

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

# REPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS, CONFLICTS, AND PEACEBUILDING

CRITICAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by  
**IBRAHIM SEAGA SHAW**  
and **SENTHAN SELVARAJAH**



Ibrahim Seaga Shaw • Senthana Selvarajah  
Editors

# Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding

Critical and Global Perspectives

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

palgrave  
macmillan

*Editors*

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw  
Right to Access Information  
Commission (RAIC)  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Senthan Selvarajah  
Centre for Media, Human Rights  
and Peacebuilding  
London, UK

ISBN 978-3-030-10718-5      ISBN 978-3-030-10719-2 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10719-2>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover image: ton koene / Alamy Stock Photo  
Cover design: Oscar Spigolon

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# CONTENTS

<b>1 Introduction: Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding—Critical and Global Perspectives</b>	<b>1</b>
Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Senthana Selvarajah	
<b>Part I Media, Conflicts and Humanitarian Interventions</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2 Human Rights Journalism: Towards a Critical Constructivist Epistemological Approach</b>	<b>13</b>
Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Senthana Selvarajah	
<b>3 Advocacy Journalism, the Politics of Humanitarian Intervention and the Syrian War</b>	<b>31</b>
Philip Hammond, Sumaya Al Nahed, and Tara McCormack	
<b>4 Beyond “Bearing Witness”: Journalists Resisting Violence in Colombia’s “After War”</b>	<b>49</b>
Mathew Charles	
<b>5 Re-designing the Media in Humanitarian Interventions Communicating with Communities at Times of Crisis</b>	<b>67</b>
Valentina Baú	

<b>Part II</b>	<b>Mediating Human Rights, Democracy and Terrorism</b>	<b>83</b>
6	Public Service Broadcasting and Security Issues: The Case of ‘Blowback’ Jake Lynch	85
7	Communitarianism, Ethics and the Burden of Journalistic Objectivity: Reflections of “Peace Journalists” Covering the Boko Haram Insurgency Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob	103
8	The Politics of Representation of Migrants in Italian Media Sara Gabai	119
9	Assessment of Media Coverage of Human Rights Abuses in Internally Displaced Peoples’ Camps Olusola O. Isola and Toba Yusuf	137
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Human Rights Reporting: Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding</b>	<b>153</b>
10	Understanding and Practising Human Rights Journalism in China Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Di Luo	155
11	Unworthy Victims? The Media, Politics and the Search for Justice Through the International Criminal Court in Kenya Jacinta Mwendu Maweu	169
12	The Media, Conflict and Peace During Transitional Times: The Case of <i>The Herald</i> and the <i>NewsDay</i> During the Period of the Zimbabwe Government of National Unity (GNU) 2009–2014 Georgina Sabawu and Octavious Chido Masunda	187

<b>Part IV The Challenges of Reporting Human Rights and Conflicts in the Digital Age</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>13 Re-imagining Human Rights Photography: Ariella Azoulay's Intervention</b> Anna Gormley and Stuart Allan	<b>203</b>
<b>14 Journalists as Human Rights Defenders: International Protection of Journalists in Contexts of Violence and Impunity</b> Tamsin Mitchell	<b>221</b>
<b>15 Together and Separate? An Exploratory Study of Political Polarization on Social Media During the 2016 Brazilian Political Crisis</b> Patricia Ferreira Alves and Bruce Mutsaers	<b>243</b>
<b>16 Exiled Journalists as Active Agents of Change: Understanding Their Journalistic Practices</b> Nirmanusan Balasundaram	<b>265</b>

## Assessment of Media Coverage of Human Rights Abuses in Internally Displaced Peoples' Camps

*Olusola O. Isola and Toba Yusuf*

### INTRODUCTION

The existence and management of internally displaced people (IDP) in camps is a global phenomenon. People are displaced within their countries for various reasons across the world. Some of the reasons adduced for such displacements include outbreak of violent conflicts, natural and human made disasters, political repressions and famine. When people flee from their communities to cross their countries' boundaries into another country, they become refugees and they ultimately become the responsibility of the international community. In Africa, the majority of IDPs and refugees are victims of armed conflicts and many are settled temporarily in IDP or refugee camps which are scattered across the continent. Sometimes, these people are subjected to human rights abuses, exploitation and neglect because of their situations. Even though the inevitability of conflict in all facets of human existence is an undeniable fact, certain internal and external factors make some states more vulnerable to conflict than others. The vulnerability of African countries to incessant internal dispute and inadequate

---

O. O. Isola (✉) • T. Yusuf  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

tools to manage such challenges has made the continent home to millions of refugees, which has over time been a major impediment to the human development and socio-economic growth of the continent (Human Rights Watch 2016).

