

## **LEGISLATIVE INTERVENTION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA'S INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: A DISCOURSE**

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**Abstract:** *The main objective of this paper is to examine the legislative intervention efforts in Nigeria, with the North-East zone internal displacement as focus of study. The activities of Boko Haram have made this zone a flashpoint, and this comes with socio-economic and human costs, such as unsettled and decimated population. With a reliance on secondary data, the paper interrogates the instruments deployed by the National Assembly to mitigate the plight of internally displaced persons resulting from the carnage in that part of the country. It observes that the initial slumbering attitude of the Nigerian state, as led by its governing elite to appropriately classify Boko Haram activities as terrorism invigorated this Sect, thus culminating in avoidable losses. This explains the near absence of strong central regulatory and coordinating agencies that can attenuate the issue of internal displacement. The suggestions proffered are capable of redressing the malaise.*

**Keywords:** *Displacement; Internal; Intervention; Legislature; Nigeria*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The issue of internal displacement of persons has assumed a phenomenon of international interest as a result of its regular occurrence in recent times and its direct impact on the socio-cultural, political and financial life of internally displaced persons (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2014). Before now, it was common place to hear of refugees arising from conflicts within and between nation states. Such was the concern of the international community over the plight of victims of conflict that the United Nations established the United Nations High Commission on Refugee which was formed in 1950 with the mandate to protect

and support refugees (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 2004).

However, in recent times, the issue of internally displaced persons has taken the centre stage in the affairs of nation states. Internally displaced persons (or IDPs) are subjects of either artificial or natural emergencies who have not left the boundaries of their country. Unlike refugees, IDPs are caught up by conflicts or natural disasters, but have not crossed beyond the boundaries of their own country to another country. Again, and quite remarkably, IDPs remain the problem or concern of their home country, unlike in the case of refugees (United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), 2005).

Post-independence Nigeria had its share of IDPs. During Nigeria's civil war between 1967 and 1970, a good number of eastern Nigerians crossed Nigeria's border to become refugees in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, but the majority of south easterners were internally displaced within Nigeria. More recently, constant ethnic and religious clashes, communal clashes due to boundary disputes, grazing land disputes between farmers and pastoralists and widespread flooding across states in Nigeria which became unprecedented in 2012 (Adeejat-Kubra, 2013; 142), have all converged to bring the issue of internal displacement to the front burner of political discourse and federal government policy and consequent appropriation of funds.

However, the conflict in the North-East of Nigeria arising from the Boko Haram insurgency appears to have triggered the highest displacement of hundreds of thousands of affected victims who have been compelled by the intensity of the conflict (both terrorist attacks and military operations) against the terrorists to flee their homes, businesses and farms, to safer parts of the country (Imasuen, 2015: 288).

The National Assembly has tried to develop a framework to "take legislative action that supports the delivery of special economic development measures that addresses the root causes of problems specific to the North-East geo-political zone of the country..." (The National Assembly, 2016:16). In 2015, and for the very first time, the House of Representatives created a standing committee-(Committee on Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees and North-East Initiatives) - having the singular aim of addressing the overwhelming challenges of internal displacement in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria caused by the Boko Haram insurgency (Odufowokan, 2016). The 8th National Assembly has also proposed a bill titled "North East Development Commission Bill". This bill has since received the concurrence of a joint sitting of the House of Representatives and Senate (Zorro, 2017: 4). The bill, therefore, sets out the entire framework proposed by the National Assembly towards solving the IDP crisis in the North-Eastern region of Nigeria. The initiative by the parliamentarians appears to have provoked corresponding step by the presidency in the form of "Presidential Initiative on the North East", the "Presidential Committee on the North East" and the "Buhari plan" (Buhari plan, 2016).

Although the issue of internal displacement in Nigeria became a major concern during Nigeria's civil war, yet the Nigerian government appears to be totally overwhelmed and unprepared in the face of the mass displacement of persons in the North-East. The national agency saddled with emergency situations, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) simply proved structurally, financially and administratively incapable of rising to the situation (Adefisoye, 2015).

Additionally, efforts to combat the challenges arising from the IDPs situation in the North-East has oscillated between a national embarrassment in the eyes of the international

community, to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the world's largest black nation. The Nigerian national emergency agencies are used to small scale catastrophes in a place and at a time, and not all at once. The capability of Nigerian emergency agencies like NEMA, the Red Cross and Red Crescent are clearly overstretched due to their multiple involvements in numerous emergency situations all over Nigeria (IDMC, 2014), and meager budgetary allocation.

