation) is illegal and immoral; teach them to act wisely and with the fear of God, to learn to practice self-control, and to respect girls' right to privacy. The women recommended character moulding through good parenting and mentoring for boys, assistance to deal with drug use and substance abuse and counseling support to overcome the urge to hurt girls by boys and men.

Train the girls at locations where you can guarantee some level of confidentiality

The respondents believed that locations such as churches and schools were safe for a training for the girls. Some of the respondents considered the option of holding a training in the camp, but

then it was also observed that there was no location within the camp where adequate confidentiality could be guaranteed.

Local people possess indigenous wisdom to articulate requirements for designing interventions to address exposure to sexual violence

The key ingredient for designing interventions to address exposure to sexual violence is, indigenous wisdom of the people affected; it resides with the local population in the contexts where the abuses occur. That is why the ideas of the IDPs regarding ways to tackle sexual violence are highly valued. They know and live with the perpetrators of violence and may sometimes have perpetrated violence against a girl. So, there is value in harvesting their ideas when seeking ways to prevent or manage sexual violence in the community. A number of suggestions were made regarding what to include in training packages aimed at empowering girls to manage the risks of sexual violence directed at them. An appropriate combination of the ideas to design training, mentoring and other empowerment packages would provide a context specific and well targeted set of intervention products that are effective and efficient.

Recommendations***1. Protect girls at risk of sexual violence or who have been raped.³*****Key actions:**

- 1.1. Advocate for the full implementation of child protection and sexual violence prohibition laws in the State;
 - 1.2. Provide training on the Child's Rights Law and VAPP Law and strengthen the capacity of girls to understand and act on their responsibility to seek help whenever needed;
 - 1.3. Provide education to enable girls and other children to understand the concept and reality of risk and vulnerability;
 - 1.4. Build their skills to act on the basis of their understanding including taking action to report and seek help;
 - 1.5. Raise awareness about where to seek help in the community and how to access it.
- 2. Mitigate any experience of hardship wherever possible, especially where the people who report it consider the experience to be unbearable or***

³ The study confirmed a high level of occurrence of sexual crimes and other forms of violence within and outside the IDP camps, with the children in school demonstrating comparatively higher capacity to recognize violence and its multiple dimensions, relative to their out-of-school peers. The study also revealed that there is some understanding in the community that girls can contribute to their protection. If trained and supported, children can collaborate with camp leaders to better manage situations that put them at risk.

*excruciating.*⁴

Key actions:

- 2.1. Provide support for Household Economic Strengthening, especially skills to engage in income generating activities (IGA) for girls with their households and, where possible, skills for income diversification to reduce the chances of unexpected idleness or joblessness;
- 2.2. Provide training on human rights and the right of girls to protection against SGBV;
- 2.3. Provide periodic education for men and women on viable and available income generating activities in the community;
- 2.4. Provide training on time management, parenting skills and family improvement;
- 2.5. Provide counselling and other psycho-social support services (PSS) to traumatized parents, especially adolescent mothers and their spouses;
- 2.6. Strengthen the capacity of adolescent mothers and girls to access legal services in the event of abuse of their rights.
- 2.7. Advocate for the establishment of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in the

⁴ The men who were associated with idleness and unemployment in the camps were found to also be the ones who seemed to be super-active, sexually, and often impatient or angry in their dealings. They were reported to frequently demand sex, they were known to rape and physically assault their wives and other girls and they were likely to move on to start sexual relationships with other women or girls if their own wives refused to yield to their demands. In addition to causing sexual, emotional and physical harm to their partners, they engaged in frequent waste of the meagre financial resources at the disposal of their spouses. The study did not reveal what they squandered the financial resources upon, but apparently they were not recording positive returns on investment.

community.

3. Girls in the community are sexually active at an early age, often get raped and are left without adequate support.⁵

Key actions:

- 3.1. Sensitize key Government authorities on the research findings and advocate for the full implementation of laws and policies protecting girls and laws against SGBV in the State;
- 3.2. Raise awareness at the community level regarding laws and standards that protect against sexual violence and good practices for handling issues regarding adolescent girls;
- 3.3. Mobilize community support to change norms and practices that negatively affect girls including child marriage, impunity for perpetrators of sex crimes, and deprivation of the right to education for girls and adolescent mothers;
- 3.4. Organise confidence building activities and mentoring programmes to help girls improve their sense of personal dignity and to serve as advocates for girls in similar conditions;

⁵ It is not unexpected in the studied area that a girl of 14 years could be engaging in sexual activity and may have already married. People accept this as normal and tend to encourage it by considering marriage to a rapist as an acceptable option when a man rapes a girl and the family wants to take action against the man. But girls who engage in sexual activity stand the risk of public ridicule, rejection, and shame. She may be forced to get married to the man who raped her or any man at all. Nobody in the community wants to come to the help of a girl that is raped, because she is perceived as having brought shame to her family. Nobody remembers that she is only a child and it does not matter very much if they do. On the other hand, Girls tend to blame themselves when they experience sexual abuse, because they have been made to believe that their physical appearance is the cause of sexual violence against them.

