

MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

Gender Relations in Adamawa



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RESEARCH REPORT

AUTHOR

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ACRONYMS

ACJA	Administration of Criminal Justice Act
ADR	alternative dispute resolution
AOG	armed opposition group
CAF	Community Accountability Forums
CID	Criminal investigation Department
CJTF	Civilian Joint Taskforce
CPSP	Community Peace and Security Partnership
DRC	Danish Refugee Commission
DDRR	disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration
GBV	gender-based violence
IDP	internally displaced person
IMN	Islamic Movement of Nigeria
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province (Wilayat al Islamiyya Gharb Afriqiyyah)
JAS	Jama'atu Ahl al-Sunna li-I-Da'wa wa-I-Jihad
LGA	local government area
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
MCN	Managing Conflict in Nigeria programme
MDAs	ministries, departments and agencies
MHPSS	mental health and psychosocial support
MNJTF	Multi National Joint Task Force
MSF	Medecins sans Frontières
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NPS	Nigerian Prisons Service
NSCDC	National Security and Civil Defence Corps
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCNI	Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiatives
PSWG	Protection Sector Working Group
ROLAC	Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption programme
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SEA	sexual exploitation and abuse
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SSMPA	Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act
STD	sexually transmitted disease
VAPP Act	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act

INTRODUCTION

This year (2019) marks ten years since the death of Mohammed Yusuf and members of his Yusufiyya while in custody of security operatives.¹ These actions marked a turning point with the group, now known as Jama'atu Ahl al-Sunna li-l-Da'wa wa-l-Jihad (JAS, translated as People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), recovering and returning to Maiduguri under Yusuf's deputy, Abubakar Shekau.

Increasingly, JAS members engaged in targeted killing of security personnel and other persons they perceived to be agents of the state that they were opposed to.² In response, the Nigerian military initially engaged in mass arrests given lack of intelligence on members of the JAS, which had taken arms against the state with this approach leading to violations of human rights.³ The impact on civilians of the escalation of violence perpetrated by both the JAS members and security agencies inspired the worst affected community in Maiduguri to form the *yan gora*, a community militia,⁴ popularly known as the Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF), which contributed largely to the effort to drive JAS insurgents out of Maiduguri.

Outside Maiduguri, JAS members reportedly turned their attention to towns and villages, preaching their ideology, increasing tensions between Christians and Muslims, killing government workers, security agents, community leaders and anyone opposed to them, and recruiting members.⁵ The group captured and declared control of territory in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, was responsible for bomb blasts in Abuja, Jos, Kaduna and Kano, and spread into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.⁶ It engaged in forced recruitment and kidnapping, including of girls and women, attacks on schools, violence against women and girls (VAWG), killing of men of fighting age, and the setting off of bombs including through person borne devices.^{7,8}

In 2014 and 2015, operations by the Multi National Joint Task Force (MNTJF), comprising units from the security forces of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, together with community militias recovered much territory. The formation of community militias was one factor in turning the conflict from a war between the state and an armed opposition group (AOG) into more of a civil war.

All conflict parties have committed civilian harm. While the Nigerian military has failed to protect communities from violence, committed harm during operations and directly targeted civilians, including through human rights violations, community militias, CJTF members in particular, while taking significant action to protect civilians have also been involved in extortion, extra-judicial killings, recruitment and use of children and sexual violence.⁹

Always with different factions, two distinct groups emerged in 2016: JAS and Wilayat al Islamiyya Gharb Afriqiyyah (Islamic State West Africa Province or ISWAP). At the time of writing in 2019, analysts interviewed believed both groups had factions and commanders operating independently with considerable weakening of command and control from the centre and spoke of a potential third group operating around Lake Chad.

¹ Please note that in the interests of conflict sensitivity, this report will use the exact names of the groups involved where relevant and the term 'armed opposition groups' to refer to all those active in the northeast (as opposed to using the blanket term 'Boko Haram' which, rather than being the name of the groups themselves, is one given to them by the media and serves to simplify their message and aims).

² Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, 'Boko Haram and Politics: From Insurgency to Terrorism,' in Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (ed), *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, (African Academic Press, 2015), pp. 155-222.

³ Amnesty International, 'Nigeria: Trapped in The Cycle of Violence,' AFR 44/043/2012, 1 November 2012.

⁴ Militias are defined as armed groups that operate alongside state security forces or work independently of the state to protect local populations from armed groups: Corinna Jentsch, Stathis N. Kalyvas and Livia Isabella Schubiger, 'Militias in Civil Wars,' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2015 59(5) 755-769.

⁵ Amnesty International, 'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill: Boko Haram's Reign of Terror,' AFR 44/1360/2015, 14 April 2015.

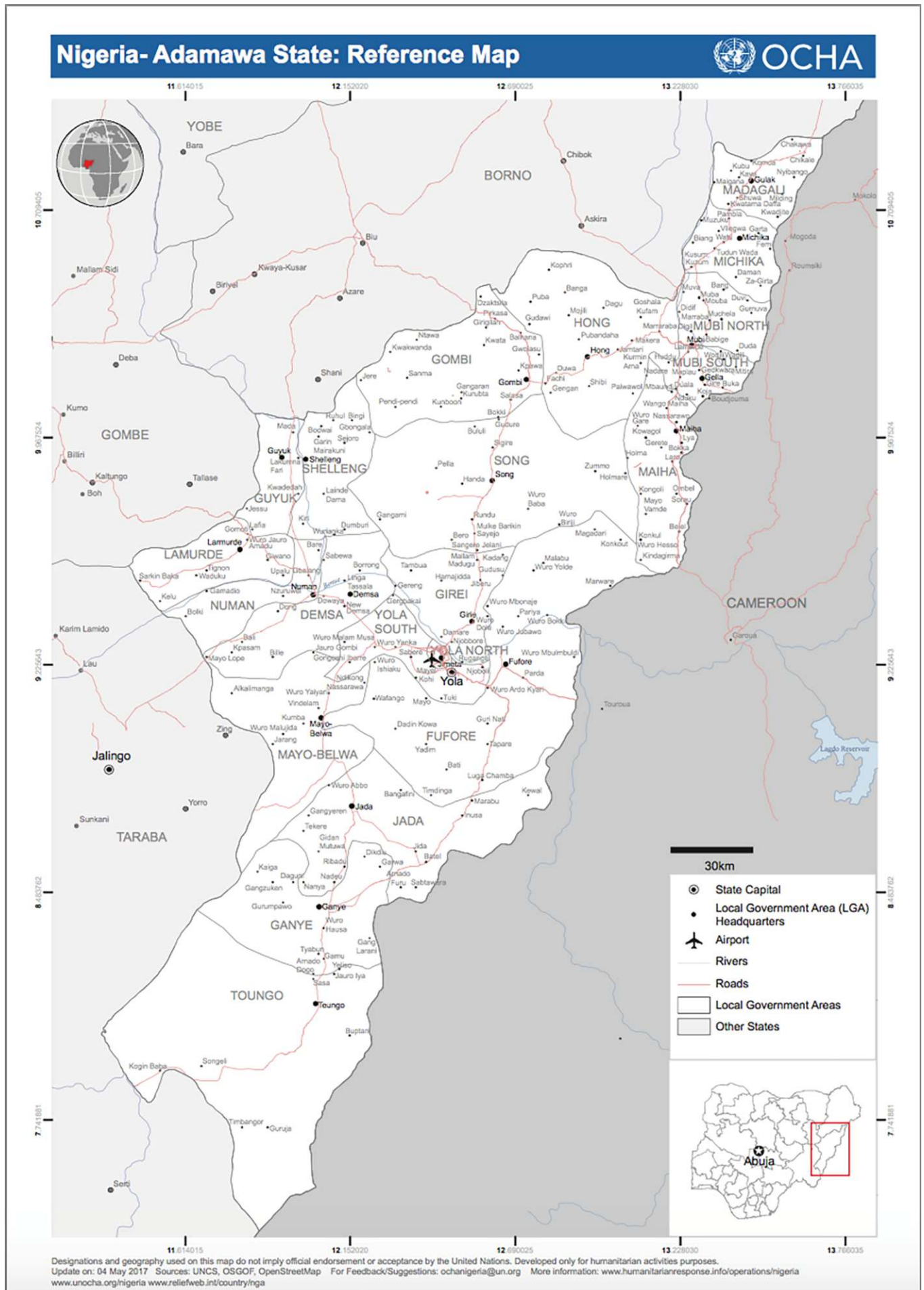
⁶ Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of An African Jihadist Movement*, (Princeton University Press, 2018).

