

CAUSES, TRENDS AND IMPACTS OF ARMED CONFLICT ON SOCIAL WELFARE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN NIGERIA: A LEGAL APPRAISAL*

Abstract

The 21st century has experienced aggravated armed conflicts in almost every part of the world, from Nigeria to South Africa, Iraq to Yugoslavia, Afghanistan to Syria, and to Yemen. Nigeria has stark divisions along the lines of deep-rooted ethnic, regional and religious bias, which cause agitations, unhealthy competition, rivalry and even war. Since its independence, Nigeria has been torn in different directions by repeated crisis of regional agitation, religious superiority, political violence and diverse economic interest, which stall economic transformation and national cohesion. Armed conflict has threatened Nigeria's peace, stability and unity, increased the number of civilian victims of armed conflicts, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP's) and people in need of rapid humanitarian attention has increased. At the receiving end of all chaos, insurrection, unrest and armed violence are vulnerable children who face devastating consequences of armed conflict. Nigeria's socio-political landscape has been infested by armed conflict and for the country to end this trend, it is important to explore the history of armed conflicts in Nigeria, access the trend, identify its causes, analyse the effects of armed conflict on social welfare rights of children in Nigeria, vis a vis an appraisal of the legal regime targeted towards ending the menace of armed conflict.

Keyword: Armed Conflict, Children, Social Welfare, Human Rights

1. Introduction

Nigeria is multiethnic and consists of divergent ethnic nationalities. These groups co-exist irrespective of their cultural, ethnic and religious differences. However, diversity¹ in ethnicity, religion and culture often clash, and results in various forms of armed conflict. Nigeria has recorded a few of such heightened clashes, such as Ijaw-Itsekiri-Urhobo, Benue-Cross River, Ife-Modake, Nassarawa, Taraba, Benue/Cross River Crises,² Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu Biafra's self-actualization/secession attempt, recurrent ethnic/religious armed conflict in Jos, Plateau State, plague of militancy in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, insurrection perpetuated by the extremist group, known as *Boko Haram*, several brutal attacks of Fulani herdsmen on rural farmers and dwellers in North Central Nigeria; and the Shiite Islamic Movement³ which has been proscribed as a threat to Nigeria's security due to their incessant uproar against the Government.³ Armed conflict has devastating effect effects on persons and economy of states wherever it exists and therefore deserves legal, social and psychological attention.

2. Brief History of Armed Conflict in Nigeria

Since Nigeria's independence from British Colonization in 1960, the country has experienced various kinds of violent conflicts, wars and ethnic rivalry. These conflicts have brought extensive destruction of lives and properties.⁴ Sequel to months of political instability in Nigeria due military coups which left many people of Igbo extraction in the late 1960's massacred, the then military Governor of Eastern Nigeria- Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu unilaterally declared Biafra's independence, an aspiration of Igbo people who have long endured marginalization by Northern dominated federal government, thereby triggering a civil war between the government of Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra⁵. This conflict lasted for three years, form 6th July 1967 to 12 January 1970, and reportedly claimed over 3 million lives⁶. Akin to the foregoing is the emergence of the agitation for Biafra by pro-Biafran groups, especially the Nnamdi Kanu led Indigenes People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has also given rise to tension, waste of life, resources, interruption with education of children and continuous false imprisonment by their intermittent sit at home orders in South-East Nigeria. Other conflicts that have bedeviled the nation include the recurrent ethnic/religious armed conflict in Jos, Plateau State in 2001, 2008 and, especially the

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² J. C. Ebegbulem, 'Ethnic Politics and Conflicts in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspective' University of Calabar, Nigeria, 2010 p. 79

³ [https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/214575/Violence in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Solutions \(thenigerianvoice.com\)](https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/214575/Violence%20in%20Nigeria:%20Causes,%20Effects%20and%20Solutions) accessed 17/2/22

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ F. Ugochukwu, 'The Nigerian Civil War and Its Media: Groping for Clues', SAGE 2010, p.182

⁶ M.O. Ikeke, 'The National World and Violent Conflict in Nigeria: An Appraisal' Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities, p. 95

deadly riot that occurred in 2010 which left a fatal impact on the society⁷. Many people including women and children were killed. About 500 women lost their lives, children and their source of livelihood⁸.

