

Impact of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts on Women and Children in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on women and children in Nigeria with Kaduna State as a case study from 1999-2007. The issue of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria has been a reoccurring phenomenon and is characterized with high degree of casualty in both human and material resources with reinforced prejudice and animosity for group over the other. The research problem therefore is, considering the patriarchal nature of Nigeria and Kaduna State in particular and the manifestation of these into conflicts in ethnic and religious forms; how are women and children impacted by these conflicts. The paper adopted the case study approach as its methodological template. Analysis and interpretation of data for this study was established at both theoretical and empirical levels. Theoretically, the social conflict theory served as guide in our analysis of the problem. The paper revealed that, ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State are as a result of historically established structural imbalances and prejudices between different social groups. Also, the paper shows that, compared to other social categories, especially men, women and children experience severe economic deprivation, abandonment, sexual violence, rape, forced labour, slavery and other social ills as a result of their vulnerability occasioned by ethno-religious conflicts in the State. Finally, the study revealed that, government intervention has been a failure on policy framework. This is because government is seen as part of the problem. Based on these findings the paper recommends that, government needs to do more and support conflict resolution mechanisms foisted at preventing identity related violence, by ensuring that the state government adopts the reports of the various commissions of inquiries established in the past, arresting and bringing to justice those responsible for supporting these conflicts. Further, it recommends that government should ensure that, women and youth should be involved in conflict resolution and peace building process as they are an integral part of the society, and are frequently heavily impacted during and after conflicts.

Key Words: Religion, Ethnicity, Conflict and Gender.

Introduction

Ethnic and religious identities are a major cause of conflicts in Africa generally and in Nigeria particularly. Ethnicity is normally a benign construction that does not cause conflict nor does it create destabilizing effects for state and nation building; rather certain underlying factors with ethnic connotations have been used for instigating ethnic violence. Socio-economic imbalances often translate into political tension, and a key factor which instigates conflict and not ethnicity per se. Indeed Quashigah (1991:285) argued that, the control of political machinery creates easy access to the national wealth, not only for the individual in authority, but also for his immediate family members and ethnic group. Even a subjective interpretation of ethnicity does. Therefore, ethnicity becomes a source of conflict due to long term domination and ill treatment with unresolved socio-economic and political imbalances, injustices and inequalities by the politically dominant ethnic group as well as faulty interpretation of the concept. Religion on the other hand was always seen as a factor for conflicts in Nigeria but it is not necessarily true. What has been the problem putting religion as a source of conflict is the lack of religious tolerance, fanaticism and politics.

While group identity has often instigated conflicts and their formation could be attributed to lack of control by the Nigerian state in terms of security provision to the people, poor governance and unfair distribution of the nation's material resources. The lack of significant developmental support and dividends of democracy to the populace has spawned an avalanche of civil groups and militia groups, which to a large extent, champions exclusivist primordial causes using violent means (Omeje, 2007:24). Most of these militia groups are equipped with small arms and light weapons and often operate as ethnic armies. According to Omeje (2007), these ethnic armies do not only confront and attack the state and its agencies, but they also spearhead communal and inter-ethnic wars, including offensive, defensive and retaliatory killings of members of rival groups. Also, these militia activities have intense ethnic import and primordial linkages, a large number of the civil militia groups are tacitly supported, funded and armed by some of the ethno-political elites. Consequently, the civil militias are often recycled individually and as groups for political and electoral violence by some of their ethno-political elite patrons. It is the complex elite connections and support of the civil militia groups that mostly complicate the efforts of the state to stamp out or curb the phenomenon (Omeje, 2007).

Accordingly, Kazah-Toure (2003) posited that, the subject of ethno-religious conflicts in the contemporary epoch has remained a challenging one for Social Scientists. Humanity is living in a paradoxical epoch that is full of hope for peaceful co-existence between peoples but also dangerous, with the possibility of a series of explosive conflicts based on the mobilization of various identities and deterioration of relations at the different levels of the identity divides. The survival of some states is being confronted and threatened by ethno-religious conflicts. This is because the aftermath of the conflicts always leaves behind socio-economic and political repercussions on the most vulnerable in the society i.e, women and children.