⁷ The people carrying such devices are often known as 'suicide' bombers. As the existence and level of agency of those who carry and detonate bombs is unknown, quotation marks will be used around the word suicide in the absence of another succinct descriptor. Reports are some people are drugged, duped or unaware of plans while others volunteer for the task, motivated by commitment to the group's ideals.

⁸ Amnesty International, 'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill: Boko Haram's Reign of Terror,' AFR 44/1360/2015, 14 April 2015.

⁹ Chitra Nagarajan, 'Community Perceptions of the Yan Gora (CJTF) in Borno State, Nigeria,' (CIVIC, 2018).

Figure 1: Map of Adamawa State



In Adamawa, violence linked to the conflict between AOGs, the state and community militias was limited to seven (Madagali, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, Gombi, Hong and Maiha) of the state's 21 local government areas (LGAs) although internally displaced people (IDPs) fled violence to other parts of the state. Moreover, this conflict is not the only source of violence in the state. Adamawa has experienced continuing tensions between ethno-linguistic, religious and occupational groups caused by struggles for political power, in particular hostilities between Christians and Muslims as well as significant levels of farmer-pastoralist and inter-communal tensions across the state. These dynamics mirror those around the country with incessant violence between farmer and herder groups over reported encroachment of grazing routes and reserves, damage of farmland and cattle rustling that has worsened in the context of weakened conflict management mechanisms and state authority.

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) programme commissioned this assessment of gender, conflict dynamics and peacebuilding in northeast Nigeria. MCN's overall objective is to enhance state and community level conflict management capability to prevent the escalation of conflict into violence in selected locations in northeast Nigeria. Its geographical scope is Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states and its specific objectives are as follows:

- To strengthen community level conflict management mechanisms
- To enhance reconciliation and stability within communities, in particular those affected by displacement
- To both support the involvement of women in peacebuilding and address the impact of violence on women and girls
- To enhance the reintegration of young men and women (affected by and involved in insurgency and counter-insurgency operations)
- To influence key decision-makers and opinion-formers through targeted research

The main purpose of this assessment is to investigate the state of gender relations and implications for peace and conflict in northeast Nigeria. It follows a gender assessment conducted in 2017 at the start of the programme which provided situational analysis to inform interventions. Given the dynamic nature of the context, MCN decided to update the 2017 assessment to generate knowledge and information on the present-day state of gender relations and the results, challenges and lessons of interventions to date. This report does not repeat information provided in the earlier assessment. The two reports are complementary and should be read together



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for a complete picture, including historical perspectives, of gender dynamics in Adamawa state. The analytical approach of this report is comparative, with attention paid to continuity and changes in gender relations since the previous assessment was conducted. MCN will share this report with policy makers and practitioners in federal, state and local governmental and non-governmental institutions. It will also integrate findings and recommendations into design and adaptation of its interventions to ensure they are still relevant and appropriate to the changing environment.

The next section presents the methodology of the study. This is followed by the contextual analysis which highlights key conflict and security dynamics in the state. It then outlines the main gender dynamics, looking at association with perpetuating conflict and violence, continuing physical and psychological impacts of violence, livelihoods and economic conditions, participation and voice, gender-based violence and changing gender norms and realities. It next examines policies and programmes implemented by government and non-government actors, outlining their main results, challenges and lessons. It ends with programming and policy recommendations for MCN and others engaged in programming as well as for government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

METHODOLOGY

This report draws on a desk review of research reports and programme documents and the author's observations, research and programmatic work in Adamawa since 2017. Since the aim is to uncover current contextual dynamics and how they have changed since the previous gender assessment in 2017, it focuses on research and assessments carried out from mid 2017 onwards.










However, large gaps in research and insufficiency of data, particularly on VAWG incidence and trends identified in the 2017 assessment continue. The author asked respondents questions on conflict and gender trends and assessment of programming and policy action to fill gaps in knowledge on gender and conflict.

Most of the findings in this report are drawn from interviews and focus group discussions conducted in Girei, Mubi North, Mubi South and Yola in August 2019. These locations were chosen to reflect a wide range of conflict dynamics, including conflict over land and water use in Girei and conflict related to AOGs in Mubi as well as information about state level dynamics from actors based in the capital Yola. While the author would like to have visited more locations, particularly Madagali and Michika where the AOG related conflict is most prominent and Demsa and Numan which have been gravely affected by

farmer-pastoralist conflict, it was not possible to do so given security and time constraints. However, the author interviewed respondents with good knowledge of these locations to elicit information about conflict, gender and peacebuilding dynamics there.











The author ensured that persons from diverse ethno-linguistic and religious backgrounds in the state were included in the study sample for focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Given the different experiences and further marginalisation experienced by women with disabilities in conflict, the author held women with disabilities only FGDs in each location. A total of 35 FGDS were organised for the study as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Focus Group Discussions

CATEGORY OF FOCUS GROUP	NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN FOCUS GROUPS			
	GIREI	MUBI	YOLA	TOTAL
Women with disabilities				11
Non-disabled women				12
Non-disabled men				12
TOTAL	12	11	12	35

She also conducted five group interviews whereby multiple people were interviewed simultaneously with 26 people (12 women and 14 men) involved in key MCN interventions and knowledgeable about the context, as shown in table 2. These included the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), also known as the Adamawa Hope Centre, and Community Security and Peace Partnerships (CPSPs).

Table 2: Group Interviews

CATEGORY OF GROUP INTERVIEW	GENDER	
	WOMEN	MEN
SARC steering committee and workers (Yola)		
MCN partners working on conflict management (Yola)		
MCN partners working on women and youth empowerment (Yola)		
CPSP (Girei)		
CPSP (Mubi North)		
TOTAL	12	14

The author also interviewed 41 people (24 women and 17 men) who work for government ministries and departments, security agencies, Adamawa-based and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and traditional institutions of community leadership with the mandate to bring about peace and security, human rights and/ or gender equality in the state. Commissioners of ministries had not been appointed by the Governor after his taking of office in late May 2019 at the time of data collection so the author interviewed senior civil servants such as permanent secretaries instead.

Unless a reference is provided to reports, programme documents and assessments as source of information, all findings have been gleaned from interviews and focus group discussions. Research respondents were encouraged to be frank with their views and assured of confidentiality. Information provided in interviews has been verified by two or more reliable sources. The report clearly states where this was not possible.



CONFLICT AND SECURITY CONTEXT

While conflict between AOGs and the Nigerian state has reduced in the last two years, respondents in Adamawa spoke of continuing attacks and cyclical displacement in the Madagali/ Michika/ Mubi axis as well as increase in religious tensions and inter-communal violence, gang activities and kidnapping around the state. Social exclusion of particular groups exacerbates impacts of violence and adds to conflict dynamics and grievances with government, security agencies and institutions of community leadership continue.

Fighting between armed opposition groups and the state

The security situation in northern Adamawa has improved compared to 2017. As of August 2019, Madagali was the only LGA that continued to experience regular AOG attacks. One woman in a focus group discussion in Mubi said, “Before, we were running away. We would spend two days outside before coming back but now we are at home. People are sitting outside to chat. Nobody would do this before. Now, you can go to the market, children can go to school, there is no fear of bombing and the situation is calm.” Yet, many people living in Madagali, Michika and Mubi continue to experience fear based on the trauma of previous experience. People in neighbouring towns and LGAs often start fleeing if they hear of attacks in Madagali. As one male respondent in Mubi said, “If there is a bang now, the whole town will start running.” In Mubi, although economic activities have started to return to pre-conflict levels, people are afraid to go to farm in certain areas whereas in Madagali, many people only farm near their houses as they fear attacks and landmines.

While JAS reportedly has some presence in Madagali and Michika, respondents said ISWAP come into Adamawa from the Gwoza/ Damboa/ Askira Uba axis of southern Borno. Respondents believed attacks that occurred in Michika and Madagali during the lead up to the February and March 2019 elections had political motives. The opposition candidate for the Governorship (who subsequently defeated the incumbent) is from Madagali and respondents saw these attacks as aimed to neutralise the voting strength of his political base. While this analysis was echoed by many respondents, the veracity of these claims is unknown. Since the elections, the number and scale of attacks have subsided. Respondents stated the main purpose of current incursions by JAS into towns and villages was to get food with civilian harm committed incidentally.

