

## **TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN SECURITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND REFUGEES PROTECTION IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Security remains a central issue in human existence. Currently, it has gained greater relevance in the political agenda, owing to its inherent dynamics. The paper consciously interrogated a particular derivation of the concept of security (human security); from the perspective of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in Nigeria. The alarming flow of IDPs and refugees has proven to be problematic in terms of human security in the country. It investigated what has changed that could demand greater attention in crafting a human security regime. Hence the place of technology, state

actors, Non-governmental Organizations and Inter-Governmental Organizations in addressing these concerns became central to this paper. The study therefore, argued that these institutions are inadequate in terms of ensuring and enhancing security and protection of IDPs, and refugees in Nigeria. It is the position of the paper that critical stakeholders of the country, such as leadership of communities, religious leaders, teachers at all levels of education, labour and trade unions, among others, should be captured in the scheme of actions for effective rehabilitation and protection of the IDPs and refugees in all parts of the country. The paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach. Primary and secondary data deployed are qualitatively analyzed.

**Keywords:** Technology, Governance, Security, Perspective, IDPs, and Refugees

## **Introduction**

Humanitarian emergencies are elemental in every human society, and factors that precipitate the emergencies are either predicated by wars, terrorism, insurgencies or other forms of human-made or natural disasters. The notion of internally displaced persons and refugees stems from these challenges. Globally, the issue of displaced persons and refugees is taking the front burner as the globe recorded about 75.9 million IDPs and 117.3 million refugees as at 2023 (<https://www.iom.int/news/759...https://www.internal.displacement.org/>..>). Given these data, Nigeria in particular, recorded about 3.5 million IDPs, ranking among the first ten

countries in the world with the highest number of IDPs (<https://reliefweb.int>nigeria>dis...>).

The preponderance of internal displacement and influx of refugees in Nigeria call for serious attention. This is so because these categories of persons are met with severe starvation, housing, health and educational challenges, discrimination, physical and psychology trauma, among others, which contradict the idea of human security. This indicator of insecurity, if not controlled, could inextricably truncate the security of the country in its entirety. So, there is a dire need for collaborated efforts of critical state holders under the moderation of government and other relevant international organizations to ensure the security of IDPs and refugees. This position is further strengthened by the laws of *jus naturale* (the law of nature: respect for human life, dignity, liberty, and property) (Greene 73-76, 199-202) and the *Jus Gentium* (the law of nations), (<https://www.cambridge.org>books>, <https://www.amazon.com>Funda>) which make treaties and statutes for humanitarian protection and guarantee their implementation.

The two fundamental laws serve as the foundation of humanitarianism and humanitarian law. The philosophy underpinning *Jus Naturale* is supported by the writings of John Locke in his work entitled "The Second Treatise of Government." For Locke, "Every man is born free and equal; nature does not authorize us to kill one another" (Locke 4-13). *Jus Gentium*, on the other hand, comes from the treaty of the social contract of men who hand their rights to the state, which in turn,

offers protection and therefore, makes laws to govern humanity (<https://www.nlnrac.org>). It also covers laws and conventions made by supranational entities like the United Nations, European Union and the African Union (A.U).

Gleaning from the above, the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons is therefore, a monumental task that confronts the state and international communities. This paper seeks to examine the problems of the displaced and refugees, and the extent to which relevant bodies have responded to such challenges in Nigeria. This could be done with due consideration to the institutional frameworks for the protection of people, especially the refugees and IDPs.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is situated within the framework of the cosmopolitan theory. The theory advocates collective responsibility to solve global problems. Accordingly, the phenomena of internal displacement should not be seen as only the responsibility of the affected state, but it should be seen as a global or collective responsibility. Fundamentally, the cosmopolitan theory is relevant to this study because it extends its enquiry beyond sovereign State borders and it assumes that “everyone matters” irrespective of national boundaries (Mogaji 199). It is a philosophical perspective that advocates for the protection of all individuals, regardless of their nationality or location, as moral equals with inherent human rights.