It is interesting to note that ethno-religious conflicts have a deep rooted foundation and can be traced to British colonialism which forcefully merged divergent groups in cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious units into uneasy bond of co-existence and throughout these period conflicts happened in incessant occurrence like the Zango Katab crisis of 1946 among others. In the first republic such crises occurred based on regionalist identities such as the census crisis of 1962/1963, electoral crisis of 1964/1965 to the 80's and 90's where Nigeria experienced ethno-religious conflicts such as the Maitatsine riots in Kano, in 1980 with its extension to Bulumkutu in Borno in 1982, Yola and Gombe in 1985, the Kafanchan and Zangon-Kataf conflicts in 1987. A total of about 20 different ethno-religious conflicts across the country within the period of the 1980s and 1990s (Elaigwu, 2005) can be seen during the authoritarian military era before the coming of the present democratic system in 1999 to today. In these crisis women and children were always impacted on.

This paper focused on Kaduna State which is one of the oldest and largest in Nigeria. Kaduna State was chosen due to the incessant ethno-religious clashes which are always sparked off due to struggle for power, and dominance in the state because of her two unbalanced population distribution, that is, the northern and the southern Kaduna. That is, there exist a deep political divide between the two groups and this divide extend to their ethnic background where the northern Kaduna populace are predominantly Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups who are considered to be the majority and the southern Kaduna people are predominantly dominated by different smaller ethnic groups such as, the (Atyap, Ikulu, Ninkyop, Adara, Bajju, Ham, Kurama) and a combination of all from the minority southern Kaduna populace (Kazah-Toure, 2003).

In terms of religious affiliation, the majority northern Kaduna populace is Muslims with minority southern Kaduna populace being Christians. Areas like Zango Kataf and Kafanchan which are situated in the southern part of Kaduna have a mixed population of the Hausas and Fulani's meaning that the populations of these two areas are not completely Christians or Muslims. Although, a common trait can be identified between the two groups, that is, their ability to understand each other using a common language, which is Hausa. Therefore, the social formation of the state has always led to most conflicts in the state and this have since given rise to the study of ethno-religious conflicts in the state in terms of its causes and impact to the state. This paper investigates the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on women and children. The years 1999 to 2007 were volatile as we experienced security challenges as a result of the various conflicts that occurred in different parts of Nigeria. Since May 1999 there have been over 100 conflicts of different dimension in the country (Eliagwu, 2005). Kaduna state has experienced many ethno-religious conflicts. These include the ethno-religious conflict of 1999, 2000, 2001 and that of 2002

Conceptual Clarifications

Ethnicity

This is a very ambiguous concept to properly conceptualize. However, Otite (1990) defined ethnicity as categories of people characterized by cultural criteria of symbols including language, value systems and normative behavior, and whose members are anchored in a particular part of the new state territory. Distinctively, Rose (1965) conceptualized the term as a unique social and cultural heritage where members of a group share a unique social and cultural heritage passed from one generation to the next are known as ethnic groups. According to Osaghae (1992), ethnicity refers to a social formation resting upon culturally specific practices and a unique set of symbols and cosmology. Hence, ethnicity is a designed trait of character, values and norms to members of a group with a defined trace of heritage from origin.

Religion

The relationship between religion and society has frequently attracted the attention of anthropologists and sociologists. Karl Marx sees religion as the sigh

of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless condition. It is the opium of the people (cited in Trotter, 1941). Coming from the same persuasion, Lenin argued that “religion is the opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, in which the slaves of capital drawn their human image, the demand for a life more or less worthy of man” (Lenin, 1965:7-8). In their study Tar and Shettima (2008:300) see religion as any belief system in which adherents submit themselves to a particular supreme being – supernatural, material or cosmic – as a sacred independent entity with invisible capacity to supply a range of mundane and afterlife satisfactions in return for unconditional obedience, devotion and loyalty. The above is contrary to the Marxian position on religion, in that here, religion is given a lofty position in the life of the adherent as submission to the Supreme Being attracts an afterlife satisfaction. In this study, religion is seen as a way of belief in which adherents give in to a supreme being that is intangible and adhering to its laws attracts everlasting rewards and the opposite of that too.

Conflict

The concept conflict has attracted different interpretations from various scholars. Zartman (1989:8) is of the view that, conflict refers to the underlying issues to disputes between parties. And these issues are related to needs and interest of individuals and groups within a society. Woodhouse (2000) sees conflict as a situation that arises when individuals or groups identify a goal they want to secure in order to satisfy material interest, needs or values and these perception lead to actions that come up against the interest, needs and values of others. This definition shows that, conflicts arise or occur as a result of clash in interest between individuals or groups as a result of their needs and aspirations in the society. While Dahrendorf (1958) maintained that conflict is intrinsic to all societies and associations due to perpetual competition for authority within such groups. Conflict is therefore inevitable in all human societies.

