

*Regular Research Paper*

# **Roles of government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in meeting the needs of internally displaced women in Katsina State, Nigeria (2020-2025)**

**Mubarak Mashi**

Department of Political Science and International Relations Faculty of Social Sciences, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina Nigeria.

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**Insecurity in North-Western Nigeria has resulted in the displacement of thousands of individuals, particularly in Katsina and Zamfara States. The displaced persons are predominantly women and children who are in urgent need of protection and assistance from governmental authorities, non-governmental humanitarian organisations, and philanthropic entities. This need arises from the loss of their livelihoods, limited access to education and healthcare, and insufficient food and shelter. Accordingly, this paper seeks to examine the roles of government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in addressing the challenges faced by internally displaced women in Katsina State, employing a qualitative research methodology and the Humanitarian Response Theory as its theoretical framework. The findings indicate that, despite efforts by both government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies, the plight of internally displaced women remains dire due to inadequate collaboration and partnerships, issues of corruption, the closure of all formal internally displaced persons camps within the state, and the disorganised settlement of displaced individuals. The paper concludes that the conditions of internally displaced persons can be significantly improved through robust collaboration between governmental and non-governmental entities, the establishment of formal IDP camps, and a concerted effort to combat corruption in the distribution of food and non-food supplies intended for IDPs.**

**Key words:** Governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, IDPs, humanitarian assistance.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Women are the most vulnerable group to the adverse consequences of conflict. This is evident in the North-West geopolitical zone, where banditry (as a form of conflict) has displaced women and further exposed them to circumstances and conditions that threaten their socio-economic rights as internally displaced persons. This paper requires, from the outset, a global perspective on the phenomenon. According to the United Nations

Refugee Agency (2024), globally, over 83 million people were internally displaced within their countries by the end of 2024, the majority of whom are women and children facing unique vulnerabilities due to gendered social norms, insecurity, and limited access to basic needs. Out of the 83 million displaced persons, more than 60 million women and girls face the risk of sexual violence, as well as health, security, and humanitarian crises (United

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [mubarakmashi@gmail.com](mailto:mubarakmashi@gmail.com).

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Nations Refugee Agency, 2024).

In Africa, violent conflicts in the Central African Republic, Mozambique, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso, among others, have produced hundreds of thousands of deaths, the destruction of property worth billions of dollars, and over 19.5 million internally displaced persons, the majority of whom were women and girls in 2023 (IDMC, 2024). Out of the 19.5 million IDPs in Africa, 3.6 million are in Nigeria, with women and children constituting around 1.8–2 million (IDMC, 2024; NHRC, 2025). Displacement in Nigeria is complex and multidimensional. It is mostly caused by human factors such as criminal activities perpetrated by groups like Boko Haram insurgents, armed bandits, cattle rustlers, and kidnappers, as well as tensions between pastoralists and farmers.

In Katsina State, attacks by armed bandits, kidnapping for ransom, and cattle rustling in rural areas, which began around 2009, have led to the displacement of millions of people from their homes—mostly women and children—who fled to the state capital in search of safety. The International Organisation for Migration (2018) reported that Katsina State had about 16,257 IDPs as of 2018. The Displacement Tracking Matrix (2021) also estimated the number of IDPs in the state to be around 80,115. This shows a sharp increase in the number of IDPs, from 16,257 in 2018 to 80,115 in 2021, over a period of three (3) years, driven by ongoing attacks by armed bandits. Women and children were the most affected, representing 60% of the vulnerable population, while men accounted for 40% in the state (Babatunde and Oluwaseun, 2022).

IDP women in the state face humanitarian challenges, including inadequate and unsafe shelter; hunger due to lack of access to food; limited access to justice in cases of rights violations; poor sanitation and hygiene; lack of bedding, blankets, and cooking and washing utensils; exposure to sexual violence and exploitation; the threat of diseases; and a lack of psychosocial support. These displaced women urgently need protection and assistance from the government, non-governmental humanitarian agencies, and philanthropic individuals, as they have lost their means of livelihood, farmland, and livestock, and are often forced to assume the role of household heads due to the loss or displacement of male heads of households caused by the conflict. Most of them reside in host communities, school buildings, football fields, abandoned structures, and temporary shelters, since all formal IDP camps in the state were closed down by the state government in November 2020 (UN Refugee Agency, 2021a). This closure, which contradicts their constitutional right to protection, has further worsened their security situation.