- 3.5. Advocate for community-wide public declaration to end child marriage and sex crimes against women and girls.
4. Services to address sexual violence are inadequate, poorly accessible, and females are poorly represented among the service providers.⁶

Key actions:

- 4.1. Link existing community structures with Local Government level and State level structures to enhance the quality and variety of support while ensuring ease of access to adequate services for all who need them;
- 4.2. Regularly improve the capacity of service providers to see that they continue to provide adequate services and that they are accessible to those who require the services;
- 4.3. Ensure to have adequate number of community members actively involved as service providers whose sense of duty is determined, not merely by financial gain, but by a sense of personal commitment to prevent sexual violence and respond to the needs of those at risk of abuse;

⁶ Services to address sexual violence are inadequate in the community and not easily accessible, which, in a way, may indicate poor knowledge of the extent of harm suffered by girls who experience sexual violence, or it may be as a result of poor commitment on the part of the relevant authorities with responsibility for the safety and protection of girls and other children in the community. Female representation and participation on existing child protection committees in the communities was found to be poor, yet the involvement of females on committees that protect children can have significant impact for girls who seek support services. Available services are also not adequately linked to state level structures or are not adequately supported by state authorities who are in a position to ensure that comprehensive services are in place for all who require them.

- 4.4. Provide technical, material and financial support on the basis of shared responsibility in order to encourage a sense of community ownership and maintain transparency regarding every support provided in order to encourage a sense of accountability on the part of other stakeholders.
5. *Develop evidence based options for managing livelihood security for vulnerable households, especially girls with their families.*⁷

Key actions:

- 5.1. Conduct an inquiry into the livelihood activities of those who reported positive or highly positive outcomes to determine if, and to what extent, the positive outcomes have been sustained;
- 5.2. Provide technical and other support to increase income earning potential among priority groups that can learn from the example of the small group (2%-5%) of IDPs that successfully increased their earnings as identified in this report.
- 5.3. Provide support to train, mentor and economically empower IDPs, especially the more vulnerable but enterprising ones, to reduce their level of dependency.

⁷ The COVID-19 induced lockdown was accompanied by increased household hunger and poverty, which 70% of all research respondents found to be unbearable. Some respondents indicated that they tried hands on new businesses during the lockdown including the production of hand sanitizers and about 2%-5% of the respondents reported positive or highly positive outcomes on their livelihood activities.

6. Act on the research evidence that some locations in the camps and in the host communities are unsafe for girls.⁸

Key actions:

- 6.1. Identify and map locations in the community where girls are at risk of sexual violence and characterize the predatory characters that are known to make the locations unsafe for girls;
 - 6.2. Carry out advocacy to sensitize Benue SEMA, Police, NSCDC, Community Vigilante, community leaders, and other decision makers on the evidence generated and mobilize support to influence them to improve security at those locations for girls and community members;
 - 6.3. Link up with relevant authorities to ensure that businesses and home owners located at spaces designated as unsafe for girls can demonstrate accountability for keeping girls and children safe from harm in and around their homes and business premises;
 - 6.4. Jointly develop safeguarding standards with businesses and market associations in the community to increase commitment to keeping girls and vulnerable members of the community safe from sexual violence and other crimes.
- 7. Act on research findings regarding the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on displaced*

⁸ The study revealed that girls generally do not feel safe in the community and the high-risk locations where sexual molestation and rape have occurred, but the camp leaders and the IDPs seem to feel helpless about what to do.

*communities*⁹

Key actions:

- 7.1. Sensitize Federal and State Government agencies on the impact of the lock-down on internally displaced households;
- 7.2. Advocate for differential treatment in favour of IDPs (and refugees, where applicable) whenever a lockdown is to be enforced during a humanitarian emergency or in environments that have recorded displacement influx at the time of enforcing a lockdown. This can be by way of prioritizing palliatives to the people - both the displaced households and the host communities;
- 7.3. Provide technical, financial or other support to enable relevant government agencies to conduct baseline assessments to inform government policy during a humanitarian emergency;
- 7.4. Based on the assessment findings, provide

⁹ The level of compliance with the Government protocol on movement and activities by the IDPs during the COVID-19 lockdown was highly significant. The impact of the lockdown on the IDPs was, however, disturbing. Seventy per cent of the research participants reported increased household hunger and poverty. The overall impact on livelihood outcomes was negative for most IDPs. Most of the respondents in Naka and almost 80 per cent of those in Gbajimba rated the level of hardship that they endured during the lockdown as unbearable.

The lockdown also occasioned significant increase in violence against girls, with 80 per cent to 90 per cent of all respondents reporting incidents of sexual molestation, rape, child marriage, and other patterns of exploitation during the period.

technical support in the area of conflict sensitivity with a view to ensuring that policies implemented in times of humanitarian emergency can minimize human suffering and conflict, while contributing to increased conditions for peaceful coexistence.

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WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES: THE NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

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&

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Abstract

This paper has carefully considered the compendium of contributions of Nigerian women folk both at individual, group, and organized and formidable registered group level toward peace building and conflict resolution in Nigeria. Issues examined took account of traditional means of women's engagement in the peace process and the growth into the conventional pathways of mass-social mobilization, peaceful protests, women peace advocacy organizations and women owned registered Non-Governmental Organizations – e.g. NGOs with specific mandate to offer contributions to ensure a violence-free society. Scholars had advanced that women are naturally peace loving and have equally demonstrated high result-driven panacea to conflict in comparison with the men. It is noted that the United Nations Security Council Resolution - UNSCR 1325 - serves as an impetus for the growth of women participation in the peace process.