Kidnapping, criminality and gangs

Despite this improvement, many respondents outside northern Adamawa claimed the security situation had deteriorated due to increased incidence of kidnapping, conflict over land and water use and the activities of gangs. Even in northern Adamawa, respondents spoke of fear of kidnapping replacing previous fear of actions by AOGs and security forces. As one MCN partner who convenes one of the CPSPs said, “There are no longer bombs but the rate of kidnapping has increased. You can't even go to the market. You can't go to farm as you will be kidnapped or killed.” Kidnapping in Adamawa state started two to three years ago, mirroring what was happening in the rest of the country. Respondents said this rise in kidnapping had been spurred by the payment of ransoms. It is occurring against a backdrop of economic destruction caused by violence in northern Adamawa and farmer-pastoralist conflict in central and southern zones, continuing fear that prevents people from resuming livelihoods and weak governance, leadership and security provision. Kidnapping was seen to have steadily increased and is now a 'booming business.' The same MCN partner quoted above approximated that whereas there used to be one or two cases a month, nowadays over 30 cases of kidnapping a month are reported. While most kidnapping victims tend to be rich, kidnappers do not only target the rich: ransom demanded reportedly can be as little as N5,000.



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People believe networks engaged in kidnapping are wide ranging and include influential people in traditional institutions and security agencies as well as politicians. Security agents interviewed said kidnappers have insiders everywhere which makes them difficult to apprehend as news of patrols or raids reach them ahead of time and that they are often better armed than security agents. Respondents pointed to cases where suspected kidnappers were identified and arrested by community members who handed them over to security agencies who subsequently released them. The people who took part in apprehending these suspects are threatened and, in many cases, go into hiding. Other respondents talk of how kidnappers take advantage of porous borders between Nigeria and Cameroon to evade security agencies of both countries and stress the need for cross-country cooperation if kidnapping is to be addressed.

Given these realities, some communities have turned to alternative means of dealing with insecurity arising from kidnapping. In Mubi North, people invited a follower of traditional belief systems who they believed was able to recognise kidnappers. He pointed out some members of the crowd as kidnappers. Those present attacked the people identified and some of them were killed. This incident shows the level of frustration and lack of trust in state institutions to act many across the state feel.

In addition to kidnapping, respondents perceived other kinds of criminality linked to gang activities to be on the rise. Respondents in all locations spoke at length about the *yan shilla* or 'shilla boys', a group believed to have a major politician as their patron who uses them to 'manipulate the tide of politics in his favour.' The *yan shilla* is perceived to be a wide network across all 21 LGAs which included the children of key politicians and community leaders. As a result, even when they are apprehended by security agents, they are soon released. Northeast Nigeria has a history of such groups of young people created and used by politicians to intimidate political opponents and 'win' elections since democratisation in 1999. Other gangs mentioned included the *yan moda* and *yan gardaga*. Respondents said these groups were involved in theft, rape, kidnapping and murder.

The new Governor has taken some action to deal with gangs and criminality. In his maiden speech to the state, he gave the *yan shilla* two weeks to repent after which security agents were deployed to their area and arrests made. The state government has also started looking at skills acquisition and other forms of livelihood support for

this group. The numbers of *yan shilla* arrested is contested – while some respondents pointed to government statements claiming that over 500 young people were in detention facing trial, others working for civil society and community members were sceptical about this figure. There were also concerns as to existence of sufficient evidence to sustain a conviction and that dehumanisation of these young people by society and by the prison and criminal justice systems would likely lead to more anger and frustration, inflaming dynamics further. Heavy handed approaches of arrests and destruction of their homes without economic options and societal reintegration was seen by some respondents as not providing a lasting solution.



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Persisting religious tensions

While there had been friction over 20 years ago, for example in Mubi, respondents said interactions between Shia Muslims and the rest of the community were peaceful and recent incidents elsewhere in the country¹⁰ had not affected communal relations. Conversely, respondents pointed to rising separation and self-segregation along faith lines particularly when it comes to education with a number of schools set up in the last two years by religious bodies and rich individuals. People justify this fragmentation by saying they no longer feel safe staying with others. This trend is believed to have negative consequences on social cohesion with children at primary school level onwards reported as not knowing anyone of the other faith well, being increasingly intolerant and having a 'us vs them' mindset. Even in schools which have

¹⁰In December 2015, after members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) refused to allow an army convoy to pass, the military killed hundreds of IMN members and arrested Ibrahim El Zakzaky and Zeinat El-Zakzaky, the spiritual leaders of the movement. Subsequent protests calling for their release and the medical care of Ibrahim El Zakzaky have led to security forces opening fire on protesters: Amnesty International, 'Unearthing the Truth: Unlawful Killings and Mass Cover-Up in Zaria' AFR 01/3883/2016, 22 April 2016; Human Rights Watch, 'Nigeria: Deadly Crackdown on Shia Protest,' 24 July 2019, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/24/nigeria-deadly-crackdown-shia-protest>, visited 14.08.2019.

students of all faiths, local peacebuilders reported Christian and Muslim students and pupils sitting on separate benches and not speaking with each other or mixing together. One CPSP has responded to this trend and has engaged with students and teachers on the importance of religious harmony and set up peace clubs encouraging members to come together across religious, ethnic and other backgrounds which has led to a decrease in tensions and fighting and increased resolution of conflict.

Beyond education, the language of ethnic and religious difference has become gradually more marked in general discourse. One respondent stated that “Nothing is done now that people don't bring religious and ethnic coloration to the issues. Relationships are being built on differences that exist between groups. Humanity is lacking. This is a dangerous path. If pursued, it will only lead to increased violence.”

In northern Adamawa, these dynamics are intertwined with people's experiences of violence. In Michika, a LGA which is predominantly Christian but has a significant Muslim population, there is a long history of inter-religious tensions as described in the 2017 gender assessment.¹¹

Respondents reported sustained tension, bitterness and mistrust. For example, according to one woman who works for an NGO, “People comment that Christians are angry with Muslims in town as they left 24 hours before everyone else when AOGs took over town. They say we know you were not involved and didn't want this to happen but you didn't tell us. We could have run with you and instead my father or uncle died.” She described relations as continuing to be at a plateau, neither escalating nor de-escalating.

In Mubi too, many people believed Muslims navigated the way for AOGs to penetrate Mubi and used this opportunity to steal people's property, creating disharmony and animosity along religious lines. Whereas respondents saw an improvement in inter-religious relations compared to 2017, a Christian woman spoke of perceived continued discrimination and marginalisation from humanitarian assistance and that, “Before, we would have problems but go to others' marriage and naming ceremonies and be on good terms on neighbours. But now, even when we greet, people have something in mind. They killed women's husbands, leaving them with their children and people are struggling.” Nonetheless, she said Christian and Muslim women acted as a bridge between the two communities as they shared problems and supported each other.

Conflict over land and water use

Another form inter-communal conflict takes place is over land and water use by different occupational groups. Across northern Nigeria, while there are long histories and current realities of peaceful coexistence between farmers and pastoralists, 'recent years have seen recurrent violence in many locations that are resource based, aggravated by ethnic and religious identities and driven by politicians involved in electoral contestation. Although conflict dynamics and root causes can be more complex and deeper, this violence is frequently spoken of as being caused by conflict between farmers and pastoralists.'

Tensions between farmers and pastoralists¹² have increased, especially in central and southern Adamawa, with growing politicisation of the issue. Politicians were seen by respondents as utilising this conflict to gain votes at national and state levels. There have also been a number of cases of wealthy individuals buying and enclosing large portions of land. Before people were able to farm, graze, fetch water and carry out other tasks, but this acquisition of land in a few hands has reduced the amount of land available to others for farming, grazing or any other economic activities.

Adding to pressure around land use, encroachment by farmers onto grazing routes and reserves have increased in the last two years. In some cases, this encroachment is due to government action. For example, Fufere LGA degazetted grazing land which had been established for use by pastoralists and converted this land to farming purposes without giving pastoralists alternative areas in which to graze. These actions triggered conflict in this area.

Migration patterns are also changing. Whereas migratory pastoralists used to come to areas in the dry season during the harvest period between November and January, they are now coming even earlier during the rainy season when crops are still growing. At the same time, people in positions of power are no longer seen as neutral arbiters of conflict but more likely to favour their own ethnic or religious group. There have been cases of community leaders using their power and position to tell pastoralists to leave the area if they are from a farming community and vice versa. In some places, community leaders have been found to inflame tensions. In Guyuk, one person was found responsible for violence as he would purposefully create conflict so he could steal cattle when others were fighting.