The absence of laws and policy framework has created ambiguity of roles and duties of the emergency agencies, ministries, departments and agencies of government involved in any response beyond the initial phase of displacement (IDMC, 2014). By law, no specific agency is exclusively responsible for the protection of IDPs, so we find national emergency agencies standing aloof, or competing with each other for limited funds budgeted for the protection and assistance of IDPs (Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN, 2010).

This research attempts to investigate the legislative intervention efforts in national emergencies as it relates to internal displacement in the North-East. It examines how legislative instruments such as; bills, motions and resolutions has effectively been used to grapple with issues of internal displacement in North-East Nigeria, and to identify the challenges faced by the National Assembly in tackling the problems of internally displaced persons and proffering solutions to those challenges.

## **2. METHOD AND MAIN ARGUMENT**

This paper adopts the qualitative approach, with the use of secondary data. A major attraction of this study is the application of textual analysis to the themes and issues, which informed the discussions that followed, and the recommendations.

The paper contends that where the Executive arm is flat-footed in dealing with emergencies as characterized by agencies of government being lethargic and operationally ill-equipped, the Legislature must deploy appropriate instruments via bills, motions and resolutions to compel performance of functions, and make provision for resources, thereby creating/ensuring an atmosphere of peace and security in the country. The Legislature therefore, rises to the challenge of conflicts and crises that predicates and predisposes internal displacement.

## **3. CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE**

The concepts of Legislature and Internally Displaced Persons are discussed in this section.

### **3.1 The Concept of Legislature**

Even though the term 'legislature' bears different names like 'Parliament', 'National Assembly', 'Congress' and the likes, there is no major dispute about its definition (Lafenwa, 2009 cited in Oni, 2013: 21). As the human blood is important to the human system, the legislature is vital to a democratic government. This results from the fact that the legislature plays a critical function as a bridge between the people and the government, bringing the demands and desires of the people into the political domain by initiating laws to protect the people's aspiration. Eme (2014) conceptualizes legislature from a functional perspective. He

posits that the law-making body is a delegate of the general population chosen from the people to make laws for the well-being of the citizenry (Eme 2014: 53).

As an organ of government, the legislature is the main medium for citizen representation and communication (National Democratic Institute (NDI, 2006) cited in Oni and Joshua, 2014:117). Carey (2006) avers that the legislature is a body with expansive participation that offers the chance both to speak to all the differing qualities in the country and to encourage nearer associations among delegates and voters. Awotokun (1998) characterizes the legislature as the lawmaking body and arm of government made up of those agents or a naturally constituted assemblage of individuals whose obligations in addition to other things are to make laws, control official exercises and defend the goodwill of the general population.

Taking after this practical definition, Loewenberg (1995:736) captures the legislature as a “congregation of delegates from defined constituencies, with lawmaking roles in the political domain. The legislature has been portrayed as “the representative body that provides for legitimacy, enacts legislation and oversees and scrutinizes the actions and activities of the executive in a State” (Baldwin, 2006:5).

Okoosi-Simbine (2010) sees the assembly as the law-making, deliberative and strategy affecting body working for the promotion of fair political framework. He depicts the governing body as the domain of representation and the location of sovereignty, the main expression of the desires and needs of the general population. The power of the lawmaking body derives from the general population and ought to be practiced as indicated by the desires of the citizenry who they represent.

Will (1992) however, identifies the institutional perspectives stating that the legislature is “a deliberative institution in which members reason together about problems confronting the community and strive to promote policies in the general interest of the community” (cited in Oke, 2014: 43). Typically, the legislature resolves issues through debate, dialogue, compromise and full explication of all issues. Essentially, therefore, compromise, conciliation, and consensus-building drive the legislative process. Legislators reach decision by persuasions and discussions suffused with reason.

The conceptual approach of this study resonates from the fact that the Nigerian assembly has the restrictive function of initiating laws, and given that the executive branch and its agencies are aware of proposing laws, the obligation of revising and making such laws is the special responsibility of the law-making body. The legislature in Nigeria has the mandate, and is under obligation to initiate debates and show concern on matters affecting the generality of people in the country. Expectedly, such activities should be directed toward reversing declining economy, stabilizing the polity and integrating society with overall aim of ensuring national security.