Introduction

'Women in Peace Processes' is a concept that has only recently found popularity within the Nigerian environment. The discourse of female participation in peace processes is at its lowest in a country like Nigeria where patriarchy is deeply embedded, with most of the resolution mechanisms put in place by the government being predominantly occupied by the men. It is essential and fundamental to change the attitude towards women's empowerment and inclusion in these peace-building processes. Men and women should be seen to participate equally in the processes at various levels of the procedures. This is because conflict affects both men and women differently, and so their definition of protection will also vary. Therefore, it is very important to consider the perspective of women in peace building as this provides a more holistic approach to achieving a sustainable peace. The relative newness of the term "peace building" is something of popular characterization; while its actual newness in relation to women's issues, specifically, is even more. (Akpan, Ering & Elofu, 2014).

Bouta & Frerks (2002) observed about women in formal peace processes as he noted that only a small number of women actually participate in formal peace negotiations. Usually, their contributions to conflict resolution and peace-building is regarded as positive. Women bring diverse conflict experiences; they represent different interest groups and set aside other priorities, more than the men. On the basis of women's interests, they are able to form coalitions,

bridging deep political, ethnic and religious divides. Their participation in the actual peace talks often foster a wider popular mandate for peace, making it more sustainable.

While organized, formal or conventional means of women participation in peace processes have recently been noticed, Olaitan (2018) argues that for centuries, women in Nigeria have played important roles in peace and war situations, mainly as traditional peace-makers, as priestesses who consult with the gods to determine whether or not it was right to go to war, as singers of praise for men during battles as a boost to guarantee their victory. He cited examples of Queen Amina of Zaria, who led her people into victory, Queen Moremi of Ile, who rescued her people by negotiating with the opposing side, Efunsetan, Aniwura, fierce female general in Egbaland and among several others whose great traditional contributions were not documented for referencing, including some women who either submitted for altruistic suicide to save their people from long standing crisis, or some who were forcefully taken to be offered as sacrifices to appease the gods and to ensure that peace returned in some lands; such are typical of stories that characterized African traditional peace making processes using women.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN Resolution 1325) on women, peace and security, which was adopted by the Security Council on 31 October, 2000, presents a comprehensive political framework within which the protection of women and their roles in peace

processes can be addressed. The development of Nigeria's National Action Plan (NAP) began in 11th March, 2011. It was organised under the overall leadership and guidance of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development which is the gender mechanism in the country.

Akpan, Olufo & Ering (2014) maintained that the passage of the Resolution (S/RES/1325) on October 31, 2000 was the watershed for women peace building participation all over the world. The resolution stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts of the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It also emphasized the need to increase their role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. The impact of this resolution was further concretized by the establishment of national action plans by 24 nations, including Nigeria; confirming government support for the involvement of women in matters concerning conflict and gender based violence. It was noted that men do not seem to understand or come to terms with the impact which women have, not only in diplomacy, but in presenting holistic solutions to resolving conflicts.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is the first UN resolution that acknowledges the disproportionate effect of war and conflict on women, highlights the reality that women have traditionally been left out of peace processes and stabilization initiatives. The Resolution calls on the bodies of the United Nations and the Member States to pursue a variety of

actions to increase women's representation and engagement in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and to involve them in peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building activities in the process. It also seeks to foster respect for and preservation of women's rights, ensuring that women's security is strengthened in situations of conflict and post-conflict contexts (UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1325, 2000)

According to Oluwaseun (2021), consequent upon signing of this UN resolution, many women's groups have emerged and empowered themselves to educate women at the grassroots level and to defend their fundamental human rights. In the bleak situation of the Niger Delta, those women and their groups are the unsung heroes. Women rise to the occasion, according to Ekiyor & Gbowe (2005), and have been involved in a number of regional peace-building initiatives. The women's group has often taken the lead in calling for interventions in the region. Expectations and development of implementation of NAP of UNSCR 1325 were: Gender mainstreamed into conflict resolution, security and peace-building at all levels; increased women's participation in conflict management processes, increased provision for women's needs/concerns during peace negotiations and post-conflict management, mainstream at least 35% Affirmative Action in peace-building and conflict management in the security sector and bridge the gaps in knowledge, policies, institutional capacity and deficits in the security and the development architecture in

Nigeria. (FMWA&SD -2019).

The occurrence of women's leadership and peace building initiatives has historically led to better decision making practices. When women's voices are heard and recognized as valuable, a more sustainable economic and social reality is achieved. Several international declarations have affirmed a woman's right to participate in politics, peace building and economic development of their societies. (Aniemaka, 2013).

Women in peace process can be categorized into traditional and formal or conventional approaches. The work will view their contributions under the two folds:

Traditional means

Traditionally, peace-making has been the role of women. Ijere (1991) in Aniemeka (2010) said that "women are the impartial arbitrators in family or clan disputes or disagreements". In situations of war, between ethnic group women are called on to initiate a ceasefire. This is because they are regarded as life givers, life sustainers and society builders. They are also responsible for nurturing children, and also taking care of their feeding health and training. Experiences from the international scene asserts the benefit of involving women in decision making. This cultural belief that women are the peacemakers of society and the respect for mothers, should be believed as vital cultural resources to draw on in order to assert the women folk on the male dominated political societies. Similarly, Akpan, Olufo & Ering (2014) quoted Garcia (1994:45) who asserts that

both men and women have the potential for peacemaking and the responsibility to build and keep peace. The women, however, seem more creative and effective in waging peace. It is the women's emotional strength to transcend pain and suffering, and their predisposition to peace that provide them with greater potentials for peace building.