Internal crises within African states, especially after the abatement of the Cold War, have accounted for most of the internal displacements of people and refugee problems across international boundaries; this has compounded poverty and the under-development situation on the continent. Such crises often prove very difficult to resolve, linger for a long time and sometimes transcend sub-regional or regional boundaries, leaving millions dead, displaced and torn away from their families. In such states of displacement, the IDPs often lose their basic fundamental rights such as the right to shelter; right to sustainable livelihood; and right to good food, health care, education, clean water, political rights, etc., all of which are enshrined in various international human rights covenants. Apart from losing these rights, displaced victims are confronted with a wide range of physical and psychological trauma and abuses as a result of losing their communities, homes and other lifetime investments. Having experienced family and social breakdown, the IDPs are vulnerable to economic, cultural and sexual exploitation, which increase the trauma that they experience.

Even though international humanitarian law requires that the rights of the IDPs must be protected by national governments (African Union Convention 2009), in crises situations such State governments often lack the ability to guarantee and protect such rights or may not have the political will and resources to do so. In many cases, the only options left for the IDPs to sensitize the public about their rights' abuses are the international voluntary organizations at the vanguard of human rights, national and international media, individual activists, and sometimes international organizations that use the platform of the United Nations to sensitize the world about such abuses in the IDP and refugee camps (Schoenholtz 2015).

The mass media collect, process and disseminate information to a wide spectrum of society. Apart from these roles, the media should also be at the vanguard of protecting the rights of citizens, irrespective of their current situation in the social environment (Isola 2015). In emergency situations, it is the responsibility of the media to monitor how authorities are protecting individual and collective rights of IDPs and groups that have found themselves in dangerous situations outside their normal dwelling



environments. The objective of this chapter is to discuss how the media in Nigeria are covering and reporting human rights issues and abuses that are prevalent in the IDP camps in Nigeria and the impact of such coverage on mitigating the suffering of the residents of the camps.

### THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

Nigeria has witnessed several internal crises caused by armed conflicts, which have led to massive migration and internal displacements of people since 1999. Such crises manifested in forms of ethnic, religious and communal conflict across the country, leading to the creation of temporary IDP camps in various areas. However, none has matched the Boko Haram insurgency violence, which reached its peak in 2014, when the North East region of the country was overrun by the insurgents, leading to massive displacement of people from their communities (Rotimi 2016).

Beginning with its Islamic proselytizing acts in 2009, which gradually turned into fundamentalism and violent activities, the Boko Haram sect grew very powerful and became a major threat to the Nigerian State and its neighbours in the West African sub-region (see Abubakar Mu'azu 2015). More than 20,000 people have been killed, while countless women, girls and children have been abducted and recruited as suicide bombers and fighters. Up to 2.1 million people have been displaced from their homes in the heat of the conflict. About 1.8 million of these people are currently internally displaced, while about 200,000 of them are displaced in the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger (Human Rights Watch 2016).

The activities of the Boko Haram sect have been characterized by incessant killings through bombing of public places, institutions and government offices. Abduction, sexual slavery, forced recruitment and other major violations of human rights affecting thousands of women, children and their families have been reported in communities that have been captured by the group which they had declared as their Islamic Republic. A disturbing aftermath of this is the huge number of people displaced and separated from their families in communities that had been forcefully subjected to Islamic law (Obaji and Abolo 2016). The displaced people have been settled temporarily in camps established by government in secured localities in North East Nigeria such as Maiduguri, Kalabage, Rahn, Yola, Abuja, the Federal capital and other camps established by non-governmental organizations and religious bodies.

