

SYNTHESIS PAPER ON LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESPONSES TO VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA SINCE 2009: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHERN NIGERIA¹

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Abbreviations

JAS	<i>Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad</i> ('People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad').
NSGF	Northern States Governors Forum
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
LGA	Local Government Area
JTF	Joint Task Force
STF	Special Task Force
OR	Operation Rainbow
MOPOL	Mobile Police
DSS	Department of State Services
NSCD	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response system
SRP	Social Re-orientation Policy
DPO	Divisional Police Officer
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
ISO	Internal Security Operations
MACP	Military aid to civil power
AFN	Armed Forces of Nigeria
MACA	Military aid to civil authorities
MJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EU	European Union
CALM	Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation
TOLERANCE	Training of Leaders on Religious and National Co-existence
NSRP	Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
R2R	Responsibility to Report
DRPC	Development research & Projects Centre, Kano
TF	Task Force

¹ This synthesis paper is based on a number of NSRP research papers.



Executive Summary

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, various states in northern Nigeria have witnessed repeated cycles of violent conflict. Five clusters of conflict patterns are discernible, with different actors, motives, and objectives. The first is largely, but not exclusively, around Kano and northern Kaduna States, and is characterized by episodic but repetitive large-scale violent conflicts along ethnic and religious lines. A second cluster of violent conflict can be located in Plateau, southern Kaduna, and southern Bauchi and is based on the cleavage between the dominant Hausa and Fulani Muslim majority in northern Nigeria, and the myriad of ethnic minority nationalities who are often Christian and followers of African religions. A third cluster is located around Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa States and is largely characterized by inter-communal struggle for land by different ethnic and clan groups and by conflict between nomadic pastoral Fulani herdsmen and local sedentary farming communities. A fourth cluster of conflict has recently emerged in western Kaduna, southern Katsina, and Zamfara States and is characterized by marauding bands of robbers who repeatedly raid local communities. The final cluster of violence, with its epicentre in Borno, Yobe, northern Bauchi, and northern Adamawa States, related to the violence connected to the *Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* ('People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad') (JAS).

Various governmental and non-governmental actors have sought to address these outbreaks of violence with the objective of restoring peace. The federal government is a principal actor in this regard. Its major policies involve: (a) the appointment of eminent persons on commissions of inquiry and peace panels; (b) the deployment of various degrees of force; and (c) the periodic payment of compensations.

On their part, the various state governments in northern Nigeria have adopted a range of policy responses: (a) selective inclusion of elites from marginalized communities; (b) social policies to address the needs of vulnerable and potentially volatile constituencies like almajirai; (c) a range of preventative measures such as the ban on the use of motorcycle taxis called Okada; (d) the appointment of eminent persons into commissions of inquiry and peace panels; (e) the systematic payment of compensation to victims of violent conflicts; (f) supporting vigilante groups; and (g) and through the Northern States Governors Forum, advocating for federal policies on the establishment of a victims Rehabilitation Fund and the paying of attention to the needs of nomadic pastoralists.

Other actors whose responses are explored in this paper include the military, the media, women's groups, and international development partners. The military is the most important element in the deployment of force by the federal government. The media has the important responsibility of reporting incidences of conflict in a balanced and professional manner. The inability of some elements of the media to meet these high standards has often resulted in less than professional reporting. This has negative consequences for peace. Women's group have played important peace-building roles at the community level by promoting dialogue across communal cleavages. On their part, the international community, especially the DFID, USAID, and the UNDP have engaged in various peace-building programmes aimed at strengthening the capacities of local communities.

A number of policy gaps are highlighted. These include:



- a. Lack of synergy and coordination between different institutions of government at all levels
- b. Lack of political will in the implementation of inquiry recommendations
- c. Ineffective early warning system; and (d) poor research effort and the resulting lack of evidence based policies

The final section of the paper addresses the question of policy effectiveness. The use of commissions of inquiry by governments has had only limited results, since their reports are frequently unimplemented and left to gather dust. This attitude of setting up fact-finding commissions and then ignoring their recommendations has eroded public confidence in government's commitment to peace and encouraged the resort to self-help strategies by aggrieved communities. The lack of an effective early warning capability and the deleterious functioning of commissions of inquiry have made the resort to force a frequent occurrence. Yet, the resort to force is tailored to achieve the short term objective of restoring order, rather than addressing deep-seated causes of conflict. Even when the deployment of force becomes inevitable, it can frequently be better done. Other policies, such as those of 'political inclusion' in states like Plateau and Kano have reached only a tiny elite, while it is difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of the attention paid to the needs of vulnerable groups like the *almajirai*. Interventions by the international community have sometimes improved the capacity of local communities to engage in peace-building, but their ultimate effectiveness have been mixed, especially given their limited ability to address structural economic and political issues in contention.



Background

Conflict incidents across northern Nigeria are not uniform in terms of causes, triggers, patterns, and consequences. In fact, it is best to see these conflict incidents as related clusters which may, or may not, share some characteristics in common. The first – and oldest cluster – is to be found largely, but not exclusively, around Kano and northern Kaduna States, and is characterized by episodic but repetitive large-scale violent conflicts along ethnic and religious lines. It is often triggered by the competing claims of ethnic and religious elites at the national level, but perpetrated by bands of unemployed young men. A second cluster of violent conflict can be located in Plateau, southern Kaduna, and southern Bauchi. This cluster is based on the cleavage between the dominant Hausa and Fulani Muslim majority in northern Nigeria, and the myriad of ethnic minority nationalities, often Christian and followers of African religions, who, from the start of the decolonization process in the 1950s, embarked on a politics of ‘Emancipation’, by which they mean freeing themselves from alleged Hausa and Fulani, Muslim domination. At issue are contestations over the distribution of economic and political rights, as well as cultural recognition and religious freedom. In many instances, these conflicts take the form of a conflict between ethnic minority Christian ‘indigenes’, on the one hand, against Hausa and Fulani, Muslim ‘settlers’, on the other. Starting from the Tiv Riots in the 1960s, this cluster also saw the repeated conflicts in Zangon-Kataf in southern Kaduna and Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro LGAs, in southern Bauchi. In recent times, there have been the repeated cycles of violent conflicts in and around Jos. In recent times, an ‘economy of conflict’ has built up around cattle-rustling and this has complicated the pattern of violence in rural areas of this conflict zone.

A third cluster can be located around Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa States. Conflict in this zone is largely inter-communal, frequently involving the struggle for land by different ethnic and clan groups in those states. There is also a cleavage between nomadic pastoral Fulani herdsmen, increasingly pushed southwards by desertification in the Sahel, and local sedentary farming communities in these states. Though the conflicts in this zone bear some similarities to the conflict in Plateau, they are more diffused than the polarized conflicts in Plateau and the control of livelihood resources, especially land, features very strongly as drivers of conflict. A fourth cluster of conflict has recently emerged in western Kaduna, southern Katsina, and Zamfara States. In this zone, marauding bands of robbers, sometimes numbered in the hundreds, raid communities to rustle cattle and steal other resources. These bands allegedly live in forest communities outside the reaches of the law, and are especially interested in attacking local vigilante groups and rich local dignitaries, especially politicians. The final cluster of violence, also of relatively recent provenance, relates to the epicentre of JAS violence in Borno, Yobe, northern Bauchi, and northern Adamawa States. Fuelling this conflict is a cocktail of poverty, inequalities, religious extremism², and the manipulation of vulnerable youth by political and religious leaders.

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, there has been an escalation of violence across Nigeria. It is reported that there have been at least 187 ethno-religious conflicts across Nigeria since

² According to Monguno (2013), ‘Key informant #1 disclosed that 20 years ago, his landlord in Bulabulin Ngarannam quarters gave the following conditions for renting his house: (i) tenants must not enroll their children into secular schools and (ii) all tenants must attend prayers in the mosque where the landlord attends prayers. This shows the level of hatred for secular education and religious extremism long before Yusuf began his preaching and it was from such communities that Boko Haram got the maximum acceptance.’ Fn. 2.