Some cases of Niger-Delta women participation in peace processes in the region

Explaining the Niger-Delta challenges Ijeoma (2013) brought to bear the activities of women in the peace process. She maintained that women of the Niger Delta face many tragedies. They live in fear, poverty, deprivation, degradation, environmental destruction, flowing from irresponsible oil exploration, chemical pollution, gas flaring, high infant mortality rate, rape, dehumanization etc.

Consequently, following the suffering experienced by women in the Niger-Delta in 2002, the Niger Delta Women (Nigeria) was founded. It is a charity organization, registered and based in the United Kingdom. Its formation was consequent on the August 8th 2002 military brutalization of the women's peaceful protest in Warri, Delta State, at Shell Nigeria's gate. The aim of this organization is to work in partnership with the Nigerian Government and the oil multinational companies to enthrone justice, peace and development in the region. The women wish to participate in conflict resolution and decision making in matters that concern them

and the well being of their children. The United Nation Security Resolution 1325 and the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference recognized the need of women to work in partnership for the management of their country and empower the women of Niger Delta to seek and actively participate in the decision making process in Nigeria (Ukoko, 2005).

Women play tremendous roles in the Niger Delta conflict and they must be encouraged. Ekiyor (2009) said that the roles women play in Niger Delta are defined by their perceptions of conflict in general. She said that men view conflicts as a "struggle or war" which needs to be won and in the process of winning there are casualties. Women on the other hand view conflicts as a necessary evil in communities, and the injured and dead in these conflicts are sons and husbands to them. So unlike men they focus on the cessation of violence and rehabilitation of their homes. There are other women organizations such as the Federation of Ogoni Women's Organization FOWA. Through the actions of FOWA women actions became highly publicized. The women engaged actively with the elders and the youths in the struggle against shells activities and for the political autonomy of their land. Together with the youth branch of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples (MOSOP), the women of FOWA was given "Unprecedented power within a democratic configuration" (Iumer, 1997).

Oluwaseun (2021) pointed that another example of women's involvement in Peace Movement at the grassroots is the women's non-

violent protest against Chevron in Escravos (Delta State), in 2002, for destroying the environment and livelihoods of many local villages. The angry women held Chevron in captivity for ten days. While the negotiations were going on, all operations had to be put off and the firm was forced to declare "force majeure". The resolution involved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the women (Iruloh & Uche, 2017).

Inikpi, Igala Princess that committed altruistic suicide for the sake of peace

Women care more for other human beings, they show more empathy, and think more about human and social consequences of acts, more than the men. This brings in mind the story of Princess Inikpi, daughter of Attah Ayegba in Igala community of Kogi State, Nigeria; Omo Idoko and Queen Omele Omiko (2019) narrate the altruistic suicide of a virgin girl called Inikpi who offered herself to be buried alive to end the long standing crisis of her people and the Benin warriors reported to have stood between 15th-16th century. Her sacrifice brought unending joy, peace and security to Igala Kingdom. Her death liberated her people from the shackles of the surrounding enemies who persistently attacked Igala land to the extent of wanting to annihilate them completely. The above story and several related ones in African communities using virgin girls as sacrifice confirm the African traditional belief that a virgin girl signifies purity to cleanse iniquity that might be a cause of some calamities that

befall a community. For peace deals, this affirms the traditional commitment of women for peace making as Inikpi had willingly offered herself for an end to a long existing crisis between her people and the Benin people, thereby showing women's love for peace building and conflict prevention.

The role of Nde-Nwerenzi, and other women groups in Ikwerre in the peace process

In Ikwerre tradition, the married women Nde-nwerenzi occupy important position in village administration especially, taking cognizance of the fact that they formed the assembly of all the married women in the village. They are charged with moulding the character of the children in the community and are the bedrock of peace. They intercede for the betterment of the community. Amadi (2021) in his work 'Ikwerre Women and Conflict Resolution in Contemporary Rivers State, 1958 – 2010' espouses the various ways through which Ikwerre women have maintained peace and promoted harmonious living in their communities, especially in Rukpokwu, Ibaa, Ubima, Rumuekpe, Omuanwa, Ogbakiri and Omademe. The women used some kitchen utensils such as mortar and pestle sometimes while naked to invoke the powers of the gods against anyone who would indulge in stealing, kidnapping, cultism and killing of any community member, whether indigene or non-indigene. This pattern of conflict resolution used by Ikwerre women has over the years prevented conflicts and criminality. He further revealed that the indigenous methods of conflict resolution

adopted by the women brought fear on the perpetrators, and so guaranteed lasting peace in the communities. It further observes that women have intervened in settling minor disputes such as boundary disputes and allegations of homicide.

Amadi (2021) asserts that in 1958, Ibaa women in Cross River State through peaceful demonstration showed their discontentment with the colonial government over high rate of corruption, misappropriation of fund and mistrust among the agents of government. Ebere (2018) posits that the women marched peacefully in organized manner, composed songs and marched to Ahoada. The direct result of this demonstration was that the appointment of warrant chiefs within the native administrative system was later discarded and Ibaa began to experience several infrastructural development by the colonial government. This shows the ability of the women to peacefully change the decision of the colonial government (Ofege, 2018).