Cosmopolitan owes its etymological derivation from the combination of two Greek words, kosmo (universe or world) and polites (citizens). Therefore, kosmopolites means “citizens of the world” or “global citizens” (Kleingeld and Brown 14-23). It posits that all human beings are of a single community by virtue of their common humanity. It advocates that all human beings should interact across the globe with a high sense of companionship. Furthermore, the theory upholds that all human beings shall be treated equally irrespective of colour, religion, gender, race and nationality. It opens global roles that surpass any social, political, cultural, religious and geographical divisions. Basically, all human beings belong to the same community, regardless of their political or national attachments. Human beings are morally obliged to be good and helpful not only to their fellow country citizens, but also to strangers (Magaji 199). In fact, the cosmopolitan theory champions ‘universal hospitality’ (Magaji 200). Consequently, the idea of IDP and refugee protection chimes with cosmopolitanism. It is observed that the humanitarian crisis affecting IDPs in Nigeria receives less attention from the international community. It is obvious that the plight of IDPs and refugees has become a formidable challenge that requires genuine international attention and assistance and all-inclusive governance

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 could be regarded as clear manifestation of the cosmopolitanism. It “brings human agency back in world politics” (Sugiono, 18). Moreover, the theory recognizes the role of international

institutions, and the importance of finding transnational solutions to global crises. This is because the international institutions are more interested in helping the generality of humanity rather than advancing narrow national institutions. Likewise, O'Neill persuasively argues that when the rights of a particular group are not fully protected, this does not mean that they have insufficient rights (<https://www.researchgate.net>>258). It is because their rights are not fully protected as a result of failure of their states to carry out their internal responsibilities. Consequently, the international agencies as “secondary agents of justice” shall assume the secondary responsibility of protecting the rights the group. This is in tandem with the principle of Right to Protect.

The theory supports the idea that when a state fails to protect its population from mass atrocities, international organizations have a moral obligation to intervene. This intervention can take various forms, including diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, and military action. The recent involvement of the UNHCR, WHO and UNDP in the internal displacement crisis shows the relevance of cosmopolitan theory. The new approach of the agency concerns not only the protection and assistance of the refugees, but also the internally-displaced persons. In this regard, Sadako Ogata, former UN High Commissioner for refugees, urges the international community to prevent or alleviate the plights of both IDPs and refugees (<https://wissjournals.com.ng>).

In summary, cosmopolitan theory provides a moral framework for protecting refugees and IDPs expanding the scope of protection, promoting humanitarian intervention, addressing root causes, and enhancing accountability. Consequently, there is the proliferation of the international organizations' involvement in internal displacement crisis more than ever before. For example, the UNHCR has played a very vital role in the internal displacement crisis not only in Nigeria but in other parts of the world. Moreover, the cosmopolitan theory attempts to reconcile state sovereignty with responsibility. It recognizes that the protection responsibility of the IDPs lies with the state concerned. However, when the state lacks political will or is incapable of discharging those responsibilities, the responsibility shifts to the international community to fill in the gaps of the state responsibilities (<https://wissjournals.com.ng>). Hence holistic governance is imperative.

### **Human Security: The IDP and Refugee Question**

Human displacement is triggered by multi-faceted indices which include but not limited to war, conflict, natural disaster and human-related disasters and is seemingly becoming a recurring phenomena in Nigeria. This poses violations on the victims, affected communities, host communities and the country at large. These set of person are often met with severe challenges that impedes them from beings well-integrated with their host communities. Leaving these groups of dispossessed, violated, and rootless population to their fate, invariably, leads to security risks, such as serving as potential breeding grounds for uncontrollable activities, political

movements, insurgency, terrorism and instability. The impact of refugee flow on host countries can be measured in direct and indirect economic cost, negative social and cultural consequences.

