



NIGERIA COUNTRY REPORT

ON CONJUGAL SLAVERY IN WAR AND CONFLICT

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Title page: Kaduna, Kaduna state, Nigeria. Arewa House.

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Figure 1. Kano, Kano state, Nigeria.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief Background

Nigeria has a history of religious and ethnic conflict that goes back decades. The current insurgency by Boko Haram, however, began in the mid-2000s. The group was initially formed as a non-violent sect in 2002 but this later changed as they initiated active war against the Nigerian Government in 2009¹. Boko Haram is an Islamic sect built on the belief that Western education must be prohibited, and that Nigerian politics, particularly in the North, have been dominated by a group of corrupt and false Muslims. These beliefs are the stated reason for why Boko Haram wages war against the governing bodies in the North, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria as a whole: to further their aim of establishing a “cleansed” Islamic state ruled by Sharia Law². Fuelled by a desire for vengeance against politicians, security agencies, and Islamic authorities, Boko Haram has killed thousands and displaced millions of civilians especially in the North Eastern part of the country. Their rampage was driven by factors such as religious radicalization, previous interreligious intolerance, poverty and financial incentives³.

Boko Haram engages in inhumane practices such as mass killings and destruction of property. Their tactics include abduction of women and girls for the purposes of forced marriage, forced hard labour, and to act as foot soldiers or suicide bombers. In the past

three years alone, over 2000 women and girls have been abducted by the sect⁴. These abductions were often well planned and systematic, with some of the girls abducted from schools⁵ while others were forcefully taken from their homes as their parents and siblings watched helplessly⁶. Although many theories exist as to why the rebels kidnap young women and girls, research and interviews have shown that the primary reason for these abductions is for purposes of forced marriage and sexual slavery⁷.

1.2 Legal Context

Over the years, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) have recognized a range of acts and omissions as crimes against humanity, and “other inhumane acts”. Some of the acts recognised as crimes against humanity as “other inhumane acts” include: sexual violence to a dead woman’s body;⁸ sexual violence other than rape;⁹ mutilation, and other types of severe bodily harm, beatings and other acts of violence;¹⁰ and, more recently in forced marriage in *Prosecutor v. Brima, Kamara & Kanu (AFRC case)*¹¹ and *Prosecutor v. Sesay, Kallon & Gbao (RUF case)* at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.¹²

Forced marriage was characterised and prosecuted before the SCSL as a distinct crime encapsulating a variety of sexual and non-sexual acts which in themselves are criminal and may be regarded as crimes against humanity. Some of the distinct components of forced marriage are sexual slavery, enslavement, forced labour, rape and forced pregnancy committed in a systematic and / or widespread manner. The first prescription of marriage in international law took place sixty years ago via the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery.¹³ The genesis of this acknowledgment in international law that marriage should be regulated was brought about by the recognition that ‘marriage’ could be utilised as a means of enslavement.¹⁴

The Rome Statute of the ICC, like the statutes of previous international criminal tribunals and courts, has not specifically criminalised the crime of forced marriage. However, in several of the cases before the ICC, there have been reports of forcible abduction, continued rape, forced domestic chores and the imposition of marital status on women and young girls. In each of the cases of *Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo (Lubanga’s case)*,¹⁵ *Prosecutor v. Germain Katanga (Katanga’s case)*¹⁶ and *Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen (Dominic Ongwen’s case)*,¹⁷ evidence of the practice of forced marriage has been presented before the ICC.

In Nigeria, sexual and gender-based violence encompasses a wide range of practices and is a crime both in times of relative peace and in war and conflict. Some acts of gender based violence codified by the Penal Code applicable in northern Nigeria include: assault

resulting from outrages to a woman's modesty and from wrongfully confining persons, kidnapping, abduction, wrongfully concealing or confining an abducted person, procuring a woman or girl for immoral purposes, rape, acts of gross indecency against persons under 16 years, deceitfully inducing belief of lawful marriage, and enticing or taking away married women.¹⁸ In developing countries like Nigeria and especially in regions like the North, sexual and gender-based crimes are highly under reported. This is probably due to social stigmatization experienced by victims which makes them reluctant to come forward with their stories. This serves to hide the prevalence of these crimes within the society¹⁹.