May 1999, not-to-mention the hundreds of JAS-related incidences that have allegedly claimed over 3,600 lives since 2009. The pressures deriving from the 'politics of democratization' have compounded extant pressures set in motion by the competition for scarce resources triggered by population expansion, economic crisis, and state economic withdrawal under structural adjustment, started in the 1980s. Within the context of the buccaneering politics of political elites, the struggle for control over the 'spiritual realm' by religious entrepreneurs, the deprivations of poverty and widening economic inequalities, and a restless army of unemployed youth, violent conflict and general insecurity has intensified across Nigeria. While the degrees of dissatisfaction and alienation has increased within different communities, the responses of the relevant authorities have often been perceived as 'unsatisfactory', thereby providing the justification for the resort to violence as the only effective means for seeking redress.

This synthesis paper provides an overview of the responses of various authorities, social actors, and international agencies that have sought to grappled with the spiral of violence across northern Nigeria since 1999. It examines the nature of the policies advocated by these actors, and their effectiveness in addressing the challenges at hand. The next section explores the responses to violent conflict across the north by the federal and state governments, the media, women, the military, civic groups more generally, and the international development partners. This is followed by a section which examines the policy effectiveness of these various interventions.

Responses

Federal Government

The federal government tends to oscillates between the use of military force and the use of eminent persons to intervene in protracted crisis situations in Plateau and Borno States. As Albert (2013) notes, eminent persons are engaged in either of two ways: (i) holding consultative meetings with them in the hope of dousing down conflict situations, or (ii) appointing them into peace commissions of inquiry. Eminent persons intervene in conflicts either individually or collectively, but we have has more information on group interventions because individual efforts are usually conducted in discreet, off the record, manner.

Between 2002 and 2010, the federal government appointed four commissions to investigate the violent conflict around Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States: Justice Okpene Judicial Commission of inquiry into communal conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states in 2002; Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State, headed by Shehu Idris, Emir of Zazzau, May 2004; Federal administrative panel of inquiry into the 2008 crisis, headed by Major General Emmanuel Abisoye; and Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos Crisis, headed by Solomon Lar in 2010. After the 2011 post-election violence that swept through many northern cities, the federal government appointed the Sheikh Ahmed Lemu Committee on Post-Election Violence and Civil disturbances. In the northeast geo-political zone faced with the insurgency of JAS, the federal government appointment the Galtimari Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North East in July 2011. And in April 2013, Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North was appointed to dialogue with JAS.

Along with these use of Eminent Persons in dialogue and commissions, military forces were deployed in Plateau and the northeast under multi-agency Joint Task Force (JTF) and



Special Task Force (STF). In both areas, the federal government also declared a State of Emergency in order to contain particular spikes in the violence. In May 2004, a short-lived State of Emergency was declared in Plateau State. In 2011, a State of Emergency was again declared in some local government areas in Borno and Plateau States. Finally, in the northeast, another declaration of a State of Emergency took place on 14 May 2013, barely a month after inaugurating the Amnesty and Dialogue Committee. In both Plateau and in the northeast, the treatment of the civil population by a military confronting a faceless enemy has become a critical political and security challenge. As Monguno (2013) notes, in Borno State, considerable damage has been done to citizens' property by both insurgents and security agents who allegedly have set homes and shops ablaze whenever they are attacked by the insurgents. In fact until May 2013 when JAS insurgents started large-scale burning of homes in villages, most burning of houses and business premises were attributed to security agents. In 2013, a new army division, the 7th Division, was created in the northeast to provide a permanent military counter-insurgency capability in that volatile corner of Nigeria. With the declaration of the State of Emergency in May 2013, the commercial mobile telephony infrastructure of the affected states was turned off on the orders of the federal government in an attempt to deny the insurgents vital coordination capability.

One variation in the normal pattern of force deployment by the federal government is the Operation Rainbow (OR) established in Plateau State after massive criticisms of the STF by the population. Kwaja (2013) notes that OR was approved by President Goodluck Jonathan in 2010, and subsequently ratified by the National Assembly. It relies on security agents from the STF, Mobile Police (MOPOL), Nigeria Police, Department of State Services (DSS) and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence (NSCD) for personnel. Unlike the STF which relies solely on force for its operations, the OR tries to incorporate civilians into its peace mission. With support from the (United Nations Development Programme) UNDP, OR has been able to set up an early warning and early response infrastructure. Community members across all the seventeen local government areas of the state are trained to monitor their communities and report to a situation room that coordinates early response. In this way, both military and non-military strategies are incorporated into OR. Specifically, OR seeks to incorporate women, youths, community and religious leaders into efforts at mediation, early warning facilitation, and community policing. Though sporadic killings have continued in rural Plateau, and some have complained of bias in favour of Christians in the recruitment of youths to be trained under OR (Sadiq 2013), the establishment of the outfit has coincided with reduced agitation by local communities on all sides of the conflict against the security forces.

Bakut (2013) also reports that the federal government established an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system which includes all security agencies, Technical Research Institutes, Academic Institutions, CSO and Community based associations in data collection and processing. If EWER is still in existence, it is certainly ineffective, given the repeated cycles of violence in many parts of the north that the authorities have failed to nip in the bud. In recent times, the federal government has paid compensation to the victims of the 2011 post-election violence. This is a welcome departure from the usual neglect of victims of violence.



State Governments

The responses of the state governments in the violence affected states across the north have been as varied as the different conflict clusters described in the background section above.

Mohammed (2013) identifies four main strategic responses of the Kano State government to the violence that engulfed the state with increasing frequency after 1999. These are: (a) the reform of the educational system; (b) the institution of elements of inter-ethnic inclusive politics in the governance of the state; (c) Shari'a reforms; and (d) preventive security measures such as the creation of employment opportunities for youth, the banning of commercial motorcycle operation and the carrying of passengers, and the support for *Yan sunturi* security initiatives.

The first policy response of the Kano State government on conflict management is the policy on *Almajirai* system of Qur'anic education. Since the Maitatsine riot of 1980 which caused great hardship and destruction in Kano, reports of various committees of inquiry have singled out the *Almajirai* and the large population of unemployed youth as the major foot-soldiers of violence in the state. For example, it was widely believed in government circles that the *Almajirai* and the *Yandaba*, gangs of uneducated and unemployed feral youth whose life-styled bordered on drugs and crime, were to blame for the 1991 riot over the attempted visit to Kano of the German Christian evangelist, Reinhardt Bonnke. From the point of view of the state government, addressing the educational needs of the *almajirai* would not only address the needs of a sizeable, but neglected, section of the youth of the state, it would also choke off the supply of recruits for violent conflicts in Kano.

On 23 October 2003, the state government launched the Action Plan on Qur'anic Islamiyya and *Ilmi* schools as part of its *Shari'a* legal system. Based on this Action Plan, the state government conducted a census of Qur'anic schools, *Almajirai* and their *Malamai* (teachers) with a view to improving the conditions of learning of the *Almajirai* whilst paying some stipends to their teachers. As part of this Plan, the physical structures of rural Qur'anic schools were vastly improved under the *Tsangaya* schools programme, while some resources were made available for the feeding of the *Almajirai*. A sensitization programme of the host communities and the *Malamai* was also undertaken through seminars and weekly radio and TV programmes. However, according to Mohammed (2013), apart from evacuating some beggars from the streets of Kano and improvements in the standard and curriculum of the Islamiyya schools to further integrate elements of western education into them, not much was achieved in the area of reforming the *Almajirci* system of education. Furthermore, factors such as high youth unemployment, overburden infrastructure and overcrowding in the city, all of which contribute to the periodic outbreak of unrest in the city of Kano were paid scant attention. In December 2013, the government of Governor Kwankwaso went on to pass a law banning street begging in Kano. He announced that: 'Some of the beggars will be incorporated into the state civil service while those who cannot work will be receiving a N10,000 monthly stipend' (Saidu & Yaya 2013). It remains to be seen how effective these initiatives will be in checking street begging and removing the young men from the volatile streets.

