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Suicide Bombing of Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Northeast Nigeria, 2015-2017

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Abstract. Terrorism and insurgency have created a vast population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), in Nigeria. This has led to the proliferation of internally displaced persons' camps in some towns especially in the Northeast of Nigeria, which is the epicentre of violent insurgency. Many IDP camps have been set up as part of government responses to population displacement because of insurgencies. While some scholars have examined the challenges, management, and roles of government and non-governmental organisations (NGO) on IDPs, scanty attention has been paid to how the IDP camps have become soft targets for suicide bombers. Suicide attacks have in recent times been carried out in and around different IDP camps on an alarming rate, thereby, raising the question of security challenges confronting these camps. This chapter examines how IDP camps have become targets for suicide bombers due to lapses in security management. The study has become imperative to draw the attention of relevant government agencies to this menace with the view of strengthening security around these already disadvantaged people. The study is carried out using primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources used include oral interviews and newspaper reports, while secondary sources utilised relevant books and journal articles. The chapter recommends that a robust security mechanism be set-up around IDP camps while relocating those vulnerable to attacks.

Keywords: Suicide bombing, Terrorism, Insurgency, Internally Displaced Persons, International Humanitarian Laws.

1. Introduction

Terrorism, insurgency, and counter-insurgency operations in the Northeast of Nigeria have created a vast population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Studies estimate that there are currently over 3 million displaced persons in the Northeast. While local and international humanitarian organisations grapple with the management of these IDPs, *Boko Haram* has adopted the tactics of targeting IDP camps where displaced persons are temporarily housed. The reason for this tactic remains a source of scholarly debate. Comolli directly linked the increased rate of suicide attacks on the changing tactics of *Boko Haram* to use young girls beginning with the abduction of the Chibok girls, abducted over time. (Comolli, 2015: 161). Omeni argues that suicide bombing is a broader tactic adopted by *Boko Haram* to avoid engagement altogether while ensuring the use of such attacks to sustain propaganda. (Omeni, 2018: 18)

Boko Haram's campaign of violence has been multidimensional, aside ambush of police and military personnel, they bombed markets, raided banks, kidnapped, and engaged in a confrontation with the Nigerian security forces. (Omeni, 2018: 2) This is consistent with the actions of global terror groups such as Islamic State, *Al-Qaida*, and Hamas among others. Gupta and Mundra (2005: 573) observed that terrorist groups use multidimensional attacks to achieve their politically motivated goals and objectives. Suicide bombing features prominently among the tactics used by terror groups like *Boko Haram*, these attacks have been extended to IDP camps.

Recently, some scholars have linked the increased attack on targets such as markets, schools, and government establishment to the loss of territories previously occupied by the Boko Haram. For example, Vesna Markovic observed that one of *Boko Haram*'s tactic is of using suicide bombing has been

changing over time, between 2009 and 2014, the terror group used suicide bombing to target Churches, Government buildings and markets, however, Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) by Nigerian armed forces made the group to adopt a gender dimension, by using female suicide bombers who could easily blend into specific settings. She observed that the group target civilians using girls as young as 7 years of age to attack targets.

This paper examines the dynamics of suicide bombing in IDPs camp in Northeast Nigeria. The failure of the security forces of Nigeria to prevent these attacks has further increased the vulnerability of IDP camps to suicide bombing attacks. The concept of suicide bombing and the gender dimension it has assumed in the Northeast is explored theoretically with evidence of specific attacks on IDPs camps in the Northeast. The authors explore the links between increased suicide attack camps and the abduction of young women in the Northeast, the extent of suicide attacks in the area, as well as the government response to suicide bombings of IDP camps. The chapter opines that suicide bombing of IDP camps is a strategy utilised by terror groups such as *Boko Haram* to create maximum impact, attract media attention, cause fear as well as disrupt the lives of IDP. More importantly, IDPs are targets because they are easily infiltrated especially by female suicide bombers who easily blend into their camps.

2. Background: *Boko Haram* Terrorism in the Northeast

The horrendous activities of *Boko Haram* or *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati wa'al* Jihad (people commit ed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), is often traced to three periods, first, the group is often traced to 1995 when the *Ahlulsunna wal'jama'ah hijrah* or Muslim Youth Organization (MYO) was set up by Ahmadu Lawan in University of Maiduguri as a non-violent sect that preaches conservative Islam. Second, the group is traced to 2002, when Mohammed Yusuf was appointed by a group of *Shayks* (learned Muslims) to act as the leader of the group when Ahmadu Lawan departed to the Middle East for further studies on Islam. Yusuf quickly embarked on power grab by ousting the committee of *Shayks* that appointed him by accusing them of corruption. He embarked on violent preaching and was quickly identified with such names as *Muhajirun, Yusuffiyyah*, and even "Nigerian Taliban". His preaching was anti-government and anti-secularism. To consolidate his power, he established a so-called caliphate called "Afghanistan" in Kanama Geiam having attacked public buildings and police stations in the town on Christmas Eve 2003. The dastardly act of violence unleashed on the town was what brought the group to the attention of security operatives. It appeared the violence drew many young Muslims to his stead, as youths previously in the University of Maiduguri abandoned their studies and joined the group.