Ethno-Religious Conflict

Ethno-religious conflict is a situation whereby the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Salawu, 2010). According to Ibrahim (2005) ethno-religious conflicts refer to disputes arising from ethnic and

religious differences. Such conflicts are often associated with ethnic or religious sentiments. She further stated that the usage of the concept denotes the fact that all crises that have religious and ethnic undertones are ethno-religious conflicts i.e. either of the two can give way to the other. The point is that ethno-religious conflicts do vary depending on the basis of a group's objective, its orientation towards the state, and the way it defines the discourse of its struggle.

Gender

According to Haralambos and Holborn (2008) gender is a concept that contains psychological and cultural manifestations; when the proper terms for sex are female and male, the original terms for gender are feminine and masculine; these latter terms might be actually independent of biological sex. In the same instance, Idyorough (2005:2) said that "gender issues are not women issues alone, they are issues of men and women and the attendant power relations between the sexes". The issue here is that gender is a sociological term as well as a socio-cultural phenomenon that divides people into various categories such as "male" and "female", with each having associated dress, roles, stereotypes, etc.

Situating Women and Children During and After Conflicts in Nigeria

This section seeks to preamble the analysis of the impact of ethno-religious conflict on women and children in Nigeria. On this instance, Okoye (2000) provided an explanation of the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on women and children. The work provided information on the extent of destruction in selected conflicts areas of Northern Nigeria. He argued conclusively that women and children have been the worst affected by the various ethnic and religious crises that the Northern Nigeria has witnessed. Women have lost their bread winners and are made to fend for themselves.

Generally, available studies on gender dimension of violent conflicts tend to portray women as group of vulnerable who are not capable of any action or decision of their own. Rather, they are seen as 'weaker sex' whose problems and issues are the same as those of children (Abdu, 2002). As Nwabara (1997) puts it, "women were given shadow of existence, acting as spoils to highlight the sagacity and prominence of the male character. In the same vein Ntunde and Ugwu (2005) stated that conflict is a gendered activity; women and men have different access to

resources, power and decision-making before, during, and after conflicts. The experiences of women and men in situations of tension, war and riots are significantly different. Therefore, this paper seeks to challenge the argument of the subject and as well appreciating some of the issues.

While Mijah (2007) in his study of the Numan conflict and its impact on women and children stated that, women and children in Numan, as in most other communities in Nigeria, are victims of structural violence, especially during crisis situations. However, perceiving women and children as victims of conflict suggests that these categories are incapable of responding to the exigencies of their vulnerabilities. That is why he argued that, because women and children may not be aware of their vulnerabilities, as a result of which they suffer differing extents of violence, or be consciously ready to challenge same, does not justify any form of structural violence against these categories.

According to Kunder (1998) in situations of internal political violence and material poverty, especially in Africa, children are no longer juveniles, but young adults. They are no longer underage persons requiring adult protection, but real and potential competitors for resources with the adults. They are no longer mere consumers of resources, but must earn a living. They are no longer innocent bystanders in conflicts, but actual and potential combatants. This end to juvenility in conflicts means that millions of children are forcibly separated from their families, physically abused, abducted into military groups or starved to death. On this note of intensity it was observed that in the Jos crisis in Plateau state, over 53,000 deaths were recorded out of which 17,397 of them were women. By this estimation it translates to 32.8% of the total deaths (Yesufu, 2007).

In a study by Okoye (2000) of six major conflicts in Northern Nigeria, it was reported that on the average about 20% of children are left to fend for themselves following the conflicts. A Study show that, children are more at risk than adults during violent conflicts as over 80% of children exposed to violence had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder one or two years later (Stavrou, 1993). Women in Nigeria cannot be treated as a homogenous group. There are variations in socio-economic class, ethno-religious identity etc. Yet they share a common identity of being discriminated against because they are women. Therefore, this study intends to specifically concentrate on the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on women and children in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Theories act as foundations for analysis and interpretation of problems. This is because everyone creates a theory to help him make sense of what he experienced. For this paper, the social conflict theory shall serve as the theoretical frame work in our analysis and interpretation of the impact of ethno-religious conflict on women and children. The constructivist/invention theory was used in describing ethnicity and religion and we concluded that colonialism is the major factor responsible for the present form of ethno-religious identity in Nigeria. Basic questions have to be posed in relations to central theoretical issues in the discussion on conflict in Nigeria.

