



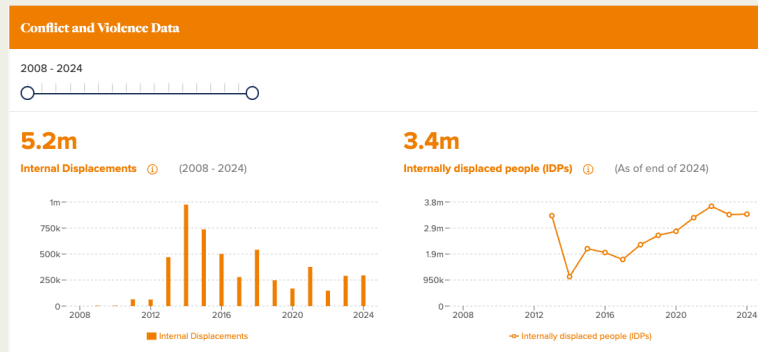
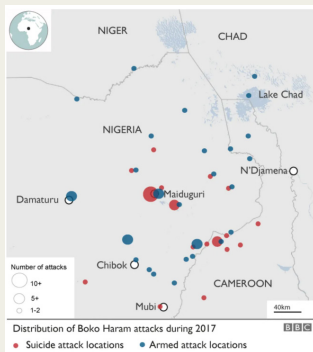
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE - RESEARCH REPORT II

Mitigating the humanitarian impact of armed conflict in Nigeria

Introduction to the Topic:

Armed conflict in Nigeria represents one of the most severe and complex human rights crises in Africa today. For over a decade, persistent violence involving insurgent groups, criminal bandits, and communal militias has resulted in widespread civilian suffering, displacement, and violations of fundamental human rights. The conflict is most intense in northeastern Nigeria, where extremist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have conducted sustained campaigns of violence against civilians, government institutions, and humanitarian workers.

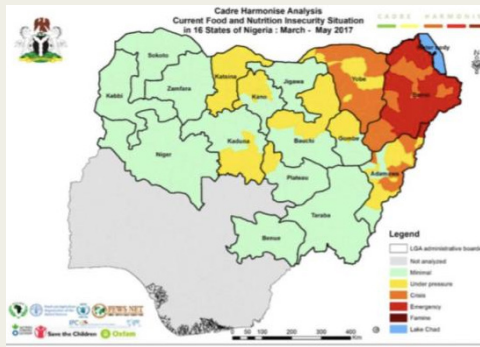
These armed groups routinely target villages, schools, and places of worship, employing tactics such as mass abductions, suicide bombings, and forced recruitment. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, facing sexual violence, forced marriage, and denial of access to education. Beyond insurgency, intercommunal violence between farmers and herders, as well as large-scale banditry in northwestern Nigeria, has further deepened the humanitarian emergency and overwhelmed state protection mechanisms.



Background information

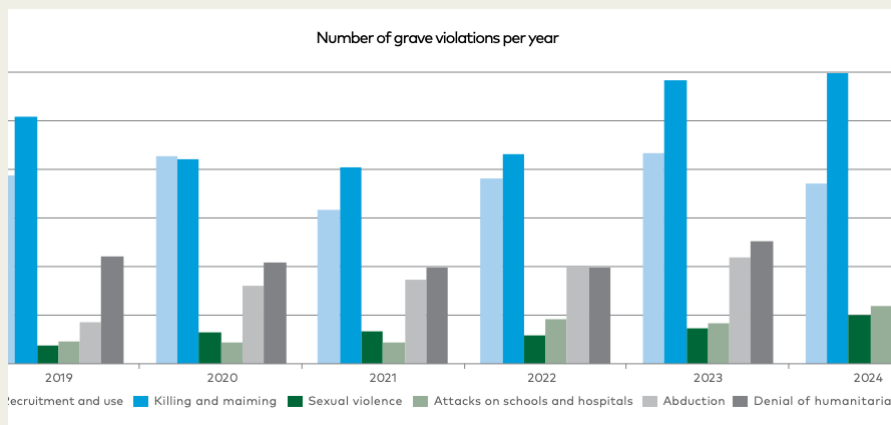
The armed conflict in Nigeria has evolved into a protracted humanitarian crisis with devastating social and economic consequences. As of 2025, over 33 million people are estimated to require humanitarian assistance, while approximately 2.1 million individuals remain internally displaced due to violence. Entire communities have lost access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, healthcare, and education, particularly in conflict-affected rural areas. Food insecurity has reached critical levels as armed attacks disrupt farming activities, destroy crops, and prevent safe access to markets. Insecurity has also limited humanitarian access, leaving many communities isolated and dependent on emergency aid. According to humanitarian agencies, Nigeria now hosts one of the largest food insecurity crises globally, with conflict identified as a primary driver.