Attempting to build confidence among the various ethno-religious groups in Kano State through including elites from non-indigenous ethnic groups resident in Kano in the system of



government is another mechanism used by the state government to stabilize inter-group relations. Since 1999, governments in Kano have sought to forge harmonious relations among various ethnic and religious groups through 'inclusive politics'. Under Shekarau's administration (2003-2007 and 2007-2011), three Special Advisers on inter community relations representing the south-eastern, south-western and the northern minority communities were appointed, in addition to three Special Assistants whose origin can be traced to south-south and north-east. This was a way of dousing the strong grievances of the settler, and largely Christian, communities of *Sabon gari* quarters in Kano. There are concerns, however, that these Special Advisers are tokenistic appointments, aimed at the selective incorporation of a minority of non-indigene elites into the Governor's patronage network, and not a genuine effort at socio-political inclusion of non-indigenous ethnic groups in the governance of the state. Within the wider civil society, many therefore see this gesture as purely political, though it has created some informal access to government decision makers for non-indigenous ethnic groups and lessened their isolation and sense of alienation.

An important element of the Shari'a reforms in Kano was the policy on social reorientation, aimed at inculcating peaceful habits within the wider population of the state. The Social Re-orientation Policy (SRP) of the state government, code-named *Adaidaita Sahu*, was launched on September 11, 2004, and implemented vigorously during the tenure of the Shekarau administration. It employed a massive public enlightenment programme across the 44 LGAs of Kano, advocating the virtues of peaceful, proper, and harmonious relations. Drawing from Islamic teachings, it sought to promote moral and cultural reorientation of the citizenry. To give some muscle to the teachings of *Adaidaita Sahu*, the *Hisbah*, a local Islamic vigilante sponsored by the government, was established under the Kano State Hisbah Board Law No. 4 of 2003 and No. 6 of 2005 (as amended).

The Board established *Zauren Sulhu* – platforms for peaceful conflict resolution - in each ward of the LGAs. These platforms were designed as centres for alternative conflict resolution from the courts, though not every platform was functional. Still, the Board was able to settle hundreds of disputes between citizens who preferred to take their cases there than to the conventional courts. It is claimed that even some police stations referred cases to *Hisbah* because of its quick and satisfactory approach to conflict resolution through mediation.

The final mode of intervention of the Kano State governments is the adoption of special preventative measures aimed at containing the outbreak of violence. One of such measures was the banning of the operations of motorcycle taxis, popularly called *Okada* or *Achaba*. For some time, security reports have identified *Okada* riders as a major support infrastructure for criminal activities in Kano. Seizing opportunity of the attack on the convoy of the Emir of Kano by terrorist, some of whom were on motorbikes, the State government clamped banned the operations of *Okada* in Kano. Another preventative measure is the purchase of a variety of security-enhancing equipment for surveillance within the state. For example, in the 2012 budget, over ₦17 million was allocated for the procurement of items such as 150 mini digital video and still cameras, 200 mini tape recorders, 100 pen video cameras, 100 security lights, and 10 electronic detectors (see Kano State Approved Budget Estimate, 2012). By August 2013, the government was quoted to have spent ₦35 billion for the repair and running of security lights and the installation of new ones within Kano city. Anecdotal reports suggest that the constant provision of street lighting has reduced the level of crime in the city and increased the confidence and sense of security of the population.



The ban on Okada riders has improved the flow of traffic within Kano, reduced the level of air pollution, and reduced the rate of traffic accidents and hospitalization. On the negative side, the ban has removed one of the few economic opportunities for many disadvantaged young men.

Another preventative measure is in the field of provisioning the Nigeria Police command in Kano. The State Governor has lamented that as at 2012, Kano had only 9,000 policemen, compared to over 30,000 in Lagos (*Thisday*, 31 January 2013). As in most Nigerian states, the state government has also had to intervene to provide basic facilities to enable the Nigeria Police carry out its functions. This is on top of similar support for local vigilante groups, as well as members of the Nigeria Civil Defence Corps. The official sanctioning of local vigilante groups is as a result of heightened insecurity. In recognition of the importance of this type of policing, the Kano State House of Assembly passed a Neighbourhood Watch (Vigilante Society) Bill in 2012. The Bill not only legitimated the establishment of vigilante units in all the LGAs in the state, it also proposed the creation of a regulatory organ within each LGA, made up of the Chairman of the LGA as its head, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), the District Head, a representative from a reputable NGO, and the Head of Local Government Community Development Unit as members. If Kano has been relatively peaceful since 2003, it is partly on account of these numerous initiatives, but also on account of the increasing realization amongst Kano elites that the repeated violence that has plagued the city was beginning to take an unacceptable toll on the economic and social standing of the state.

Kwaja (2013) observes that the setting up of commissions of inquiry in the aftermath of violent conflict has also been a dominant conflict management tool in Plateau state. These include the Justice Aribiton Fiberesima Commission of Inquiry of 1994 to look into the riots of April, 12th 1994 in Jos metropolis; Justice Nikki Tobi Commission of Inquiry of 2001 to look into the crisis of September, 7th 2001 in Jos North; Justice Jummai Sankey Judicial Commission of Inquiry of 2001 to look into communal conflicts in Wase LGA; Rev. Dr. Pandang Yamsat High Powered Committee on Peace and Security in Plateau State, set up in 2002; Mr Musa Izam led Administrative Committee and the Justice Constance Momoh Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Namu conflicts of Quanpan LGA in 2005; and Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry of 2009 to look into the election-related crisis of November 28th 2008 in Jos North LGA. However, as was the case with the commissions set up by the federal government, the findings of these commissions are hardly implemented. A second strategy for managing conflict in Plateau State is the appointment of senior special assistants to the governor, with responsibility for inter-community relations, from some ethno-regional groups such as the Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, South-South and Yoruba. As in Kano, this strategy is justified on the grounds of providing an inclusive government that accommodates diversity in view of the cosmopolitan – and conflict-ridden - nature of the Jos. As in Kano, many have argued that such a strategy is too narrowly based, concerned as it is with extending patronage appointments to a select few from the concerned ethnicities.

Monguno (2013) analyses the multi-faceted responses of the Borno and Yobe State governments to the horrors of JAS attacks in the two states. These include the imposition of curfews, the banning of *Okada* operators, the payment of compensation to victims of violence, the advocacy of dialogue with the insurgents, delivery of livelihoods and skills acquisition programmes for the youth, the securing and better provisioning of schools, the support for the youth vigilante, the so-called Civilian JTF, the screening of Islamic preachers



to weed out malcontents, and the organization of group prayers for the return of peace to the communities.

The imposition of curfews and the resulting restriction of movement for durations of between 6 and 24 hours, often greeted each atrocity in both states. The duration of the curfew depended on the severity of the violence. These curfews appear to be the first response in the badly affected areas, especially in towns and cities, which until recently used to be the loci of the insurgency. Cities such as Maiduguri, Damaturu, and Potiskum have been particularly affected, and in recent weeks, smaller towns like Baga, Bama, Gwoza, and Konduga have also been affected. The state governments often declare the curfews at the behest of the security officials of the JTF. As in Kano, a ban on *Okada* operators has also been imposed in Borno and Yobe States. This was aimed at denying the insurgents mobility and flexibility. Both state governments have promoted the use of tricycle taxis (*keke NAPEP*) as a replacement for the *Okada*, though there have also been reports of the use of tricycles for attacks by insurgents.

One important strategy of both governments is the payment of compensation to victims of insurgency. In most violence-infected parts of the north, victims often demand some compensation from the government. This is partly to recompense them for their losses, but more importantly, it is seen as a symbolic recognition of the injustice done to them. Unfortunately, in many instances, both federal and state governments have failed to recognize the import of this demand for compensation and restitution. In both Borno and Yobe, the strategy of paying compensation is well understood and established, and it appears to have considerable positive effect on the victims of the insurgency. Compensation to victims, whether in cash or kind (in some cases, burnt houses are re-built), acknowledges the suffering of the victims, signals collective societal support in a trying period, and reduces the pain and agony suffered from the excesses of either the insurgents or the security forces. Both state governments have also been steadfast in advocating dialogue with the insurgents as a path to peace. Borno even undertook to negotiate with a faction within the JAS leadership though nothing came out of it. Factionalism within JAS, the intransigence of some of its leadership, and the reported killing of 'traitors' within the group, have made it difficult to pursue a strategy of negotiated peace. It has also been alleged that the killing and arrest of JAS negotiators by federal forces has equally been an obstacle to the negotiation process.