The concept of human security advocates the primacy of human-centered security. It therefore, seeks to address the internally displaced, and refugee question. This draws interest to the UNDP's standard projection (phrase) that ensuring 'freedom from want and freedom from fear' for all persons is the best path to tackle the global insecurity problem. The international humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights act provide a firm legal backing for and authorize the protection of IDPs and refugees (<https://www.icrc.org>file>...>). Apart from the legal backing for the protection of displaced persons during crises, it is also important for collective and coherent efforts to be geared towards averting the causes of displacement as well as managing the displaced and refugees in Nigeria, for example.

### **Governance and Human Security: IDPs and Refugees Protection**

Protection involves "all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law" (Ferris 278). Similarly, Humanitarian Aid Policy of the Swedish government argues that:

Protection includes measures designed to ensure respect for the rights of people in need, in

particular the right to physical safety and dignity. Related measures include calling attention to the obligations of armed groups, registration of the status of refugees or internally displaced persons and education about rights and obligations under international law (Cubie 23).

For protection of refugees and IDPs to be effective, there is the need for concrete legal and institutional frameworks. No doubt, effective protection requires sincere states' commitment to unreservedly implementation of these frameworks. In this respect, Arthur Helton argues "When we speak of 'protection', we mean legal protection. The concept must be associated with entitlements under the law and for effective redress of grievances, mechanism to vindicate claims in respect of those entitlements" (Cubie 119). Therefore, legal protection is beyond providing food and shelter to the IDPs in camps, it must encompass rights to entitlement and legal redress.

### **A three-fold Perspective for Assessing Protection of IDPs and Refugees:**

**The Perspective of the Nation-State:** The sovereignty of the nation-state places it as a primary actor as it holds the geography, territory, and politics within which IDPs and refugees reside (<https://repository.usfca.edu>). Protection works under the framework of a nation-state and is liable under the law and sovereign jurisdiction in which it operates. As a result, nation-states wield a high degree of governance by deciding, controlling, monitoring, and safeguarding the IDPs and refugees

therein. Nation-states use the inherent superstructure-the military to act as a watchdog, enforce, and provide security. It also institutionalizes frameworks for the protection of IDPs and refugees in Nigeria. The frameworks include the framework for the protection of refugees and such for protection of the IDPs. The major legal and institutional framework for the protection of refugees is the National Commission for Refugees (NCFR). The Commission was established by Decree 52 of 1989. It is currently referred to as the National Commission for Refugees Act. The Commission was created with a view to protecting and safeguarding the interests of refugees in Nigeria (<https://www.ncfrmi.com/aboutus>).

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is an institutional framework for the protection of IDPs. NEMA is responsible for providing direct material assistance to displaced persons in Nigeria. It offers material assistance to repatriated Nigerians and IDPs no matter the cause of displacement. NEMA came into existence through the promulgation of the National Emergency Relief Act of 1976 which has today been transformed into National Emergency Management Agency Act 2004 (<https://www.un.spider.org/nigeri...>, <https://repository.elizadeuniversity.edu.ng>).

**The perspective of Non-Governmental Organizations:** Article 1 of the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights stipulates that “everyone has the right individually and in association with others to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedom at national and

international levels” (<https://www.un.org>>...). Upon the various international legal backings, NGOs who are the main drivers because they reach out to victims, affected communities, and internally displaced persons can operate. Some of these NGOs, like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Building Blocks for Peace Foundation, Spaces for Change, CLEEN Foundation, Red Crescent, Save the Children, OXFAM, and many others, exert some form of governance in the humanitarian space. The internal organizational strategy of the NGOs forms the governance of the humanitarian space. The NGOs provide access to resources, professionalism, and support to supplement the resources of the state. NGOs tend to cooperate in the field in the discharge of their distinct organizational roles to avoid friction and undue competition.