Yusuf's preaching has been explained as being inspired by the thirteenth-century Sufi preacher Ibn Taymiyyah. Several reasons can be adduced, first, the mosque which the group established in Maiduguri and where most of his preaching were done was called Ibn Taimihyyah Masjid. Second, Ibn Taimiyyah was a Salafist of the Sufi order. According to Comolli (2015), Salafism is:

…is a movement within Sunni Islam that is characterised by being literalist and puritanical in its interpretation of the Quran and Hadiths. Their study of the basic source of Islam is at the core of Salafism and a way of ridding Islam from external/non-Muslim influences. Furthermore, there is a strong propensity among its followers to clash with the state… (15-16)

While there are other versions of the early origins of *Boko Haram*, what is obvious is that the militant nature of *Boko Haram* emerged when Yusuf Mohammed took over the leadership of the sect. The violent campaign of *Boko Haram* soon emerged to be channelled not just against the state as Comolli observed above but also any other preacher of Islam that was seen by the group as not preaching the version of Islam they have come to embrace.

The group embarked upon a series of violence that included assassinating Islamic leaders that were seen as preaching against them, one such case was the murder of Sheik Adam Ja'far Mahmud who was assassinated in Kano state. The killing of the Sheik was allegedly connected with his open rejection of violence against the state and fellow Muslims. As from 2004 to 2007, *Boko Haram* went underground and reinforced itself, the group recruited more members and even sent some to receive training from other terror groups overseas. Comolli observed that:

…some senior Boko Haram members are believed to have travelled to Pakistan to obtain funding from al-Qaeda to carry out attacks against American targets in Nigeria…Mallam Mohammed Ashafa, a suspected Nigerian Taliban member from Kano, was arrested in 2006 on charges of receiving funds from two Al-Qaeda operatives at the Tabligh headquarters in Lahore, Pakistan… (2009:51)

The intensity of *Boko Haram*'s violence was witnessed between 2007 and 2009. They openly

contested spaces with public officials in 2007 when the group attacked a police station in Kano. This led to military deployment in the state. In 2008, the group attacked another police station in Maiduguri, which led to the arrest of Yusuf who was then charged to court, but for several institutional and administrative failures that have become synonymous with the Nigerian justice system, the Nigerian state was unable to hold him accountable for his alleged involvements with directed violence against the state. The implication was that Yusuf's led *Boko Haram* became emboldened. The lack of appropriate sanction for offenses appeared to be the norm of the Nigerian society and this has led to the proliferation of crime and criminal gangs that have taken advantage of the loose Nigerian system to perpetrate all forms of crime. The lack of timely intervention to stem the tide of *Boko Haram* despite the clear dangers the group presented to the Nigerian state had immense consequences.

Initial effort to curb the activities of the group was in form of "Operation Flush" which was launched to ensure the security of the lives and properties of the people in the hinterland of Borno State. However, *Boko Haram* saw this as a direct challenge to their growing influence. Therefore, *Boko Haram* built on the resentment of the public who decried the high handedness of the security operatives implementing Operation Flush to increase tension and rhetoric against the state.

The year 2009 marked a turning point in the Nigerian state versus the *Boko Haram* relationship when members of the group clashed with security operatives. Yusuf used this opportunity to denounce the state and claimed that the Nigerian state as well as the Borno State government were not only against *Boko Haram*, but against Islam. This message resonated with its members as they mobilized and embarked on violent attacks of public offices especially police stations and prisons around the Northeast states. Studies have already shown the aftermath of these confrontations. However, the most significant was the arrest and death of Yusuf Mohammed in the hands of security operatives on 30th July 2009. His most notable affiliates, namely Yusuf Buji Foi who had served as Commissioner under Ali Modu Sheriff when he was Governor of Borno State, his father-in-law, Baba Fugu Mohammed were both killed by Nigerian security operatives. (Iyekekpolo, 2016: 2215; Ojo, 2010: 47; Walker, 2012: 4)

These extrajudicial killings by the Nigerian authorities served as propaganda materials for the new leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau. As a successor to Yusuf Mohammed, Shekau's influence over *Boko Haram* grew rapidly as he was able to use available footages on media circulation about extrajudicial killings and injustices meted out to the members. The initial response of the group was to target three categories of groups: the first was the security operatives; *Boko Haram* embarked on a violent attack of police stations, prisons, and Federal Road Safety offices. (Adam Ahmed, Personal communication, June 10, 2020) The second group was Borno State Officials directly related to Ali Modu Sheriff, their perceived enemy who was initially their ally. Lastly, were Muslim clerics that vehemently opposed and preached against the sect's version of Islam.

