

APPRAISING THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES OF NON-STATE ACTORS ON NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICTS IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

BY

¹ CHINYERE N. ALIMBA (Ph.D)

¹Centre for Peace and Security Studies Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola Adamawa State.

Corresponding author: ¹CHINYERE N. ALIMBA (Ph.D)

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.17341598](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17341598)

Article History

Received: 04-10-2025

Accepted: 06-10-2025

Published: 13-10-2025

Abstract

Natural resource conflicts have become a pervasive feature of intergroup relations in the 21st Century. Its frequency, intensity and violent nature often throw up complex humanitarian challenges, necessitating interventions in order to alleviate the suffering of the affected population. Since 2015, herdsmen attacks on the farming communities have become a commonplace issue in Nigeria. This development is characterised with the destruction of livelihoods, killing and displacement of people, with north eastern zone being on the front burner of the discourse. Thus, this study appraised the humanitarian activities of non-state actors over natural resource conflict in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Key informant interview (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) were deployed to gather data from six local government areas of Adamawa State, namely: Numan, Demsa, Girei, Mubi north, Madagali and Maiha. Data collected were analysed qualitatively. It was revealed that the non-state actors that intervened in the various conflict zones were individuals within and outside the state as well as a foreigner. The interventions provided by the non-state actors were mainly food items and to some extent non-food items. Also, the study uncovered that the major obstacles inhabiting the efficiency of non-state actors were insufficiency of relief materials, the flow pattern of interventions and non-delivery of interventions at the right locations. Therefore, it is essential for corporate non-state actors to be motivated to participate early and effectively in the provision and distribution interventions to ameliorate and strengthen the conditions of people in the affected communities in the state.

Keywords: Humanitarian Responses, Non-State Actors, Natural Resources, Conflicts

Introduction

The return to democracy in 1999 heralded the end of 16 years of military rule in Nigeria. This development raised the hope of people, bringing about a make-believe attitude that the tensions and the challenges created during the various military regimes, capable of evolving into real crisis situations will soon naturally fizzle out, due to the installation of democratic government in the country. This mirage may perhaps be based on the assumption that democratic practices and principles are capable of mitigating social conflicts and distributing scarce resources in an equitable manner in divided societies in order to promote orderliness (Alimba, 2010). Realistically, what exists today in Nigeria and elsewhere around the world where democratic system is operating is a situation in which democracy appears to have reverberated long-suppressed

feelings of aggression among ethnic nationalities, paving the way for the emergence of new forms of threats and social conflicts (Johnson, 2021). Therefore, the formation of democratic spaces in states and societies around the world holds the threat of generating new types of conflicts and criminality in the available democratic space (Rupesinghe 2002 and Ejiofor, 2022). The reality on ground since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 is the revolving nature of vicious violent social conflicts of different shades and brands. The emergence of Boko Haram insurgency and herder-farmer conflict based on natural resources appear to have taken over the centre stage of attraction, due to their incessant occurrences and the dangerous dimensions they have assumed, with grave deleterious outcomes for the country. With the degradation and technical defeat of Boko

Haram as revealed by the military headquarters, resource conflict appears to have emerged in a more reinvigorated manner across the geopolitical zones, launching the country into another epoch of violent conflicts. Conflict over resources is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. However, the dimension it took coupled with its destructive tendencies in the recent times makes it worrisome and highly unpalatable based on past experiences in the country (Thaddaeus and Albert, 2025). For instance, only 18 incidences of herder-farmer conflicts were recorded between 1997 and 2010, whereas there was a surge of 371 attacks between 2011 and 2015 (SBM Intelligence, 2016). The surge was one of the resultant effects of poor governmental, heralded by failure to tackle the conflicts, the spread potential of the conflict, and the reckless use of sophisticated weapons. These stimulated the accentuation of death toll, destruction of communities and farm lands, with women and children being the major victims of the attacks in the country.

The Institute for Economics and Peace (2015) reported that the number of people killed rose from 63 in 2013 to 1,229 in 2014. An estimated death toll of 2,500 people was reported in 2016 (International Crisis Group, 2017) and 1,300 people were killed since January 2018 (International Crisis Group, 2018). Also, in 2016 alone, at least 800 people were killed in southern Kaduna, and 1,269 in Benue state, where herders invaded at least 14 of the 23 local government areas (ACAPS Thematic Report, 2017). The dynamism of herdsmen attacks has snowballed into a serious security challenge, capable of robbing the country its unity and peace. Farmer-herder conflict is not associated with Nigeria alone; it is a worldwide phenomenon that has been ravaging societies with high death toll and creating complex humanitarian concern. The attacks of herdsmen have affected several rural communities in different parts of the country, leading to displacements of people and destruction of livelihoods (Rosenje and Adeniyi, 2021). This social menace has paved the way for the emergence of humanitarian problems. For instance, in 2013, the attack in Agatu Local Government in Benue claimed 46 lives; farmlands and houses were destroyed, and over 12,000 people were displaced (The News, 2013). Also, in 2014, no fewer than 80,000 people were displaced by the attacks launched by herdsmen in Nasarawa, Benue and Plateau (The Source Magazine, 2014). In January 2018, an estimated 300,000 people fled their homes for fear of being attacked, resulting in large-scale displacement and insecurity in parts of Adamawa, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states, hindering farming as well as herding and driving up food prices (International Crisis Group, 2018). It was reported that between September 2017 and June 2018, farmer-herder violence left at least 1,500 people dead, more wounded and about 300,000 displaced. Records show estimated displacement of 176,000 in Benue, about 100,000 in Nasarawa, over 100,000 in Plateau, about 19,000 in Taraba and an unknown number in Adamawa (ICG, 2018). Currently, over 30 states of the federation have experienced