Amadi (2021) further noted that there are other women associations in Ekwere such as Ogbotu Social Club, Achama Social Club and Agwabunma Social Club. These social clubs also settle conflict among their members as well as between the members and non-members. Their leaders are experienced women married in Ikwerre over the years and have good acumen for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In Borno, women have organized and participated in numerous marches, rallies, campaigns and demonstrations to raise awareness of abuses, to call for participation and to take

action for peace. Within local vigilante units, such as Kungiyar marhaba (hunters' association) some women fight against Boko Haram and especially the Borno State-based Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Women's organizations also mediate and support returned abductees who are pregnant or have children whose fathers are/were members of the Boko Haram terrorist group, by building community support. This way, the women are actively working to address the major obstacle to community reintegration. The State of Borno also developed a State Action Plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325 to ensure the participation of women in peacekeeping. All of these women in the North East (as elsewhere in Nigeria) have come together to defend and promote women's rights across religious and other lines of identity. (Imam, Biu and Yah, 2020)

Formal or conventional women peace building approaches

These range from organized women groups, women led-peace advocates, women conferences held to carry out peace talks, mass social mobilization, peaceful protests and registered corporate bodies; they are organized basically to ensure that they have a voice in peace building and conflict resolution matters.

Women Peace Conference

Ednah & Margaret (2016) during the International Centre for Ethno-Religious Mediation (ICERM) workshop in Makurdi, the Benue State capital, presented a paper examining the role of women

in peace building and related challenges. The paper noted that women have done tremendous in the midst of challenges confronting the state. Emanating from the theme of the workshop, 'Panel on Women of Faith and Conflict Resolution: Practical Lessons Learned' the duo examined the critical role of Catholic Women Organization (CWO) found all over in any Nigerian Catholic church. They stressed the fact that CWO have over the decades demonstrated peace building initiatives by taking peace advocates to families as small units of the society, teaching morality among their children and extended family cycle which is fundamental to preventing conflict in any society. Similarly, Ifeanyi & Friday (2003) submitted that another way women contributed to conflicts is by recounting and narrating harrowing experiences of previous bloody confrontations to their children. What this means is that, children become aware of consequences of conflicts, therefore they minimize their involvement. The Catholic Women group under the umbrella of Catholic Women Organization (CWO) has chiefly considered this as its cardinal objective of bringing peace to families and by extension to a larger society.

Precious Ajunwa: A peace building model

More women are aware of their importance in the political and peace building spheres, more than ever before. Women-led Non-Governmental Organizations are gaining momentum and not only advocating for gender equality but also educating and equipping women and girls with

skills on how to speak for their rights, prevent violent extremism and build peace within their various communities.

Notable ambassador of peace, Precious Ajunwa, born and bred in Nigeria, is a peace advocate with over ten years of experiences, leading corporate training on: workplace Conflict Management, Communication and Customer Relations, also creating and leading youth-focused projects for development. The Co-Founder & Project Lead of Galaxy4Peace, Precious Ajunwa, has called on Nigeria's Federal Government and other stakeholders to invest more in Peace Education as that remains a major panacea for preventing and reducing violent conflict among youths in Nigeria. Ajunwa said this at the 5th edition of the annual Sweat4Peace organized in commemoration of the International Day of Peace held in Lagos, with over 500 participants from Lagos, Abuja, Portharcourt, and Ibadan. (The Nation News 3rd Oct. 2018).

Ajunwa is a woman one can describe as a genuine Nigerian patriot, lover of peace, promoter of peace and peace model. Through her NGO, Foundation for Human Concerns, she has organized various peace building initiatives and made mass media sensitizations for peace.

In an interview with Encomium Newspaper (2017), she disclosed that the 2017 Sweat4Peace was 4th edition of her peace advocacy programme. She expressed delight saying 'we are glad with the records we have achieved so far'. There are also several other projects we engage in to help build a violence-free generation. Also initiated

Galaxy4Peace which she said is a youth focused, women-led peace building organization, championing a violent-free generation by adopting the primary approach of teaching Peace Education in Nigerian schools and conducting several capacity building trainings on conflict prevention and resolution. She was asked of why the above programme and further emphasized that it is part of a concerned group of individuals lending their voices in the call for global peace, there arose a need to put Nigeria on the global map of countries committed to this cause. In addition, after taking a closer look at what is happening around us: incessant ethno-religious conflicts, intra community and inter-state conflicts, also factoring in that Nigeria is ranked 149 out of 163 countries in the 2017 Global Peace Index Report, there is no better time to bring people together and enjoined them to promote peace than now.

The Women for Peace and Gender Equality Initiative (formerly the Commonwealth Women's organization Nigeria) is also an example of a woman led –Non Governmental Organization that is committed to empowering girls and women through equitable gender equality with the potential to foster sustainable peace through inclusive gender equality. They also strive to ensure women's meaningful participation in peace-building and policy making process from the grassroots to the national levels in Nigeria. The organization invests in women and girls in order to accelerate socio-economic and political development through peaceful, equitable and

inclusive society. Its achievement includes conducting research and documentation on gender –based violence, training and participation in International conference on conflict prevention and peace-building for women leaders in south-west Nigeria, outreach activities such as radio and TV programme and documentation on peace making concerns, informing and engaging the public by using education, women entrepreneurship and advocacy skills to create a platform to increase awareness of the issues facing teen mothers and gender-based domestic violence among others. (WOPEGEI official website).

