

The Effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on Democratic Participation in North East Nigeria: A Case Study of Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali Local Government Areas

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Abstract: The rise in number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) fleeing in search of safe haven to escaped attacks promoted by insurgency in the north-eastern region of Nigeria attracts global attention with the persistent rise in number of civilian casualties in communities within Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states-development that affects democratic participation in affected communities which came under attacks in the conflicts. Conducted with the used of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, this research examines the effects of insurgency on democratic participation among the people of Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states of Nigeria. It also examines the impacts of such conflicts on the democratic and political development of the communities under study. Insurgency the research found out affect democratic participation among the people of the communities under study. The research also recommended that necessary measures be adopted to counter insurgency in the communities so as to promote effective democratic participation among the people of the communities under study.

Keywords: Democratic, Insurgency, Participation and North-East.

INTRODUCTION

Democratic participation if stable contributes to the political development of human society [1]. Security and conducive atmosphere are basic prerequisites for the establishment of a stable democratic society [2]. Conflicts retard the level of political development in human society [3]. Communities aspiring for sustainable political growth deserve to work out modalities that will promote sustainable peace and security among their citizens [4]. The insurgency that started like a mere religious disturbances which the Nigerian government initially believed it can arrest in a little time is still on in the north-east region of the country. Several tactics of extending insurgency and counter same have been witnessed by civilians caught by the fierce battles for hegemony by the bloody insurgent group claiming to be killing for the sake of God and Nigerian government forces fighting in defense of national unity and interests. The confrontations are far from been over. Although, on daily basis, the Nigerian government as Nnenna [5] reports, hold claim to the view that it is winning in its fight against the insurgent group-claim that people in the north-east region of the country are yet to actually ascertain because of the growing nature of attacks been launched in communities in the region.

The demarcation between those killing in the name of God and those ever willing to die in defense of

national unity is still hard to be clearly defined in communities around the north-east region of Nigeria. Allegations of atrocities committed by both insurgents and government forces [6] are part of the experiences civilians have to tell in Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states-development that led to the allegations of conspiracy on one hand and state sponsored terrorism on the other all in the guise of promoting and protecting political interests. Doubts of how religious the insurgency itself is are high on the minds of the people. Nature of attacks on communities as many observed do not have religious inclinations and affiliations-issues that contradict the insurgents' claim of fighting in defense of religious interest or the establishment of a religion state and political system. Strategies adopted by insurgents are confusing in nature. Christians [7] and Muslims followers have been attacked in the ongoing conflicts. Rumors in some cases are high on why more Muslims casualties are recorded than Christian's casualties while the group constantly claim it is fighting to establish an Islamic state and government in the country. This has also created suspiciousness on the minds of some Muslims as to whether the insurgency is not an international or western conspiracy to discredit Islam and affiliate it to killing and war like faith before the international community.

The Nigerian government military operations in urban terrain failed woefully in countering insurgency in the north-east region. Although, government claimed she was adhering to the rules of engagement and to minimize the growing number of civilian casualties often killed in the cross fire with combatants loyal to the insurgent group-claim that the group continuously refutes. The emergence of the civilian group popularly known as “Yan Gora” ever willing to confront the insurgents in defense of their communities made guerrilla or hit and run tactics severely difficult to be continued by the group [8]. This however resulted in “Boko Haram’s” withdrawal from urban to jungle warfare with the Nigerian government forces. The establishment of a camp in Sambisa Game Reserve by the group resulted in another wave of contradiction of how serious the Nigerian authority is in countering insurgency in the north-east region [9]. Nigerian government claimed repeatedly that it is fighting terrorism and in a guerilla warfare with the group. But some people in the region subscribed to the view that the confrontation is a conventional warfare since the group retreated to an isolated forest where it can be confronted by government forces without civilian casualties been recorded.

The inability of the Nigerian government troops to stormed once and for all, the forest in a mob up or flush out operations to end the insurgency itself results in allegations of little seriousness on its part to end the conflicts [10]. Higher hierarchy in the government forces are also been accused of extending the conflicts by nature of command given in order to make more fortunes that the insurgency create to them. Cross border offensives by the Chadian and Nigerien forces have resulted in the liberation of Ngala, Dikwa, Mafa and Damasak all on Nigerian soil [11]. But soon after these communities were handed over to Nigerian forces, they were again recaptured back by the insurgents-dramatic development that created suspiciousness on whether the Nigerian forces are not actually divided into two and fighting each other’s under the guise of insurgency. Several claims of invading Sambisa forest have been laid by the Nigerian government forces [12, 13] but still, the same forest has continued to serve as a strong hold of the insurgents from where they launch attacks on communities surrounding the reserve and returned back into it to regroup against fresh operations.

