Internally Displaced persons (IDPS) and Therapy for Political Participation in North Central Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract
The thrust of this research is on the plight of the Internally displaced persons (IDPS) who are the victims of terror attacks in the North Central Zone in Nigeria. The objective is to determine the extent to which their Psycho Social needs have been accommodated in their new abode as a result of the disruption of their livelihood. Questionnaire and In-dept interviews were employed to illicit information from these Victims and Officials managing the IDP Camps. Findings revealed that not much have been done to assuage the trauma experienced by the victims of terror attacks thus making it difficult for them to integrate and fully participate in the political process. It was recommended that a Comprehensive blue print be rolled out to facilitate a programme to take care of the after shock experienced by the IDPS in the various camps across Nigeria to assist them to adjust to their new realities.

Introduction
Insecurity has not only brought untold hardship but the continuous psychological and social trauma to its victims all over the world. Providing infrastructure such as Housing, Hospitals, and other necessities without providing other support services such as psycho/social trauma therapy mighty lead to un intended consequences. The concept of insecurity has usually been ascribed different interpretations in association with the various ways it affects individuals and institutions. Some common denominators of insecurity include, lack of safety, danger, hazards, uncertainty, lack of confidence, doubt, troubled, lack of protection, loss of property, life etc. Beland, (2005) defined insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack of inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity and it feeds into many other insecurity such as economic and social insecurity.

The escapades of BokoHaram, Ethnic militias and other armed non State-Actors which seems to have held the Nigerian state to ransom makes it germane to evaluate their strategies and compare them with that of the State-Actors with a view to reviewing the whole security architecture. What are the armed non state actors doing which makes it difficult for the state actors to subdue them? Certainly a critical review and analys is necessary to help tackle the mence posed by these armed non State actors.

In view of the growing menace of the Armed Non-State-Actors it has become necessary to compare their strategies and that of the Nigerian state which could help throw new insights to

find solution. According to Benedict et al (2010) this comparison has shown that the philosophies and strategies of the two actors are in opposite directions as each side tries to negate the other side. Channels TV (2019) in a report mentioned that the President of Nigeria ordered the Nigerian security agencies to step up their games by and eliminate all bandits (Armed Non State-Actors) but whether they have the capacity to carry out the order is another thing.In 2025,despite several attemys by scholars to examine the and prpfer solutions to the menace of armed banditry, we are still faced with a resurgence of violent extremism sacking entire communities and imposing taxes on other even in the face of well equipped modern army which is supposed to guarantee the secury of every citzen.

Implications of the Activities of the Armed Non State-Actors
The armed non State-Actors whose objective is to upset the status quo are well conscious of the implications and as such must be stopped by the state machinery before its accomplishment. Some of the implications of the continuation of the activities of the armed State-Actors include trauma, lack of confidence on the ability of the state to sustain peace in the society, disruption of social and economic leading to forceful eviction of terro attacks to IDP Camps. The legitimacy of any State pre supposes that the strategies of the state in combating insecurity is not only right but sufficient enough to counter that of the armed non state agents or actors. The state must also be 99% superior to the Armed Non State-Actors.

Problem Statement/Justification: There has been an increasing level of violence and insecurity in Nigerian society and thus threatening the state whose responsibility it is to secure the population. This situation is not only threatening the state but the entire population which calls for in-depth study to unravel the missing link which could be key to restoring the legitimacy of the Nigerian state. In Nigeria over 1,000,000. people have been internally displaced forcing the emergency management authorities to give them temporary shelters in relatively secured places usually called IDP camps. The activities of the non-State actors who acquire lethal weapons from numerous sources have worsened the crisis and is expanding. The government is being overwhelmed as a result of their free movements. Though a semblance of normalcy is provided such as food, health centers, schools etc. most IDPS are not satisfied as they suffer greatly from home denials leading to the necessity of providing psycho/social trauma therapy

Justification. This is necessary because a traumatized citizen cannot get involved in the political process until he or she is liberated through series of deliberate skilled and professional therapies which the proposed project aims at unraveling.

Research Questions
1. How often have the Internally displaced Persons been sensitized on the need to participate in the political process in the IDP camps?
2. How often have the Internally displaced Persons participated in the political affairs of their community since they arrived at the IDP camps?

Objectives of the Study.
1. This research is aimed at creating an enabling environment for the IDPS to effectively participate in the Political process of their communities. Specifically, the objectives are:
2. To find out the availability or adequacy of psycho/socio trauma therapy to the IDPS in the North Central zone in Nigeria.

