

Non-state Actors and Humanitarian Service Delivery in North –East Nigeria: A Need for Recap

by

Ibrahim O. Salawu (Ph. D)

Department of politics and Governance
Kwara State University Malete, Nigeria
ibrahim.salawu@kwasu.edu.ng

Rashida Oyoru Adamu (Ph.D)

Department of politics and Governance
Kwara State University Malete, Nigeria
Rashida.oyoru@Kwasu.edu.ng

Yusuf Ibrahim Ajao

Department of politics and Governance
Kwara State University Malete, Nigeria
yusuf.ibrahim@kwasu.edu.ng

Abstract

Over a decade now, the Nigeria state have been bedeviling with several typologies of security challenges, which is more predominant in the North-eastern Nigeria. The nature of insecurity in North-eastern has been rapid and ramped ranging from Boko-haram, bandits, suicide bombing, cattle rustlers among other security challenges. The upsurge in this level of insecurity as made life unconducive and unbearable for many populace in most parts on North-eastern Nigeria. This menace has made majority of citizens to leave their ancestral home to find abode in refugee camps who are been technically referred to as internal displace persons (IDPs). The effects of this insurgency has resulted into social vices such as out of school children, economics hardship, health issues among other several consequences. The paper adopts both the qualitative and quantitative research method, which consist of primary and secondary data. The research population were made up of the personnel of Non-governmental organization, Internally Displaced Person (IDPs) across the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe state respectively and other similar federal and state agencies in humanitarian response delivery. The sapling technique was purposive and sample size was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula and data analysis was presented in SPSS and thematic forms. The paper finds out that Humanitarian non-state actors (HNSAs) have played a pivotal role in delivering life-saving assistance. Other findings shows a strong positive perception of their contributions to food security, healthcare, education, and psycho-social support, particularly among IDPs. The paper therefore recommends that HNSAs should adopt area-based aid models that incorporate host communities into planning and delivery frameworks which will reduce grievances and reinforce social cohesion. At the same time, the establishment of community-based feedback mechanisms is essential for aid delivery programs in North-east Nigeria.

Keywords: Humanitarian Non-State Actors, Internally Displaced Persons, Insurgency, Service Delivery.

A. Introduction

The influence of non-state actors in buffering up areas where federal and state government fall short of supply or overwhelmed as gain momentum over decades now; more importantly in democratic states. Addressing the effect of economic, political and social vices has been a major concern for Government at the federal and State level. Also, non-state actors are key players in addressing these multi-dimensional crises, humanitarian non-state actors (HNSAs) have increasingly emerged as significant players in international peace-building and humanitarian response. Organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have contributed meaningfully to peace restoration, relief distribution, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in affected regions. Their interventions have complemented the efforts of national governments, particularly in areas where state institutions are weak or absent. However, the challenges associated with delivering humanitarian assistance and promoting peace in conflict zones are enormous. These efforts demand substantial human and financial resources, long-term commitment, and complex coordination mechanisms. As such, the involvement of non-state actors has been widely acknowledged as a necessary strategy under the broader agenda of good governance and global peace promotion (Peterson 2021).

Non-state actors represent a diverse category of institutions, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations, faith-based groups, and international humanitarian agencies. Operating outside direct government control, these entities have significantly influenced global governance through advocacy, service delivery, and policy engagement especially in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. They function independently from the state, market, and familial structures and often pursue goals that are economic, political, or sociocultural in nature. Importantly, these actors do not seek to capture political power or operate for profit. Rather, their core focus lies in improving governance outcomes, advancing human development, and ensuring the well-being of vulnerable populations, particularly in situations of armed conflict, displacement, and humanitarian suffering. Their roles have become increasingly critical in the evolving architecture of both international humanitarian response and conflict resolution mechanisms, non-state actors are defined as organizations or entities not under the authority of a recognized state and has become more prevalent in international conflicts (Byman, 2018).

Among the important areas of focus for many non-state actors is the provisions of charitable welfare services in crisis and natural disaster-affected regions. These non-state humanitarian actors play an essential role in delivering relief materials, nutrition, health services, education, and protection to vulnerable populations in area of Post insurgency Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Re-integration's. When viewed from a global context across continents, the roles of non-state humanitarian actors have been widely recognized. For instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provides the needed platforms and resources for non-state humanitarian actors to deliver aid and implement development programs. Similar instances can be seen in the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), within the Asian continent, as one of the largest humanitarian organizations globally, with over 100,000 staff providing a range of quality humanitarian services (The Sphere Handbook, 2018). In conflict zones like Syria and Turkey, humanitarian non-state actors have been pivotal in ensuring that children living in Internally Displaced Peoples camps have access to education (Aslihan, 2017) in addition to engaging such governments in fine-tuning the legal basis for their operations.