The social conflict theory consist of several interrelated parts and they are; frustration aggression, structural conflict; realist; human needs; biological; relational, human need theories and many more. Comte, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Ross, Simmels, Weber, Sorel, Collier, Coser, Dahrendorf, Mills, Galtung and Collins are the major proponents of the social conflict theory. To all of them, social conflict means that the political and socio-economic structure of a society brings about conflict, that is, conflict emanates from the competition for scarce resources amongst actors and structures in a society. It can also be linked to the dislocation in society such as ethnic, racial, gender and religious (Ritzer, 2008:62). The social conflict theory is based on two significant factors; conflict occurring as a result of structural defects in the society. Where Faleti (2006:41) argued that, this type of conflict is as a result of the way a society is organized and structured. The second factor is hinged on the mechanism and actions of structures within the society. And this is as a result of the social relations they entered into which ultimately leads to conflicts. That is to say, when competition and weak social structures defines the features of a society, then conflict becomes inevitable in that society.

The social conflict theory is a Marxist based theory which argues that, “individuals and groups (social classes) within society have differing amounts of material and non-material resources (such as the wealthy versus the poor) and that the more powerful groups use their power in order to exploit groups with less power” (Ryzanskaya, 1971). In other words human history is all about this conflict; a result of the strong-rich exploiting the poor weak. This therefore

explains why the social conflict theory argued that, groups within a capitalist society (like ours) tend to interact in a destructive way that allows no mutual benefits and little cooperation. And that the various institutions of society such as the legal and political systems are instruments of the ruling class domination and serve to further its hold on power and their interest.

The social conflict theory was better explained by the founder of the peace studies school of thought Johan Galtung (2009) as a special case of incompatibility a situation where actors use conflict behavior against each other to attain incompatible goals and or to express their hostility. His theory on negative and positive peace, also elaborates on how conflict can occur in a society, at individual level through the presence of direct violence against individuals, fear, injustice, structures and unequal relations. The structural model of social conflict theory assumes that government institutions and agencies, traditional structures, religious structures as well as family structures existing within the society are all involved in the struggle for resources and power. A struggle between all these structures, among individuals and groups within these structures, as well as against actors in society, combine in effect to result to disagreement, violence and also conflict in social interaction. And the major victims in this type of conflicts are always women and children no matter the stage of development of that society.

From the above discussion on the social conflict theory, its suitability as a tool of theoretical frame is apt. It argued that economic and political factors always bring about conflicts, deflected into ethnic and religious factors which are secondary and prolongs the conflicts and sufferings of the most vulnerable women and children the main focus of this paper.

Methodology

For the fact that our study is an examination of the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on women and children in Nigeria Kaduna state; to be specific, we adopted the “case study” approach as its methodological plan because case studies are in depth investigations of a single or small number of units. The unit may be individual people, patients, groups or organisations. One of the most common uses of case study method is evaluative studies (Abdallah, 2006:66). Hartley (2004) argued that, the case study approach is a way of studying a problem or

phenomena in the society in-depth. It allows for a clear understanding of the relationship of socio-economic factors and processes as exhibited in the study area.

In choosing the case study plan for our research, the work of Mbachu (2005) and Yin (1999) were quite useful in informing our choice. While, Mbachu argued that, in the case study approach the study pays particular attention to a single event, phenomenon and institution and attempt to relates the attributes of that case study to other variables (ibid:39). Yin (ibid) on the other hand, came up with the following yardsticks, namely: representativeness, comparability and prevalence rate. In adopting it to our study, we considered that, the six local governments (Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Zaria, Sabon-Gari, Kachia and Chikun) of Kaduna State are truly representative of Nigeria in terms of their relative comparability and occurrence of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. It is well known that, Kaduna state witnessed various violent conflicts of different dimensions and propensity.

Analysis and interpretation of the data collected is established at both theoretical and empirical levels. Theoretically, the social conflict theory served as guide in our analysis of the problem. And empirically, we used both the qualitative and quantitative methods presented under the themes, sub-themes and simple statistical tools specifically set up to address our research objectives/questions. Therefore, data collected for this study is presented and analyzed through the mixed research methods.