According to an assessment conducted from November to December 2015 by the International Organization for Migrations' Displacement Tracking Matrix team in 207 Local Government Areas covering 13 States of Northern Nigeria, 12.6% of the IDPs were internally displaced due to communal clashes, 2.4% as a result of natural disasters and 85% as a result of insurgency attacks by the Boko Haram sect. In effect, the assessment estimates that there were almost 2,152,000 IDPs in various camps in Nigeria as of 31 December 2015.

The displacement crisis in Nigeria is peculiar when compared with others in the world, according to UN data. About 40% more people have been displaced in Borno State (1.4 million) than those who reached Europe by boat in 2015, which is about 1 million (Kingsley 2016). Across the region, the war against Boko Haram has forced more people from their homes—2.6 million—than there are Syrians in Turkey, the country that hosts more refugees than any other. The IDP situation in Nigeria becomes heart wrenching when the reports of scarcity of basic resources, diversion of relief materials and sexual violence are fully analysed. To effectively address these issues, it is important to establish the parameters with which an IDP can be identified and the terms under which he is granted protection under international, national and regional laws.

### IDPS' RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

Whereas a "refugee" has an authoritative definition and clearly defined status under the 1951 Refugee Convention, there is no universal legal definition of internally displaced persons. However, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement offer a descriptive identification of the category of persons that can be identified as displaced: "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee, or to leave, their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order, to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border". Thus, involuntary departure and the fact that the individual remains within his or her country are the two defining elements of an IDP.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement bring together an overview of the rights of IDPs and the responsibilities of national authorities and non-state actors towards them. Although they are not a binding document like a treaty, the Guiding Principles are based on and reflect

existing standards of international law. They cover all facets of protection from displacement; protection during displacement; principles of humanitarian assistance, and issues relating to return, resettlement and re-integration of displaced people. The Guiding Principles indicate that national authorities have the primary responsibility to protect and assist IDPs within their jurisdiction. They also articulate that IDPs are entitled to enjoy in full equality the same rights and freedoms as other persons in their country and shall not be discriminated against.

According to the Guiding Principles, when state authorities are unable or unwilling to provide assistance to the displaced, international organizations have the right to offer their services and to enjoy rapid and unimpeded access to the displaced. The principles also identify the fact that IDPs should have access to a durable solution to displacement, which would include the rights to return to their place of origin, to integrate locally at the displacement site or to resettle elsewhere in the country voluntarily, safely and with dignity; and the right to participate in the planning associated with their return or settlement and re-integration. They also include the right of return of lost property or, where not possible, to obtain compensation and equal access to public services.

International human rights law, humanitarian law and criminal law also offer a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of IDPs, including during armed struggle. Under these laws, a state has the duty to protect and respect the rights of IDPs and provide necessary conditions for the fulfilment and exercise of those rights. A state must ensure access to resources such as food, water, basic shelter, medical services and sanitation (Celik 2005).

In Africa, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (otherwise known as The Kampala Convention) affirms the range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right of every individual. Individuals, including IDPs, can make complaints about rights violations to the African Commission for consideration by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantees the right to adequate housing, including prohibition of forced eviction.

### THE CONDITIONS OF IDP CAMPS IN NIGERIA

The international and regional legal instruments of protection for the IDPs have not shielded displaced persons from the ordeals and agonies of living in make-shift camps without access to food, water, sanitation and

hygiene in Nigeria, hence making life in the IDP camps unbearable. An appalling and perhaps the most disturbing angle to the issue of IDPs in Nigeria's North East region is the humanitarian scourge these people have experienced. Schools, churches, mosques, town halls, and abandoned and uncompleted buildings and government facilities are often utilized as temporary shelters for IDPs. Responsible government bodies such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) set up tents and bunk houses as temporary accommodation for the IDPs and suffice it to say that such structures are often inadequate.

