



Strangers in their Homeland

Policy Recommendations

1. Root causes of internal conflicts which trigger internal displacement should be addressed especially reducing youth involvement due to unemployment.
2. Transparency and accountability should be ensured in the management of relief programmes through deployment of adequate safeguards and use of technology in curbing corrupt practices.
3. Security provision in IDPs camps should be a top priority, with enumeration, documentation and monitoring of activities installed, as a way of preventing infiltration of such camps by criminal elements.

Nextier SPD Policy Weekly provides an analysis of topical conflict, security, and development issues and proposes recommendations to address them. It is a publication of Nextier SPD.

For further discussion of pragmatic implementation of the recommendations, please contact

The level, scale and frequency of internal displacement in Nigeria have surged since 2010 on account of both human and natural disasters. Boko Haram insurgents have [killed about 100,000 persons by February 2017](#) and forced [over 1.8 million persons to flee their homes especially in the North-East](#). Between September 2017 and June 2018, deteriorating relations between nomadic herders and farming communities left about [1,500 persons dead and 300,000 displaced in Benue, Plateau, Taraba and Adamawa](#) states. There are rising incidents of violent banditry especially in rural communities in Northwest-Nigeria. In July 2018, attacks from [bandits on communities in Zamfara State](#) led to the forced migration of over 20,000 from their homes. In fact, Zamfara is taking on the moniker as [Nigeria's Wild Northwest](#). According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), since the end of August 2018, large-scale flooding has impacted 826,403 people, with [199 persons](#) dead and 286,119 homeless.

According to the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#), Nigeria is number eight on the list of countries with the highest number of displaced persons by the end of 2017; even worse than Afghanistan that has been in conflict for over four decades.

Most of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been in makeshift camps established by government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Ironically, humanitarian responses have not only been inadequate and ineffective but have also, in some cases, resulted in worsening the predicament of the displaced. On account of these developments, this edition of Nextier SPD Weekly analyses the phenomenon of internal displacement and provides recommendations to reverse the trend.

Government and non-governmental

humanitarian efforts have led to the evacuation of people in communities under threat and to the set up of temporary camps for those displaced by violence and natural disasters. For example, in 2016, [Borno State alone had 27 camps for those displaced by Boko Haram insurgency](#). While many of the IDPs have been kept in public buildings such as schools, a few of them were given a large plot of land to erect their tents as was the case in [Karimajiji and New Kuchigoro IDP camps in Abuja](#). The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and its state counterpart (State Emergency Management Agency, SEMA) are responsible for providing care to the IDPs, while the security and paramilitary agencies ensure security at the camps. Despite these interventions, there have been reported cases of starvation, [cholera epidemics](#), overcrowding, rape, drug peddling, human trafficking, and incessant deaths in IDPs' camps. There are cases of [camp officials demanding sex before giving food items to helpless refugees](#). There are numerous allegations of theft or mismanagement of humanitarian items such as food, drugs and beddings meant for the IDPs. For instance, a supervisory councillor of Mafa Local Government Area in Borno State was [arrested for diverting 300 bags of rice meant for IDPs](#). Currently, [the Director General of NEMA is under probe for over N3 billion contract scandals](#). There have also been a number of security breaches at IDPs' camps including the infiltration of suicide bombers. Worse still, there was the mistaken [bombing of an IDP camp in Rann](#) (Borno State) in 2017 by a Nigeria Air Force jet which killed over 100 persons. The appalling state of [Nigeria's humanitarian intervention has led to widespread condemnations](#) and forced many people out of the camps.

The government has been unable to ensure effective management of internal displacement and utilisation of



humanitarian interventions. A number of critical actions required to bring relief to the IDPs are discussed below.

1. There is need to address the root causes of internal displacement including the direct and remote triggers of terrorism, insurgencies, farmer-herder conflicts, rural banditry, etc. One way the government and its development partners and stakeholders can address this challenge is to ensure the youth are constructively engaged. Conflict entrepreneurs have found ways to engage this 'army of destabilization' by leveraging their grievances. There is need for visible commitment from the government and partners to investigate, peacefully interrogate, and resolve the fundamental challenges before they escalate into violent conflicts.
2. There is need for a commitment to improved protocols for ensuring transparency and accountability in the purchase and distribution of relief items. Technology can be leverage to plug the leakages and ensure that materials meant as relief for those who are suffering are not diverted or privatised by those who are meant to administer them. The agency in charge of [emergency management in Nigeria \(NEMA\)](#) has become a theatre of scandals of misappropriation, denials and misunderstanding. The government should show its commitment to transparency by prosecuting and penalising a few corrupt officials as a way of displaying its zero tolerance for corruption.
3. Security at the designated IDP camps should be prioritised. This can be achieved by leveraging technology (and other home-grown solutions) to enumerate those in camps and for proper monitoring of their activities. Proper documentation of IDPs, especially those in camps in the North-East of the country, will help guard against infiltration of such camps by terrorists under the guise of being IDPs.
4. While there is need to ensure the well-being of the IDPs while in camp, special focus should be given to plans to return them to their homes and ensure they are provided the means to rebuild their lives. In addition to economic assistance, there is need to provide the psychological support and counselling to the IDPs from the day of their admission into such camps. These efforts should focus on re-integration into their various communities. Such therapy will help prevent the current consternation by many IDPs about integrating back into the society.
5. Government and relief agencies should provide technical and vocational skills for IDPs so that they can fend for themselves rather than waiting for handouts. Considering the subsisting security threats in much of the Northeast, realistically, many IDPs may remain in camps for some time. Provision of vocational training could be crucial so they can begin to take care of their basic needs without recourse to government or relief agencies. One way of achieving this feat is by providing land and agricultural materials to the IDPs.
6. There is need for a proper coordination of relief assistance/programmes between the Nigerian government, non-governmental organisation (local and international), and other donor agencies. The Nigerian government should lead this effort to ensure international best practices are maintained and to prevent international scandals such as the [Oxfam sex scandal](#) in Haiti.

Millions of Nigerians have become strangers in their homeland. While efforts have been made by the government and its development partners to address this challenge, there are current issues that demand immediate attention, and other issues that portend new risks in the future. Nigeria needs to renew its commitment to address the challenges faced by these internally displaced persons before those camps become fertile breeding grounds for new forms of terror.