

THE RENTIER TRAP AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE: CONFLICT-DRIVEN DISPLACEMENT IN NIGERIA GOES BEYOND BULLET HOLES

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's internal displacement crisis is often blamed on immediate triggers like terrorism, banditry, environmental/climate disasters, communal clashes and ethnoreligious crises. While these factors are real, this article argues that these are symptoms of a deeper, largely ignored structural failure. To address the research problem of how state neglect and weak institutions systematically drive mass displacement, this paper employs the qualitative doctrinal methodology. It also combines Rentier State Theory with Johan Galtung's Theory of Structural Violence to show how reliance on crude oil revenues detaches political elites from accountability to citizens, fostering systemic neglect. This paper finds that focusing on displacement through the lens of direct triggers is not enough to resolve the situation; instead, a deeper investigation is needed into what enables the structural violence that sustains displacement. It is recommended that Nigeria must transform from a consuming economy to a producing economy; immunise the nation's security architecture from politics; institutionalise social security; strengthen institutional checks to make the executive accountable; restructure the unitary federal system to enable states to manage their own resources; and make Chapter II of the Constitution fully justiciable to secure fundamental human rights. To establish a resilient foundation for peace, the Rwanda-inspired restorative transitional justice model should be adopted to heal historical grievances and leverage the domesticated Kampala Convention, which is vital to coordinate national response and legally protect displaced persons to achieve durable solutions.

Keywords: *Rentier, Structural Violence, Displacement, Governance, Weak Institutions, Durable Solutions, Johan Galtung.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Displacement in Nigeria is no longer an emerging issue but has evolved into a very concerning, large-scale, protracted and continuing crisis, deepening mass displacement within and outside the country and mass migration on a scale unrivalled in Nigeria's history. The Kampala Convention¹ defines internally displaced persons 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 generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border."² This definition is consistent with the introduction to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.³ The two core elements of the definition are those of involuntary movement and that such movement takes place within national borders. These groups of persons, if they were to cross a geographical border, would qualify as refugees. The 1951 Refugee Convention⁴ defines a refugee as someone "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of (their) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail (them self) of the protection of that Country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of (their) former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."⁵

A close look at the UNHCR Nigeria forcibly displaced populations dashboard for February 2026⁶ reveals that Nigeria has a displacement population of three million, five hundred and forty-four thousand, five hundred and nineteen (3,544,519) internally displaced persons, with four hundred and six thousand, six hundred and seventy-two (406,672) refugees in Cameroon, Chad and Niger,⁷ while one thousand, seven hundred and five refugees voluntarily returned to Borno State. According to the UN Refugee Agency, Nigeria alone accounts for 3.5% of the world's 117

¹ African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, 2009

² Article 1(k) of the Kampala Convention, 2009

³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 22 July 1998, ADM 1.1, PRL 12.1, PR00/98/109, available at: <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/3c3da07f7.html>> 23 March, 2024

⁴ More properly cited as the UN General Assembly, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189

⁵ Article 1 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951

⁶ UNHCR, UNHCR Nigeria Forcibly Displaced Populations Dashboard - 1 February 2026 <<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/121265>> accessed 30/07/2026

⁷ UNHCR, UNHCR Nigeria Forcibly Displaced Populations Dashboard - 1 February 2026 <<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/unhcr-nigeria-forcibly-displaced-populations-dashboard-1-february-2026>> accessed 30/07/2026

million forcibly displaced population, while noting that conflict, insurgency, and communal violence have displaced millions, with the North-East experiencing the highest displacement.⁸

This has induced forced migration from rural to urban areas, as well as movement of resourceful Nigerians to other parts of the world, ultimately leading to loss not just of human lives and livelihoods but emptying a great nation with vast human and natural resources of its human resource component, leaving the nation's great potential remaining latent. What started as isolated, localised, spontaneous events has spread out into not just a regional issue but a national disaster.

For the past twenty years, millions of Nigerians have been displaced (or are still displaced) at some time in their lives.⁹ The high level of displacement has consequences for the displaced communities, the displaced persons themselves, as well as the host communities. The consequential humanitarian crisis has attracted the attention of governments at many levels, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, as well as humanitarian agencies and policy makers. This is especially so because, though displacement is caused by various factors, some outside human control, like natural disasters and climate change, and even development-induced factors or economic factors, the conflict-induced displacement remains the major driver of forced displacement in Nigeria. It has led to the destruction of not just homes but families across the nation, disrupting livelihoods and slowing down economic development, deepening the already fractured lines of this multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation, hampering advancement, deepening mistrust, entrenching disharmony, unpatriotic activities and creating fertile ground for conflict merchants/entrepreneurs and the like to exploit the situation to continue to destabilise the country. As a great West African nation, if the situation continues, the likelihood of a spillover is great, and an implosion of Nigeria will carry consequences far beyond West Africa into the whole continent and even globally.

The apparent drivers of this extremely high level of displacement in Nigeria's history are chiefly armed violence perpetrated by non-state actors¹⁰ like Boko Haram, ISWAP, militant Fulani herdsmen and allied groups who have defied the country's constitution, hiding behind extremist

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Data from Statista shows over 15 million displacements between 2013 and 2020 alone. See Statista Research Department survey <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1237374/number-of-internally-displaced-persons-in-nigeria/?srsltid=AfmBOoqc0vw8CCs4fijFZ2zWUmscfmCi9K4ifQt33Jm2AIF3DQ8WUCw_> accessed 30/07/2026

¹⁰ OCHA, Nigeria 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (January 2025) <<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/nigeria/nigeria-2025-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-january-2025>> accessed 30/07/2026

religious supremacist ideologies, enabled by a failing state system and emboldened by weak institutions. This is prominent mostly in the northern part of Nigeria, though experienced in various parts of the country at different times. Another major driver is the consequential rise in criminal violence, branded banditry by the government, dominant mainly in the northwestern part of Nigeria, where parallel shadow governments are established, allowing terrorists, criminals and insurgents to tax Nigerians before they can access their farms or even live in “peace” in their communities.