Shelters set up for IDPs in Nigeria by government are usually make-shift camps that lack durability and often cannot stand the test of time and weather (News24.com 2016). These shelters are characterized by overcrowding and lack of access to water and sanitation facilities, proper waste management, and electricity. Inadequate health facilities in the camps have triggered the outbreak of disease and there are often reports of increase in the number of cholera cases and other epidemic diseases among IDPs in the camps. According to the United Nation Council on Humanitarian Affairs, in the three most affected North East States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, almost 7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, of which more than 50% are children. The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund had declared that children are dying daily in Nigeria's IDP camps due to acute malnutrition. In a related development, a report by Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*) revealed that six malnourished children die daily in the IDP camp in Bama, Borno State. Approximately 188 died of diarrhoea and malnutrition in June 2016 alone, while 1200 graves were counted, of which over 500 were those of children (Ehikioya 2016).

Apart from the humanitarian crisis faced by the IDPs, there have been reports of diversion of relief materials by government officials and alleged subjection of residents of IDP camps, especially women and children, to rape, torture and other forms of human rights abuse (US State Department Country Report on Human Rights Abuses). This raises a lot of questions about the complicity of government agencies and security institutions in the abuses. The media are also complicit for not doing enough to bring such abuses to public knowledge in order to stamp out impunity in the IDP camps. In July 2016, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented sexual abuse, including rape and sexual exploitation, of 43 women and girls living in 7 IDP camps in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital. The victims were displaced from several Borno towns and villages such as Abadam, Bama, Baga, Damasak, Dikwa, Gamboru Ngala, Gwoza, Kukawa

and Walassa. In some cases, the victims had arrived in the Maiduguri camps where their movement was severely restricted after spending months in military screening camps. According to the HRW Report (2016), four victims were drugged and raped, while 37 were coerced into having sex through false marriage promises, and material and financial assistance by security staff and government workers assigned to work in the camps. Many of those forced into sex said they were abandoned if they became pregnant. They were thereafter subjected to various forms of discrimination, abuse and stigmatization from other camp residents. Eight of the victims said they were previously abducted by Boko Haram fighters and forced into marriage before they escaped to Maiduguri.

In addition, an assessment of the IDPs' situation in the North East in July 2016 by NOI Polls, a Nigerian research organization, reported cases of camp officials abusing displaced women and girls. The report was verified by 66% of the 400 displaced people in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. The fear of retaliation and feeling of powerlessness prevented most of the women and girls abused by members of the security forces and vigilante groups—civilian self-defence groups working with government forces in their fight against Boko Haram—from reporting or speaking up against the officials.

Irregular supply of food, clothing, medicine and other essential needs is another major problem being experienced by the IDPs. The lack of or inadequate supply of these essentials along with restricted movement in the IDP camps in Maiduguri make the victims (many of them widowed women and unaccompanied orphaned girls) more vulnerable to rape and sexual exploitation by camp officials, soldiers, policemen, members of civilian vigilante groups and other Maiduguri residents. This is evident in the fact that in some cases, men used their positions of authority and access to desperately needed food or other items to rape women.

Restricted movement in the camps, which is a clear violation of Principle 14.2 of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which provides that IDPs have “the right to move freely in and out of camps and other settlements”, is further evidence of human rights abuse against the IDPs. Apart from the clear evidence of human rights violation against the IDPs, life in the camp is characterized by insecurity and constant fear of shooting, suicide bombing and random attacks from Boko Haram. There are often reports of infiltrations into the camps and physical attacks on the IDPs. In February 2016, the NEMA reported that 58 people were killed and 78 others injured after suicide bombers detonated explosives at

the IDP camp in Dikwa, Borno State (*The Punch* 2016). Also, in September 2015, it was reported that suspected Boko Haram terrorists detonated a bomb at Maikori camp located in Yola. According to NEMA, the attack killed 7 and left 20 injured. In addition, in October 2016, it was also reported that a suicide bomber was shot dead while sneaking into an IDP camp in Borno State, apparently to wreak havoc in the camp.

Apart from attacks by Boko Haram, the IDPs have been victims of an accidental air raid by the Nigeria Air Force (Erunke 2017). In January 2017, *Vanguard* reported that the Nigerian Air Force apologized over the accidental air raid on the IDP camp in Borno State. The accidental air strike occurred when a Nigerian Air Force fighter jet invaded Rann in Kala Balge area of Borno State and many innocent lives were lost. It was later stated that the air raid was a result of wrong intelligence and the military using outdated maps in prosecuting attacks on the Boko Haram. Since the accident, no information has emerged about compensation for the victims of the air strike, while normal life has continued in the affected camp.

