

# Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Economic Recovery in North Eastern Nigeria

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**Abstract**—Even before the Boko Haram crisis, the North East region Nigeria was among the poorest in the country, with high demographic growth and vulnerability to extreme weather and climate change. Its fragility was heightened by its position at a climatic, cultural, and geopolitical intersection with the Francophone countries effectively dividing the region among a multitude of regional settings and the fact that it straddles three countries (Cameroon, Niger, and Chad), whose socio-political histories have been turbulent, to say the least, since independence.

Since 2009, insecurity in the North-East of Nigeria has led to the loss of over 20,000 lives and the displacement of over 2 million people. Throughout the region livelihoods have been disrupted, and homes, public buildings and infrastructure destroyed. In a part of Nigeria where 80% of people rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, much has been lost. People have been forced from their land and livestock has been killed. In many areas, land mines and other remnants of war bring challenges for safe and voluntary return.

Therefore, this paper intent to look at the Post-Conflict Peace-Building and Economic Recovery Efforts in the North East region of Nigeria.

**Key Words:** Peacebuilding, Economic Recovery, Boko Haram, Livelihood, IDPs, Refugees, Reconstruction, Maiduguri

## Introduction

States that are rising from violent conflict confront exceptional challenges towards mobilizing the human and monetary assets that are critically needed (John, 2011). This is, often to begin with humanitarian assistance and subsequently peacebuilding, economic recovery and post-conflict reconstruction. The states are regularly and fundamentally brief of almost all sort of mastery and however, need to bargain at the same time with a few major challenges. They ought to protect and defend security, re-integrate ex-combatants, resettle Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and

returning refugees, restore basic framework and key public institutions, and re-establish private investors' confidence (John, 2011). They must also revive the public finance regime and reassert control over key national assets. Finally, they must promote conditions that make the resumption of conflict less likely, including by generating employment opportunities, tackling horizontal inequalities and by re-establishing the rule of law.

Since 2009, about fifteen million individuals have been influenced by the guerrilla of Boko Haram, and the coming about of the military operations within the North East of

Nigeria. The human, social, and financial misfortunes of the strife, and the ventures required for the recuperation, peacebuilding and reconstruction of the North East are overwhelming (UNDP 2016, Vol. I). Damage to markets, farm lands, education and health facilities, the loss of job opportunities and the physical and psychological impacts of the crisis are all negatively affecting an entire generation of the North Eastern part of Nigerians. The conflict has triggered a humanitarian crisis, with increasing food insecurity and destruction of social services, infrastructure and the environment, all of which has exacerbated already existing socioeconomic disparities (UNDP, 2016). This is not just a problem affecting the North-East of Nigeria, but ultimately the economic stability and social fabric of the whole country, with spill over impact in the region.

### **Overview of the Boko Haram Crisis**

The most devastating armed conflict that has ever taken place in Nigeria is the Boko Haram insurgency that initially started from the north eastern city of Maiduguri. The conflict or violence that erupted was to later spread to other cities like Damaturu, Potiskum and Bauchi all in the north east. The immediate causes and objective of the group is still somehow shrouded in mystery despite many disclosures. Among other reasons identified as the immediate causes is upholding the rule of law and other humanitarian principles, among the important ones observed (Geraud, 2018, P 118)).

Boko Haram, an Islamist sect turned armed movement, first developed in Nigeria with rear bases in neighbouring countries. In 2014–2015, the insurgents expanded their theatre of operations into Cameroon, and then into Niger and Chad, as an anti-terrorist coalition was set up (Geraud, 2018, P 119). The highly fragmented group then retreated into the region's bush but continued to carry out attacks, particularly suicide bombings. Its capacity for resilience raises questions about the causes of the insurgency. Climate change is hardly a convincing explanation for the conflict, no more than is the theory of Salafist indoctrination, which has played a very marginal role in the ongoing hostilities. Nor is it an ethnic liberation front, although the majority of Boko Haram speak Kanuri. Given the immense poverty in the area, it is worth looking instead into the social and political conditions behind the group's emergence and radicalisation. Corruption, state dysfunctions, a brutal military crackdown, and the suffering it has caused to the civilian population are key factors behind the insurgency and its continuation (Geraud, 2018 P 8).

In 2003, the Boko Haram (then Taliban) set their based in Kanama on the Niger border. The 'Nigerian Taliban' attack police stations and then flee from the army toward the Mandara Mountains in Cameroon.