¹¹ Polarisation post announcement of the April 2011 presidential election results led to killing and destruction of property. After this, Christians, who saw the market as contributing to low church turnout, changed the market day to Saturday without consulting Muslims in the community who objected to the change. The market stands divided with market days for Christians held on Saturdays and for Muslims held on Sundays. After the Nigerian military recaptured Michika, conflict broke out among returnees with at least three reprisal attacks by Christians on Muslims whom they conflated with JAS members.

¹² Chitra Nagarajan, “No Tribe in Crime”: Changing Pastoralism and Conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt, (Mercy Corps, 2019), forthcoming.

In Bole, the main conflict actor was one influential pastoralist who incited others to commit violence. Most pastoralists were against the actions he was taking but unable to act due to his power and influence as a community leader. Due to the dialogue process facilitated by Murmushi for Community Development, he publicly declared he would no longer support others to conduct attacks and a mediation committee was established.

Even in northern Adamawa which had seen less violence of this nature, relationships between pastoralists and farmers have broken down in recent years with symbiotic practices such as pastoralists' animals feeding on crop residue post-harvest and thereby fertilising farms less likely to take place. Reasons provided for these changes were the impacts of climate change with cattle struggling to find pasture and water elsewhere going onto farms, farmers farming and pastoralists grazing closer to town than they once did due to insecurity and fear of AOGs, farmers encroaching and planting on grazing routes and reserves, changing migration patterns with migratory pastoralists coming earlier in the year and overgrazing by multiple pastoralists in similar spots. In Michika, actors are increasingly resorting to violence rather than resolving conflict peacefully and these dynamics have led to some violent clashes. In central and southern Adamawa, tensions are even higher. In some areas, conflict is over land as pastoralists and farmers have different ways of accessing water. For example, in Girei, farmers use water points in towns and villages while pastoralists get water from streams and rivers on the land. In other areas, conflict is over both land and water use. Many incidents go unreported so the scale of violence and related death toll is unknown.

This conflict has environmental and economic implications. Farmers spoke of pastoralists arriving in their farms before harvest and their animals eating crops, leaving very little to harvest. Farmers have stopped farming in some areas due to this previous experience. They point to cases where women farmers have been raped by pastoralist men who meet them on farms. They asked for systems to be put in place so pastoralists would come to farms after harvest was complete. Most respondents felt that government agencies were not being proactive in preventing or responding to this conflict, that security agencies did not respond quickly and that media reporting exacerbated conflict. They believed this inter-communal conflict was influenced by politicians outside areas in which they took place. Nonetheless, more local level actors have acted to mitigate violence. For example, local conflict management mechanisms supported by MCN and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) that consist of community members, government and security officials and community leaders have been proactive and stopped farming on grazing

routes and reserves, enforcing demarcation between farming and grazing areas in a number of locations. Communities have established inclusive farmer-pastoralist committees that try to minimise conflict in identified cases. In other locations, CSOs facilitated dialogue between groups which led to participants being reflective of their share of the blame, for example farmers attributing the start of tensions to farming on grazing routes, and acting to mitigate conflict.

Displacement trends

In 2019, while there was less displacement of people than in previous years, people continued to move around the state. Many people displaced from communities in northern Adamawa had returned but significant IDP populations remain in Yola. Furthermore, communities in other parts of the state experienced temporary displacement as a result of communal clashes and natural disasters such as flooding.

Most IDP camps in Yola are closed. While a significant proportion of people have moved from Yola to their LGA capitals (although not necessarily their homes) in northern Adamawa, many IDPs remain in Yola living in the camps of Malkohi, Fufure and St. Theresa, in informal settlements or integrated into host communities. These IDPs fled violence in places such as Gwoza, Mubi, Michika and Maiha, have settled into life in Yola and do not wish to return. Some IDPs who returned to Borno came back to Yola as they found the situation there to still be insecure so they were unable to farm or engage in livelihood activities.

According to one respondent interviewed, repatriation of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon, a first batch of almost 3,000 people planned for 21 August 2019, will see figures of those displaced increase in Yola. Current plans are for them to stay in a transit camp that used to be a girls' school before parents withdrew their daughters after the abductions of girls from Chibok Government Secondary School in 2014. As many of those repatriated are from Borno state, the Adamawa and Borno state governments are in discussions about moving them from Yola to Maiduguri after health screening and data collection. Given the length of time spent on planning this process, some people have already returned from Cameroon on their own and chosen to stay in Yola rather than go back directly to their communities.

In northern Adamawa, there is frequent displacement from and return to areas in Madagali and parts of Michika. People frequently move to Yola or Mubi whenever there are attacks and move back when the security situation improves. Due to frequent attacks in Madagali and Michika, many people have settled in villages around Mubi to farm.

There is only one transit camp in Mubi for IDPs which accommodates few people. As of August 2019, only four people, all of whom had mental health issues, were staying there. As this transit camp is managed by the military and there are few actors providing support to camp residents, most IDPs prefer to stay with relatives or in uncompleted buildings rather than live there.

When they first arrived, IDPs were provided with land on which to live and farm, shelter, clothing and other assistance from communities who were hosting them. However, some residents of Mubi now see a link between the arrival of IDPs and the depressed economic situation as a result of violence and increased rates of unemployment and youth restiveness. People from Mubi spoke of how this higher population had led to increased prices for buying and selling of land and larger class sizes in schools but also described positive benefits, for example cheaper prices of water, growth in availability of goods in the market and their sale in neighbourhoods unlike before.



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Those who return to their homes after a period of displacement face challenges. For example, their homes may have been destroyed during the violence leaving them trying to find places to rent and facing high cost of living as a result of competition and demand. As people are unable to farm in certain areas due to fear of kidnapping in Mubi and Michika, they have little sources of livelihood and find it difficult to make ends meet. There were many conflicts over housing, land and property when people were returning as they found their homes occupied by IDPs from elsewhere. Women in particular face challenges, particularly if their husband had been killed. There have been cases of husbands' families taking ownership of

houses and other property in Christian and Muslim families leaving women concerned homeless. In Michika, the brothers of deceased husbands give women the choice of marrying them and staying in the property. Often, the husbands' family also requires her children to stay with them. As will be discussed below, levels of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA),¹³ survival sex and sex work are high in these areas.

Even if women have a home after returning to communities post-displacement, life remains difficult. Many of them now head households as their male family members have been killed or are trying to find work elsewhere. As discussed in the livelihoods and economic conditions section, earning incomes and livelihoods is challenging. Many children, girls in particular, are unable to attend school. According to one NGO worker, "There are many out of school, separated and unaccompanied children growing up on the streets without proper guidance, family love and links." People in these areas, women and men alike, requested support to help women restart livelihoods and children to attend school so they can have a sense of belonging and hope for the future.

In addition to IDPs who have fled violence in northern Adamawa, the state also sees people displaced who are fleeing communal clashes in places such as Demsa, Fufore, Lamurde, Mayo Belwa, Numan and parts of Yola South. Many of these displaced people live in informal camps and uncompleted buildings. This displacement tends to be temporary in nature with people returning to their communities once there is relative security however some people are unable to return so are displaced for longer periods of time. Adamawa has also seen temporary displacement due to flooding. Humanitarian agencies have tended to focus support on people displaced due to violence in northern Adamawa rather than those displaced due to inter-communal clashes. One aid worker said the government had asked for them to concentrate their efforts in this manner as the state would provide for people displaced due to farmer-pastoralist violence. However, other representatives of NGOs and UN agencies spoke about how difficult they found it to support IDPs from central and southern Adamawa due to the temporary nature of their displacement and resourcing difficulties. As donors focus on northern Adamawa, it has been difficult to get funding for other kinds of displacement. Any assistance provided tends to focus on providing shelter and non-food items.

¹³ Sexual exploitation and abuse are forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Sexual abuse is 'the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a minor is considered as sexual abuse.' Sexual exploitation is 'Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.' IASC, 'Understanding the Differences Between Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Sexual Harassment and Sexual and Gender Based Violence,' October 2016, available here: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/understanding-differences-between-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-sexual-harassment-and>, last visited 27.12.2019.

