



## **Displaced Rights and Citizenship: An Appraisal of The Practical Existence of Displaced Women in IDP Camps in Nigeria**

By

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the actual experiences of women in displaced people's camps in Nigeria with regard to their rights as citizens and their rights as vulnerable persons. Using participation in decision making as the point of reference, the paper argues that protection of rights of displaced women first as citizens of the country and as persons deserving of humanitarian protection will best be understood and appreciated when tested against the practical existence of displaced women in IDP camps. Data is from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data comes mainly from the responses from two sessions of focus group discussion (FGD) organized in two separate camps –one in Abuja and the other in Urhogua, Benin-City, Edo State. Secondary sources include books and internet sources. The paper used the qualitative analytical method to analyze the data. Findings show that the camps are managed through interventionist decisions and policies due to the lack of a legal and policy framework. To the displaced women, it does not matter who is making the decisions to provide their immediate needs and, consequently, protecting their rights. Also, they do not think their rights, whether as citizens or as vulnerable women needing humanitarian protection, will be better protected or guaranteed only when they are involved in the management of the affairs of the camp through participation in decision making. The paper concludes that internally displaced women do not need outright substitute protection as such. All they need is a purposive management program that addresses their basic needs as vulnerable women.

**Keywords:** Internally Displaced Women, Rights, Citizenship, Practical Existence, Appraisal.

### **Introduction**

A variety of events can induce the displacement of people from their homes and communities. For example, we have natural disasters induced displacement (NDID) such as fires, floods, earthquakes, etc. There is also development induced displacement (DID) such as when the government relocates communities to a new place because the government desires to use the relocated community's erstwhile land for roads, dams, factories, etc. (Mehta and Napier-Moore, 2010, p. 10). Finally, is the conflict-induced displacement (CID). Instances of conflict-induced displacement include displacements caused by Boko Haram terrorist attacks, header-farmer conflicts in Benue and Plateau States, etc. The two most common inducers of displacements are the NDID and the CID. According to the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), 79.4 million persons were displaced globally by these forms of displacements in 2019 (IDMC, 2020).





Concerning internal displacement, UNHCR reported that by the end of 2019, 45.7 million people were displaced internally as a result of conflict and violence (Kristy Siegfried, 2020;IDMC, 2020). According to Benjamin and Fancy (1998, p.2):

Internally displaced persons have been forced from their homes by armed conflict or internal strife. They remain within the borders and under the domestic jurisdiction of their countries. They are nearly always destitute and acutely in need of international protection. They lack legal or institutional bases for receiving protection and assistance from the international community.

In Nigeria, conflict-induced internal displacement is by far the most prevalent. The causes of displacement of persons in Nigeria today is the Boko Haram terrorist attacks in the North-Eastern part of the country and ethnoreligious conflicts around the Benue, Plateau, Taraba, and Kaduna axis. (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2020). The Boko Haram insurgent attacks are by far the highest singular cause of the internal displacement of persons in Nigeria. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Boko Haram insurgency has, as of April 30, 2020, displaced over 2,770.01 million people in Nigeria and neighboring countries like Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Nigeria's share of internally displaced is 2,046,604 million IDPs (UNHCR, 2020). This is reflected in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: April 30, 2020, updated UNHCR Records of IDPs Population by Country**

Country of origin	Source	Data date	Population
<b>Nigeria</b>	<i>IOM, NEMA</i>	29 Feb 2020	<b>2,046,604</b>
<b>Cameroon</b>	<i>IOM</i>	30 Apr 2020	<b>297,380</b>
<b>Chad</b>	<i>IOM</i>	31 Mar 2020	<b>208,382</b>
<b>Niger</b>	<i>Government</i>	30 Apr 2020	<b>114,927</b>

**Source:** UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/nigeriasituation> (Accessed, Monday, May 25, 2020).

According to Alawemo&Muterera (2010, p.83), women and children constitute the majority of the IDPs. Specifically, women constitute 79 percent of the 2,046,604 million displaced people in Nigeria. This reality made the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA cited in Amodu, Richter, and Salami, 2020) to assert that displacement is a gender issue and the face of displacement is female. Displaced women suffer economic, social, and psychological dislocations. Displaced women, in most cases, come into IDP camps with nothing, as they have lost everything they ever owned. Most of them lost their children and husbands too. Internally displaced women come into the camps with only hope, a hope to start all over again if given the necessary assistance.

The 2010 Jos crisis alone led to the death of over 500 people, mostly women (Alawemo&Muterera, 2010, p.82). Women and others displaced from their ancestral





communities by Boko Haram found sanctuary in IDP camps. The camps are often hurriedly constructed just so that the displaced will at least have a place to lay their heads in the interim, notwithstanding the disaggregated composition of those displaced. This very nature of the camps affected the displaced in various ways. Also, the "interim" nature of the camps deprives it of most basic facilities. Thus, accessing adequate food, shelter, and safe drinking water is becoming increasingly difficult for the majority of the dispersed population.

Worried by the growing menace of internal displacement, the international community and governments of various countries set out to find ways of meeting the needs of displaced people. To the International Organization for Migration, meeting United Nations Sustainable Development Goal agenda "to leave no one behind" entails carrying everyone along, including women dislodged and forced to take refuge in displaced person camp (Amodu et al, 2020). To this end, actions and programs directed at meeting basic needs and consequently, the rights of internally displaced women must depend on evidence-based understandings of the practical existence of these displaced women in IDP camps.