Recognizing the contribution of unemployed and alienated youth to the crisis in both states, the state governments have embarked on job creation programmes in agriculture, transportation, civil service, and public works. According to Monguno (2013), by far the greatest response to the insurgency by both states has been in the area of reducing joblessness among the youths. The government of Borno State entered into partnership with Chad Basin Development Authority (a Federal Government agency) to irrigate 7,000 hectares of land for wheat cultivation in 2012. Since 2012, 1000 youths have been trained in different aspects of agriculture in Thailand, Egypt, Benin, China and Israel as well as locally. In addition the government also awarded a contract of NGN 457 million (USD 3million) in August 2012 for the development of six irrigation projects in the three senatorial zones of the state aimed at creating 300,000 direct and indirect jobs for the youths. The initial success of the wheat irrigation project in Chad Basin was however later nullified by the insurgency as harvesting the matured crops became a big challenge because the area had fallen under the control of JAS at the time. There were also grumblings and accusations of political



patronage in the selection of the youths sent for training abroad. Despite the best efforts of the Borno State government, the biggest challenge to Borno's agriculture in 2013 was the fact that many rural areas in the north and central parts of the state had failed to cultivate their farms for fear of being attacked by insurgents. The government's planned purchase of 10,000 metric tons of grains for subsidized distributed may help to ward off hunger in these parts of the state.

Another important measure aimed at improving the livelihood of the volatile youths is the development of skills acquisition programmes in both states. In Borno, this also involved sending these youths abroad. Following the ban on *Okada* in 2011, 5,000 tricycles and 100 mini buses were purchased and distributed to youths who may have previous *Okada* operators. 9,000 youths were also trained at eight skills acquisition centres and were subsequently given take-off grants to commence business operations. Similarly a total of 1,500 youths were employed in 2012 as 'Environmental Vanguard', engaged in sanitation activities within Maiduguri. Meanwhile, in Yobe State, 1000 tricycles were purchased and distributed to youths on loan and about 1,000 youths were trained in different skills at the Institute of Youth Development, Kano, and were later given take-off grants. The state government also recruited 3,600 graduate indigenes into the civil service, and through a Special Youth Empowerment Programme engaged 6,000 Ordinary National Diploma (OND) holders. The latter were attached to various areas of interest in the civil service to acquire additional skills for later self-employment.

Given the religious nature of the security challenge in both states, it is government policy to screen Islamic preachers in both states. The aim is to check unlicensed preachers peddling fiery messages of hate and violence. In both states, however, this move has been far from successful, not to mention the possible infringement on the constitutional right to worship. The Islamic Preaching Board under the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Borno State and Yobe's Board of Arabic and Islamic Studies are responsible for the enforcement. In both cases, however, sectarian wrangling between the agencies (often controlled by members of the Sufi Orders) and members of other sects (principally the reformist salafis of the *Izala* sect) has in the past compromised their effectiveness. With the outbreak of the JAS insurgency in 2009, there is a more serious approach in Borno. State intervention in the religious sphere has also included the promotion of communal prayers for divine intervention in ending the violence in the states. The governments, groups and individuals have variously engaged themselves in prayer, fasting and alms giving for God's intervention, with the government in Borno liaising with local *ulama* to engage in continuous prayer for the restoration of peace.

Other sundry measures taken by the two state governments include the support and training of the youth militia, the Civilian JTF, the periodic closure of schools in the face of security threats of particular atrocities, the deployment of security forces to affected schools, as well as improvements in feeding of students in these schools in order to encourage increased attendance. It is not clear what the effects of any individual measure are, but in general, the government in Borno State since 2011 is seen to be pro-active in responding to the wishes of the population. In particular, its policy of compensating victims of violence seems to be well regarded. Other policies, such as the policy on youth employment, may be more symbolic than strategic, nevertheless, they contribute to the generally positive perception of the government within the population. That disjuncture between significant portions of the



citizenship and the government which frequently characterizes conflict states in Nigeria has been significantly reduced in Bornu State since 2011.

In the violence cluster around Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa States, the deployment of the police and army have frequently been used to suppress inter-ethnic clashes in those states. In some cases, commissions of inquiries have also been instituted. In the case of the frequent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and Tiv farmers in parts of Benue State, eminent persons such as the Sultan of Sokoto and the Special Adviser to the Governor on security matters have occasionally intervened in the search for peace. With respect to the large-scale banditry in the western Kaduna, southern Katsina, and Zamafara cluster, very little has been done by the state governments other than the mobilization of the Nigerian Police. The Zamfara State governor has also called for the establishment of state police forces. In all of these 'neglected' instances of violence across the two clusters, local militia, often of an ethnic nature, are the primary instrument communities use to defend themselves from attack.

Northern States Governor's Forum (NSGF)

Apart from the direct efforts of federal and state governments, the Northern Governors Forum (NSGF) is yet another platform through which the state governments of the region have sought to respond to the persisting tensions and violence in the northern states. The NSGF inaugurated a Committee on Reconciliation, Healing and Security on August 22nd 2012. The Committee, composed of over 41 eminent citizens from all ethnic and faith backgrounds in the north and headed by Ambassador Zakari Ibrahim, travelled across the region to meet with other community leaders and civic organizations. It even sought to engage the JAS insurgents in a dialogue. Its key mandate was to identify opportunities for lasting peace across the various turbulent crises in the region. The Committee called for, received and processed 137 Memoranda, Reports, White papers and Position papers. Less than 20% of the Memoranda came from individuals while the majority were from organized groups and institutions. In April 2013 the Committee submitted its report to the NSGF along with a proposed implementation plan to the NSGF.

Some key recommendations of the NSGF include the payment of full compensation to all victims of violent conflicts, especially those of the 2011 post-election violence and victims of JAS atrocities. Secondly, the Forum called for the immediate establishment and institutionalization of a Rehabilitation Fund for rehabilitating militant groups that embrace peace and dialogue as well as those that are affected and afflicted by the insurgency in the region. Thirdly, it advocated the preservation of existing cattle routes in the region, the enforcement of their boundaries, while also working with the Federal Government to develop scientific methods of animal husbandry in conformity with current best practices. As in the other cases of the establishment of committees and fact-finding commissions mentioned above, very little has been seen by way of the implementation of the recommendations of the NSGF committee.

Military

In all cases of conflict in the northern states, there is a strong tendency for the governments to deploy the police and the military. The ineffective early warning capability has already been noted. Unable to apprehend conflicts before they flare up into violence, the governments have frequently applied the 'fire brigade' option of deploying the security forces to quell the violence, after they have broken out. This has turned the military and the police



into critical institutions for the maintenance of peace in Nigeria. Section 217 (2) (c) of the Constitution provides that the military could be deployed to suppress insurrection and act in aid to civil authority. The President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN), relying on this provision, has deployed the military in riot control, combating armed robbery, kidnapping, oil bunkering, militancy and insurgency. The frequent deployment of the AFN to perform mundane duties that ordinarily is the prerogative of the police hints at the failure of governance fuelling the militarization of national life. According to the National Security Adviser, Col. Sambo Dasuki (Rtd), the military is currently engaged 'in joint activities with other para-military outfits currently in about 28 states' (Emewu 2013) of Nigeria's 36 states, suggesting the breakdown of normal policing in these states. It is within this context that the military has played an important role across the region.

According to Sanda (2013), the deployment of the military for Internal Security Operations (ISO) is often a subject of intense debate. While some view the deployment of the military as a welcome idea since they often times save lives and mitigate the destructive consequences of violent conflict, others argue that their deployment often result in some unintended consequences. Such deployment, she argues, is known as military aid to civil power and involves the use of arms (MACP). When the military is used to help deal with disaster or humanitarian situations not involving use of arms it is military aid to civil authorities (MACA). Much of the deployment of the military in Nigeria is of the MACP variety.

With respect to JAS, opinion is divided on the advisability of seeking a military solution to the insurgency. Many, like the Borno Elders Forum called for the withdrawal of the military and the initiation of dialogue with the insurgents. And despite the declaration of the State of Emergency and the creation of the 7th Division, JAS has continued to commit large-scale atrocities in Damaturu in October 2013, on the highways of the northeast, and in Maiduguri and Bama in December 2013, where they attacked the Air Force Base and the Army Barracks respectively. These attacks suggest that the military option may not be having the desired effect. Some have suggested that the number of military personnel deployed is insufficient to effectively secure the states. It is argued that even the military presence in Maiduguri is small compared to the scale of the insurgency; they are even thinner on the ground in the rural areas were, in recent weeks, JAS has engaged in the wanton killings of travellers. Many villagers have been forced to flee from their villages in such places as Gadaka, Gaidam and Goniri (Yobe State) and Ngowom, Barawa, Kayamla, Mainok and Mairari (Borno State) between June and August, 2013. Some communities bordering Cameroon Republic have fled across the border, where 10,000 Nigerians are said to have sought refuge. Some thousands have also fled to Niger Republic.

