

Conditions of IDPs in Benue State and Red Cross Humanitarian Interventions in Tivland 2001-2022

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century has been so challenging for humanity in Benue State due to a combination of natural and man-made crisis that has resulted to death, population movement and displacement. In Tivland for instance, the activities of herders and farmers, military reprisals and flood disasters have since 2001 caused many deaths and displaced millions especially of the rural populace. The intermittent clashes between herders and farmers in MINDA, Buruku, Tarka, Kwande and Logo; the Jukun/ Tiv crisis at the Benue/Taraba border had disconnected people from their ancestral land who ended up as IDPs taking refuge in both official and unofficial camps. The 2001 and 2021 military interventions in Ukum and Konshisha have also caused internal displacements and set people on movement who took refuge at different places. The incessant flooding occasioned by River Benue over-flowing its banks has caused deaths and equally displaced millions of people between 2009 and 2022.

These series of displacements have led to a humanitarian crisis in Tivland and have stressed the urgent need for state and non-state actors' interventions in the management of the rising profile of IDPs majority of who are women and children. This led to the interventions of the Red Cross Society to provide succour and humanitarian support. It is however unfair that the intellectual sector has completely neglected the humanitarian work of the NGOs in Tivland whose interventions have brought relieve to the IDPs .The idea for this paper therefore originates from the desire to interrogate the conditions of IDPs and establish the intervention strategies of the Nigerian Red Cross Society and the impact such humanitarian activities of the Red Cross has created in the lives of IDPs in Tivland since 2001. The paper adopts the qualitative content analysis method of research based on the use of primary and secondary sources of data. The paper found that about four million people have been displaced in Tivland who are taking refuge in about 24 official and unofficial camps in 7 LGAs in Tivland. These IDPs are living in tight conditions and their survival is dependent on the humanitarian activities of NGOs such as the Red Cross society. Red Cross humanitarian interventions in this area have been in the provision of food and non food items, health facilities, accommodation, nets, beds, buckets, education and counselling services. These interventions are significant in addressing common challenges of hunger, malnutrition, preventable diseases, social security and illiteracy. The victims (IDPs) through this development have feelings of belongings as part of the larger social conundrums deserving to live normal lives not minding where they are, who they are and what they are. The study found however that the humanitarian activities of Red Cross are being impeded by the activities of bandits who sometimes abduct humanitarian workers of the organization in demand for ransom particularly in the South Eastern Tivland. The study thus recommends for the provision of

adequate security and proper collaboration of the locals with the officials of the Red Cross society. There is also the need for a policy framework on the management of IDPs and the involvement of non state actors in Benue State.

Introduction

The 21st century has been particularly challenging for humanity in Nigeria as a result of both man-made and natural crisis. From Boko-haram activities in the northeast, herders/farmers in the North central, secessionist's onslaught in the south east and West and the Niger Delta militant agitators in the south-south respectively have posed a greater challenge to human existence. Life in the Benue valley is particularly been threatened by the activities of herdsmen, bandits and flood disasters that have killed many and displaced millions of people in the region. Between 2001-2022, herders/farmers crises have escalated such that no day passes in Benue State without seeing or hearing media captions such as; herdsmen killed 37, displaced 500 in Guma LGA; sad,7 people killed, thousand displaced in Logo by suspected herdsmen; farmers/herders clash,500 left dead and 2300 displaced in Agatu , herdsmen slaughtered 74 in Guma, herdsmen attack;3 communities ransacked in Kwande and so on¹.

Other conflicts occurred on the intra-communal levels and includes the Mbakor /Nongov border crisis in Guma and Tarka LGAs (2011), the Mbatierov/Masev conflicts in Gboko and Gwer-west LGAs (2000, 2003, 2006) and the MINDA/Kparev communal conflicts in Makurdi (1993, 2004, 2016, 2018, 2020), the Masev/Shangev, (2005), Ukan-Gaav, (2003,2006) Ukan /Ipav, MINDA-Kparev at Agboughol and Ityo-Mu in Makurdi Local government just to mention a few. These spates of intra-communal crisis have equally created casualties while thousands displaced². The 2001 Zaki-Biam (Ukum LGA)³ and 2021 Bonta (Konshisha LGA)⁴ military invasions have

also created victims and displaced thousands during the period under consideration.

Apart from displacements arising from human conflicts, thousands of people have also been displaced through perennial flood disasters and other ecological related issues in the State. One particular worrisome scenario from these series of attacks and environmental disasters is the number of people rendered homeless who now live in tight situations as IDPs. As at July 2022, the UNHCR reported that about 1.8 million IDPs were living in makeshift shelters popularly called IDP Camps across 15 local government in Benue State. These have created serious humanitarian situations that require urgent attention in the management of the IDPs⁵. They will find it difficult to live normal lives again unless given the utmost care and support. These IDPs faced common challenges such as accommodation, feeding, lack of clean water, lack of basic health facilities, lack of a good habitation and perpetual fear of another attack. Their survival is depended on the donations of NGOs and religious bodies and individuals of good will⁶.

This paper therefore examines the conditions of IDPs in Tivland and establishes the impact of Red Cross Humanitarian interventions. The paper adopts the use of qualitative content analysis as its research method based on the use of primary and secondary sources of data collection.

Conceptual Clarifications

IDPs; This is an abbreviation for Internally Displaced persons. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence⁷.”

Humanitarian interventions: This refers to actions undertaken by an organization or organizations that intends to alleviate extensive human sufferings within a

sovereign state border⁸. It is an activity that aims to bring succour and relief to a suffering person⁹.

Historical backgrounds to IDPs in Tivland

There has been series of incidences that have resulted to people moving from their places of residence to IDP camps in Tivland since 2001. These crisis are diverse and not limited to flood disasters, political crisis communal conflicts and herders attacks. The first incidence of displacement and population movement in Benue State was recorded in Tivland during the NPC crisis that resulted to arson (*nande-nande* 1959-1960) and head crushing (*atemityo* 1963-1964). During this periods, hundreds of people were displaced particularly in Buruku, Gboko and Gwer-east LGAs¹⁰.

In recent times, the 2001 Jukun/Tiv crisis and the involvement of the military which has come to be known as the military invasion of Zaki biam in 2001 has at the first instance of internal displacements in Tivland. The military reprisal according to Ikpanor and Wuam happened in October 2001 beginning from 22nd to 24th of that month when Nigerian army invaded Benue state communities in Kastina-Ala, Ukum and Logo in reprisal exercise to the alleged missing of soldiers to teach the Tiv people a lesson of their life. In the resulting attacks on Tiv towns and villages of Gbeji, Vaase, Tse-Adoor, Sankera, Anyiin, Kyado and Zaki-Biam, hundreds of people as the authors argued were killed and close to one million people from Ukum, Kastsina-Ala, Logo LGAs of Benue state and in the southern LGAs of Taraba were reportedly displaced and camps at Zaki-Biam and Gbeji while others were brought down and camped at Agasha in Guma LGA¹¹.

While tensions between herders and farmers have existed since the Fourth Nigerian Republic's founded in 1999, violent clashes have become increasingly frequent in the last 15 years, displacing millions of people in Tivland. According to Professor Iyorwuese Hagher, the first fatality in the conflict between farmers and

pastoralists was recorded on 23 June 2001 when one Iortim Umande was killed by a Fulani pastoralist when he tried to force cattle out of his farm and houses set ablaze. In this incident 15 households were later ransacked and approximately 95 people displaced¹². Armed conflict between farmers and herders in Benue State ceased for some time and only began to assume a dramatic dimension in 2011 with preponderance instances in July 2011 where 7 persons were killed and over 300 displaced in Gbajimba, Guma LGA. Not just that, on March 05, 2013, armed herders attacked Tiv farmers at Nzorov in Guma, killing over 20 inhabitants and burnt down the entire settlement and displaced 624 people. These attacks according to Dooga intensified from the middle of 2013 when the major road from Makurdi to Naka, the headquarters of Gwer West local government was blocked by Fulani armed men after ransacking more than six districts along the highway. For more than a year, the road remained closed as armed Fulani herdsmen held sway. Over 7000 people were forced to abandon their farms and homes to seek refuge at the suburb of Makurdi¹³

According to Ihom, from January to May 2019, scores of settlements in Guma, Gwer-West and Makurdi local government areas of Benue State were overwhelmed by horrendous attacks by Fulani armed herdsmen. Imande Jem village in Guma was visited on April 11, 2014, killing 4 peasant farmers as well as Ikpayongo, Agena, Mbatsada villages in the Mbalom council ward in Gwer-East local government area were attacked on different dates in May 2014, killing over 20 residents and collectively displaced 5823 people according to SEMA data bank¹⁴.

The peak of the Fulani invasion and attacks on Benue farmers was witnessed at Uikpam, Tse-Akenyi-Torkula village, the former Tiv paramount ruler's ancestral home in Guma. The attacks on Uikpam village left more than 30 people dead while the entire village was burnt down sacking about 11,231 people including women and children who ended up in official and

unofficial camps as IDPs. Afaor¹⁵ maintained that between 2014 to 2017, herders with the aid of mercenaries and using sophisticated weapons, have launched attacks on Benue communities in the Tiv speaking Local Government Areas of Guma, Gwer-West, Makurdi, Logo, Ukum, Kastina-Ala, Kwande, and Buruku Local Government Areas and destroyed thousands of lives and properties, farmlands and crops worth billions of naira, and rendered over 8000 people homeless.

On 1st of January, 2018, the people of Gbjimba, Guma LGA again experienced the worst form of attacks in the history of the crisis. Over 200 people were slaughtered and later given mass burial by the State government while 5000 thousand people were displaced in the attack. In just the first six months of 2018, the International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated that fighting between farmers and cattle herders over access to land claimed more than 1,300 lives and 7,211 persons displaced in Benue mostly in Tivland¹⁶.

Similarly perennial flood disasters have also had their share of displacement in the State. SEMA has reported that 30 people died and over 800,000 people were displaced in the 2012 flood disaster that lasted between July to October in Benue State. The most affected communities in Tivland were reverie communities of Makurdi, Buruku, Ktasina-Ala, Logo and Tarka LGAs. Thousands of people have later been displaced every year with the worst hit in 2017, 2019 and 2022. The 2017 flood took place in September and displaced 100,000 people. The BENSEMA reported in 2019 that the flood sacked a total of 137,797 persons from their homes and affected about 18 349 households. In 2022, the agency in a report disclosed that 104 communities were sacked while 116,084 people have been displaced and forced to take refuge in temporal shelters such as schools and churches¹⁷.

These developments have brought about the establishment of several official and unofficial camps especially in the affected LGAs as a way forward to

accommodate the rising number of IDPs. Notable camps that IDPs have lived in Tivland includes among the camps were Jortar,Zaki-Biam(2001),Agasah,Yelwata, Uikpam, RCM Primary School Daudu, Tse-Ginde Camp, Gbajimba Camp (Guma), Anyiin, LGEA Ugba, Abeda camps (Logo LGA), Gungul, Bonta(Konshisha LGA as well as Abande, NKST Primary school Ityulugh Camp, Ikyongen and Imande-Agbatse camps both in Kwande Local Government area of Benue State. Others are old Market, North Bank 1 and 2 camps, Agan or Abagena, Ichwa/Tas Yande camps all in Makurdi LGA¹⁸.

The Conditions of IDPs in Tivland

The situation of crisis in Tivland led to establishment of the above camps to accommodate the rising number of people being displaced. Over 2 million displaced persons are kept in overcrowded schools, empty government buildings used as camps across Tivland while others run to other communities/towns to seek refuge on their own. According to Ukase and Jato¹⁹, these camps are characterized by inadequacy of basic amenities and are prone to further attacks by same people who pushed them into these camps. The Abagena IDP camp attacked in 2022 speaks volumes of this position. These IDPs according to Benue State Ministry of Information (BSMI)²⁰ have undergone enormous psychological, emotional, health and other related stress and social dislocations. Some of these IDPs have continued to stay in various makeshift camps in the State for more than five years now. This development has seriously disarticulated their sources of livelihood with some implications.

Majority of the Internally Displaced Persons in these camps are women and children. The Red Cross reports in 2021 that children numbered 2.6 million were taking refuge in IDP camps in Benue state. One of their major challenges has been lack of good food, clean water and accommodation.

**NAMES OF IDP CAMPS WITH HIGHEST NUMBER
OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN TIVLAND as of April,
2022**

S/N	NAME OF IDP CAMP	LOCATION	Women	No of children	Total
1	NKST PRIM SCH CAMP	ANYIIN LOGO ,LGA	4320	6211	10531
2	LGEA PRI SCHOOL CAMP	UGBA,LOGO LGA	3502	7809	11311
3	OGIRI AJENE CAMP	NORTH BANK1 MKD	2404	3282	5686
4	GOVT SC AND TEC CAMP	MBAGBER,LOGO LGA	6172	986	7158
5	NEPA QUATRES 11	NORTH BANK MKD	2034	3421	5455
6	ABAGENA CAMP	OFF MKD TOWN	1823	5223	5346
7	NAKA TOWN CAMP	NAKA,GWER WEST	3001	7028	10029
8	DAUDU CAMP1	DAUDU,GUMA	4765	8210	12975
9	GBAJIMBA CAMP	GBAJIMBA,GUMA	3754	10,234	
10	DAUDU CAMP2	DAUDU,GUMA	2025	6267	8292
11	DAUDU CAMP3	DAUADU,GUMA	2167	8763	10930
12	OLD MARKET CAMP	NORTH BNK,MKD LGA	823	4752	5575
13	NKST ABWA CAMP	ABWA VANDEIKYA LG	421	2761	3182
14	IBB CAMP ICHUA	MKD	3872	7233	11105
15	LGEA PRIM CAMP	KYAGO,UKUM LGA	2654	8432	11086
16	LGEA PRIM CAMP	PEVIKYAA,UKUM LGA	1675	3762	5437
17	LGEA MELABU CAMP	MELABU,UKUM LGA	3768	10234	14002
18	LGEA MOBILE BARRACKS	MKD	4321	9234	13555
19	LGEA ADAKA CAMP	ADAKA,MKD LGA	4567	11239	15806
20	LGEA JOOTAR CAMP	JOOTAR,UKUM LGA	3876	10732	14608
22	GEM MEM COLL CAMP	JOOTAR,UKUM LAG	2876	9673	12549
23	IKYOGEN CAMP	KWANDE LGA	6543	12764	19307
Tot					

Sources: Red Cross, Benue State Branch, 2023²¹.

This number excludes unofficial IDPs in the area under study. According to official statistics obtained from the Benue State Emergency Management Agency, (SEMA) in July, women and children are the most affected IDPs in Tivland. They are experiencing psychological trauma in both official and unofficial camps established by the government and NGOs²². Their fundamental human rights and freedom to freely express and leave their normal social life violets the essence of their existence.

Some children have been raped by their enemies and sometimes even by those who should protects them an experience which according to Patrick²³ creates constant feelings of humiliation and discrimination; and a state of affairs that also breeds hatred and the urge for revenge. It's also an excruciating experience that women and children IDPs had to watch the brutality and atrocities that were carried out during any of the crisis that displaced them. Some of them watched helplessly their loved ones slaughtered to death while others maimed and dehumanised. The picture of such horrors has continued to haunt them, while affecting also their mental health and renders them emotionally unstable and economically unproductive²⁴.

In the reality of destruction of farmers' crops and killing of their breadwinners as well as displacements, hunger and poverty have become a daily dilemma that characterises the IDPs across Tivland. At the LGEA,RCM primary school camps and the Shelter camp, all in Daudu in Guma LGA, the health personnel in charge of both camps and Assistant Chief Nursing Officers and Midwives of the Red Cross told the researcher separately that, the over 10,871 children in both camps had come down with malnutrition²⁵. Vanguard's reports in 2021 that the Abagena camp alone houses over 16,583 children and 75% of them were malnourished because of inadequate

feeding. These children are disconnected from their learning processes as schools have completely been destroyed. These calamities are not good for growing children, for they can affect their entire being in the long run.

Extant literature revealed that all the IDPs in Tivland are facing similar accommodation challenges, inadequate food, poor nutrition, poverty, unemployment, lack of clothing, lack of access to schools and proper health systems. These have untold short and long-term impact on the lives of IDPs and that of the upcoming generations. These negatives includes but not limited to homelessness, hooliganism, pending social vices, diseases and deaths, starvations, declining literacy level, low productivity, high level of dependency and increasing spate of child labour, insecurity and criminality.

Other effects identified are changes in demographic compositions of the rural communities, economic and political backwardness, psychological trauma and cultural decadents amongst the people²⁶ etc. Ukase and Jato borrowed the words of Global Protection Cluster Group to argue that:

Forced out of their homes, IDPs also experience specific forms of deprivation, such as loss of income, shelter, and often faced heightened or particular protection risks. These risks may include: armed attacks and abuse while fleeing in search of safety; family separation, including an increase in the number of separated and unaccompanied children; heightened risk of sexual and gender based violence, particularly affecting women and children; arbitrary deprivation of land, homes and other property and displacements into inhospitable environments where they suffer stigmas, marginalization, discrimination and harassment²⁷.

This situation as described by the GPCW in the words of Myom²⁸ is not far from the conditions of Benue IDPs or if there is any comparison, theirs may even be worse. It is to say that the State is therefore sitting on a timed bomb. In this sense, this category of people no doubt need urgent attention to avert the emerging danger in the society internationally and domestically.

Interactions with Eunice Gabriel an IDP with five children at Abagena Camp revealed the real situation of IDPs which is characterised by misery and helplessness. The five children showed visible showing symptoms of malnutrition as they feed on roasted cassavas and corn. As the time of visit, Eunice was caught outside the tent peeling cassava with her neighbours when Patrick a member of Red Cross arrived. Each one she peeled was dropped inside a container, to be processed before the interview where she revealed according to Patrick that;

“Sometimes the government feeds us, other times people come to donate food,”. “But right now, nothing is coming from the government again. Even this cassava you see here was given to us by someone. I’m preparing it into dried flour so I can use it to feed my children. We have not eaten since morning,” she said, cutting off a stick attached to the cassava²⁹.

It was in 2018 that Gabriel Eunice and thousands of other villagers were displaced by armed herdsmen who reportedly invaded several villages in Guma LGA razed homes, leaving over [100](#) people dead, mostly farmers.

Yer Agernor a yam and maize farmer also narrowly escaped the herdsmen with seven children from Guma, one of the local government councils in the state badly affected by the attacks. They are now taken refuge in Makurdi LGA. At Ichwa camp along Makurdi J.S Tarka University road. She narrates her experience thus;

“They (herdsmen) took us unaware and destroyed our farms; we luckily escaped from them but some of our neighbours were killed

both in the farm and at home. They destroyed everything we had and we cannot go back now.³⁰

During the visit to the camps, the researcher also interacted with other IDPs such as Usartse Philip, Sewuese Igbana and Hembadoom Selumun all of Naka IDP camp. They all revealed that it has been very difficult for them to live normal lives in the camps. When the attacks started, I thought it would last for just weeks then we will return to our houses but since 2018 we have been here, Philips maintained with a hopeless voice. Both the IDPs in this camp acknowledged that food, water and decent accommodation are their major challenges³¹.

At the LGEA primary school Ugba IDP, an encounter with Athanasius Shinge, 65 who has fifteen children to cater for revealed that;

“Sometimes, my children and wife go to the market to pick grains from where traders come to sell. When they bring it home, they sieve it and prepare food with it,” he says, watching his daughters as they roast one of two snakes that were caught in the bush earlier that day³².

This is the reality of IDPs in Tivland who live under tight conditions. The opinions of some other IDPs are in unison to the above position. Their collective position is a reflection of a sincere wish to return to their original bases. Mama Mna of Gbajimba Camp during interaction with the research assistant revealed that;

It is terrible living here for over 5 years now. We want to go back to our communities”. We want to go and continue with our normal lives because it is not easy for someone who has been taking care of himself to be depending on other people or the government for food. We are not even satisfied with our stay here and there is nothing you will give us here that can satisfy us. Our major goal now is to go back to our villages to continue our normal lives³³.

At LGEA Ugba Camp, a research assistant Terungwa Ukam, himself a victim of herder's attack who lost two hectares of his rice farm in 2020 along many others also narrates the experience of those living in the camp. About 9000 people are camped here under a tight condition. Since it is a school, the classrooms without doors and windows have become people's safe heavens with one classroom housing about 15-20 people. Apart from hunger, they live in perpetual fear of outbreak of diseases due to overcrowding in the area and the unhygienic nature of the camp. About six women including Sewuese Ihiina³⁴ gave birth to seven children while in Camp here between August 2021 and October 2022. One of the nursing mothers, Mrs Patricia Alu gave a symbolic name to her baby, Mnengerter meaning she has seen the Lord. It was only God's that kept her alive considering her experience with the attackers as a pregnant woman while their communities were invaded by killer herdsman. Life in the camp has been a terrible experience for someone who ate full square meals before to beg for one in a day. They laments lack of food, water and shelter. Most of them have turned the mosquito nets supplied by Red Cross into their shelter as shown in the picture below.



Tents and children at DP Camp, Ugba

Mr Awua Patriot who lost everything during the military invasion of Bonta in Konshisha LGA in 2021 told the researcher that, although he and his wife and 6 children all escaped alive to Makurdi, the condition of life compelled them to later relocate the children to their mother's natal home at Akpagher, Mbativ in Gboko LGA. As someone who has lived a self sufficient life before, leaving under a displaced condition has been a new phase of life he never expected in his life.

“Throughout my life, I have been a farmer and a teacher and we were doing well in our own way until that fateful day of April 2021. I lost seven bags of soybeans, 4 bags of corn and 8 bags of cassava chips while 455 tubers of yam and 300 tubers of water yam were burnt in my house including other household items”. We didn't pick anything because I and my wife went to Ngugul market that day and to my wife, it has not been easy with us but we thank God for life and we are hopeful that things will only get better with us one day³⁶.

Mr Awua's life experience during the 2021 military invasion of Bonta is a replica of Mr Asawa and his family who have been displaced from the perennial Masev/Shangev Communal Crisis. As border home, Aondovenda Asawa³⁷ was also displaced in the persistent crisis over landownership since 2018 and had to run and take refuge at Mbatierev, his wife's native home alongside with his aged and sick mother and their 3 kids. The children were withdrawn from school since that fateful day June 2018 and have no hope enrolling them back any soon due to the deteriorating health of the mother.

Furthermore, this study found that the displaced peasant farmers who are staying in both official and unofficial camps and very keen on farming depend on others to give them land to carry out their farming

activities on a small scale than what they have cultivated before. A Female IDP from Ityo- atee and now taking refuge in North Bank, Makurdi, Mrs Dzeremo³⁸, a mother of five told the researcher that she has been forced to hire unfertile farm land around J.S Tarka University area on yearly basis to cultivate corn and rice. The stunning side of her story is that her farm and that of many others have been visited every year by robbers who normally harvest in the night whatever the farmers plant. This has visibly increased her poverty and many other peasant IDP farmers in the area. Production output is also affected by the poor quality of farm lands and lack of farm inputs. Their economic well being is thus, tempered with because of the crisis. Some who could not access land and/or have their labour contracted out to eke a living, ended up indulging in criminal activities, thereby contributing to the already deteriorating criminal situation in Tivland³⁹.

The IDPs in Tivland are also confronted with other excruciating conditions like discrimination and moral decay. They are treated with disdain even by their peers in any form of interaction as people who have been encircled and encumbered with poverty and trauma. It has been discovered that the IDPs have great worries about their social security as many of them have experienced subsequent attacks. Those IDPs in urban areas are undergoing through series of child labour and abuse processes. This study found that most of the street hawkers in Makurdi are the Internally Displaced Children (IDC) who hawks or work to argument their parents living conditions. Mama Yar, a 65 year old IDP at Ichwa camp told the researcher that her survival depends on what her granddaughter Dooshima brings back from her hustle at the rice mill. One negative effect that is associated with this development is that especially female children who engag in these kinds of jobs experienced rape, unwanted pregnancies, early marriage and trauma. Life is in no way better with this category of the Tiv population. The IDPs are in the words of Dennis existing instead of living⁴⁰.

Red Cross Humanitarian Interventions

The UNHCR policy on UN engagement in the situations of internal displacement during its policy review in 2019 states that , “All internally displaced people are entitled to protection from harm, to live peacefully, learn, work and flourish as contributing members of the communities in which they live.

State or Government intervention efforts in the condition of IDPs in Tivland though supportive, but have proven highly insufficient. In this sense, non-state actors have taken the burden of catering for these IDPs. All the IDPs acknowledged interventions of over 50 different NGOs whose role they said have been tremendous. Philip an IDP noted thus;

Last year, a coalition of 58 NGOs decided to intervene to provide solutions for the basic needs of the displaced persons — food, water and shelter. Under the supervision of Community Links and Human Empowerment Initiative, local NGOs are collaborating with foreign organisations like the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). ICRC came on board and they did a revalidation and carried out an assessment on malnutrition. One of the key things they distribute among IDPs are specially prepared meals and nutrients for children. Their first distribution was not enough but they came back to redistribute. She said the interventions have helped to address the issue of malnutrition giving a lot of relief to the camps.⁴¹

The Red Cross Society is one of the major NGO supporters that have reached out to the IDPs in Tivland with humanitarian aids. The first recorded and official intervention of the Red Cross society in Tivland dates back to 2001 when it got involved in the Tiv/Jukun Crisis at the

Benue/Taraba border and the later reprisal of the military that killed over 200 people and displaced the already displaced Tiv victims who fled from Taraba and have taken refuge in Zaki-Biam, Gbeje Vaase and Jortar towns. Through the prompt intervention of the Red Cross, about 5000 IDPs were temporarily camped at Jortar and Zaki-Biam in make-shift homes. Many other IDPs who fled down to Guma were according to the Red Cross Disaster Management Officer, Gabriele Anjov⁴² hosted at Agasha in Guma LGA for one year and seven months. At the IDP camps at Jortar, and Zaki-Biam, the organization supplied food and non-food items to the victims. The assorted food items included among other things 15 cartons of Idomie noodles, 11 cartons of spaghetti, five bags of rice and 3 bags of beans alongside cooking utensils and ingredients were distributed in same quantities to each of the two camps. Records have shown that non-food items were also distributed to ease accommodation and health challenges. Basic items on the list includes moveable beds, mats, mosquitoes nets, buckets, detergents and sanitary for women while special arrangement was made for daily water supply in these camps. Mobile hospitals were also set up one for each camp. According to Gabriel Anjov⁴³, due to the proximity of Agasha camp to Makurdi the headquarters of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, the organisation gave much of its support during the period to the Agasha camp which benefited double what its sister camps benefited in far away Zaki-biam and Jortar.

In 2001 at the same time of Tiv people's displacement from military invasion in Zaki-Biam, the Alago and other groups at the Nassarawa/Benue border teamed up against the Tiv over indigene/settler problem. Many people were killed while about 352 were displaced in Doma and Awe. According to Bem Audu, these Tiv IDPs were brought back and camped at Daudu through the effort of Red Cross Society. Basic food and medical care were given them for over year at Daudu⁴⁴.

In 2003 again, scores of Tiv people were displaced in Doma, another border town between Nassarawa and Benue by herdsmen and the Red cross swiftly responded by settling the displaced at RCM primary school Daudu⁴⁵. The organization as usual supplied food and non-food items to the victims. Fairley used cloths and beddings constituted the non food items that were supplied to them. In 2011, many people were displaced by herdsmen activities in Guma and Logo LGAs and the organization in collaboration with SEMA took assessments and set up camps at Gbajimba and Ugba for the settlement of the IDPs. According g to Mensseh, Red Cross intervened through the provision of assorted food items such as rice, beans, cloths, tun-brown, garri, idomie, spaghetti and other food items including cooking utensils. Non food items including beds, net, buckets were supplied and a systematic effort for water supply was made⁴⁶.

The height of Red Cross humanitarian activities in Tivland according to Anthony Abba⁴⁷, Branch Secretary of Red Cross for Benue State, was between 2018 to 2022. In 2018, Anthony disclosed that Guma, Gwer-west, Makurdi, Buruku, Tarka, Logo and Kwande were affected by the activities of herdsmen and bandits. Konshisha LGA was also affected though by the activities of the Nigerian army in a reprisal attacks that led to the displacements of over 7000 people at Bonta, Gungul, Awajir, Agidi, Guleya, Aku, Gbinde and Adoka. Red Cross in its usual humanitarian interest collaborated with SEMA and UNHCR and set up camps in some selected LGAs. Notable among the camps were LGA Gungul and Bonta. Other camps the Society intervened in are Tse-Gind, Daudu, Gbajimba Camps (Guma), Abagana, Mobile Baracks, Adaka Ichwa, old Market Camps in Makurdi LGA, LGEA Anyiin Camp, Abeda, LGEA Primary School Ugba camps (LogoLGA) as well as Abande and Imande-Agbatse camps both in Kwande Local Government area of Benue State. These camps were through the instrumentality of the Nigerian Red Cross supplied assorted food items and non food items to

argument their living conditions⁴⁸. Apart from relieved materials, the NRS also provided temporal clinics at each camp for treatment of common illnesses especially amongst children and pregnant women. On occasion basis, the Society do organised a medical tour of all the camps for assessment and treatment. During this time, tests are carried out on children, the aged and pregnant mothers and those with detected cases are treated at spots or refer to Federal Medical Centre and Teaching Hospital for continuation of treatment. These interventions of the Red Cross have been significant in addressing common challenges of Hunger, malnutrition, sanitary infections and other contagious diseases for the IDPs⁴⁹.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has carefully analyzed the key issues surrounding to the phenomenon of IDPs and Red Cross humanitarian interventions in Tivland. The study provided a historical background of internal displacements in Tivland which as according to extant literature began way back in the first republic but majority of the people have been displaced in the 21st century beginning particularly in 2001. Displacements in this area within this time is premised on both man-made and natural forces. These IDPs normally live under tight conditions and depends on the humanitarian interventions of both State and non-state actors and donors. The activities of Red Cross as a state actor began in 2001 but have since assumed a different dimension in scope and nature of services and aids offered. The humanitarian activities of the Red Cross Society are however facing challenges by a number of factors such as kidnapping of humanitarian works by bandits for ransom and the uncooperative attitude of the IDPs. Lack of a government policy on the management of IDPs and NGO interventions has limited the functions and intervention strategies of Red Cross. Infrastructural deficit across Tivland has greatly limited the functions and activities of

Red Cross. Due to network of transport and communication systems, Red Cross normally finds it challenging in accessing the IDPs. Bad road network and poor ICT systems have particularly posed a great limitation to Red Cross activities. All these must change for effective and robust humanitarian interventions in Tivland. Government must fix critical infrastructure such as road network and tele-communication systems to enhance easy movement into the hinterlands which are the primary centres of attacks and displacement.

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