Addressing the challenges faced by these IDPs requires the concerted efforts of both the government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies, which have a

constitutional mandate to protect them. Although the government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies make efforts in this regard through the provision of humanitarian services and partnerships with international development organisations, the security condition of IDPs continues to deteriorate, suggesting that these efforts are inadequate in meeting their needs.

Therefore, it is crucial to examine the roles of the government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in the state to ascertain whether the efforts made are sufficient to meet the needs of internally displaced women in the state or otherwise.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To identify the peculiar needs of IDP women in Katsina state.
2. To examine the independent and collective roles of government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in meeting the needs of IDP women in Katsina state.
3. To examine the factors that hinder government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in meeting the needs of IDP women in the state.

### **Conceptual clarification**

#### ***Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)***

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are individuals residing in formal (government-recognised) or informal settings (within host communities), whether under IDP camp rules and regulations or not. This includes all persons displaced due to banditry, government counter-banditry operations, vigilante activities, and harsh socio-economic conditions resulting from insecurity.

#### ***International governmental aid / humanitarian agencies***

These are international multilateral or bilateral institutions that provide material and non-material support to victims of war, conflict, or natural disasters in order to save lives, protect dignity, and alleviate suffering. These include the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

#### ***Federal and state humanitarian agencies***

These are government-owned organisations, such as the

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, the North-East Development Commission, the North-West Development Commission, and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA).

### **Non-governmental aid agencies (NGOs)**

Also known as relief organisations or agencies, these are legally recognised, non-profit entities that operate independently of government to provide relief, promote and protect the interests of vulnerable populations, and deliver basic social and medical services to groups such as internally displaced persons and victims of conflict or natural disasters. These include, but are not limited to:

**Action against Hunger:** Specialises in saving the lives of undernourished children and supporting communities with safe water, food security, and sustainable livelihoods.

**Doctors without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières):** Composed mainly of medical professionals who provide emergency healthcare services to vulnerable populations during and after conflict situations.

**Islamic Relief Worldwide:** A faith-based humanitarian aid organisation established in 1984, operating in multiple countries and providing emergency relief to vulnerable populations.

**International Rescue Committee (IRC):** Provides emergency assistance to individuals displaced by conflict or natural disasters.

**International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC):** Assists victims of conflict and promotes adherence to international humanitarian laws that protect affected populations.

**Oxfam International:** Works to alleviate poverty through advocacy, public education, and humanitarian assistance.

**Refugees International:** Advocates for the protection of displaced persons and develops strategies to address humanitarian crises.

### **Theoretical framework**

This paper adopts the Humanitarian Response Theory, attributed to the works of Jean Pictet (1979) and Karen Jacobson (1999). The theory is based on the assumption that humanitarian organisations are responsible for responding to humanitarian crises and should be guided

by the principles of neutrality, humanity, state responsibility/independence, and impartiality when providing aid to those in need or affected by conflict through proper camp management. It also assumes that humanitarian crises can overwhelm a state's capacity, thereby necessitating the involvement of external humanitarian donor agencies. The theory further posits that humanitarian response should be timely and swift to prevent loss of life and alleviate the suffering of affected populations, and that priority should be given to those in dire need through effective coordination.

In applying the theory to this study, it is the responsibility of both government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies to collaborate in addressing the needs of internally displaced women within the state. Priority should be given to their urgent needs, including the provision of food, healthcare, education, psychosocial support, livelihood assistance, and shelter, in order to safeguard their lives and protect them from all forms of violence and exploitation. This commitment should be undertaken without discrimination based on religion, gender, political affiliation, or ethnicity, particularly within formal camps.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The main thrust of this paper is to undertake an empirical investigation into the roles of government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in meeting the needs of internally displaced women in Katsina State using a qualitative research design. Data for the study were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data include Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with respondents who were directly or indirectly affected by banditry, including IDPs and humanitarian workers. The secondary data were sourced from relevant documents, including reports and records from organisations, research works, newspapers, magazines, journals, and other related materials.