Another network of women in peace building is the Network of Grassroots Women (NEGWO) founded in 2019 aims at promoting peaceful co-existence and empowering the grassroots women and youth from different societies in Plateau State and Nigeria at whole. Based in Jos North LGA of Plateau State. The Network is established by women who conjure the passion, zeal and time sacrifice to create peaceful co-existence and rid poverty from grassroots in the society, irrespective of religion, socio-economic and ethnicity as well as political differences. The women network group offers services of job creation and peaceful co-existence most especially among Christians and Muslims etc. It is reported that the NGO has trained over thirty (30) women and intending to train fifty (50) partnering with Justice Peace and Reconciliation Movement – JPRM,

#Bring Back Our Girls movement

Oby Ezekwesili aimed at bringing to bear all peaceful protests, persuasions to government to ensure that the 276 Chibok school girls abducted by Boko Haram in Borno State in 2014 were brought back alive. It is a woman-led mass-based social movement. Duncan (2018) admits that in a world where movements appear and fizzle out just as they are getting started, Nigeria's Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) movement is an exception. Meant to be a one-day march in 2014, it has now entered its fourth year and is waxing stronger. It is observed to be a powerful peace protest initiated by Ezekwesili and joined by women mostly parents and relatives of the victims of the Chibok abduction but suddenly metamorphosed into a widely embraced social movement by women, men and youth who shared in the pains of that experience pushing with intense pressure on government for realization of the movement's set objective. The extension of this movement intervened in related issues, 'when some women were abducted in Bassa, the BBOG printed their photos on large placards and staged a protest – bring back our girls and the women. When lecturers of a university were abducted while on fieldwork, the BBOG staged a protest – bring back our girls and the UNIMAID lecturers, when Boko Haram allegedly killed a large number of soldiers, BBOG staged march, - bring back our girls and don't bury our soldiers secretly in mass graves'. The list goes on. The movement extended its concern to include demand for good governance – shorthand for everything from the provision of

safety and security of citizens, to better healthcare, better infrastructure and a better economy, Duncan (2018) added.

Closer attention of the above civil strategic alliance formed by women in this regard affirms the creativity of women regarding the designing of peace making strategies thus equally explaining their resilience and how positive results are gained from their contributions to peace making processes. The movement has moved into long-term activism using strategies to mobilize and carry on its activism using social media platforms. Report from internationalaffairs.gov.au stated, as of April, 2018, the movement's online presence was at 219, 694 followers on facebook, 26,300 followers on Twitter with 231,030 likes becoming a country's strongest and longest-lasting women-led social action movement for peace advocacy and concerns for the state of the nation's security. It is appreciable to understand the pathways the movement has taken and the impact it has on empowerment and accountability within the context of fragility, conflict, and violence in Nigeria.

Southern Kaduna killings: Women protested naked on streets, cried and rolled on the ground, thus defining a unique peace finding option

Recall that on July 23, 2020, in Southern Kaduna, women staged a peaceful demonstration to register their pains occasioned by recent incessant killings in Zango Kataf and Kaura Local Government Areas resulting in the

loss of lives, burning of houses, foodstuffs and rustling of animals. The style of their protest directed the attention of the Nigerian government and indeed the entire world to the insecurity situation they had faced over time which is critical and has constitutes a great contributions to the peace building and conflict resolution process. Ama (2020) reports that the women who besides protesting naked, cried and rolled on the ground demanding justice for their loved ones who have been killed and maimed. The protesting women called on constituted authorities, security agencies and the international community to come to their aid to avert further killings and destruction of properties in the area.

Tobia (2020) stated that according to the protesting women, the continued killings have taken away their bread winners, parents, sisters, brothers, husbands and children, adding that today majority of them are widows. He quoted them as saying 'we are also calling on government to assist us in going back to our farms which is our major source of income, but above all to help stop the killings and bring the perpetrators to book'. It is pertinent to note and include here that, Southern Kaduna women took to the streets naked to display displeasure over the rounds of killings of their kinsmen; a unique and far reaching approach that touches everyone who witnesses their act and for those who watched over the television and some who saw the pictures as displayed and the video circulated. This peace finding approach certainly compels a responsive government to act fast so as to avoid escalation

of the dehumanized violent extremism as was the case.

The story of Deborah in the Bible reflected women role in bringing peace.

This evidence is considered generic not excluding Nigeria; cross cutting hence need to emphasize at this point to add to women's contributions to peace building process. It could be noted that women are by divine force, peace models. The story of Deborah in the Holy Bible (Good News Bible, 2010, Judges 5:31) shows how God uses women in bringing peace as Deborah led her people of Israel in war against Canaan some times in 1692. Deborah in terms of the portrayal of her taking the lead as a military commander is unique. Deborah's story is a radical departure from standard biblical themes which rarely place women in roles as warriors and generals. Over and over Israel's saviors are women unlikely heroes.

Deborah and Jael were women who contributed much in restoring the people who were almost annihilated by the Canaanites. Over time, the people of Israel were defeated in battle or fell into moral decline only to be saved by Deborah at that point in time. Note that the Biblical account of Deborah ends with the statement that after the battle, there was peace in the land for forty years and the popular saying that 'what a man can do, a woman can do better' is traced to having a root from the story of high military skilled woman; Deborah as displayed in defeating the enemies and bringing lasting peace to her people.