herdsmen attacks, resulting in different humanitarian challenges. The trend in displacement patterns reflected the imperativeness of state and non-state actors to intervene in order to make provisions for the affected communities in the country. The essence of humanitarian interventions is to alleviate the suffering of displaced people by ensuring that their basic needs are met to positively improve their conditions. According to **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** (2018), the ongoing clashes between herders and farmers in Adamawa State have claimed lives and left over 100, 978 people displaced. Also, over 200 people have been killed since the conflict escalated from November 2017 to date (OCHA, 2018).

Before now and at different times, herder and farmer crisis had occurred in most of the local government areas in the state, however, the recent attacks were conducted much more in Numan, Demsa, Lamurde, Guyuk, Girei, Mayo Belwa, Shellige and Song local government areas (OCHA, 2018), with various degrees of displacement. This development necessitated the intervention of both local and international non-state actors to assuage the suffering of the affected people and to improve their welfare (Atolagbe, 2024). Non-state actors have been operating independently or concurrently with governments sponsored bodies in several states of the federation, especially in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. In Adamawa State, non-state actors have been working relentlessly to provide relief materials to internally displaced persons for the past five years, since Boko Haram invaded 7 of the existing 21 local government areas. In 2014, both official and unofficial camps were created to house internal displaced persons for effective intervention. The various humanitarian actors were identified as playing different roles in order to meet the basic needs of IDPs in camps in Adamawa State. These actors were categorised into state and non-state actors. However, the National Emergency Management Agency and **Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency** play leading roles in taking care of IDPs in the state. Apart from the state-based actors, Lee (2016) classified the non-state actors that have been providing interventions for IDPs in Adamawa State into international, national, local and faith based. The non-state actors provide interventions in the forms of food items, medical and health materials, skill acquisition programmes, educational programme and shelter (Lee, 2016). Therefore, in view of the ongoing herder-farmer crisis, which has generated displacement in Adamawa State, this study appraised the humanitarian responses of non-state actors in communities attacked as a result of the resource-based violent conflict.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Nigeria, like many other countries in Africa and around the world, is bedeviled by improper management of natural resource. This anomaly can become a curse to a society, hence, the coining of the phrase, "resource curse". This idea perhaps sets the stage for the understanding of the correlation between natural resources and civil war (Ross,

2004). Natural resource crisis has rendered societies ungovernable and unstable, creating room for the emergence of insecurity and complex humanitarian problems. In Nigeria, the Northeast has suffered severely as a result of Boko Haram insurgency and recently from the attacks of herdsmen based on resource conflict. The resource-based conflict is attributed to “changing demography, climate variability, shrinking natural resources and socio-political manipulation” (Kwaja and Ademola-Adelehin, 2017). These make obvious the poor management of natural resources. The complicated nature of the issues surrounding herder-farmer conflict and the degree of violence associated with their activities often result in the killing of people, destruction of farmlands, rustling and killing of cattle, and stemming the propensity for reprisal attacks in the country. The frequency and volatility of herder-farmer conflict easily provoke humanitarian challenges, making interventions imperative in order to save lives. The intervention patterns of some non-state actors vary based on their mandate and possibly location. While some provide opportunity to agitate for government to pay damages to the affected communities for not standing up to its responsibility, others attempt to monitor the activities of herdsmen to ensure that their communities are not attacked. Equally, some basically focused on building conciliatory and promoting peacebuilding between herders and farmers to achieve peace in their domains. For instance, in 2016, Benue-based Movement Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO) filed a suit at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court based in Abuja, demanding the federal government to pay N500 billion (about \$1.6 billion) as compensation for failing to protect its citizens (International Crisis Group, 2017). In South west, Afenifere, a Pan-Yoruba cultural group was saddled with the responsibility of monitoring herdsmen in order to protect their people (The Punch, 2017), while Bakassi Boys as well as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) exist in the South east to guard communities against herdsmen attacks (Vanguard, 2016). There are others that basically make provision for the immediate needs of IDPs in terms of providing them with food and non-food items. These non-state actors in Adamawa State are primarily the focus of this study. This paper appraises their efficiency, nature of items they provide for IDPs and the possible challenges confronting them in the course of interventions. In Adamawa State, the changing dynamics of IDPs have turned out into an escalating phenomenon, pushing the government on its toe for provision of spaces for camps. In September 2017, the IDPs recorded were 139,362, while in October 2017, the figure increased to 140,356 IDPs (International Organisation Migration, 2018). By February 2018, the figure went up from 164,150 to 178,977 in June to 183,570 in August (International Organisation Migration, 2018). The circumstances surrounding the rising trends of IDPs, equally increased the need for humanitarian assistance.