The loss of hegemony over the civilian population by the JAS, epitomized by the rise of the CJTF and the holding of the *Sallah* Durbar in Maiduguri in 2013 for the first time in four years, has forced the JAS away from the cities. The consequent concentration of JAS forces in forest reserves and mountain terrains has given rise to a unique form of military involvement – the systematic deployment of air power within Nigeria's borders for the first time since the 1967-1970 Civil War. The deployment of foreign troops from Chad and Niger Republic for internal security operations in Nigeria under the umbrella of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) is yet another distinctive feature of the struggle against the JAS in the northeast. As the composition of the military formation gets more complex, so does the challenges of effective coordination. Already, there are speculations of in-fighting over the control of the military deployed in the northeast (see *Leadership* December 15th 2013)



The combination of the loss of civilian support or acquiescence and the deployment of air power may ultimately tilt the military balance against the JAS which is increasingly restricted to pockets within its Borno heartland. On the other hand, it would seem that the JAS is increasingly internationalizing its strategy and tactics, including the procurement of more deadly weapons, in order to offset these negative changes in its domestic environment. It is also increasingly adopting tactics of kidnapping and the indiscriminate brutalization of civilian populations regarded as hostile to its aspirations.

The deployment of the military may be an unavoidable necessity, given the scale of violence perpetrated by the insurgency. Yet, the effectiveness of that deployment remains a constant source of worry for many people. A second key issue with respect to the deployment of the JTF to the two states is the manner in which they carried out their duties. Many allegations of the use of excessive force against insurgents and ordinary civilians have been made. This has tended in the past to souring of relations with the civilian population. According to 2012 study, only 8% of soldiers interviewed admitted to the existence of good civil-military relations in Maiduguri (Monguno 2013).

As in the northeast, the deployment of the military in Plateau has also been greeted with a lot of criticism. In Plateau, many accuse the military of partisanship, with some communities accusing the military of perpetrating atrocities with impunity. Some communities have expressed preference for the police, which they saw as more sympathetic to their cause, while others prefer the military. This dragging of the military into communal sectarianism is very dangerous for the military institution itself. A second criticism of the military in Plateau is the claim that the military is unable or unwilling to effectively defend civilian populations against perceived enemies or impending attacks. Others have accused the military of indiscipline, unprofessionalism, and corruption, particularly at check points.

It may often be necessary to use the military for the immediate task of the restoration of public order. But it would be wrong to see the semi-permanent deployment of the military as the solution to the numerous conflict situations across the country. Firstly, even where successfully deployed, force rarely addresses the structural and core factors that led to the violence in the first place. Secondly, because of inadequate training, the lack of adequate logistic support, and the poor human rights culture of the military, the longer the military is deployed in a conflict zone, the more likely cases of the abuse of the civilian population will begin to emerge. Facing unidentified enemies in the northeast, initially getting little cooperation from a population terrorized by the insurgents, and poorly provisioned, the tendency was for some in the military to shoot first and ask questions later. With the formation of the Civilian JTF, the tense civil-military situation has improved. In Plateau State, on the other hand, the unhealthy civil-military relations was fuelled by military perceptions that civilians are not appreciative of the sacrifices the military are making in partaking in internal security management under very difficult conditions. But from the perspective of some local communities, sections of the military carried out their functions in a biased manner detrimental to their communal interests. The establishment of OR in Plateau has also had the impact of improving civil-military relations as these communal complaints have drastically reduced.



Media

The conventional media (terrestrial television, radio, newspapers) and the new media (YouTube, online newspapers, bloggers) have played a great role in the way the numerous conflicts in the northern states have been framed and understood. There is a tendency for people producing material for the media, both conventional and new, to betray some bias in favour of one ethno-religious side or the other, depending on their political interests, or those of the controllers of the medium. Government-controlled broadcast media were largely seen as mere conveyors of government positions, rather than the truth. This deplorable situation of reportage is as a result of a number of factors: poor conflict sensitivity training of the individual journalists, the lack of professionalism within the media, the lack of resources to adequately carry out investigative journalism, the widespread use of corrupt inducement to influence poorly paid journalists, and the uncontrolled jingoism of unverifiable contributors to discussions in the social media. The very anonymity of contributors to the Public Sphere encourages extremist expressions in the social media.

As Mu'azu (2013) notes, the media's task is made worse by the security forces imposing a culture of secrecy on military operations. In some cases, casualty figures released by the military authorities are not believed, yet, the media have no alternative avenue for verifying these figures or establishing the real situation in most conflict zones. Furthermore the military make sure that evidence of any human rights abuses are difficult or impossible to establish through investigative journalism. When the military was accused of burning down houses in Baga, access was denied to journalists and independent assessors, and Human Rights Watch had to resort to satellite imagery to establish a different narrative from that put forward by the military authorities. Media bias through selective utilisation of sources and reliance on government and security officials and experts/commentators became the only legitimate voices for the definition of the insurgency. Alternative voices were silenced or denied legitimacy. Media outlets are seen as religiously or regionally biased. Some interpreted JAS's alleged mission to Islamise Nigeria as the real motive for the terrorism, while others emphasised a number of societal failures involving the governmental, parents, and the security and political systems. Conspiracy theorists impute the terrorism to some dark, disgruntled political forces in society on the one hand while on the other, JAS denialists tend to deflect criticism away from the group. Even individual journalists are not spared this media polarization; while security forces threatened the freelance journalist Ahmed Salkida on suspicion of his alleged JAS links, JAS spokespersons issued death threats against the *Thisday* journalist Segun Adeniyi.

JAS itself has sought to exploit the social media to seek to influence the population. Periodic releases on YouTube convey images of beheadings, and messages of defiance and promises of more destruction. They also called stringers of international broadcast media to make claims and grant interviews. They also maintained a website. There is almost a propaganda war for hearts and minds between the military authorities who control the flow of information on military operations and JAS operatives on the social media. The role of the media in educating the public about the conflicts in society is a crucial one. Yet, it would seem that insufficient professionalism on the part of media practitioners has encouraged a culture of partisan and biased reporting. The trust of the public has been further shaken by the heavy-handed management of information flows by governmental agencies and the military who frequently highlight insurgent casualties while underplaying military casualties and failures. The denial of access to conflict zones to journalists means that independent corroboration of official information is impossible. Meanwhile, JAS seeks to use the social



media to spread its own equally uncorroborated version of events. In all this, truth seems to be the first casualty and a sceptical public is increasingly relying on international media houses for their information.

Women & Civic Participation

Women have largely been a force for inter-communal dialogue and peace in both Maiduguri and Jos, though some women have been arrested while assisting JAS in transporting guns or whilst directly taking part in hostilities in both Borno and Plateau. Although the majority of casualties are men and young boys, it is nevertheless the case that as mothers, sisters, care-givers, and home-makers,, women tend to suffer disproportionately from violent conflict. In Maiduguri in March 2012, women from across the religious and ethnic divides marched for peace, appealing to both the JAS and the JTF to respect the sanctity of human life. The women 'amidst tears appealed to members of the Boko Haram to sheathe their swords and embraced peace. They also condemned the ... burning of schools, which they said has left many children roaming about the streets' (Olugbode 2012). Similarly, in Jos in 2010, a Christian women's community leader, Esther Ibanga teamed up with a Muslim women's community leader, Khadija Hawaja, to sue for peace. Ibanga organized the '100,000 Women March' to stop the violence in the summer of 2010. Tens of thousands of Christian women took to the streets in the segregated city of Jos to chant and wave palm fronds, demanding an end to the killings. Hawaja, the Chairperson of the Plateau State Muslim Women Peace Forum, also organized a Muslim women's protest march in reaction to the Esther's 100,000 Women March. With time, both women joined forces in an interfaith women's coalition for peace (Schlaffer 2012).