This and many more unpublished works of great women in the Lord's vineyard in settling marital crisis that could lead to divorce, directing women league organs of worship centres in the pathway of peace in the families which transcend to communities is enormous indicating how God is using the women folk in enhancing peace building and conflict resolutions.

Conclusion

Women are interested in conflict prevention and peace-building because conflicts engender-specific consequences for women. Though all segments of the society suffer the pains and adverse consequences of violence, existing inequalities between men and women expose women to greater sufferings during and after violent crises or conflict. It is women and their children who are subjected to gender-based crimes and other violations of their fundamental human rights.

Nigerian women have contributed significantly to peace building in the country both in the past and in the present. Scholars have stressed a significant point that women are central to conflict resolution in its entirety and should be encouraged especially now that they have been empowered by UNSCR 1325 and the Beijing Declaration on 35% Affirmative Action on women inclusion in policy-making, election, and appointment and their involvement in issues of the democratic process, social cohesion, peace process, security, governance and economy. Nigeria's patriarchal context places restrictions on the mobility of

women and plays on conservative ideologies of gender. This complicates peace-building and the inclusion of women as full actors in peace-building in particular. While women are largely seen as victims in need of protection, they engage in informal peace-building and demonstrate their organization and advocacy for a better future through this. In order for sustainable peace to be achieved in Nigeria, it is necessary to pursue the full inclusion of women in all peace processes and, more importantly, to remove barriers to the full inclusion and participation of Nigerian women in peace-building by developing their capabilities. (Oluwaseun, 2021).

This work discovers series of attempts at varied strategies and advances of individual women, women groups and organized women platforms in the quest for bringing peace to communities much more and result oriented than what the men can offer. This may be as a result that women actions and dispositions attract recognition, sympathy coupled with their meek nature and how humanity perceives woman as a weaker sex and would show empathy in their cries always. It has often been noted that men have fewer strategies to resolve issues amicably as the women do because of how a man's temperament is usually high with egocentricism.

Finally, issues presented here pointed towards the earlier traditional approaches engaged by women in peace building, conflict prevention and resolution over time, the progress in the pathways that they had made to a formal organized group in one accord to present conflict panacea to issues

and to this time, women have better organized themselves by registering groups to Corporate Affairs Commission CAC as Non-Governmental Organizations - NGO order to contribute to peace building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes.

Recommendations

Having explored diverse contributions of individual women and organized women groups and women networks for peace advocacy and having understood the challenges, the following recommendations are therefore considered:

1. That the United Nations resolutions targeted at women empowerment should be carefully considered and strengthened by both National and State governments to ensure their full implementation to realize the set objectives of those resolutions. In this case, an appraisal of the UNSCR 1325 should also be carried out to determine its successes and the progress made by the Nigeria National Action Plan.
2. There should be a standard for measuring the extent of implementation of UNSCR 1325 by relevant government agencies and bodies in Nigeria.
3. Government should always consider gender equality in panels of inquiry investigating issues of conflict, violence, human right abuses which women and children are usually the most hit.
4. There should be conscious evaluation plans by government, human right advocates to ascertain the full implementation of 35% affirmative action which has relationship to

- UNSCR 1325 and which its implementation has a direct bearing in achieving the UNSCR 1325.
5. Government should recognize, accept and implement recommendations conducive to the realization of UNSCR 1325.
 6. Federal and state ministries of women affairs should demonstrate readiness to partner with peace building, conflict prevention and resolution organizations formed by women and men.
 7. Government should offer grants to women peace building organizations to enable them conduct peace building conferences, mobilize peace talks and sensitization activities.
 8. Women should be encouraged to register more groups targeted at contributing to peace building, conflict prevention and resolution processes.

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INCREASING PROTECTION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH ADVOCACY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

*Concept by: West Africa Network for
Peacebuilding (WANEP Nigeria)*

In Nigeria today, gender-based violence ranks high. Women and girls frequently experience rape, physical assault, female genital mutilation, inequality in access to opportunities, sexual assault and abuse. Gender-based violence is rooted in a complex of patriarchal beliefs and power and control measures which continue to create a social environment that normalizes the act and makes it pervasive. Remarkably, sexual and gender-based violence is perpetrated both in times of peace and warfare. According to media reports, there are prevalent cases of gender-based violence especially meted on women, which resulted in the loss of loved.

Recently, Ochanya Ogbanje, a 13-year-old junior student of the Federal Girls College, Gboko in Benue State, Nigeria, died due to complications arising from sexual violence, rape and abuse against her allegedly by her uncle and cousin. Recently, Nigerians were shocked by reports of the ambush and burning to death of the women leader of a political party in Nigeria, Mrs Salome Abuh, in her house during the recently (2019) concluded governorship election in Kogi State.

Violence against women and girls tends to increase during armed conflict. Women are used

as sex slaves, suicide bombers, abducted for forced labour, displaced internally and as targets of recruiters for insurgent groups. On April 14, 2014, 276 female students were abducted by the Boko Haram insurgent group from the Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State; some are still missing. Similarly, 110 school girls were abducted on February 19, 2018, at Government Girls' Science and Technical College, Dapchi, Yobe State, by the Boko Haram terrorist group in defiance of girls' education.