However, at the early stage of the crisis, UFPA, UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF mobilised assorted non-food items

including dignity kits and handed them over to the State Government for distribution to IDPs. Due to the increasing number of people affected by the crisis, the assistance had very little impact on the ground (OCHA, 2018). The displacement pattern and the rising number of the people displaced, NEMA, PCNI and SEMA were able to provide relief assistance to some of the IDPs (OCHA, 2018). The displacement pattern reflected a situation in which people were scattered in different locations, making it difficult for them to be cared for in the state. Anecdotal observations revealed that there was a poor turn up of non-state actors in most affected communities, which may be due to the intensity of the crisis, especially in Numan and Demsa areas of Adamawa State. According to OCHA, (2018), no active humanitarian agency with response capacity operated in the area. This development was rather obvious in most of the communities attacked by herdsmen in the state. This may be as a result of the scattered nature of the communities, their locations in remote areas and the complexity involved reaching them because of incessant rain fall. Apart from this, the crisis was ongoing and the security of the humanitarian actors was not assured as most of the affected communities were out-of-town (Shesterinina, 2023). Considering this development, it becomes imperative to examine the categories of non-state actors that intervened, the nature of intervention they provided, the impact of their interventions and the possible challenges they encountered on the field. Based on this, the following research questions resonate through the study:

- (i) What are the categories of non-state actors that provided humanitarian interventions for communities affected by herder-farmer conflict in Adamawa State?
- (ii) What is the nature of interventions provided by non-state actors to the communities attacked as a result of resource conflicts in Adamawa State?
- (iii) What are the impacts of the interventions provided by non-state actors in the affected communities in Adamawa State?
- (iv) What are the challenges associated with the administration of interventions by non-state actors in the affected communities in Adamawa State?
- (v) What are the key lessons learnt from the humanitarian interventions provided by non-state actors in Adamawa State?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey research. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), descriptive survey research is set out to look at individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields of enquiry. Thus, this research type will create a pathway for systematic analysis of the subject matter of the study, enabling the gathering of data in order to provide answers to the research questions raised in the course of the study. Six local government

areas were selected for study and the selection was primarily based on the fact that they were attacked and invaded by the insurgents, experienced herder-farmer crisis and banditry. Therefore, those areas that were highly attacked and invaded were used in the state. These localities were chosen for the purpose of data collection, and they include Numan, Demsa, Girei, Mubi North, Madagali and Maiha in Adamawa State. These localities equally have track records of past and recent incidences of resource conflicts, which was why the problem of herder and farmer crisis is inevitable in the region. The data collected was based on primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), while the secondary sources involved the interrogation of documented literature, journals, textbook, and administrative reports that have bearing on the subject matter of the study. The KII and FGD guides were developed based on the different research questions raised in the study. The collection of data was carried out in the locations marked for the study with the assistance of two research assistants. The field works were conducted on the 21st and 26th of July 2018 at Numan and Demsa Local Government Areas. On the 1st of August 2018, data collection was carried out at Koh in Girei Local Government Area. On the 9th and 10th August 2018, KII and FGD were conducted in Madagali, Mubi North and Maiha. Specifically, purposive sampling technique was used to select communities for data collection. The parameters used were based on communities that were actually attacked to the extent that they attracted interventions to alleviate their difficulties. Based on this, Dong, Lawaru, and Dowaya were selected from Numan Local Government Area, while Gwanba and Borrong were chosen from Demsa local government Area. In Maiha, Sagal was selected for sampling, while data were collected in Mubi North and Madagali. In all the locations, at least 5 Focus Group Discussions and 15 Key Informant Interviews were conducted to gather data for the study. Therefore, a total of ninety (90) informants were interviewed and thirty (30) respondents were selected for the focus group discussion in the communities visited for data collection. The composition of the respondents were district heads, that is Hakimi, Mai anguwa, Jauro, farmers, hunters, security agents, community leaders such as youth leaders, women leaders and vigilantes. Data collected were analysed through qualitative method, which involves the interpretations and transcriptions of information gathered through the KII and FGD.

Analysis and Results

The interpretations and transcriptions presented below represent data analysis and results.