#### NIGERIAN MEDIA AND REPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN IDP CAMPS

The media are often described as a mirror for society. They serve as a two-way channel of communication between the government and the governed. In essence, the role of the media is to reflect back to the society what they see, especially those things that are not in the interests of the society so that appropriate action can be taken to address or prevent such things. As a bridge between the government and the public, the media provide relevant and necessary information about the state of affairs in government and in the public domain and monitor the ruling class in the interests of the society. This role falls within the social responsibility functions, which is one of the normative theories of the press (Baran and Dennis 2003, p. 316; Burton 2005). Because the media exist for the welfare of the society, it is their duty to ensure the wellbeing of the members of the society, including the protection of their freedom and liberties irrespective of the position or class of individual members of the society. These functions must be exercised both in peaceful and conflict situations.

In conflict and non-conflict situations, journalists have a moral and ethical obligation to provide the public with unprejudiced insight into all issues affecting the vulnerable people. These include issues pertaining to human rights of all segments of the society including those of the displaced and other victims of armed conflicts. In essence, the media are expected to serve as “watchdogs” to create awareness about threats to freedom, security and sustainable livelihoods of the people irrespective of their positions. Theoretically, this role could be best served within the agenda-setting framework of media operation, in which the audience attaches more importance to issues that are given prominence in the content of the media (Coleman et al. 2009). Even when there are other equally important contending issues, the media audience tends to believe at any point in time that those issues positioned high in the media content deserve immediate attention from government, while others are regarded as less contentious to deserve such attention (McCombs and Shaw 1978; Burns 2002).

Unfortunately, the Nigerian media often does not bring matters of human rights abuses of the IDPs high enough on their news agenda to sufficiently capture local and international attention to enhance the remediation of the situation (Nwankwo 2011). The mass media in Nigeria, especially the traditional outlets (television, radio and newspapers), have often been criticized for failing to adequately carry out these roles. These criticisms become justified when one considers the high rate of occurrence of human rights abuses which are reported on social media but which the traditional media ignore in their reporting.

Even though the traditional media in Nigeria witnessed a paradigm shift from state-owned and censored media to a multiple-ownership and plural media, this trend has not made a sufficient impact in exposing official corruption and human rights infringements in the IDP camps. Privately owned media have been more at the forefront of bringing to public knowledge the violent acts perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect and the various infringements on the rights of the victims, especially women, children and other vulnerable groups (Chambers 2000). Even though some of the reports in the media are characterized by conflicting details of casualty figures of victims of violence in IDP camps, and the exact identities of perpetrators, they have helped in creating awareness about how great a threat the Boko Haram conflict has constituted to the Nigerian State and the likely consequences of not addressing the situation on time.

It is important to note that the increasing use of the Internet, mobile phones and social networking platforms like Twitter and Facebook has opened up new frontiers and more ways to receive information and alerts about human rights abuses globally. This also applies to Nigeria, and the social media channels have in fact replaced the traditional media in disseminating timely news about human rights abuses in the IDP camps. In addition, new technology on social networking platforms is creating new ways of reporting and analysing information outside of the traditional information gathering and processing format, making news events more accessible and more understandable to citizens who prefer to receive information in real time. International media networks, like the BBC and CNN, have utilized the citizen journalism platforms to expand their news dissemination networks and help in bringing information about the Boko Haram conflict and other armed conflicts within Nigeria to the consciousness of the audience from international perspectives, even while the local media are still grappling with how to present such information without upsetting the local authorities and security apparatus.

In spite of all this, however, there still appears to be a consensus amongst scholars and stakeholders that most cases of human rights violation in Nigeria, including those against the IDPs, have not been given adequate attention by the media. Nwodu and Ezeoke (2013) in their study affirmed that the "Nigerian press did not give sufficient attention to the coverage of women's and children's rights". Out of 322 editions of newspapers they studied, 119 (27%) editions covered issues relating to women and children, while 203 (63%) did not cover the issues. Even within the 119 editions of the newspapers that covered the issues, the frequency of mention of the issues was found to be as low as 1–2 mentions, dominating with 87.4%; 3–4 mentions were 12.6% while none was found within 5 mentions and above.