A mixed research method is a general type of research (it is one of the three paradigms) in which quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques, or other paradigm characteristics are mixed in one overall study (Adamu, Mohammed and Dandago, 2006:67). The fact that, this study is based on mixed research methods is not in doubt. The study uses the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of the study and the quantitative research paradigm for another phase of the study. In this study, questionnaires were first administered as an experiment (quantitative) and there after the FGDs and the interviews were conducted with participants (Qualitative) to ascertain the first experiment and confirmed or reject its results. Mixed method research is like conducting two mini-studies within one overall research study (Ibid, 67). And it is a type of social science research that uses

various tools such as case studies, observations, phenomenology, grounded theories, historical studies and ethnography to investigate a phenomenon (Greertz, 1973; Patton, 2002; Adamu, Mohammed and Dandago, 2006). Qualitative approaches to data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation contrast sharply from the quantitative approaches.

The study made use of one of the major category in qualitative research: phenomenology to gather open-ended, newly formed data with the sole intention of examining the impact – negative and positive (ethno-religious conflicts) has on women and children in Nigeria. Phenomenological research investigates individuals' lived experience of events (Adamu, Mohammed and Dandago, 2006). It asks proving and incisive questions like 'what do you think is the major cause of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna state?'

The adoption of the mixed research method over the application of either qualitative or quantitative research approach alone was because, when distinct approaches are applied to concentrate on the same phenomenon and they brought out the same outcome, you have "corroboration" which means you have higher evidence for the outcome. Again, mixed research is employed to complement one set of results with another; to expand a set of result or to discover something that would have been missed if only a quantitative or qualitative approach had been employed (Abdallah, 2006).

Results and Discussions

Impact of Ethnic and Religious Conflict on Women and Children in Nigeria

Ethnic and religious conflicts have a serious impact on women and children in Nigeria. Below are some of the major impacts of ethnic and religious conflicts on women and children.

Displacement of Women and Children

Women and children always bear the disproportionate brunt of ethnic and religious conflicts. Many were internally displaced. It is on record that, between October 2010 and October 2011, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Nigeria stated that, 377,701 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due

to ethnic and religious violence (Laden, 2012). Concurring to the above, the Nigerian Red Cross in their report suggested that, over 17,500 families were displaced. In fact, studies conducted immediately after the Shari'ah crisis, also shows that well over 63,000 people were displaced, of which about 75% of them were women and children (HRW 2003).

Economic Impact

The finding of the study also show that, women and children experience economic deprivation of various intensity as a result of very high cost of living and decline in their standard of living because as widows and orphans they had to cope with the heartbreak of not only losing the bread winner and head of the family, but also the responsibility of taking care of their families within a fractured society. Their economic predicament is further worsened by the insecurity and loss of their ancestral land occasioned by the conflicts especially in rural parts of the Nigerian state. The implication here is that, women and children were forced to take on non-traditional roles such as forced labour, child slavery, forced prostitution, thuggery, theft, etc, because of their vulnerability caused by ethno-religious conflicts.

Socio-Political Impact

The findings of the study show that women and children are the most negatively impacted during conflicts due to their extreme vulnerability and that majority of them became internally displaced and were subjected to sexual violence. It is important to note that in situation where family members are displaced as a consequence of conflict, children were naturally left in the care of their mothers. Internal displacement can create an unhealthy environment that can promote poverty, unemployment, under-employment, hunger, malnutrition, starvation and diseases, youth restiveness or delinquency and criminality. Others suffer permanent injuries – loss of body parts. The implication is that, many families were forcefully separated and many more migrated with their children to safer areas within and outside the state and the implication is that, these children were denied access to basic education and primary health care. The physical and social separation between husband and wife further worsen the already bad situation.

Psychological Impact

One significant impact of ethnic and religious conflicts on women and children is psychological trauma. A lot of the victims suffer from post-traumatic syndrome from the experiences that they had. Therefore, would require psychological counseling and training which is really not available in this country. One of the problems of Nigeria today is that, we have three to four million IDPs in the country. This is a huge number and it is more than some African countries. We as a nation do not have the capacity to handle the trauma this millions have gone through. And of course for children in particular, being subjected to this life of trauma could create a situation where they believed that, the sort of life of violence visited on them is normal! They would likely visited same type of violence on others when the opportunity presents itself.