(i) Categories of Non-state Actors that provided Humanitarian Interventions in Communities affected by herder-farmer conflict

During crisis situations, different categories of state and non-state humanitarian actors are involved in the process of bringing succour to the affected people or communities. This is a common phenomenon playing out around the world. **However**, in the case of the conflict between herders and farmers in Adamawa States, the non-state actors identified to have provided interventions for people in Numan and Demsa Local government areas were politicians, philanthropists, Bwatiye Development

Association (BDA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Bwatiye and Bachama Traditional Councils. The interviewees reported that the impact of the interventions provided by these non-state actors were sufficiently felt in the affected communities. This is because they were the first frontline actors to intervene. Also, the respondents to interview revealed that the humanitarian interventions provided by Bwatiye and Bachama Traditional Councils were basically to support the Hama Dong, whose residential apartment and palace were completely razed by the herdsmen. The philanthropists that participated in the provision of interventions in Dong were local individuals, traditional-based institutions, faith-based organisation and a foreigner. These non-state actors have direct connection with the Numan Federation. However, they were not staying in the communities, but were rather operating from within or outside the state. Non-state actors were recognised as natives of the affected communities in the state. The key informants in Dong community disclosed that both the present and past Miss Adamawa State as well as Binta Faruk visited their community with relief packages. The interviewees also divulged that there are other individuals from outside their localities, that are considered as friends of the affected communities that equally assisted them¹. The non-state actors that assisted were mostly indigenes of Numan Federation, residing within or outside Adamawa State. The key informants interviewed and focus group discussion conducted in the temporary palace of Hama Dong, revealed that they received intervention from a foreign non-state actor known as Evans Sajane from Denmark. Through the interviews, it was gathered that Evans Sajane gave each household a sum of hundred thousand naira (#100,000.00) in Dong community.

As it was self-reported in an interview, Hama Dong and his chiefs constituted a central committee responsible for the sharing of relief materials donated to the community, which was based on compound to compound. This action promoted equity, fairness and prevented conflict in the course of distributing interventions. It was revealed that Lawaru community was attacked on the 4th December, 2017 at about 6.00am and in the course of the attack, Hama Lawaru was killed. However, a new Hama (i.e King) was appointed immediately to prevent leadership gap for effective coordination of the community. The key informant interview and focus group discussion conducted in the community revealed that they received interventions from CAN, individuals and politicians. The humanitarian non-state actors that provided the interventions were individual and faith-based in nature. The politicians that supported them were mainly those representing their constituencies. Equally, the Secretary to the Federal Government, Boss Mustapha visited the community. At Dowaya community, the key informants indicated that politicians and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (L.C.C.N) provided relief materials to the community. Dowaya community was

¹ Key informant interview at Dong community conducted on the 21st July, 2018

attacked on the 22nd June 2018, and the interviewees disclosed that the attackers had called on one of the elders, that they will revisit for further attacks. As a result of this, women and children were moved out of the community to city, while the men stayed back to wait for the attackers. The interventions received by the elders of the community were distributed household to household as reported by those interviewed. It is important to note that the household approach of distributing relief materials helped to prevent social conflict and increased social cohesion among them. It also encouraged them to be more focused and determined to defend their land. At Borrong and Gwamba communities in Demsa local government area, the key informants revealed that the interventions they received were made available to them by politicians, faith-based group and individuals. At the General Hospital Borrong (GHB), those that incurred injuries as a result of the attacks of herdsmen were treated, and the bill was settled by the honourable member representing Demsa in Adamawa State House of Assembly². The information gathered showed that the Red Cross also visited the hospital to see those that were hospitalised. However, the interviewees unveiled that no relief material was made available to the hospital; rather, interventions were provided in the community.

Borrong community was not directly attacked, but it felt the effects of the attacks on the surrounding communities because the General Hospital is located in Borrong. The key informant interview and focus group discussion conducted in Madagali, Mubi North and Maiha revealed that the activities of Boko Haram, especially in Madagali, scared away herders with their herds from these localities except for Maiha, where some of them are seen. The information gathered from Madagali and Mubi North reflected that herder-farmer conflict is a thing of the past in these localities, simply because of the activities and fear of Boko Haram. The respondents admitted that before the advent of Boko Haram insurgency, they experienced herder-farmer crises. The invasion of these localities by Boko Haram, resulting in attacks on herders and rusting of cattle, caused the herders to migrate towards Maiha, where they could easily link up with local and international routes. From Maiha, herders could easily connect various other states in Nigeria and neighbouring countries like Chad and Cameroon because of the existence of well-established local and international cattle routes passage in the place. Despite this development, herder-farmer conflict was witnessed with serious collateral damage in Sagal community in part of Maiha Local Government Area. The key informant interview and focus group discussion conducted revealed that humanitarian non-state actors did not visit the community. Thus, community members argued that they never received any form of intervention or assistance from either the state or non-state actors. However, the respondents reported that some people came to distribute questionnaire to collect their identities and to ascertain the

level of destruction experienced in the community. The promise they made after collecting the data that they will return with intervention, did not happened. Since then, nothing has been received by the community³. The respondents in Koh community in Girei Local Government Area indicated that despite the various attacks that took place in their community, no intervention has reached them from either the state government or non-state actors in Adamawa State. Therefore, the categories of non-state actors that participated in the provision of interventions in localities attacked can summarily be catergorised as individual non-state actors, which involve both local and foreign individuals including politicians and philanthropists.