Apart from women, other civic actors have been prominent in responding to the spiral of violence across the northern states. In Kano in 2010, a conference on Christian and Muslim cooperation for conflict prevention and management was organized by the Programme for Christians-Muslims Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and another one-day conference for key stakeholders on peace and stability in Kano was organised by the Voice and Accountability Platform in 2011. In January 2012, nation-wide protests against the removal of fuel subsidy led to the formation of the interfaith Kano Civil Society Forum (KCSF) which eventually serves as an umbrella network of CSOs whose motive is to establish peace in the state. The forum produced the Kano Covenant, which bound the Muslim and Christian organizations together in mutual support and peaceful co-existence. The organization also paid a symbolic visit to *Sabon gari* - the Christian dominated settlers' quarters in Kano - in order to commiserate with the families of the Christians affected by 29 July 2013 JAS attack on the bus station.

In Borno State, the situation in Maiduguri was only stabilized after the sudden rise of the informal youth counter insurgency group called the Civilian JTF (CJTF). These youth volunteers, at the risk of their own lives, have used local knowledge to fish out lurking JAS members in their various neighbourhoods. In the process, they have tremendously helped in the improvement of civil - military relations. The state government is now offering logistical support, some stipend, and training to the group. However, while the CJTF succeeded in Maiduguri, it was less so in other areas affected by the insurgency. Attempts by the CJTF to carry out operations in some of these areas resulted in heavy casualties. Yet in spite of CJTF's initial success many residents are apprehensive of the possible hijack of the group by politicians, or the conversion of the group into a semi criminal outfit.



Development Partners

International Development partners have also been playing a part in responding to the violent conflict in various parts of Nigeria. As Egwu (2013) notes, the United Nations system, the United States International Development Agency (USAID), the United Kingdom's Department of Development (DFID), and the European Union (EU) have been the largest investors in conflict prevention and governance-related activities in Nigeria. In 2009 USAID estimated that it would provide USD 17, 552 million within the general framework of *Democracy Assistance* to Nigeria, while DFID increased her spending for the broader category of governance from GBP 85 million in 1997 to over 322 million in 2008. Specifically, conflict resolution has received donor priority in the Niger Delta and in parts of the northern States.

There has also been some coordination between donors. In the 2010-2013 programme period, the World Bank group, DFID, USAID, and the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) teamed up to prepare a joint Country Partnership Strategy. The modes of intervention have emphasized the need for Nigerian organizations themselves to take the lead in harnessing energies for peace. This approach is not unconnected to donors' recognition of the reluctance on the part of the Nigerian authorities to be open to support for conflict mitigation and prevention issues. There is a seeming reluctance on the part of Nigerian authorities to address the generic governance and accountability issues which are at the root of the endemic conflict in the region. The strategy has been to promote stronger and broader collaboration between the government, civil society and the private sector to reduce sources of communal violence.

In 1999 USAID launched the Office of Transition Initiative (OTI) which supported Nigerian institutions, government and non-governmental, to build capacity for conflict analysis, conflict mitigation and peace-building. The logic of OTI interventions was to address issues of conflict and violence capable of undermining the transition to civilian rule. In the countdown to the 2003 elections, USAID's PACE Consortium established a programme led by the Institute for Democracy of South Africa (IDASA) targeted specifically at the mitigation of election-related violence. Furthermore, in 2005 USAID launched the "Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation" (CALM) programme. IFESH, the implementing agency, gave priority to the establishment of Conflict Mitigation and Management Regional Councils (CMMRC), which sought to reduce conflict by encouraging greater communication and transparency between leaders and underprivileged groups in their localities. There was also a deliberate effort to use cascade training and information as a strategy of fostering partnerships with local level actors. In response to the indigene/settler crises in those states, CALM gave priority attention to Kaduna and Plateau states out of a total of five states covered. One important achievement is the project is the enhanced capacity of the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre in Kaduna and the Kaduna Peace Committee to address ethnic and religious violence, through a number of activities including those that support inter-faith dialogue, inter-ethnic relations, trauma healing for women and youth, early warning and response, media sensitization and special election monitoring. Through CALM also, support was provided to three regional centres made up of 37 Muslims and 30 Christian clerics in Kano, Kaduna and Plateau states. The US mission through USAID has also supported 'Training of Leaders on Religious and National Co-existence" (TOLERANCE) which was launched in 2011 and is on-going in Plateau and Kaduna states.



TOLERANCE has its primary focus in northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt with high levels of ethnic and religious conflict. It established national level inter-faith deliberative dialogue for religious and traditional leaders, involving the Archbishop of Abuja and the Sultan of Sokoto. Other aspects of TOLERANCE include support for national conference on interfaith co-existence promoted through the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), and for state bureaus of religious affairs and community leaders to promote peaceful co-existence. An important component involved media engagement through collaboration with BBC/World Trust Services and Voice of America. And finally, it sought to build the capacity of marginalized groups to join existing networks to promote good governance in their communities as well as engaging both Muslim and Christian women in intra- and inter-faith dialogue to identify constructive solutions to address underlying issues that drive violence against women.

Under its Nigeria's Security, Justice and Growth (SJG) programme, DFID is reported to have established the Kano Multi-Door Courthouse (KMDC) located within the premises of the Kano High Court of Justice in January 2009. Community Mediation Centres (CMC) were also established in each of the three Senatorial Zones of Kano located in Kabuga, Bichi and Takai. These centres offered alternative dispute resolution services. The Kano state government partnered with the DFID in these initiatives, offering the sum of ₦100 million as its contribution. DFID also supported the Institute for Governance and Social Research (IGSR), a Jos-based NGO to contribute to reducing violence in Jos and contributing to enduring peace. The support which was rolled out in 2010 focused on four major activities for achieving this goal: youth peace camps and vocational training, inter-community mediation support; community/security early warning and response; and promoting peaceful co-existence and conflict resolution through sports and establishment of "Youth Ambassadors". DFID also carried out the Access to Justice (A2J) and Security, Justice and Growth (SJG) programmes which were succeeded in 2010 by the Justice for All (J4A) programme. The five year programme focused on safety and security, access to justice, and anti-corruption in five focal states across Nigeria, including Jigawa, Kaduna, and Kano in the north. J4A paid particular attention to improving the human rights and access to justice for poor and disadvantaged members of society. In 2010, DFID launched the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) to succeed the J4A under the Country Assistance Plan. The NSRP is a £39m five year project (2013-2017) which aims to reduce violent conflict in Nigeria by providing support to Nigerian stakeholders to better manage conflict. Of the eight focal states, five - Kano, Yobe, Borno, Kaduna, and Jos - are in the north. The programme aims to reduce the number of lives lost to violence and the impact of violent conflict on the most vulnerable people by encouraging the non-violent management of conflict and reducing the frequency and severity of violence in the target states.

The UNDP has a Local Governance Programme (LGP) which aims to create an enabling policy, legislative and regulatory environment for governance at the local level. It seeks to address capacity development in areas of policy formulation, service delivery, resource management, and gender participation at the local level. Another UNDP project is the Sustainability and Risk Management Programme (SRMP) which aims to support the protection and development of the people and natural resources, and prevent crisis, especially in the Niger Delta. One of the three sub-components of the programme is for Conflict prevention, management and peace-building.



Finally, the UN system in Nigeria has also developed an Assistance Framework document in collaboration with the Nigerian government. UNDAF III spans the period 2014 – 2017, and has four key objectives, including in the area of Human Security and Risk Management under which:

the UN will work with national and development partners to ensure that by 2020 Nigeria is on a peaceful, secure and sustainable development path where disaster, environmental, climate and conflict risks and threats are mitigated by policies, laws and plans that are participatory, gender responsive, funded, monitored and enforced systematically at all levels of the federation with high levels of political will; relevant government institutions respond timely, effectively, efficiently and are well coordinated (vertically and horizontally) in effective partnership with empowered civil society and utilize evidence-based early warning systems; and where the population is rights-assertive and increasingly resilient through awareness and ability to participate in mitigation and response to threats, crises and change. (UN 2013).