Gulani in Yobe, Gwoza in Borno and Madagali in Adamawa states are communities in between which the Sambisa Game Reserve is located. Insurgents maneuvered from the forest, chased Nigerian government forces away and took over these communities where they ruled for sometimes imposing taxes on people, forcefully conscripted under age children into combatant operations, taking women for

sex slaves and massacring innocent citizens who disobeyed their draconian laws and rules. This brutality in addition to the Chibok Girls abduction [14] attracted international condemnations that forced the Nigerian authority into launching a serious military operations that culminated in the recapturing of Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali back from the insurgents. Citizens from communities in these three local government areas in north-east region who were lucky to be alive or not killed as a result of the invasion of their communities fled and became harbored in one of the refugee camps provided for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP’s)-location from where they casted their votes in the Nigerian general elections of April 2015. Others as a result of this displacement were unable to participate in the nation’s general elections conducted between February and March of 2015. The extent to which this status incubated by insurgency affected their political participation [15, 16] form the basis of this research.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Political franchise which Almond observed to be individual right to vote and be voted for in electionis under Nigerian electoral system as Okoli [17] asserts restricted to the country’s citizens under the universal adult suffrage system. This simply implies that Nigerians of the ages of 18 and above are qualify by law to vote when elections are due negation of which to Ranney [18] is a violation of the fundamental human right of the citizen. In Nigeria’s general elections of 2015, several citizens who were qualify to vote could not do so due to the fact that they were displaced from their communities as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. Some of the eligible voters were in refugee camp when voting took place. Although, in some of the camps, voting took place. But the problem of several refugees not been able to vote also happened because they have no prove to show that they are registered to participate in voting in their communities before they were displaced by the insurgency. The haste under which some of the refugees escaped from communities in Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas left them with no time to even think of finding and taking along their voters cards or any evidence to show that they were initially registered as eligible voters in their communities before they were displaced by the insurgency. By electoral act, allowing them to vote when there was no evidence to prove that they were registered to participate as voters in the elections is also an offense. Next general elections in the country again will be 2019. The certainty of them participating in it can only be guaranteed if the conflict is over and they return home to settle and prepare against next voters registration exercise. But if conflict persist then, arrangement to register them in the refugee camps will serve as alternative to correcting their disenfranchisement as in the 2015 elections. As a result of psychological trauma, few who voted do not even

realized how their votes have been influenced by authorities in charge of the camps they are settled. The political atmosphere created in some of these camps do not actually provide those who were opportune to vote with the freedom of choice. It can hardly be argued that the conditions they found themselves in during the elections were not used to influence them into voting against their choices. The insurgency affected political and democratic participation of Internally Displaced Person's (IDP's) from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states all in north-east Nigeria. The desire to examine how the insurgency affected the political and democratic participation of refugees from these areas necessitated this research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the effects of Boko Haram insurgency on the political and democratic participation of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas.
2. Assess the extent to which the insurgency affected them in voting during the 2015 general election of Nigeria.
3. And to find out how to ameliorate the effect of insurgency on political and democratic participation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are raised and answered by this research:

1. Does Boko Haram insurgency affect the political and democratic participation of Internally Displaced Person (IDP's) from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas?
2. To what extent the insurgency affected the IDP's in voting in during the 2015 general elections of Nigeria?
3. How can the problem of insurgency affecting IDP's political and democratic participation be ameliorated?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Clash with police during a funeral procession led to revenged attacks on police and widespread rioting. A joint military task force operation was launched in response, and by 30 July more than 700 people had been killed, mostly Boko Haram members, and police stations, prisons, government offices, schools and churches had been destroyed. Yusuf was arrested, and died in custody "while trying to escape". He was succeeded by Abubakar Shekau [19]. Yusuf's death and the accentuation of Shekau to the position of the group leaders resulted in serious regroup of members and resurgence of new waves of attacks that

superceed initial ones. Attacks by Boko Haram grew with time and number of casualties both in terms of death and internal displacement rose of daily basis to an extent that the group cross border attacks succeeded in dragging into the conflicts the governments of Cameroun, Chad and Niger. As it is now, Boko Haram insurgency has gone far beyond national conflict to a regional one. Persons internally displaced by the insurgency are scattered across the various refugee camps in the four affected countries.