Also at a discussion panel, leaders of civil society organizations and media editors agreed on the need to increase and improve the reportage of girls and women's rights as components of the human rights issue in Nigeria (IPC Roundtable 2014). Participants on the panel concluded that women and girls lack adequate reportage due to several reasons, which include constraints within media management, lack of understanding of media operations by women, and stereotypes within the newsrooms and in society. This already lopsided nature of the coverage of human rights issues by the media has largely influenced the incorrect, inaccurate and



biased reporting of the challenges and ordeals of the IDPs who are predominantly members of the vulnerable groups.

Most of the reports of rape, torture, human rights violations and diversion of relief materials by security forces were brought to public knowledge by international agencies and watchdogs like Amnesty International, HRW and other UN agencies. The media in Nigeria often relay these reports, and hence there has been no independent information obtained locally as most of the details have come from international bodies. It is also important to note that privately owned media outlets and social media platforms perform better than the state media in reporting and analysing the cases of human rights violations and humanitarian problems plaguing the IDPs in Nigeria (Nwankwo 2011).

An overview of the content of reports and information conveyed by state-owned media in Nigeria reveals that much attention is given to government statements and official condemnations, rather than detailed accounts of the ordeals of the IDPs in the various camps (Erunke 2017). One can thus say that even though official press censorship is fading, there are other constraints that still impede state-owned media outlets from engaging in in-depth reporting of issues that pertain to the human rights of Nigerians.

#### CONSTRAINTS AGAINST EFFECTIVE MEDIA REPORTING OF IDP CAMPS IN NIGERIA

A number of factors could account for the inability of the media to effectively cover and report the rampant human rights abuses in the IDP camps in Nigeria. Most important of these is the inability of journalists to recognize some of the abuses and violations of the rights of IDP camp residents when they occur because of lack of appropriate education by journalists. Reporters sometimes confuse rights issues while reporting because they do not have in-depth understanding of human rights, their local and international provisions, what they are, their origin, governments' responsibilities to protect them, and how they can be promoted and enforced. By not comprehending the various categories of human rights, journalists often miss stories pertaining to them because they lack the skills to report and investigate them. This is a reflection of the low quality of journalism practice in Nigeria, and it diminishes the public's right to information concerning the plight of the IDPs.

Insufficient understanding of what constitutes human rights by journalists has also accounted for the fact that, although the media often report the exploits and violence of the Boko Haram sect and the displacement of people brilliantly, they often fail to focus on the humanitarian angle of the armed conflict. Rather, they present human rights issues, which could have generic consequences beyond the immediate environment where they occur, as mere crime stories. The media often fail to acknowledge the existence of international human rights standards for sexual violence, forced marriages, abductions, food crisis, child abuses and many other issues that are predominant in the IDP camps across Nigeria, while reporting the issues. This tends to weaken the media's watchdog role and reinforce the inability of journalists to hold government and security institutions, most especially the military, to account on these rights abuses when they are culpable.

The quest to attract revenue from government and relevant official agencies also sometimes influences media coverage and effective reporting of human rights abuses of the IDPs. Government media rely on subventions from government, while a section of private media also survive on advert revenue from government agencies. Such reliance on government patronage sometimes influences them to ignore or under-report human rights abuses in IDP camps in order not to embarrass the government. In such a situation, attracting public attention to human rights abuses becomes less of a priority, since protecting the image of the government and the commercial sustainability of the media takes precedence. Some journalists and broadcasters go as far as trivializing stories of human rights abuses and presenting them in such a manner that media audiences might react to the issues as though they were normal social phenomena.

Closely related are the political influences on the media publication of human rights abuses that occur in the IDP camps. Governments would prefer to keep information about rights abuses in the camps under cover to avoid attacks from opposition parties and the international community. In the process, they influence the media to shun news of abuses in the camps and desist from presenting it to the public.