Furthermore, since the early 1990's, the oil endowed Niger-Delta region of Nigeria has been plagued by crisis between militants and oil companies⁹ in the region, as well as the government forces and some militant groups that were aggrieved over certain fundamental issues affecting the region which has led to the hostility. Since the last two decades, militants have fought with government forces, sabotaged oil installation, taken foreign oil workers hostage and carried out lethal bombing¹⁰. At the root of the hostility is the complaint of under development. Another cause of armed conflicts in Nigeria is that perpetuated by the extremist group, known as *Boko Haram* which began its nefarious activities in 2009 with fighting of any political or social activity associated with western society. Notorious among *boko haram* activities include armed conflicts and acts of terrorism, ranging from the 2011 Abuja bombing to the 2011 Christmas day bombings and the brazen abduction of over three hundred schoolgirls from the Chibok Government Secondary School, in Borno State, Nigeria.¹¹ Also, on 21st of April 2016, the Nigeria Police and the Department of State Security declared the 'Shiite Islamic Movement' as a threat to Nigeria's security due to their incessant uproar against the Government.¹² These ethnic and religious agitations and violent attacks on citizens lives and property across Nigeria by perpetrators of armed conflicts; have all contributed to Nigeria now being classified as a volatile and a terrorist nation, and one of the worst countries on earth for a child to grow up¹³.

3. Trends of Armed Conflict in Nigeria

Armed conflicts in Nigeria thrive on ethnic, religious, social, economic, political/electoral violence, terrorism, militancy, and youth restiveness¹⁴. Divergent ethical, religious and political divisions facilitate armed conflict in Nigeria. Political positions are usually vigorously and violently contested along the ethnic, religious and regional bias¹⁵. Since its independence, Nigeria has experienced recurrent crises propelled by these biases, which often clog efforts at democratization, stability, economic transformation and national cohesion.¹⁶ Currently, armed conflict rocks almost every part of the country, some of these conflicts are reinforced by selfishness, poor institutional capacity and lack of human and material resource needed for addressing widespread crime and the general situation in Nigeria¹⁷. In 2018, the figures of casualties of crime in Nigeria slightly increased by 1.4%, from 10,517 in 2017 to 10,665 in 2018¹⁸. The year marked a rise in general crime across the country. Banditry was prevalent in Zamfara and Kaduna states¹⁹. The first quarter of the year witnessed massive killings in Benue and Plateau states by alleged herdsmen. Rivers and Lagos states also recorded large incidents of cult 2018²⁰. Delta, Ebonyi, Cross River and Akwa Ibom witnessed rise in inter-state and intra-communal clashes that resulted in several loss of lives and properties²¹. Many casualties were also recorded in attacks on military bases in Tumbum Gini, Metele and Gashigar in Abadam Local Government Area (LGA), Zari and Gudumbali in Guzamala LGA and Damasak in Mobbar LGA, Borno state, as well as in Kukareta in Damaturu LGA, Yobe state²².

⁷ M.O. Ikeke *ibid*

⁸Essays, UK. (November 2018) 'The Impact of Armed Conflict in Nigeria' www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology-essay.php?vref=1, accessed 19/2/20

⁹Ogoni against Shell (1990 till date); Umuchem against Shell (October 1990) and Uzere against Shell (1992)

¹⁰iproject, Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria, Root Causes of Peacelessness in the Region, 2004, <https://www.iproject.com.ng/political-science/niger-delta-crisis-in-nigeria-root> accessed 07/02/22

¹¹*ibid*

¹² [https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/214575/Violence in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Solutions](https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/214575/Violence%20in%20Nigeria:%20Causes,%20Effects%20and%20Solutions) (thenigerianvoice.com) accessed 17/2/22

