



NIGERIA JUSTICE SURVEY REPORT

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Authors: Lawan Balami, Heather Tasker, Umar Ahmad Umar, Rahina Zarma

The Conjugal Slavery in War (CSiW) research Partnership is a collaborative team of African-based non-governmental organizations working with survivors of conflict related sexual and gender-based violence; university-based researchers, faculty and students. <http://csiw-ectg.org/>

Title page illustration: Lorenzo Serravalle

NIGERIAN JUSTICE SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

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1 SUMMARY

This report summarizes research with civil society organizations (CSOs), religious and community leaders, and security agents into conceptions, barriers, and opportunities for achieving justice for sexual and gender-based crimes in North-eastern Nigeria. Our findings demonstrate a need to strengthen legal mechanisms and provide multi-faceted supports to encourage community reintegration and recovery for survivors.

2 SURVEY BACKGROUND

The Justice Survey is a CSiW initiative that aims to better understand the key perspectives, priorities, concerns, and challenges for community-based justice workers in six conflict-affected countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Rwanda. This report summarizes the methods and key findings of the Nigerian 'Justice Survey'.

The first phase of the research rolled out in June 2018 and was conducted entirely online. Questions in the survey explored what justice means to and for survivors of SGBV; obstacles and challenges to achieving justice (however described); the most important needs for survivors; and helpful and accessible justice mechanisms for survivors (i.e. regional, national, or international courts). The survey was developed in Survey Monkey and made available in French and English. Partners sent the link to their networks of contacts, encouraging recipients to forward further. In rolling out the survey, CSiW partners were responsible for selecting the most appropriate organizations and regions to distribute the survey, thus allowing for contextually appropriate sampling. We received a total of 61 completed surveys.

It was apparent that the online format did not work well, largely due to internet accessibility challenges. Phase two of the research, launched in spring 2019, utilized the Kobo Toolbox platform allowing for offline data collection on i-Pads distributed to CSiW partners. Data collection is ongoing in most countries, and the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly slowed progress. This Nigeria report is the first in a series of partner country justice survey research.

3 BACKGROUND TO NIGERIA REPORT

North-eastern Nigeria has experienced insecurity for decades, but the current conflict dates to 2009 when the region experienced increased volatility largely attributable to the armed group known as Boko Haram and retaliatory violence by the Nigerian armed forces. One tactic employed by Boko Haram is the abduction and forcible marriage of girls and women to Boko Haram fighters. Many of these girls and women have had children resulting from this sexual

violence. Humanitarian organizations, paramilitary groups, and CSOs are continuously working towards rescuing and reintegrating these girls and women back into communities. However, in a context where there is limited access to formal justice mechanisms or support for survivors, alongside stigma and ongoing insecurity, this process is extremely challenging (please see the [CSiW Nigeria Country Report](#) for further details). The Nigeria Justice Survey aims to better understand these challenges of survivors, alongside the needs of survivors and those supporting them.

Borno State is located in the North-eastern part of Nigeria. With a population of approximately 5 million people, it is the most populous state in the North east and borders with Niger Republic to the north, Republic of Chad to northeast, Cameroun to the east, Adamawa state to the south and Yobe state to the west. Borno has 27 local Governments and Islam continues to be the dominant faith practiced in the state with a minority being Christian. The dominant ethnic group in the state are Kanuri's with a mixture of others such as Babur and Shuwa. In the last 11 years, Borno has been the epicenter of the Islamist group Boko Haram's violence since it began its insurgency in 2009. Since the start of the crisis over 20,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced. Women and girls have been most affected by the humanitarian crisis through heightened vulnerability as a result of displacement and migration exposing them to sexual and gender based violence and various levels with little to no access to justice.

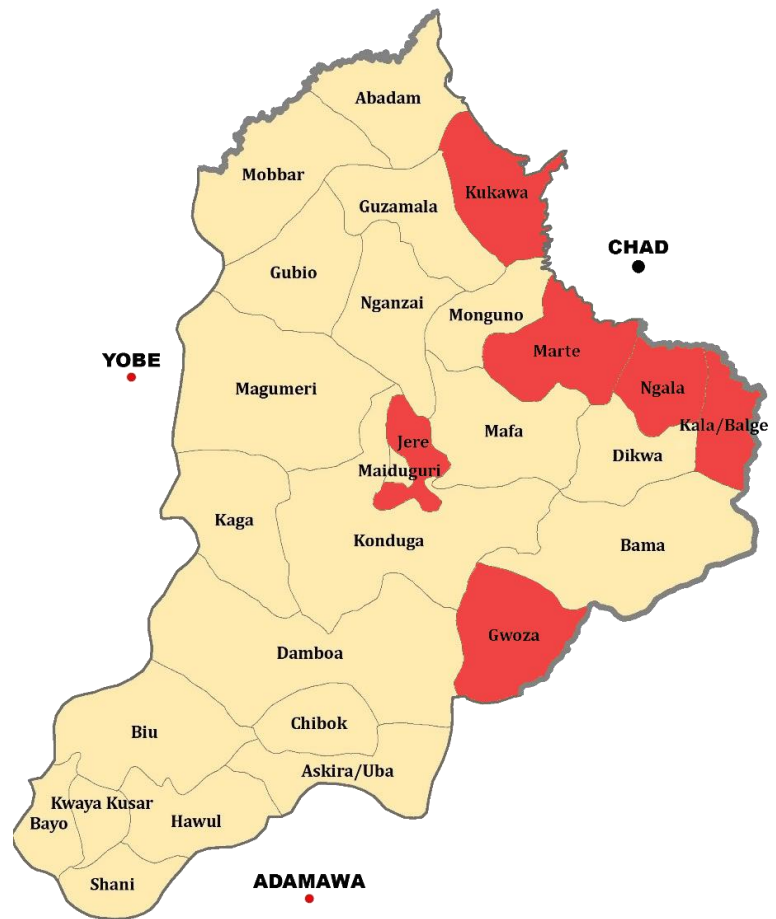


Figure 1. Map of Borno state

4 METHODOLOGY OF NIGERIA REPORT

Data collection in Nigeria began on August 26th and concluded October 4th, 2019, it was carried out by CSiW's Nigerian partners, the Development Research and Project Centre (DRPC). In cases where the participant was comfortable reading and writing in English, they were handed the tablet and encouraged to fill out the survey on their own. In many cases, the researchers translated the survey questions into Hausa and the responses into English to input into the survey. This latter approach also helped prevent literacy barriers.

Given that CSiW partners select the most appropriate organizations and regions to distribute the survey, the Development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) chose to survey religious leaders and members of security forces in North-eastern Nigeria, as well as lawyers, members of women’s organizations, humanitarian workers, etc. This offered significantly contextual insights into the challenges of survivors.

A total of twenty-nine (29) CSOs respondent (15 males, 14 females) were surveyed, representing ten (10) CSOs:

- i. HERWA Community Development Initiative (CDI)
- ii. Women in New Nigeria (WINN)
- iii. Life at Best Development Initiative (LABDI)
- iv. Restoration of Hope Initiative (ROHI)
- v. Intercommunity Development Social Organization (IDS)
- vi. Grow Strong Foundation (GSF)
- vii. Rehabilitation Empowerment and Better Health Initiative (REBHI)
- viii. Health Hope Initiative (HHI)
- ix. Alliance for Girls Action (AGF)
- x. Girls Empowerment Forum (GEF)

A total of twenty (20) male traditional and religious leaders from six (6) different local government areas (LGAs) in Borno state participated in the study. The LGAs were:

- i. Gwoza LGA
- ii. Marte LGA
- iii. Gomboru Ngala LGA
- iv. Kukawa LGA
- v. Jere LGA
- vi. Kalabalge LGA

Category/Location	Gender Distribution of Respondents	
	Male	Female
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)		
<i>HERWA CDI</i>	4	
<i>WINN</i>	1	1
<i>LABDI</i>	1	1
<i>ROHI</i>	2	2
<i>GCC</i>		2
<i>IDS</i>		1
<i>GSF</i>	1	1
<i>REBHI</i>		1
<i>HHI</i>	3	1
<i>AGA</i>	2	1
<i>GEF</i>	1	3
Traditional and Religious Leaders		
<i>Gwoza LGA</i>	7	
<i>Marte LGA</i>	9	
<i>Gomboru Ngala LGA</i>	1	
<i>Kukawa LGA</i>	1	
<i>Jere LGA</i>	1	
<i>Kalabalge LGA</i>	1	
Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)		
<i>Bakassi Camp</i>	18	6
<i>El-Miskin Camp</i>	2	
<i>Tasha</i>		3
<i>Madinatu Camp</i>	4	2
<i>Gwazari</i>	2	
<i>Shuwari</i>	2	
<i>Chulau</i>	1	
<i>Old Maiduguri</i>	1	
Psychosocial Support Counselors (PSS)		
<i>Bakassi IDP Camp</i>	4	2
<i>Madinatu IDP Camp</i>		5
<i>Total Respondents by Gender</i>	69	32
<i>Grand Total</i>		101

dRPC also surveyed members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) who were tasked with protecting female survivors and other vulnerable persons affected by war and conflict in North-east Nigeria; a total of forty-one (41) members from eight (8) different locations in the state participated in our interviews (female: 11, male: 30). The locations were:

- i. Bakassi Camp
- ii. El-Miskin Camp
- iii. Madinatu Camp
- iv. Gwazari
- v. Shuwari
- vi. Chulau
- vii. Old Maiduguri
- viii. Tasha

A total of 11 Psychosocial Support Counselors (PSS) (female: 7, male 4) from 2 different locations: Bakassi Camp and Madinatu Camp, also participated in our interviews.

Completed surveys were uploaded to the KoBo Toolbox server. Data analysis was completed by Dr. Lawan Balami and Umar Ahmed Umar of dRPC, and Rahina Zarma and Heather Tasker at York University. Balami and Umar focused on the Likert scale/quantitative responses, generating graphs to depict the total and mean responses to each scale-based question. Tasker and Zarma coded the qualitative responses and organized these codes into themes determined to be prevalent across questions.

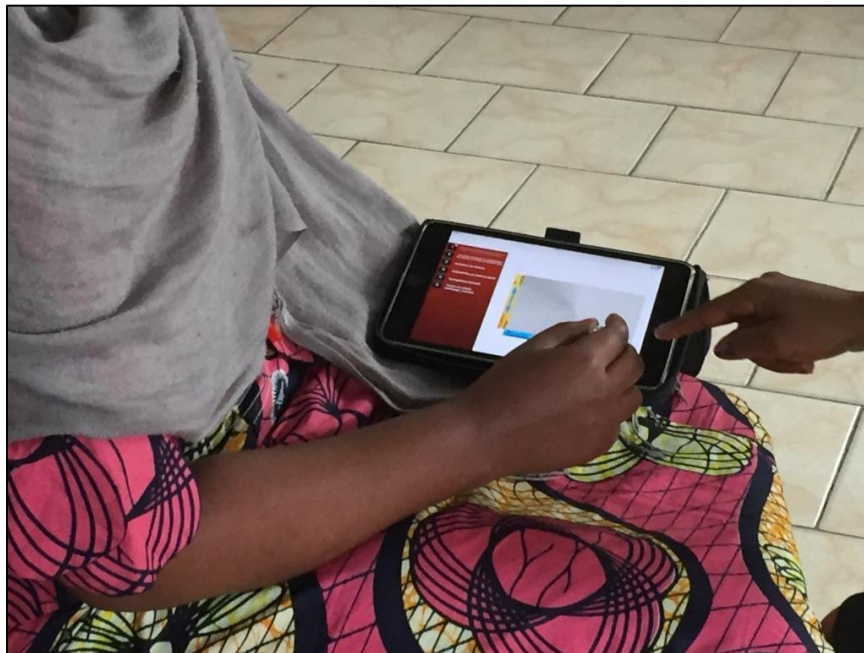


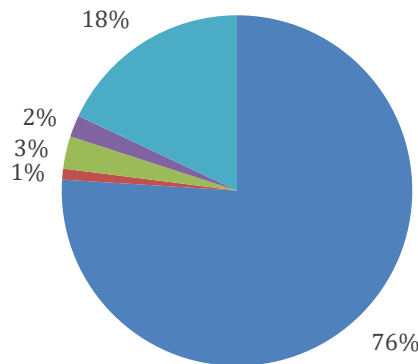
Figure 2. Photo by Annie Bunting

5 KEY FINDINGS

Respondents' survey answers can be broadly grouped into three general categories: barriers and obstacles to survivors' recovery and reintegration; needs and priorities of survivors; and engagement with justice systems.

There was little variability in quantitative responses pertaining to the obstacles and barriers faced by survivors. The most important element was mental health/psychological challenges, rated as very important by 76% of respondents with a mean of 4.61¹

Mental Health and Psychological Issues

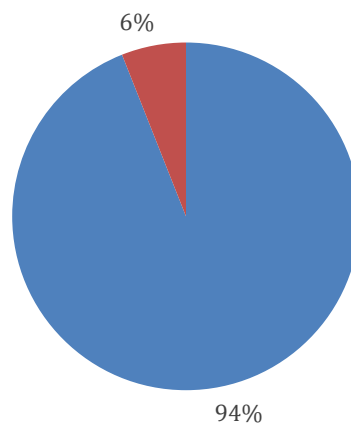


■ Very Important ■ Sometimes Important ■ Rarely Important ■ Not Important ■ Important

The lowest mean score of 4.16 for strained family ties still results in a rating of “important”. In the written responses, poverty/economic challenges, stigma, mental health challenges, and difficulties with the legal system were identified as the most common barriers to reintegration.

Safety and security were considered to be the most important need for survivors, with 94% of respondents rating it as “very important” on the likert scale question, with skills training the second highest priority with 91% rating as “very important”.

Importance of Safety and Security



■ Very Important ■ Important

¹ Numerically, ‘very important’ receives a score of 5, ‘important’ a 4, ‘somewhat important’ a 3, ‘rarely important’ a 2, and ‘not important’ a 1.

Lowest in priority was “importance of official memorialization/history”, with 54% rating this as “not important” and only 25% rating it as “very important” or “important”. The likert scale design allowed for each item to be rated equally (i.e. respondents could have chosen “very important” for each one) so the low preference for memorialization is an interesting finding. When compared to safety and security in a context of ongoing conflict, it is reasonable that it would be considered less important.² Also ranked as low in priority was a government apology, with 74% of respondents rating this item as sometimes, rarely, or not important. 32% considered it important or very important. This finding is slightly more surprising, given the almost decade-long conflict that has ravaged the region and on-going feelings of mistrust and lack of confidence in the government by the people of the North-east.

56% of respondents considered legal accountability “very important” and 38% considered it “important”.



Across the open-ended questions, respondents expressed reliance on formal justice mechanisms with a common response being to encourage survivors to pursue formal justice and to not lose faith in the legal system: “They should value the justice system and exercise patience”.

However, as discussed below, respondents also expressed frustration in the slowness, corruption, and unfair treatment of survivors found in the legal system: “Often there is no proper judicial system for conflicts affected individuals; traditional justice is often being patronised for their safety and security.” ; “The government participation [for justice] is very weak” ; “they should not be collecting bribes before pushing for individual rights”; with

² Interestingly, this finding echoes those from countries further into post-conflict recovery, such as Sierra Leone, as found in phase 1 of the research.

corruption, inaction, and lack of prosecutions, and stigma identified as additional reasons for survivors' feelings of exclusion from the justice system.

This ambivalence about the role of legal accountability for the recovery and reintegration of survivors can be read as justice workers grappling with a belief in the importance of securing convictions and developing legal protections, while remaining skeptical of the feasibility of these efforts and the potentially damaging impact attempts at securing justice often takes on survivors. Concerningly, numerous participants identified stigma as an important factor contributing to survivors' feelings of exclusion from the justice system, indicating that in addition to ostracization from their communities they may feel further discriminated against through the process of seeking legal redress.