For example, the UN representative on internally displaced persons in 1998 issued a Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Mehta and Napier-Moore, 2010). These principles are based on and consistent with international human rights law, humanitarian and refugee law, even though they are not a binding legal document. The African Union (AU) drafted the African Union (Kampala) Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa in 2009. The Convention aims at ameliorating the hardships suffered by displaced persons in Africa. The International Committee of the Red Cross (2016) described the Kampala convention as the world's first-ever legally binding instrument on IDPs. The Nigerian government ratified the African Union (Kampala) Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa on April 17, 2012 (Ladan, 2015, p.2).

When the number of those displaced from their homes are not much, such persons may be given temporary accommodation by relations and friends. In Nigeria, both government and private bodies have come up with projects and programs to mitigate the discomforts of those displaced from their homes by Boko Haram. Where the number displaced is enormous, the government provides temporary accommodation for victims on public school grounds. The government may also develop virgin lands solely for the resettlement of those displaced. Public spirited individuals and organizations also come to the aid of displaced persons by providing places and shelters to take such displaced persons in. (Ladan, 2015).

IDP camps are located in various locations around the Federal Capital Territory, such as Lugbe, Area One, New Kuchingoro, and Kuje. According to a report by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) government has also built IDP camps in Adamawa, Taraba, Gombe, and Yobe for people fleeing from Boko Haram attacks in communities in Borno State. There are over 32 internally displaced people's camps in Borno State alone (NEMA, 2013). An example of an IDP camp provided by faith-based organizations (FBO) is the one run by the International Christian Mission (ICM) at Urhogue near Benin-City, Edo State.



Against the preceding background and from the perspective of participation in decision making, this paper sets out to examine the actual experiences of women in displaced people's camps in Nigeria with regards to efforts to meet their needs and protect their rights as citizens and as vulnerable persons. The participatory decision-making theory posits that those who are likely to be affected by the outcome of a decision be allowed to participate in making the decision. Thus, from an empirical point of view, this paper seeks to ascertain whether those definitions of formal rights, including participation, are what displaced people need to survive in IDP camps. Arising from this research issue and broad aim, this paper also attempts to appraise the frameworks for managing displaced persons, ascertain the stakeholders of IDP camps, discuss the process of decision making in IDP camps, highlight the effects of current decision-making arrangements on the needs of displaced women and suggest ways of meeting the needs of IDPs from the perspective of the displaced women themselves.

## Methodology

### Study Location

We used two IDP Camps in Urhogua, Edo State, and Kuchingoro in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. The Urhogua camp is run by Faith-Based Organizations (FBO), the International Christian Mission (ICM) and Kuchingoro is run by Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA).

#### ICM Urhogua Camp

The ICM Urhogua IDP camp is located about 30km from the center of Benin City, in a forest in Urhogua, Ovia North East LGA of Edo State (6° 43' 11" N and 5° 57' 10" E). It is managed by the International Christian Center (ICC). The ICC is a religious organization involved in Christian missionary and humanitarian activities in rural communities in different states in Nigeria. The majority of the IDPs are displaced people from the north-east region of Nigeria due to the insurgent activities of Boko Haram and ethno-religious conflicts (Ajakaye and Ibukunoluwa, 2020). The first batches of IDPs arrived in 2014, and since then, more displaced persons have been admitted yearly to the camp. Currently, the camp population is about 2000 persons, including management staff and IDPs, with around 900 children made up mostly of Christians from Borno and Adamawa states.

#### Kuchingoro Camp (Abuja Camp)

The Kuchingoro camp was established in 2014 by the federal government. (Premium Times, 2019). New Kuchingoro is a community in the Lugbe Division, a suburb of Abuja Municipal Area Council, AMAC, Federal Capital Territory, FCT, near National Stadium, by Games Village in Abuja. There are 4500 displaced persons in the camp. Over 90% are from Borno State, especially Gwoza Local Government Area. The rest is from Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, and even Cameroon. The environment is overcrowded with makeshift shelters. At one end of the expansive camp are a solar-powered water borehole, a skill acquisition center, and a clinic. The camp has two schools located within. Although the government had asked residents





of the camp to return to their original communities in the North-east, many of them have remained in Kuchingoro for safety.

### Sources of Data

Data were from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the outcome of focus group discussion (FGD), reports of international and national agencies such as UNHCR, NEMA, etc. FGD was held at the Urhogua and Kuchingoro camps. Two sessions of FGD comprising of ten participants each were held at Urhogua and Abuja IDP camps, respectively. There were 20 participants. All the participants were females. A woman leader selected the participants in each of the camps. The criteria used in selecting participants is the ability to understand and communicate in English. Table 2 below shows the breakdown of participants of FGD in the two camps while Table 3 shows the percentage of FGD participants.