But in 2011, the group came to embrace all types of public establishments in its violent campaigns. It also became clear that the group intentionally targeted Churches to give the impression that it was targeting Christians to draw sympathy from undiscerning Muslims, the violent campaign of the group only intensified and widened with time. The bombing of churches and mosques, schools and other public buildings increased. The first suicide attack on public buildings was carried out on August 26,2011 with the bombing of the United Nation's building in Abuja, others were to follow. (Oko, Ufomba, & Benjamin, 2018: 34)

As of 2013, the sect sought to take control of the vast expanse of land through open confrontation with Nigerian authorities. *Boko Haram* even succeeded in taking over some local government areas and border towns with Cameroon. Consequently, *Boko Haram*'s activities led to millions of displaced persons in the Northeast. A recent estimate by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reveals that about 2.4 million to 3.7 million people have been displaced in the Northeast.

3. Conceptual clarification

3.1 Suicide Bombing

Suicide bombing does not have a generally accepted definition. Scholars define the term according to the context in which it is being used. It is often interchangeably used as suicide terrorism. According to Choi and Piazza suicide bombing is a type of terrorism in which the perpetrator intends to die while launching the attack. (2016: 1034) Schweitzer and Sari Goldstein define suicide terrorism as "a politically motivated violent attack perpetrated by a self-aware individual (or individuals) who actively and purposely causes his death by blowing himself up along with his chosen target. The perpetrator's

ensured death is a precondition for the success of his mission." (2005: 10) Similarly, according to US Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, suicide bombing (also interchangeably used with suicide terrorism) refers to an operational method in which terrorists attack is dependent on the death of the attacker, such attack aims to derive maximum terror (to cause fear, to intimidate individuals and government or society in pursuance of ideological political or regional goals). The major denominators of these definitions are that suicide bombing involves an attacker premeditating his/her death while carrying out a terror attack. And the main objective is to ensure maximum terror.

Finally, it is important to say that suicide bombing is a rational act, (Genç, 2015; Choi and Piazza; 2016) and it is part of a wider organization of terror attacks directed to cause harm and fear. The present attempt is not aimed at ascertaining why terrorist groups use suicide bombing as a mode of attack, scholars have explained several factors that cause terror groups to use suicide terrorism (Atran, 2003; Post 2005; Sageman 2005; Silke 2003; Azam 2005; Gupta 2004; Pipes 2004; Maikovich 2005; Margalit 2003; Prusher 2005) but how *Boko Haram* has used suicide bombing of IDP camps to sustain their campaign of violence and the seeming inability of the Nigerian security forces to curtail such attacks.

3.2 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

These are people that have been forced from their homes for several reasons such as violence, natural disaster, or because of persecution. The UN General Principle on Internally Displacement defines IDP as:
… persons or a group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters and which have not crossed an internally recognized state border. (2001: 1).

According to the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2009), which is the operational term adopted in this study, the term "Internally Displaced Persons" is defined as "*persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border"* [Article 1 (k)]

Two key elements of the descriptive definition above may be discerned, the first element is that displacement occurs when people are coerced out of fear, to run or flee from their homes, properties, and the abandonment of their economic activities. The second element is that those fleeing their homes have not crossed their national borders. Therefore, while refugees and IDPs may share a similar cause of displacement, the difference remains that refugees cross international borders while IDPs remain within their national borders.

Despite this difficulty in definition, IDPs have continued to increase in the 21st century because of the multiplicity of violent conflicts around the world. Since 2009 terrorism and insurgency by *Boko Haram* and other terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) have led to huge cases of population displacement especially in the Northeast of Nigeria. As a result of the *Ad hoc* nature of Nigeria's response to IDPs, the camps are usually makeshift in schools, army or police barracks, and abandoned factories.
Camps: the definition of camp adopted in this study is that offered by National Policy of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria, (2012) it defines camps as *erected sites with non-permanent shelters (e.g., tents) used for the collective and communal accommodation of evacuated or displaced persons. Camps can be planned (i.e., purposely built sites, completed before or during the influx) or settled (i.e., set up spontaneously by internally displaced persons or host communities without the support of the government or the humanitarian community).* (13)

Some assumptions in this study are as follows; first, there is a high level of suicide bombing of IDPs camps in the Northeast (see table 1). This situation is supported by Choi and Piazza who argue that high number of IDPs leads to increased suicide attacks. (2016: 1013) Secondly, the government's inability to adequately protect IDP camps has allowed suicide bombers to easily infiltrate them. Also, the suicide bombing of IDPs has mostly been successful because of the use of female terrorists to carry out attacks as they can easily infiltrate IDP camps. Finally, more protection of IDP camps can lead to reduced number of suicide attacks.

3.3 State of IDP Camps in Nigeria

IDP camps face many challenges in Nigeria. There are acute shortages of essential amenities such as

water, healthy sleeping materials, and proper shelter. In addition to these, relief materials are in short supply because of the government's lack of proper coordination, corruption poor management. International relief agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Bank, and others are at the forefront of providing relief materials to IDP camps in the Northeast.

Recently there have been reports of human rights violations in camps such as sexual abuse, rape, prostitution, and other forms of exploitation, as well as trafficking in persons. The acute shortage of relief materials is IDP camps have a feature of temporary erected shelters for the accommodation of displaced persons. This has further exacerbated the vulnerability of the camps. Camps are usually located in schools, barracks, and disused factories among others. The level of exposure of the camps is high, very little fencing is visible around many of these camps.