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women defined Violence against Women as “any act of gender-based violence that result in or likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty occurring in public or private life...”(UNICEF, 1998). Usually, these types of violence against women are systematically carried out. They were planned and well coordinated. In most instances women were sought for and exposed to social violence of various types.

Conclusion and Contribution to Knowledge

The major thrust of this study is that there are many causes of identity related tension and conflicts in Nigeria and quite a number of them are actually interrelated. What this means is that, several causes may be responsible for various violence and conflicts in the course of the history of Nigeria. The study concluded that, ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State were as a result of historically established chauvinistic practices, organizational disequilibrium and preconceived feelings between different ethnic and religious groups which are inherently linked with the history of state formation in the present Kaduna State from the earliest period to the present one. This engendered conflicting interests or emotions that got them involved in ethno-religious tensions and subsequently into ethnic and religious conflicts.

As we have discovered earlier in this study, women and children are feeble and are therefore victims in most conflicts. Our discussion has provided graphic evidence that socio-economically, women and children always bear the disproportionate brunt of ethno-religious conflicts. Most were internally displaced, killed, and their properties destroyed. They were exposed to sexual violence of different intensity such as rape, forced prostitution, denial of access to formal education, instability at home due to abandonment and were most importantly exposed to physical and psychological trauma associated to their exposure to violence.

Furthermore, the study concluded that both the state government and other agencies were not effective enough in curtailing the re-occurrence of conflicts in the state and their attempt to forestall conflicts has been a failure due to inefficient framework of purpose and, most importantly, the absence of a comprehensible policy decision to protect women and children during and after these conflicts. The government and its agencies were seen to be actors in perpetuating these crises in the state. The study also concludes that extrajudicial killings of civilians by the security agents took place in various locations in the state during the spate of ethno-religious conflicts in the state.

Finally, the paper concluded that government needs to do more and support conflict resolution mechanisms foisted at preventing identity related violence, by ensuring that the state government adopt the reports of the different commissions of inquiries established in the past, arresting and bringing to justice those responsible for supporting the conflicts and those who perpetuated the killings. Furthermore, government should ensure that, women and youths are involved in conflict resolution and peace building process because they always bear the brunt during and after conflicts due to their extreme vulnerability.

Recommendations

Based on our conclusions above that ethnic and religious conflict in Kaduna State is as a result of the contradictions inherent in our system. Responding to the conflict in the state will attract critical overhaul on social and policy issues such as:

1. Find a lasting solution to the violence and tensions in Kaduna State not only on the level of the recent conflicts of 2000 and 2002, but taking into

consideration the persistent reoccurring conflicts in years past and the findings of investigations and studies into the 2000 violence. Concerted efforts should be made to listen to the concerns, grievances and suggestions of the various communities affected by the conflicts.

2. Women should be involved in conflict management and peace building processes. Intensify and encourage conflict resolution initiatives and other measures aimed at preventing further inter-communal violence, including by supporting grassroots initiatives to foster dialogue and cooperation between Muslims and Christians and raise awareness among the local communities of the need to respect fundamental rights, including the right to life, and religious and ethnic differences.
3. Provide compensation to individuals whose houses or livelihoods were destroyed during the violence. It is enough providing compensations, what is important are how it is distributed. Compensation to religious bodies and house-holds don't necessarily benefit women. Specific interest and rights of women should be protected during and after conflict. Ensure that those women and children still displaced by the conflict have the necessary practical support and security to return to their ancestral or chosen homes if insecurity persists.
4. Identify and bring to justice those responsible for organizing or encouraging the violence in Kaduna State, as well as those who carried out the killings. The Government should not allow political consideration to cloud their decisions about prosecutions and should recognize that prolonged delays in passing judgement for those involved in fermenting violence in Kaduna State is a clear case of impunity which is resulting from government non-commitment to punishing known previous perpetrators.
5. Issue clear orders to the police and other agencies that, operations to restore law and order in a situation of violence should never be a justification for unlawful attacks on persons, to settle scores.
6. The government should ensure that Nigerians enjoy equal protection of law and are not subjected to discriminations of any kind; on the basis of

their origin, ethnic group, sex, religion and political orientations as enshrined by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

7. It is important to take the issue of women and children empowerment seriously. Deliberate attempts should be made to include women in all the decision making structure of the state. It is recognized that economic frustration is one issue that continued to force women and children to carry arms during crises, the state should develop women and children social and economic empowerment program to reduce their social and economic backwardness.

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