Furthermore, the farming communities in North Central Nigeria, though not exclusively, but mainly in North Central Nigeria, suffer from attacks and violence perpetrated by militant herdsmen who rape, maim, attack farmers on their farms and in their homes, killing people, burning down entire communities, raiding farms, abducting persons and displacing thousands of people at will; most times unapprehended, with multiple reports of complicity on the part of government and its officials.

Other drivers exist based on resource control,¹¹ secessionist activities in the southeastern part of Nigeria, communal clashes and environmental factors like flooding and desertification. These identified drivers, though not exhaustive, are made worse by the ineffective and weak institutions in the country, high rates of poverty and unemployment, marginalisation, religious intolerance and ethnic bigotries/sensitivities, population growth and the like. The ineffective policing and security architecture of the Country also entrenches impunity, deepening tensions, perpetration of armed violence unchallenged or unapprehended, and encouraging repetition of cycles of violence. Abductions of persons for ransom are fast becoming a booming “business” in Nigeria, leading to forced displacement of persons, though not on a large scale as that caused by terrorism, but this is fast becoming a driver to watch out for. An author noted that

kidnapping for ransom has become so “rampant that that no fewer than 500 incidents have been reported annually since 2017, claiming thousands of victims. While billions of naira are paid in ransom and thousands of lives are lost in the process, the phenomenon of kidnap for ransom has led to a political economy of blockade where economic activities along the Abuja-Kaduna highway have been paralysed, and travel for private and commercial purposes in the northwestern axis of Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara and the northcentral states of Benue and Niger have been halted for security reasons. The crisis has spread beyond Nigeria’s borders as travelling, whether for

¹¹ IDMC/NRC, Nigeria: Unresolved Conflicts Cause Ongoing Displacement
<https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1233895/1002_1229615957_idmc-nigeria.pdf> accessed 14/08/2026

trade, work or even personal purposes, between Nigeria and Niger Republic is becoming increasingly impossible due to the excessive abduction activities.¹²

These factors further exacerbate the issues of displacement, making it a very complex multi-level crisis needing not just policies and laws but strong willpower on the part of every stakeholder for the crisis to be resolved durably.

On the face of it, it appears that these physical acts of aggression are the sole reasons for the security situation and displacement crisis in Nigeria. However, a more in-depth investigation will reveal that these acts alone are not enough to sustain forced displacement in Nigeria, particularly with the response of government at different levels (including sustained military interventions and collaborations) and the interventions from multilateral organisations and international governments in the fight against insurgency. For instance, there have been vast investments in Nigeria in terms of humanitarian aid and interventions running into billions of US dollars. In ten years, the amount of paid funding received in USD is \$3,758,213,539 when the addition is done with data from the UN OCHA financial tracking service for each year from 2017 to 2026 alone (as many humanitarian organisations, locally and internationally, do not pass their data through the UN OCHA).¹³ As of July 2026, the UN OCHA financial tracking service shows that Nigeria received a total of \$184, 155,642.¹⁴ From the analysis of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, its analysis of the evolution of its humanitarian response indicates that the people in need continue to fluctuate in millions: from 7.7 million persons in 2018, it spiked to 10.6 million in 2020 and began dropping slightly to 7.8 million persons in need in 2025 and, so far in 2026, 5.9 million people.¹⁵ The fact that the need continues in the millions, averaging between 7 and 8 million within the past ten years, indicates something important – the response so far is not addressing the root cause of the problem but merely treating the symptoms while overlooking the underlying factors, leaving the situation substantially the same or even worse.

¹² Sule Babayo and Usman Sambo, *The Political Economy of Banditry in Nigeria* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2025).

¹³ UNOCHA also focusses its operations mainly on the BAY States – Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States

¹⁴ UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service, Total reported funding 2026 <https://fts.unocha.org/global-funding/donor-grouped/2026?order=total_funding&sort=desc&f%5B0%5D=destinationLocationIdName%3A163%3ANigeria&f%5B1%5D=flowStatus%3Apaid> accessed 30/07/2026

¹⁵ UN OCHA, Humanitarian Action Analyzing needs and response <<https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1508>> accessed 10/09/2026

In its military efforts, Nigeria has also partnered with various countries to fight terrorism or insurgency, engaged in bilateral military operations and joint tasks with neighbouring countries, and established bilateral security frameworks with Israel, the United Kingdom and the USA. The latest of which is the collaboration between Nigeria and the United States of America in areas of military training, intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism operations, maritime security, logistics, and professional military education¹⁶ and, in recent times, boots on the ground in specific areas of Nigeria. The various military operations and neutralisation of terrorists have not yielded many results either, compared to the magnitude of work left to be done.

This is because there are underlying factors and history that have not been looked at wholistically before acting on assumed solutions. The Maitatsine riots in the 1980s, which extended into the 1990s (this was in very many ways similar to the current Boko Haram; an author referred to it as Modern day Maitatsine¹⁷ but now more lethal, widespread and sustained due to technological advancement) was dealt with using the military option; the results achieved were temporary, as evidenced by the hydra-headed terrorism launched by Boko Haram and its allied groups, as ideologies nursed and nurtured in a dysfunctional system cannot be erased simply by taking care of the symptoms while leaving the causes intact and deteriorating.

In looking beyond the physical shocks and insecurity realities in Nigeria, deeper issues enabling or sustaining armed violence and insecurity, with the consequential mass displacement of persons in Nigeria, will be carefully considered by combining the Rentier State theory with Johan Galtung's theory of structural violence. It will address the question as to whether or not the major driver of protracted displacement in Nigeria is structurally enabled because the government is preoccupied with the wealth that it generates from crude oil, thereby neglecting infrastructural development, citizens' welfare and responsible governance.