Respondents were asked to rank local, national, and international justice systems as 'very useful' 'sometimes useful' or 'rarely useful'. The most common pattern of responses to this question, given by 54/101 respondents, considered local mechanisms very useful, national sometimes useful, and international rarely useful. Again, this question type allowed for each ranking to be applied to more than one mechanism. The second most common pattern of response (11/101) considered local mechanisms very useful and both national and international mechanisms as sometimes useful. 3 respondents considered all mechanisms to be rarely useful and a total of 8 respondents considered international mechanisms very useful. The preference for local justice mechanisms is quite striking, particularly when considered alongside expressed concerns about corruption and stigma. The importance of accessible justice mechanisms was made clear though, as demonstrated by this participant's response to how justice should be improved:

"1. Bringing the justice system to the doorstep of victims. 2. Making access to the justice system free and easier."

Respondents did not consider justice to be limited to formal legal avenues, however. When asked what justice should entail, respondents expressed the importance of compensation, livelihood and economic support alongside punishment of perpetrators and alternative modes of justice. It is unclear from the responses what these alternatives may be, but this would be an important issue to pursue in future research.

In the written responses skills training and economic empowerment featured strongly, along with the need for psycho-social support and help in overcoming trauma and stigma. Some examples of tools that have aided survivors to overcome challenges include:

"Early integration back into society, empower them, reduce and eliminate stigma and discrimination against victims"

"1. skills acquisition 2. Psychosocial support 3. Sensitization to the entire communities"

Each of these considerations were prioritized by respondents as being necessary for survivors' healing and reintegration into their families and communities. This finding demonstrates that while formal legal mechanisms are considered very important, justice goes beyond courtrooms to include social well-being, mental health, and economic opportunity.



Figure 3. Photo by Ba Mala HERWA

6 CONCLUSION

One of the most significant research findings was the prevalence/deep significance of poverty and socio-economic need as both a barrier to accessing justice, as well as possible means to achieving justice. The importance of “livelihood” or “skill acquisition” were prevalent in the research and these were positioned as being crucial to allowing survivors to provide for themselves and often for their children, and to aid in community reintegration.

Secondly, there is a near absence of engagement with international justice mechanisms: these were not discussed in the open-ended responses and were largely considered unimportant/not useful in response to the rating questions. At the same time, respondents were critical of the ineffectiveness of domestic systems. Despite its recognized limitations, respondents still held faith that the justice system is the most promising avenue to redressing sexual and gendered violence and creating societal change.

Finally, and although not something emerging directly from the survey, there was a discussion between the researchers about allegations of members of security agencies, notably the Civilian Joint Task Force, perpetrating SGBV and the absence of an appropriate framework to hold these persons accountable.³ Considering members of the CJTF also position themselves

³ See HRC, 30th, 09/12/2015, A/HRC/30/67, Violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram and the impact on human rights in the countries affected - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights :

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session30/Documents/A-HRC-30-67_en.docx

(and at times are positioned by international agencies and the Nigerian government) as responsible for the rescue of women and girls and providing protection within IDP camps and have at times participated in similar trainings and outreach efforts as gender focused CSOs, this pattern of abuse is quite concerning and is an important area for further research.

This research benefitted immensely from the sustained collaboration between all researchers. Regular conversations throughout the analytical process provided valuable insights and contextualized the data in important ways, while also raising questions and issues for further exploration in subsequent projects.

References

1. Dr. Lawan Balami; Asma'u Mustapha; Dr. Judith-Ann Walker (2019). Nigeria Country Report on Conjugal Slavery in War and Conflict. Conjugal Slavery in War Partnership Project. <http://csiw-ectg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Nigeria-Report.pdf>
2. See HRC, 30th, 09/12/2015, A/HRC/30/67, Violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram and the impact on human rights in the countries affected - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.