Indeed, even IDPs from northern Adamawa spoke of a reduction in humanitarian assistance from NGOs and government agencies compared to 2017 and resulting food shortages and inability to continue sending children to school. Humanitarian actors said resources for Adamawa had reduced, leading many agencies stopping working in Yola and focusing provision in northern Adamawa for which there is still some funding. UN agencies that still work in Yola are supporting the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to provide services in informal settlements. Representatives spoke of need for non-food items and shelter maintenance and repair. There is little funding even for northern Adamawa as many donors consider the situation to be development rather than humanitarian in nature even though repeated and cyclical displacement as described above continues.

Social exclusion, marginalisation and stigma

Adamawa sees continued exclusion of particular groups. Given social exclusion dynamics often vary between communities, this assessment was unable to do a complete social exclusion analysis for the whole state. Nevertheless, it uncovered groups often socially excluded across the state including adolescents and young adults, people with disabilities and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI), and people socially excluded in certain areas of the state such as the Matakam ethnic group in parts of northern Adamawa.

The dynamics around yan shilla described above are symptomatic of relations between older and young people. Many older people spoke about 'idle' youth engaging in drug use and criminality due to lack of employment. They perceived that drug use had been gradually increasing in the last five years, perhaps as a means for young people to get relief from feelings of frustration and despondency. Meanwhile, younger people spoke of their lack of prospects and not feeling love from elders, including their own family members. They believed older people demanded respect while not fulfilling their obligations of support and care to younger generations. Indeed, many respondents of all ages raised cases of children being abandoned and not taken care of by relatives. One respondent spoke of boys as young as 5 or 6 years coming into town to look for jobs as their family could not provide for them while a police officer recounted a case of two brothers aged 7 and 11 years who were trying to walk from Yola to their grandmother in Mubi to escape their father who beat them and their stepmother who did not feed them.

The yan shilla is mostly male but includes significant numbers of young women who join to escape familial control and have a sense of freedom. Some members are young women and men who are escaping familial domestic violence and abuse. Being part of yan shilla offers members – women and men – a sense of belonging and security not provided by families and mainstream society. Given age hierarchies and unavailable opportunities for income earning and marriage, the group also provides as one of the only ways young people are able to command 'respect' and power, even if this respect is through fear. Young respondents also noted that young people, particularly those who are impoverished, are often blamed, scapegoated and viewed with fear. Doing so not only discounts the majority of young people who are not violent but also disregards the reality that these gangs are often linked to and driven by older richer men for their own ends.

A second group that faces social exclusion is people with disabilities. Respondents from this group described how they are stigmatised, discriminated against and neglected by families, communities and government. A disabled man in Mubi said, "It seems that nobody cares to assist... We face neglect. We are looked down upon. We are not being treated equally." Whereas some NGOs purposely try to include people with disabilities, as shown below, doing so is uneven and still far from effective at improving their lives or changing societal norms and structural inequalities. Women with disabilities in the three focus groups conducted with them described others feeling disgusted at having people with disabilities around them and having their disability used as insults. They shared their challenges getting married as family members of suitors actively discourage the match. They described difficulties getting health care when going to hospitals, being avoided by fellow students at schools, not being allowed on public transport and being marginalised from interventions. As one of them said, "Non-disabled people really look down on us. Once they see you are disabled in any sort of way, they use that against you."

Another group which faces stigma is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. Given the prevalent religious beliefs and cultural systems in the state, communities tend to reject and frown at same sex relations as 'abnormal'. Persons suspected or found to be involved in same sex relations face violent attack, arrest, prosecution and conviction. The study found that despite the passage of the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) in 2015 at the federal level and similar laws in several states, same sex relations among both men and women was perceived to be on the increase. The real dynamics at play are unknown, though beliefs that same-

sex relations bring wealth are common. It is also probable that conditions of displacement have led to more exposure of same sex relations.

The final socially excluded group this section will discuss are the Matakam.¹⁴ An ethnic group from Madagali and Michika, Matakam people are often called makere, a term of insult, and seen as outcasts. Many of them are blacksmiths or farmers. The majority of people from other ethnic groups do not want to mix with them. They live in separate areas away from towns. There is no intermarriage. Other ethnic groups do not share food with them, cook together or go to market together. Matakam people have a separate market and people from different ethnicities will often not attend or trade there. Matakam people are Christians, Muslims and followers of indigenous faiths. They attend separate places of worship with religious leaders in mainstream churches and mosques also reportedly being party to the discrimination. Their children go to separate schools in their areas which are not at the same level as the schools for the rest of the community. Respondents spoke of Matakam people going to clinics to receive healthcare and being turned away. As a woman respondent said, “If they are sick and go to a health facility, if they find a kind person, they may help. If not, they tell them to go as they will not treat them. They tell them to their face that they cannot access the service because they are makere.” As one woman working for an NGO in the area said, “If you are Matakam, you are not allowed to touch other people or their things. If you do, they will get angry and find something to clean the area of their skin that you touched. This has been in existence for a long time. People are born into this group and there is nothing they can do about it.” While respondents did not know about incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) among the Matakam, women from groups that are similarly socially excluded in other contexts often face high levels of sexual violence from men of dominant communities. Moreover, considering low levels of income generation and livelihoods within this community, high levels of SEA and survival sex seem likely.

Due to this social exclusion, some Matakam people reportedly joined AOGs, particularly in Shuwa and Gulac in Madagali LGA. While both women and men joined, men joined in greater numbers and those that remain tend to be mostly women and their children. An NGO worker talked of a community leader saying the main reason for AOG recruitment in his area is this discrimination. A man engaged in peacebuilding in the area agreed with this analysis saying, “If you are makere, nobody will relate with you, eat with you or marry you. People were finding it

difficult to survive but AOGs engaged with them and there they found a family.” This exclusion has increased because other community members believe members of this group have joined AOGs and blame them for attacks and their suffering openly when talking to each other or talking to Matakam people themselves. The male peacebuilder quoted above said, “The group has been defeated but there is now another problem as Matakam who were discriminated against joined and became family with AOGs. They come back to the community and meet the same stigma and discrimination as before but it has increased as people now think that everyone who is Matakam families has joined.” As a result, representatives of NGOs working the area said that people who had not previously discriminated against the Matakam have now started supporting and practicing marginalisation. Even those who say they want this exclusion to change use dehumanising language to talk about this group. For example, a community leader who heard of a case of a Matakam woman disciplining her daughter with extreme violence said that “if the person is makere, he is used to such cases as they do not have human feelings” according to the woman who discussed this case with him.



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Humanitarian agencies have made some efforts to reach Matakam communities but they themselves admit these are insufficient. Some members of community platforms set up by NGOs say, despite sensitisation, that they do not want to associate with Matakam people. As a result of such attitudes, they are unlikely to render assistance if needed. Often chosen by community leaders, these platforms do not have any representation of Matakam people. There has been at least one instance of a Matakam woman in Michika who was in desperate need of shelter which was not provided to her so she had to go elsewhere with her five children.

¹⁴ It was not possible to visit Madagali or Michika and speak with Matakam people directly for this assessment so the information that follows has been gathered and verified from a number of people who work in these areas.

Grievances with state and non-state institutions

Many respondents complained about lack of action by government ministries and department, security agencies and institutions of community leadership in addressing security challenges. Some believed politicians and security agents were in collusion with gangs or kidnappers or played a role in fomenting insecurity. While it was not possible to fact check whether this was true, respondents pointed to particular instances of insecurity which they believed would not have been possible or would not have continued without involvement of politicians or security agents. That this collusion is a widespread perception is in itself a good indicator of grievances with state institutions and actors.

Respondents also had grievances linked to security agencies and talked of frustrated efforts by communities to seek redress and justice. They spoke about the number of human rights violations committed by the military such as extortion, torture, inhumane treatment, sexual violence and highly selective application of curfews which set communities against them. If complaints are raised, the response is often to redeploy the security agents concerned rather than investigate and punish. Respondents spoke of human rights violations committed by the police and National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).



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People who had been displaced from their homes due to violence returned to find they were unable to reclaim their property as it was occupied by soldiers in official and non-official capacities. While there were very few people in these areas when the military was first deployed there, when people started returning to these areas, continued occupation of homes caused a lot of friction. Another issue raised was the number of cases where the military or police apprehend people and leave them in detention centres without providing them of information of the offence with which they are charged or bringing them to trial. In these cases, the Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS) does not have any information about what crime the person is suspected of having committed. Reportedly, NPS personnel are now insisting on getting minimum documentation before taking people into custody which is reducing these cases of long-term detention without charge.