**Table 2. FGD Participants**

SERIAL NUMBER		URHOGUA	KUCHINGORO
1		U1S	K1S
2		U2S	K2S
3		U3S	K3M
4		U4S	K4M
5		U5M	K5M
6		U6M	K6M
7		U7M	K7W
8		U8W	K8W
9		U9W	K9W
10		U10W	K10W
TOTAL		10	10

**KEY:** U- Uhrogua, K-Kuchingoro, S- Single, M- Married, W- Widow

**Table 3. Percentage of FGD Participants**

STATUS	URHOGUA	KUCHINGORO	OVERALL TOTAL	OVERALL PERCENTAGE
Single	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	6	30
Married	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	7	35
Widow	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	7	35
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	20	100





Four core questions bothering on the objectives of the paper were posed to each of the two FGDs. The questions were: Who makes decisions in the camp? How are decisions made? What are the things or areas on which decisions are made? How do these decisions affect you? How should decision making be made better to meet the needs and protect the rights of IDPs? The secondary sources include textbooks, newspapers, and internet websites. The analytical method was used to appraise the mass of data. We ensured that data obtained from existing documents of these local organizations, institutions, and other sources were used safely and ethically to generate the identified data in this paper.

### **Literature Review and Conceptual Analysis**

Both academic and non-academic literature agree that women are disproportionately affected by the negative consequences of conflict-induced displacement (Olarenwaju, Omotosho, and Alabi, 2018). Some studies examined specific challenges of displaced women such as their health needs, a situation that prompted Amodu, Richter and Salami, (2020) to opine that research in the field of displacement are skewed toward sexual violence and prevention of unplanned pregnancies, a result of the gender-based violence women experience. Specifically, Adewale (2016) examined contemporary discourse on the plight of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Abuja, Nigeria. Other studies focused on what protection and needs of women IDPs entail (Mooney, 2001), protection of their rights as citizens (Meyta and Napier-Moore, 2010), rights of IDPs under international law (Hathaway, 2005). Despite all these studies, little is known about how the needs and the rights of displaced women can be met through an examination of the practical existence of displaced women in IDP camps. The concepts examined include legal and policy frameworks for meeting the needs of displaced people and concepts of internally displaced persons and refugees.

### **Frameworks for Tackling Needs of Displacement of Persons**

Internal displacement of persons and the attendant human sufferings associated with it has drawn the attention of both national and international communities. Efforts at tackling the problem have led to the drafting of policies and laws. At the international level, the United Nations drew up a document in 1998 entitled "United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement." At the African regional level, the first legally binding regional instruments for IDPs' protection were developed in the Great Lakes Region. This pioneering document was the 2006 Pact on Security, Stability, and Development in the Great Lakes Region. It was known widely as the Great Lakes Pact and its protocol on IDPs' protection and assistance. The document requires member states to incorporate the UN Guiding Principles into their national legislation (UN, 1998).

Another regional instrument on IDPs in Africa is the African Union Convention on IDPs ("Kampala Convention"), which the African Union adopted in 2009 in Kampala, Uganda. The Convention is a landmark instrument that established a common regulatory standard for IDPs in Africa. The Convention also draws on the UN Guiding Principles of 1998. It is the first common regional framework to define roles and responsibilities for a wide range of institutions and organizations operating in displacement settings and other stakeholders.

At the national level, the Nigerian government ratified the Kampala IDPs Convention but has not domesticated it by way of approved national policy and legal framework (Daily Trust, 2019;



Ladan, 2015). A committee set up to draw up a national IDP policy put together what can pass as a "commendable document" which even President Mohammandu Buhari acknowledged when he said "the new policy will help regulate the internal displacement crisis and complement the fight against insurgency." The president's acknowledgment notwithstanding, this policy is yet to be adopted by the Federal Government to date. (Daily Trust, 2019). By setting out the obligations of state parties, the (Kampala) Convention complements the Guiding Principles: while the latter focus on the rights of IDPs, the former is intended as a tool for duty-bearers (IDMC, 2020). The policy and legal framework of analyses in this paper are as provided in the Constitution, the Kampala Convention, and the UN Guidelines for IDPs.

### **Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees**

It would appear that the two concepts mean the same thing. But they connote two different things. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, "Refugees are people who have crossed an international frontier and are at risk or have been victims of persecution in their country of origin. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), on the other hand, have not crossed an international frontier, but have, for whatever reason, also fled their homes" (ICRC, 2020).

African Union Refugee Convention 1974 in defining the term states that:

"refugee" shall mean every person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

On his part, Ladan (2015) said that displaced persons under international law, are persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or to have cause to leave their homes or place of habitual residence in particular, due to or to stave off the effect of armed conflict, military engagement, violations of human rights, situations of generalized violence, natural or human made disasters, to another place considered relatively safe within their national borders.

Thus, Mohammed (2018) opined that IDPs are persons or groups of persons who because of armed conflict, systematic violations of human rights, internal strife, or natural or human-made disasters have been forced to flee their homes or places of habitual residence suddenly or unexpectedly, to another location but have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. The United Nations in its Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement defines IDPs as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border.

To ascertain if the IDPs understand the meaning of IDP and refugee, we asked during the focus group discussion (FGD) with ten internally displaced women: Are you IDPs or refugees? All the participants at Kuje Camp chorused they were IDPs and not refugees. According to one



of them ("K1"), "example of refugees are the Rohingya who fled their country Myanmar to Bangladesh." "We in Kuje came from Bornu and other places all in Nigeria. So, we are not refugees. We are inside Nigeria, our country." Although both refugees and IDPs have fled their homes for safety, differences exist between the two. IDPs, though, have fled their homes, but they are resettled inside their countries. Refugees, on the other hand, most often cross international borders for safety and resettle. International law makes express provisions for refugees and hardly IDPs. Thus, IDPs are usually more vulnerable, less visible, and less protected than refugees. There is less international attention devoted to IDPs than to refugees. This is because, by definition, people who cross an international border are a subject of international concern.