The complex and pluralistic nature of Nigeria's legal system has played a contributing factor in the propagation of sexual and gender-based violence in the country. In Nigeria, laws are derived from the Constitution, legislation enacted by both the federal and state legislature, received English law (consisting of common law, doctrines of equity and statutes of general application in force in England on January 1 1900), customary law, Islamic law (in 1999, 12 of the 19 northern states adopted sharia law as the basic source of law) and judicial precedent. Over the years, there has been a failure to review, update and harmonize most of the laws on the statute books. This failure has created inconsistencies and gaps in the legal regime on different sphere in Nigeria notably in the area of criminal law.

Following the surge in terrorist activities in the country, the National Assembly enacted the Terrorism Prevention Act, 2011, amended by the Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act, 2013, with the objective of criminalising terrorist activities. Sadly however, this Act did not address the issue of SGBV in the context of terrorism/ war and conflict²⁰. This is unfortunate and regrettable, as arguably one of the most prevalent war tactics by the insurgents has been. Despite the omission of SGBV in the Terrorism Prevention Acts, it is apt to draw attention to the provisions of Chapter IV of the Nigerian Constitution which enshrines several inalienable fundamental human rights of Nigerians and in section 34 lays out the rights of Nigerians to dignity of person²¹. The rights laid out in section 34 have a lot of relevance with the issues that arise from the forceful abduction of women and girls for purposes of forced marriage and sexual slavery. Section 34 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 reads:

Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly -
(a) no person shall be subject to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment;
(b) no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; and
(c) no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

Considering these provisions, a review of current laws and guidelines operative within the Nigeria legal system is necessary in order to revive any hopes of enforcing justice concerning sexual crimes as we look towards rehabilitating the survivors in a post-conflict situation.

1.3 National, hybrid or international proceedings

It is evident that the government has not performed its duties in meeting the reparations needs of survivors of sexual violence and abuse by Boko Haram. According to a 2016 report by the Global Justice Centre, despite the capture and arrest of thousands of militants over the years, there has been no prosecution of a single Boko Haram member for crimes of sexual violence to date²². Recently, pressure by international organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International has pushed the Nigerian Government to make moves towards prosecuting about 2,321 members currently in detention²³. There have been 50 successful prosecutions to date, with charges including killing and abduction²⁴. There has been one prosecution in relation to the infamous Chibok schoolgirl abductions, with a Boko Haram member sentenced in February 2018 to 15 years imprisonment for his role in the mass kidnapping.²⁵ While these are positive developments, unfortunately SGBV is not on the list of charges against the militants and there have been no prosecutions of SGBV committed by Boko Haram members to date. Detailed information regarding the proceedings has not been publicised, demonstrating a lack of transparency in the proceedings. Adequate plans towards meeting the reparations needs of survivors must be put in place, starting with open access to courts, impartial, effective and thorough investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible and provisions offered such as specialised medical assistance²⁶.

There is currently no existing TRC regarding the war crimes committed by Boko Haram, including in relation to SGBV. However, in September 2017 a military commander in the Nigerian army recommended the establishment of a TRC in the North East²⁷. He emphasized that considering the devastating nature of the damage to life and property by the insurgents in the North East, a TRC is necessary to ensure lasting peace in the post conflict context.

1.4 Recent law reforms on marriage age

According to the Child Rights Act, which was passed in 2003²⁸, the legal age of marriage is 18 years and above. However, not all states in the federation adhere to this law, with several states yet to implement the Child Rights Act into state laws. According to reports, only 23 of Nigeria's 36 states have adopted this Act. Under the Matrimonial Causes Act, religious and customary marriage practices are recognized as valid. As a result, in certain regions of the country marriage is considered legal for children as young as 12 years²⁹. This is further evidence of the need to revisit and harmonize the laws governing marriage, consent and sexual offenses in Nigeria to reduce jurisdictional conflicts.

1.5 Key findings of the report

The results of this report are derived from qualitative research involving women and girls that were abducted and forcefully married by Boko Haram insurgents in Northern Nigeria. The key themes that emerged across most of the interviews were false matrimony, psychological intimidation, physical assault, hunger and starvation. These were

systematically used as tools of war to coerce victims into conjugal relationships with or without express consent. This report details both recent and ongoing experiences that occurred in the lives of the victims. It starts by relaying their journey from abduction and separation from their loved ones, followed by life in captivity and forced marriage, the experience of hard labour and other forms of psychological and physical abuse, and finally their reintegration into society in terms of needs, stigma and coping mechanisms.



Figure 2. Zaria, Kaduna state, Nigeria.

2 OVERVIEW AND DEMOGRAPHICS

2.1 Number, date and location of interviews

This report is based on results from qualitative, one-on-one, in-depth interviews conducted in June 2017 with seven (7) women and girls who were survivors of abduction and forced marriage by Boko Haram insurgents in Borno state, North Eastern Nigeria. Only the results of interviews with girls and women who disclosed that they were forced into marriage are included in this report, but these were part of a much larger project in which 50 former captives were interviewed. The participants were sampled from Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps located both within the city and around the outskirts.

There are about 32 IDP camps in Borno³⁰ and three (3) of them were conveniently sampled for this study based on their dense population and proximity to the city centre. The camps that were sampled were Muna, Dalori and Farm Centre camps (Table 1). Research was conducted in the IDP camps because most of the abductees rescued by the military were accommodated across various IDP camps in the country. Although some were resident in host communities, they are fewer in number and it would take additional time and resources to identify and interview. Hence, the camps served as a confined and secured location where the survivors could be sampled and interviewed. Table 1 presents the three study locations^{31, 32, 33}.

Table 1. Sampled IDP Camps for In-depth Interviews in Borno State		
S/No	Camp Name	Estimated Population
	Muna Camp	14, 500
	Dalori Camp	15, 529
	Farm Centre Camp	4, 500

The interviews were conducted by dRPC staff, consultants and eight (8) trained student researchers from the social sciences department at the University of Maiduguri, Borno state. The students first went through training by dRPC on research ethics and conducting in-depth interviews before they were permitted to interview the survivors. Data collection was also performed under the supervision of dRPC staff and consultants. A translation of an informed consent sheet was read to survivors in the local language (Kanuri and Hausa) where they acknowledged full comprehension and understanding before signing in the presence of a witness.

2.2 Demographics of participants

Participants were girls and women between the ages of 15-30 years; five (5) of them were married, one (1) was single and the other was a widow. Their level of education was low as most of them had no formal education with only one having attended primary school. The time survivors spent in captivity ranged from one week to approximately two years; five of the survivors spent more than a year in the hands of their captors. Out of the seven women and young girls we interviewed that were forced into conjugal slavery, six of them returned with a child born out of war.

2.3 Other observations about the interviews

The interviews were conducted in the local languages of the participants which were predominantly Kanuri, Hausa and Shuwa. These were then transcribed and translated into English. This cross-language barrier and the unreliability of translation techniques may limit the validity of the results. This is because the interviews only underwent the translation process once. This minimal level of translation carries with it a tendency for words to lose their meaning or for a dampening of the original voice of the survivors to occur.



Figure 3. Yola, Adamawa state, Nigeria. IDP camp.

3 KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Experiences in captivity

The interviewees report that most of the girls were abducted during invasions of small towns and villages by the insurgents. Some were taken directly from their homes in the presence of their families while others were taken in-transit while trying to escape to other towns. Some girls and women were abducted when they were sent on errands.

A 19-year-old girl relates how she was forcefully taken from her home after refusing to marry a Boko Haram member:

“When the insurgents came, they took me from our house. They asked me to marry them but when I refused, they took me to the forest.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017).

In another life story, a 16-year-old girl tells how she was captured while trying to flee the rebels only to encounter them while in-transit to a presumed safer territory:

"I got captured when we were on our way to Maiduguri from Bama. I was taken away; they went with me."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

The results show that abduction by Boko Haram mostly targeted women and girls. During our interaction with the survivors we also realised that within this target group was also a preference for younger aged girls. A 15-year-old girl tells us:

"The Boko Haram caught me the day they attacked Bama, they invaded our house and asked all the women to come out where they picked us the younger ones."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

Based on the experience of the girls, the common practice after abduction was to take the girls to a temporary location before migrating to their hide outs. These were either prisons or thick forests to escape ambush by the military. A 25-year-old woman recounts:

"They took us when Banki was captured, later we were taken to the forest where we did not see them for about two (2) weeks..."

(Interview at Muna camp June 2017)

The specific reasons for accommodating the girls and women in temporary residences were not quite clear, however we know that residences varied from forests to abandoned buildings that were converted into prisons.

"After they abducted us, we were marched to a house where we were locked up as prisoners."

(Interview at Farm centre camp June 2017).

In some occasions, the selection of brides began during this transit period; we could not ascertain if there was a specific protocol that was followed for this selection. However, what we realised was that whatever decision was made was regarded as final and accepted by all members of Boko Haram.

"... then we were informed that we have to get married as it was not acceptable under Islamic rule for us to remain unmarried. I was married to one Umar as a second wife."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

In some cases, brides were selected based on preference by the rebels, while in other occasions they were just ordered to meet their new husbands at certain locations with or without consultation with either the future bride or groom.

"They told me that there was a certain man I should go and meet as he will be my Boko Haram husband, if you don't go and meet him we will kill you."

(Interview at Farm centre camp June 2017)

Sometimes mass weddings were organized where all the girls in a particular district or town were married off in a single day without prior knowledge or consent.

“They did it like a ceremony without informing us the girls. On a certain Monday we were not even aware when they went to a town called Njaka and did a mass wedding for the girls there; they gathered them and forced them to marry.”

(Interview at Farm centre camp June 2017)

While the results indicate that forced marriage was arranged in some instances based on requests by individual rebels, on other occasions the girls were married off with or without consent by both parties. This brings up a possible question as to whether all rebel husbands who have wives actually chose to be married to them and whether violent actions were triggered in circumstances where the husbands did not choose or love the wives given to them. As a 19-year-old woman relates:

“They forcefully married me to one of them; I did not and do not love him. We just lived together because it was a forced marriage. I prepared his food and bed but whenever I did something wrong, he would beat me...”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

The woman goes on to tell us how a survivor was beaten by her husband whenever she failed to perform some tasks as instructed. However, this was not the case for all girls; while some were beaten and subjected to hard labour, other husbands did not abuse their wives in an attempt to maintain the marriage.

“They beat people all the time however they never beat me personally. The reason was because they wanted me to stay married to them...”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

In the above quote, we see that while a 16-year-old girl was forced into marrying a Boko Haram member she was not physically assaulted by him.

Although some women did not experience beatings and other physical violence, sexual and psychological violence in the camps were a common experience for all respondents during their stay in captivity. All the girls and women reported that initial sexual intercourse in the marriage was through the use of physical force, regardless of whether their husbands had emotional attachment to them. Sometimes abuse would be practiced through physically restraining the victims with the help of other rebels.

“When I was in captivity, they started by sexually abusing me by force, then one day one of them said he would like to marry me. From then he used the help of his friend to force himself on me.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

From the beginning, it was evident that physical force was used against the women both within and outside the perceived matrimonial bond; the only difference was that before the so-called marriage, women and girls were abused by many rebels. Following the ritual

only one rebel would have sex with her, but rapes still occurred with the help of multiple other members. In other instances where direct physical violence was not used, women were threatened with weapons. Responses to these threats varied; for some the presence of a weapon was enough to coerce them into servitude but in other instances women remained committed to escaping.

"I cried every day; we all were weeping but they warned and threatened us. They forced us to do whatever they wanted us to do and we must obey them because they were carrying whips and guns, though they did not use them on us."

(Interview in Dalori camp June 2017)

Another girl narrates her story of how they used a weapon and their scripture in threatening her:

"They tried everything, they read the Tafseer; they said they will kill me, they fired a gun as warning, but I still said it is not possible, I will not stay..."

(Interview at Farm centre camp June 2017)

3.2 Roles of Women in Boko Haram camps

Women assume a lot of roles both within and outside the rebel camps which ranged from household chores, reproductive labour and childcare, to acting as combatants and performing infiltrative roles such as spying and suicide bombing. It is suggested that the presence of women in the camps serves as a morale booster to the rebels and women were also used for childbearing. Producing children was important to Boko Haram so that their progeny can continue their cause.

A woman that spent a year and a half with Boko Haram and gave birth to a child fathered by one of the insurgents reported that some women were offered leadership roles in the camps. Women in these positions were called "Ameerahs".

"... they kept telling us that we should accept their doctrines and should become Ameerahs of the group."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

The precise criteria for choosing the Ameerahs were not clear, though several factors such as duration of time with the group, marriage to a rebel commander, or giving birth to a child fathered by a member of Boko Haram may have contributed.

3.3 Resistance by women

While instilling fear ensured co-operation and obedience among some women, others demonstrated resistance to the advances of the rebels:

“I did not agree to the marriage and it was done without my consent. I fought him preferring to die.”

(Interview at Farm centre camp June 2017)

For some, resistance was evident immediately following marriage while for others they would pretend to comply in order to escape after gaining the trust of their husbands and other rebels.

Escape attempts of any sort were met with severe consequences; those who tried and were caught were either beaten up or immediately killed.

“I tried to escape to Maiduguri but they caught me saying they will slaughter me; however they slaughtered the other woman I was with and went away with me...”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

Some women were spared after being caught trying to escape, while others were executed. The reason behind this selective punishment was not clear. However, it was evident that some were spared despite multiple attempts at escape.

“... I tried several times to escape but they caught me and brought me back. The first time they caught me I was brought back to them, the second time we got lost in the forest and met them, the third time they met us and injured my daughter; it was at the fourth attempt we got rescued by the military.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

Attempts at escape were usually made in groups. Women would start off together and then disperse in the forest to decrease the chances of being tracked by Boko Haram members. With no assurance of survival or escape, they would walk sometimes bare footed for several days without food and water.

“We have stayed without food for a week and even more... Some of us died of hunger and thirst. This continued till soldiers rescued us and took us to Bama.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

3.4 Internal “laws” and norms for treatment of women and girls

Interviewees did not explicitly discuss internal laws or rules governing treatment of women and girls in Boko Haram camps, but we did find a practice of increased protection for those that were married. Marriage for protection in times of war and conflict has been reported by earlier studies³⁴ where women sometimes accept forced marriage as a means of survival, and this has also been the case in our findings. Although the marriage was despised by the women, their co-operation was sought by rebels telling them that it would provide some form of protection in the camps. They were given the sad choice of choosing to be enslaved by only one rebel or being raped by any member of the group. A 15-year-old girl tells us:

“When I tried to resist him they warned me that it was better to be married than remain single and living amongst those tagged slaves to be used by any member of Boko Haram.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

In this context, forced marriage to a Boko Haram member was portrayed to be the lesser of two evils and it was a woman’s choice to make regarding which “option” she could live with. Although some of the girls accepted this offer, others preferred death to meeting this fate. One of the girls tells us:

“I did not agree to the marriage and it was done without my consent. I fought him preferring to die; I was bruised all over with injuries to my elbows, my back, my legs and other parts of my body. They said: ‘we will slaughter you if we don’t marry you; even if you don’t want to, it’s impossible, we must take you to Sambisa, and we must get you married.’ After that they kept beating me; it got so bad that every time I go to the toilet it’s blood, if I throw up it’s blood. I said: ‘you cannot force me to stay’.”

(Interview at Farm centre camp June 2017)

3.5 Systematic violence in camps

Systematic violence towards the girls and women in the camps was mostly public and primarily related to marriage, sexual abuse, forced labour and in other occasions attempted escape. Sexual violence was prevalent in the camps and this was experienced by all the women we interviewed.

“They tortured us... they treated us like orphans. I did not want to be with them.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

“They tortured me whenever I tried to escape and was caught, they called me a non-believer. If they see someone going to Maiduguri they slaughter them instantly.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

Violence in the camps was intended to instil fear in the hearts of the victims. Women would be called to witness violence against others as a warning. One of the women relates to us the open exhibition of people being publicly slaughtered. The girls and women would be called to see the dead body and in other occasions to witness the execution process.

“When they slaughter people, they ask us to come and see; they say we have slaughtered this person...”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

Death threats towards the women were a common occurrence and public executions were to serve as proof of the possible repercussions for disbelief or disobedience.

3.6 Post-conflict relations with forced husbands

Despite documented reports of rescued girls requesting reunion with militant husbands³⁵, none of the women we interviewed had continued relations with forced husbands. Rather, the girls we interviewed despised their husbands and wanted nothing else to do with them. One of the girls from Dalori camp says:

"I did not and do not love him; we just lived together because it was a forced marriage."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

The insurgency in the North East is still ongoing, hence it is possible that women who still have affection for or are still in contact with militant husbands may be reluctant to say so as they are considered terrorists in a continuing war.

3.7 Stigma on return

Survivors of abduction and sexual violence by Boko Haram have often experienced stigmatization upon returning to family. It has been reported elsewhere that those who return with children born of militant fathers often find their children are rejected by family and close relatives³⁶. This differs from our findings as our respondents reported they do not face any form of stigma from family, relatives or fellow cohabitants in the camps where they currently live. This may be attributable to the fact that the girls were resident in camps and surrounded by people with similar experiences. As one of the women who gave birth in captivity told us, she did not notice stigma possibly because she had not returned home yet. She stated that there may be the possibility of negative treatment on returning home but that was yet to occur when we interviewed her.

"... perhaps people may do so behind my back but so far the reception in the camp was that of appreciation that I came out alive. Maybe that may happen in the future when we return to our homes; but for now honestly I do not notice that."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)



Figure 4. Kano, Kano state, Nigeria.

4 REPARATION NEEDS OF SURVIVORS

The reparation needs of survivors of abduction for sexual slavery/forced marriage by Boko Haram have not been acknowledged or met. It became evident through our interviews that victims lacked knowledge of their rights towards reparation, hence it was not a priority for them to demand it. For most of the women, being secure within the walls of the IDP camps was enough and so they were satisfied with their situation despite just surviving a horrific experience.

Very often it is perceived that rescue and shelter alone are adequate for survivors of abduction and sexual slavery, especially in times of ongoing war and conflict. This is far from the truth. In addition to security and shelter, survivors have other pressing needs, particularly in the areas discussed below.

4.1 Healthcare and Psychosocial Support

There have been several concerns raised over the status of the healthcare system available to survivors at various IDP camps in the North East. This has attracted attention by donor agencies as well as the media, prompting the Federal Government, through the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced (NCFRMI), to launch

a health insurance program specifically for IDPs³⁷. One of the women we interviewed expressed gratitude to the government for the medical care and feeding programmes in the camps:

“... the Government has assisted us a lot. At least we eat regularly and we get medical care too.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

A survivor who was rescued from abduction by the military gives us insight into the health care system within the camps. According to her, services available were predominantly focused on screening, first aid and some level of psychotherapy which involved lectures about moving on with life:

“We thank the Government and security forces for rescuing us. They took us to the clinics where we were given medical check-ups. Those of us that were abducted were given special care. They gave us drugs and carried out HIV testing for us... Some people were sent to us and kept talking to us on how we should move on with life.”

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

It is commendable that the government is providing some care to survivors, however healthcare goes beyond first aid and pharmacotherapy especially concerning vulnerable populations and victims of SGBV who have special needs. Care should be offered through a holistic approach covering physical, nutritional and psychological rehabilitation and should be in connection with multidisciplinary specialist care, all of which is currently lacking for the survivors³⁸. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the past two years has made a significant contribution toward some of these goals with a robust maternal new-born and child health scheme of which hundreds of women and girls have benefited³⁹ however more holistic and collaborative health care interventions are still required to meet the many needs women experience.

4.2 Empowerment: skills training, returning to education and housing

Our respondents praised the Government and donor agencies for economic empowerment and skills acquisition programmes currently in place in the camps. Organizations such as UNFPA have built safe spaces for women and girls where they can have privacy as well as learn certain skills such as tailoring, and they also award financial grants to a select number⁴⁰.

4.3 Housing

Currently the girls reside in tents within the IDP camps. However, they expressed an eagerness to return to their hometowns where reconstruction to cover their housing

needs is currently ongoing. Some of the girls from Dalori camp tell us they expect to return home very soon and continue life from where they left off:

"I understand they are helping in rebuilding our destroyed homes, and that very soon we would return home..."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

"I just want to return to my home (Bama) and start life from where I left it when the Government completes its reconstruction..."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)

4.4 School and caring for children born of war

Most of the respondents preferred access to capital to start a business as opposed to support in furthering their education. Several factors may have contributed to this preference: our respondents were not enrolled in any formal education programme before they were abducted, and some specified that they had the responsibility of caring for their children, which is why they would not opt for enrolling in formal education. One of the young women who gave birth while in captivity tells us how the decision to go back to school was not hers to make and how her primary concern is sustenance for her child and herself.

"I don't think I might be able to go back to school now that I have a child. My parents will decide that. But for now, I know how to knit our local caps, I will engage in that business to support my child and myself."

(Interview at Dalori camp June 2017)



Figure 5. Jimeta, Adamawa state, Nigeria. Lamido's palace square.

5 NOTES

¹ Proceedings of ICIC2015–International Conference on Empowering Islamic Civilization in the 21st Century e-ISBN: 978-967-13705-0-6

² Andrew Walker, *Special Report: What is Boko Haram?* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2012), <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR308.pdf>

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Nigeria Chibok Abductions: What We Know,” *BBC* online, May 8, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32299943>

⁵ Ibid.

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