1.1 Methodology/Scope/Limitation

This article focuses on structural violence as it relates to the governance systems and economy since Nigeria's independence, looking at how proceeds from crude oil are centrally

¹⁶ Ministry of Defence, FRN, "Press Release — Ministry of Defence." *Defence.Gov.Ng*, 2026, <<https://defence.gov.ng/press-release.html?slug=nigeria-united-states-defence-ties-strengthened-as-ministry-hosts-former-africom-commander-general-william-e-ward>> accessed 15 Aug. 2026.

¹⁷ Sule Babayo and others, *Islamic Militants and Insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria: A Comparison of the Ideology and Methodology of Maitatsine and Boko Haram*. Dec. 2018, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329701504_ISLAMIC_MILITANTS_AND_INSURGENCY_IN_NORTHEASTERN_NIGERIA_A_COMPARISON_OF_THE_IDEOLOGY_AND_METHODODOLOGY_OF_MAITATSIN_E_AND_BOKO_HARAM> accessed 31/07/ 2026.

managed by the Federal Government, giving rise to dependence on it by States and consequently undermining other revenue generation avenues and potentials, using data from authors and research organisations directly linking this with theories of Johan Galtung on Structural Violence and the Rentier State Theory. Although Rentierism has an effect on various aspects of the State, this article concentrates on how reliance on oil wealth leads to systemic neglect of infrastructure and the general welfare of the citizens. A significant limitation is the reliance on sourced and published data rather than on-field research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Rentier State Theory

The Rentier State Theory was developed by Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani,¹⁸ following their categorisation of certain countries based on “their disproportionate reliance upon one or several inherited sources of rents, such as mineral resources, notably oil and gas. Petrochemical-rich rentier states gain much of their income through the extraction, processing, and shipping of these resources.”¹⁹ This theory posits that governments of such countries place heavy reliance on the mineral resource sector for income and therefore are less reliant on other sources such as income generated from the taxation of their citizens. A rentier state or rentier economy therefore, is a country that relies on substantial external rent in the form of the sale of oil, transit charges (Suez Canal), or tourism.”²⁰ Several authors²¹ have studied this theory and applied it in countries in the Middle East²² and also in Africa. Using empirical evidence and also investigating theories of foremost authors, it was observed as follows:

Evidence suggests that the discovery of a natural resource has led to a decrease in the rate of economic growth in African petrostates. Less studied is the phenomenon that all African petrostates or resource dependent countries have authoritarian governments or have experienced a very slow process of political reforms. These include Algeria, Nigeria, Libya, Gabon, Cameroon, and the former Zaire ... The

¹⁸ Neal Mark, *A Dictionary of Business and Management in the Middle East and North Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Puranen B and Widenfalk O, The Rentier State: Does Rentierism Hinder Democracy? In: Moaddel, M. (eds) *Values and Perceptions of the Islamic and Middle Eastern Publics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) pg.160 <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230603332_7> accessed 31/07/ 2026

²¹ Hazem El Beblawi, The Concept of “Rentier States” Revisited. In: Diwan, I., Galal, A. (eds) *The Middle East Economies in Times of Transition*. International Economic Association Series. <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-137-52977-0_8#citeas> accessed 31/07/ 2026

²² Walker S, Rentier State Theory 50 years on: new developments <<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/political-science/articles/10.3389/fpos.2023.1120439/full>> accessed 31/07/ 2026

literature on rentier states has investigated the political implications of resource abundance (Mahdavy 1970; Beblawi and Luciani 1987). A rentier state is characterized by a high dependence on external rents produced by a few economic actors. Rents are typically generated from the exploitation of natural resources, not from production (labor), investment (interest), or management of risk (profit). The common conclusion is that rentier states tend to be autonomous. Thus, states with large natural resource endowments are more detached and less accountable because they do not need to levy taxes. Mahdavy (1970) uses this argument to explain the lack of pressure (from below) for democratic change in the Middle East ... Nowhere is the positive correlation between natural resource windfalls and dictatorship more evident than in Nigeria. As the share of oil revenues in its GDP increased from 1% in 1960 and 30% in 1964 to more than 90% after 1979, its government has become increasingly centralized and oppressive. Only four of Nigeria's past thirty-five years of political history have been under civilian rule. Oil revenues have allowed the government to consolidate power on the federal level by creating financially dependent states. More than half (55 percent) of oil rents accrue directly to the federal government, which is responsible for distributing an additional 35 percent of these profits to states (Khan 1994). The resultant regional and ethnic competitions for oil revenues have contributed to Nigeria's political system of institutionalized patronage.²³

More than thirty years after the quotation above, Nigeria has enjoyed about 27 years of additional civilian rule, yet the situation described above has not changed significantly. Though Nigeria is beginning to diversify and increase income from taxation, it still relies heavily on foreign income exchange from its crude oil sales and exports. Analysis from 2025 federal allocations show that about 26 States in Nigeria relied heavily on resources from federal allocations as their internally generated revenues were not sufficient to finance their expenses.²⁴ Early indicators already show that 28 states received a combined ₦2.64 trillion from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) between January and May 2026, a sum that is 90.5 per cent more than the ₦1.387 trillion they generated internally throughout 2025 indicating not just continuing but increasing reliance on federal allocations for survival of most States.²⁵

²³ Leonard Wantchekon and Nathan Jensen, Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa <<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/47026/AS03.pdf>> accessed 10/10/ 2026

²⁴ Sami Tunji, 26 states lean on FAAC as wage bills outstrip IGR <<https://punchng.com/26-states-lean-on-faac-as-wage-bills-outstrip-igr/>> accessed 10/10/ 2026

²⁵ Bukola Aro-Lambo, 28 States' 5-month FAAC Allocation In 2026 Tops 2025 IGR By 90.5% <<https://leadership.ng/28-states-5-month-faac-allocation-in-2026-tops-2025-igr-by-90-5/>> accessed 10/10/ 2026

2.2 Johan Galtung's Theory of Structural Violence

The Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung is sometimes referred to as the “Father of Peace studies”²⁶ developed a triangle of violence that explains structural violence.²⁷ In his view, violence goes beyond direct violence or physical acts, which are mainly symptoms (visible aspects), to root or foundational causes or justifications, which are a combination of structural and cultural violence (the invisible aspect).²⁸ While direct violence is at the top of the triangle and therefore obviously seen, cultural and structural violence are placed at both sides of the base of the triangle as many times, these are overlooked because they are concealed and require intentionality to find them. In his words, “*the formation of violence can be differentiated into direct violence (its visible aspect), and structural and cultural violence (its invisible aspects). These are the three corners of a triangle of violence.*”²⁹

Direct violence is therefore explained as visible harm such as injury, killing, assault, coercion, war, intimidation, and overt forms of domination which can clearly be seen as there are identified perpetrators, victims and causative incident(s); a typical example of direct violence given by Johan Galtung is war. Structural violence, also called systemic violence or “faceless violence” lacks “the subject-action-object formula”, which makes it one of the invisible categories of violence.”³⁰ It is produced by the social structure through the imposition of unnecessary and avoidable deprivations and suffering. According to Galtung, although there is not a direct act of violence against the body, structural violence can have the consequence of both physical and psychological effects. It is therefore harm done systematically by depriving people of meeting their potential, by denying them access to basic amenities and infrastructure like education, healthcare, a healthy environment and the like. Galtung's position on structural violence in relation to direct violence is that “structural violence is silent; it does not show – it is essentially static, it is the

²⁶ Right Livelihood, Awarded 1987 Johan Galtung < <https://rightlivelihood.org/the-change-makers/find-a-laureate/johan-galtung/> > accessed 19/08/2026. In this article, Johan Galtung is reported to have authored and co-authored more than 1,600 articles and 160 books on peace studies in his 70-year career. it was also reported to have also more than 150 conflicts among nations, religions, local communities and civil society giving him the requisite authority and experience on proper diagnosis of structural violence.

²⁷ Johan Galtung, *Violence, War, and Their Impact: On Visible and Invisible Effects of Violence* (Polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy 5, 2004) <<https://them.polylog.org/5/fgj-en.htm>> accessed 31/07/ 2026

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ricarte J, *The Construction of Identities in Protracted Conflicts*. In: The Impact of Protracted Peace Processes on Identities in Conflict. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023) pg.2

tranquil waters,”³¹ it is silently institutionalized and manifests by creating inequalities, marginalisation and unequal access to state resources.

Cultural violence, as expounded by Johan Galtung, is more lethal and referred to as “violence without moral restraints;”³² it is described as violence that “relates with identity and representations of ‘the self’ or ‘the other’ as it refers to symbolic aspects of life, such as ideology, language, religion, art or history, that can be used to legitimise violence in its direct or structural form.”³³ In other words, “...cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look or even feel right - or at least not wrong.”³⁴ It is that layer of meaning that justifies harm because it encapsulates the belief systems and beliefs, symbols, stories, ideologies, habits, and assumptions that make direct or structural violence seem acceptable, inevitable, natural, deserved, or invisible.³⁵

Johan Galtung’s theory of structural violence basically brings about a paradigm shift from conflict analysis of conflict actors to analysis of social systems. This structural violence manifests in Nigeria in various forms; for example, the National Multidimensional Poverty Index Report “finds that 62.9 per cent of Nigerians are multi-dimensionally poor, approximately 132.93 million citizens deprived across health, education, living standards, work and nutrition.”³⁶ This was confirmed by the World Bank that poverty rose to 63 per cent in 2025, trapping about 140 million people in hardship.³⁷ There are also widespread reports of marginalisation in employment, admissions into government schools/institutions, high rates of unemployment and general infrastructural deficits.

³¹ Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” *Journal of Peace Research* [1969] (6) (3), 167–191 pp. 167–191. <https://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPD%202015%20readings/IPD%202015_2/Galtung_Violence,%20Peace,%20and%20Peace%20Research.pdf> accessed 20 Aug. 2026. Pg.173

³² Ricarte, J, *The Construction of Identities in Protracted Conflicts* In: *The Impact of Protracted Peace Processes on Identities in Conflict. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies.* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16567-2_2>

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Toward Life Knowledge, Johan Galtung: Peace, Violence, and Structural Diagnosis <<https://bsahely.com/library/foundational-lineages/johan-galtung-peace-violence-and-structural-diagnosis/>> accessed 21/08/2026

³⁶ Moshood Oshunfurewa, Rising revenues, deepening poverty: Nigeria’s self-contradictory reform path <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2026/04/rising-revenues-deepening-poverty-nigerias-self-contradictory-reform-path/>> accessed 10/09/2026

³⁷ Ibid

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Available research on displacement in Nigeria focuses on conflicts, particularly internal armed violence, as being the major driver of displacement in Nigeria and even Africa as a whole. On the adequacy of legal protection, Adeola³⁸ extensively explored national frameworks with recommendations on how to deepen legal protection for displaced persons, for example by domesticating the Kampala Convention,³⁹ a move already made by the Federal Government in March 2026. She also analysed the rights of IDPs under the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement⁴⁰ particularly the right not to be arbitrarily displaced. Other authors focused on the humanitarian context by researching the causes of displacement and poor management of IDPs' camps, with concerns about how the displaced persons were first victims of Boko Haram and then victimised further by inefficient, uncoordinated, and unsuitable displacement management programs, looking at the various roles played by government and international aid agencies, urging for stronger protections.⁴¹ Another context examined is the regional and cross-border dynamics — displacement across the Lake Chad Basin and along the Nigeria–Cameroon border, including the Numan border and other fragile borderlands; demonstrating how cross-border influxes, armed conflicts in neighbouring countries, weak border controls, and inadequate humanitarian infrastructure strain already impoverished host communities.⁴² Research has also been done to indicate the ineffective national response and gaps in the compilation of data on displaced persons and the need for durable solutions, peace processes and transitional justice.⁴³

Looking through the lens of the resource curse, Idemudia⁴⁴ states that “oil wealth has potentially transformed the state into an effective tool for corruption⁴⁵ attributing many of the

³⁸ Aderomola Adeola, *Internally Displaced Persons and the Law in Nigeria* (Routledge 2022)

³⁹ Adeola, Romola, ‘Boko Haram-Induced Displacement: A Critique of Nigeria’s Implementation of the African Union Internally Displaced Persons Convention.’ *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2017, pp. 41–55. *JSTOR*, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27327993>> accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

⁴⁰ R Adeola, ‘The right not to be arbitrarily displaced under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ *African Human Rights Law Journal* [2016] (16) (1) 83–98

⁴¹ Medinat Abdulazeez Malefakis, *Humanitarian Displacement and Boko Haram in Nigeria* (Springer Nature, 2022)

⁴² Yahaya Jibrin and others, Cross-Border Displacement from Cameroon to Nigeria: Numan Border Dynamics (2015–2020) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/404974328_Cross-Border_Displacement_from_Cameroon_to_Nigeria_Numan_Border_Dynamics_2015-2020> accessed 20/08/2026

⁴³ Prof Cantor, David, and others (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Internal Displacement*, (Oxford, 2026) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/9780198928805.001.0001>> accessed 18/08/2026.

⁴⁴ Uwafiokun Idemudia, The resource curse and the decentralization of oil revenue: the case of Nigeria. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, November 2012

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S095965261200279X?via%3Dihub>> accessed 10/09/2026

⁴⁵ Ibid

developmental challenges suffered by the country to oil and rent-seeking while citing how military coups and counter coups only served those in power to embezzle funds while introducing violence as means to win elections and hold onto power. This gives a good foundation to the rentier theory, however, does not link to the structural violence that has enabled the current level of displacement.

In most of the available literature, there is marked shortfall in proper analysis of underlying reasons for displacement beyond the direct consequences of physical violence.

4. MANIFESTATIONS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE THAT RESULTS IN MASS DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS IN NIGERIA

Insecurity and violent conflicts perpetrated majorly by non-State actors are discussed in three categories hereunder:

4.1 Terrorism/Insurgency

Terrorism and insurgency are concepts that mean close, but different things but used interchangeably particularly in Nigeria. Nigeria's Terrorism Act defines it as "an act willfully performed with the intention of furthering an ideology, whether political, religious, racial or ethnic ..."⁴⁶ Terrorism does not have a universally accepted definition however, the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines terrorism as "the calculated use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective."⁴⁷ The resulting consequence of the "willful act" referred to can be wide ranging as provided for in the Terrorism Act to include causing serious harm or damage to a country or international organization, seriously intimidating a population, attack on a person's life in the form of grievous bodily harm or death and also includes kidnapping of a person and destruction of government or public facilities/infrastructure amongst others.

Insurgency on the other hand is broader though not specifically covered in any law in Nigeria other than a passing comment in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the powers of the armed forces to suppress insurrection. Insurgency is synonymous with rebellion and is defined by the US Department of Defense as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and conflict. It is also defined as "a protracted struggle conducted methodically on all fronts – political, economic, social,

⁴⁶ Section 2 (3) Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022

⁴⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Terrorism <<http://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism>> accessed 11/08/2026

Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).⁵⁴ However, key disagreements over leaders and treatment of civilians led to a split of the group (to JAS and ISWAP). Over the years, Boko Haram began to fragment into splinter groups with emergence of new groups and its former ally turned rival began to engage in bloody clashes.⁵⁵ These clashes are continuing so much that the global conflict monitor, ACLED recorded “over 300 clashes involving Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad region in the first quarter of 2026 —a 30% increase from the last quarter of 2025 — with a notable rise on both the Cameroon and Nigeria sides of the border.”⁵⁶

Though terrorism is usually associated with a political motive, the terrorism in Nigeria is religiously motivated as can be deduced from the name of the organization that sparked terrorism as currently is in Nigeria. The major players claim to be fighting a religious war and began implementing identity-based attacks overtaking Christian communities, abducting Christians – schoolgirls, farmers, and families. Muslims who refuse radicalization or extremism and did not align with these terrorists were also killed violently to the extent that the victims of Boko Haram tilted at some point to affect more Muslims than it did Christians who were originally the main targets. Currently, the terrorist groups in Nigeria have expanded to include ISWAP, Ansaru, Lukarawas, JAS⁵⁷ and their menace is most endemic in the northeastern part of Nigeria though spontaneous attacks have been carried out and can still be done in any part of the country.

Although, broadly speaking, the major role of the Nigerian Army as provided for by law is to contain external aggression and preserve the territorial integrity of the nation while the Police is charged with internal security duties; the nature of, and calibre of weapons and operations of the Boko Haram group possibly informed the decision of the Federal Government of Nigeria to engage the military to tackle the Boko Haram and other terrorist groups’ menace. The activities of the military have yielded success in some cases, leading to recapture of several towns from terrorists; these recaptured towns became garrison towns and places of safety for community members with

⁵⁴ United Nations Security Council, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

<<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/islamic-state-west-africa-province-iswap-0>> accessed 9/9/2026

⁵⁵ International Crisis Group, JAS vs. ISWAP: The War of the Boko Haram Splinters

<<https://www.crisisgroup.org/brf/africa/west-africa/nigeria/b196-jas-vs-iswap-war-boko-haram-splinters>> accessed 9/9/2026

⁵⁶ Ladd Serwat, Is Violence involving Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province Rising?

<<https://acleddata.com/expert-comment/violence-involving-boko-haram-and-islamic-state-west-africa-province-rising>>

⁵⁷ European Union Agency for Asylum, “1.3.1. Boko Haram, Including JAS, ISWAP and Ansaru.” 2021,

<<https://www.euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria-2021/131-boko-haram-including-jas-iswap-and-ansaru>> accessed 13/08/2026.

active terrorist groups in their communities, leading to the displacement of persons from nearby places to the garrison towns. The unintended consequence, however, is that it created room for more terrorists to settle and capture the communities people fled from.

The terrorist groups adopted styles of burning down entire villages, sometimes arriving at night while people slept or ambushing a town and invading it in large numbers on motorcycles, using guns, machetes and other weapons to kill and hack down people while burning down their homes, places of worship and sources of livelihood. Other times, they attack farmers on their farms, hacking them down and carrying many into captivity. This became one source of recruitment as they forced captives to join as active fighters or, worse still, suicide bombers. Besides the number of persons killed, the number of people displaced by Boko Haram alone is in the millions, as aptly captured below:

Millions of people have been displaced, both internally within Nigeria and across the border in Cameroon and Niger; when in our traveler's imagined trip to the land of Boko Haram, they came close to Itere, they would have passed a series of formal and informal refugee settlements along the way, not just the huge camp at Minawao. Boko Haram has caused untold hardship across the region in the past decade, chiefly inflicted on people whose lives were already very hard.⁵⁸

In line with the theory of this research, decades of abandonment and resentment fanned the embers of radicalisation; state neglect of infrastructure and a trained local security architecture enabled the terrorist groups to grow fast. The centralised command structure of security agencies does not allow for quick responses to distress calls, when possible, as sometimes locals did not have access to make distress calls. The topography of the attacked areas is well known to the terrorists, while the first responders, who happen to be the military many times, are not as familiar with the topography of the locations. Response time of receiving instructions from the central command hinders rapid response coupled with infrastructural deficits – many times the terrorists had better, more sophisticated and well-coordinated logistics, foot soldiers and weapons compared to the military meant to repel them.

This is worsened by the endemic poverty, illiteracy and high rate of unemployment that provides a ready pool for recruitment into terrorist groups not just from the populace but also, as

⁵⁸ MacEachern Scott, *Searching for Boko Haram* (Oxford University Press, 2018). Pg. 15

some reports have it, from some members of the security agencies who double as informants and sympathisers with the terrorists, giving them information for ambushes and helping the terrorists foil attempts by the military to fight the terrorists, leading to heavy losses of military equipment to the terrorists, which also indirectly serves to better equip the terrorists to continue their activities.

4.2 Armed Herdsmen attacks on Farming Communities and communal Clashes

Most endemic in North Central Nigeria but not exclusive to it, spontaneous attacks on farming communities and village raids have driven thousands of people into displacement. Farmers and herders have always coexisted in historical times, with both benefiting from each other in the sense that the farmers leave their farms to be gleaned after harvest by cattle, who in turn fertilize the lands with their droppings/cattle dung. In the early 2000s, reports⁵⁹ began to emerge on attacks by herdsmen on farming communities; for instance, in March 2010, a local community in Plateau State, Dogo na Hauwa, was brutally attacked while the community members slept at night. The gunshots woke people who scrambled for safety and were attacked with machetes, while others were burnt down in their homes, leading to the murder of over five hundred persons. Though reports on circumstances that led to this vary depending on who was doing the reporting, some reports stated that it was reprisal attacks based on earlier religious violence.⁶⁰ While others reported that the perpetrators were not herdsmen, this only brought about a situation where identity and resource-based violence became a continuing occurrence.

Reports abound from communities and LGAs in Plateau,⁶¹ Benue,⁶² Taraba,⁶³ Nasarawa,⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Adam Nossitter, Toll From Religious and Ethnic Violence in Nigeria Rises to 500

<<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/09/world/africa/09nigeria.html>> accessed 14/08/ 2026.

⁶⁰ Human rights Watch, Nigeria: Investigate Massacre, Step Up Patrols: Hundreds killed by Mobs in Villages in Central Nigeria <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/03/08/nigeria-investigate-massacre-step-patrols>> accessed 14/08/ 2026.

⁶¹ Zagazola Makama, Chronological Narrative of Attacks and Reprisals in Plateau State

<<https://zagazola.org/index.php/security-analysis/12>> accessed 14/08/2026. See also ROC-Taiwan, Herdsmen attack 11 Plateau Villages, kill 86, torch 50 houses < https://www.taiwanembassy.org/ng_en/post/1382.html> accessed 14/08/ 2026.

⁶² Tyokase Clement Terlumun, 'The Challenges of Herdsmen/Farmers' Clashes and Rural Development in Benue State, Nigeria' *International Journal of Scientific Research in Humanities, Legal Studies & International Relations* [2019] (4) (1) 89-102

<<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://internationalpolicybrief.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ARTICLE6-79.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjVmpDu76yWAXV8UUEAHV5NGQYQFnoECBgQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0ymK461MqnR155D7sZKJD9>> accessed 14/08/ 2026

⁶³ Juwe Oluwafemi, Taraba killings: 95 communities demand govt intervention < <https://punchng.com/taraba-killings-95-communities-demand-govt-intervention/>> accessed 14/08/ 2026

⁶⁴ ICIR, Investigation In May, gruesome photos and videos from attacks on Nasarawa communities were widely circulated; here is what happened < <https://www.icirnigeria.org/in-may-gruesome-photos-and-videos-from-attacks-on-nasarawa-communities-were-widely-circulated-here-is-what-happened/?tztc=1>> accessed 14/08/ 2026

Kaduna⁶⁵ and several other states of the federation indicating that herdsmen have carried out spontaneous attacks on their farms, burnt down their villages, rape their women and abducted their people, leading to a mass exodus of people from the farming communities to state capitals and other surrounding communities that are safer. Reports also indicate that several of the farming communities who have been displaced remain so for prolonged periods of time because they get little or no support from the government⁶⁶ and also because the perpetrators remain on their lands, leading to the killing of community members who dare to return.⁶⁷ The herdsmen, on their part, have also reported several reprisal attacks on them that have led to severe losses like loss of cattle, livelihood and housing.⁶⁸

In many communities in Benue and Taraba States, communal attacks based on border disputes have also exacerbated displacement as armed violence has led to the burning of houses and destruction of sources of livelihood.

This factor continues to lead to sustained displacement as boundary disputes and takeover of grazing routes due to population expansion have continued to remain live issues. Reports of retaliatory violence, many times enabled by imported militia and hate campaigns, have led to a recurring cycle of violence which cannot be left unchecked if Nigeria is to make meaningful progress as a nation. Reports of desertification that led to mass exodus of pastoralists into farming communities ought to be tackled by the government. This points to the fact that underlying factors of this situation have been left intact while treating only the visible signs of violence.

4.3 Banditry/Criminality

Banditry and criminality reign supreme in many rural areas in the northwestern part of Nigeria as they operate with sophisticated weapons and complex networks. These bandits carry out mass abductions for ransom, rape women and girls, including married women, and kill people

⁶⁵ IOM, Nigeria — North-west Nigeria — Kaduna State Flash Report 275 (18 January 2026) <<https://dtm.iom.int/reports/nigeria-north-west-nigeria-kaduna-state-flash-report-275-18-january-2026>> accessed 14/08/ 2026

⁶⁶ Ezenwa E. Olumba, Nigeria's conflict zones: why people stay even when they can leave <<https://theconversation.com/nigerias-conflict-zones-why-people-stay-even-when-they-can-leave-287826>> accessed 14/08/ 2026

⁶⁷ Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect, Nigeria <<https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/>> accessed 14/08/ 2026

⁶⁸ Amnesty International, Nigeria: The Harvest of Death – Three Years of Bloody Clashes Between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria < <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/9503/2018/en/>> accessed 15/08/2026

including traditional rulers.⁶⁹ Whole communities have been invaded and sometimes overtaken by bandit and terrorist groups who have begun to establish shadow governments in captured communities, thereby inserting themselves into the deeper fabric of society. Citizens and farmers are forced to pay tax before they can access their farms either to plant or harvest crops.⁷⁰ The consequence of this goes beyond displacement as it also has the capacity to drive up prices of goods and also the capacity to cause food shortages which will make displaced persons suffer more acutely in their already disadvantaged situation. There are also reports of increased illegal mining of gold and other natural resources while cattle rustling has become the normal order in affected communities. These bandits and terrorists have invaded and live in the vast forests and ungoverned spaces from where they carry out arbitrary raids on communities and farms catting away the belongings and farm produce of the citizens. This has led to situation where many communities have become unsafe and uninhabitable for people who are forced to flee for their lives and in some cases, in certain communities, the people are unable to leave because the bandits would not let them.

5. LOOKING BEYOND THE BULLET HOLES

Conflict driven displacement in Nigeria is alarming and worrisome; there are existing efforts on the part of the Nigerian government at all levels; even concerted efforts and collaborations with other Countries, multinational partners and organizations. The resulting humanitarian situation has been met with several actors contributing their expertise and resources trying to proffer durable solutions to this disturbing and very stubborn situation. Researchers and academicians have done their part by researching the situation, visiting the field to meet with victims and analyses done with experts yet the situation remains protracted which points to the fact that there is a root cause that has been left intact and needs to be found – in likening this to an ailment, the causative factors must be found for there to be wholistic healing. If a person with persistent headache keeps taking only analgesics, the pain might lessen but so long as the high blood pressure or other underlying cause remains undiagnosed and tackled, the problem will only get worse.

⁶⁹ The New Humanitarian, Beyond “Christian genocide”: The real roots of criminal violence in Nigeria <<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2026/03/05/beyond-christian-genocide-real-roots-criminal-violence-nigeria>> accessed 15/08/2026

⁷⁰ Ruth Okwumbu-Imafidon, How Bandits are building shadow economies, taxing traders and farmers across Nigeria < <https://businessday.ng/news/article/how-bandits-are-building-shadow-economies-taxing-traders-and-farmers-across-nigeria/>> accessed 15/08/2026

Nigeria is a great country blessed with vast natural and human resources and a very diverse and multi-faith population; for such a dynamic nation to grow progressively and develop strategically, it requires a robust, effective government that is patriotic. Unfortunately, colonial heritage left Nigeria with structural divisions and faultlines which were amplified by the political elites after independence, and this is largely responsible for what became the civil war in Nigeria between 1967 to 1970. With a no victor, no vanquished declaration, the country tried to move forward and then the oil boom transformed Nigeria from a largely agriculture rich country to a stupendously oil-rich country; so much so that the former President Yakubu Gowon declaring that “money is not Nigeria’s problem, but how to spend it.”⁷¹ There is no evidence that Nigeria ever got a government from independence till date who successfully solved the problem of the structural divisions and faultlines that laid a dangerous precedent for divisions and rancour in the country.

What ensued rather was that the vast oil resources became a convenient subterfuge to abandon the masses for self-aggrandizement and advancement of parochial interests. How this played out is that just in line with the Rentier State theory, Nigeria gradually became overdependent on external income particularly proceeds from crude oil extraction⁷² and income generated from multinational companies dealing in Nigeria’s crude oil (making it fairly a mono-economy while other revenue generating sources including its previous agricultural wealth became minimal to deteriorating level and unable to sustain the country’s economy without crude oil proceeds). This weakened the capacity of the individual states, centralized political dominance at the centre; gave rise to a very strong federal government with its federal allocation policy, and became a reason for the political class to detach from the governance needs of the citizens giving rise to gross neglect of security and welfare needs as well as infrastructural and development needs of the State.

This means that states of the Federation concentrate on receiving monthly allocations from the Federal government rather than generating their internal local revenue or developing their state’s infrastructure and citizen’s capacity in terms of education and training. This also encourages

⁷¹ The Editor, “Chinua Achebe’s ‘The Trouble with Nigeria’ Revisited: Is Nigeria’s Trouble Still Rooted in Poor Leadership?” *Afrocritik - Projecting Africa: One Word, One Story at a Time*, 22 Mar. 2025, <https://afrocritik.com/chinua-achebes-the-trouble-with-nigeria-revisited-is-nigerias-trouble-still-rooted-in-poor-leadership/> accessed 22/08/2026.

⁷² Salihu, Ibrahim and Anas Abubakar, ‘The Nigerian State as a Rentier State: Theoretical Foundations, Scholarly Perspectives, and Empirical Manifestations.’ *Modibbo Adama International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, [2026] (1) (1) pp. 359–72, <<https://doi.org/10.64290/maijomas.v1i1.44>> accessed 31/07/ 2026.

elites and politicians to focus on getting a portion of the “nation’s wealth” rather than strive to serve and develop the country. This therefore attracts kleptocrats, gerontocrats and kakistocrats to vie for leadership positions and hijack if they must, leadership to enable them rule the people by exploiting the revenue source from crude oil for personal and clannish interests and therefore do not need to invest in infrastructure and citizens’ welfare. State institutions are weakened and sometimes used to institutionalize parochial interests; they ultimately also neglect the security of the citizens who they do not feel accountable to, despite this being a constitutional role.

The resulting rentier government can afford mass public services and employ the largest population giving a situation that makes mass uprisings difficult and easier to suppress. Rentierism in Nigeria has given rise to gross mismanagement of funds, neglect of state infrastructure and deep neglect breeding poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and the worse of it, an entrenchment of divisive politics that preys on the diverse tribes, ethnic and religious differences in the country to sustain divisions and faultlines that become active tools for conflict that is so deep it breeds hatred leading to sustained insecurity that ultimately leads to continuous mass displacement of persons in addition to increased poverty and unemployment that gives rise to a pool of restive youths who can be recruited by terrorists and criminal gangs.

The resulting structural violence therefore got to the point that direct violence began to erupt in bullet holes, burning down of villages, raping and hacking down people and ultimately displacement of persons which is more visible to track rather than the foundational root causes; that is, the structural violence that feeds direct violence in form of systems, structures, deprivation and attitudes/culture/practices or traditions that were created from Rentierism. These structures enable or sustain the various forms of direct violence, but they are quiet, unnoticed and therefore not tackled, leaving the situation to continue to be prolonged worse than a health situation that has defied medication due to misdiagnosis.

Applying the structural violence theory to Nigeria, it is clear that armed violence (whether by non-state actors like Boko Haram, Bandits and other terrorist groups or even military operations that has led to mass evacuations to garrison towns) continues to feed protracted displacement and it results from neglected duties of responsible governance and institutionalization of cronyism, discrimination, ethnic and religious bias, poor accountability, bigotry, intolerance, economic mismanagement, marginalization and all sorts of corruption. Certain factors lay foundation for the unique problems in different regions of the country, for example in the eastern region, the relics of the Biafran civil war lay foundations for the secessionist agitations while in the north, the elements

which paved way for Boko Haram include “... religion, fragmentation, religious fundamentalism, influence from past insurgencies, poverty and government failure, lack of political will, and the inefficiency of security forces.”⁷³

This results in high rates of poverty, unemployment, apathy, inequalities and superiority phenomena. The resulting discontent from the citizenry is seen in mass protests, high rate of crime, calls for secession, radicalism/extremism, large number of youths idling away, providing a ready tool for recruitment into terrorist cells and criminal gangs. And also creates room for extremists to grow gangs and sell ideologies that pacify an already disgruntled people, gaining their loyalty and allegiance proving Johan Galtung’s theory of structural violence that suggests that invisible, institutionalized inequalities wreak physical and psychological harm on marginalized populations.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Findings

A major finding of this research indicate that the lingering displacement situation in Nigeria is not just a problem of direct violence alone, rather there are underlying causes that sustains the violent attacks, terrorism and criminality which has been inadvertently left unexplored or underexplored and therefore unresolved. The continuous emphasis on combatting the direct actors of terrorism and attacks without addressing the fundamental structural violence that is enabled by governance deficits may amount to revolving in circles and wasting resources while lives and livelihoods continue to be endangered. It is therefore imperative to consider an in-depth investigation into indirect enablers of the direct violence seen to decisively solve the situation.

6.2 Conclusion

The wealth derived from crude oil proceeds in Nigeria has become a major focus and area of interest of the political class therefore a higher priority compared to developing the nation’s other natural and human resources. The monthly federal allocation system has been developed where all eyes are on receipt of allocations and not so much on internally generated funds from infrastructural development and viable fiscal structures for earning making Nigeria a proper Rentier state. The fall out of this system is a systemic neglect of the welfare and security needs of the populace as the political class does not see ‘direct’ benefit from the citizens. This becomes the

⁷³ Medinat Abdulazeez Malefakis, *Humanitarian Displacement and Boko Haram in Nigeria* (Springer Nature, 2022).

bedrock and sustaining factor that feeds insecurity, the growth of terrorism and allied factors that continue to plague Nigeria hindering attainment of durable solutions to the lingering displacement situation.

6.3 Recommendations

- i. Members of the National Assembly needs to sponsor bills or initiate amendment processes of relevant existing laws that ensures a departure of governance system of Nigeria from the rentier structure by diversifying wealth from crude oil to develop other aspects of Nigeria's economy with a deliberate direction to break Nigeria away from continuing to be a consuming nation to becoming a producing nation.
- ii. The National Assembly must amend the Constitution to enable a strong, vibrant judiciary that will be capable of keeping the executive arm of government accountable to the citizens and correct the institutionalized inequalities in the nation.
- iii. The Constitution also needs an amendment to ensure that the unitary federal system of Nigeria is redesigned to allow the component parts of the country to function as federating units properly so called; they must be allowed to use their natural and human resources without having to first depend on approval from the federal government.
- iv. The Constitution needs to be amended to ensure that the security architecture of Nigeria is immunized from political interference.
- v. Section II of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria must be made justiciable for Nigerian citizens to adequately enjoy the fundamental human rights. The National Assembly can include this in items for constitutional amendment.
- vi. States mostly affected by violence can create short-term restorative transitional justice systems to tackle grievances caused by past violence and conflicts, lessons can be learnt on this from Rwanda model.
- vii. The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction needs to put in place policies that ensure functional social security measures to reduce inequalities and deprivation
- viii. is paves way for work on durable solutions for displaced persons who can now return or be reintegrated without fear of further displacement.