However, the United Nations might not be financially responsible for IDPs. Still, it has put together a document titled "United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNGP)" to guide countries and stakeholders handling IDPs. To this end, it is the duties of the national and sub-national governments of IDPs to provide for their humanitarian needs (Olufemi, Sule and Ibrahim, 2020, p. 34).

Internally displaced women are the millions of displaced women and their dependent children who have been living in camps and emergencies for generations. The very scanty nature of the camps raises questions as to how the authorities manage the human and humanitarian rights of displaced women. Citizenship is conventionally viewed as political membership in a nation-state through which citizens possess civil, political, economic, and social rights (Mehta and Napier-Moore, 2010). As displaced people but camped within their country, displaced women like other citizens have their citizenship rights as enunciated under international human rights law and guaranteed by the Constitution of Nigeria. Besides, displaced women have rights under international humanitarian law accruing to them as persons deserving of humanitarian protection. This position is aptly explained by Mooney (2001, p.81) as follows:

Internally displaced persons remain within the territory of their state. Human rights law provides the fundamental basis for addressing their plight. In addition to human rights law, other standards of international law are also relevant, namely international humanitarian law when displacement occurs in situations of armed conflict

Rights accruing to every citizen displaced or not include right to Education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement (1999 Constitution as amended). The set of rights unique to internally displaced women include right to participate in decision making, right to privacy, the right to own property and disburse the property etc. (The AU Kampala Convention).

### **The concept of participation.**

To the World Bank, (1994) "Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them." To Cohen and Uphoff, (2008, p.213- 214) participation is possible under many conditions and is desirable to achieve development goals. There are also different dimensions of participation such as participation in decision-making, participation in implementation, and





participation in benefits. However, of interest to this paper is participation of displaced women in IDP camps in decision-making processes aimed at managing the camps and meeting their needs. To this end therefore, wherever participation (or any of the alternative terms) is used in this paper, unless otherwise clarified, it is to be understood as participation of displaced women in decision-making in IDP settlements camps.

### **Concept of Decision and Decision making**

Decision is a choice made in response to certain needs, problems or desired objectives. Decision making on the other hand is the act of selecting from an array of possible actions that are proposed or have been proposed in response to given challenges (Masajuwa and Ajisebiyawo, 2016, p.69). In this paper, decision making means displaced women taking part in, being invited to take part in, being present at meetings or other fora where decisions regarding the management of the affairs of camps for internally displaced persons are taken.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper relied on the participatory development theory of Robert Chambers (Gran, 1983). This theory abhorred the top-down approaches to development that treated people as abstract concepts, it assigns to an individual the role not of subject, but of actor who participates in defining the goals and directing the process of achieving them.

Advocates believe that participation in the design and management of development plays an important role in improving efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of development projects, and that the potential of the participation of intended beneficiaries to reach development goals cannot be disregarded (Gran, 1983). To this end, participatory development theory is considered very relevant to this paper. Although the theory is focused on development agencies, the position of these agencies as both sponsor and facilitator of development projects is akin to, and often merges with, that of the state when the state tries to map out a strategy for developing and managing issues of concern to it such as IDP camps.

### **Stakeholders, Needs and the Rights of Displaced Women**

Stakeholders are those who manage the affairs of IDPs. According to the yet to be adopted National Policy on IDP, major stakeholders providing for IDPs include the government, communities hosting IDPs, NGOs and the IDPs themselves. At both the Urhogua and Kuje IDP camps FGD, we asked "*who makes decisions for the management of IDP camps?*" All the twenty participants (Representing 100 %) agreed that there are stakeholders who make decisions for managing IDPs generally. However, the constituents of the stakeholders vary in the two camps. To the Urhogua FGD, the stakeholders are the Edo State government and Ovia North East Local Government (LGA), the General overseer (GO) and members of the council of the International Christian Centre and the Urhogua community hosting the camp. According to some of the participant (U3S, U5M, U7M, representing 40%), Edo state government and Ovia North East LGA are considered stakeholders because they granted the GO the permission to bring the camp to the state and the land to site it respectively. To all (100%) the FGD of Abuja camp, the



stakeholders are the Federal Government, the authorities of the federal capital territory (FCT), Abuja Municipal Council government and the Kuchingoro community.

Government at all tiers, that is the federal, state and local are recognized as the primary bearers of the responsibility of preventing internal displacement and when it occurs, it has the responsibility of protecting and assisting IDPs in Nigeria (Ezeanokwasa, Kalu, and Okaphor, 2018, p.17). Federal government carries out its responsibilities through the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). Before the birth of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs on Wednesday August 21, 2019 by an Executive pronouncement of President Muhammadu Buhari, the National Emergency Management Agency was the lead organization responsible for IDPs in Nigeria. It has its headquarters in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria and is supported by branches at all the state levels called State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA).

