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Humanitarian Response to Electoral Violence in Nigeria – Focus On 2011 General Election

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Abstract: The 2011 election is infamously hailed as the most brutal and violent election in Nigeria's history. Scores were killed; more were displaced from their places of residence, and; most were deprived of the basic necessities of subsistence. The way and manner that the government handled or tackled the humanitarian issue of the 2011 electoral violence have not been adequately understood. Consequently, underpinned by the social inclusion and stakeholders' theories, this paper sets out to ascertain the humanitarian role the government has played in addressing those affected by the electoral violence of 2011. The study thus interrogates the major stakeholder in the management of the largest internal displacement camp in Nigeria as a result of the 2011 elections. Hence, the study relies on a limited extent on primary sources of data and heavily on secondary sources of data for analysis. This study reveals that the measures being utilized by the Nigerian government in handling the humanitarian needs of the affected population, most especially internally displaced persons as a result of the aftermath of the 2011 election violence has been on an ad-hoc basis with no solid or structured modus operandi. As an illustration, some lessons learnt by the Kenyan government in addressing some of the humanitarian needs of the affected population were made reference to. In essence, this paper advocates that the government of Nigeria ensure strict, decisive and clear-cut policies on IDPs management in order to avoid ambiguity in boundaries and in the roles of agencies managing internally displaced persons.

Keywords: Electoral Violence, Internally Displaced Persons, Humanitarian Assistance, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Since 1960, there has been no election held in Nigeria without fatal casualties. This has been the political scenario in the country where only the bold, wicked and violent can freely take part in active party politics [37]. In other words, the general elections of 1964-1965, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 have had varying levels of violence. Nevertheless, of these elections, 1965, 1983 and 2011 elections were marked by worrying levels of electoral violence. First, the official number of deaths in the 1965 elections was 153, 64 of them in direct confrontation with the police, but the unofficial number speculated that more than 2,000 people were killed with a much higher number of injuries [1].

Furthermore, the violence that erupted during the 1983 general elections had similar magnitude with that of 1965 [2]. The widespread protests that followed the announcement of the victor turned violent and the state became a war front. There were dread and trepidation as people and houses were targeted for death and destruction [3]. Markedly, the 2011 elections' widely acclaimed success was assailed with a one of kind violence that even surpassed those of 1983 and 1965 following the declaration presidential results. Indeed, the 2011 election is said by many to have the bloodiest incident of electoral violence in the narrative of the nation Nigeria as it claimed over 800 lives in just three days in Northern Nigeria [4][5][6]. The election violence was most prevalent in Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Adamawa states out of the categorically affected 14 northern states. A vague number of National Youth Service Corps (a mandatory one-year scheme where Nigerian graduates embark upon to participate in serving the nation) members among several other people were killed. Businesses, religious buildings and private houses were set on fire, plundered or ruined (HRW, 2011). However, Kaduna State bore the brunt of the destruction and casualties that were recorded. During the 2011 election carnage, scores of people were forced from their places of residence and business, thus precipitating serious internal displacement in Nigeria. The Human Rights Watch (2011) put it that those who fled were more than 65,000, a common aftermath of the recurring sectarian violence in the country. In order to avoid the consequences of this particular violence, scores of people were thus forced or obliged to flee. The bulk of those who should be provided with humanitarian assistance found their ways into the homes of friends and families. However, the less 'fortunate' ones took shelter in shanties and makeshift locations. In all, the absence of an operational monitoring framework which makes it herculean to get accurate figures of the displaced is quite worrisome.

In the event of such an emergency, the host communities of the displaced are indeed the first humanitarian responders. These "host" communities could come in the form of total strangers or known entities and personalities. The "known entities" could be relatives, friends, public places (such as security installations), spiritual or traditional figures. Moreover, the place of faith-based and ethnic groups, as well as some civil society organizations (more especially indigenous ones), cannot be overemphasized as they indeed play vital roles in addressing some of the humanitarian concerns of the displaced. Thus, these ad hoc entities are good *Samaritans.* Correspondingly, the Nigerian government has a primary duty to assist and protect all populations affected by an emergency within its boundaries, including coordinating and leading all humanitarian endeavours. The aforementioned is stated in a number of international treaties, notably the UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991). Correspondingly, Nigeria, which is deemed a trailblazer in the international community when it comes to ratifying international treaties, had ratified a number of treaties in a bid to address humanitarian and human rights issues of displaced populations some of which include the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Moreover, the Federal Government of Nigeria has drafted a National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and also ratified the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons [7].

Uniquely, there is a myriad of government agencies established to address this humanitarian issue. They include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Services, the National Emergency Management Agency, the National Human Rights Commission, the State Emergency Management Agencies, the Local Government Management Agencies, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced, and other government agencies and the military that are brought in when the situations call for. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the 2011 election violence and to interrogate the kind of assistance that those affected by violence received. To put it differently, this article is an attempt to x-ray the humanitarian assistance being directed towards situations of electoral violence in Nigeria specifically in 2011, being the most brutal electoral year in the history of the country considering explicitly, the kind of aid provided by the most powerful and most influential stakeholder, i.e. the government. In addition, this study concludes by proffering some recommendations for improving on some of the challenges facing Nigeria's humanitarian management system.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The prime objective of this article is to provide the academic society with a comprehensive data with the hope that it would give an idea on the trend and pattern of humanitarian assistance provided for internally displaced persons in Nigeria as a result of electoral violence and thus give an inkling on what to expect during Nigeria's forthcoming (2019) general elections in the event that violence breaks out again.

The specific objectives of the study are:
1. To investigate the 2011 election violence in Nigeria.
2. To identify vulnerability and humanitarian issues of the 2011 electoral violence in Nigeria
3. To assess the role of the Nigerian government in the coordination of humanitarian activities, in the light of the 2011 electoral violence
4. To identify how Kenya handled subsequent case of election violence after its most violent election year.

1.2 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is a national study of the form of humanitarian responses accorded to the management of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a result of the 2011 general election crisis. Geographically and temporally, however, the research is restricted to the humanitarian assistance directed to the worst-hit state in Nigeria 2011, Kaduna State. The one major challenge militated against this study was the inability to collect enough primary data from relevant authorities. Some government offices contacted claimed not to have sufficient data on the issue. Another reason given was that the issue being understudied happened far back as 2011 and as such, some relevant documents could not just be found by them. Nonetheless, to overcome this challenge, some officials were interviewed and moreover, various secondary data were used to augment.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In essence, this work will be a crucial x-ray of the humanitarian assistance provided during the 2011 electoral-violence in Nigeria with a view to exposing loopholes and making viable proposals. Thus, the primary significance of this long essay is to provide recommendations and derive lessons learned that can contribute to the formulation and implementation of future national emergency assistance measures. Moreover, it is envisaged that the information contained in this article will stimulate debate and advocacy for improved transparency and accountability leading to an improved national response to internal displacement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Humanitarian Emergencies

In 2015, Puri et al. put the humanitarian crisis as an event characterized by an exceptional and generalized threat to human life, health or subsistence [8]. These events occur within the frame of lack of protection, finding bearing in a series of pre-existing unpalatable conditions which when exacerbated by conflict surely has disparaging effects. Markedly, various definitions of humanitarian emergencies reveal three strong and common elements in them. An assessment of several other publications pertaining to humanitarian emergencies gives credence to this assertion. Notably, the said elements are: the exceptionality of the event, the predisposing or underlying circumstances and the third element being the need for an intervention in the face of an extensive (widespread) concern with threats to health and subsistence. Several authorities put the said exceptional event as a hazard or trigger event. Whereas, the predisposing circumstances is dubbed the vulnerability of the affected populations. Correspondingly, the third is humanitarian response or action.

2.2 Exceptionality of Electoral Violence

This particular section would attempt to address what exactly makes electoral violence to be different from other violence vis-à-vis the uniqueness of this form of conflict. This is typified in its causes and consequences. In the first place, Hoglund (2009), posits that the motive and timing is what basically set electoral violence apart from other violence that comes in the form of insurgency, terrorism or armed conflict in general [9]. Though electoral violence may take place in states that are already witnessing other forms of skirmish, it is the reason and timing that make it an analytically different phenomenon. Chiefly, influencing electoral process is the general reason behind electoral violence. This stance is in tandem with many conceptual works of literature on electoral violence, which places focus on the underlining goal-oriented nature of this violence [10]. Comparatively, there are four other definite reasons for actors of electoral violence to engage in it. This said violence could be simply used as a form of opposition to elections of any sorts. Secondly, it could be a way of violently opposing only specific electoral contests, but democracy in its entirety [11]. Also, actors might resort to violence as a way to influence the results in their favour [36]. Lastly, violence may be employed in the aftermath of elections in order to overturn or defend the said results [9].

Moreover, in order to draw paint a clear distinction between electoral violence and armed conflict, Fjelde & Hoglund (2015) argue that electoral violence is "employed alongside other constitutional and non-constitutional strategies for retaining power", whereas the event of an armed conflict "represents an exit strategy from the domain of regular political competition" [12]. This distinction has however failed to capture the first, second and fourth forms of the aforementioned motives for electoral violence as they represent 'exit strategies' from the status quo of regular political competition. Thus, in a bid to conceptually separate electoral violence from other forms of political violence, Dunaiski (2015) suggests that a second facet could be introduced. This dimension is the timing of the violence [11]. With regard to timing, electoral violence takes place during the electoral process (while it is impossible to draw clear temporal boundaries around the concept of 'electoral process', it has been suggested that this process typically begins with events such as voter and party registrations or campaign initiations and that it usually ends with the inauguration of the newly elected officials [9] and generally falls into one of the following three periods: the pre-election period, the election day(s), or the post-election period.

2.3 Vulnerability of Affected Population

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are a particularly special category who most times forms the bulk of the affected population. However, it should be borne in mind that this classification of internally displaced persons is not intended to encourage their preferential treatment in order to exclude other vulnerable groups, but rather to address the quality of humanitarian response they receive. Forced to leave their homes, internally displaced persons suffer some forms of deprivation and often face heightened protection risks. These risks may include armed attacks and abuse during flight; separation from family, increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, especially of women and children; arbitrary deprivation of land, houses and other property; and moving into inhospitable environments, where they suffer from stigma, marginalization, discrimination or harassment [13]. Consequently, of all the numerous theories that could have been adopted to address the issue of the vulnerability of the affected population (and IDPs in particular), the 'Social Inclusion' stands out. This is so because it has the tenacity of attributing an obligatory role to the government in curbing the impacts of electoral violence hazards.

The theory of Social Inclusion addresses groups of people who need help to cope with their prevailing situation. The publication of René Lenoir brought this concept to the limelight (*Les exclus: One Francais Sur Dix, 1974).* This theory postulates that the primary needs of all and sundry are valued and provided in a socially inclusive society [14]. In the late 1980s, this idea was embraced by the European Union as a key concept of social policy, gradually replacing the concept of poverty.
However, beyond addressing solely poverty which is a major source of the vulnerability of the affected population, this theory draws attention to how the complex needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups are met (or not). Thus, this theory should emerge in response to the crisis of humanitarian welfare in Nigeria, which has an increasing impact on the analysis of the affected population of electoral violence. It attempts to take account of vulnerable people unable to adjust to mainstream society [15]. In essence,

the Social Inclusion theory ensures the greater involvement of the affected population in making decisions that affect their lives and access to their fundamental rights. This theory is thus apt as it supports the integration of the electoral violence-affected population, especially the internally displaced persons into the larger society [7].

2.4 Humanitarian Response

It was realized that emphasis has been overly placed on the humanitarian imperative of aid. Correspondingly, Cohen and Deng voiced out their authority by stating that the inclination in the humanitarian circle is to devote attention to providing relief but paying little or no consideration to protection needs. They opined that although the response to violence is indeed a humanitarian issue, there is equally a pertinent need that it should also be treated as a human rights concern. Uniquely, it is therefore important that assistance be closely linked to protection if one is to avoid the contradiction of the "well-fed dead" [17]. For this purpose, the theoretical underpinning of the Stakeholder Theory would be utilized. This theory which was first developed by Freeman in 1984 puts emphasis on certain entities in the management of an organization [36]. Thus, in a bid to explore the issue of humanitarian management during the electoral violence of 2011 in Nigeria, the stakeholder approach would be summoned. This is because it addresses the interests of all the major stakeholders of an organization. However, in this case, the organization in question is the whole humanitarian organizational structure of the Nigerian state.

Without stakeholders, the very being of an organization may be threatened. Moreover, stakeholders are essentially a group of individuals whose actions are either violated or respected by legal measures [18]. The affected population and the Nigerian government are consequently the major stakeholders among others identified from the aforementioned assertion. In consonance with Kouwenhoven (2009), there is always a salient necessity to know the expectations of stakeholders in order to come up with corresponding policies [19]. Stakeholders here being the affected population, are thus entitled to lay a claim on the humanitarian sector and consequently have a right to make demands from the management of the organization, which is primarily the government. Taking bearing from this standpoint, the affected population indeed have a right to enjoy dividends of proper humanitarian action most especially protection. Summarily, this theory hinges on the fact that the affected population has a stake in the management of all humanitarian action poised to them and such, the other principal stakeholder, that is, the government has a pivotal obligation to cater for humanitarian and human right needs, within the framework of acceptable international laws and norms.

3.0   Methodology

This study is qualitative and evaluative as data were gotten from primary and secondary sources. Key in-depth interviews with few government officials and non-governmental organizations representatives were relied upon. Nigeria constituted the study area and Kaduna State was particularly selected for the study. The study population was made up of the affected population (chiefly, the Internally Displaced Persons) and governmental management agencies. The study relied on a large literature review. Data were also drawn from online journals, books, newspapers, workshop papers as well as publications of non-governmental organizations. Moreover, triangulation of the information collected was ensured, as far as possible, so as to make sure the data and findings are reliable.

4.0   Discussion of Findings

1. What led to the 2011 electoral violence in Nigeria?

To give an explanation of why the violence occurred during the elections of 2011, this section will take a bearing from three important analytical perspectives:

a. Grievance Perspective

Most theories related to this perspective emphasize on how an individual's and a group's frustration could incite violence. Markedly, the frustration-aggression theory puts it that when individuals feel they are restrained from attaining valued objectives, the result is frustration which could spawn into violence protests [20]. Politicians who failed to clinch victory could have incited violence at any group/persons perceived to have contributed to their woes. Orji & Uzodi (2012) reiterated that the deprivation of electoral victory bred frustration which begot grievance which ultimately cumulated into violent behavior [21]. The supposed flaws in electoral administration or doubtful electoral processes added fuel to the flame. In essence, an allegation of electoral malfeasances by some parties spurred violent reactions in the country, especially in Kaduna State [22].

b. Opportunity Structure Perspective

This opines that no matter how disgruntled or frustrated people are with the results of an election, they cannot engage in a violent political action unless they organize and have access to some resources [23]. Elite's manipulation to incite violence came to brood here, as they were able to manipulate the frustrations of individuals to violent mass protests in 2011. The aforementioned resources or opportunities were in the form of presence of willing protesters, weak state capacity to provide security and law enforcement, use of inflammatory rhetoric, and the existence of simmering communal tensions [24][21].

c. Structural Perspective

Beyond the presence of grievance and opportunity perspectives, this perspective considers how societal structures could really influence disposition towards violent [25]. Thus, the political importance of ethnicity really played a pivotal role in inciting violence especially in Kaduna and Northern Nigeria as a whole, as many of the violent actors reacted to the clinching of the presidency by a non-northerner. Many believed that the President elected then should have conceded his presidential bid to a Northerner in honour of the unwritten rotation of power between the North and South. And as such, when a non-northerner emerged, irate youths reacted violently [26].

2. What were the vulnerability and humanitarian issues of the 2011 electoral violence in Nigeria?

The 2011 electoral violence claimed 800 lives over three days in northern Nigeria [4] and more than 1,000 people were killed in all [27]. However, Kaduna State recorded the highest number of deaths and destruction. Furthermore, as regards sexual violence, Bastick *et al.,* put it that is typically part and parcel of violent conflicts around the world (2007) [38]. Thus, during the electoral violence of 2011, some cases of sexual abuse were reported. In one instance, some irate youth raped and molested some unspecified female corps members in Gadau, Bauchi State [28]. Also, though it was reported that a female hostel was invaded at a Federal tertiary institution in Kano there was no mention of any sexual assault [29]. Although this may be true, the truth of the matter remains that the perpetrated sexual violence may have actually been under-reported. The difficulty of identifying violators, the attitude of security agencies towards victims, the culture of silence around sexual abuse and the insufficient reporting mechanism are some of the reasons given for this poor reportage [30]. Additionally, asides the challenges of insufficient IDP camps [31], many of the camps available lacked basic sanitation and health facilities and as such, inhabitants were left to contend with communicable diseases among other major health challenges. The camps situation was so dire that it was said that some IDPs had to find alternative places of abode. Some had to even squat at brothels [29]. Also, shortage and food and other basic necessities like water aggravated the situation. This was exacerbated by the curfew imposed by the state government which made the prices of food items soar. It was so dismal in Tudun Wada area of Kaduna that many of the residents were hungry for many as they could not afford the food items that had as high as 100 per cent price increase in food items [32]. In essence, the human suffering that precipitated from the 2011 election violence really defined the severity and intensity of this violence [21].