By 2004, pursued by the army, the 'Nigerian Taliban' join the most radical preacher in Maiduguri, Mohammed Yusuf, and form the most extremist core of a sect that does not yet have a

name and will come to be mocked by the disparaging title of Boko Haram ('Western education is sacrilege'). In 2009 following an encounter with the police, Mohammed Yusuf calls for jihad and is summarily executed by the police. The army intervenes and the crackdown leaves a thousand dead in Maiduguri, mostly civilians. Under its new leader, Abubakar Shekau, the group goes underground and extends its sphere of action to Nigeria with terrorist attacks and spectacular strikes in Bauchi in 2010, Abuja in 2011, Kano in 2012, and Zaria in 2014. As of 2013, as the declaration of a state of emergency exacerbates the violence in the countryside in Nigeria's Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, the mutual non-aggression pact that held on the border with Cameroon is broken when a French family is kidnapped on the Waza nature reserve. The hostages are exchanged for Boko Haram commanders held by the Cameroonian forces. The insurgents soon scale up their attacks in the Mandara Mountains. In 2015, The Multi-National Joint Task Force was formed as an anti-terrorist coalition. With the formation of the antiterrorist coalition, the situation deteriorates in Niger where Boko Haram targets mainly Diffa, Bosso, and small villages along the Yobe River. As of 2015: Chad is in turn hit by the sect. Already operational on the lake's islands, Boko Haram fighters mount suicide bombings in N'Djaména, Guitté, Bol, and Baga Sola. In 2017, the sect continues to fragment. Its two main factions operate from Sambisa Forest and the marshlands of Lake Chad. From 2017 to date, the Boko Haram sect operate

along the Nigeria-Cameroun and Nigeria-Niger border towards Northern Borno. The group attack communities and security formation in the Northern part of Borno State (Geraud, 2018 P 119-120).

Since 2009, nearly 15 million people have been affected by the violence of *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*, also known as Boko Haram and the resulting military operations in North-East Nigeria. The fighting became particularly intense from 2014, leading to the loss of an estimated 20,000 lives and the displacement of 1.8 million people directly attributed to the violence, while further aggravating the weak economic development of the North-East with an estimated infrastructure damage of US\$ 9.2 billion and accumulated output losses of US\$ 8.3 billion (UNDP, 2017).

### **Historical Perspective of the North East**

North-Eastern State is a former administrative division of Nigeria. It was created on 27 May 1967 from parts of the Northern Region (Ibrahim, 2012). The capital of the region was the city of Maiduguri, and also North-Eastern is full of agricultural products and other mineral resources.

On 3 February 1976, the then North-Eastern state was divided into three (Bauchi, Borno and Gongola) states. With creation of more states by military regimes, Gombe State was later split out of Bauchi, Yobe State was created from Borno and Gongola was divided into Taraba and Adamawa States. The North East (NE) Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria covers close to one-third

(280,419km<sup>2</sup>) of Nigeria's land area (909,890km<sup>2</sup>). It comprises 6 states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. According to projections for 2011 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), these States have 13.5% (i.e. 23,558,674) of Nigeria's population which is put at 173,905,439 (Ibrahim, 2012).

North East is one of the political component that make up the six geo-political zones that make-up the Nigerian nations. The political zone referred to as North-Eastern Nigeria comprises of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. Among the prominent factors that make an area a unit of historical study are its geography and human activities. This area shares various geographical, economic, social and political features.

North-East zone of Nigeria lies between the vast arid expanse of the Sahara and the dense tropical rain forest along the Guinea Coast. Delimiting the area is Cameroon on the east, Niger and Chad republics on the north, North-Central Nigeria on the west, and South-Eastern Nigeria on the south.

### **Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding came into existence in the last two decades as one of the principle functions of the United Nations System (George, 2019). The United Nations is not, however, the only organization working in the field of peacebuilding. Other international organizations like the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), and the Organization of American States

(OAS) aid failed and fragile nations through the concept of peacebuilding. Even various national governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) contribute both people and money to help nations recover from violent conflict.

Peacebuilding focuses on helping nations recover from violent conflicts, whether internal wars or wars between States. Recovery from violent conflict is a long-term process, and it requires the expenditure of vast amounts of resources, specifically people and money. Peacebuilding is a complex undertaking that involves a multitude of actors. Each organization approaches the field of peacebuilding in a different manner.

Many practitioners of peacebuilding believe the term "peacebuilding" emerged from Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report *an Agenda for Peace*. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was not the first to introduce the term "peacebuilding" to the international community. Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung, considered by many to be the founder of peace and conflict studies, introduced the term "peacebuilding" in 1976 (George, 2019). Galtung developed his concept of peacebuilding through his early writings on peace, negative and positive peace, and direct and indirect (structural) violence. In a 1976 paper presented to the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Galtung outlined the concepts of

peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding (George, 2019).