4. Terrorism and Displacement in the Northeast

Boko Haram's tactics of using suicide bombers emerged after 2009. The group coordinated suicide attacks on the Nigerian army, government buildings, markets, and plazas. For instance, in 2011 the group successfully carried out attacks on United Nations building and Nigeria Police Force Headquarters in Abuja. Those attacks marked the actual beginning of using suicide bombers as tactics. (Omeni, 2018: 4) Moreover, these coordinated attacks made it clear that their broader interests lie in creating terror and not just controlling swathes of land in the Northeast. (Omeni, 2018: 14)

Boko Haram has continually adopted a pattern of bombing churches, mosques, markets, and other easy targets. In 2016, the terror group was labeled the second most deadly group according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI, 2017). Abubakar Shekau the sworn leader of the group tended to adopt an indiscriminate attack on civilian population especially displaced people, compared to Abu Musab-al-Barnawi who prefers to target security forces. (Comolli, 2015: 21) If Shekau aimed to build an Islamic caliphate as his rhetoric often reveals, then, the leader paid no attention to building any relationship with the civilian population. His reliance on fear and violence was aimed at maintaining control in the territories of the Northeast. The incessant attacks have left millions of displaced persons who despite fleeing their homes and economic activities for the safety of camps have become targets for Boko Haram.

Aside from *Boko Haram*, internal displacement has been caused by other variables such as population relocation and displacement, which are some of the major techniques of counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. This is done either intentionally or unintentionally. Population displacement may be done intentionally during COIN when certain groups of people are evacuated to a more secure location, because of imminent COIN. In Nigeria COIN has also led to the displacement of massive population. Residents of some parts of Northeast have had to flee their homes because of targeted bombings by the Nigerian military of areas they suspect to harbouring *Boko Haram* elements. Civilian populations have had to flee areas of operations for fear of being caught up in the crossfire between the Nigeria military and *Boko Haram* members.

4.1 The Vulnerability of IDPs to Suicide Attack

Several factors make IDP camps vulnerable: the high concentration of people in the camps make them attractive as targets. When suicide bombings occur, victims are often in a state of panic. In the ensuing disorder, stampede may occur leading to further deaths and injuries, the general feeling of distrust for government increases as the displaced persons may feel abandoned. More so, international media coverage is guaranteed for such attacks which improve the visibility of the terror group.

The weak security structure around IDP camps is also another factor that makes them vulnerable to attacks. Deployment of security personnel in Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) which, has been pointed out as inadequate is depriving camps of urgently needed security. Moreover, Police formations in the Northeast appear inadequately equipped to guard IDPs. Therefore, inadequate resources in COIN have increased the vulnerability of IDPs. Choi and Piazza offer alternative explanations on why IDPs may be susceptible to attacks. According to them, countries with a larger population of IDPs are more likely to experience suicide terrorism. They aver that:

A set of intervening factors…mediate the relationship between internal displacement and suicide terrorism…(a) economic deprivation (b) ethnic conflict (c) human rights abuses (d) raising counterterrorism costs/ taxing state capacity… internal displacement boosts each of these factors, thereby creating an environment in which suicide attackers can be more easily recruited, suicide attacks can be more easily planned and launched, and suicide

terrorism will be met with higher approval or less condemnation from constituent groups of the terrorist movements themselves. (2016:1013)

Choi and Piazza's submission implies that, IDPs are vulnerable because of the debilitating economic situation. As noted earlier, they lack the basic facilities that make life meaningful such as lack of adequate nutrition, medical care, clean drinking water, shelter, education, and security. The implication is the tendency of IDPs to serve as both avenues for recruitment for terrorists and easy targets for terrorists. Choi and Piazza contend that poverty serves as a motivating factor for potential terrorists. (2016: 1013) Since most of the population of IDPs are potentially female, hence the tendency to have more female suicide bombers being recruited and carrying out attacks.

Existing ethnic fractures within the Northeast in which the Kanuri population feels politically and economically marginalized have fueled massive recruitment drive by *Boko Haram*. Commoli (2015) observed that the Kanuri population are mostly among the terrorists recruited by *Boko Haram*, while this may fuel the notion that there is an ethnic coloration in the recruitment and violent drive of *Boko Haram*. It may not be a sufficient explanation as *Boko Haram* has defied any easy explanation in terms of potential targets and who violence is directed at.

Human rights abuses have been a recurring decimal in the Northeast in the years before and after *Boko Haram* terrorism began. National security operatives such as Police and the Nigerian military have been indicted for several human rights abuse by both local and international observers. IDPs in the Northeast continue to suffer human rights abuses on several levels such as violence, rape, transactional sex, physical and verbal abuse. Such abuse is capable of alienating members of the IDPs and encouraging them to embrace the rhetoric of terrorists who find IDPs as an avenue for recruitment and suicide attacks. Several attackers whose bombs did not detonate have confessed to being children of displaced persons and whose parents may even be in camps they targeted (see table 1).