Gender-based violence causes women and girls to be susceptible to economic hardship; it perpetually puts them in an economically disadvantaged position. According to research, the female group remains the poorest because of widespread inequality of access to resources.

Nigeria is signatory to several international frameworks that protect the rights of women and girls. Some of these include the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, among others. Several attempts were made to domesticate the frameworks and limit the prevalence of abuse against women and girls in the country, including the launch of the Sexual Offenders Register. However, the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in the country indicates that government cannot do all that is required alone.

Alongside the novel Coronavirus pandemic across Nigeria, Nigeria has witnessed a surge in

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. This reality was brought to the fore due to the Stay-at-Home precautionary measures adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to curb the spread of the disease. The stay-at-home order heightened the already prevailing risk of gender-based violence in the country as most vulnerable women and girls were forced to stay at home with their potential abusers.

Women and girls must be protected from Gender-Based Violence. Because of this, WANEP-Nigeria proposes to increase protection for women and girls from Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria through advocacy and economic empowerment. WANEP- Nigeria, through her Women in Peacebuilding programme (WIPNET), has been active in offering opportunities for the participation of women in peacebuilding mechanisms through a coordinated network that facilitates advocacy, reconciliation and transformation skills. It is expected that this project will help reduce Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria.

CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY IN TARABA STATE

Concept by: West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP Nigeria)

BACKGROUND

In Nigeria, local communities have witnessed a significant worsening of the security situation, stalling socio-economic development. The country is experiencing the burden of violent extremism, farmer-herder conflict, communal crisis, gang violence, drug abuse, armed banditry and kidnapping, among others. With the surge in violence, local, national and international interventions have focused on transforming the communities through conflict transformation and human development projects across the geopolitical zones. In Taraba State, the insecurity arising from ethnic violence, farmer-herder conflict and kidnapping in the North-East region has continued to threaten peace and security.

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) National Early Warning System (NEWS) reported that the security challenges posed by communal violence in Taraba State witnessed an escalation with regard to the frequency and intensity of the challenges, particularly between 2017-2019. Reports on the statistics of fatalities arising from ethnic violence between the Tiv and the Jukun ethnic groups in Wukari, Takum and Donga Local Government Councils in the State revealed a death toll of over 651 people between

April 2 to November 30, 2019.¹ Several others were injured. The violent confrontations resulted in the displacement of thousands of people as houses, farmlands, schools, places of worship and health facilities² were burnt down in the process. The web of criminality in the State includes acts of communal violence and kidnapping for ransom. The Taraba State Government reported that over 100 people³ were kidnapped between January and September 2019, thus compounding the climate of insecurity.

Beyond the spill-over effect of violence on neighbouring localities in the State, inter-communal trading activities, household food consumption and income have also been affected due to fear of reprisal attacks. This harmed public safety, food security and social cohesion. Also, the nature and dimension of these crimes tend to heighten the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, especially rape against women and children trapped in armed conflict situations.

Given the security threats and the need to curb their recurrence, the Nigerian State and Taraba State Government adopted both militarised and non-militarised measures in combating insecurity and fostering a civil-military relationship in the

¹ <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/taraba-why-tiv-jukun-crisis-refuses-to-end.html>

² <https://thenationonlineng.net/300-houses-burnt-in-fresh-jukun-tiv-crisis/>

³ <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/10/10/taraba-recorded-over-100-kidnap-cases-in-2019-says-ishaku/>

State. These efforts included joint security patrol and raids, arrest of perpetrators and destruction of criminal hideouts. The non-militarised approach focused on advocacy engagements and peacebuilding dialogues between conflicting communities, among other measures. Although these interventions considerably reduced the threat of violence, isolated attacks and kidnappings by criminal gangs continue to remain rife in Gassol, Gashaka, Bali, Takum, Wukari and Ibbi Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State. The perception of affected communities is that the States' Intelligence systems and security agencies are not adequately responsive to their security concerns.

The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including security agencies, and traditional and religious leaders, among others, have tended to give the peace initiatives more credibility. However, the engagement of peacebuilding experts and civil society organisations would further erase all perceived interest in the dialogue and ensure a more transparent process that will create an enabling environment to promote and sustain peace in Taraba State. The role and capacity of civil society organisations in sustaining the peace through strategic advocacy, training and inclusive dialogue processes remain a transformative tool for change. The successes accruing from the conduct of peace dialogues have been attributed to the practice of 'inclusivity, credibility, transparency, public participation,

appropriate and clear rules of procedure and an implementation plan⁴.

WANEP-Nigeria identified the need for collaborative action with development agencies to address the proximate and remote causes of the conflict in the State and to map out creative solutions for sustainable peace. Consequently, WANEP-Nigeria collaborated with the Center for Environmental Education and Development (CEED) in the State to organize a series of constructive engagements with key stakeholders to discuss existing security threats, increase citizen engagement in peacebuilding and enhance peaceful coexistence. The project will build on existing State-led interventions to support social cohesion in State. It will also provide a platform for the Taraba State Government, relevant stakeholders and security agencies to discuss the security challenges, review approaches and appraise progress for tackling insecurity. The project will promote synergy between state and non-state actors and contribute toward adequate interventions to sustain peace in Taraba State.

⁴ <https://www.usip.org/publications/2015/10/national-dialogues-tool-conflict-transformation>