The NGOs implement the international domestic code in line with the coordinating roles played by states and international bodies. Finally, some NGOs go beyond their primary objectives to play an advocacy role in the national and international spheres, thereby resulting in positive change. The NGOs personnel also carry out negotiations with the government and other actors (<https://stephanieeffvottu.com>>). However, the caveat here is that the NGOs are unable to do most of the negotiations that the nation-states embark on. The NGOs are not signatories to the United Nations Charter, treaties, and conventions. It is solely designed for the nation-state. Therefore, their position remains insufficient for providing security and protection to the displaced and refugees.

### **The Intergovernmental Organization Perspective:**

This perspective forms the political dimension and the legal dimension. The intergovernmental organization comprises sovereign states coming together to form an entity through multilateral treaties that serve as a constitution, in that states that are signatories are bound by the treaty that sets up the entity. The IGOs include the U.N, AU, EU, the OAS, etc. The U.N. is the supranational organization that regulates state behaviour as well as that of other actors. The U.N. serves as a body that integrates and consolidates the operations of the state, NGOs, and other actors in the humanitarian space.

Multilateral institutions (IGOs) try to create a niche or semblance of governance that is well coordinated under certain rules. They seamlessly govern the humanitarian space, though not without the roles of nation-states and NGOs. Multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, have better crafted international law to protect refugees and IDPs. The U.N. Charter, treaties, and conventions that nation-states are signatories to must be obeyed and respected, and violations could lead to severe consequences. The U.N. designed a specialized agency saddled with the responsibility of ensuring human security during humanitarian crises- the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The commission establishes working relationship with the state, regional, international and NGOs in all parts of the globe (<https://www.ohchr.org>chr>co...> ).

Apart from the U.N, other IGOs at the regional level, such as the AU, also carve out policies and treaties that are in tandem with international law to protect IDPs

and refugees in the region. It is not out of place to argue that IGOs are the pen-ultimate bodies that guide, regulate, and control the actions and inactions of state behaviour, particularly during crises that threaten the survival of man regionally as well as globally. IGOs provide the institutional platform upon which all other actors operate in ensuring the protection of IDPs and refugees.

In all these roles of Nigerian government at all levels, NGOs and IGOs to ensure security and protection of the displaced persons and refugees in particular, there have been increasing cases poor rehabilitation and violation of displaced persons and refugees in the country. It is however, the position of this paper that Nigerian government should establish a legal framework that would capture some critical stakeholders, such as community leaders, religious leaders, teachers at all levels of education, labour and trade unions, among others, in the scheme of actions toward providing security and protection to the displaced and refugees. These stakeholders would help to involve technology (domesticate and indigenize what they know how to do) toward achieving success in the pursuit. The fact is that these categories of stakeholders that form the host communities to the displaced and refugees understand the environments and can enable more effective responses to the victims of displacement (whether they are indigenous persons or foreigners).

It is obvious that effective collaboration of those institutions with these critical stakeholders that have the capacity to provide indigenous and domesticated

technical knowledge (technology) in solving problems will help to redeem the situation. In some environments for example, government and foreign equipped personnel and functionaries might not deliver assignments more efficiently than they could be done if indigenous critical stakeholders are brought into the scheme of actions. It is therefore, expected that in policing environments, local vigilante, with locally-made weapons can lead operations more efficiently than the Nigerian Police and other military and para-military bodies.

### **Factors Militating Against Refugee and IDP Protection in Nigeria**

Clearly, refugee and IDP protection in Nigeria has not been a very smooth and easy task to address. The preponderance of displacement, as well as the glaring realities of the state of displaced persons and refugees begs certain questions- Are the nationally instituted framework really discharging their mandate at optimal? Is the government addressing this issue with kid gloves? Are the international actors doing enough? What then are the factors militating against refugee and IDP protection in Nigeria? The factors militating against refugees and IDPs protection are complex and multifaceted (Mogaji 203, Okorie). These factors include but are not limited to;

- Fragmented, uncoordinated and grossly inadequate activities among humanitarian actors: Lack of proper coordination among the various actors impedes effective internal displacement

management in the country. The coordination challenge exists not only among national agencies but also international actors alike. NEMA and NCFRMI tend to clash because of lack of clear and specific operational and jurisdictional mandate among them over IDPs' mandate. (UNOCHA 18). This challenge is also peculiar to international actors that collaborate with the state. This is so because there is no centralized system among the United Nations agencies in internal displacement situations. It involves several agencies such as the World Food Program (WFP), the UNHCR and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) among others. But coordination has become a challenge to them.