There are three observable tactics that *Boko Haram* has been using within the context of insecurity around IDPs: The first is the reliance on female suicide bombers especially girls. The reason is that they can easily circumvent checkpoints and blend into the IDP population. Second is the infiltration of IDP flow and camp. Mbiyozo (2017: 4) observed that the practice serves two purposes, such as ensuring that they are evasive and turning victims of *Boko Haram* insurgency into suspect themselves. The implication is that security forces and IDP camp administrators are distrusted by the victims of violent conflicts in the region. Third, is the adoption of asymmetric warfare by the group to ensure the effective propagation of their violent campaigns. Recognizing their weaknesses in terms of men and equipment to withstand the Nigerian state, *Boko Haram* continues to adjust their tactics by adopting the suicide bombing of easy targets to foster their objectives. Osakwe and Audu observe that since groups like *Boko Haram* follow no rule and conventional military tactics, they tend to be innovative in their technologies and means of violence, which complicates military operations to root out the group. (2017: 1) IDPs have thus remained major targets of the group, thereby further complicating the challenge of COIN. Table 1 below, shows that 2015 witnessed the first successful targeting of IDPs camps by suicide bombing; this was carried out by *Boko Haram* using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) such as Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED). In that attack, seven persons lost their lives. Other attacks in the Northeast have since followed.

Over time, it is becoming clearer that there is a gender dimension to attacks on IDP camps. Women and children are likely to be more affected by bombings in IDP camp because they generally constitute a greater population of those displaced who reside in camps. More so, most suicide bombers that have targeted IDPs are female. For instance, the use of female suicide bombers to attack IDPs camps have been adopted as a tactic by the *Boko Haram*. This is not a new phenomenon; terrorists have used female suicide bombers successfully in other climes. These attacks by female suicide bombers were successful for many reasons. Bloom and Matfess observed that contrary to previously held notions of female victimhood with regards to insurgent groups, women are increasingly playing important roles in tactical operations within the ranks of terror groups. (2016: 106) They observe that using women to carry out terror attacks is a tactical response of insurgent groups to COIN in various locations. (Matfess, 2016: 106) Marway observed that simply classifying women as victims of insurgent groups does not give a full picture of how women are used as agents among the insurgent group. (2015: 111) Women play different roles within modern terrorist groups such as functioning as brides to militants, operating safe houses and carrying out suicide attacks. (Markovic, 2019; Bigio and Vegestein: 2019)

Women have mostly been used to carry out suicide bombings at IDP camps in the Northeast of Nigeria. Between 2015 and 2017, close 30 attacks on IDPs were recorded in Northeast Nigeria and the Cameroonian border. In over half of those attacks, female suicide bombers were involved. (See table 1) The lethality of suicide bombing as a tactic reflects the tendency of terrorists to adopt such tactics. Even though suicide bombing accounted for only 3% of terror attacks carried out between 1980 and 2003, the casualty level compared to other forms of a terrorist attack was 48%. As terrorist attacks increased since 2004, terrorists have increased the frequency of suicide bombings tremendously. (Eugene O. Eugene, personal communication, June 15, 2020) In Nigeria, *Boko Haram* has equally adopted such tactics, deploying explosive vests, vehicles, and other IEDs.

4.3 Intensification of the Suicide bombing of IDP and through Female bodies

There appears to be a connection between the abduction of young girls by *Boko Haram* and the increased suicide bombing of IDP camps. Although the insurgents had carried out series of abduction before 2014, the audacious invasion of a Chibok secondary school on 14th April 2014 and the abduction of nearly 300 schools creates a timeline of *Boko Haram*'s changing tactics. Subsequently, On 8th June 2014, the first female suicide bombing was carried out in Gombe state. In that same month, 60 women were abducted in a village in Borno State. Since then, the frequency of female suicide bombing increased. On 30th July 2014, a 10-year-old girl was arrested wearing a suicide belt. Markovic rightly observed that young girls have been used to carry out suicide attacks in the Northeast:

It has been reported by the United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) that numerous suicide bombers were age 14 or younger. In 2015, there were at least 44 child suicide bombers in Nigeria…it is not always possible to discern whether a bomber was forced, coerced, tricked, or willingly carried out an attack. Due to this limitation, all attacks that were carried out, whether forced, coerced, or otherwise… (2019: 2)

In October 2015, a suicide bomber targeted the Baga Sola refugee camp in the Nigerian boundary with the Republic of Chad, 37 people lost their lives in that attack with several others injured. In November 2015, a female suicide bomber attacked an IDP camp in Maiduguri killing 8 persons and injuring many others. The suicide bomber believed to be 20 years of age infiltrated the camp by posing as a displaced person; she used an explosive vest and detonated her bomb while IDPs were being screened.