Galtung's article, "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding", did not receive much visibility until Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali introduced the term "post-conflict peacebuilding" in his seminal work, *An Agenda for Peace*. The first edition of *an Agenda for Peace* outlined all three of Galtung's approaches to peace – peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. Boutros-Ghali, however, called it "post- conflict peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capabilities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Peacebuilding is a complex, long term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. It works by addressing the deep-rooted, structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner.

In 2008, after much deliberation about creating a UN doctrine for peacekeeping, DPKO published its first doctrinal publication, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*.<sup>3</sup> Also known as the "Capstone Doctrine", this publication provided a good definition of peacebuilding:

"Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to

reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. It works by addressing the deep-rooted, structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner (George, 2019).

### **Economic Recovery**

Economic recovery, while still an evolving concept and set of practices in need of greater coherence, is increasingly understood as an approach focused on enabling government and communities to rebuild and economically recover from war and other crises, though doing so in new and transformative ways that can facilitate the consolidation of peace. Economic recovery efforts should catalyse development activities. They should build upon and maximize the utility of earlier humanitarian efforts, and lay foundations for sustainable and longer-term development that can bring lasting transformation of the societal economic structures that were part and parcel of the conflict era (Uvin P, 2002).

The beginning of financial recuperation exercises early within the peace process, portion of early recovery endeavours, looks to close the infamous gap between assistance and development efforts. As such, financial recuperation

procedures should support the survival needs of nearby populaces and be compatible with the assurance of the environment. Economic recovery ought to construct fundamental capacities for economic governance, bolster livelihood creation at the community level, and help within the protection and restoration of beneficial resources and frameworks. Increase in production in agri-business, fabrication and construction, and the resumption of savings and credit required for supporting the foundation of little undertakings, and commerce, are likely to constitute imperative needs. Capacity for raising household income in such setting is frequently low, and request for consumption is high, requiring that foreign donors with financial resources play a significant role in economic recovery (Kumar, 2005)

### **Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**

Since 2009, insecurity in the North-East of Nigeria has led to the loss of over 20,000 lives and the displacement of over 2 million people. Throughout the region livelihoods have been disrupted, and homes, public buildings and infrastructure destroyed. In a part of Nigeria where 80% of people rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, much has been lost. People have been forced from their land and livestock has been killed. In many areas, land mines and other remnants of war bring challenges for safe and voluntary return (Gamawa, 2017).

Terms such as 'recovery', 'reconstruction' and 'rebuilding' tend to suggest a return to the *status quo* before the conflict (John F, 2011). Typically, however, developmental pathologies such as extreme inequality, poverty, corruption, exclusion, institutional decay and poor economic management would have contributed to armed conflicts in the first instance and would have been further exacerbated during conflict. In the aftermath of war, recovery could mean a return to pre conflict economic growth and employment rates. Indeed, one perspective views recovery as a return to the highest level of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita attained during the five years preceding the conflict (Flores and Noorudin, 2007). In many cases however, growth rates in the period immediately before the outbreak of violence have been very low, or even negative. Returning to the pre-war GDP growth trajectory is clearly not good enough in such situations. A narrow emphasis on growth alone may also understate the sheer complexity of managing the economic consequences of conflict. For instance, if growth favours only a small segment of the population, it risks perpetuating or exacerbating grievances that may have contributed to conflict in the first place (Cedric, 2008). A broader viewpoint that sees recovery as achieving wide socio-economic well-being is additionally conceivable. This will incorporate re-establishing citizen and societal security, guaranteeing food security, re-establish protection, public health and educational system, as well as reconstructing the physical infrastructure, generating

employment, opening markets, re-establishing prudential systems for banking and financial institutions (Paris and Roland, 2002). There is a risk, however, that such a maximalist definition could conflate recovery from conflict with attaining economic development more broadly.

The post conflict phase is usually characterized according to progress achieved along a range of peace building milestones (Cedric, 2008). Most states identified to be in the post conflict phase are seen to be lying along a continuum of each of these milestones, cognizant of the fact that it is still possible to move backwards. The peace building milestones identified include the following;

1. Ceasing violent hostilities
2. Peace agreements to be signed
3. Inception of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration.
4. Safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and Refugees
5. Establishment of the foundations of a functioning state.
6. Initiating reconciliation and societal integration, and
7. Start of economic recovery.

### **Post-Conflict Economic Recovery**

From a strictly economic perspective it could mean the return to pre-conflict growth and employment rates. Indeed, one perspective views recovery as a return to the highest level of

gross domestic product (GDP) per capita attained during the five years preceding the conflict (Kumar). It is possible, however, that growth rates in the period before the outbreak of violence may have been very low, or even negative. In these cases, it is not desirable for the country to return to its pre-war GDP growth trajectory.