Respondents also spoke about sexual violence against women and girls in areas with high military presence. According to one respondent, “When they institute curfews, they ask people not to move around but they can move around. So, if they see any young girl they are interested in, they carry her along. Youths report they are confined to their homes so military can have access to women.” Police officers were also noted to engage in extortion and beating. According to one respondent, “If you are brought to them for any reason, you either have to pay a bribe or you will be beaten.” In some areas such as Mubi, the NSCDC is also known for physical violence. The Community Accountability Forums (CAFs) that bring communities and police together to discuss security issues often address human rights violations by police officers raised by community members but there is no similar forum to address military abuses. Security agents as perpetrators of gender-based violence and the impact of these actions on women's freedom of movement will be further discussed below.

These grievances also extended to community leadership institutions. One respondent talked of 'tourist traditional leaders' in the Madagali/ Michika axis who are mostly in Mubi, Yola or elsewhere. As they are hardly ever in their communities, they do not deal with issues of concern and people living there do not feel the impact of their work. Others spoke of traditional leaders who are biased towards their own ethnic or religious group, tilting their decisions in the favour of 'their' people. They also complained that these leaders give the names of those to whom they are connected for assistance and inclusion in programmes and interventions of benefit. This criticism was particularly strong among those most marginalised in communities, such as people with disabilities.

GENDER DYNAMICS

Association with perpetrating conflict and violence

The 2017 MCN Gender Assessment found significant levels of women's involvement in violence.¹⁵ It found both women and men were associated with AOGs falling on different parts of a spectrum between voluntarily joining to forced recruitment to abductions. While groups of vigilantes and hunters were predominantly men, at least 20 percent of their members were women. These women members were involved in patrolling towns and cities and had taken part in active fighting. Indeed, in some areas, men had left towns and villages leaving mostly women vigilantes and hunters to protect their communities.

Respondents said recruitment into AOGs had happened in many areas of northern Adamawa. While Madagali and Michika were noted as sites of high levels of recruitment, inducement through loans to start businesses had led to some recruitment taking place in Maiha, Gombi, Hong and Mubi. Relatively high levels of recruitment amongst Matakam people driven in part by societal discrimination against them, has led to further increased stigma and discrimination as discussed above. In Michika where the level of abductions was lower than in other places in Adamawa, many people formerly associated with AOGs live in a specific ward (Madzi) as people of that community are more forgiving and accepting of them there than elsewhere. Even people who are from other communities have moved to this ward. Madzi consists one of three more religiously mixed communities in Michika and the reasons for these attitudes is unclear.

By 2019, focus had shifted to reintegration of people associated with AOGs. Processes of return to communities tend to be highly gendered. Many men associated with AOGs go through formal disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) mechanisms with support provided through a programme administered in a centre and to reintegrate into communities. Meanwhile, women associated with AOGs are often simply released back into communities with little support or oversight. These different procedures speak to highly gendered attitudes with little basis in reality: men are seen as being more of a potential threat and so needing a programme of intervention while women, even if they follow AOG ideology, are not viewed with danger. Male graduates of Operation Safe Corridor, a facility in Gombe state where ideology adjustment, counselling and livelihoods training takes place for six months, have been handed over to the state government and asked the location in which they want to live. The majority of the first set of Operation Safe

Corridor graduates were from Gwoza and Maiduguri in Borno state. Some of this group found it impossible to return particularly to Gwoza due to community resistance, discrimination and stigma. As a result, they chose to join relatives and friends who are IDPs from these places living in Yola, for example in Malkoyi camp. Many of the next group of Operation Safe Corridor graduates are from LGAs in Adamawa state such as Gombi, Hong, Michika and Madagali. The level of their acceptance is not yet known. Women on the other hand either manage to escape or come into military custody during the course of operations. They are questioned and released. They either live with their families or alone. While gendered policies are predicated on not seeing these women as a threat, many people in their communities still view them with suspicion, watching their behaviour and trying to see signs of AOG ideology. Some respondents said communities believe these women and girls, even if they had been abducted by AOGs, pass on information to AOGs. For example, many attacks in Madagali are attributed to actions of women associated with AOGs who now live in the town.

Representatives of NGOs spoke of reuniting children who had been abducted by AOGs and stayed with them for up to five years before going through the Maiduguri rehabilitation centre with their parents. In Madagali, these children often feel their families were not comfortable with them. For example, one girl who was abducted at 13 years and returned to her family at 16 years was reported as saying she wants to go back to Sambisa as she felt more love there than with her family and community. NGOs working with these children say many of them feel the same way. Both boys and girls have been caught by the military trying to re-join AOGs. The military has reportedly been understanding of their situation and cooperative to requests to act if anyone is threatening or harassing them.

¹⁵ Of respondents to a 2015 UN Women study, 26.9 percent reported women encourage their husbands and children to fight, 19.4 percent that they bear arms and carry out violence themselves and 33.9 percent that they provide support services to men and 10.2 percent reported all of the above: O. Para-Mallam, 'Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria: Report of Baseline Study (Adamawa, Plateau and Gombe States of Nigeria),' (UN Women, 2016), p. 22-26.

Respondents also spoke of children associated with Nigerian armed forces, for example seeing children working at checkpoints with soldiers in parts of Madagali. The United Nations listed Nigeria for recruitment and use of children by AOGs and the CJTF with regular reports on this situation.¹⁶ If the Nigerian military is using children to support them at checkpoints, this would constitute a grave violation affecting children in times of war. Doing so is prohibited by international humanitarian law and defined as a war crime.

Another way in which people are involved in conflict is as hunters and vigilantes. The government asked groups of hunters and vigilantes to assist the military in fighting AOGs. Representatives of these groups interviewed spoke of women members being deployed in Gwoza in neighbouring Borno state to assist security agencies there with searches as well as working in Adamawa state. Women members are usually older and engage in searching women and attending women's meetings while their male colleagues search men and attend men's meetings. While women serve as security guards in key places and conduct patrols in the afternoon, men conduct patrols at night. Women in these groups also investigate and respond to cases of domestic disputes.

In other parts of northern Nigeria, research has found many conflictual encounters when it comes to farmer-pastoralist conflict to be over land and water use between young pastoralist men and women farmers.¹⁷ Farmers (men and women alike) say young pastoralist men are more likely to allow their cattle to damage crops if a woman as opposed to a man is on the farm. Women to whom this has happened say this is as women are taken less seriously due to attitudes about women and as it is believed they cannot fight back. If they protest animals eating their crops, they are threatened including with rape. Conflict also arises over water points when women go to collect water and pastoralist men go to water cattle. The women are unhappy as the cattle will pollute the water which will be undrinkable while the men are eager that their cattle have the water they need, often after having travelled long distances to drink. In some of these cases, the women have been able to physically fight and drive away pastoralist men due to their higher numbers. In both types of incidents, injured masculinity has a role in escalating tensions, either as men in farming communities feel compelled to avenge the attacks on 'their' women or as young pastoralist men want to seek redress for having been chased away from water points by 'mere' women. While respondents mentioned similar dynamics in Adamawa, for example talking of some

cases where women farmers have been threatened with rape by young pastoralist men and that this increases desires for vengeance, there was insufficient time for a full inquiry into these dynamics within the scope of data collection for this assessment.

Continuing physical and psychological impacts of violence

As described in the conflict and security context section above, while fighting between AOGs and state security agencies has less impact on civilians than in the past, other forms of insecurity and violence such as criminality, gang activities, kidnapping and inter-communal conflict have increased. Communities in many parts of Adamawa continue to live in fear of potential violence and with the consequences of that already experienced. Respondents in Yola spoke of not going out at night for fear of the activities of the *yan shilla*. Respondents in Girei said they no longer go to farm due to worries of inter-communal clashes. Respondents across the state spoke of concerns they or family members would be kidnapped, particularly due to rumours kidnapping victims were sometimes killed with body parts used for ritual purposes. Respondents also told of a number of cases of ritual killings by husbands of their wives or fathers of their daughters.