One of the deadliest attacks on the IDP camp occurred in Sangaya Camp, Dikwa, Borno State. Two female suicide bombers detonated bombs in the camp that led to the killing of 58 IDPs and humanitarian workers. (Ime Bassey, Personal communication, November 16, 2020) Several others were injured in that attack. The third suicide bomber refused to detonate her bomb because she realized that her parents were in the camp. The Dikwa attack remains one of the deadliest attacks on IDP camps by Boko Haram and its affiliates. The outcry from local and international media that the attack received reveals a major reason why Boko Haram has sustained attacks on IDPs camps. As the attacks were being condemned by local and international observers, *Boko Haram* became more dreaded and was listed as the second deadliest terror group by the GTI.

However, not all the suicide bombing attempts on IDP camps have been successful. In October 2016, a sniper shot down a 30-year-old suicide bomber who was attempting to blow up an IDP camp in Borno State that housed displaced persons from Bakassi. In November of the same year, another terrorist was shot while trying to detonate a bomb in Garage IDP camp in Maiduguri. Other failures have been because of the inexperience of the suicide bombers, for instance in February 2017, a female suicide bomber detonated her bomb prematurely when she was spotted at the Banki IDP camp, Bama, Borno State.

Another factor that has made *Boko Haram* deadly is the tactical alignment with foreign terror groups such as *Al Qaeda* in the Maghreb (AQIM), *Al-Shabab*, and the Islamic State. Comolli observed that *Boko Haram* alongside AQIM and *Al-Shabab* that carry out suicide attacks and disseminates martyrdom videos. The terror group has equally made statements of links with terror groups by claiming their fighters have been trained in Somalia.

Strategic terrorism and acts of desperation have been explained as being the reason for the adoption of the suicide bombing of IDP camps. In this case, *Boko Haram* understands the strong negative sentiments attached to bombing vulnerable people and the wide international attention it will receive by way of condemnation which appears in all forms of media across the globe. Several such strong-worded condemnations have since been given by both local and international organizations after those attacks. This means that *Boko Haram* continues to remain in foreign and local media, thereby indicating their relevance in the global jihad.

As an act of desperation, the suicide bombing of IDP camps is an attempt by *Boko Haram* to retain a presence in areas they previously declared as caliphate. The sect has mostly been denied of occupying territories in the Northeast, they have alienated the local population because of their continued violence and there appears to be no actual achievement that has been derived from its long-term terror campaign. If anything, *Boko Haram* has become a mere dreaded terror group that is deeply hated by the local population. The implication is that the terrorist attacks on IDP camps show the sect as a bloodthirsty group that seeks to maintain relevance in the Northeast against all odds. According to Omeni (2018):

Bearing all this in mind, it, therefore, becomes unclear what *Boko Haram*'s "strategic" use of terrorism is. There seem to be no real overall or long-term objectives to the scores of suicide bombings and attacks on local communities. These incidents do not take the insurgent any closer to his territorial ambition, they do not serve to convince victims that *Boko Haram* is a viable alternative to the Nigerian state's dereliction of duty, and they do not serve to dissuade further escalation of the military's counter-threat. Rather then, *Boko Haram*'s terrorism thus appears to be an end in and of itself, not a means to a viable strategic end, but a sign of desperation. (10).

However, the lives of those *Boko Haram* suicide bombing have affected are real and relevant. IDP camps have been denied critical aids and supply by local international agencies working in the Northeast. The government has equally been short in terms of IDP protection. Operations around IDP camps by security agencies have sometimes put the displaced persons in harm's way. For instance, on 17th January 2017, the Nigerian Airforce bombed an IDP camp in Rann, killing over 236 displaced persons including 8 foreign humanitarian workers. (Premiumtimesng.com, January 17, 2017) The bombing led to serious outcry and outpouring of grief, while the air force blamed several reasons for the bombing. No doubt, this was nothing short of collateral damage.

4.4 The Effect of Suicide Bombing Activities on IDP Camps

There are multifaceted effects of the suicide bombing of IDP camps. The actions of suicide bombings in IDPs camps have tremendous effects on humanitarian provisioning. Humanitarian organizations have become reluctant to send insufficient manpower to the Northeast. This has adverse implications on IDPs, especially in medicine, food and shelter, the situation has become desperate because of the activities of suicide bombers.

The psychological effect of the devastation caused by the suicide bombing of IDP camps has increased over time. Asanebi and Ayibatan observed that suicide bombing has several health effects such as emotional trauma due to the shock that follows suicide bombing: fear, numbness, anxiety, and disorders. (2018: 132-133) Other health effects of suicide bombing include confusion and disorientation, depression, hypervigilance, and hyper-arousal. These are the culmination of profound fear that follows the sound of the explosion.

The health situation in IDP camps is precarious. According to Faronbi *et al*, IDP camps need serious health service provisioning because many hospitals around the Northeast have been shut down, the available ones are overstretched, underserved, and underfunded. (2019: 247) Suicide bombing around IDP camps has thus further stretched health services. The urgency required of victims of suicide attacks worsens as the state of emergency health response face massive shortages.