The study was conducted within Katsina Local Government Area, the capital city of the state. The choice of this location is informed by the fact that IDPs, as well as humanitarian aid providers, can be easily identified there, as the government has discouraged the encampment of IDPs. Secondly, the selected location is relatively peaceful and easily accessible to the researcher. Furthermore, the IDP population in this area is believed to have originated from all the affected local government areas (Safana, Batsari, Dandume, Faskari, Kankara, Sabuwa, Jibia, Dan-Musa, and Kafur), making the sample representative of the affected communities in the state. The people in the state are predominantly Hausa/Fulani, who are mostly Muslims, and their major occupations are commercial activities and subsistence farming.

The study adopts a qualitative method of data analysis. The qualitative data generated from KII and FGD were presented and analysed using descriptive and analytical approaches, while the secondary data were used to support the findings of the research.

### **Ethical considerations**

Before the commencement of the fieldwork, all participants were informed that their participation would be voluntary and that they could withdraw from the exercise at any time if they so wished.

Participants' consent was obtained, and they were assured that they were not obligated to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable with. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the data collection process. The responses of participants who were unwilling or chose not to reveal their identities were presented anonymously to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, some responses were moderated to prevent potential harm or vulnerability, given the sensitive nature of the issue, which relates to security.

## FINDINGS

Findings from the field indicate that internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the state do not reside in formal camps; rather, they live in informal camp settings within host communities, such as school buildings, football fields, abandoned structures, and makeshift shelters. These living conditions are often characterized by socio-economic risks, including sexual exploitation, overcrowding, poor service delivery, and tenure insecurity, thereby exposing them to further vulnerabilities.

Numerous efforts are being made by the government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies to provide the necessary support for IDPs. But these efforts are not adequate to meet the needs and guarantee the security of IDP women in the state. However, there is an effort underway to domesticate and implement the National Policy and State Action Plan for solutions on internal displacement in the state.

Government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in the state gave too much attention to the provision of food items, neglecting other basic needs, which are vital for womanhood and survival. There is a strained relationship between the state government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in the State, due to the closure of all formal IDP camps in the state, which has troubled the smooth operations of the NGOs to provide the needed support to the IDPs.

The study revealed a deficiency in accountability and transparency concerning the distribution of food and non-food items intended for internally displaced persons, which hinders effective management of the IDPs. The majority of non-governmental humanitarian organisations operating within the region allocate a minimal portion of their resources to the IDPs, despite mobilising funds in their name. Conversely, a significant proportion of their funds is spent on staff welfare and logistical arrangements, resulting in limited or no contribution toward improving the living conditions of the IDPs. Furthermore, there is evidence of humanitarian personnel engaging in the diversion and re-routing of food and non-food items designated for IDPs for their personal benefit.

### **Rights/needs of internally displaced women in Nigeria**

Internally displaced women in Nigeria, whether living in

formal camps, informal camps, or host communities, have basic needs which include:

1. Internally displaced women should be protected from trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage, and economic exploitation (such as forced labour and the exchange of food for sex or shelter).
2. Women IDPs should be provided with nutritious and sufficient food, safe and adequate shelter, privacy to preserve their dignity, and psychosocial support in cases of rape or psychological trauma, without discrimination.
3. There is a need for sexual and reproductive healthcare, including hygiene kits (sanitary pads and underwear), maternal care, access to contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), especially in cases of sexual violence.
4. IDP women who have lost their means of livelihood require economic empowerment to sustain their well-being, such as livelihood support programmes (such as, skill acquisition, tailoring, poultry farming, seed oil extraction, flour milling, and soap making), micro-grants, and conditional cash transfers. These measures help reduce their vulnerability to sexual exploitation and decrease dependency on humanitarian aid.

### **The roles of government humanitarian agencies in meeting the needs of IDP women in Katsina State**

Although IDPs in Katsina State are not housed in formal camps, efforts have been made by governmental and non-governmental humanitarian agencies, international donors, and philanthropic individuals to meet their needs, particularly those of women and children. A Senior Special Assistant to the state governor on victims of banditry and internally displaced persons, Alhaji Saidu Ibrahim Danja, explained that the state government has not established formal IDP camps due to the comprehensive requirements set by the United Nations, which include standard education, healthcare delivery, water and sanitation, feeding, social amenities, and the security and safety of IDPs. Nevertheless, the state government has adopted two alternative methods of accommodating IDPs:

1. Hosting by relatives: IDPs locate and stay with relatives.
2. Neighbourhood hosting: IDPs settle in communities they consider safe, after which they are documented and assisted, while the government and security agencies continue efforts to liberate their original communities for safe return (Liman, 2025).

Danja further noted that the state government has partnered with development organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Pulaku Initiative to provide needed support for IDPs,



**Figure 1.** On Wednesdays and Sundays, a bowl of rice and beans is usually the only meal available to the women. Photo Credit: Zubaida B. Ibrahim/HumAngle (June 28, 2023).

especially women. For instance, the UNDP is constructing 152 housing units in Jibia LGA in accordance with UN standards, with skills acquisition centres also under construction. Under the Pulaku Initiative, 360 housing units are planned for IDPs across Batsari, Danmusa, Dandume, and Faskari LGAs, with a minimum of 85 units per LGA (Liman, 2025).

These efforts form part of the State's Action Plan on Internally Displaced Persons, which also targets the reintegration of 270,000 IDPs, provision of 10 primary healthcare centres with solar-powered water supply, and 63 basic schools for 2,389 housing units for IDPs (Sardauna, 2025). Additionally, the state government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to improve the welfare and well-being of IDPs, particularly women and vulnerable households, providing each beneficiary with ₦69,000 for three consecutive months (Nasir, 2024).

At the federal level, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) donated relief materials to 3,600 and 3,500 IDPs in the state in 2021 (Bello, 2021). The State government, through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), has spent ₦58 million on relief materials for IDPs, with the majority of beneficiaries being women (*Business Day*, 2022).

The most notable achievement is the state government's collaboration with the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to domesticate the National Policy on International Displacement and develop a corresponding Action Plan on durable solutions. This plan provides a comprehensive five-year

roadmap to implement the policy, aiming to deliver livelihood support, education, shelter, psychosocial intervention, integration, and relocation for IDPs. This initiative is the first of its kind in the entire Northwest region, where humanitarian crises are a persistent challenge (*Katsinapost*, July 09, 2025). Furthermore, on 9th September 2025, the state government launched an EU-funded £5.1 million peace initiative to empower communities affected by banditry, particularly displaced women and vulnerable groups (Ramalan, 2025). These efforts demonstrate the commitment of both federal and state governments in collaboration with development partners.

In contrast, Dr. Abubakar Imam of the UNDP Academic Lisson Solid Project observed that IDPs from frontline local government areas—Batsari, Dandume, Danmusa, Faskari, Kankara, and Sabuwa—continue to live without access to education, healthcare, proper shelter, and food security despite government efforts, citing non-implementation and lack of political will (Sardauna, 2025). Supporting this view, Hum Angle (2023) reported that IDPs in the state face shortages of nutritious food, clean water, and other basic necessities, posing serious health risks for women and children. For example, along Babbar Ruga Road, women wait under trees for food, while their children are jostled as they try to receive a single scoop of plain rice with beans per person per day (Ibrahim, 2023) (Figure 1).

In a counter-narrative, the former governor of the state, Alh. Aminu Bello Masari, maintained that “we have enough food, clothing, shelter, and security for our IDPs,

while we continue to strengthen efforts to restore security for their return to their respective homes” (Ibrahim, 2023). Corroborating this claim, Gambo Isah (not his real name), a staff member of NEMA in the state, reported that:

In August 2020, the Federal government, through NEMA, provided aid to 3,600 IDPs in Batsari Local Government. The aid included 1000 bags of 12.5 kg rice, 1000 bags of 25 kg beans, 1000 bags of 12.5 kg maize, 50 cartons of Milo, 50 cartons of powdered Milk, 50 bags of 50kg sugar, 167 cartons of seasoning, 83 cartons of tin tomatoes, 2000 pieces of foam mattresses, 3,500 pieces of wrapper, 63 cartons of soap, and 2,500 pieces of children's clothing (G. Isah, personal communication, July 29, 2024).

In another narration, Ismail Mai Sa'ida, Katsina State coordinator on nomadic education, opined that:

Currently, the state government is training pastoralists including the IDP women and children on skill acquisition, information and communication technology (ICT), tailoring, modern methods of animal production and salon business, even though this is not enough, am advising the state government to set up a nomadic commission that will come up with better and more initiatives that will better the lives of these people.

He further revealed that:

The Federal Government, during the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, established the 'Ruga Forest Project' that benefitted 10 communities, mostly displaced, in which the following were provided: grazing reserves, schools, veterinary clinics, and water points, aimed at educating and preventing them from engaging in crimes (I. Mai Sa'ida, personal communication, June 23, 2024).

These are some of the commendable efforts made by the government. However, Dr Ahmed posits that:

Efforts made by the government are not adequate to provide the needed support to the IDPs. One major challenge is that the government do not want to admit that they have failed woefully in providing for the needs of the IDPs, the state governments don't even want to admit that there are IDPs in their state for political reasons. They are afraid that their political opponents will use the IDPs as a tool against the government because the presence of IDPs is an indication of security failure from the government, which is why the state government even called for the immediate closure of all the IDP camps in the state. We have approached the government on several occasions to give us lands that will be used for the building of houses for the IDPs, but to no avail. Sadly, if you see what the government is giving to the IDPs is

ridiculous (A. Filin Samji, personal communication, June 23, 2024).

Probing the above claims, Umar Yandaki observed that:

The government is not interested in providing formal camps to support IDPs because of the financial implications of providing the needed support to the IDPs, such as food and shelter, which has worsened the security challenges of most IDPs in the states. At times, non-governmental humanitarian agencies approached the state's government on how to provide support to IDPs, and the government's reply was always 'We do not have IDPs in our state'; the government don't want to even admit that there is insecurity in their state. This also makes it difficult for NGOs to locate and provide the needed support to IDPs as they are not living in formal camps (U. Yandaki, personal communication, June 26, 2024).

### **The roles of non-governmental humanitarian agencies in meeting the needs of IDP Women in Katsina State**

Non-governmental humanitarian agencies and philanthropic individuals have made frantic efforts to meet the needs of IDP women in the state. In (2021), Nagge Dadi Goma, a non-governmental empowerment scheme for women, provides start-up capital for 1,450 women to set up businesses to improve the economic status of their families in the State (Olaniyan, 2021). Dr Ahmed Filin Samji, the Chairman of ATTA'AWUN ISLAMIC FOUNDATION, a non-governmental Islamic charity organisation, argued that:

The first and most crucial assistance needed by IDPs is accommodation or shelter, after which other forms of aid become secondary. This is why our foundation, ATTA'AWUN, has called on 1,000 Muslims worldwide to donate ₦1,000 each, which would raise approximately ₦1 billion for the construction of 400 houses, mosques, and schools providing both Islamic and Western education for the IDPs. As of now, we have begun building the houses, mosque, market, and farmlands, and have commenced training IDPs in empowerment programs such as tailoring, weaving, shoemaking, salon services, and dyeing. On the farm, we aim to plant date trees (Dabino), develop fishery projects, and establish poultry farming, providing IDPs with productive activities to keep them engaged and alleviate their worries. The initiative is also intended to bring them closer to us for comfort, counseling, and guidance. After their training, and once normalcy returns, we plan to provide them with capital and facilitate their return to their original communities to practice the skills they have acquired. Efforts by

philanthropic individuals and organisations have been significant. Within six months of the foundation's inception, we have received donations of boreholes, land, and approximately ₦300,000,000. However, the state government has neither contributed nor demonstrated concern for these efforts (A. Filin Samji, personal communication, June 23, 2024).

Gambo Isah (not his real name) a staff member of NEMA in the State, reported that:

Aliko Dangote Foundation donated 10,000 sleeping mats, 10,000 cardigans and sweaters, and 10,000 assorted blankets to the State Government, along with ₦5 million cash to the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria to meet the specific needs of women and children IDPs in the state (G. Isah, personal communication, July 29, 2024).

In an FGD, some IDP women narrated thus:

Allah in his mercy, a local NGO visited us last year (2023) and distributed ₦10,000 to each IDP woman and ₦5,000 to each man. It was these ₦10,000 we used as start-up capital, and I have been gaining from it. It is from the proceeds that we used to buy some of our basic needs, including food. We don't go to beg for food or engage in menial jobs for survival, which is the situation of almost all the IDPs here. A woman with a local NGO once came and distributed menstrual pads to us; since then, we have been using tattered clothes because we could not afford them, except for the beautiful ladies who have access to men who take care of their basic needs (B. Rabi, L. Binta, S. Harira, personal communication, July 26, 2024).