The EU's Country strategy Paper (2008-2013), besides promoting collaboration on non-violent and transparent elections which is implemented through a multi-donor basket fund, envisages substantial support for purposes of strengthening the peace process and conflict prevention, including reduction of small arms and light weapons. In July 2013, the European Union under the aegis of the Instrument for Stability (IFs) programme started an 18-month project in Plateau. The project aimed to support confidence-building, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation in the state. The action is to be implemented in five (5) local government areas of the state namely; Jos North, Jos South, Riyom, Barkin Ladi and Mikang. The World Bank has also intervened through projects aiming at empowering the youth population by address livelihood challenges at the community level.

Other initiatives include the United State Institute of Peace (USIP) Annual Priority Grant Competition in 2012 won by the Search for Common Ground to carry out Participatory Early Warning for More Effective Response to Religious Conflict in Plateau state. Similarly, the GHR Foundation, a German organization has a funded programme, Mercy Corp, with a focus on "Inter-Religious Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria" (IPNN). The IPNN project is strategically building on a three-year DFID-funded program that aims to resolve pastoralist/farmer conflict in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria. The Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) Jos successfully completed the Jos North and South Peacebuilding Project (JNSP) with financial support of Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Nigeria Program. The aim of this two year pilot project was to promote inter-group and inter-personal dialogue among people of diverse ethnic and religious groups. Apurimac, a Jos-based non-governmental organization has also been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malta, with EUR 22,000 to re-integrate violence-prone youth in the mainstream of the society in Jos. Finally, the Canadian High Commission is funding a dialogue process that is being implemented by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue HD in Plateau state. The HD through a steering committee is facilitating a process that engages representatives of five ethnic nationalities in Bassa, Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs of Plateau state. This intervention seeks to build a culture of peace and re-establishing tolerance and peaceful co-existence among people of different ethnicities and religion in the state.



Some of the interventions promoted and encouraged by the development partners have had the benefit of building the capacity of local groups, especially women's groups, to take part in addressing their security challenges. In some instances, efforts have also been made to strengthen platforms for inter-communal dialogue. At a more general level, some of the programmes have sought to address issues of governance and service delivery. On balance, however, these interventions by development partners are incapable of solving the deep-rooted structural causes of the conflicts – constitutional, institutional, governance, economic, and political causes which require concerted governmental and civic action on the part of Nigerians.

Policy

Mapping Key Institutional Responses

The federal government's main response to insecurity in the northern states has primarily been the deployment of force. This has increasingly dragged the military centre-stage in what is supposedly a democracy. Worse still, in most of the societies involved, the military has been accused of excessive, disproportionate, and indiscriminate use of force. This has alienated many communities from government's efforts and fuelled grievances. In Plateau, the institutionalization of OR is an attempt to address this deleterious effect of militarization on already volatile communities. In Borno, the CJTF serve the same purpose, though they are poorly institutionalized.

A second institutional strategy of the federal government is the use of eminent persons in commission and panels. Since most of the resulting reports are never made public and their recommendations hardly implemented, one can be forgiven for seeing these commissions as a way of kicking the can down the road, instead of addressing the problem. The commissions and panels therefore serve the purpose of giving the impression that something is being done, when in fact, very little concrete effort is being made. The one good result of the commissions might be the taking of combatants' focus away from the streets, and into the chambers of government. The commissions can also sometimes serve as a process of documentation of what happened.

The third strategy of the federal government is the selective payment of compensation. Those affected by the 2011 post-election violence have been paid compensation, though the same government has declared that it would not pay any compensation to the victims of JAS insurgency, despite the near unanimous demand for it. Instead of a systematic payment of compensation to acknowledge society's debt to the victims, the federal government has beefed up its institution for providing relief to victims of both natural and man-made disaster. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has certainly made useful contributions to people in distress, but by converting victims of communal violence into the 'needy', its operations lacks the symbolism of society's acknowledgement of the wrong done to victims.

Lacking direct control over the armed forces and the police, state governments have limited coercive forces to deploy in the face of violent conflicts. But they have been known to use official vigilantes such as the *Hisbah* in Kano, or unofficial ones, such as *Yan Kolare* in Gombe. Some have considerable influence with their Police Commissioners, but this cannot override federal prerogatives. There is currently an agitation for constitutional review to allow state governments establish police forces of their own. State governments also use eminent



persons in commissions and panels in a way similar to that of the federal government. Though some states – Borno is a good example – systematically pay compensation to victims of violence, most states have simply set up State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMA) which function very much like NEMA. As highlighted in previous sections, state governments also use a number of policies that are unique to them. These include firstly, the selective incorporation of elites from disadvantaged minority groups into the governance structure, usually as senior advisers to the governor. However, this version of ‘inclusive’ politics barely reaches beyond a narrow cycle of elites and it is only in Lagos State that such appointees hold offices with substantial influence and power. Secondly, state governments also use a range of social policies through which they seek to address the conflict potential of specific communities that are regarded as high risk groups. In this regard, various programmes directed at *almajirai* and their teachers are worthy of note. Thirdly, under the aegis of the NSGF, state governments have advocated for a policy of systematic rehabilitation of repentant offenders. They have called for the establishment of a Rehabilitation Fund by the federal government, though none of them has actually taken the lead to establish such a fund in their states. Finally, also through the NSGF, the state governments have called for special attention to the needs of nomadic pastoralists. Kwaja (2013) reports that joint efforts between the Plateau State Government and the STF led to the recovery of over 80% of the cattle rustled in the state.

Gaps in Institutional Responses

President Goodluck Jonathan has noted that when the Boko haram insurgency took off in earnest in 2009, the country was taken by surprise. For a long time, there seemed to be no comprehensive counter insurgency strategy, no functional Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism, no effort to elicit systematic civilian involvement conflict resolution, no attempt to develop a strong research capability to contribute to the conflict resolution strategy, and a general failure to build an institutional memory on past interventions. Another important institutional gap is the very poor quality of inter-governmental coordination of conflict resolution activities. Frequently, efforts by the federal executive to set up a committee to investigate a breakdown of peace in an area would be complicated by the Senate and the House of Representatives setting up parallel committees in competition with the one set up by the executive. On some other occasions, the lack of synergy is between the federal and state governments; in one instance in Plateau State, while the federal government set up the Emmanuel Abisoye Commission, the State government set up the rival Bola Ajibola Commission to investigate the same matter. It is little surprising that this clash of competing jurisdictional claims ended in court. Meanwhile, the social breakdown both commissions were supposed to be investigating continued unabated.

More recently, in November 2013, this lack of synergy – or even outright political competition - between different actors could be seen in the reactions to President Jonathan’s request for the extension of the State of Emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States. While Governor Nyako of Adamawa requested the National Assembly to reject the Adamawa extension, the Borno Elders Forum condemned the Borno extension. In the same vein, the Governor of Borno State has frequently complained of the lack of federal support in his battle against the JAS insurgency. The Borno Elders Forum has also lamented the lack of recognition and respect for its members as legitimate stakeholders in the peace building process in Borno. In particular, they condemn the maltreatment of the former Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Goni. The lack of coordination between different arms of government



and other relevant social actors opens the door to the possible partisan politicization of various peace building efforts.

Another dimension of the problem of the lack of institutional coordination is that of inter-services rivalry and questionable professionalism within the different agencies of the military and security services. As Kwaja (2013) notes, in the Plateau countryside since 2010, the perpetrators of violence were able to make a headway because the security forces not only failed to share intelligence among themselves, they were also suspected of taking sides in the conflict and soldiers were accused of trading guns for money. There is also a major institutional gap in the management of the forces deployed to conflict zones. Though these forces are controlled from Abuja, inadequate resources are made available for their operational running. This often forces the state governments to assume responsibility for providing for these police units. In some instances, the deployed forces fleece the local population for their sustenance, thereby jeopardizing civil-military relations. Another institutional gap is the inability to check the culture of impunity that has characterized communal violence in Nigeria. There is no systematic attempt to collect relevant data on human right abuses and the use of same for prosecuting offenders before the courts. It would seem that this important responsibility has been abandoned to the International Criminal Court.