4.5 Protection of IDP Camps

The Nigerian government is vested with the protection of every Nigerian life including those of IDPs from internal and external threats. In several measures, the government has not successfully fulfilled this obligation. Nigeria faces multi-internal security stress and threat because of terrorism, banditry, intercommunal cleavages, armed robbery, and other crimes that have led to the loss of lives and properties of citizens. With specific reference to terrorism, the country has been plagued with a *Boko Haram* sect that has shown resilience in their threat to the lives and properties of the citizens. Activities of *Boko Haram* terrorists have led to massive loss of lives and population displacement in the Northeast, and indications are that the activities of the group are fuelling cattle rustling and banditry as a way of improving the group's financial base. The implication is that the creation of IDP camps in many fronts within Nigeria has the potential of expanding the operational zones of suicide terrorism, since high presence of IDPs invariably leads to high cases of suicide attacks by terrorists. (Choi and Piazza, 2016:1013)

Evaluation of government response to *Boko Haram* reveals that Counterinsurgency (COIN) against Boko Haram have been carried out through different operations, first was Operation Flush as already noted. This operation was a state government

response to early *Boko Haram* activities in 2008. The chronology of COIN operations against *Boko Haram* is as follows:

2011-Operation Restore Order, a Joint Task Force (codenamed JTF-ORO) 2011
2013-Civilian JTF 2013, to help in the war against *Boko Haram*.
2013-Multinational Joint Task Force (M-JTF) (consisting of Nigerian, Chadian, Cameroonian, and Nigerien troops were either established or reinstated. This is because the M-JTF had been in operation since 1998 when it was established to tackle Chadian rebels and bandits in the Lake Chad Basin.)
2013-Operation BOYONA was launched, the codename was gotten from Borno. Yobe, Nasarawa, and Adamawa states. (Launched May 2013).
2013-Operation Zaman Lafiya (Launched August 2013).
2015-Lafiya Dole (launched July 2015).

Source: Osakwe, C.C.C., & Audu, B.J. (2017). "Nigeria's Military Operations in the Lake Chad Basin." *Journal of Defence Management* 7: 162. doi:10.4172/2167-0374.1000162.

These operations have recorded a measure of successes as well as failures, while *Boko Haram* has not been defeated, the group has been degraded and restricted to the Northeast area, contrary to the previous spread of their attacks. However, the most visible of the failures is the continued attacks by *Boko Haram* at intervals on both military and civilian targets, as well as human rights violations that continue to bedevil military operations in the Northeast. More so, vulnerable groups such as IDP camps have not been given adequate protections despite the huge allocation that has been given to the security sector in Nigeria.

Several factors have hindered the effective protection of IDP camps in Nigeria. First, there is a lack of a proper legal framework that guides for the protection of IDPs in Nigeria. There is a lack of recognition of the special needs IDP camps require for proper protection. This is because IDP camp protection is organized within the wider COIN operations. This is not adequate in several respects. First, IDPs need special protection that requires different techniques used in the prosecution of COIN, for instance, the kind of stop-and-search techniques used in the Northeast if applied to IDPs risks violating their human rights and further weakening existing trust between the state and the IDPs. Since *Boko Haram* are known to infiltrate camps, information gathering should be at the forefront of IDP camps' protection.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) popularly called drones are a very important tool in the protection of IDP camps. The scope of the surveillance capacity of modern drones can reduce the physical areas under the protection of ground troops. This is because surveillance equipment in drones can be used to monitor activities around IDP camps. This will lead to the early detection of unusual movements and the prevention of potential suicide attacks. Another advantage of drones is that they can fix on specific targets, making it easier to efficiently identify unusual movements and behaviours which could be analysed by experts to offer a prediction about a potential suicide bomber. Drones are now very sophisticated and commercially available.

Poor identity management of IDPs has fostered the easy infiltration of foreign bodies into their camps. The failure of both local and foreign officials to create an easy means of identification in IDP camps continues to pose security challenges. Creating unique ID cards have the potential of making for quick identification of terrorists who may infiltrate camps. If IDPs are issued identity cards with verifiable security features, it can reduce the operational time used in identifying IDPs, so that such energies can be channelled to other areas of protection. Although, this measure could be circumvented by the terrorists.

There is a tendency to overlook the role women could play in the prevention of terrorist attacks in IDP camps since it has been established that *Boko Haram* use female suicide bombers for these attacks, any successful operation to ensure the prevention of suicide attacks on IDPs must give women specific roles such as identification of members of the camp, proper searching of fully dressed women to avoid the allegation of sexual molestation by men, and training of women to identify potential terrorists.

More so, it may be necessary to carry out simulation exercises in IDPs camps on expected behaviours during an attack to prevent the panic that often follows the suicide bombings of IDPs. This is because when an attack occurs in some IDP camps, some people often run into the attackers out of fear upon hearing an explosion, thereby causing their deaths. Simulation exercises in other places susceptible to natural or manmade situations have helped prevent avoidable fatalities.

Media blackout could be employed as a tactic to frustrate the activities of *Boko Haram* terrorists. Since they enjoy media coverage of their dastardly acts and tend to remain relevant through cheap

publicity, the Nigerian state could consider the option of media blackout. If no coverage of their activities is carried on electronic and print media, this will deal a great psychological effect on the group.