Of the 2.3 million people displaced by the conflict since May 2013, at least 250,000 have left Nigeria and fled into Cameroun, Chad or Niger. Boko Haram killed over 6,600 in 2014. The group have carried out mass abduction including the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in April 2014 [20]. Among these number of people displaced are also people from communities Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas. Abduction of girls to be used for sex slaves, under age boys for forceful conscription into combatant operations and slaughter of people considered to be proven stubborn all took place in these local government areas. Those internally displaced and are camping in the various IDP camps are the lucky ones to have survived the group attacks when their communities were raided.

Boko Haram as Olukayode [21] observed is a threat to democratic consolidation. In a related contributions, Sani [22], Wosu and Agwaanmo [23] submitted that the effects of the group have political implication on national development. It is part of the political implication that was seen during the 2015 general elections of Nigeria. Some of the Internally Displaced Persons in the various camps could not vote in the election despite the fact that they have attained the voting ages required by law. Others could not also participate in the elections because there were no evidence to show that they actually registered as voters before the elections. The fear of possible attacks also affected participation in some of the camps because at a point, Boko Haram device means of extending attacks as far as the IDP camps. Psychologically, some other eligible voters could not vote despite the fact that they have evidence to prove that they are registered and qualified to vote in the elections. These are drawback to democracy and political development of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted with the use of quantitative research methodology. Close ended questionnaire was designed an administered to 150 respondents randomly chosen from among the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) camping in the different refugee camps provided for IDP's from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas. In each of the camps, 50 respondents were chosen by

the Researcher to form the respondents on which questionnaires were administered. Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali were represented by 50 respondents each. Respondents for Gulani were drawn from the IDP's camp along Gujba road in Damaturu the capital of Yobe state while Gwoza's respondents were chosen from the IDP's camp at Dalori near Maiduguri the Borno state capital and the ones for Madagali were chosen from the IDP's camp at Jimeta-Yola the capital of Adamawa state. The Researcher personally administered the questionnaires and retrieved them instantly from the

respondents after they were completed. All 150 questionnaires administered were retrieved successfully by the Researcher and analyzed using statistical tool of analysis known as percentage. This resulted in a number of major findings which were also presented by the Researcher.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Below is the presentation and analysis of data collected by the Researcher:

Table 1: The Effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on Democratic participation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali Local Government Areas in North East Nigeria

Sn	Variables or Questions asked and answered	A	SA	U	D	D
01	I am one of the IDP's from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali LGA's.	22%	78%	0	0	0
02	I am staying in one of the IDP's camps outside my community.	31%	69%	0	0	0
03	Before the displacement I am one of the registered voters in my community.	40%	34%	10%	10%	6%
04	Boko Haram insurgency did not affect my democratic participation in the 2015 general elections.	15%	5%	5%	40%	35%
05	If not for the insurgency and displacement, I would have voted in the 2015 general elections in my community.	40%	35%	10%	7%	3%
06	Voting did not take place in the IDP's camp where am staying in the 2015 general elections.	0%	0%	0%	70%	30%
07	I could not vote in the elections because there was no evidence to show that I registered as a voter in my community before the displacement.	50%	25%	10%	6%	4%
08	Refugee status caused by insurgency and displacement does not have negative effect on my democratic participation.	9%	6%	10%	40%	35%
09	Proper record keeping of registered voters by electoral commission would ameliorate the problem of disenfranchisement of IDP's in refugee camps in future elections.	45%	55%	0	0	0
10	Political measures to counter insurgency and return IDP's to their communities would also lead to improve democratic participation in future elections.	60%	40%	0	0	0

Source: Field Survey (2016)

Analysis of Results

As the data presented in the table above clearly shows, 22% of the respondents agreed while 78% strongly agreed that they are part of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas in north-east Nigeria. Thirty one percent (31%) of them agreed and 69% strongly agreed that they are staying in one of the camps provided for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's). Before they were displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency, 40% of them agreed, 34% strongly agreed, 10% were undecided, 10% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed that they are part of the list of registered voters in their communities. Boko Haram insurgency as agreed by 15% of the respondents did not affect their democratic participation, 5% strongly agreed that it did not affect their participation while 5% were undecided on this issue. But 40% agreed and 35% strongly agreed