### **3.2 The Concept of Internally Displaced Persons**

The concept of internally displaced persons has become highly disputed (Cohen and Deng, 1998a; Bennett, 1998). An attempt at a working definition in 1992 by the United Nations Secretary-General goes thus:

Persons or groups who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disaster, and who are within the territory of their own country (United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1992: paragraph 17).

This definition typifies the circumstances faced by displaced persons as an unintentional move by persons within state borders. The explanation also covers persons absconding from armed conflict, internal strife and organized violations of human rights. IDPs were characterized as including persons displaced by natural disasters and sundry man-made calamities. There are many causes of displacement which includes: droughts, tsunamis and tornadoes as well as occurrences such as oil spills, aircraft mishaps, military equipment explosion, the definition is broad enough to take these other causes into cognizance.

In an attempt to fill the gaps and omissions in the above explication, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement was unveiled to the UN in 1998 and has huge acknowledgment for treating internal displacements in the world by various state and non-state actors, regional and sub-regional bodies. The definition presents this group 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 in order 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 (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2004: 6.

- It is imperative to note that this conceptualization of “internally displaced person” is rather expressive or descriptive, rather than being an authorized or legal definition (Mooney, 2003). This simply states in clear realistic terms the condition that displaced persons face within their habitual residence. The concept confers no special legal standing or status on internally displaced persons as the one given to “refugees” does. Kälin et al (2004) explain that IDPs do not need such legal attention. He added that refugees have lost the protection of their own homeland and have crossed the international borders to another state, and by so doing, have lost their human rights to the basic things of life and therefore need special legal status. Internally displaced persons on the other hand, still enjoy the privileges and protection of the habitual residence of a particular state.

#### **4. DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES AND CHALLENGES TO TACKLING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN NIGERIA**

This section is segmented thus: Background to Internal Displacement in North-East, Nigeria; The Nigerian National Assembly Intervention on North-East Internal Displacement; and Challenges Encountered in Tackling Internal Displacement in Nigeria.

##### **4.1 Background to Internal Displacement in North-East, Nigeria**

The history of North-East internally displaced persons is directly related to the insurgency in the North East. The North-East was said to be relatively peaceful until the Boko Haram sect violated the zone. The group came into existence in the 1960s, but began tactical operations in 2002. That same year, Mohammed Yusuf became its leader. With a new leader, the first order of command was to move its headquarters to Kanamma, Yobe state where they strategically attacked nearby police stations, killing police officers (Ekwueme & Akpan 2011:41). The Islamic group famously known by its Hausa name “Boko Haram” was a domestic deep-seated Salafist group which later transcended into a Salafist-Jihadist terrorist organization

in 2009. The phrase Boko Haram is a combination of both a Hausa word “Boko” (book) and Arabic word, Haram (forbidden) meaning “Western education is forbidden”.

The Boko Haram is also called Jama’tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awatiwal-Jihad which means in English “People Committed to the Spread of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad” (Cook, 2013). The Boko Haram sect in Northern Nigeria has presented security challenges in the area, uprooted families and communities from their ancestral homes, and also led to loss of property and means of livelihood (Aluaigba, 2011: 1). While some apologists romanticize the Boko Haram as radicals who oppose the social contradictions inherent in the Nigerian system, some argue that they are a group that arose due to governance failure (Salihu, 2012; Walker 2012; Aly & Johnson, 2015). Others view the group as a band of brutal terrorists bent on foisting an Islamic model on secular Nigeria (Salihu, 2012:212).

For tactical motives best known to Yusuf, the operations of the group were extended to Maiduguri, Borno state, in 2009. Yusuf’s first official operation as group leader was to kill political and religious leaders or their families, especially, those who publicly rejected or criticized Boko Haram’s activities. Although, the sect had not adequately engaged in attacking and bombing public places and religious buildings like now, evidence show that this sect carried out a number attacks on police stations in Bauchi which also spread to Maiduguri on 26 July 2009 (The Punch, 2011). Following the untimely death of President Yar’Adua in May, 2010, and with the emergence of his Vice, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, first as the Acting President and later President, the activities of the dreaded Islamic sect became noticeable, and upgraded in its target areas from attacking drinking joints to bombing security buildings, public buildings and Christian institutions (churches) which happened to be the most affected (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012).