The government also ensures host communities are properly compensated for hosting IDPs, that communities' food security is protected. The NGOs meet the needs of IDPs by keeping strictly to the guidelines set by government and international agencies for their involvement with IDPs. Host communities are assigned roles in the affairs of IDPs camps located around them. Communities are required to ensure the security of lives and properties of displaced persons. They are enjoined to also protect the rights and freedoms of displaced persons in their communities. The rights include freedom of religion, freedom to keep their cultural values without discrimination by indigenes of the communities. In return, the IDPs are required to ensure the security of the life and property of their host communities, respect their religion, cultural and customary values.

### **The Needs of Displaced Women**

In many cases, internally displaced women are deprived of adequate shelter, food and medical care. In some cases, they lack equal access to education and opportunities for income generation (Mooney, 2001, p.82). Thus, increasing awareness of the plight of displaced women has resulted in new initiatives to address their needs not only under the doctrine of the *Responsibility to Protect*, but also in the reform efforts of the international humanitarian system, launched in 2005 (Ferris & Winthrop, 2010, p.11). The Responsibility to Protect (R2P or RtoP) is a global political commitment which was endorsed by all member states of the United Nations at the 2005 World Summit to address its four key concerns to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (Ferris & Winthrop, 2010, p.13).

The needs of displaced women like those of other citizens are expected to be met through their constitutional rights to safety, education, health care, employment and freedom of movement. These constitutional rights are met in the case of displaced people, through camp coordination, camp management with reasonable safety and security measures in place, provision of food and nutrition, access to basic health, reproductive health, education, water and sanitation services, emergency shelter and non-food items such as clothing (Ladan, 2015, p. 4).

Stakeholders address these needs in phases in the displacement journey. These phases include relocation and provision of relief phase, rehabilitation, return, and resettlement or re-



integration phase (Kampala Convention, 2009). This paper examined the needs of IDPs during the relief phase of displacement. The relief phase entails displaced women arriving and settling at a destination community. It entails relocation to a new but safer place and being given relief items such as food, water, accommodation, security, clothing, health and schools. In effect, the relief phase pertains to attending to the most pressing needs of the IDPs living in camps set up by either government or NGO/ religious bodies.

From the FGD, the needs vary according to the status of the participants (Olanrewaju, Omotoso & Alabi, 2018). All the four girls (40%) in Urhogua camp itemized their needs in order of importance as education, shelter, finance, movement, safety, medicals. The 3 married women (30%) said their needs include food, finance, shelter, water, medical, safety and education for their children. The widows (30%) explained their needs to be safety, shelter, food, finance, cloths, movement and medicals. Two of the FGD UIS and U5M explained how these needs are met in their ICM camp.

According to FGD UIS:

The Mission running this place is trying their best to provide our basic needs. For medical issues like sickness and antenatal care, there is a health center with a nurse. Serious medical cases are taken to hospitals in Benin-City. We have no reported case of rape or sexual abuse here. Food is provided by the Mission. They feed us twice daily from food items they bought and those donated by government and others. The camp obtains its water from boreholes. So, we have enough water here. Our movement is restricted to the camp. But the married couples and mature elderly widows do go out more than the younger ones.

To FGD U5M, alongside a woman leader in the camp reacted thus:

There is a primary and secondary school in the camp for displaced children and children of displaced parents in the camp. We are clothed by the Mission. Some charity bodies do also bring cloths to us. Those with money can also buy clothes for themselves and children. Policemen man the gates. They are assisted by young male residents in the camp. So far, we have not had issues like attacks, rape or stealing. Accommodation and finance are our major problem areas. But the Mission is trying its best to erect more buildings to house us.

### **Rights of Displaced Women**

As earlier observed, the fact of being an IDP is not a legal status as is the case with refugees. This is because IDPs are still under the jurisdiction of their own country's government and may not claim any rights additional to those shared by their compatriots. However, because women are more of the vulnerable group among IDPs and the fact that some of them have been victims of different forms of indignity and abuse, the Federal Government, under *Section 3.1.5* of the proposed National Policy on IDPS spelt out humanitarian rights specific to internally displaced women. These rights are:





- a. The sanctity of Nigerian womanhood shall not in any way be violated
- b. Every woman in an IDP camp shall have the rights to her privacy;
- c. Women in IDP camps shall not be subjected to any form of indignity; including beating, forced labor, sexual abuse, or forceful stripping either for medical examination or other reasons whatsoever without her consent;
- d. Under no circumstance shall women and men be lumped together in a room except as husbands and wives or as members of the same family;
- e. It is the policy of government to protect Internally Displaced Women from forced marriage. Thus, nobody shall determine the partner of, or the period within which internally displaced women ought to get married;
- f. Women in IDP camps shall be entitled to hold any position of authority in camp without any form of discrimination;
- g. Women in IDP camps shall be free to take micro-credit and other financial assistance with or without the consent of their husbands for economic self-reliance;
- h. Women in IDP camps have the right to own property and disburse the property with or without the consent of their spouses;
- i. Every woman in an IDP camp has the right to embark on any form of lawful economic activity of her choice to enhance her well-being and that of her family;
- j. Women in IDP camps are entitled to self-development, particularly in the area of Education and skill acquisition.

Sadly, most of the FGD participants said they are not aware of any document highlighting these rights exclusive to them. According to one of the married women in the Kuje camp, "am not bothered about any rights. I can't do much about my situation. Just want insurgency to end so that I go back home. Until then, am just happy and thankful to God that I escaped the wicked attacks of Boko Haram." (FGD, K3M).