3. To establish the level of political participation due to their relocation from their ancestral homes.

Literature Review

The concept of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) within the context of security architecture is a misnomer. It is an indication that people have been forced to move away from their ancestral homes and being made to live in make shift shelters pending the return of normalcy. The emergence of banditry and terrorism across Nigeria has introduced a new dimension in our social and Political trajectory. According to Sagay (2021) the Modern State Structure ought to be based on institutional exercise of power and authority on a well-entrenched set of impersonal rules with overwhelming control of the instrument of violence capable of deterring any Non-State element. However, its heart breaking to observe that, the victims of terrorism have experienced great sense of loss and deprivation and in addition are forced to stay in temporary shelters to avoid recurrence of future attacks. Terrorism according to Ogwu (2005) is also about the slow erosion of the might of a country, the threatening of its core values and above all a Psychological war that is aimed at wearing away even the most battle-hardened troops in war where the enemy is invisible and the victims the ordinary citizens. This is a worrisome development as the Legitimacy of the State is further eroded and could eventually lead to a failed State, thereby compounding the societal problem.

According to Mohammed (2020) Every Citizen is a potential target for violent and dehumanizing treatment. In the light of the forgoing background, the Government is forced to relocate the victims of these terror attacks to what we now refer to as IDP camps where they are given food handouts and cloths, medicine to satisfy their physiological needs. However, the social, economic and political needs are usually considered of less priority. Given the fact that efforts must be continuously made to forestall or ward off the criminality in terrorism, attention must also be given to the psychological and political needs of the victims of terror attacks. Several literatures on the effects of global, regional and sub regional terrorism and attempts to curb it are well documented. But in spite of these, the activities of these Non-State Actors are on the increase, thereby forcing researchers to look elsewhere for solution,

The Rise of violent extremist groups

All over the world, the violent non-State actors have emerged threatening the peace of state systems. Williams (2008) said even the most advanced states of America and Europe such groups have been identified. According to Federal Government of Nigeria (1999) in the Constitution, the paramount duty of the state is the well-being and safety of Nigerian citizens.

However on the account of the weak character of the post-colonial states, the emergence of violent extremist groups which threatened the very existence of these states was not surprising. It was no coincidence that such groups were doted across most African states immediately after independence. In Nigeria barely seven years after independence a pro ethnic militia led by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu declared a Biafran state against the constitution. It took the Nigerian state four years to subdue the insurgency with a toll on human lives and properties. After the civil war which ended in 1970, other ethnic and religious militias have sprung up to challenge the legitimacy of Nigerian state, Amongst such groups include OPC (Odudua People's Congress),MEND (Movement for the Emanicipation of Niger Delta), Maitestine, Bokoharam to mention a few. The activities of these groups have had destabilizing effects on Nigerian society and points to the very fragile nature and character of the Nigeria state. According to Atsumbe

(2019)   Such powerful and militant Non state actors should not pose much problem to the modern state if it is properly constituted.

Challenges in confronting the violent non state agents
In confronting these violent non state actors the Nigeria state has faced a lot of obstacles ranging from issues of relative incapacitation to funding and equipments and lack of cooperation from the international community. The Nigeria Army in 2019 admitted that it does not possess the sophiscated weapons to match that of the insurgents in the north east and more worrisome is the alleged sabotage by some nongovernmental organizations providing information to the terrorists. Furthermore, The Nigerian security agencies having been trained to face standing armies lack the capacity to rein in the violent extremist groups whose tactics are unconventional from hit and run to selection of soft targets for mass destruction. For them to withstand these tactics require a lot of logistics and new technology. The role of the advanced states in fully supporting the Nigerian state and other African states to forestall the impending failure of the post colonial state is another factor worth of consideration. From the recent episodes in Sudan, Syria, Egypt, Libya Nigeria and a host of other African states, it may well be adduced that the interests of the advance world is better served with fragile states as opposed to formidable states which might in future pose a challenge to their dominance in world scene.

Gap in Literature: A lot have been done by the governments at various levels, and non-governmental organizations to cater for the immediate needs of the victims of terror attack in the north central zone of Nigeria, however their socio-political needs have been neglected which is going to be filled by the current research.

Methodology
The research employed the field survey design through quantitative and qualitative methods. The population of the study will be drawn from IDPs registered in designated camps in each of the camps in Nassarawa, Benue and Niger and officials Coordinating the activities of these camps. The sample size will be 50 from each camp through random sampling methods for questionnaire while the purposive method will be used to choose respondents for the Indept- interview.
Secondary data will be collected from journals, books and internet materials. Data from questionnaire will be analyzed using Simple percentages, while data from in-depth interview were analyzed using textual analysis. Secondary data was analyzed using content analysis

Data Analysis. Results
The data gathered from the field was subjected to rigorous analysis . They have been presented and analysed according to the table below.

Table 1.00 Respondents level of Awareness of sensitization and participation in the political process in the North central zone of Nigeria.