- Mismanagement and Corruption: Report from the New Internationalist discloses that Nigerian IDPs have been suffering because of endemic corruption from the camp officials such as NEMA. It reports that "IDPs are suffering not due to shortages of food and other relief items, but because of endemic corruption in the NEMA and other state emergency agencies which receives and distribute donations" (Malik 1). Other report by the UNDP and NHCR have confirmed that there is gross corruption, criminal misappropriation of funds, diversion of food and non-food items that have been donated for the IDPs (Vanguard Nigeria) . In support of this, the former Nigerian Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo

publicly admitted that about half of the food aids do not reach the IDPs (BBC).

- Security Risk: Conflict dynamics in some cases put the lives of humanitarian workers at risk. Again the longevity and dynamics of conflict has causes extensive humanitarian crisis in certain region of Nigeria- North East and North West, rendering many people homeless-the Boko Haram insurgencies (Thurston 17). Furthermore, the security constraints have hindered humanitarian actors from accessing displaced persons. Many have been trapped in hard-to-reach areas and without access to humanitarian services. This has subjected them to a lot of hardships because they have been cut off from humanitarian access (Amnesty International). The level of insecurity becomes a major challenge for the international humanitarian actors to access the victims. Even the IDP camps are not free from insurgent attacks using suicide bombers (UNHCR).
- Inadequate Resources: Lack of adequate financial resources is one of the constraints that hinder national and international agencies to adequately protect and assist the displaced persons. At the national level, this may be in adequate not because it has not been adequately budgeted for, but the reoccurrence of humanitarian emergencies within a period of time may outweigh the budget, state resources. At the international level, there is no consistent international funding for the IDPs. Unlike

funding for the refugees', there is no general provision for funding internal displacement.

The agency depends on the donations getting from other countries and organizations, which are usually inadequate to meet the increasing needs of the IDPs in Nigeria and the world in general. This situation produces lack of capacity, infrastructures and manpower (Eweka& Olusegun 16). The UNHCR has been overstretched in assisting and protecting people, such as the IDPs that are not part of its primary mandate. Recently, the number of IDPs that are desperately in need of assistance and protection of the UNHCR has increased, but the funding has not (<https://wissjournals.com.ng>).

## **Conclusion**

It is undoubtedly unveiled that there are numerous cases of IDPs and refugees in virtually all parts of Nigeria. However, certain factors that are not limited to war, terrorism, banditry, unpatriotic activities, and other forms disaster are responsible. Yet, government as the key state actor reserves the right for provision of security of lives and property at all costs. IDPs and refugees are no exception. To achieve this, government has over the year's maintained synergy with NGOs and IGOs. Yet, the collaboration has not provided the expected results toward rehabilitating, providing security, and protection for the displaced and refugees in the country. This study however, is of the position that indigenous and critical stakeholders should be brought into the scheme of actions. They would help in domesticating and indigenizing the approaches and

technology toward achieving the aims of rehabilitating and safe guiding the victims of displacement and refugees from violation.

This expanded synergy with legal and material supports would better harness what and where they know, their technological power and other instruments to ensure that their responsibilities as they relate to the displaced persons and refugees are fulfilled. Inasmuch as the team of state actors, NGOs, IGOs and other critical stakeholders is charged to live up to its responsibilities on the violated, displaced and refugees, the rights of their host communities and persons must as well, be protected. So, government and its co-players are to set a framework for peaceful co-existence between the displaced persons, refugees and their hosts.

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