(ii) Nature of Interventions provided by Non-state Actors in Communities attacked as a result of the crisis

The interventions provided by non-state actors to the affected communities vary from one community to another. For instance, in Dong community, the key informant interview as well as the focus group discussion conducted revealed that NEMA and ADSEMA provided food items, which were presented to the palace of the Hama Dong. The interventions provided by non-state actors in affected community include food items such as maize, rice, beans and guinea corn; and non-food items such as mat, mattresses, clothing and money for the people. Also, at Lawaru, the key informants explained that the same food items and non-food items were provided for community members. The interventions provided at Dwaya community by non-state actors were equally food items such as millet, maize and beverages. The non-food items provided were building material, seven bundles of ceiling pan, two bundles of plank, two shovels and one trowel as well as mat. The communities interrogated were all in Numan local government areas. In Demsa Local government area, Borrong and Gwamba were sampled, and the key informant interview and focus group discussion conducted brought to light the fact that food items were provided by non-state actors to their community members in their localities. Food items such as yam and some bags of maize were presented to them by C.A.N. At Borrong, interviewees indicated that no intervention was presented to them, because majority of the victims of the crisis that were taken to General Hospital Borrong (GHB) were refused treatment, not until the District Head stood for them, with the hope that the bills will be offset immediately. The members of the Red Cross that showed up in the community, collected the bills of those that were treated with the hope that it will be settled by them. However, it was reported that they did not return to pay the bills. In Maiha and Koh communities, the informants disclosed that the people never received any form of intervention from both state and non-state actors.

² Key informant interview by the District Head of Gwamba in Demsa Local Government Area on 26th July, 2018

³ Interview with respondents at Sagal in Maiha Local Government Area on 10th August, 2018

S/No	Item	Dong	Lawaru	Dowaya	Borrong	Gwamba	Sagal	Koh
1	Food item	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	—	—
2	Building Material	—	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
3	Beverages	—	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
4	Clothing	Yes	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	Cash	Yes	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
6	Bedding Materials	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—

Table 1 showed the nature of the interventions provided by non-state actors. The impression created was that interventions provided vary from one community to another. The variation may possibly be as a result of accessibility and the number of well to do individuals from a particular community. For instance, the safest way to get access to Borrong, a community in Demsa, was to pass through the Numan River with speed boat. This barrier will obviously make it difficult for non-state actors to risk accessing such a community.

((

(iii) Impacts of the Interventions of Non-state Actors on the attacked Communities

The impact of the interventions provided by non-state actors in the affected communities were considered as positive, although they created a short-term effect on the communities. This is because the interventions only satisfied the immediate needs of the people. The communities that had the opportunity of receiving the interventions felt contented with what they received. However, the relief materials did not meet their long-term yearnings and aspirations. For instance, in Dong, the respondents pointed out that although they thank God for what was provided for them, but their buildings, markets, churches and houses destroyed cannot be rebuilt with the nature of interventions made available to them. This is a pointer to the effect that the major needs of the people were not met, which have to do with their buildings and other facilities destroyed. Their needs were considered as long-term aspirations, which cannot be solved with the nature of interventions provided by non-state actors. For instance, in Dong, rebuilding the residence and palace of the Hama Dong destroyed was a long term needs that the nature of intervention provided cannot address. The donation made by Evans Sajane was highly appreciated by the people, because the money assisted them to address some of their long-term aspirations. In Lawaru, the situation seems similar, as the people were struggling to fix the house of the village head that was

destroyed. The impact of the interventions provided was rather fluid as they were only able to assist the affected communities in overcoming their immediate needs which are food items. One of the key informants interviewed considered the situation as a “beggars are no choosers situation... According to them, all the interventions provided, which are basically non-food items, were highly appreciated in one way or the other, although they were not enough to meet their major needs”. This attests to the fact that the interventions provided partly satisfied their immediate needs, but were unable to meet the long-term aspirations of the people, which involve rebuilding their houses, markets, churches and facilities destroyed. Positive development registered with respect to the interventions supplied, was it aided in uniting community members together, despite its insufficiency. The items supplied were distributed in such a manner that it promoted unity, rather than further igniting conflict among them. The goods supplied were equitably distributed among the people to prevent social conflict that are common with sharing of interventions. There are evidence concerning how interventions provided in IDP camps caused altercation between IDPs and camp management bodies in Adamawa and Borno States. In this case, there was no complaint from any quarter regarding the distributions of the interventions supplied to individual communities. The pattern of distribution was household approach. The interventions were divided based on the existing households in the affected communities in the state.

Challenges Associated with the Interventions provided by Non-state Actors in the affected Communities

The major obstacles associated with the interventions provided in communities were: insufficiency, flow pattern, satisfaction of immediate needs and none delivery of interventions at the right places.