While conflict between farmers and pastoralists tends to be seasonal and is linked to the time before harvest and inter-communal conflict has led to deaths, such incidents tended to be more spontaneous in nature. As will be discussed below in the livelihoods section, some respondents had given up farming as they felt doing so had little livelihood prospects due to crop damage but no respondents spoke of fear of violence preventing them going to certain areas or engaging in livelihood activities. Meanwhile, northern Adamawa communities have seen many men of fighting age killed, detained, forcefully recruited or now living in other areas for fear of being targeted. There continue to be many families where husbands, fathers and sons are absent, leaving all the burden of providing and taking care of the household on the shoulders of women. Landmines and unexploded ordinances in parts of Mubi, Michika and Madagali have led to injury and death. Moreover, physical harm continues in some areas. There have been cases of people going to farm being attacked by AOGs. Respondents spoke of a gendered pattern of violence with men killed and women maimed. For example, there have been cases of AOGs coming across women and cutting of their ears or arms

¹⁶ For example, please see Report of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict in Nigeria to the United Nations Security Council, S/2017/304, 10 April 2017.

¹⁷ Please see Chitra Nagarajan, "No Tribe in Crime": Changing Pastoralism and Conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt, (Mercy Corps, 2019), forthcoming for more details of these dynamics that were uncovered across Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa and Taraba.

and sending them back to the community. Unsurprisingly, people in these areas no longer go beyond a certain distance past their towns and villages to farm, collect firewood or engage in other activities.

Many people continue to live with the psychological impacts of having experienced violence and fear that it will return. There are communities in rural parts of Mubi North, Mubi South, Michika and Madagali LGAs where people do not sleep in their houses due to fear of attack. Even in towns like Mubi, people are living with trauma and rumours of attacks can lead people to start running, with some getting injured in the resulting chaos. As a result, some people have refused to return. For example, students have refused to return to educational institutions and school attendance is lower than before the conflict.

For people with disabilities who remember how difficult it was to escape last time, this apprehension is particularly potent. Almost every person with disability interviewed spoke of what had happened to them when violence erupted in their area. Many disabled respondents spoke of having to rely on others for assistance. One woman spoke of everyone running when Mubi was attacked and having to rely on her roommate and then brother to carry her on their backs to safety. After having experienced this in Mubi, she subsequently was caught up in the inter-communal violence in Numan. This time, she was in the market with her sister who carried her on her back to safety. “I was lucky that my siblings were there,” she said, “If they were not there, I would have had to stay and God only knows what would have happened to me. If they are not there and violence happens again, I do not know what I will do.” Other people with disabilities shared a number of stories of being spared by fighters because of their disabilities. They spoke of many people with disabilities falling down when trying to crawl up the hills between Nigeria and Cameroon and dying as a result. Men with disabilities are more likely to have mobility aids such as wheelchairs and tricycles and so are more able to escape during attacks than women with disabilities who have no other choice but to stay behind. Women who are blind or visually impaired spoke of being able to follow others if they are nearby but having to sit down if nobody else is there as they cannot see the direction in which to run.

Respondents also spoke of people who had acquired disabilities while fleeing violence and continue to live in pain and with limited mobility. One respondent spoke of her brother who had been complaining of leg pains before the attack but had to run to escape. After they reached safety, he has been unable to move his body below his waist and family members believe running exacerbated his pre-existing condition. Other respondents spoke of acquiring a

disability as a result of being hit by stray bullets. Many who were physically harmed during the violence or had a pre-existing disability condition spoke of difficulties in finding shelter and assistance. While all those who experienced violence have faced challenges, for people with disabilities, they are compounded by societal attitudes and stigma and the need to struggle for assistance. Women with disabilities interviewed shared that many of their number prefer to stay inside the home rather than go outside to face stigma, discrimination and potential violence.

While levels of trauma have subsided as time and distance from violence has increased and people have started to rebuild their lives, agencies providing mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) continue to provide in-community care and referrals to specialists. However, due to reduced levels of funding, agencies are unable to provide the holistic array of services including livelihoods support and women's empowerment required to enhance psychosocial wellbeing.

Livelihoods and economic conditions

Livelihoods in Adamawa are affected by the activities of AOGs, inter-communal violence, gangs and kidnapers. Communities require improved seeds, mechanised farming, new farming systems, improved animal husbandry techniques, capital and tools, and enforced demarcation of grazing and farming land. While agencies such as NEMA and SEMA as well as NGOs are providing some livelihoods assistance, this support does not meet needs. Respondents spoke of how soldiers had “become businessmen” in areas where they fight AOGs as they have money and trade in goods which community members have to buy. For example, they buy crops, store them until the price increases then sell to make profits.

There has been some improvement in the material circumstances of people in northern Adamawa linked to improvements in security. As a result, women are able to go to work on their own and others' farm for pay, collect firewood for personal use or sale and engage in other livelihood activities. This situation contrasts with that two years ago where women were unable to leave areas in search of work and livelihoods and there were higher numbers of cases of women being sexually exploited and abused and engaging in survival sex or sex work. However, insufficient assistance is being provided to assist people in economic recovery with few organisations engaged in this area of work. Respondents spoke of need for support as they have no capital or access to farmland. They often struggle to pay rents for farmland or have to give



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percentages of harvest in rent which they can little afford to do. As a result, many people, women and men alike, are engaged in providing labour on farms for pay rather than working their own farms. Widows whose husbands have died or been killed face particular difficulties, not only because all household responsibilities now fall on their shoulders but also as his relatives often take control of homes, property and savings.

In Mubi, known for its market which attracts significant cross border trade from Chad, Cameroon, Sudan and other countries, economic impact of conflict is still visible. While Mubi is slowly recovering with people having restarted trading and showing resilience, many in the town have difficulties taking care of their families, not being able to afford enough food for them to eat or to pay school fees for all their children. A number of respondents interviewed separately said they need to sell two bags of maize to buy one bag of fertiliser to illustrate the difficulties people face and linked the depressed economy with increased criminality levels.

An exception to this trend of slow recovery is areas of Madagali and Michika where security dynamics are more volatile and people are afraid to leave safe areas to engage in livelihood activities. As described above in the physical and psychological impacts section, there have been cases of people going to farm or graze being killed or maimed by AOGs. Sometimes, the identity of attackers is unknown. As one respondent said, “Recently, a group went to farm and were attacked and beaten in Madagali. We don’t know by

whom - whether this were herdsmen or [AOGs] or some other group.” As described above this insecurity leads to cyclical displacement: people escape areas when there are rumours of attack, for example during festive periods, then return when the situation is calmer then flee again.

Many people in these areas also do not have access to their farms or grazing areas due to presence of AOG on this land. As a woman working for an NGO in the area said, “Those who are supposed to be going to farm during the rainy season have fear of attack and, as they land own is occupied by AOGs, they are not able to farm. This will result in shortage of food if they cannot harvest at year end.” The same NGO worker spoke about the struggles people in Michika and Madagali had when they returned to areas with getting enough food and going back to farm without support. It was unclear if any government or non-government agency were planning interventions with this likely food shortage in mind but there is urgent need for relevant actors to engage in contingency planning to offset prospects of severe food insecurity.

Fulbe pastoralists have been gravely affected by violent conflict, both that related to AOGs and that which is inter-communal in nature. As many Fulbe people were in the bush with the cattle in areas of high AOG presence, they were among the first to be affected. Respondents spoke of many incidents where Fulbe groups were attacked and people killed. In 2017, they reported AOGs giving them orders if they came across them, for example demanding they kill some of their animals for them or bring them items. AOGs told them not to reveal their location or any

other information to security personnel and threatened them with repercussions if they did so. As a result, not only did Fulbe pastoralists come under suspicion from security agents but they kept moving to try and stay away from AOGs. Migration patterns have changed as a result. Whereas migratory Fulbe groups used to be some distance e.g. 30-40 km away from villages in the past, they are now closer, approx. 2-3 km away, to ensure increased safety and move quickly into town if anything happens. As a result, Fulbe pastoralists in some areas cannot graze in their grazing areas and are nearer to farmlands, increasing the chances of crop damage and ensuing conflict.

In other parts of the state, respondents reported no longer engaging in livelihood activities. In Girei, one man said, “I have stopped farming due to the farmer-pastoralist conflict. For four years, I have been unable to harvest anything as cows would keep coming and eating. I have now given up as this year is likely to be the same.” He complained community leaders were not being proactive and asked for them to tell farmers to harvest or safeguard their farms from crop damage with their presence when they knew pastoralists were on their way. He linked farmer-pastoralist conflict to other forms of unrest, saying that lack of return from farming, pastoralists having lost cows and there being no other forms of employment leads to young people starting to use drugs and engage in criminality such as kidnapping. He believed that “men give birth but do not have the means to take care of children” who join gangs such as yan shilla and AOGs due to lack of employment and economic activities as well as familial care. Even when people do engage in farming, this can be disrupted. For example, local communities in Malkoyi in Yola have given land for IDPs to farm but people continued to be afraid of the prospects of inter-communal conflict. Last October, a message was sent out from pastoralists that the community should complete all their harvest from mid-October to mid-November then vacate the land. As a result, people rushed to bring in their harvest within this deadline. There were cases of conflict resulting in injury from October to December in neighbouring communities where this message was not passed.