B. Problem Statement

The seeming opaque nature of the activities and positive gestures of HNSAs, to the extent that their roles are neither appreciated nor understood within the counter insurgency effort of the Nigerian state. This has resulted in an underestimation of their contributions to national stability. This knowledge gap often manifest in the forms of fragmented coordination, lack of transparency, and limited accountability mechanisms within the humanitarian community. In some cases, the activities of these actors have been viewed with suspicion by both government authorities and local communities, leading to distrust and restricted access to certain high-risk areas. In the year back, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been perceived as loyalists of organizations with usually divergent viewpoints to the Nigerian military, sometimes accused of posing as aggressive opponents of security agencies and their activities. Specifically, the Amnesty International falls within this category. Also, Action Against Hunger, and Mercy Corps were suspended in Maiduguri for their involvement in activities capable of sabotaging military counterinsurgency efforts (Njoku, 2020).

Moreover, the absence of a unified strategic framework aligning humanitarian aid with national counterinsurgency goals has weakened the perceived impact of these organizations.

Their contributions are often undocumented, unmeasured, or overshadowed by state-led security operations, making it difficult to assess their factual influence on regional stability. This disconnect continues to hinder a holistic response to the insurgency and may unintentionally prolong the crisis by neglecting the non-military dimensions of peace and recovery. Additionally, while numerous humanitarian interventions have taken place in insurgency-affected communities, there is limited evidence of their long-term impact on livelihoods, resilience, and social cohesion. Many programs are implemented without comprehensive needs assessments or impact evaluations. For example, a review by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG, 2021) found that several livelihood support initiatives in Borno and Yobe states lacked baseline data and follow-up monitoring, making it difficult to assess whether they promoted self-reliance or inadvertently fostered dependency. In some cases, aid distributions have been characterized as uniform responses that fail to account for the specific needs of different communities. This absence of robust impact assessment mechanisms not only limits accountability and learning but also affects strategic planning for sustainable development. Also, it weakens the credibility of humanitarian actors among stakeholders and donors, while also hampering broader stabilization and recovery efforts that require integrated, evidence-based programming. Ultimately, the lack of operational synergy and data-driven programming between humanitarian and security actors continues to impede the effectiveness of both humanitarian assistance and counterinsurgency strategies in the region.

In light of the above problem, that the paper aims to assess the impact of humanitarian interventions by non-state actors on local communities, including Internally Displaced Persons in North-East Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

H0- Humanitarian non-state actors have no impact on local communities, including Internally Displaced Persons in North-East Nigeria.

C. Literature Review

History and Relevance of Non-State Humanitarian Actors

The genesis of contemporary humanitarianism can be drawing back to the Age of Enlightenment, when debate and critical thought questioned accepted notions of what and who should receive care and attention. In addition to opposing the misery brought on by slavery, poverty, severe types of chastisement and imprisonment, and animal brutality, the new philanthropists started working for societal reforms that would significantly increase human well-being. Accordingly, the questioning of the moral importance of national and political borders gave rise to cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitans extended compassion to "others" in far-off places and questioned the geographical boundaries of what was worthy of notice and care. Both charity and cosmopolitanism are components of contemporary humanitarianism. Its international appeal is particularly noticeable during emergencies when technology instantly sends pictures of misery into households across the world.

In his essay *Perpetual Peace* (1795), Immanuel Kant illustrated cosmopolitanism; it lays the groundwork for global distributive justice, shared humanity, and social responsibility. The cosmopolitan idea of moral duties to faraway people is expanded upon by the more prominent theorists Peter Singer and Thomas Pogge. Singer makes the case that those of us who have profited from economic inequalities have a moral duty to help those who are harmed by them in his landmark work "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (Singer 1972). Pogge agrees with Singer that we have a duty to help those who are poor and destitute around the world, but his conclusion is predicated on the negative responsibilities of avoiding hurting other people and making amends after doing that. Examples of such ills are momentous and recent inequalities under imperialism and neocolonialism (Pogge,2008). Humanitarianism was established to mitigate sweeping anguish that is usually entrenched in colonial and neo-colonial system.

Humanitarianism in the modern era is reactionary and has changed to accommodate new types of suffering. Three periods of humanitarianism are distinguished by Barnett (2011): liberal humanitarianism (1989 to present), Neo-humanitarianism (1945–1989), and imperial humanitarianism (1800–1945). Globalization and international reactions to various crises and disasters are characteristics of contemporary liberal humanitarianism. Three traditions form the foundation of humanitarianism as a profession: the Dunantist, Wilsonian, and religious traditions

(Stoddard, 2003). The first type of humanitarianism is spiritual humanitarianism, which developed from crusader labour abroad. US President Woodrow Wilson, who believed that American NGOs could best serve the world by delivering humanitarian aid while simultaneously advancing American goals and ideals (America's "manifest destiny"), is the inspiration behind Wilsonian humanitarianism, especially during the post-World War II Marshall Plan. The humanitarian ideals listed below are embraced by Dunantist humanitarianism, which bears the name of Henri Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross. This page focuses on liberal Dunantist humanitarianism, which is the most prevalent type within the global humanitarian endeavour.

The Concept of Humanitarianism

Another significant dimension is the localization of humanitarianism. The “localization agenda” advocates shifting power and resources from large international NGOs to local organizations that often have better contextual knowledge and community trust (Roepstorff, 2020). This move challenges the dominance of Western humanitarian structures while recognizing that resilience and recovery are best achieved when local actors are empowered. For example, in conflict zones such as Syria, Yemen, and Nigeria, local NGOs have often been the first responders when international actors faced access restrictions. Equally, humanitarianism has been critiqued for being influenced by donor politics and securitization. Donini (2019) notes that aid is sometimes instrumentalized as part of foreign policy or counter-insurgency strategies, blurring the line between humanitarian action and political or military objectives. This raises ethical dilemmas, as communities may view aid actors with suspicion when they are perceived as extensions of state agendas. Yet, despite these critiques, the humanitarian imperative the duty to relieve suffering remains a powerful ethical anchor.

Technological innovation has also shaped modern humanitarianism. The use of drones, mobile applications, and digital cash transfers demonstrates how humanitarian action is adapting to globalization and digitization. According to Sandvik et al. (2021), technology not only enhances efficiency but also raises questions of data privacy, surveillance, and inequality, as vulnerable populations may lack equal access to digital tools. Humanitarianism is the act of seeking help and welfare for other humans. Humanitarianism, aims at providing aid during crises, has become a critical global concern. The term itself captures a broad spectrum of ideas, behaviors, and processes recognized as “humanitarian,” even though they are constantly evolving. It is reflected

in different actions, movements, and ethical practices, all striving for idealistic goals but varying in how they are applied. The current form of humanitarianism is the formalized system of governments, agencies and organizations, which may be defined as a ‘network of inter-connected institutional and operational entities that receive funds, directly or indirectly from public donors and private sources to enhance, support or substitute for in-country responses in the provision of humanitarian assistance (Knox Clarke, 2018: 32).

Beyond the core principles of neutrality, independence, humanity, and impartiality, humanitarianism embodies a modern commitment to compassion and governance. Rather than simply reacting to crises, it represents a dynamic and interconnected system of people, policies, and structures aimed at addressing human needs in unequal or challenging circumstances. At its heart, it’s about improving lives and fostering hope, making it an enduring and integral part of modern society with deep historical roots in liberation and social progress. In other words, humanitarianism includes different paradigms, practices and ethical registers that operate in parallel and co-exist (Carver, 2022).

In emergencies and disasters, humanitarianism takes shape as immediate actions to save lives, ease suffering, and uphold dignity. However, its interpretation often goes beyond this. To John and Mathew (2015), it’s a political or faith-based grassroots measure or a formal body, a quick crisis response, or part of long-term development. It might align closely with humanitarian ideals or operate independently of them. At its core, the essence of humanitarianism is to provide a quick response to vulnerable by providing essential resources, services, and medical care. It is an ethical commitment to protect lives and promote dignity. Effective responses require teamwork and collaboration, with skilled professionals from various backgrounds tailoring their efforts to address the unique demands of each situation.

The Concept of Non-state Actors

Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women’s organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and

advocacy groups (London School of Economics, 2025). Civil society is made up of voluntary assemblies and organizations that form part of the modern democratic system as a pressure group that promotes justice and social order (Ikelegbe, 2013). In addition, civil society is a combination of civil groups that represent voluntary articulation of interest and yearnings of the populace who share similar goals, purpose, and moral attitudes or social norms (Almond & Verba, 1963). Civil society is a trend of societal interaction between individuals and the government which is displayed in the values of the societal cooperation, self-help organizations, and networks of public activities (Adibe, 2015).

Chambers and Kopstein (2008) identify that civil society as an association that is part from the state, against the state, in support of the state, in dialogue with the state, in partnership with the state, and beyond the state. This definition simply denotes that civil society is an association that is in coordination with the state, in contradiction and in-between depending on the interests and the issues at hand. Civil society is a non-governmental organization which promotes democracy and good governance across the globe through some legal activities that are entrenched in the constitution (Zubane and Mlambo, 2020). Civil societies consist of wide range of organizations which are not under the control of government and are not profit oriented. This consists of civil society organizations (CSOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), trade unions, farmers association, academics, professional organizations, student movements and other activities which are not related to political organizations (Edwards, 2011).

Civil society is becoming a wider term beyond NGOs only. It is identified today owing to its role at the global level as a wider and more active variety of organized and unorganized groups; they are more of service providers, economic partners, and political associates today than ever before (Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room, 2015). Populations in need without direct affiliation to any government. These include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), and faith-based organizations (FBOs). They play a crucial role in conflict zones, where they operate to mitigate the effects of crises and support magnitude percentage of the population. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), humanitarian NSAs are pivotal in

delivering essential commodities such as diet, housing, healthcare, and education, particularly in areas where government capacity is limited or compromised due to conflict (OCHA, 2020).

The Concept of Humanitarian Principles and the International Humanitarian Enterprise

These respondents, notwithstanding, are usually regarded as a component of the social safety net, or local resiliency, rather than the humanitarian endeavour. Humanitarian aid is commonly used to describe emergency help given by international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), which are typically headquartered in the Global North and have satellite offices all over the world. In the Global South, they usually mobilize in reaction to crises and natural catastrophes in areas with little resources. United Nations agencies like the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and private international NGOs like CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are examples of humanitarian organizations (Weiss,2016).

The provision of primary healthcare, water and sanitation, food and nutrition, shelter and site design, public health surveillance, immunization programs, and disease outbreak response are all examples of humanitarian action, albeit it varies depending on the situation. The task of coordinating the numerous big and small organizations that comprise the global humanitarian response falls to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). While low-profile, prolonged situations in less Geo-politically strategic places (the donor orphans) may expect little or no response, high-profile emergencies (the donor darlings) usually elicit well-funded responses from various organizations. Humanitarian help, in contrast to development aid, is typically meant to be short-term and responsive to urgent needs. Humanitarian organizations will develop an exit strategy after launching an emergency response and leave when the crisis is resolved or they are able to transfer control to a partner organization, like the local health ministry or another NGO.

Humanitarian initiatives may be designed to be short-term, but the reality is frequently otherwise. Humanitarian organizations are caught up in complicated situations involving extreme

poverty, frequent natural catastrophes, low-intensity war that recurs frequently, and intentional mistreatment or neglect of vulnerable groups. There is rarely a workable exit route in such circumstances. Organizations that provide humanitarian relief may have to spend decades in. The word "humanitarian intervention," which is similar to military interference on ostensibly humanitarian levels like the United Nations responsibility to protect (R2P) initiative, is not synonymous with humanitarian support, which is separate from but occasionally harmonized with assistance and services rendered by governments and militaries. Humanitarian actors bargain for humanitarian space a conceptually and geographically significant area where humanitarian operations can take place without hindrance during armed conflict.

Insurgency in Nigeria

The emergence of militia groups across the country is sequel to persistent yearnings and aspirations of ethnic nationalities. These groups are also referred to as Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). They engage in criminal activities such as oil bunkering, hostage taking and vandalism of multinational oil companies' pipelines to divert the attention of the Federal and State Governments from their illegal acts. They exchange or are involved in the trade by barter deal of exchanging oil for sophisticated weapons and armory to facilitate their militant movement. Some of these militant groups include Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVE), National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Egbesu, Bakassi Boys, Igbo's People's Congress (IPC), Yandaba, Boko Haram amongst a few. These ethnic nationalities spring up and assert their identities with the use of force and venom which threatens the corporate existence of this country as a nation.

Nigeria as we know is blessed with abundant human and national resources, and is ranked the 12th largest producer of crude oil products in the world. Even though Nigeria possesses all the potentials to be a significant force in international and trade relations, the country's development has been hindered by political instability, macroeconomic challenges, inconsistent policy regimes, to mention a few (Omiunu, 2010). Over the years, the exploration, ownership and other incidental processes of the oil sector of the Nigerian economy has brought

more acrimony than development to the Nigerian State. Since independence, the Nigerian State has been fraught with inconsistencies and lack of sincerity of purpose. The major cause of this misnomer has been largely encapsulated by the agitations of the Niger Delta communities from where a majority of oil is harnessed (Ade, 2010).

The Niger Delta communities have argued that they have been constitutionally marginalized and deprived of the fruits of the resources which is been harnessed from the lands. They equally argued that they have also been left to suffer the environmental consequences of oil exploration of their lands without adequate compensation from the government and the multinational corporations for the environmental degradation and the attendant loss of their sources of livelihood (Okeke, 2022 :155) To register their discontent with the status quo, the people of the Niger Delta have resorted to varied forms of protests-peaceful and violent alike, which in the last decade degenerated to a point of small scale war between the various militant groups in the Niger Delta such as the MEND and the security operatives of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

The Concept of Counterinsurgency

This explanation takes into consideration the dynamics and factor contributing to the emergency of insurgency and the three ways of tackling insurgency which ae places military, security operations, acknowledges the causes and dynamics of insurgency and the three-dimensional complexity of dealing with them and places military and security operations firmly within the wider context of the conflict. The concept of counterinsurgency suffers from imprecision and confusion. It has, in the past several years, been used interchangeably with stability operations, foreign internal defense, counter guerrilla operations, and, most recently, countering irregular threats (Folade, 2016). In addition, it has been included as a subcomponent of small wars, unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, asymmetric warfare, low-intensity conflict, and military operations other than warfare.

While intuitively, most who conduct any or all of these types of operations know counterinsurgency when they experience it, each of these terms denotes a distinctly, if interrelated, type of conflict or military strategy that, does not define counterinsurgency as a whole. For example, small wars encompass a wide range of military operations that may

include counterinsurgency, but also interventions, peacekeeping operations, crisis actions, and irregular warfare. On the other hand, counterinsurgency may encompass or, conversely, be a component of, depending on the strategic situation, efforts to combat terrorism, suppress guerrillas, restore security and stability, assist with foreign internal defense, and reconstruct post-conflict societies. It is easy to see where confusion may begin. Because of these interrelationships, a clear definition of the term counterinsurgency becomes necessary.

The current Department of Defense definition of counterinsurgency reads as follows: “Those military, paramilitary, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.” While more expansive than the doctrinal definition of insurgency in its acknowledgement of political and economic components, its emphasis on defeating an enemy betrays a military bias. Additionally, it does little to aid in understanding the nature of counterinsurgency or its expected end state. Given the nature, characteristics, and strategy of insurgency, any definition of counterinsurgency must acknowledge the complexity of the conflict. For these reasons, the following definition of counterinsurgency is offered. Counterinsurgency is an integrated set of political, economic, social, and security measures intended to end and prevent the recurrence of armed violence, create and maintain stable political, economic, and social structures, and resolve the underlying causes of an insurgency in order to establish and sustain the conditions necessary for lasting stability (Fournier, 2020). These acknowledges the causes and dynamics of insurgency and the three dimensional complexity of dealing with them and places military and security operations firmly within the wider context of the conflict. Perhaps, most importantly, it also establishes the end-state of successful counterinsurgencies (COINS).

The Concept of Non-kinetic Counterinsurgency Measures

Non-kinetic counterinsurgency measures refer to a strategic approach that employs non-military methods to combat insurgency and restore stability in conflict-affected regions. As articulated by David Galula in his seminal work, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice," non-kinetic counterinsurgency focuses on “winning the hearts and minds” of the population rather than relying solely on military force. This concept emphasizes the importance of addressing the underlying sociolect-economic and political grievances that fuel insurgent

movements. According to John Paul Lederach, effective peace building requires “relational and participatory processes” that foster dialogue and cooperation, highlighting the role of community engagement in counterinsurgency efforts. Effectively countering insurgency requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond military action. Governments often need to implement comprehensive strategies that address the underlying causes of discontent, promote good governance, and enhance socioeconomic conditions. This includes engaging with local communities, fostering dialogue, and integrating non-kinetic approaches such as development programs and reconciliation initiatives.

The essence of non-kinetic counterinsurgency lies in its multifaceted approach, which integrates social, economic, and political strategies to undermine the insurgents' appeal while strengthening the state's legitimacy. This approach involves fostering community resilience through development programs, enhancing governance, and promoting social cohesion. As described by military strategist Colonel J. F. O'Neill, “the key to counterinsurgency success is the ability to create a situation where the population feels secure, and the government is seen as legitimate.” Thus, non-kinetic strategies aim to create a stable environment that prevents insurgents from exploiting community grievances. In the context of the humanitarian non state actors in the North east, the organization plays a vital role in implementing non-kinetic counterinsurgency strategies in Northeast Nigeria, where the Boko Haram insurgency has profoundly affected communities in various aspect of health, basic necessity, and has destabilized the socio-economy.

Humanitarian non state actors in the North east engages in grassroots initiatives that empower youth through education, vocational training, and economic development programs. By addressing issues such as unemployment and lack of access to education, Humanitarian non state actors in the North east aims to reduce the vulnerabilities that insurgents exploit. Furthermore, Humanitarian non state actors in the North east fosters community dialogue and collaboration, creating a platform for youth to voice their concerns and participate in the peace building process.

Underpinning Theory

Non-kinetic Counterinsurgency Measures

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D. Research Methodology

The study adopted the analytical research design method, and key informant interview, triangulated with personal observation. This is necessitated by the fact that all the research questions in this study cannot be answered using one single method or using the same research instrument. The selected area of research would focus on three states in Nigeria's North-East geopolitical zone Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. These states have been significantly impacted by insurgency, primarily as a result of various activities of Boko-Haram and other militant groups. The specific local government areas (LGAs) chosen for the study are, Bama, Jere, Konduga, Maiduguri (IMC), and Moguno in Borno. While Fufure, Girei, Songari, Yola North and Yola South in Adamawa. In these same vein Damaturu, Funai, Gujba, Nguru and Potiskum in Yobe State. Borno, at the epicenter of Boko Haram's insurgency, has been one of the most affected states in Nigeria. Bama, Jere, Konduga, Maiduguri (IMC) and Moguno, the selected LGAs, are notable for their strategic and historical importance in the insurgency. Bama, for example, was a major battleground and has faced large-scale destruction, while Jere serves as a key location for displaced populations and humanitarian efforts.

Adamawa, also located in the North-East, has faced insurgent activities, particularly in the northern part of the state. Fufure, Girei, Songari, and Yola North in Adamawa have witnessed attacks and occupation by insurgents in the past, making them critical areas for understanding the broader impact of insurgency. Yola South, though less internationally recognized, plays a key role in local dynamics and represents the broader rural challenge posed by insurgency. Yobe has similarly experienced substantial insurgency-related disruptions, particularly in the selected LGAs of Damaturu, Funai, Gujba, Nguru and Potiskum. These areas have faced both direct attacks from insurgents and have suffered from widespread displacement, with challenges to infrastructure, governance, and community resilience. The North-East geopolitical zone is generally characterized by poverty, high unemployment, and limited access to education and social services, conditions that have exacerbated the rise of insurgency in the region. The selected LGAs are representative of the broader challenges faced by the region,

including the displacement of populations, destruction of livelihoods, and the breakdown of traditional governance structures. Population according to Shkaran and Bougu, (2016), define population as a complete set of individuals (subjects), objects, or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested; they further assert that the population constitutes the target of a study which must be clearly defined and identified. Specifically for this survey research method, the target population was generated from the total population of selected Ministries. Internal Displaced Person and official of humanitarian non state actors in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe which is 204,430.

a) Borno State

The population of selected personnel's of Humanitarian Non-state actors and internal displaced person in Borno State is as follows:

Table 3.3

S/N	LOCAL GOV'T	IDPS AND PERSONNEL		POPULATION
1.	BAMA	Internal Displaced Person's	41,563	52,872
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	11,309	
2.	JERE	Internal Displaced Person's	36,297	42,584
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	6,287	
3.	KONDUGA	Internal Displaced Person's	29,767	35,780
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	6,013	
1.	MAIDUGURI(IMC)	Internal Displaced Person's	16,695	

		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	4,205	20,900
5.	MOGUNO	Internal Displaced Person’s	30,484	
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	5,479	35,963
TOTAL				188,099

Source: National Commission for Refugees, Migrant and IDPs. (2024)

b) ADAMAWA STATE

The table shown five (5) Local Government selected in Adamawa State based on number of Internal Displaced Person's and number of Humanitarian Non-State Actors personnel.

Table 3.4 Showing Target Population

S/N	LOCAL GOV'T	IDPs and Personnel		Population
1.	FUFORE	Internal Displaced Person's	2,399	2,747
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	348	
2.	GIREI	Internal Displaced Person's	923	1,081
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	158	
3.	SONGARI	Internal Displaced Person's	189	225
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	36	
4.	YOLA NORTH	Internal Displaced Person's	574	699
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	125	
5.	YOLA SOUTH	Internal Displaced Person's	2,916	3,413
		Number Personnel of	497	

		Humanitarian Non-State Actors		
TOTAL				8,165

c) YOBE STATE

Table 3.5 Showing Target Population

S/N	LOCAL GOV'T	IDPs and Personnel		Population
1.	DAMATURU	Internal Displaced Person’s	5,076	5,922
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	846	
2.	FUNAI	Internal Displaced Person’s	544	636
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	92	
3.	GUJBA	Internal Displaced Person’s	980	1,120
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	140	
4.	NGURU	Internal Displaced Person’s	274	313
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	39	
2.	POTISKUM	Internal Displaced Person’s	63	75
		Number Personnel of Humanitarian Non-State Actors	12	
TOTAL				8,066

Source: National Commission for Refugees, Migrant and IDPs. (2024)

Population from Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Borno, Adamawa and Yobe

Table 3.6 Showing Target Population

S/N	POPULATION	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe zonal office
1	Total	100

The total population figures were generated from the ministry, personnel of non-state humanitarian actors, and internal displaced persons in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe state. The justification for this is to ensure that the all the respondents that has characteristics with the subject matter under investigation were included in the research.

The sample size for this research work is based on the purposive random sampling method. It is hoped that through these methods, the diverse elements of the different people in the selected ministries, internal displaced person and personnel of humanitarian non state actors, in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states are given an equal chance to represent the entire population and ensure true representation. Hence, the sample size chosen is determined by the Taro Yamane (1967) formulae, the formulae for determining the sample size are given:

$$n = \frac{N}{K + N (e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size

N = total population of selected Ministries, internal displaced person, and personnel of humanitarian non state actor in Borno, Adamawa and Yola states

$$k = 1$$

$$e = 0.05\%$$

$$n = 204,430$$

$$n = \frac{204,330}{1 + 204,330(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{204,330}{204,330 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{204,330}{1 + 511.075}$$

$$n = \frac{204,330}{512.075}$$

$$n = 399.99$$

Approximately, n=400

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data were elicited from the two sources as discussed above. Quantitative data were collected via the use of questionnaires, while qualitative data were elicited through oral interviews. Equally, quantitative and qualitative data were elicited through other secondary sources such as journals, textbooks, archival materials, etc.

Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher adopted thematic analysis technique to analyze the data and information that was obtained from the interviewees, while SPSS were used to analyze the data gotten from the questionnaires. The nature of this research afforded categorization of data into themes and sub-themes making way for the variables to be situated within a working environment which proffer answers to questions raised in the research. Basically, the data obtained from the field were used to compliment the secondary information that consequently aid the findings of this study.

E. Data Presentation and Analysis

S/N	ITEMS	STATE	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	Humanitarian non-state actors provide essential relief services such as food, shelter, and water to IDPs	BORNO	132 (66.0%)	44 (22.0%)	16 (8.0%)	8 (4.0%)	200
		ADAMAWA	76 (63.3%)	30 (25.0%)	8 (6.7%)	6 (5.0%)	120
		YOBE	52 (65.0%)	16 (20.0%)	6 (7.5%)	6 (7.5%)	80
2	The presence of humanitarian non-state actors has improved access to health care and psycho-social support services in camps	BORNO	118 (59.0%)	54 (27.0%)	18 (9.0%)	10 (5.0%)	200
		ADAMAWA	66 (55.0%)	36 (30.0%)	10 (8.3%)	8 (6.7%)	120
		YOBE	44 (55.0%)	24 (30.0%)	6 (7.5%)	6 (7.5%)	80
3	Humanitarian actors support educational access for displaced children and vulnerable host community members	BORNO	102 (51.0%)	66 (33.0%)	20 (10.0%)	12 (6.0%)	200
		ADAMAWA	60 (50.0%)	36 (30.0%)	14 (11.7%)	10 (8.3%)	120
		YOBE	40 (50.0%)	24 (30.0%)	10 (12.5%)	6 (7.5%)	80
4	The activities of humanitarian non-state actors have reduced social tensions and improved peaceful coexistence in host communities	BORNO	88 (44.0%)	64 (32.0%)	30 (15.0%)	18 (9.0%)	200
		ADAMAWA	52 (43.3%)	38 (31.7%)	18 (15.0%)	12 (10.0%)	120
		YOBE	30 (37.5%)	26 (32.5%)	14 (17.5%)	10 (12.5%)	80

Source: Field survey 2025

Humanitarian non-state actors provide essential relief services such as food, shelter, and water to IDPs

Regarding the above sub-objective question on if Humanitarian non-state actors provide essential relief services such as food, shelter, and water to IDPs, the respondent within the position of Strongly Agree and Agree in, Borno is 176(88%), Adamawa 106(88.3%), and Yobe 68(85%), while Strongly disagree and Disagree stood at, 24(12%) in Borno, 14(11.7%), Adamawa, and 12(15%) for Yobe. Therefore, majority of the respondents across the three states affirmed the vital roles of humanitarian non-state actors in delivery relieve assistance to internally displaced persons with Borno recording the highest level of strong presence of HNSAs essential relief services reflecting its greater concentration of displaced populations. These findings highlight the centrality of humanitarian actors in alleviating the immediate needs of internally displaced persons. Going further, the regression analysis result calculated value a strong positive association ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$) indicate that there is a high statistically significant level of humanitarian roles in delivery of relieve assistance. Affirming the second hypothesis (H2). However, this apparent consensus concealed a range of underlying perceptions and institutional experiences, which were illuminated further through the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs (FMHA-01) took a positivist and policy-aligned view, asserting:

“The impact of our coordinated partners on displaced populations is evident nutrition levels have improved, and learning centers are functioning even in hard-to-reach centers.”

A program officer with a local NGO in Yola (KII-NGO-AD-03) emphasized; “If not for these actors, many people would have died silently. We go into areas the government abandoned years ago in order to revive people from such areas.” This resonates with Risse’s (2011) theory of “areas of limited statehood,” where humanitarian actors substitute for the state. This is especially visible in IDP camps across Borno and Yobe, where governance is often outsourced, informally, to INGOs and faith-based networks. These findings underscore the crucial role of non-state actors in bridging health service gaps within IDP camps, consistent with Adebayo (2022), who

emphasized that access to health care and psycho-social support remains a cornerstone of humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected regions.

Sub-theme2: The presence of humanitarian non-state actors has improved access to healthcare and psycho-social support services in camp.

Regarding the above sub-objective question on if the presence of Humanitarian Non-state actors has improve access to healthcare and psycho-social support services in internally displaced persons camps, the respondent within the position of Strongly Agree and Agree in, Borno was 172(86%), Adamawa 102(85%), and Yobe 68(85%), while Strongly disagree and Disagree stood at, 28(36%) in Borno, 18(15%), Adamawa, and 12(15%) for Yobe . Therefore, majority of the stakeholders across the three states confirmed that humanitarian non-state actors have significantly enhanced access to healthcare and improve psycho-social support services in internally displaced persons camps. Borno recorded the highest number of healthcare and psycho-social support compared to Yobe and Adamawa. These findings underscore the crucial role of HNSAs in bridging health service and psycho-social support gaps within IDPs camps. Going further, the regression analysis result calculated value a strong positive association ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$) indicate that humanitarian non-state actors have significantly enhanced access to healthcare and improve psycho-social support services in camps. Affirming the second hypothesis (H2). However, this apparent consensus concealed a range of underlying perceptions and institutional experiences, which were illuminated further through the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The North- east Development Commission NEDC (NEDC-04) admitted the gap-filling impact of HNSAs in the post-conflict reconstruction phase:

“They don’t just offer relief they train returnees, support trauma healing, and enable economic reintegration. In his statement he buttress that majority of the service rendered and needed by the Internally Displaced Person in the camp site are often health related”

Similarly, Adebayo (2022), emphasized that access to health care and psycho-social support remains a cornerstone of humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected regions as majority of the people in the IDPs camps suffers from one sickness or the other due to open environment and poor hygiene from over congestion.

Sub Theme 3: Humanitarian Actors Support Educational Assess for Displaced Children and Vulnerable Host Communities Members.

In response to the above sub-objective question on whether Humanitarian State Actors support educational assessment for displaced children and vulnerable host communities members, the respondent within the position of Strongly Agree and Agree in, Borno was 168(84%), Adamawa 96(80%), and Yobe 64(80%), while Strongly disagree and Disagree stood at, 32(16%) in Borno, 24(20%), Adamawa, and 16(20%) for Yobe. Therefore, majority of the respondents across the three states confirmed that humanitarian non-state actors contribute meaningfully to ensuring assessment to education among displaced and vulnerable. Borno recorded the highest level of educational assessment in relation to Adamawa and Yobe. Going further, the regression analysis result calculated value shows a strong positive association ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$) which indicates that humanitarian non-state actors have significantly support educational accessibility for displaced children and vulnerable host communities members (H2). However, this apparent consensus concealed a range of underlying perceptions and institutional experiences, which were illuminated further through the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs (FMHA-01) took a positivist and policy-aligned view, asserting; “The impact of our coordinated partners on displaced populations is evident nutrition levels have improved, and learning centers are functioning even in hard-to-reach centers.” In another findings by Musa (2021), who emphasized that humanitarian education programs are critical not only for continuity of learning but also for fostering resilience and stability among children affected by conflict.

Sub-theme 4: The activities of humanitarian non state have reduced social tension and improved peaceful coexistence in host communities.

In response to the above sub-objective question on whether the activities of humanitarian non state have reduced social tension and improved peaceful coexistence in host communities, the respondent within the position of Strongly Agree and Agree in, Borno was 152(76%), Adamawa 90(75%), and Yobe 56(70%), while Strongly disagree and Disagree stood at, 48(24%) in Borno, 25(20%), Adamawa, and 24(30%) for Yobe. Therefore, majority of the respondents across the three states confirmed that the presence of HNSAs contribute to easing

social tensions and fostering peaceful co-existence among displaced persons and host communities. Although, level of strong agreement was slightly lower in Yobe compare to Borno and Adamawa. Going further, the regression analysis result calculated value shows a strong positive association ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$) which indicate that the presence of HNSAs contribute to easing social tensions and fostering peaceful co-existence among displaced persons and host communities (H2). However, this apparent consensus concealed a range of underlying perceptions and institutional experiences, which were illuminated further through the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).An official at the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and IDPs (NCFRMI-01) shared:

“We’ve developed MoUs and joint frameworks with some NGOs. That reduces conflict and improves accountability. Going further he said that social tension as being one of the most often problem inflaming peaceful coexistence has people leaves in panic all there days in the camps”

The finding highlighted that peace-building dimension of humanitarian action, supporting the view of salvaticci (2020), who noted that beyond material aid, the activities of non-state actors play a vital role in strengthening social cohesion and mitigating conflict in fragile communities.

D. Discussions of Findings

Humanitarian Non-state actors (HNSAs) have played a pivotal role in delivering life-saving assistance, especially in Borno and Yobe. The data showed a strong positive perception of their contributions to food security, healthcare, education, and psycho-social support, particularly among IDPs. Regression results confirmed their role is significant and measurable. However, qualitative feedback reveals uneven service coverage, dependency risks, and resentment from host communities who often feel marginalized. This aligns with global critiques that humanitarian aid can over time, displace state accountability and erode local initiative (Anderson, 1999; Donini, 2012).

In checking the Impact on Communities and IDPs, Humanitarian non-state actors were reported to have a strong and positive impact on Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected populations, particularly in areas of food security, healthcare, and education.

Across the three states, over 75% of respondents strongly agreed that HNSAs filled critical service gaps left by state actors. However, evidence also revealed emerging tensions between host and displaced populations due to uneven aid distribution.

E. Conclusion

This study concludes that humanitarian non-state actors (HNSAs) are vital auxiliary agents in the counterinsurgency landscape of North-east Nigeria. Over the 2015–2024 period, HNSAs have provided indispensable humanitarian services particularly to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in areas where the Nigerian state has struggled to assert civilian protection, restore livelihoods, or maintain consistent presence. Yet, the current architecture of engagement places HNSAs in a minimal and peripheral role. Their operations are guided primarily by international humanitarian principles rather than by any structured domestic legal framework. This weakens the predictability, protection, and strategic utility of their contributions to counterinsurgency(COIN). Their complementarity to state efforts is often functional but not strategic, and cooperation with security institutions is generally informal, fragmented, and hampered by trust deficits.

F. Recommendations

The study recommend that HNSAs should adopt area-based aid models that incorporate host communities into planning and delivery frameworks. This will reduce grievances and reinforce social cohesion. At the same time, the establishment of community-based feedback mechanisms is essential. These platforms will allow both IDPs to report discrepancies, express concerns, and participate in the design of aid delivery programs in North-east Nigeriahe study also recommend the creation of a Humanitarian Access Framework negotiated jointly by federal authorities, military command structures, and humanitarian organizations. This framework should define safe corridors, protected zones, and rapid clearance procedures for humanitarian movements in north-east Nigeria.

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