Lack of comprehensive demographic data on the IDPs in Nigeria is another challenge to effective media reporting of the plight of displaced persons living in IDP camps in Nigeria. There is no reliable database of the number of IDPs, where they are located and the nature of welfare arrangements for them, either from official or non-official sources. This does not encourage the media to equip themselves to initiate investigative reporting

or to monitor the situation of the IDP camps. Because of this, journalists often rely on distorted descriptions of situations in the various camps provided by unreliable sources, which does not avail them the opportunity of knowing exactly where interventions are needed. Although various organizations have presented different figures and statistics of displaced persons, there is no consensus in terms of the actual number of these people.

There are reports of the existence of unofficial IDP camps around the country being managed by religious organizations and other unregistered groups. Many of these are inaccessible to journalists, which makes it nearly impossible to obtain accurate figure of displaced persons in different camps in Nigeria. Security measures imposed by security agencies make accessibility almost impossible in government IDP camps too, which makes gathering of accurate data of occupants of the camps and access to them a herculean task. If the media lack accurate data and are unaware of the existence of some unofficial camps, reporting cases of rights violation and diversion of relief materials becomes virtually impossible.

Apart from not being properly trained to understand the dimensions of human rights abuses, journalists are under-resourced and lack basic tools such as computers, cameras, transmission equipment and finances to undertake intensive and extensive investigation and coverage of IDP camps in Nigeria. Most of the media outlets are concentrated in urban locations and commercial capitals, which are hundreds of kilometres away from the IDP camp locations, mostly concentrated in the northern part of Nigeria. Many of the media outlets employ freelance journalists and stringers who are paid per report submitted or story written. Many of these freelancers are more preoccupied with reporting stories of momentary incidents that could make the news headlines instantly in order to get better pay, and are therefore less concerned with humanitarian or human rights stories which can only be presented in features format. Therefore, instead of reporting the deteriorating conditions of health services, poor sanitation, inadequate educational services and poor treatment of women and girls, the stringers would prefer to report the invasion of the camps by terrorists and the attendant casualties, which occur occasionally in the camps.

Constant harassment of journalists who attempt to cover the IDP camps by security men and soldiers is another factor that prevents effective coverage of the camps. Journalists are occasionally beaten, locked up or have their equipment seized by soldiers who are assigned to guard the

camps. Since there are no effective protection mechanisms for journalists who decide to investigate abuses in the camps, coupled with the absence of social protection from their employers, journalists often do not find such stories attractive and would rather direct their attention and professional skills to other issues that are less challenging and dangerous.

## CONCLUSION

Inadequate media presentation and publicity of human rights violations in IDP camps in Nigeria constitutes a huge challenge to human development and human rights protection in the country. In spite of the challenges they face, the IDPs still constitute a substantial part of the Nigerian population, as well as the global population, who are entitled to enjoy the same rights and protection as people who are living their normal lives and are adequately protected by government and the international community. While it is the responsibility of the mass media to reflect the plight of the IDPs in media content, to enlighten and mobilize the public, and stand at the vanguard of advocating for better living for the occupants of IDP camps in Nigeria, they face a number of constraints in doing this. However, this failure of the media is tantamount to failure to perform their social responsibility to a section of the society which would make them accountable for the consequences.

In order to rectify the situation, journalists and media workers should strive to expose themselves to issues concerning universal human rights and all the legal instruments that pertain to it through formal and informal training and education. Media organizations should embark on concerted efforts to train their staff and build their capacities to be able to undertake assignments that would enable them to expose humanitarian abuses in IDP camps and other complex conflict theatres. Management of media organizations should provide adequate funding, remuneration and relevant technology to aid journalists to focus on and specialize in covering humanitarian issues in the discharge of their duties.

Finally, there is a need for the Nigerian government and those of other developing countries to domesticate the various international laws and legal instruments that protect displaced people from human rights abuses, which could compound their already insecure lives (UNCHR 2016). Appropriate government institutions should work towards implementing policies that will reflect a comprehensive roadmap for the prompt resettlement of occupants of the various IDP camps in Nigeria. Moreover, such agencies should

take steps towards collecting accurate data of the IDPs as this would not only aid the design of a result-oriented policy, it would also aid journalists in gathering, reporting and bringing to international knowledge the agonies of displaced persons in Nigeria and elsewhere in West Africa.