3. What roles did the government play in coordinating humanitarian assistance towards the 2011 electoral violence?

Out of the scores of IDPs camp, it was reported during some of the interviews that only three, namely, Mando Hajj, Kafanchan and Ladduga Camps received some forms of relief materials from the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and Federal (National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA). This report said lasted for only 30 days. In other words, the not-so-popular IDP camps were left to carter for themselves as they did not receive any relief from either the State or Federal Governments, since their displacement in mid-April, 2011 [33]. It was also on record that at the take-off, Kaduna State Government set up a Clinic at the Mando Hajj camp with doctor, nurses and drugs but at a later stage withdrew them. From that point, the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria, (FOMWAN), a faith-based umbrella organization that links Islamic women's group in Nigeria stepped in and continued to provide free medical services to the IDPs [26]. Also, the National Eye Centre (Kaduna) and the Psychiatric Hospital (Kaduna) also rendered medical services at the Camp.

Furthermore, after the initial relief consignment provided by the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) got exhausted in May 2011. It was said that the state government of Kaduna offered Fifteen Thousand Naira (15,000.00) to cater for the housing needs of the displaced families. However, this was purported rejected by many communities. Moreover, Alhaji Sa'idu Adamu (Kaduna State Commissioner of Information in 2011), was quoted in a national daily on August 19, 2011, that the 200 displaced persons in the Mando Hajj Camp would be relocated by the government to the Rehabilitation Centre, Kakuri-Kaduna. This statistic, however, contradicts the data released by the camp management that there were 2,987 IDPs at Mando Hajj Camp as at Tuesday, August 16, 2011. This disparity in numbers portrays one of the grim realities of IDP management in Nigeria [26]. Nonetheless, local governments actually have the prime responsibility of ensuring an appropriate response to IDPs' needs, as such; the Kaduna State Emergency Management Agency was only expected to step in when local authorities are unable to cope. However, from the interviews, it is saddening to note that the capacity of the local governments is weak for them to even have any defining impact in addressing the Kaduna humanitarian. Similarly, the assistance gotten from the federal government via National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), which was subject to presidential approval, should have only come when the required response is beyond the capacity of both local and state authorities. In essence, this insufficient humanitarian response is not surprising in the face of unclear policy, legal framework or incomprehensive approach. Thus, efforts by the governments in tackling the accompanying crisis of this internal displacement, alleviating its effects and reducing its duration were inadequate. In such a strong way, it was gathered from government respondents that the response to those affected by the aftermath of the 2011 electoral violence varied from state to state and had been ad-hoc and uncoordinated, causing many shortfalls. Even in the presence of support, the trend had been to focus on the provision of assistance to the neglect of protection needs. The fact that the National Human Rights Commission which has the responsibility of seeing to the protection of IDPs' rights could not avail itself with visiting the largest IDP Camp (throughout the camp's existence) corroborates the aforementioned assertion.

4. Comparing Notes: Lessons from Kenya

In what one could say was the most violent political crisis in Kenyan post-colonial history, the 2007 election violence recorded over 1,000 dead and 600,000 displaced [33]. Correspondingly, Kenya's experience with election violence primed its humanitarian community for any impending risks of the 2013 elections. Of course, a key lesson learnt from the response to the 2007 election violence from the perspective of humanitarian preparedness was the absence of a clear policy and institutional structure for the preliminary coordination of assistance [34]. Consequently, the collective memory of the 2007 crisis, coupled with concerns that many of the underlying tensions that sparked the violence was still not resolved, prompted efforts to put up a robust 'National Plan' in order (to mitigate violence and) to

tackle any humanitarian issues in the lead-up to the 2013 election. Part of the plan involved pre-election monitoring which identified potential hotspots. This plan involved Kenyan government ministries, United Nations agencies working in Kenya, NGOs and civil societies, among others. Specifically, the Contingency Plan involved Humanitarian Planning Efforts among other sub plans, namely Early Warning and Prevention Planning Efforts; Security and Safety Planning Efforts; Humanitarian Planning Efforts; and Mass Casualty Efforts [35]. The plan revolved around eight decentralized humanitarian hubs, each led by various agencies and organizations (including faith-based organizations) and was used 6 years after Kenya's most violent election [35]. Therefore, it came as no surprise in 2013 that no sooner as electoral violence broke out than it was reported that the humanitarian community in Kenya began to activate contingency plans. Suffice to say that Kenya's so-called National Plan is not unencumbered with myriads of shortcomings. However, one can categorically posit that the Kenyan government has a plan on ground. This is a country that is progressively learning from errors of its past humanitarian efforts, so much so that in six years it was able to create a robust though not perfect plan to address forthcoming humanitarian challenges. Consequently, it is hoped that the Nigeria government could take a cue from this and categorically put a solid and better framework in place to tackle future humanitarian challenges that come with electoral violence.