Finally, there is a need to energise the effort of security operatives in the Northeast to end the terrorism and insurgency of *Boko Haram*. This will ensure that the high cases of attacks on IDP camps will not only reduce, but resettlement and rehabilitation of IDPs and reconstruction of places destroyed by both insurgency and COIN operations can be properly carried out.

5. Conclusion

Suicide bombing is one of the tactics insurgents in the Northeast have adopted to cause terror attacks. There has been a deliberate target of IDP camps and displaced persons in the region. These attacks have increased over time as the camps are seen as easy targets. The attack on IDPs shows the limitation of the Nigerian state in protecting her citizens. The failure of the government to protect IDPs has increased the humanitarian challenges of IDPs. Since 2014 when Boko Haram began targeting young girls, there has been an increased use of female suicide bombers to target IDP camps. It is equally clear that the tactics have been mostly successful. The implication is that IDP camps which were meant to house vulnerable groups have become targets for suicide bombing by *Boko Haram* terrorists. There is a need for relevant agencies of government to increase surveillance and take preventive measures to stop the menace of suicide bombings in IDP camps.

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Appendix

Table 1: Showing *Boko Haram* Suicide Bombings targeting IDPs and Camps.

SN	Date	Location	Casualties	Description
1	09/09/15		7	The first successful IDP attack; an improvised explosive device (IED).
2	10/10/15	Baga Sola, Chad	37	A suicide attack targeted a refugee camp and fish market.
3	09/11/15	Fotokol Cameroon	5	Female suicide bombers hit a truck full of Nigerian refugees.
4	22/11/15	Maiduguri, Nigeria	8	A female suicide bomber (aged 20), disguised as a refugee returning from Dikwa, detonated while people were being screened.
5	28/01/16	Kerawa, Cameroon	6	Two female suicide bombers targeted a public-school housing IDPs.
6	10/02/16	Dikwa, Nigeria	58	Two female suicide bombers stormed an IDP camp and blew themselves up; a third refused when she realized her family was in the camp.
7	20/04/16	Nigeria	8	Two female suicide bombers targeted an IDP camp.
8	07/05/16	Banki, Gonori, Nigeria	7	An IED bomb was targeted at IDP returnees.
9	04/07/16	Monguno, Nigeria	3	(Failed attack) Three female suicide bombers hit a borehole 3 km outside a camp.
10	29/10/16	Maiduguri, Nigeria	5	A female suicide bomber hit the Bakassi IDP camp in the morning.
11	30/10/16	Maiduguri, Nigeria	1	(Failed attack) A male suicide bomber in his 30s was sighted by a sniper and killed in the Bakassi IDP camp.
12	19/11/16	Maiduguri, Nigeria	1	(Failed attack) An attacker was spotted trying to enter Muna Garage IDP screening camp and was shot while trying to detonate.
13	21/11/16	Kolofata, Cameroon	1	(Failed attack) A female suicide bomber with nine explosives on her tried to detonate in the IDP camp but was shot dead by the MNJTF force.
14	31/01/17	Doublé, Cameroon	3	An adolescent suicide bomber attacked a camp 20 km from Mora.
15		24/02/17	2	A female suicide bomber tried to enter Banki IDP camp but detonated when she was spotted by troops.
16	22/03/17	Maiduguri, Nigeria	8	Five bombers attempted a coordinated attack in Muna Garage IDP camp.
17	20/05/17	Maiduguri, Nigeria	4	12 IDPs went outside Dalori IDP camp and were attacked by *Boko Haram.*
18	29/05/17	Nguro, Nigeria	5	Knife attack killing IDPs.
19	02/06/17	Fotokol, Cameroon	6	Two suicide bombers.
20	18/06/17	Maiduguri, Nigeria	2	Two female suicide bombers attacked Dalori IDP camp.
21	30/06/17	Diffa, Niger	4	Two female suicide bombers attacked a refugee camp.
22	23/07/17	Maiduguri, Nigeria	1	A female suicide bomber was sighted by vigilantes and detonated a bomb while trying to flee.
23	23/07/17	Maiduguri, Nigeria	5	One male and one female suicide bomber targeted a camp within hours of the previous Dalori attempt.
24	29/07/17	Dikwa, Nigeria	14	Two female suicide bombers attacked an IDP housing complex.
25	15/08/17	Konduga, Nigeria	30	Three female suicide bombers detonated at the camp entrance: the first to create panic, followed by two others.
26	01/09/17	Banki, Nigeria	18	A knife attack targeting ex-Minawao refugees on their return.
27	08/09/17	Ngala, Nigeria	7	Rocket-propelled grenades were fired into the camp from two pickup trucks.
28	20/09/17	Daima, Nigeria	9	Gunmen attacked people who took daily trips outside the camps to work on farms. Some survivors fled back into Cameroon.

Source: Mbiyozo, Aimee-Noel (2017) "How *Boko Haram* Specifically targets Displaced People," *Policy Brief 109,* Institute for Security Studies.
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