Human rights violations are committed not only by non-state armed groups but also, in some instances, during counter-insurgency operations by state security forces. Reports from international organisations document cases of arbitrary detention, excessive use of force, and civilian casualties, raising concerns regarding accountability and adherence to international humanitarian law. These dynamics have eroded trust between communities and authorities, complicating peacebuilding and recovery efforts.

Beyond immediate humanitarian needs such as food and shelter, Nigeria’s armed conflict has produced severe long-term social consequences, particularly in the areas of education, civilian protection, and community stability. Armed groups have deliberately targeted schools, teachers, and students, especially in northern Nigeria, leading to widespread school closures and leaving millions of children without access to education. This disruption has significantly increased risks of child labour, early marriage, and forced recruitment by armed groups, further entrenching cycles of poverty and insecurity.



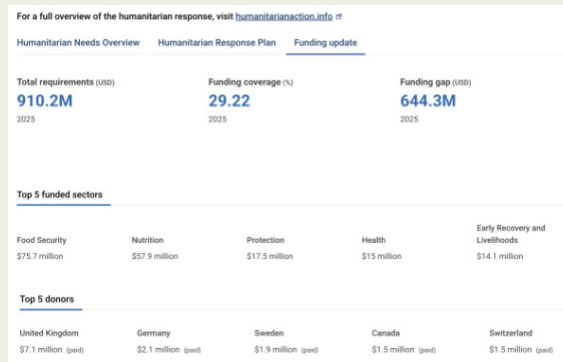
At the same time, women and children living in displacement camps or host communities face heightened exposure to gender-based violence, exploitation, and abuse, often in environments lacking adequate security or access to psychosocial and legal support. The majority of internally displaced persons are hosted by local communities rather than formal camps, placing immense pressure on already limited resources such as food, housing, healthcare, and employment. This strain has intensified social tensions and, in some cases, contributed to further localised violence. Together, these factors demonstrate that Nigeria’s humanitarian crisis extends beyond immediate survival needs, affecting human rights, social cohesion,

and long-term development prospects, and underscoring the need for integrated humanitarian, protection, and recovery responses.



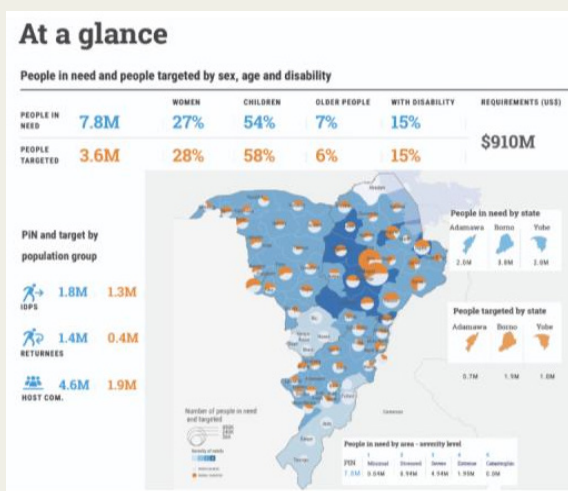
Past UN Actions

OCHRA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs)- Provision of humanitarian aid in Nigeria, particularly through the 'Nigeria Humanitarian Fund' (NHF). This funding policy was established in February 2017, as a quick and flexible means of assisting local and international NGOs, as well as UN agencies in the provision of critical relief services to respond to emergencies during this rapidly changing conflict. The NHF is managed by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria and focuses on the provision of timely assistance to the most vulnerable groups of the Nigerian population based on the 'Nigeria Humanitarian Needs Response Plan', through the disbursement of donor resources, from countries such as, but not limited to; The United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Sweden, Canada and Switzerland (main donors).