Inadequate attention has been paid to the training of journalists for conflict sensitivity reporting. The media often displays insufficient awareness of differences in ethnic, religious and regional sensibilities. Frequently, the professional tenets of accuracy, balance, fairness, neutrality and non-partisanship are sacrificed for time-worn ethnic and religious stereotypes. There is the failure to see the common humanity of all citizens. Related to this professional failure on the part of the media is its problematic relationship to the security forces. As Mu'azu (2013) notes, strengthening media-security relations is required for proper accountability and the forging of a strategic alliance to win public support for restoring law and order. A system for the release of information between security and journalists needs to be institutionalised including accreditation.³

Effectiveness

It remains a wonder that Nigeria has not disintegrated, given the escalating levels of violence and insecurity that have been witnessed since 1999. But there should be more to a country than mere fearful co-existence, and the continued coexistence and wellbeing of the country should not be taken for granted. In this regard, attention needs to be re-doubled to find policies that effectively address the numerous security challenges discussed in this paper.

The use of commissions and panels can be improved, if some effort is made at the timely implementation of their recommendations. If we take the Ambassador Usman Galtimari Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North-East Zone set up in 2011 as an example, though it took the Committee only four weeks to do its work, the government took ten months to produce its own white paper on it in June 2012. Thereafter, there was another lull before the White Paper was finally published and government's decision made known to the public. Worse still are the numerous committees and panels set up to look into the crises in Plateau State. Their reports are frequently ignored to gather dust. This attitude towards

³ The Responsibility to Report (R2R) project of the dRPC, Kano, sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Embassy has developed a 'Guideline for Reporting in Periods of Conflict' in conjunction with various media practitioners and government communication managers.



government appointed commissions erodes public confidence in government's commitment to peace and encourages the resort to self-help strategies by aggrieved communities. It also dents the personal credibility of the eminent persons that served on the commissions, and explains why some eminent Nigerians now decline serving in peace commissions.

Another fall-out of the non-implementation of the recommendation of commissions of inquiry is the increasing culture of impunity as the non-prosecution of indicted persons and institutions undermine the moral credibility of government. In Nasarawa State, for example, a principal character in the Ombatse conflicts refused to turn up at the commission of inquiry set up by the state government, despite four invitations for him to come and testify and special arrangements made to meet his pre-conditions.

When peaceful means to conflict resolution fail, the resort to military force becomes inevitable. As already noted, the lack of an effective early warning capability and the deleterious functioning of peace commissions and panels have made the resort to force a frequent occurrence in northern Nigeria. Yet, as Sanda (2013) notes, 'the military on Internal Security (IS) duties is to civil society what an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is to a critically ill person. A patient cannot remain for years in a hospital ICU, because he/she would be effectively dead.' More often than not, the resort to force is also tailored to achieve the short term objective of restoring order, rather than addressing deep-seated causes of conflict. Because causes are hardly addressed, combatants separate only to fight another day, thereby intensifying the climate of insecurity and prompting both retaliatory attacks and pre-emptive attacks aimed at eliminating potential threats.

Even when the deployment of force becomes inevitable, it can be better done. Sanda (2013) narrates the difficult deployment of a Task Force (TF) code-named Op Flush Out II Operating in Borno State. She states that the TF was not properly organised and this was brought to the fore on 26 July 2009, when the ill-prepared force was confronted by highly motivated Boko Haram insurgents who 'were able to overrun the TF location in Damsak with relative ease.' She added that by 'the time the TF re-organized itself and launched an offensive against the sect, it was unsuccessful as the troops strength was few compared to the sect number estimated to be around 3000.' The TF was made up of 215 Nigerian Army troops, 25 Nigeria Air Force personnel, and 240 members of the Nigeria Police Force. 'Thus, the number was inadequate to make any meaningful in roads to the sect's stronghold.' In general, weak synergy between different arms of the security agencies, growing mutual distrust and low cooperation between security agents and the local populations, and the widespread allegations of human rights abuses by the security forces have combined to undermine the efficacy of force as a response to conflict in many parts of northern Nigeria. The only instances when the use of force seems to produce the desired result are when collaboration with the civil population is secured, as in Operation Rainbow in Plateau and the rise of the CJTF in Borno.

Other responses to violent conflict in northern Nigeria have had mixed results. Policies of 'political inclusion' in states like Plateau and Kano have reached only a tiny elite, and have not been supported by a more comprehensive policy of 'social inclusion' for the general population of marginalized groups. However, by recognizing the settler communities as legitimate members of the community, and giving them some pathways into patronage networks, such narrowly based policies do serve some integrative peace-building purpose. Similarly, while attention to the needs of vulnerable groups like the *almajirai* is very



welcomed, the effectiveness of such social programmes is difficult to ascertain. Similarly, the ban on the use of *Okada* and the distribution of *Keke NAPEP* may not have had a significant impact on the level of violence in places like Maiduguri and Damaturu, but they are said to have had the unintended consequence of lowering road traffic accident cases in these cities. In large cities like Kano, the positive impact of the *Okada* ban on environmental quality and traffic flow is offset by higher levels of unemployment amongst an already marginalized demographic group. And while Monguno (2013) declares Borno's youth empowerment programme, especially its 'Environmental Vanguard' as 'a great success', he also notes that the same cannot be said of Yobe's 6,000 diploma holders who are given employment but 'do not turn out for work but are regularly paid.'

Finally (Egwu 2013) notes that donor support for 'peace-building' in states torn by domestic conflicts has created a huge 'conflict industry' across the world involving 400 'national' or international non-profit organizations, and that Nigeria accounts for a fair share of this 'conflict industry'. This increasing reliance on non-state actors to carry out one of the core functions of a state poses its own unique challenge to the long-term sustainability of peace efforts in fragile environments like northern Nigeria.

Conclusion

A number of lessons can be learned from the experiences of violent conflict in northern Nigeria since 1999. The recurring nature of these conflicts suggests that it is imperative to develop early warning and early response mechanisms at the different levels of governance – LGA, state, and federal. Efforts in this direction will limit the heavy losses in lives and property that have characterized many northern societies since 1999. It should be noted, however, that an early warning system is not necessarily a panacea, given the entrenched nature of the causes of many of the conflicts. To address the root causes of many of the conflicts, conflict mitigation must become an important element in the process of constitutional and institutional reforms in the country. For example, after repeated cycles of inter-communal conflicts in southern Kaduna State, the creation of chieftaincies in the area in the 1990s seemed to have dampened the level conflict. The National Dialogue scheduled for the early part of 2014 is an opportunity to push similar constitutional and institutional measures across the country. The ad hoc measures of political inclusion we have seen in some states can be strengthened through a constitutional review of indigeneship such that long-term residents from other parts of the country can be more systematically integrated into their host communities.⁴

When violent conflicts do erupt, they can be better managed. The deployment of force might become an urgent necessity. What type of force is deployed and with what level of logistical support need to be better thought through. The collaboration and coordination between such forces and local and state bodies cannot be taken for granted, and must be given the attention it deserves, since such collaboration has been shown to be vital to the success of the forces. The constitutional and institutional factors fuelling the competition between federal and state authorities over the control of the security forces need to be re-examined. The human rights culture of the military need improving upon, and their rules of engagement in internal security duties need to be clearly articulated. Further training in these regards will be necessary within the military. In the context of the current JAS security challenge, the

⁴ See: Nigeria Research Network, 2013, 'Indigeneship, Belonging, & Religious Freedom in Nigeria: Citizens' Views from the Street', Policy Brief No. 5



payment of some compensation to victims of violence, no matter how limited, will go a long way in assuaging their sense of victimization and alienation.

Commissions of inquiry and eminent persons' panels have often been used as fact finding mechanisms. These are useful in giving aggrieved communities opportunities for airing their complaints. They also avail the governments of the views of experienced and possibly, impartial members of the community. But as we have seen, the reports of these commissions are frequently ignored. It would be necessary to strengthen such commissions by giving them greater access to intelligence and research data. Governments setting up such commissions must also recognize that they will be required to demonstrate sufficient political will to give effect to some of the findings of the commissions. Raising the hopes of aggrieved communities through the setting up of these commissions, and then dashing such hopes through inaction is likely to worsen an already fragile situation.

Finally, building peace in northern Nigeria must be seen as a partnership between the various governments and their agencies, on the one hand, and an array of domestic and international actors, on the other. The frequent tendency to over-politicize the management of conflict situations needs to be addressed. Instead, civil society organizations, the media, and the development partners should be seen as important partners in a search for peace which transcends the forceful suppression of communal violence.



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