As a result of the violent activities, internally displaced persons in the North-East are living in makeshift and temporary sites. Details of the IDPs living in North-East camps as given by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (2017:17) are: Borno – 1, 002, 688; Yobe -125, 484; Adamawa – 113, 437; Bauchi – 76, 504; Gombe – 16, 984; Taraba – 20, 501; giving a total of 1, 253, 498. It is pertinent to note that the displacement of persons has generated so much chaos, devastation, economic ruin and tremendous loss of lives that the Nigerian state has come to see the problem as an emergency deserving the urgent attention of both the executive and legislative arms of government.

#### **4.2 The Nigerian National Assembly Intervention on North East Internal Displacement**

The essence of the legislature as captured in section 4 (2) of the constitution is to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the federation or any of its component parts. These objectives can only be achieved using the procedures established by the same constitution, other statutes and rules. In the National Assembly, legislative functions are executed through: Debates; Bills; Motions; Public Hearing and Oversight (Sekibo, 2014: 159).

In 2003, the National Assembly set out to draft a national policy on internal displacement that would assist in the reintegration, resettlement, protection of internally displaced persons and also the allocation of responsibilities to agencies, organs of government, non-governmental and civil society organisations. The committee’s work culminated in a National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons also known as Kampala Convention which was prepared and presented to the

government in May 2012, the draft policy was re-written and re-presented in December 2014, but was never adopted.

The former President Jonathan in 2013, against the background of rampant Boko Haram activities ravaging portions of Nigerian territory under the guise of creating an Islamic caliphate, declared emergency rule in selected local government areas of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, the three hardest hit by the insurgency. The 1999 Constitution in Section 305 (1&2) empowers the President to deal with emergency situations as duly prescribed in that part of the law. Thus, the presidency in collaboration with the National Assembly, have tried to tackle displacement and insurgency in the North-East or attempt to stabilise the situation through the declaration of emergency rule.

The brutality of the the Boko Haram sect in the North-East has been on the increase. With the inauguration of the Buhari administration, the 8<sup>th</sup> assembly has set on its legislative agenda to “take legislative action that supports the delivery of special economic development measures that addresses the root causes of problems specific to the North-East geo-political zone of the country...” (The National Assembly, 2016:16). In 2015, and for the very first time, the House of Representatives created a standing committee (Committee on Internally displaced persons, Refugees and North East Initiative) with the singular aim of addressing the challenges of internal displacement in the North-East caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. The 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly has also proposed the “North East Development Commission Bill”. This commission is to be responsible for evaluating the costs incurred, making plans and policies, and principally heading the rehabilitation and resettlement of victims in affected areas of the North-East region.

That same year, the Assembly also passed “The National Commission for Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees and Migrants Bill”, 2016, sponsored by some members of the House of Representatives, which aims to repeal the National Commission for Refugees Act, to enact a new law that establishes a new Commission for internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants, to address the challenges of IDPs and other victims of violence or conflict across the country for which no extant legal framework exists (Zorro, 2017: 4).

The Bill seeks to provide “a Central Coordinating and Monitoring Agency that champions the cause of IDPs, Refugees and Migrants in Nigeria”. Others include:

- Ensure transparency, accountability, Judicious and effective management of IDPs and other subjects of this Bill.
- Empower the Commission to administer any law, policy or regulation on IDPs, Refugees and Migrants in Nigeria.
- Provide a Synergy between other Security Agencies and the Military through an organised unity of efforts in the execution of various operations to secure the IDPs camps across the country.
- Generate better safety, welfare and re-integration of the IDPs through a well coordinated treatment, based on experience, expertise and professionalism (Zorro, 2017: 5).

In 2016, the National Assembly also proposed the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons Bill. The bill is set to protect the rights of internally displaced persons and prescribe punishments to the violators of the rights of internally displaced persons (Guardian, 2016). The House of Representatives has also held a public hearing on the North-East Development Commission Bill on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2016, in order to lay a concrete legal framework to remedy the social dislocation and progressive socio-economic devastation of the North-Eastern states occasioned by the destructive

escapades of the Boko Haram insurgency. Also, to ensure that affected citizens participate in the law making process and by implication, in governance (National Assembly Bill office Department, 2017).