(i) Insufficiency of the interventions

The interventions supplied by non-state actors were grossly insufficient, given the numbers of communities that were torched by the crisis. The interventions could not go round the teeming community members that suffered attacks from herdsmen. It is a truism that interventions may not, at any point, be sufficient for victims. This is obvious in the case of Numan and Demsa localities, the interventions received were grossly in short supply. This possibly may be connected with the fact that majority of the non-state actors that responded to the humanitarian call were individuals and CAN. The presence of NGOs and corporate bodies, whether local or international were conspicuously absent in the communities surveyed. It is worrisome that government agencies such as NEMA and ADSEMA that are basically responsible for addressing emergency situations did not make any impact in terms of provision of interventions especially in Numan. NEMA was mentioned only in Dong community as presenting food items to Hama Dong for the people. The other communities sampled, there were complaints that they did not get any intervention from NEMA and ADSEMA.

(ii) The Flow Pattern of the Interventions

The flow pattern of the interventions is equally an issue because it prevented the moderation and coordination of interventions supplied to the affected communities. This is because the individuals that donated relief materials did so based on their affinity, affiliation and personality link with the affected communities. The linkage of the donor with a community became the yardstick for determining what the community will get. Thus, this led to a situation in which interventions were well received by some communities, while some got either little or nothing. This problem would have been prevented if interventions provided were centrally collected by a coordinating body for distribution among the affected communities. Therefore, the flow pattern of the interventions was a function of the number of well to do personalities affiliated to the communities attacked and who are highly influential in the society. The development in Koh and Sagal communities in Girei and Maiha Local Government Areas seem unpalatable as intervention did not reach them. This is a reflection of the absent of a central coordinating body or bodies to collect interventions for donors for equitable distribution in the affected communities. The key informants in Koh lamented that even their local government did not do anything because of the variation in ethnic and religion compositions⁴. This issue paved the way for some communities to be more favoured than others, ostensibly due to the fact that they have more of their people in power in the state or more highly placed persons in the country. This challenge revealed that ethnicity and religion played dominant roles in the flow pattern of interventions supplied in some communities.

(iii) Accessibility to Communities

The problem of accessibility contributed significantly to the distribution of interventions in some communities attacked.

For instance, in Borrong, a community in Demsa Local Government Area could not receive interventions possibly because the easiest way of gaining access to the community is ferrying through the Numan River. This will be done through the aid of a speed boat and one will arrive in the community within a time limit of 35 to 40 minutes, while using local cannons will attract a time limit of 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours to get to the community. This problem will make it difficult for non-state actors to visit such a community in the name of supplying relief materials. The issue of accessibility was further compounded by the fact it was during raining season, and most of the roads leading to communities, especially in Numan became swampy due to constant rain fall and were not motorable. This problem created inherent risk in reaching some of the communities. It becomes difficult for non-state actors to embark on such a risky and hazardous journey because their safety cannot be guaranteed.

(iv) Non-delivery of Interventions at the right Locations

The inability of non-state actors to deliver interventions at the right locations is a serious issue that was discovered in the course of this investigation. Serious complains were made by the leaders of Sagal community in Maiha and Koh in Girei concerning the fact that they did not receive any intervention, despite the fact that they were reliably informed that interventions were allotted for them. In fact, the respondents in Koh said they have not received any intervention from anybody, even from their local government council, despite the series of attacks they have experienced over time in their community. Three major issues were perceived as hinderance for interventions reaching the right locations. These issues were corruption, ethnicity and religion. They are visible factors that redefined the flow pattern of interventions from getting to the right places. The key informants interviewed identified ethnicity and religion as playing out as critical factors that prevented the free flow of interventions from reaching Koh, while corruption and religion were mentioned as factors that prevented Sagal community in Maiha from getting intervention. The central town in that axis that intervention can easily get to, before journeying to Sagal is Wurolede, which is over 40 kilometers to Sagal. And there are no good roads for easy movement of goods or human beings to the place. Sagal community was recently opened to accommodate IDPs flowing from Gwoza, Madagali and Michika. In fact, the location of the community was hitherto a thick forest before it was transformed into a settlement by government. It was also gathered from the key informant that some of the refugees from Cameroon migrated to the community because of the existing instability in their country. The inhabitants of Sagal community are purely farmers. They were attacked on Sunday night, which is the Eve of the New Year in 2018. It was gathered from the interviewees that the crisis led to the dethronement of the existing Jauro, and the installation of a new one was immediately conducted to fill the gap.

⁴ Focus group discussion conducted at Koh in Girei Local Government Area on the 1st August, 2018

Lessons Learned from the Study

There are five major lessons that can be learnt from the communities surveyed in respect of interventions provided by non-state actors.