Zainab Abubakar, an IDP from Batsari, stated that the major challenge IDPs face in the state is hunger and malnutrition, although they occasionally receive assistance from philanthropic individuals. In her words:

The only support that came to us this year (2024) was from Alh. Dahiru Bara'u Mangal, during the fasting period, cooked food was distributed to all the IDPs here in the camp, but after the fasting period, everything stopped. Anyway, we still thank Allah because our children who were never enrolled in schools before our displacement can now attend schools near our camp at Gidan Dawa. The only challenge we faced now is that they couldn't go to school in most cases, especially when we woke up with no food to give them for breakfast. All these children you see are supposed to be in school this morning, but because they have not put anything in their stomachs, they cannot attend school (sic) (Z. Abubakar, personal communication, July 26, 2024).

In another encounter, Aisha Abdullahi, a lactating mother displaced from Dandume, alleged:

Food is one of our major problems; since the day before yesterday, I haven't eaten. There is no food to give to our babies. This baby you see is a year old, but still looks like a 6-month-old due to malnutrition and hunger. An organisation, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), usually distributes Plumpy Nuts (*Madaran Kwamiso / Tamowa*) to our malnourished children as part of a nutritional supplement, but they finish within days, because it is not adequate (A. Abdullahi, personal communication, July 26, 2024).

Aliyu Salmanu (not real name), who works with the Nigerian Red Cross Society, Katsina state Chapter, affirmed that "MSF in the State is working tirelessly in providing healthcare and nutrition for IDP Women with children, especially the provision of therapeutic feeding like Plumpy'nut for children with acute malnutrition. Sadly, the mothers whose children are at risk do sell the Plumpy'nut meant for the children due to high demand to make provision for other household needs" (A. Salmanu, personal communication, July 29, 2024). Cross-validating the above claims, MSF reported that: To recover from malnutrition, we have purchased and distributed more than 10 million sachets of Plumpy'nut in Katsina State. One child needs roughly 100 sachets to last for six weeks. But a shameful act of selling and diversion of the Plumpy'nut by the mothers and health workers, respectively, posed a serious challenge (Lacharité, 2022). To give life to the above assertion, IDP women in an FGD explained how humanitarian aid givers engaged in the sharp practice of round-tripping in distributing relief materials. In their words:

The humanitarian workers usually come with their agent and give them some money when the distribution exercise is going on. When they give us, for instance, half a bag of rice worth ₦15,000, they strategically take it back. Because they knew we had other needs besides the rice, they covertly sent their agents to buy the rice from us at a lesser price, like ₦8,000 or ₦7,000. We have no option but to accept such an offer. Otherwise, our names will be removed from the beneficiaries list of the further relief distribution exercise (A. Sule, M. Aisha, I. Hajara, personal communication, July 27, 2024).

Corroborating the above findings, a staff member of SEMA, Umar A. Jibril (not his real name), maintained that:

Humanitarian agencies are present everywhere and have varying degrees of life-changing experience in the state. But most of their funds are spent on logistics and comforts rather than alleviating the suffering of the IDPs (U.A., Jibril, personal communication, July 29, 2024).

From the foregoing narrations, we have seen remarkable efforts made by the government and non-governmental

humanitarian organisations in meeting the needs of IDP women in the state. This made us assume IDP women in the state are living with less severe challenges of shelter, food and other peculiar needs. But the pertinent question to ask here is, with all these provisions and assistance, why are these IDP women with their children struggling to get only one scoop of food for their daily survival? This shows that there is a lack of transparency and accountability in the management of resources meant for the IDPs, as most of the IDPs don't receive these relief items in the distribution exercise.