5.0   Conclusion and Recommendation

Africa is by no means the only continent where electoral violence erupts on a regular basis. Moreover, Nigeria is not the only country on the continent bedeviled by electoral violence. However, Nigeria's peculiarity as the largest black nation makes one wonder how she has attempted to address the issue of humanitarian crises. Given its enormous human and capital resources, one should not be too quick to boast of the efficacy of its humanitarian imperative, especially in the face of electoral violence. Thus, this research was basically an attempt to x-ray the nature of assistance and protection offered to affected Nigerian citizens and dwellers, particularly in the nation's most violent electoral year. As a way of establishing the background for the humanitarian dimension directed towards Nigeria's 2011 general election violence, there are crucial lessons to be learned actually. First, it can be posited that the narrative of electoral violence in Nigeria is such that is deeply rooted in its historical, political and socio-economic configurations, and the violence was prompted by-election results and electoral discrepancies. Moreover, the response elicited after electoral violence by the government is tardy and insufficient as a result of competing interests of ruling elites and bureaucracy.

Furthermore, faith-based groups have been playing a prominent role in providing immediate relief and assistance in the event of electoral violence. This supposed assistance usually done along religious lines may actually aggravate tension and worsen the violent situation. Generally speaking, all assistance directed to the plights of IDPs tends to be short-lived and does not sufficiently address the long-term reconstruction of lives and livelihoods of IDPs [31]. Thus, any occurrence of violence in the forthcoming general elections, just as in the 2011 elections, will only be met by a humanitarian support that has a weak legal, national policy and institutional framework. This is why most organizations working on IDPs issues in Nigeria engage the issue on an ad hoc basis. The response, both national and international to tackling internal displacement in Nigeria has generally been inadequate. Consequently, the aftermath of electoral violence remains a major concern for Nigeria and will remain so until much is done to address the problem. Although there is existing literature of election violence on Nigeria, little research has been done on the humanitarian aspect of this issue, particularly as it has been a trigger for other major areas of concerns such as human displacements of which is critical on the agenda on humanitarian agencies. Thus, there is a need for more rigorous and detailed research on this topic.

To address some of the challenges facing humanitarian response and also to adequately attend to the needs of those affected by electoral violence in Nigeria, this study recommends that:
1. The federal government should clarify which of its agencies would be responsible for Internally Displaced Persons between the National Emergency Management Agency and the National Commission for Refugees. The government on their part should ensure that these agencies have decisive, clear-cut and strict policies on IDPs management so as to avoid obscurity in roles and boundaries.

2. The Nigerian Government should domesticate the Kampala Protocol of the African Union on Internally Displaced Persons. Moreover, the enactment of local law to compel IDPs management agencies to strictly adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement would also go a long way.

3. There should be provision for effective judicial redress and assistance to victims. Effective judicial redress is crucial in a bid to right past wrongs and to reduce the propensity for violence. Assistance to victims, in the long run, is a critical element of conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies. In essence, the governments need to live up to their international and constitutional obligations in ensuring protection and assistance for IDPs in a timely and coherent manner.

4. In a highly religious and ethnocentric society as ours, spiritual leaders and traditional authorities probably have more potential than any other actor to reduce electoral violence and to provide humanitarian assistance, and it is thus recommended that the governments and development partners should encourage and support them.

5. Relevant government agencies, either humanitarian or security agencies should adequately kick-start contingency planning process in light of the 2019 General Elections. These agencies could make informed decisions through the various publication of Election Security Threat Assessments reports, notably that of CLEEN Foundation [38].

6. In the 2019 and future elections, concerted efforts have to be made by media houses as a way to defusing rather than fueling tensions. This could be done by them staying clear of defamatory or inflammatory rhetoric of politicians.

7. There should be an inclusion of humanitarian action at the local government level. By this, the government should establish offices for internally displaced persons at the local government level with representatives of internally displaced persons occupying positions in these offices.

8. It is suggested that all recommendations in all the White Papers (Federal and State) pertaining to previous electoral violence be fully implemented.

9. The deployment and coordination arrangements among security agencies should be properly reviewed by the federal government to ensure that security agents are promptly deployed in the event of a violent outbreak.

10. Last but definitely not the least, the root causes of insecurity and consequently internal displacement should be addressed by relevant entities (most especially the federal and state government). Promoting good governance and providing jobs are good ways to address this.

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