Tales of government neglect abound. Protection of the human and humanitarian needs are met more in breach. This is despite the impression by FGD participants that they are satisfied with how their needs and by extension their rights are being protected in the government camp. The fact that there is no official record of sexual abuses and sexual violence in IDP camps, does not mean these do not happen. Displaced women and girls in camps experience sexual violence, trafficking and forced marriage. This is due to lack of adequate protection in the camps (Aham-Chiabuotu 2019). Some women in another study said some military men guarding the camps force them or their daughters to have sex with them. Continuing, they said once the women in this forced relationship get pregnant, the military partner abandons the lady to her fate and moves over to another woman in the same camp. According to aresearcher at Human Rights Watch, "It is disgraceful and outrageous that people who should protect these women and girls are attacking and abusing them" (Human Rights Watch, 2016). However, officials of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) dismissed these reports of gender violence and sexual abuse as misinformation (Aham-Chiabuotu 2019). NEMAs denials notwithstanding, the safety of Kuje IDPs was shaken when in 2015 multiple explosions occurred in the camp killing 20 people. The explosion was said to have been planted by suspected Boko Haram insurgents who may have infiltrated the camps pretending to be displaced persons.



Notwithstanding the recognition of displaced women as group with rights and humanitarian needs the truth is that the fact of being displaced brings about loss of rights, reductions in livelihoods, participation etc.(Aham-Chiabuotu 2019, p.1). Formal recognitions of needs of displaced women is not also backed by commensurate action, thus not translated into positive impact on the lives of displaced women. The Federal Government shirks in its responsibility to protect both the human and humanitarian needs of internally displaced women. Only international agencies and NGOS come to the aid of these women(Udegbunam and Agbola, 2019). If Federal Government IDPs camp is this poorly maintained, one can imagine the situation in non- government IDP settlements in Abuja FCT and other places. The general condition of living in non-government run IDP settlements is very dire. According to a male IDP in Durumi camp "There are 3,000 people in this camp alone. People have been here for five years. There is no food, no water, no healthcare and schools for the children. Life here is very tough, it is miserable," (Aljazeera, 2018).

### **Participation in Decision Making in IDP Camps**

Effective management of an entity entails not just having in place a clear process of decision making but also a clear idea about those who should drive the decision-making process. For the IDPs, issues requiring decisions bother on meeting their needs. The process of decision making is in two stages. The first stage is solely a government affair. It starts when government is faced with problem of people being displaced from their homes and communities due to insurgency. Officials from various government agencies hold series of meetings aimed at plans on how to tackle the immediate challenges of those uprooted from their homes by insurgents.

The trustees and general overseers of religious bodies and NGOs who volunteer to set up their own camps also hold meetings and approach the relevant government agencies to request for permission to set up camps to take in displaced persons. Thus, the initial process of deciding what to do about displaced persons is done by government and by the trustees of those bodies willing to assist displaced persons. The process of deciding whether to build camps and where to locate the camps are done at governmental level and for private humanitarian bodies, at the trustees' level.

The second stage in the process of decision making begins after displaced persons have taken residence in the camps. The decision process at this point is directed at providing basic needs such as shelter, food, water, schools, finance, security, medicals, clothing and security.

Officials from NEMA and Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs lead the decision-making process in Federal government run displaced peoples' camps like the Kuchingoro camp. Decision making process in non- government IDP camps like the Urhogua camp is led by the General overseer, elders and trustees of the Christian Mission running the camp.

From the Kuje FGD, K4M, K7W and K10W had this to say about decision making process:

When there is an issue to be addressed, for example, allocation of rooms in a new building, the committee on accommodation will meet to handle it. Most of the committees here are headed by an official from NEMA or Ministry. Other members are drawn from among us the displaced people to assist after decisions have been taken. We do





the job of porters. We show new displaced persons their rooms or portion of land to build their temporary houses.

Providing for the needs of IDPs includes ensuring that they are given the opportunity to participate in the making of decisions whose outcomes will affect them. The Kampala Convention ("KC") under *Article 9(2)* places an obligation on State Parties not only to consult IDPs but also to allow them to participate in decisions relating to their protection and assistance including public participation under Article 9(2) L of same KC in democratic governance. In order to realize this obligation, countries are enjoined to create mechanisms or channels through which IDPs can participate in decision making whose outcomes will affect their lives (Ladan, 2015, p.8).

As noted in the methodology section, both Kuchingoro and Urhogua IDP camp have mostly women and children. We asked the focus group: what is decision making and who makes the decisions? To most of the respondents (90 percent), decision making is about determining how they live, the processes and procedures to meet their needs. To them, government or those in charge of the camps make all the decisions. According to the woman leader of Kuchingoro camp (K9W), "the government officials decides everything. We just wake up and see them putting up a building or any other thing. We see trailers driving in with food items and we and the children jump up in celebration." Continuing, she said "Inside the camp, the men are in charge of warehouse. Women are in charge of cooking. But generally, displaced men feature more in major decisions especially on issues and areas of life in the camps that require physical strength like security".