## REFERENCES

- African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, (Kampala Convention) Document.* Adopted by the Special Summit of the Union held in Kampala on 22 October 2009.
- Baran, J. S., & Dennis, D. K. (2003). *Mass Communication Theory: Foundation, Ferments and Future* (3rd ed.). California: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Burns, L. (2002). *Understanding Journalism*. London: Sage Publications.
- Burton, G. (2005). *Media and Society: Critical Perspectives* (2nd ed.). Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Celik, A. B. (2005). Transnationalization of Human Rights Norms and Its Impact on Internally Displaced Kurds. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 27(3), 969–997.
- Chambers, D. (2000). Critical Approaches to the Media: The Changing Context for Investigative Journalism. In de Burgh, H. (ed), *Investigative Journalism: Context and Practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Coleman, R., et al. (2009). Agenda Setting. In K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Ehikioya, A. (2016). President Buhari Orders Probe of Human Rights Abuses in IDP Camps. *The Nation*. Retrieved April 20, 2017, from <http://thenationonline.net/buhari-orders-probe-human-rights-abuses-idp-camps/>.
- Erunke, J. (2017). Accidental Bombing of IDPs Camp: Nigerian Airforce Apologize. *Vanguard*. Retrieved April 20, 2017, from <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/01/accidental-bombing-of-idps-campnigerian-airforce-apologizes-over-action/>.
- Human Rights Watch World Report*. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/Nigeria>.
- International Press Centre (IPC). (2014). *Report of Roundtable on Women's Right*.
- Isola, O. (2015). Covering and Reporting Armed Conflicts: Techniques and Precautions. In O. Isola & M. Popoola (Eds.), *Journalism Practice and Terrorism in Nigeria: Issues, Trends and Techniques*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
- Kingsley, P. (2016). The Small African Region with More Refugees than All of Europe. *The Guardian Newspaper*. Retrieved April 20, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/26/boko-haram-nigeria-famine-hunger-displacement-refugees-climate-change-lake-chad>.

- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1978). The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press. In R. Everett, E. Dennis, et al. (Eds.), *Enduring Issues in Mass Communication*. St Paul, MN: West.
- Mu'azu, A. (2015). Media Use by Insurgent and the Application of the Media to Counter Boko Haram. In O. Isola & M. Popoola (Eds.), *Journalism Practice and Terrorism in Nigeria*. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers.
- News24.com (2016). *Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria*. Retrieved February 23, 2016, from [www.news24.com.ng/National/News/laws-to-protect-rights-of-idps-will-soon-beenacted-dogara-20160223](http://www.news24.com.ng/National/News/laws-to-protect-rights-of-idps-will-soon-beenacted-dogara-20160223).
- Nwankwo, C. V. (2011). *The Role of the Media in Promoting Human Rights: An Analysis of the BBC Documentary, "Chocolate: The Bitter Truth"*. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree, MA Human Rights Practice, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg School of Business and Social Sciences.
- Nwodu, L. C., & Ezeoke, C. B. (2013). An Evaluation of Press Coverage of Children and Women's Rights in Nigeria. *Higher Education of Social Sciences*, 42, 41–51.
- Obaji, S., & Abolo, E. (2016). Internal Displacement in Nigeria and the Case for Human Rights Protection of Displaced Persons. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*. Retrieved from [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org). ISSN 2224-3240 (Paper), ISSN 2224-3259 (Online), Vol. 51.
- Punch*. (2016). Retrieved February 15, 2016, from [www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com).
- Rotimi, O. (2016). IDPS in Nigeria: From Insecurity to Insecurity. *The Cable News*. Retrieved April 19, 2017, from <https://www.thecable.ng/idps-nigeria-insecurity-insecurity>.
- Schoenholtz, A. I. (2015). *The New Refugees and the Old Treaty: Persecutors and Persecuted in the Twenty-First Century*. SSRN 2617336.
- UNCHR (2016). *Protecting Internally Displaced Persons: A Manual for Law and Policymakers*. (2016). Retrieved February 24, 2016, from <http://www.unhcr.org/50955599.pdf>.