Variables	NA %	YR %	QTR %	MNT %	TOTAL
1. How often have the Internally displaced Persons been sensitized on the need to participate in the political process in the IDP camps?	115 (82.14)	10 (7.14)	10 (7.14)	5 (3.57)	140
2. How often have the Internally displaced Persons participated in the political affairs of their community since they arrived at the IDP camps?	100 (71)	15 (10.71)	15 (10.71)	10 (7.14)	140

SOURCE:Field Survey 2025

Key
NA =Not aware
YR= Yearly
QTR=Quaterly
MNT = Monthly

The Table 1.00 (a) shows that 82.14% indicates 'Not aware'.This means an overwhelming majority of the IDPS are not aware of the denial of one of their basic rights to franchise and further worsening their conditions in the camps as they are just wainting for hand outs from government and non governmental organisations for their survival.This is also an indication of the urgent necessity of a comprehensive approach which not only takes care of their basic needs but socio polititical needs which coul librate them from fears and trauma associated with their situation which was originally caused by banditort and terrorism. 7.14% indicated 'yearly'suggesting that only very few IDPS are opportuned to get any sort of briefings with regards their political and social environment.This might be coming from the populations who are enlightened and may go out of their ways to have access to such information independently of their new settlement.

Equally on the table 1.00 (b)71%of the IDPS are not aware of the frequency of participation in the politicl process which clearly indicates the absence of any engagement, a situation which had futher deteriorated their condition.

7% indicated that there were engaged politically and socially. This is a reflection of the minority opinion and a futher collaboration of the lack of political engagement with the IDPS. This absence will make it difficult to end the problem of banditorry , insurgency and terrorism,as they could become a reservoir for recruitment into their dangerous ideologies.

In depth interviews.

What measures have you taken to create awareness among the IDPS under your jurisdiction to assist them overcome the traumatic experience of transisting from their ancestral homes to IDP camps?

The Researcher interviewed one Official each from the three IDP Camps in Nasarawa, Benue and Niger States.

Umar Sani ,one of the Officials narrated that "We have been overwhelemed by the share population of those coming to the Camps to register.Tus we have been occupied with taking care of their basic needs suh as food, health shelter. Etc . So it becones problematic to attend to their other needs such as awareness for socia political participation.

This assertion collaborates with the information received the IDPS where majority asserted that they were not aware that such sensitization existed.

This underscores the urgency of floating programs ranging from social economic and political components as counter measures likely to word off   potential threats and help the IDPS leave normal lives rather than placing them under constant fears and neglect their socio political needs which negates their rights to a peaceful and harmonious living as advocated by te UN Charter of 1948.

The IDPS are no less human and as suc h their dignity and rigt a normal livelihood must be respected.

Discussion of findings

From the data gathered and analysed' the following findings were made.

1.The IDPS were never sensitized on the need for political participation during their stay in the camps

The researcher's interaraction with the IDPS and the officials of the Camps in the three states of the north central showed a common parttern which revealed that there were no form of sensitizations either from the officials or external organization to create awarensess for the IDPS in thes camps.A closer engagement with these officials further showed that the excersise was meant to be temporary and a response to an emerging crisris reqiurng temporary measures focused only on food, shelter health needs etc.

From inception it appeared that the socio political needs of the IDPS were nt factpred into the management of the IDPcamps, therefore there were no budgetary provisions to take care of this critical needs of the IDPS.Even externally, it appeaed as if the political and social needs of the IDPS were of no priority bto the many NGOS who suppose to complement the the efforts of the government to assist the IDPS live normal lives.Intead there have been accusations that some of te NGOS rather than fund such critical aspects of the lives of the IDPS were rather engsged in some sinister moves that fueled the continuation of the conflict and thus making the conditions

of the IDPS worse than theywere. General Musa Chritopher accussed some NGOS of helping the bandits with weapons which further excercebated the IDPS situation

2. IDPS never participated in any socio or economic activities during their stay in the IDPS

The researcher found out that the IDPS were very concernred about the temporary nature of their staying which did not give them the emotional stability to organize any form of political or social engagemet,Majority of them lived on hopes and expecting that the next day, week or months, they would be going back to their ancestral homes but ended up spending years living on suspense which had some psychological impact on them.

Apart from this,the denial of their social and political rights made nonsense of the democratic practice which amounted to exclusion from the rest of the society.

Summary of Findings

1.There was no form of sensitization on social political matters for the IDPS by the Managing Agency or any external Organization.

2 .There were no socio political engagement, by the IDPS during thire stay in the camps

3.The approach and conceptualization of IDPS were designed to be temporary in nature and thus their socio political needs were largely neglected which further increaded their trauma and anguish.

4.The basic needs of the IDPS were compromised by the very actors responsible for ameriolating such thereby leading to security breatches, health harzards and Malnutriuon

Conclusion

The research was to assess the socio political needs of the IDPS .It found out that this was largely absent due to the philosophical framework which premised the concept of IDPS to be temporary in nature. The designers never envisaged the possibility of staying too long in the camps therby neglecting an aaessental component of human existence such as the right to organize and choose who should reprent them in a democratic environment.It therefore which has now become a reality. It therefore view this gap as garmane for future research.

Recommendations.

1.There should be a clear Phylosophical approach for the establishment of IDPS which should incooporate political literacy where by the residents who are also citizens are actively involed in the political proccess involving their country and communities.

2.The activities of the NGOS should be closely monitored to forstall any abuse that will further excercebate the already dire situation of the IDPS

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