## DISCUSSION

Against the theory of Humanitarian Response, available qualitative data from the state shows that the government's response to providing humanitarian assistance to IDPs has been minimal or lacking in interest in ameliorating the sufferings of the IDPs in the state. This explains why the government in the state discouraged the encampments of IDPs or closed down the existing IDP camps due to political or economic reasons, and they prepared the IDPs to return to their communities, even in cases where their communities remain unsafe to inhabit. The IDPs, especially women and their children, now live in informal camps, exposing them to further vulnerabilities. This aligned with the findings of Zubaida Baba Ibrahim of HumAngle (2023), that the state government is not willing to make provision for an organised IDP camp to protect the IDPs. In fact, the existing camps were shut down, making the IDPs scattered in abandoned or dilapidated buildings and in the process faced challenges of lack of clean water, nutritious food and other needs, especially among women and children (Ibrahim, 2023).

Government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies focus too much attention on the provision of food items to the IDP women in the state, neglecting other peculiar needs such as access to reproductive healthcare services, psychosocial intervention for the victims of sexual violence or those that have been traumatised, access to hygiene kits, and economic empowerment opportunities. This is in line with the findings of the United Nations Refugee Agency (2021), that IDP women in Katsina state face security challenges of gender-based violence, insufficient food and limited access to livelihood (UN Refugee Agency, 2021b).

Contrary to the principle of Humanitarian Response Theory of neutrality, governmental, local, and international non-governmental organisations such as UNICEF, NEMA, SEMA, Red Cross, World Food Program, Action Against Hunger, and Doctors without Borders (MSF), among others, are present in the state. However, due to the state government policy, which discouraged the encampment of IDPs in 2020, the impact of these humanitarian organisations is virtually invisible to

any extent, as the IDPs are not in a specific location in the State. Some of these organisations expressed anger and frustration with the lack of cooperation from the side of the government in their attempt to help the IDPs, which hinders the effective management of the IDPs. This shows a lack of cooperation or collaboration between the state government and the NGOs.

Against the theoretical principle of humanity, it was discovered that most non-governmental humanitarian organisations in the state dedicate very little of their resources to IDPs in whose name they mobilise funds. Instead, they expend a large portion of their funds on their comfort and logistics, leaving little or nothing to improve the lives of the IDPs. At the same time, the IDPs continue to wallow in sorrowful conditions of hunger, poverty, inadequate shelter, malnutrition and diseases. This shows that there is corruption and a lack of transparency in the management of resources meant for the IDPs, which poses serious security threats to the lives of the IDPs.

## Conclusion

Efforts by the government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies in providing the needed support to IDP women in Katsina State are not sufficient to mitigate their security conditions. This is further aggravated by the closure of all IDP camps in the state, lack of collaborative partnership between the government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies and the preponderance of corruption in the distribution of food and non-food items meant for the IDPs. Addressing the root cause of the problem is central to mitigating the flight of IDP women, and establishment of formal IDP camps in the state should be in line with international standards. Both governmental and non-governmental humanitarian agencies should also prioritise the socio-economic needs of the IDPs in the country through economic empowerment and vocational training, which will help ease the pains of IDP women in the state and the country at large.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The state government should, as a matter of urgency, implement the State Action Plan on internally displaced persons. This will go a long way in safeguarding the rights of IDP women in the state. At the same time, efforts should be made for their reintegration into their original places of habitation with livelihood support to continue with their normal agrarian life.
2. Dignity gears, maternal health services, psychosocial intervention and other essential household items that will help meet the immediate needs of displaced women at various IDP camps in the state by both governmental and

nongovernmental humanitarian agencies should be intensified and prioritised.

3. The state government should establish formal IDP camps in accordance with the United Nations standard. Government and non-governmental humanitarian organisations in the state should work by the mandate of the UN guiding principles (1998), Kampala Convention (2009) and Nigerian National Policy on the Rights of IDPs (2012). This will ease the suffering of IDPs in the country.

4. There should be strong collaboration and partnership between the state government and non-governmental, local and international humanitarian organisations in providing the needed support to the IDP. The state should also refrain from politicising the flight of IDPs; the more the politicisation, the more the IDPs will continue to die in silence.

5. The government and non-governmental humanitarian agencies should increase the supply requirements of the IDPs to include all basic needs of women to discourage the sale of food and non-food items by the IDPs in the name of seeking money for other needs. This will help in checking the sales of IDP materials by both the favoured IDPs and corrupt officials.

5. The government and civil society organisations should intensify the fight against bribery and corruption through good legislation and stiff punishments for those found wanting in the diversion of food and non-food items meant for the IDPs.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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