(i) The failure of corporate non-state actors to intervene in the affected communities, really affected the quantity of interventions provided. This possibly may explain why interventions provided were grossly insufficient for the affected communities. The communities attacked were only left with relief materials provided by individual non-state actors, who are either indigenes of the communities or those related to them. Corporate non-state actors did not show up in the communities attacked. This puzzling issue prompted the researcher to interview a staff of NEMA, and it was discovered that when the attacks were carried out, needs assessment was not conducted to ascertain what is involved and expected and model of intervention for community recovery. The urgent state of the victims could not warrant the process of getting needs assessment report, before moving into action. Therefore, conducting needs assessment will delay interventions getting to the affected communities alleviate their suffering. Delayed intervention will cause more suffering on the victims, which can worsen their conditions. Thus, early intervention forestalled impeding problems, while creating hope for many of the victims.

(ii) Interventions can serve as a uniting factor, depending on how they are equitably distributed among community members. There are cases where interventions were mismanaged or diverted resulting in havoc and disaster in communities, especially in IDP camps. In Numan and Demsa local government areas, the interventions provided by non-state actors were equitably distributed, and it strengthened and united community members together to collectively bear their burdens. This was achieved by setting up a committee to distribute interventions on household basis, since they know themselves. In camps in Adamawa and Borno States, there were cases where IDPs cried out because of unjust sharing method and diversion of interventions met for them. Development of this nature can put people in miserable conditions, stripping them of their dignity and wellbeing. Sylvester (2016) reported that the practice in camps is clear cases of outright stealing of the supplies for the IDPs; greedy diversion of items meant for the refugees; deliberate denials of meals and medicaments; and worse still, open segregation and nepotism by government officials against some IDPs. Thus, instead of interventions alleviating the conditions of victims, their states of affairs are made worse because supplies provided were unjustly distributed and mismanaged.

(iii) Interventions provided partly met the immediate needs and not the long-term needs of the people. Their immediate needs involve the provision of food items to community members, but not their long-term needs, which involve the construction of their houses and other facilities such as markets destroyed in the course of the crisis. The long-term needs of the people remain the real or potential needs awaiting to be satisfied before their conditions can

significantly be improved. Therefore, meeting their long-term needs, which involve providing them with blocks, sinks, woods, and other materials to rebuild their houses, markets and facilities destroyed will make their abode more comfortable to live.

(iv) The distribution of interventions brings to bear the fact that corruption, ethnicity and religion underscore what people got in some places. This was evident in some communities such as Koh in Girei and Sagal in Maiha, where these elements play out to determine what happens to interventions provided in communities. These elements often leave victims worse off in the scheme of activities, because they undermine and distort the essence of rendering humanitarian intervention as expected to the people. Therefore, locally or internationally, issues of these concerns often taint a country's image and may dysfunctionally affect its future potential of receiving intervention when the need arises.

(v) Despite the attacks and its humanitarian consequences, there was no notable internally displaced persons camp in Numan. The people of Numan preferred to stay in their dented houses, rather than going to stay in IDP camps. This action is anchored on the belief that they see the attacks as a ploy to take over their lands, and as such they guarded their lands with the intent to confront the situation headlong to safeguard their heritage.

Conclusion

Violent conflicts have become commonplace issues that governments cannot effectively address alone, but would require the assistance of non-state actors not only to contend with how to promote peace and harmony in societies but also to provide humanitarian interventions to affected people and communities. Therefore, to care for the victims of resource control-related armed conflict (individuals and communities) perpetuated by herdsmen militancy, it is expected that state and non-state actors should be apt in discharging their duties for the promotion of the wellbeing and dignity of the affected people. Therefore, in this study, the humanitarian responses of non-state actors in communities attacked as a result of resource conflicts was examined in Adamawa State. The categories of non-state actors that participated in the provision and distribution of interventions were ascertained. Thus, in the absence of state actors on the field, the activities of individual non-state actors, groups and faith based non-state actors become conspicuous in the provision of relief materials to the affected population. As discovered in this study, the nature of relief materials that were provided were mainly food items. However, items of this nature only succeeded in meeting the immediate needs of the affected people. The unmet needs remain their houses, markets, churches etc that were destroyed, implicating that they are in needs of non-food items to rebuilding of houses and facilities destroyed. The operational efficiency of non-state actors that intervened in Adamawa State were not without pitfalls. The obstacles associated with the interventions range from insufficiency of relief materials, the flow pattern of

interventions, and non delivery of interventions at the right locations. Although, the terrain in which the non-state actors operated was a bit rough, based on the fact that the affected communities were located in remote areas, coupled with the fact that the whole activities were taken place during the rainy season. However, the inability of non-state actors to wholly meet the long-term needs of the people left them in the dark. This is because the question agitating their minds is central to “where I mine going to start from”. This is a pointer to the devastating experiences of the victims in the localities examined. The challenges faced by the non-state actors are capable of impairing the objectives and motives of providing relief materials, however, they were encouraged to move ahead because they share affinities and are related to the invaded communities. It is imperative to bear in mind that societies were natural resources poorly managed based on greed and exclusion, violent conflict becomes inevitable and its emergence will be highly deleterious to individuals as well as a country. Equally, these elements can play up in the distribution of interventions supplied to affected population. Where relief materials were inequitably shared, the victims will be left worse off, leading to more problems for the victims. Consequently, humanitarian interventions are bound to fail where politics, ethnicity and religion were allowed to determine who get what, how and when in societies wrecked with violent conflicts, like what is playing up in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations become imperative:

- (i) Corporate non-state actors should be motivated to participate early and adequately sponsors in the provision and distribution of interventions, as this will help to strengthen and improve the conditions of people in the affected communities. This possibly can encourage them to help in addressing the long terms needs of victims as well as improving the sufficiency of their interventions.
- (ii) Need assessment is important for non-state actors to determine the nature and quantities of interventions that should be provided for victims to ensure that they are well taken care in order to improve their welfare.
- (iii) Non-state actors supplying interventions should ensure that the destinations of the relief materials are assured. This will go a long way to prevent diversion and ensure that such materials get to those they are actually meant for, so as to reduce their suffering.
- (iv) The security of non-state actors should be improved by government as this will make them to be more committed to discharging their duties
- (v) A conducive atmosphere should be created for

non-state actors to enable them efficiently carried out their responsibilities to ensure that their productivity is enhanced in the administration of interventions to deserving communities.

References

- ACAPS Thematic Report (2017). Protection in the Northeast, Nigeria. Retrieved from www.acaps.org on the 10/12/2018.
- Alimba, C.N. (2010). Peace Education: An Untapped pathway to Managing Ethno-religious Conflict in Nigeria. In Albert, I.O. and Olarinde, O.N. (eds) Trends and Tensions in Managing Conflict, Society for Peace Studies and Practice, Abuja.
- Atolagbe, M. B (2024) Causes and Consequences of Farmer-Herder Conflict on Food Production in Selected Agricultural Zones of Kwara State, Nigeria *Al-Hikmah Journal of Arts & Social Sciences Education*, 6, (2) 33-39
- Cohen, L; Manion, L and Morrison, K. (2011). Research Methods in Education. Routledge, New York, U.S.A.
- Ejiofor, P. F. (2022). *Beyond ungoverned spaces: Connecting the dots between relative deprivation, banditry, and violence in Nigeria*. *African Security*, 15(2), 111-141.
- International Crisis Group (2017). Herders against Farmers: Nigeria’s Expanding Deadly Conflict. Africa Report N°252, 9 September, Brussels, Belgium.
- International Crisis Group (2018). Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, Africa Report N°262, 26 July, Brussels, Belgium.
- International Organisation for Migration (2018) Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 24 Report, August
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2018) Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 25 Report, October.
- [Johnson](#), C.(2021)Power-sharing, conflict resolution, and the logic of pre-emptive defection. [Journal of Peace Research](#) 58(1):002234332092469
- Kwaja, C.M.A. and Ademola-Adelehin, B.I. (2017). The Implications of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law for Farmer-Herder Relations in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, Search for Common Ground, Washington, DC, U.S.A
- Lee, B.N. (2016). Humanitarian Intervention of Non-governmentat Organisations in the Camps of Internally Displaced Persons in Adamawa State. M.A. Thesis submitted to the Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola.
- OCHA, (2018). Inter-agency Raid Needs Assessment Report: Numan and Demsa, Local Government Areas, Adamawa State, 3rd and 5th July. Abuja, Nigeria.
- Rosenje, M. O. and Adeniyi, O.P.(2021) The Impact of

- Herdsmen-Farmers' Conflict on National Integration in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *FUWukari Journal of Politics & Dev. (FUWJPD)* 5(1): 2636-5081
- Ross, M.L. (2004) How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases. *International Organization*, 58 (1) Winter, pp. 35-67
- Rupesinghe, K. (2002). Democratisation Processes and their implications for International Security. The International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) Oslo, Norway.
- SBM Intelligence. (2016). Death and the herdsmen. Retrieved on July 5, 2016 from http://sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/201604_Herdsmen-attacks.pdf
- Shesterinina, A(2023) Identifying Contemporary Civil Wars' Effects on Humanitarian Needs, Responses & Outcomes. *Daedalus*; 152 (2): 24–37.
- Thaddaeus, A.O and Albert, A.O** (2025). The Nexus of Banditry, Farmer-Herder Clashes and Insecurity in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and Policy Responses. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 9(05), 2083-2090.
- The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)(2015). *Global Terrorism Index. Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism*, New York, U.S.A
- The News (2013). Kill and go Herdsmen: Shocking Catalogue of Murders by Nomadic Cattle Breeders, 17 June, 40(23):14-20
- The Source Magazine (2014). Fulani Militia: The Rise of New Warlords: Why they are killing, 31st March, 24(24): 14-25.
- The Punch (2017) Afenifere sets up panel to monitor herdsmen in South West, 29 March.
- Vanguard, (2016) Herdsmen attack: Abia Government revives Bakassi Boys to guard rural communities, 7 May.

FUNDING: This research work was funded by British Council (Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme