



Policy Brief

EMERGENCY FOOD AID TO VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS IN SOUTHERN KADUNA



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Executive Summary

Africa is faced with some of the most obstinate conflicts, most of them constructed from differences in religious and ethnic diversities. Religious and ethnic nationalism has led to conflicts about control of state power, unequal allocation of resources, citizenship issues, state collapse, economic decline and ethno-religious clashes. Nigeria has been plagued by recurrent crises of regional or state illegitimacy, often impairing efforts at economic transformation, democratization, national cohesion and stability.¹ Since 2003, Nigeria has continued to come face to face with security challenges, prominent among which are Boko-Haram terrorism and armed herdsmen violence in the North-Eastern region. The activities/operations of these two groups over the years have been with impunity, leaving in their trails, blood, death, wailing and destruction. These have devastating social, political and economic effects on the progress and stability of not only their direct victims, but also the indirect victims and survivors. This violence is not restricted to the northeast, but has spread to other parts of northern Nigeria such as Kaduna state in the northwest.

Kaduna state has experienced various forms of conflict since the early 1970s leading to division along religious, ethnic, socio-cultural and regional lines. Moreover, the state has become a threshold for violent and massive killings especially in the years leading up to 2021. While most of these conflicts are attributed to different factors, religion continues to play a significant role in the sustenance of conflict in Nigeria. Christians have been disproportionately targeted both in terms of marginalisation, exclusion and physical violence. At the level of marginalisation, Christians are denied access to purchasing new places of worship. Some Christians in northern Nigeria are forced to live under Islamic law, while appointments and access to state-owned privileges are denied them. In terms of violence, they are

killed, abducted and brazenly targeted for their faith. Violence against Christian women, girls and children, including sexual violence, exposure to trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence, is all too common yet underreported. Christian women are often forced into survival sex in exchange for food, movement and items to meet their basic needs, while some vulnerable households have resorted to early marriage and child labour. A significant part of the local population that is predominantly Christian has also been deprived of access to basic medical care and psychosocial support and trauma counselling; hence many have died of easily treatable diseases such as malnutrition and malaria. Moreover, victims and affected communities are often overlooked. There is no accountability for perpetrators and the culture of impunity continues to fester. Southern Kaduna – which is predominantly occupied by Christians – has had such recurrent violent conflicts, which has drawn attention to both national and international bodies.

The Kukah Centre (TKC) therefore saw the need and opportunity for intervention to lessen the impact of the conflict on the most vulnerable individuals. TKC, with the support of the Hungarian Government, Caritas Nigeria and the Kaduna state Justice, Peace and Development Commission (JDPC) implemented the Project titled, “Emergency Food Aid to Vulnerable Households in Southern Kaduna.” The intervention covered (3) three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Southern Kaduna - Zangon Kataf, Kachia and Kajuru. The intervention provided resilience for social and economic recovery to vulnerable households in Southern Kaduna via the facilitation of a cash transfer programme (CTF) to two hundred and eighty-eight (288) households most affected by the incessant violent attacks.

Background

Kaduna State in Northwest Nigeria has experienced a near tripling of violent incidents involving armed groups in the past year. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), the 220

violent events have resulted in nearly a thousand fatalities. Moreover, there have been roughly 400 persons abducted for ransom and hundreds of communities destroyed causing the displacement of

¹ Osaghae, Eghosa E. and Rotimi T. Suberu (2005). A History of Identities, violence and stability in Nigeria. Crisis working paper No. 6. Oxford Centre for Research on inequality. Human Security and Ethnicity. Accessed 24th Feb. 2021 from <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/In>

more than 50,000 people. Over the last year, Kaduna has recorded the highest number of episodes of political violence and fatalities in northern Nigeria. Kaduna's security crisis revolves around three different but overlapping threats. The first threat relates to the farmer-herder conflict that involves growing tensions over access to land and its use between communities. The second threat comes from armed gangs engaged in criminal activities, including kidnapping for ransom, arms dealing, cattle rustling, and highway robbery. A similar spike from criminal gangs has afflicted neighboring states, including Katsina where over 300 schoolboys were kidnapped and later freed in December 2020. The final threat is from violent extremism. This threat reemerged in 2020 when Ansaru, a militant Islamist group thought to be defunct, carried out an elaborate ambush, followed by a series of other attacks. Southern Kaduna, in the recent past has become the epicenter of deadly violent conflicts mostly inflicted by herdsmen on farming communities. As a result, many communities have been displaced and many farmers are unable to plant and harvest for years. Consequently, hunger and poverty has risen and the economy has deteriorated by the day. Victims affected by these violent conflicts are offered little or no assistance in terms of financial and social wellbeing.

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS), estimates that up to 40, 000 people have been killed, 1.8 million displaced, while about 230,000 live at the borderland as refugees. An estimated 7.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. For example, from January to August 2020 alone, 55 attacks have taken place, with over 34 abductions, 29 kidnappings and 4 suicide bombings. In all these, 763 people are reported to have been killed, out of which 273 were soldiers. In fact, security personnel, particularly soldiers constituted over 91% of those abducted, indicating increasing attacks against security formations. Although links between extremist violence and other parts of northern Nigeria are not always clear-cut, an early 2019 report by International Crisis Group indicates that terrorist groups are coordinating an

expansionist agenda, building alliances and extending their authority to northwest and north central Nigeria. This is evident from the rising levels of violence, kidnapping, extortion, and banditry. For instance, terrorist groups are said to have created cells in Niger and Zamfara states including states such as Kaduna, Taraba, Kogi, Katsina and Sokoto. The increasing levels of violence in these states have triggered a major humanitarian challenge with estimates showing that as at May 2020, more than 210,354 persons have been displaced from 171 towns and villages in the northwest.

Eminently, the activities of armed herdsmen who have been terrorizing farmers in remote communities of North Eastern region of the country have been a grave concern. Since their emergence, they terrorized, killed, destroyed and taken over landed property belonging to farming communities. Already overstressed local economy, trodden by increasing food prices, heavy taxation, poor demand and supply, has become even more strained. Recent studies carried out by Caritas and JDPC (Justice, Development and Peace Commission) revealed that more than 1,126 persons were killed between January and June 2020. About 7,560 households, mostly Christians, were forced to flee their homes to safer havens and by that, have lost their assets and livelihoods. Currently, it is estimated that about 15,220 households (host communities and IDPs) stand in need of humanitarian assistance through emergency food aid. In Southern Kaduna, specifically, violent crises have often led to deadly religious, ethnic and sectarian divisions. Attending to the basic needs of victims helps to prepare the ground for reconciliation and facilitate peaceful co-existence. To create immediate impact on victims of violence, particularly women, it was necessary to explore ways by which the basic and immediate needs of these survivors could be reached. One of such ways was through the Cash Transfer Programming.

² Olajumoke (Jumo) Ayandele (2021). Confronting Nigeria's Kaduna Crisis. Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

³ Simon Allison, 2020. 'Conflict is still Africa's Biggest Challenge in 2020', ISS, 6 January 2020, Available at: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/conflict-is-still-africas-biggest-challenge-in-2020> [Accessed: 21 November 2020]

⁴ Interviews with contacts at Operation Safe Corridor and Operation Lafiya Dole, Gombe and Borno States, 25–27 September, 2020. Other sources include security reports and archives of Premium Times, Nigeria.

⁵ International Crisis Group, 2020. Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem Africa Report N°288 | 18 May 2020, p. 11.

⁶ "Nigeria violence sees 23,000 flee into Niger in last month alone", UNHCR, 12 May 2020; Insecurity: Niger govt takes case to God, as 10,000 are sacked from ancestral homes", Vanguard, 24 February 2020; 105,463 displaced by bandits in Sokoto", Daily Trust, 16 March 2020.

Motivation for the Selection of Beneficiary LGAs

Violent conflict in Kajuru LGA in Kaduna state dates as far back as 1980. Infact, it has been recoded that 60% of all the attacks in Southern Kaduna began from Kajuru LGA, with these conflicts usually spreading to neighboring LGAs.⁷ In recent times, most of the attacks have been recorded in Zango Kataf, Kajuru, Kachia, and Kauru LGAs. The attackers burned, killed and looted in such a manner that many described as ethnoreligious cleansing; bodies were buried in mass graves daily. Surviving households have fled their homes to neighbouring communities and LGAs, with all sources of livelihood lost.

As a result of these conflicts, Kajuru LGA records the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), persons with disabilities (PWDs), widows and orphans who have not been financially rehabilitated and are yet to recover from these crises. Most of the victims and survivors have been completely displaced from their homes and communities and their settlements currently occupied by Fulani herdsmen. Three (3) IDP Camps are currently operational in **Zanla, Maraban Kajuru** and **Rimau** communities in Kajuru LGA. Furthermore, as at the time of the project intervention, Kajuru, Kachia and Zangon Kataf LGAs had respectively recorded 20, 2 and 8 communities adversely affected by violent conflicts.

Methodology and Results

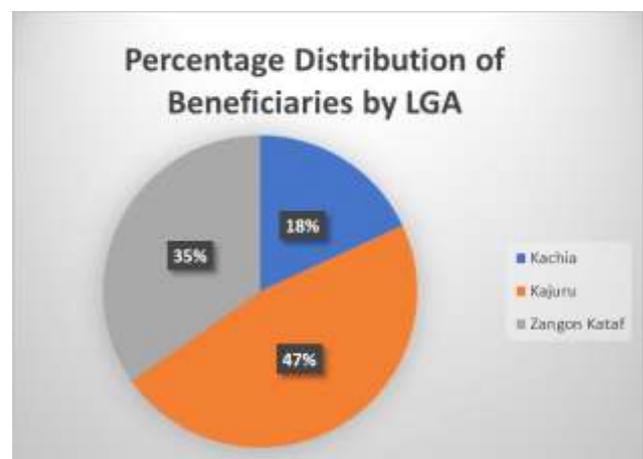
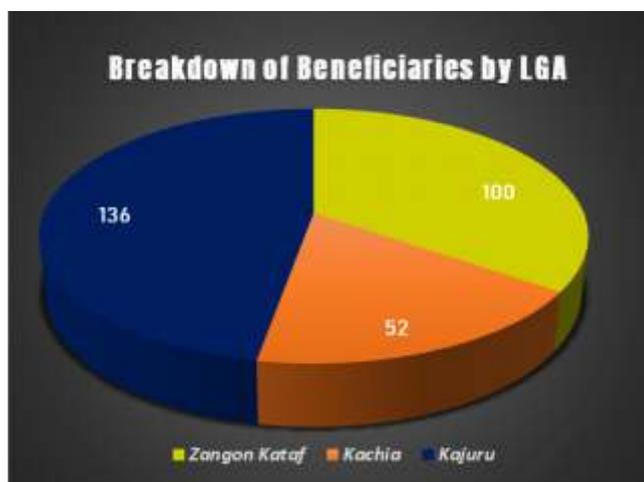
The intervention was based on 3 key activities: (a) Community Mapping, (b) Selection, Identification and Mobilization of Beneficiaries, and (c) Card Production and Distribution.

COMMUNITY MAPPING

At this stage, communities were identified, representatives were selected and community needs assessed. There were laid down criteria necessary for the selection of communities and Beneficiaries.

This stage involved the identification and selection of the target LGAs. This selection was based on an already

established criteria developed by the project team and included the presence and/or continual recurrence of violent conflicts in these LGAs, the high number of displaced victims/communities, the increase in hunger and poverty in affected communities and the number of recorded deaths and destruction of both farms landed and household property. After the selection had been completed, a community needs assessment was conducted to identify the gaps between current conditions and desired conditions, and to develop the criteria for the selection of the target beneficiaries.



⁷ An interview held on the 12th of February 2021 in Kajuru LGA on the 'History of Conflicts in Kajuru LGA'. The interviewee does not wish to disclose his identity for security reasons.

Associated Challenge and Mitigation Measures

Mobilization of Community Representatives

Community representatives were pre-informed and sensitized ahead of the CTP. Despite the sensitization, some representatives from some LGAs mobilized their family members with the aim of benefitting regardless of the established criteria. When these cases were discovered at the registration centres, immediate actions were taken by the Project Team to ensure a fair and balanced process.

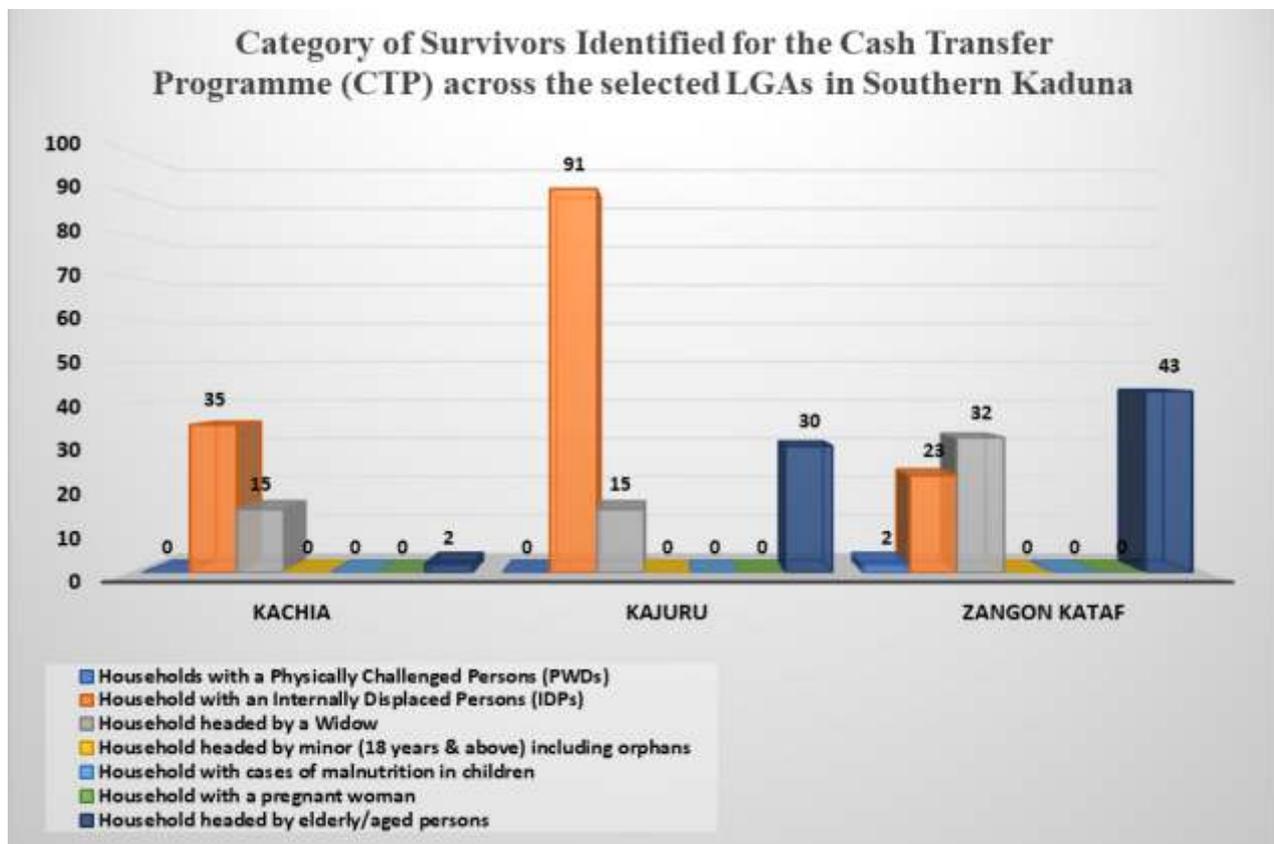
SELECTION, IDENTIFICATION AND MOBILIZATION OF BENEFICIARIES

Next was the identification and selection of the target beneficiaries. To ensure that the basic and immediate needs of victims of violent conflicts are reached, potential beneficiaries were identified by key community representatives in collaboration with the Project Team. Some of the criteria for the mobilization and selection process included:

Households with:

- physically challenged person(s)/PWDs,
- internal displaced person(s) either squatting or occupying an entire household/IDPs, households headed by widows, minors (18 years and below), pregnant women and elderly/aged persons.

288 families across the three LGAs were then identified and registered. The allocation given to each LGA was largely dependent on the number of victims and casualties recorded.



The above figure shows the various categories of survivors identified for the Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) across the selected LGAs.

Associated Challenge and Mitigation Measures

High levels of Illiteracy of the Beneficiaries

About 80 percent of all the beneficiaries across the three LGAs had difficulties in reading and writing. This slowed down the registration process and meant that they had to be assisted by the project team. The project team wrote down their names and ensured that they signed accordingly. For those that could not sign on the paper, they were provided water ink for thumbprinting.

The levels of illiteracy also affected their levels of comprehension when explaining what they perceived as 'too technical'. An example of this was their unenthusiasm of being given debit cards over the physical cash. While the idea of what they deemed novel technology was intriguing for them, innovative methods involving the use of simple terms and practical examples had to be utilized in teaching the beneficiaries how to use the debit cards.

Rising Expectations of non-mobilized survivors and Duplicate Names of Target Beneficiaries

During the community mobilization process, some victims who were not mobilized for the cash transfer were pre-informed of the activities of the Kukah Centre in the LGAs. Some of these victims were either pre-informed by persons who partook in the exercise in another LGA or by victims who were not mobilized for the programme. This challenge was peculiar to Kajuru and Kachia LGAs, where the non-mobilized beneficiaries outnumbered the mobilized ones.

Also, during the identification and registration process, it was discovered that some of the target beneficiaries had similar names. Some households also had more than one representative present for the cash transfer benefits. As many of these survivors did not possess any form of identification document, to ensure a transparent and smooth registration process, community representatives were present at the venues to distinctively identify the beneficiaries. To avoid unplanned chaos and confusion at the registration venues, participants were also properly sensitized on the basic criteria for the intervention and the possibility of implementing similar projects in the near future. Consequently, only victims who met the pre-established criteria were selected and mobilized for the programme were registered.

Allocation for Cash Transfer Programming

Financial allocation to LGAs was dependent on the number of reported community attacks and survivors recorded in the selected LGAs. As there was no exact figure of the actual number of people affected by violent conflicts in Southern Kaduna, ahead of the intervention process, the community representatives were tasked with providing lists of all communities and victims/survivors affected by violent conflicts in their respective LGAs. It was discovered that some of the community representatives exaggerated the figures in their reports to attract more allocations. To address this, the Project Team also conducted an independent research to verify the figures presented by the community representatives.

It is important at this point, to note that only about 20% of the survivors affected by these violent conflicts were engaged across the LGAs during the intervention.

CARD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Once all beneficiaries had been registered, Zenith Bank Plc, a leading multinational financial service provider based in Nigeria was contracted to create accounts and

produce debit cards for the beneficiaries in the selected LGAs. Each of the beneficiaries' account was then credited and the debit cards were distributed to the beneficiaries by the project team.

Extended Time of Card Production

The need to ensure accuracy in the production of ATM cards, pin generation and crediting beneficiary accounts delayed the card distribution process. In total, the production process for all 288 beneficiaries took about 2 months. This delay in accessing what the beneficiaries believed was owed them, led to suspicions about the motives of the intervention process. To quell their fears, the beneficiaries were frequently contacted to update them on the production process.

ICT Illiteracy among Beneficiaries

Most of the beneficiaries were not conversant with the use of debit cards especially the aged and uneducated persons. Thus, these beneficiaries had to depend on others to assist them make withdrawals with their debit cards which was cumbersome, illegal and unsafe. Some beneficiaries also had difficulty making withdrawals due to errors in setting up passwords to their ATM cards. This occurred to about 20% of the beneficiaries.

This difficulty also affected those who despite their challenges, tried to carry out the card activation process themselves. This often resulted in their cards getting stuck in the ATMs. Some of these beneficiaries ended up getting frustrated and dumping the cards. Consequently, provisions had to be made to ensure such beneficiaries got their monies.

Beneficiaries in Possession of more than one Debit Card

Because most of the beneficiaries did not know how to use the debit cards, they submitted their cards to representatives amongst themselves to help them activate and make withdrawals. In such instances, such persons who were seen in possession of more than one card at the ATM stands, had such cards confiscated by Bank officials to prevent fraudulent activity. Such incidences were reported to the Project Team, and viable actions were taken to ensure that all beneficiaries got their due allocations.

Overcrowding of ATM Machines

There are limited banking institutions in the selected communities due to the incessant insecurity. As a result, most of the beneficiaries – especially in Kachia and Kajuru LGAs - had to not only travel long distances to get to ATMs, but also overcrowd such machines. This left them at a higher risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

The technological challenges presented with the use of the ATM cards has shown it might be more beneficial to consider direct cash transfers to the beneficiaries in future interventions.

Other Registered Challenges and Mitigation Measures

Each stage of the intervention process had its associated challenges. However, there were other challenges that encompassed all phases of the project intervention. These included:

1. Rising Insecurity in Local Communities

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdown and even leading up to the subsequent ease in restrictions, there has been a noticeable rise in insecurity. While there have been lots of vigilante activity organized at the community and state levels to

curb the rate of criminal activity, nevertheless, cases of insecurity still remain. For example, prior to the identification and registration of beneficiaries, minor attacks were reported in neighboring communities. In Kachia LGA, communities like Daganaji and Katul Gida were under attack. In Kajuru LGA, Kujeni and Kaso were unreachable due to the incessant attacks going on where farmers were continually attacked and kidnapped in their farms. Also, there was high rate of kidnapping and banditry attacks both in the



■ A widow being registered at Kasuwan Magani, Kajuru LGA

communities and on the highways. This insecurity also affected many institutions, banks included; some branches had to be shut down in communities that had been attacked. This meant that the beneficiaries often had to travel long distances just to gain access to their monies, further putting them at the risk of potential attacks.