Providing more insight to what the woman leader (K9W) said, participant K6M and K10W (representing 25% of the 8 women participants from the camp) said:

Most of us are not educated. We were farmers and lived in our very rural villages. So, we lack the capacity to participate in decision making organized by government officials. The very educated ones displaced with us are not living here inside the camps. They got better jobs inside Abuja and rented their own accommodations in town.

From the responses of FGD, participation in decision making in IDP camps follows the patriarchal pattern of the larger society (Masajuwa, 2012). In the larger society men dominate decision making in the public sphere while women feature mostly in the domestic domain (Makama, 2013). Government or board of trustees as owners and founders of government and Mission run IDP camps are by implication heads of these camps. As owners or founders of displaced persons camps, the government and non-government owners alike, make all the decisions on major issues like camp coordination and camp management. This is to ensure that there is reasonable safety and security measures in place in and around the IDP camps. Displaced persons carry out duties as assigned to them. Thus, to a large extent, their participation is at the implementation level. This level pertains to domestic issues in their camps. For example, cooking, disciplining of children, allocation of rooms, manning store houses where food and other essentials are kept, cleaning of camp surroundings etc. Their experiences in the hands of



the terrorists makes many of the women to be grateful that they not only escaped with their lives but have place to call "home" again even though temporary and ramshackle. Any question about being part of the governance of their new community is considered needless luxury.

### **Effects of Current Decision-Making Arrangements on Rights of Displaced Women**

The basic rights used here as bases of analysis include rights to education, healthcare, employment, political rights and rights to movement. From the previous sections, it's obvious that majority of the displaced women in IDP camps hardly participate in the making of decisions on management of affairs in the camp. To most of the FGD participants the mere fact that they have a place to lay their heads and begin the process of building their lives again after escaping from Boko Haram attacks is enough for them. Like other citizens, the fact of being displaced and resettled elsewhere even if temporarily, does not detract from having their rights protected. Government through the policy on IDPs, envisages the protection of their basic rights through meeting their basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, and security.

### **Education of IDPs**

The Education of displaced victims is virtually non-existent in some camps. There is a lack of access to quality learning opportunities. Insurgent attacks disrupted teaching and learning in home states of IDPs in Urhogua and Kuchingoro camps. Many children and their teachers were killed, and those who survived were forced out of school. Many of the abandoned schools were converted to resettlement centers for those displaced by Boko Haram. The grim situation of education in their communities notwithstanding, the women IDPs seem to appreciate the modest opportunities provided by the managers of the camp to re-engage their lost educational opportunities. Some of the responses from the participants attest to this position.

Most of the young girls (5 out of 6 or 83%) think their rights to education are well protected. Of the six single girls that participated, five are undergraduates in higher institutions of learning while the sixth is a hairdressing apprentice. Two of the married respondents in the Kuchingoro camp (representing 50%) said they earned the national certificate of Education (NCE) from a college of Education as displaced women. Continuing, they said they got teaching jobs in a primary school around the community. All the windows in both Urhogua and Kuchingoro (7 in all or 100%) and five (representing 71%) of the married women in Kuchingoro and Urhogua said they are "enjoying" their rights to education through their adolescent and young children. The youths at Urhogua are attending secondary and tertiary schools free of charge courtesy of the Mission.

U8M, I dropped out of school in SS1 after girls were kidnapped in Chibok by Boko haram. I got married, and my husband and I followed Reverend to this camp. We now have two children. My husband and I are attending remedial classes to write our ordinary levels. We will go after that write exams to get admission into a university. I want to read medicine. My husband seems to like law or Political Science.

The schools in Urhogua camp are better in terms of building, quality of staff, and learning. The school in the Abuja camp lacks teachers and is overcrowded.



## Health Care

According to Ajibade, Ajao, Fabiyi, et al.(2017, p.2), four categories of health challenges encountered by people displaced internally "include infectious diseases such as measles, malaria, and cerebrospinal meningitis; malnutrition such as kwashiorkor and marasmus; mental health such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic disorders; and reproductive health such as sexual harassment, rape, unwanted pregnancies, and abortions." IDP women are the most afflicted by the fourth category on reproductive health. Their access to health care is also subject to the provisions made by the government in power. The unavailability of good shelter, adequate diet, clothing, and lack of money further aggravate the situation of displaced women.

The health centers in IDP camps are, in most cases, poorly serviced. The best among them are of similar standards as those health centers in most rural communities in Nigeria. Refugees and international migrants have access to better quality health facilities because international agreements, special protection, and entitlements govern their status. This international protection is not available to internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Amodu, Richter, & Salami, 2020).

According to FGD participants, there are primary health centers facilities in the camps. While the health center at Urhogua is neat and staffed by trained nurses that of Kuchingoro is unhygienic and lack trained health personnel. The poor quality of health facilities notwithstanding, the Urhoguaparticipants in the FGD say they are satisfied with what is available in their camps. According to one of them, "there is at least a health center here inside the camp. A nurse is always available for twenty-four hours. Health cases that cannot be handled at the center are referred to bigger hospitals in Benin."