The National Assembly also engaged in constituency/ zonal intervention projects in the North-Eastern areas such as: Gomboro, Ingala and Maiduguri of Borno State; Yola, Michika, Madagali, Hong, Maiha and Mubi North and south of Adamawa State; Gamawa and Jalingo of Taraba State; Damaturu in Yobe State, in order to provide care for IDPs and empower IDPs by providing livelihood support training programmes where vocations like; carpentry, soap making, bead making, hair dressing are taught to IDPs in various camps across the North-East. The legislature provided equipments such as: grinding machines, sewing machines, motorcycle, babrbing tools, hair dryers to enable IDPs adequately self-maintain themselves (National commission for Refugees, Migrant and Internally Displaced Persons, 2017).

A plethora of motions have been sponsored by members of both chambers in response to the plight of internally displaced persons arising from the conflict in the North-East. Some of the motions include:

- The Senate in March 2016, considered and passed a motion titled: “The need to urgently flush out Boko Haram insurgents re-assembling in Taraba and halt the on-going silent genocide in the state”. The motion, sponsored by Senator Emmanuel Bwacha (Taraba South), sailed through with five resolutions thus:
- Call for condemnation of killings, kidnapping, destruction of property, farms and farmlands going on in the state by Boko Haram insurgents;
- Call on the Security Chiefs to deploy security into Taraba State to stop the killings, and flush out the insurgents out of the state;
- Urge the Senate to compel the Federal Government to undertake a holistic study of the crisis in Taraba State and rehabilitate the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and supervise their reintegration into their communities;
- Call on the relevant Committees of the Senate to visit the affected states and the IDPs’ camps, so as to ascertain the gravity of activities of insurgents and interface with the state government and Security Agencies in the State towards finding a lasting solution to the activities of the insurgents;
- Commend the Federal Government and the Nigeria military for the successes recorded so far in the fight against insurgency (Committee on Rules and Business, 2016).

Additionally, the Senate on October 4, 2016 passed a motion titled “Mounting Humanitarian Crisis in the North-East”, sponsored by Senator Baba Kaka Bashir Garbai (Borno Central) and 17 others. According to the motion, the Senate noted with grave concern, the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. The motion having enjoyed the overwhelming support of law-makers was passed with five resolutions, as follows:

- Constitute an Ad-hoc Committee of the Senate to conduct a Public Hearing and ascertain how much has been released to the Presidential Initiative on the North-East and how these funds have been utilized from inception to date;
- Investigate the diversion of grains and other food items from the strategic grains reserves, NEMA and other sources for the IDPs;
- Senators to donate Three Hundred Thousand naira each, thus totalling N32.7m to the IDPs in the country;

- The Committee to also investigate the officials of the IDP camps in the region;

Senate also commended the International Community and staff working in the IDP camps for their support (Committee on Rules and Business, 2016). The Senate also debated and passed a motion titled “Interim Financial and Material Support/Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Returnees in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States”, sponsored by the former Senate Majority Leader, Muhammed Ali Ndume and eight others. The motion was passed with the following resolutions:

- Urge the Federal Government to release grains from the strategic grains reserve to the affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe;

- Direct the Senate Committee on Appropriations to allocate the sum of N10 billion under the service wide vote for relocation and resettlement of the IDP returnees in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states;

- Urge NEMA and National Refugees Commission to make special arrangements for the repatriation and resettlement of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon, Niger and Chad;

- Direct the appropriate Committee to write a letter of appreciation to the Embassies of host countries where the refugees are accommodated;

- Urge the Victim Support Fund to allocate reasonable amount from the fund for immediate relocation and resettlement of the IDPs pending the short and medium term plans, they may have;

- Include IDP centres in Nasarawa, Taraba, Benue and other states in the federation (Committee on Rules and Business, 2016).

However, inspite of the many motions and the corresponding resolutions from the two Houses of the National Assembly, the Federal Government of Nigeria is yet to effectively tackle the IDP situation in Adamawa, Taraba, Borno and Yobe states due to the devastating activities of the Boko Haram insurgents in the North-East region of the country. The above scenario has led stakeholders and commentators to echo the views of the Federal Commissioners of Emergency Agencies, that the lack of a coherent framework had drastically impeded efforts to assist displaced persons, and remained largely insufficient in the face of the massive humanitarian challenges (Tsokar, 2017).