To aid the safety and security of participants and the project team, security assessments of the target communities and LGAs were carried out frequently. This saw the registration process postponed on two different occasions. When the registration process was eventually carried out, it was conducted at venues in each of the selected LGAs where the area was accessible and considered safe for the intervention. This postponement also applied to the dates when the ATM cards were distributed, to avoid endangering the lives of the beneficiaries and project team. Additionally, when the ATM cards had been successfully distributed, the project team helped in identifying the locations of banks and automated teller machine (ATM) points in relatively safe areas for the beneficiaries to conduct their businesses safely.

2. Perceived psychological and emotional trauma of the victims and survivors

In all three LGAs, all the beneficiaries were victims of various degrees of psychological and emotional trauma, having being survivors of the attacks on either themselves, their loved ones and/or their communities. For instance, some widows who were recently bereaved found it difficult to come physically to the registration centres. It was also quite challenging for some individuals who had obvious disabilities to move freely around. For these survivors who were unable to show up physically, they were represented by a member of their household and such persons were registered on their behalf.

In interacting with these survivors, it was evident that despite the physical challenges, the invisible scars of emotional trauma still remain. Therefore, while the cash support goes a long way in alleviate their economic burdens, it is crucial to organize counselling sessions for these survivors on dealing with post-conflict trauma.

Policy Recommendations

From the intervention process, it is evident that a lot remains to be done. More attention must be paid to reducing and eliminating biases that promote interreligious and ethnic violence. Also, structural issues such as poverty, employment and insecurity must be addressed. Consequently, TKC is putting forward the following policy recommendations:

State and Federal Governments

- The government should work in tandem with religious bodies and educational institutions to design programmes aimed at promoting social cohesion. This will help reduce inherent negative biases that citizens might have against one another on ethnic and/or religious grounds.
- The rise in insecurity and poverty, which appears to have exacerbated in recent times, requires that the governments place more emphasis on the economic survival of its citizens. This includes the dissemination of palliatives to mitigate the increasing trend of social insecurity. Also, economic empowerment programmes for women and youth should be developed to help curtail rising crimes and insecurity.
- The government and key stakeholders need to create workable platforms that support community members especially women's substantive representation in post-conflict governance, by providing direct technical and capacity-building support to women's involvement "at the table" in the peacebuilding processes.

Security agencies

Perceptions about the security services within local communities remain negative and unappreciative. For one, many of the affected communities have little to no presence of policing and security forces. Where they are present, they are oftentimes seen as collaborators with some of the perpetrators of the insecurity, and as more interested in exploiting the conflict. Consequently:

- Security agencies should boost and intensify the security at the level of the local communities especially the high-risk areas.
- The respective state governments and relevant security agencies must ensure that every security official involved in abuses of human rights is investigated and held accountable for their actions. This will help promote a greater sense of security in their various states.
- Security agencies should properly indicate and outline the proper avenues to report complaints and issues of injustices.

Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and International Development Partners

- Development partners must ensure that counselling sessions are included in interventions dealing with beneficiaries that have gone through one or more forms of physical and psychological trauma.
- Development partners should design and support a gender-sensitive strategy that addresses the tailored concerns of women, children, and those with disabilities. This should include programs of psychological counseling, confidence building, critical thinking, and participation in peacebuilding processes.

Conclusion

The Hausa-Fulani ethnicities and communities in Southern Kaduna have had a long history involving competition over resources, land and political control. While the Northern Kaduna's population is largely Muslim and Hausa-Fulani, the Southern Kaduna region is predominantly occupied by Christians from over 30 ethnic groups. Oftentimes, these tensions have led to deadly religious, ethnic and sectarian violence. Activities of armed herdsmen and terrorism have threatened national unity and security, impacted a loss of revenue by states, as well as the loss of individual property and sources of livelihood. With constant attacks on remote

farmers, food production has greatly declined thus impacting negatively on the economy. These attacks have also left thousands killed and many more displaced and vulnerable. To address this menace, continuous dialogue should be employed both at national and international levels to address these pockets of conflict and lessen the impact of the conflict on the most vulnerable individuals.



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This policy brief was produced by The Kukah Centre, a Nigeria-based non-profit, non-governmental and public policy organisation that offers alternative approaches to the challenges of leadership and the impact of conflict on national development. Interfaith dialogue is at the core of the Centre's work and involves actively promoting conversations among Nigeria's faith communities, as well as between leaders in faith and public policy. The Kukah Centre's core programme areas include: Interfaith Dialogue, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Leadership Training and Development, Good governance, Public Policy Research, Memory and Knowledge Preservation.

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