## Shelter and Camp Environment.

The most common types of shelter are shanties like tents and bunkhouses that the IDPs built themselves on available spaces in government schools and government grounds. Displaced people also take refuge in churches, mosques, town halls, abandoned and uncompleted buildings. These shelters are not as a result of government effort but as a result of the individual IDPs' determination to survive (AloboandObaji, 2016, p.31). Shelter in the Kuchingoro and Urhogua camps are insufficient. The Kuchingoro camp has two schools, a clinic, a water borehole powered by a solar panel and an office space. It has one pit latrine and one bathroom. Residents who took part in the FGD claimed that all these amenities were not provided for them by the government that camped them there, but by faith-based organizations (FBOs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as other well-meaning Nigerians and foreigners.

According to FGD K7W, "When we first migrated here in 2014, FCT Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) took care of us for a few months but we haven't gotten any help from the government since then." This claim is corroborated by the DG FEMA, who said "The FCT does not have any budgetary allocation for the IDPs; we just want to input something to provide them with toilet, we mobilize NGO and other groups to provide them with some materials." (Premium Times, 2020). For the Urhogua camp, the environment is neat and less



crowded. The shelters are built with bricks and roofed with zinc. The residents of Urhogua IDP camp, like those of Kuchingoro, survive on the humanitarian gestures of the public.

The camps, especially the government-run ones like Kuchingoro, lack suitable water and sanitation facilities, cooking and privacy, especially for women. Also inadequate is waste management and electricity supply. Poor waste management it is feared may lead to outbreaks of epidemics in camp. The shortage of shelter and the lack of privacy it causes is corroborated by all (20 or 100%) of the participants in the FGD. According to them, apart from married ones who are given rooms of their own, others share spaces. This causes friction among IDPs. The Kuchingoro camp has more makeshift structures than the Urhogua camp. To the married ones in both camps, the fact that the administrators recognized their married status and gave them separate rooms is in line with one of the rights specific to IDPs women in the draft policy on IDP. That section says that on no account should opposite sexes be lumped together in one room except where they are married couple or relations.

### **Food**

Generally, the food supply is very irregular. However, some IDPs have access to food distribution every day, while others receive irregular food distribution. On the other hand, some IDPs never receive food distribution. According to FGD K1S, to get regular food supply, you must be a lover to the military and FEMA officials operating this camp. Poor and unstable food supply is the reason why malnutrition is rife in the camp. The Urhogua camps cried out recently that it has run out of food items. At the Urhogua camp, participants said they eat twice in a day, breakfast and dinner. Married ones buy and cook their meals.

### **Empowerment and Employment**

Towards empowering the women, some are registered under the open apprentice scheme of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). Non-governmental bodies' visits these camps to conduct on the spot skills acquisition reach out programs. Such training is in the area of fashion designing, hairdressing, and an auto mechanic or auto electric technician. From the FGD, the women who took advantage of the various economic empowerment programs in the camp seem satisfied with their new skills. This we think may not be unconnected with the fact that these empowerment programs in the camps are not different from those the women are used to back home.

According to participants K4M (Kuchingoro camp) and U8W, "I operate a provision shop in the camp. I make some money from the shop. We also farm to feed. I sell foodstuff in the community's market on market days." To K3M, I learned to sew here after attending a series of skill acquisition outreach visits by NGOs. My husband later bought a second-hand sewing machine for me. I now sew for people. I also make liquid soup which I sell and supply in town. From the money I make, we have sent our 3 years son to one of the private schools around the community.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Women in IDP camps do not need outright substitute protection as such. This is because, they are, like the rest of Nigerians, entitled to the enjoyment of all relevant constitutional guarantees of human rights. However, as citizens forced into vulnerability due to insurgent attacks, meeting their humanitarian needs of shelter, food, healthcare, participation, protection,



income-generating opportunities, etc. is sufficient protection and guarantee of their rights. Despite the seeming despondent atmosphere characterized by inadequate shelter, poor health facility, precarious feeding routine, etc. most of the displaced women perceive their lived experiences in the camps as a temporary setback and are hopeful of going back to their home states and communities. The Urhogua camp women claim they appreciate the modest facilities but won't mind if there is improvement in the living conditions in the camps.

Steps must be taken to alleviate the plights of IDP women. The starting point should be having a well-drafted policy and legal framework. It is in this context that one cannot understand why Nigeria signed and ratified the Kampala Convention for IDPs way back in 2012. Still, some clear eight years after, the Convention has not been domesticated in the country. There is need therefore for the National Assembly to immediately set machinery in motion to draft the IDP law as stipulated by the Kampala Convention. The Federal Government should take immediate steps to provide more durable shelter, food, health care, education, etc. to the people. To this end, the recent announcement by the Federal Government to build 10,000 housing units for IDPs should be matched with immediate action.

Both the Federal Ministry of Disaster Management and the institutional agency for managing emergencies should each have a unit dedicated to handling all concerns of displaced women right from when they are in displaced person camp to when they return to their ancestral communities. As a follow-up, it is expected that proper mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that the steps taken are not frustrated by these two establishments managing the affairs of displaced persons. In other words, the government should ensure that where relief materials are sent to IDPs, those materials are not diverted into other uses. Also expected to be of paramount importance is the need to ensure the safety of displaced women in camps. Incidence of fire outbreaks, bomb explosions, rape, taking advantage of their vulnerability by those employed to protect them, etc. will exacerbate the already apprehensive minds of these hapless women forced to reside in makeshift camps due to circumstances they never bargained for. Above all, the government should use all means to end insurgency so that these displaced women can return to their ancestral communities.







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