that their democratic participation was affected and hindered by the insurgency. In fact 40% of them agreed that if not because of the insurgency and displacement, they would have voted in the general elections of 2015 if they were in their communities, 35% strongly agreed with this view while 10% as table 1:1 shows were undecided. But however, 7% of them disagreed and Only 3% of them strongly disagreed that they would have voted in their communities if not because of the insurgency and displacement. Among the respondents, 70% disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed that voting did not take place in the IDP's camp where they are staying. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents agreed that they could not vote because there was no evidence to show that they are registered eligible voters in their communities before they were displaced by the insurgency, 25% strongly agreed that they could not also vote due to same reason while 10% were

undecided and 6% disagreed and only 4% strongly disagreed that this reason prevented them from voting in the general elections of 2015. Nine percent (9%) Of the respondents agreed and 6% strongly agreed that refugee status caused by Boko Haram insurgency and displacement does not have negative effect on democratic development. Ten percent (10%) were undecided on this issue while 40% disagreed and 35% strongly disagreed that the insurgency and displacement does not have negative effect on democratic development. Proper record keeping of registered voters by electoral commission as 45% of the respondents agreed and 55% of them strongly agreed would ameliorate the problem of disenfranchisement of IDP's in refugee camps in future elections. Political measures to counter the insurgency and return IDP's back to their communities as agreed by 60% and strongly agreed by 40% of the respondents would also lead to improve democratic participation in future general elections in communities located in the north east region of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The analysis of the data made above simply shows that Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas in north east Nigeria are staying in IDP's camps provided for them in the region as a result of their displacement by Boko Haram insurgency from their various communities. Most of them who are above 18 years of age which is the required number of years to vote in Nigerian electoral law are registered as voters to participate in the 2015 general elections in their communities before they were displaced by the insurgency. Boko Haram insurgency seriously affected their democratic participation as many of them could not vote in the IDP's camp where they are staying as a result of lack of evidence to show that they were registered as voters in their communities before they were displaced. If not because of the insurgency and displacement that came up, many of them would have voted in the general elections of 2015 in their various communities. Elections or voting precisely took place in the camps provided for IDP's from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas. But then, several of the refugees could not vote because there was no evidence to prove that they are registered voters. Many when they were fleeing did not carry along their voters cards, even in the list of registered names record provided and used by electoral officers in the camps some people names were not included and they complained to have registered in the registration exercise-development that made it impossible for them to vote in the elections. Refugee status caused by insurgency and displacement affect negatively the democratic development of the north east region and Nigeria entirely as the experience in the IDP's camps demonstrated. Proper record keeping of registered voters by electoral commission would ameliorate the

complaints of IDP's crying that they actually registered before their displacement but were surprised to be informed that their names were not among the voters register. It is high time the Nigerian authority adopt effective political measures to counter insurgency and return IDP's back to their communities so as to enable them be registered to participate in future general elections as this will improve their chances of democratic participation.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the data presented, analyzed and results discussed above, the following major findings were made by the Researcher in this research:

1. IDP's by Boko Haram insurgency from Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas in north east Nigeria are staying in IDP's camps provided in the region.
2. Most of them registered as eligible voters in their communities before they were displaced by the insurgency.
3. The insurgency no doubt affected their democratic participation to a serious extent and level.
4. Voting actually took place in the camps where they are staying but many of them could not vote because they had no evidence to show that they were registered in their communities before they were displaced by the conflict. If not because of the conflicts, this would not have happened to most of them.
5. Their refugee status created by insurgency had negative effect on the democratic development of the region and nation entirely. Therefore, electoral bodies should in order to avoid similar problem maintain proper record keeping of registered voters and political measure to end the conflict and return IDP's back to their communities for them to be re-registered against future elections would improve democratic participation in the region in future general elections.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the major findings made in the research as enumerated above, the following recommendations are made by the Researcher:

1. The Nigerian authority should strive hard before the next general elections to find an effective political solution to the Boko Haram insurgency in the north east region of the country so as to avoid future elections of Gulani, Gwoza and Madagali local government areas to again be conducted in IDP's camps outside the areas.
2. IDP's if security of their lives can be guaranteed should be rehabilitated and returned back to their communities so that they can take part in the next review of voters registration exercise renewed and authenticate their chances and legibility of voting in the future general elections because most of

them have lost their initial voters card and the names of others could not be located in the previous register.

3. Finally, against the background that if insurgency is not countered and IDP's returned to their communities before next general elections, review of voters registration exercise should be done in the various IDP's camps and the record of list of registered voters must be adequately taking care of and provided on the voting day to avoid the complains of disenfranchisement and IDP's complaining to have registered but could not find their names on the list-development that led to their inability to vote in 2015 general elections. These measures are required to avoid similar repetition of their disenfranchisement as it is an infringement of one of their fundamental human rights.

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