#### **4.3 Challenges Encountered in Tackling Internal Displacement in Nigeria**

The National Assembly has made efforts to ensure that the internally displaced persons are well protected and assisted, however, there are numerous drawbacks in tackling internal displacement. Redressing internal displacement points to lack of sincerity on the part of the managers (Odufowokan, 2017:7). Billions of naria are appropriated to cater for the IDPs, but government official use the process of procurement to enrich themselves. It is not only from state actors, contracts are being awarded to cronies and friends but they do not translate to realities (Ojiabor, 2017: 40). A recent instance is the alleged fraud of public knowledge involving the former Secretary to Government of the Federation, Babachir Lawal (of funds meant to cater for internally displaced persons in the North-Eastern, Nigeria).

The humanitarian crisis has now been turned into a humanitarian industry where people make profit. The situation of the North-East internal displacement has been turned to “cash cow” with people profiting from the agony of IDPs. According Zorro (2017), the absence of strong

central regulatory or coordinating agencies on internal displacement is occasioned by the following challenges to tackling internal displacement in North-East:

- Too many actors with varied and often conflicting roles in the field.
- Lack of coordination and monitoring mechanisms by stakeholders.
- Absence of road map or approved policy regulatory framework for IDPs.
- Delays in the passage of bills
- Refusal to implement bills and resolutions from the National Assembly on matters relating to internal displacement by the Executive.
- Absence of top government functionaries as advisers or managers of IDPs
- Mismangement of resources meant for IDPs/Misappropriation of funds to national emergency agencies, and sundry corruption.
- Ineffective legislative oversight
- Lack of synergy between the National Assembly and emergency agencies.
- Lack of transparency and accountability from the emergency agencies.

The foregoing challenges have resulted in the failure of the National Assembly to enact a law and adopt a policy on internal displacement (Zorro, 2017: 3).

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The paper discussed the efforts of National Assembly (referred to as the Legislature) in national emergencies in Nigeria, using the North-East internal displacement orchestrated by Boko Haram activities as focus of study. It observes that successive Nigerian central governments, especially from 2009 when the activities of this notorious sect reached a crescendo, appear overwhelmed and emasculated in dealing with rising profile of internal displacement of persons in that zone of the country. This is partly explicable by the fact that NEMA as the national agency saddled with handling emergency situations proved structurally, financially and administratively unequipped to deal with large scale crises and serious magnitude of internal displacement resulting there from. The capacity of NEMA and Relief Agencies such as Red Cross and Red Crescent societies became stretched beyond their elastic limits due to multiple involvements in emergency situations across the country.

It is also observable that the internal displacement of persons has oscillated between national embarrassment and unprecedented humanitarian crisis, which has generated chaos, devastation, economic downturn and decimated population in the North-East, that the Nigerian state now construe it as an emergency requiring decisive attention/action of the Executive and Legislative arms of government. The 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of this Fourth Republic have been deploying legislative instruments as discussed in Section 4.2 of this paper to attempt dealing with the pathetic situation. The paper therefore recommends as follows:

- There is an urgent need for the establishment of permanent and adequately funded central regulatory and coordinating agencies/machineries to handle national emergencies (both natural and man-made), and replace the ad-hoc arrangements which are usually unprepared, lethargic and flat-footed to handle emergencies.
- Plural and sharply divided societies require strong integration mechanisms that are supplemented with transparent, robust dialogue and consensus building which nips crises and centrifugal tendencies in the bud. The activities of Boko Haram typify this, and federalism offers

the necessary recipe for harmony. However, the Nigerian federal practice has not been able to achieve this. Time has come to rethink and tinker with the current unitary practice in guise of federalism, in order to redress these maladies.

- The agencies saddled with handling emergencies should have clearly delineated roles, equipped for performance, and leverage on the essential inter-agency/unit coordinating and monitoring mechanisms.

- There should be a National Guide and regulatory framework for policy implementation on issues relating to internal displacement and other forms of emergencies.

The paper canvasses the need for regular and effective legislative oversight, plus appropriate accountability mechanisms that would engender judicious utilization of resources by Emergency Agencies and institutions of allied mandates and responsibilities. The legislature should live up to its billings through timely and pro-active law making based on bills, motions and resolutions on citizens' security, peace and well-being in the country.

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