¹³ [https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/214575/Violence in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Solutions](https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/214575/Violence%20in%20Nigeria:%20Causes,%20Effects%20and%20Solutions) (thenigerianvoice.com) accessed 17/2/22

¹⁴M.O. Ikeke, 'The National World and Violent Conflict in Nigeria: An Appraisal' *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* p. 95

¹⁵H. Çanci and O. A. Odukoya, 'Ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria; A specific analysis upon identities' (1999-2013), African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/ethnic-religious-crises-nigeria/> accessed 10/3/20

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷*ibid*

¹⁸*ibid*

¹⁹ V. UKOJI et al 'Eighth Report on Violence, Nigeria Watch', IFRA-NIGERIA WORKING PAPERS SERIES, N°59 (2018), p.8

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

²² V. UKOJI *ibid*

Political violence poses a sad threat to the legitimacy of elections in Nigeria. This anomaly is anchored on the fact that political power is one of the few ways to amass wealth in Nigeria; politics often becomes what is frequently referred to in Nigeria as ‘a do-or-die affair’²³. However, the dynamics driving political violence differ to some extent from state to state in Nigeria. As reported by human rights watch, in the southern states of Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta, political conflict is customarily aggravated by the desire to control the lucrative relationship between local communities and oil companies operating in the area²⁴. Riot and protest events also was at its peak in Nigeria in 2015 during the country’s closely contested national elections when incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan lost out to General Muhammad Buhari. Similarly, In Kwara and Enugu, personal hostility between leading politicians has led to violence between their supporters. In 2019 general elections, it was reported that 18 persons were killed in the South-East, with about 530 persons also suffering from varying degrees of injury inflicted during election violence²⁵. In Plateau, those who call themselves ‘indigenes’ or natives of the state have repeatedly clashed with those they refer to as settlers²⁶. Recounting but a few are the religious riots of February in the year 2000 between Christians and Muslims over the introduction of Sharia law in Kaduna State which recorded about 2000 deaths²⁷. Also in November 2002, the Muslims took offence by the Miss World Pageantry that was hosted in Abuja. This gave rise to an inter-religious riot, with many houses of worship burnt by religious zealots, leaving about 200 people dead²⁸. Currently, religious violence in Nigeria is dominated by *boko haram* insurgency, which aims to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria. This point is buttressed by the incessant acts of violence as experienced on the 2012 Christmas day attack, Easter day bombing²⁹, the college of Agriculture of Yobe State massacre of September 2013, when gunmen suspected to be book haram stormed the dormitory, killing at least forty-four students and teachers³⁰. Armed conflict has devastating effect on citizenry, especially women and children. The array of conflicts and armed conflicts narrated above descends on them with consequences that stifle their enjoyment of human and welfare rights that accrue to them.

4. Causes of Armed Conflict in Nigeria

Armed conflict in Nigeria has been blamed on certain factors that threaten peace, stability and unity. These factors include- poverty, unemployment, lack of equality and justice, religious/ethnic sentiments, political instability, mismanagement of national resources and misrule by multi-ethnic and multi-religious coalitions.

Poor Economy and Unemployment: poor economy and unemployment are one of the root causes of the escalating state of armed conflict in Nigeria. Corruption and the incidental mismanagement of public funds has occasioned widespread unemployment, frustration and restiveness among youths which makes them susceptible to violence³¹. Unemployment rate has been on the increase in Nigeria, the youth constitute about 60% of the country’s population, and majority of them are either unemployed or underemployed. Thus, idleness and frustration, makes susceptible to all manner of vices including armed conflict and violence. Unemployment has also established a culture of dependence on corrupt politicians, who engage young people for thuggery during elections, riots and insurrection.³²

Lack of Equality and Justice: Nigeria has vast in natural resources and oil wealth which is controlled by the political class.³³ The gap between social classes in Nigeria is alarming, and this breed inequality. While a lawmaker earns bogus salaries and allowances, a classroom teacher is paid meagre amount which is usually delayed, sometimes for a few months³⁴. Inequality and injustice in Nigeria have instigated provocations and led to armed conflict many times, as seen in the Niger Delta agitation of neglect with respect to resource generation and control. Armed conflict has regrettably become an instrument for seeking equality and justice³⁵.

²³Human Rights Watch, ‘Testing Democracy; Political Violence in Nigeria’, April 2003Vol. 15, No. 9 (A)April 2003, [https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/04/10/testing-democracy/ Political Violence in Nigeria](https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/04/10/testing-democracy/Political%20Violence%20in%20Nigeria), accessed 10/2/22

²⁴*ibid*

²⁵ Report presented by Womens’ Aid Collective in partnership with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems in Enugu, <https://punchng.com>> accessed 10/3/20

²⁶ Ogbonna *ibid*

²⁷ www.thisdaylive.com, accessed 16/3/20

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2012/12/25/world/africa/nigeria-christmas-attack> accessed 10/3/20

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ National Bureau of Statistics, 2012 <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary> accessed 24/3/22

³² <https://www.legit.ng/1122557-causes-conflict-nigeria-ways-resolving-them.html> accessed 10/3/22

³³ [https://www.the.nigerianvoice.com/news214575/Violence in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Solutions](https://www.the.nigerianvoice.com/news214575/Violence%20in%20Nigeria%3A%20Causes%2C%20Effects%20and%20Solutions) (thenigerianvoice.com) accessed 10/3/22

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ *ibid*

Religious/Ethic Sentiments: Nigerian is excessively biased along religious and ethnic identities. Sadly, these factors play more important roles in election, appointments, employment and admission into public institutions in Nigeria more than one's qualification to perform the task. Religious and ethnic sentiments have triggered major violence in Nigeria. Marginalization of some ethnic groups that make up the country is one of the causes of ethnic conflict in Nigeria³⁶. These grievances are usually expressed through violent insurgencies.

5. Violations of Social Welfare Rights of Children in Nigeria by Armed Conflicts

'Adults go to war, but they don't realise what damage they are doing to children.'³⁷ Armed conflicts and hostilities of all sorts have always victimised children and other non-combatants. Children are callously exploited, maimed and in worse cases killed during armed conflicts. During hostilities, children find themselves caught up in complex and confusing circumstances where they are dependent on the care, empathy and attention of adults who love them. However, the attachment of these children to their loved ones is frequently disrupted in during armed conflict when such parents and loved ones lose their lives, or are extremely pre-occupied with protection and finding subsistence for the family or are emotional unavailable, depressed or distracted.³⁸ Throughout northeast Nigeria and across the border regions in Cameroon, Chad Niger, and more recently South-East Nigeria, children are in extreme danger.³⁹ Insecurity caused by the conflict between the armed group commonly known as 'Boko Haram', military forces and civilian self-defence groups in northeast Nigeria has escalated into a worsening humanitarian crisis⁴⁰. The conflict has forced thousands of people from their homes. Countless numbers of children, women and men have been abducted, abused and forcibly recruited, and women and girls have been targeted for particularly horrific abuse, including sexual slavery.⁴¹ Villages and towns have been looted and destroyed. Schools have been under several attacks. Armed conflict exacts horrendous effects on children, affecting not just their well-being and their safety but also their access to basic health services, education and social services.⁴² Six grave violations against children have been identified during armed conflict, based on the severity of their consequences on the lives of children.⁴³ These violations are as follows:

- i. Recruitment and use of children as soldiers
- ii. Killing or maiming of children
- iii. Sexual violence against children
- iv. Attacks against schools or hospitals
- v. Abduction of children
- vi. Denial of humanitarian access

6. Legal Framework for Protection of Social Welfare Rights of Children during Armed Conflicts

The basic framework for the protection of children during armed conflicts under international law are; International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law. Notably, the legal framework protecting children during armed conflicts consists of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional protocols of 1977. There also Domestic laws on protection of children's social welfare rights in both war and peaceful times. Recruitment and use of children under the age of 15 is prohibited by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions. 'The Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible measures in order that children who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities and, in particular, they shall refrain from recruiting them into their armed forces.'⁴⁴ Judicial affirmation on recruitment of child soldiers came in 2004, when the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) ruled in the case of *Prosecutor v Hinga Norman*⁴⁵ that the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict is a war crime under customary international law.⁴⁶ Also, the right of civilians not to be arbitrarily deprived of life and the prohibitions against killing or maiming civilians are principles firmly enshrined in the Constitution⁴⁷ and

³⁶ <https://www.legit.ng/1122557-causes-conflict-nigeria-ways-resolving-them.html>, accessed 18/3/20

³⁷ G. Machel, 'The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children; A critical review of progress made and obstacles encountered in increasing protection for war affected children', International Conference on War, Canada, 2020, p.2.

³⁸ J.S Barbara, 'Impact of war on children and imperative to end war'. Croat Medicine and Peace Journal, 47, 2006, p. 891

³⁹ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 'Missing Childhoods The impact of armed conflict on children in Nigeria and beyond', UNICEF 2016, p. 2

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² J.S Barbara *ibid*

⁴³ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 'The Six Grave Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict': The Legal Foundation October 2009 (Updated November 2013), New York, p.11

⁴⁴ Article 77(2), Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (1947),

⁴⁵ *Prosecutor v. Hinga Norma* (Decision on Preliminary Motion), SCSL (May 2004).

⁴⁶ Article 4(c) Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (2002)

⁴⁷ Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004 S.33

other municipal laws⁴⁸, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international jurisprudence the Additional Protocol emphasizes that ‘Children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of indecent assault’⁴⁹ or sexual abuse⁵⁰. During armed conflict, women and girls are continually threatened by rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual humiliation and mutilation. Schools and hospitals are civilian institutions that often provide shelter and protection, and tend to the needs of children during conflict⁵¹. Attacks against schools or hospitals are, in principle, contraventions of well-established international humanitarian law, including customary norms, and may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.⁵² Similarly, abduction or seizing children against their will or the will of their adult guardians either temporarily or permanently and without due cause, is illegal under international law⁵³. It may constitute a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and in some circumstances amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity⁵⁴. ‘The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.’⁵⁵ Also, Denial of humanitarian access to children and attacks against humanitarian workers assisting children are prohibited under the 4th Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocols.⁵⁶ Such a denial of access or attack may constitute a war crime and a crime against humanity.

7. Governments Response to Combating Armed Conflict in Nigeria

Nigeria has experienced several forms of armed conflicts since 1967. The country has witnessed civil war, kidnappings for ransom, religious friction/conflict, violent conflict between farmers and herders over access to land, the tension in Niger Delta, Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast and most recently the agitations of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Southeast Nigeria. Nigerian government has developed various strategies towards curbing the activities of insurgents. Fierce military force was used against armed groups and deployment of over 8000 troops into states in northern Nigeria to combat armed conflict.⁵⁷ The invasion and killing in the Baga community in Borno state on Sunday, April 21, 2013 by Nigerian soldiers.⁵⁸ The Nigerian soldiers in a single operation killed over 200 civilians suspected to be members of Boko Haram in the aftermath of an attack.⁵⁹ The federal government also deployed specially trained anti-terrorism combat squad to the terrorist zones in order to suppress the activities of insurgents. A giant stride in the combat against armed conflict and insurgency in Nigeria is the acquisition and development of more sophisticated, adequate and appropriate military hardware and the approval by the African Union and a broad-based international coalition to collaborate with Nigeria’s military.⁶⁰ The said approval was granted by the international bodies that give authority to neighbouring countries (Chad, Niger and Cameroon) to lawfully deploy troops on Nigerian soil.⁶¹ This notwithstanding, the absence of a specific Military Code of Justice, clearly identifying intended targets and protection of civilians have further increased the number of casualties in Northern Nigeria.⁶² Most of Nigeria’s major security challenges have local roots, and some States in Nigeria have rapidly improved their state and local governments’ abilities to manage conflicts at their sources by establishing Peace Agencies.⁶³ Sustained military operations by the Nigerian Security Forces, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the two Boko Haram factions, Islamic State West Africa Province and Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’Awati Wal-Jihad, resulted in a reduction in the territory controlled by those armed groups.⁶⁴

Furthermore, the unrest in Niger Delta and Ipob agitation in South East Nigeria has mainly been tackled by police and military actions. The Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Baba, has launched Operation Restore Peace in the South East, with a charge on the police to live up to their constitutional obligations by taking the battle to the doorsteps of criminal elements in the region. Operation Restore Peace is part of the

⁴⁸ S. 1, 2 and 4 Childs Right Act 2003

⁴⁹ Article 77(1), Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions,

⁵⁰ S. 32, Childs Right Act 2003

⁵¹ *ibid* p.18

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ *ibid* p.21

⁵⁴ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict *op cit* (n 68), p.18

⁵⁵ UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, Principle 8

⁵⁶ GC IV art. 23, 142; AP I art. 54, 70, 77, AP II art. 14, 18

⁵⁷ S. A. Adedire *et al*, ‘Combating Terrorism and Insurgency in Nigeria: An International Collaborations Against Boko Haram, Fountain University Journal of Management and Social Sciences: 5(1) Special Edition, (2016), p. 70

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ <https://guardianlv.com/2013/05/un-warns-jonathan-on-amnesty-to-boko-haram>. accessed 24/03/22

⁶⁰ S. A. Adedire *et al*, *ibid*

⁶¹ *ibid*

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ Nigeria Situation Report <https://wwwreport-NIGERIA.pdf> (reliefweb.int), accessed 17/03/22

government's effort to address growing insecurity, attacks on security infrastructure and secessionist agitation in the zone. The launch of the campaign was in line with the directive of President Muhammadu Buhari on the urgent need to secure life and property in the country.⁶⁵ The foregoing efforts of Nigerian government to combat armed conflicts have not been without criticisms as police and military actions often violate human rights of civilians especially vulnerable children. Military officers have accused of being complicit in corruption, rape and diversion of funds meant for procurement of ammunitions in the fight against armed conflict. The efforts to end insurgency have failed to adopt peaceful means such as negotiations to address the fundamental cause of the unrest, such as marginalization, religious superiority and equal/equitable distribution of the common wealth of the country.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Security of the individual is a basic human right and the protection of individuals is, accordingly, a fundamental obligation of Government. States therefore have an obligation to take positive measures to protect them against armed conflict and bringing the perpetrators of such acts to justice. The trauma of armed conflict forms the basis of discrimination and possible mob attack of those formerly involved with armed groups. Provision of safe environment and reintegration of former child soldiers into the society calls for synergy between government and other stakeholders to organize grassroots advocacy acceptance of children rescued from armed groups. There is also need for extensive psychosocial multi-layered system of support to families and communities, delivered at different levels of social and health systems. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for an outright overhaul of the security apparatus of the Nigerian state to meet the current security challenges confronting the state. This should include, but not limited to adequate training, funding and equipping of security institutions. Security agencies should be exposed to coordinated counter terrorism training for their officers with ample exposure to strategic input that could hasten the fight against armed conflict.⁶⁶ Finally, the fight against armed conflict demands multi-level cooperation between nations with vast experience in armed conflict. Nigerian government's strategy should seek assistance from developed countries to employ appropriate capabilities in areas of capacity building, intelligence gathering and sharing, and senior leadership development to strengthen current efforts to end armed conflict.

⁶⁵ [https://guarian.ng/news/fg-launches 'Operation Restore Peace' to stabilise South East — Nigeria](https://guarian.ng/news/fg-launches-Operation-Restore-Peace-to-stabilise-South-East-Nigeria) —accessed 3/11/22

⁶⁶ M. Omilusi, 'Combating Violent Conflicts and Terrorism in Nigeria: Some Considered Measures' *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 6, Issue 1, January 2016, p.665