Nigeria Humanitarian Needs Response Plan'- A humanitarian action plan coordinated by OCHRA, with the aim of alleviating the critical humanitarian needs in Nigeria. Its main strategic objectives are:

- **SO1** -Save lives and alleviate Suffering
- **SO2**-Provide or facilitate protection for people affected by conflict and natural disasters in line with humanitarian and human rights law.
- **SO3**-Transform affected people’s lives so they become less dependent on humanitarian aid and have their basic needs met in a dignified way



WHO (World Health Organization)- WHO and their partners are working arduously to provide urgent healthcare to meet the demands of the Nigerian population during this conflict, particularly in North-Eastern Nigeria, where armed conflict by and with the Boko Haram, has led to many victims of violence. Some of the essential amenities include critical medicines, treatment of pregnant women and their infants, and control of epidemic outbreaks due to a recent widespread of water-borne and communicable diseases. WHO and the Nigerian ministry are working alongside to strengthen immunization in Nigeria through various local campaigns, with the aim to maintain polio immunity and reduce the death rate from vaccine-preventable diseases.

UNDP (United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs)- Composed an article called "Preventing Violent Conflicts in Nigeria", exploring the main conflict catalysts in the country, including identity-based, resource-based and political power-based conflict drivers. The report highlights the imperativeness of 'sustaining peace through national ownership', rather than through military action. Despite the UN promoting dialogue, negotiation and peace infrastructure, there is a lack of involvement and understanding of these issues by local communities, leading to less effective peacebuilding solutions. Finally, the paper enhances the importance of the role of Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs), as well as the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in switching to preventive diplomacy, supported by predictable funding, political determination and strong cooperation amongst federal and state

Focus of the Debate

Debate should promote collaboration between governments, humanitarian organizations, and local communities to share intelligence, resources, and strategies for protecting civilians and providing relief in conflict-affected areas, while encouraging the Nigerian government and international partners to adopt comprehensive humanitarian policies and harmonize approaches for delivering aid and safeguarding human rights. Furthermore, significant parties should attempt to see their aims satisfied.

Significant Parties

Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)- Extremist groups that aim to overthrow Nigeria's secular state with an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Have been active mainly in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, leading to large-scale displacement, school closures and a humanitarian crisis. Boko Haram stands for "Western Education is Forbidden", and opposes western schooling systems, particularly women's education. ISWAP uses military and government forces to target government forces, gaining control and legitimacy.

Nomadic cattle herders and settled farming communities- Violent encounters between these two groups are occurring in the 'Middle Belt', due to competition over land and water. When herders move south, looking for grazing land, cattle end up destroying cropland. This leads to conflict with farmers that also heavily rely on this land. Divergence in ethnicity and religious values between these two groups leads to further escalation of the conflict. Climate change has also worsened the issue, as reduced rainfall and increasing desertification have forced herders to move further south, putting more pressure on these resources. This conflict has resulted in several deaths, displacement of local communities and food insecurity, as farms are abandoned, reducing agricultural productivity. This in turn leads to economic and national instability.

Armed Criminal Groups/ "Bandits"- Execute kidnappings, village raids and attacks on transport routes. Their main objective is economic gain. This has resulted in widespread fear as well as disruptions to the education system and trading.



Humanitarian Country Team (HCT): The key organizational body that coordinates both international and local humanitarian aid in Nigeria (from NGOs, the Red Cross, the UN) by designing a strategy, preventing gaps and incapacitating a systematic and coherent approach.

OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs)- Assists the HCT in the creation of a structured, realistic plan to provide the humanitarian assistance needed to address the severe needs of the Nigerian population. In 2025, there were 7.8 million people in need of aid. OCHA aimed to realistically assist 3.6 million individuals.

Glossary and Key Terms:

Armed Conflict: Sustained fighting between organized groups, including state forces and non-state actors, causing civilian casualties and displacement.

Boko Haram: An extremist militant group in northeastern Nigeria responsible for insurgency, kidnappings, and attacks on civilians and institutions.

ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province): A Boko Haram splinter group aligned with ISIS, active in northeastern Nigeria, targeting civilians and aid workers.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): People forced to flee their homes due to violence but who remain within their country's borders.

Humanitarian Assistance: Aid provided to populations affected by crises, including food, water, healthcare, and shelter.

Human Rights: Basic rights and freedoms entitled to all individuals, such as life, security, education, and freedom from abuse.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at individuals based on gender, including sexual violence, exploitation, and forced marriage.

Food Insecurity: Lack of reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, often worsened by conflict.

Child Recruitment: Forced or coerced involvement of children in armed groups or military activities.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): Rules designed to protect civilians, prisoners, and the wounded during armed conflicts.

Bibliography and Useful Links-

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