A much broader perspective sees economic recovery as achieving socio-economic well-being, involving "food security, public health, shelter, educational systems, and a social safety net for all citizen and an economic strategy for assistance that is designed to ensure the reconstruction of physical infrastructure, to generate employment, to open markets, to create legal and regulatory reforms, to lay down the foundation for international trade and investment, and to establish transparent banking and financial institutions (Kumar P 6). Such a maximalist definition runs the risk of conflating recovery from conflict with overcoming underdevelopment more broadly. In contrast, a narrow emphasis on growth alone may understate the sheer complexity of managing the economic consequences of conflict as identified above. For instance, as Tony Addison argues, growth that favours only a narrow elite risks perpetuating or even exacerbating grievances and therefore raising the incentives for violence among those who remain marginalized. More crucially, it provides no relief to the poor who almost always bear the brunt of war (Gilles, 1998).

Successful economic recovery, therefore, cannot simply be a return to pre-war income levels and growth rates. Rather, it must involve growth rates that permit a structural break with the past. This means growth must be sustained at significantly higher than historical rates, and should be accompanied by significant employment creation and by action to reduce severe horizontal inequalities. 'reconstruction' and 'rebuilding' might suggest a return to the *status quo*. Exclusion, institutional decay, poor policy design and economic mismanagement will have contributed to armed conflicts in the first instance and will have been further exacerbated during conflict.

The milestones for post-conflict economic recovery include the following (ILO, 2010);

- Restored economic growth
- Increased revenue mobilisation
- The restoration of economic infrastructure
- Increased private sector investment

### **Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Economic Recovery in the North East Nigeria**

The conflict in North-East Nigeria has cost over 20,000 human lives, significantly destroyed physical infrastructure, disrupted social services and damaged social cohesion among its people. Economic and social activities in the region have been disrupted, and fear and mistrust among the population

is widespread. 1.8 million people have been internally displaced from and within the conflict affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe and an additional 170,000 have fled across the border into Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The influx of displaced persons into urban areas of the above states as well as Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba has exacerbated pressure on service delivery mechanisms and local economies that were very weak to start with.

Addressing the needs and impacts in the six states derived from the Boko Haram conflict to bring about recovery and build peace in the North-East is a significant challenge (UNDP, 2012 P 01).

On two occasions, a State of Emergency was declared in December 2011, in parts of Yobe, Borno, as well as Plateau and Niger, and in May 2013, for the whole of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. In the second instance, the State of Emergency was accompanied by upward spirals of conflict. More recently, the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) developed a more integrated approach to counter-terrorism in the form of a Countering Conflict Programme (UNDP 2017, P 11). Meanwhile, attempts to negotiate have been unsuccessful. That said, it is important to acknowledge how challenging it is to coordinate the necessary elements of comprehensive response to a complex emergency such as in Nigeria's North East.

There have been challenges in coordination, coherence and clarity of roles and responsibilities among the many government agencies involved in responding to the crisis. The enormous humanitarian and protection needs of IDPs and affected communities are far from being fully met.

Food, access to clean drinking water, and other emergency supplies have been provided to IDPs living in camps and many of those staying with host families in the North-East as a result of the Boko Haram conflict. NEMA has strategically stockpiled emergency supplies in warehouses in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States to cater to the needs of the IDPs. NEMA has taken the lead in camp coordination and management and has deployed personnel to provide technical support to SEMAs and the Nigerian Red Cross, to manage the IDP camps in the North-East. Emergency education for displaced children became a major priority after unprecedented Boko Haram attacks on students, teachers, and school infrastructure. A Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) has also been established, whereby school safety and security is improved and in some cases students are transferred (in agreement with parents) to other schools in states not affected by the fighting (UNDP, 2017 Vol. II P 17).

The government leads humanitarian coordination efforts, and the international community encourages State ministries to lead sectoral working groups in the North-East, while NEMA

and the SEMAs continue to be overall humanitarian coordination partners.

The international humanitarian response in Nigeria's North-East has provided life-saving assistance to IDPs and host communities. This support aims to ensure a dignified existence as they wait for durable solutions to resolve their current situation. A Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was prepared in November 2015 and presented the latest analysis of humanitarian needs foreseen in 2016 and includes a country strategy in the (post-) conflict and forced displacement situation, as well as operational response plans for Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states. It covers a range of immediate life-saving needs including; health, food, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, non-food items, education and protection of civilians. US\$ 248 million has been requested for projects listed under the plan. As of 16 March 2016, US\$ 16 million has been received for projects listed in the HRP and US\$ 6 million for humanitarian projects not listed in HRP: US\$ 9.9 from the Central Emergency Response Fund, US\$ 5.8 million from the European Commission, US\$ 4.5 million from Japan and US\$ 2.2 from Germany (UNDP, 2017 P 31).

Currently 62 partners are providing urgent multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected people in the most affected states in the North-East. This includes food, water and sanitation, health and nutrition, and hygiene services, shelter and non-food items, education, protection – including targeted

responses for children and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors, early recovery activities and livelihoods. Some 20 national CSOs and NGOs operating in the North-East play a critical role in the delivery of assistance, especially in areas where international actors are not present or have no access.

Indeed, despite all the efforts currently displayed by national authorities with the support of local and international humanitarian actors, much still needs to be done to cater for the basic human needs of the displaced populations and hosting communities alike, until the security situation allows for the commencement of recovery interventions. The impact of the Boko Haram conflict on IDPs, on communities currently hosting IDPs, and on communities that will be receiving them, has only exacerbated the dire situation these populations were already facing before, overstressing their already limited incomes, resources and assets, and the capacities of the existing social service delivery systems. Moreover, new displacements of populations have been reported following the regular attacks conducted by Boko Haram and the ongoing military operations. The Recovery and Peace Building Strategy (RPBS) will therefore need to be closely coordinated with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in order to build on its achievements and avoid overlaps (UNDP, 2017 Vol. II P 18). This is especially relevant with regards to the early recovery interventions undertaken wherever possible by the

humanitarian actors as an integral part of their response to the crisis. Returns organised too early may only postpone the start-up of early recovery interventions, increase the suffering of the people involved and consequently extend the scope and cost of recovery needs. It is crucial that there is robust engagement with existing coordination mechanisms to ensure that (UNDP, 2017 Vol. II P 18):

(a) The Humanitarian Civilian and Military Coordination (CM-COORD) mechanism is regularly consulted to understand in real time the progress made for accessing wards, LGAs and states;

(b) A smooth and gradual transition is in place to ensure an effective and efficient link between humanitarian interventions, including early recovery response and recovery interventions;

(c) The incremental added value between recovery and humanitarian interventions effectively contributes to the human security of the affected populations on the ground.

Restoring social cohesion and trust is the most critical precondition to recovery and peace building, but also the most difficult, given the deep impact of the conflict. Hence, any type of recovery and stability activity should carefully assess and take on board its impact on social cohesion and trust across different social groups and between the State and the citizens. The strategy could bring together government, civil society,

and the private sector around a set of common principles and objectives towards peace and stability. The strategy will promote a cohesive approach that mobilises renewed efforts on the part of the government and civil society to form a new, stronger partnership, promoting trust and reducing the underlying drivers of the current crisis (UNDP, 2017 Vol. II P 25).

Involving civil society and private sector in the recovery effort and decision-making: CSOs, including youth organisations, women's groups, faith based organisations, cultural and traditional groups, and the private sector are important actors, who have the ability to mobilise sizable funding and social capital, and can often be sources of valuable expertise. CSOs often have well-cultivated links to the affected communities that can prove valuable in project implementation. Creating space for CSOs and the private sector will foster a more inclusive and locally-owned recovery process, and bring in expert resources to help guide the recovery process. This may also include creating, or building upon forums already established, for involving civil society, technical institutions, academia, private sector and affected communities. Such forums can play a significant role in facilitating community dialogue, consensus-building, and strengthening ownership of sector recovery programs at all levels. They also facilitate the direct involvement of community stakeholders, including

women and youth groups in recovery planning and programmes.

### **Conclusion**

The conflict in the North-East Nigeria has had devastating impacts on the population. While the impact on the component peace building, stability and social cohesion is hard to financially quantify, the crisis has affected 14.8 million people and resulted in massive displacement within Nigeria and across the border to Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, since 2009. The number of IDPs reached 1.8 million, of which nearly 80 percent were women, children, and youth (UNDP, 2016). In addition to the destruction of infrastructure and interruption of basic services, the city of Maiduguri, with a 2007 resident population of 1.2 million (2006 Census) is hosting 1.6 million IDPs, with some sheltering in public buildings and schools. During the conflict, more than 600 teachers were killed, 19,000 teachers displaced, and 1,200 schools destroyed. As the government regains control over some areas that were taken over by Boko Haram and the recovery process starts, signs of social fragmentation, based on ethno-religious, social, and other divisions, including between IDPs and hosts, are evident in some areas.

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