People with disabilities in particular face grave challenges in earning livelihoods. Respondents spoke of mobility, sight and hearing difficulties making it hard for them to find jobs, farm or look after animals. Many disabled women interviewed spoke of being isolated, without family and so having to strategise how to earn enough income to support themselves. Respondents spoke of being chased away when trying to trade, apply for jobs or attend interviews as people believe you are there to beg for money. A woman who has mobility issues who was interviewed in Mubi said,

“When we go to the market to buy things with our money, people do not like to sell to us. We say we are not coming to beg but to buy but they still discriminate against us. Person thinks that because we are disabled, we are here to beg.” Some women respondents talked of having no other option but to work through intense pain: “I have to work to survive. If I pick grass from a farm or do other work, my knee will swell and it will be so painful that it is difficult for me to move. I have no money to go to the hospital for treatment.” They believed women with disabilities faced more problems than their male counterparts who are more able to rely on family. One respondent in Girei said, “Women have a lot of responsibilities to take care of. For example, my husband has four wives and I struggle to take responsibility for the children without waiting for my husband to do so. I do not want to depend on or become liability to someone else as they will insult me for this.”

There are significant gendered differences when it comes to patterns of work. Women and men engage in farming different kinds of crops. While women tend to sell in small quantities in the market, men are more likely to sell crops in bags of 50kg. Women engage more in value addition processes post-harvest and so have seen their livelihoods more disrupted due to insecurity, either as they are unable to travel to particular areas to buy crops to process and sell at a higher price or as crop damage increases prices to an extent they can be unsustainable. Conversely, men talk about issues with access to farmlands or difficulties buying inputs, particularly in places in northern Adamawa to which traders are afraid to go to sell. When it comes to animal husbandry, while women and men are both engaged in looking after sheep and goats such as ram fattening prior to sallah, women tend to be more involved in rearing chickens and other birds and men focused on cattle rearing. In Christian communities, women not men are the ones who rear pigs. Women say they have too many household responsibilities so need to stay closer to the house and are unable to go the distances cattle grazing requires. Nowadays, due to higher levels of insecurity, theft and raids stealing animals, people of both genders are more likely to tie up animals than before. Some villages also have agreements in place whereby people rearing animals agree to tie them up during the planting and growing seasons in return for being able to graze them on crop residue on farms post-harvest.

Women and men have different perceived livelihood barriers. According to a woman who works for a NGO that supports livelihood activities in Michika, “When men talked about barriers, it was all about external forces and things they needed such as physical inputs, insecurity and other things out of their control whereas women are more willing

to admit not being able to market products, their lack of education on veterinary services and how to graze animals.” She believed these differences were due to men’s unwillingness to be self-reflective and admit weakness due to dominant norms of masculinity as opposed women’s socialisation in being self-critical.

Moreover, increased insecurity has led to a growing move towards sedentarisation among Fulbe pastoralist communities with young men continuing to move to graze cattle while their parents, wives and children stay in one area. This dynamic has led to a shift from families moving together and sharing responsibilities, for example with young men grazing and milking cattle and women setting up and packing away camps, cooking, selling milk and milk products and buying food, to groups of young men moving together. Not only has this change led to increased burdens falling on young men who now have sole responsibilities for safeguarding their family’s cattle wealth, are required to graze cattle, cook and set up camp and increased their stress but it has changed interactions with farming communities who view groups of young men with more suspicion than they did families. This move has also impacted the livelihoods of women as the cows from which they would sell milk and milk products are now elsewhere.

Unlike in other parts of northern Nigeria where a model of breadwinner masculinity operates, in Adamawa which has high levels of diversity of ethnic groups, women in many ethnic groups are the ones who do the majority of both productive and reproductive activities. Even before conflict, in some parts of Adamawa, women would go out to farm, trade or engage in other livelihood activities as well as take care of the children and household. After the women have harvested crops, their husbands would take farm products to sell, keeping the money earned for their own use. As one woman in Mubi said, “The men leave women as animals doing all the work.” Another woman respondent said, “In Michika, the women provide for the men. They feel it is their responsibility so they do it without complaints and do not benefit from business. The husband does not appreciate [their work] but feels it is his right.”

These dynamics have intensified in these areas and manifested in others as a result of conflict. In areas that have seen farmer-pastoralist conflict, some men who were farming no longer do so as they believe there is no point as crops will be damaged by animals anyway. Or, they have been able to recover previous livelihood activities and do not engage in new means of generating income due to lack of flexibility. A woman whose NGO provides livelihood support to communities said, “You usually see a gendered difference. The better connected you are, the more resilient you will be. You see women are more cohesive as

they are more networked. They are more willing to change so have adaptive capacity whereas men get discouraged and sit at home as they are not willing to change to new livelihoods or work if they do not get good money.”

Men interviewed agreed that many men no longer engaged in livelihood activities. A man in Girei said, “Women are going to farm alone as the men are now reluctant as maybe they farm and cannot harvest due to [crop damage by] cows. The responsibility of farming falls on the woman. It was not so five years ago. Men are unable to earn incomes, have jobs, go out for labouring so the responsibility is on women. They get pregnant, go to farm, get firewood, do work at home and do everything.” Another man interviewed stated that all responsibilities had fallen on women in this manner as men believed themselves to be the target of AOGs, kidnappers, yan shilla and others in rural areas and as there were no jobs or casual labour opportunities in the cities. This dynamic of men stopping livelihood activities due to risk cuts across locations. For example, in Michika, men no longer go to the market as they consider it to be dangerous due to the likelihood of bombing while women have higher resilience and are more unfazed by these market attacks. Many women respondents, who are in a similar situation but feel they have no other option but to engage in any livelihood activity that they can, complained about this state of affairs. One woman said, “In Michika, you see women are mostly breadwinners. They go out to do the work, farm, bring money back home while the men are drinking and do not do any work.” Another woman in Mubi spoke about how men “will be gathering, talking and discussing while women will go to market and farm. This is laziness as they do not want their body to suffer. But women cook food, go to farm and educate children. Women are suffering much.”

Women in Yola also spoke of this dynamic. A woman who works with displaced girls in Malkohi said, “It is the girls who mostly go out and do farming. You see men under the tree [talking] even in the rainy season. The number of men who go out is fewer... Girls drop out of school if they are in school, get married and keep farming... If they do small businesses and income generating activities, the men take their money. Even if they pool loans as a group, the husbands take the money and they do not have money to put back into health and education of their children. Even if they want to go back to school, they cannot put the money they have saved to their education or their children’s education as their husbands are taking control of everything.” In Malkohi, whereas both older and younger women go together to farm hardly any men go to farm. Yet, men are the ones who are selling crops farmed and keeping the money. The only women involved in selling crops were said to be older women. The only goods girls

sold themselves were items such as caps or soap they had made which they sold in the small community market. However, these sales have reduced as girls no longer have resources to maintain this business. According to someone who works in Malkohi, “We hear complaints that women make money and bring food but men control money. We have gone to camps and seen men chatting under the trees while women are out looking for food or have gone to the farm. Even if the whole family goes to the farm, everything comes down to the decision of the men. It is the women and children doing all the work and the men take the money.” The changing gender norms and realities section below will further discuss these dynamics.

Women's participation and voice in decision making and peacebuilding

Adamawa has seen a gradual increase in women's participation and voice in decision-making in recent years. Progress has been slow and incomplete and restricted to community and informal spaces. For example, in the recent 2019 elections, more women participated as voters than in previous elections. There was also more interest among women when it comes to contesting for positions despite stigma attached to women in politics who are often insulted. Although women candidates do not have to pay for forms to express interest in standing for political position, the money spent on political campaigns in Adamawa as elsewhere in Nigeria rules most women out of serious contention. As a woman government official said, “Not many women succeeded [in being elected] but at least there was the attempt unlike before.”

The current National Assembly (2019-2023) has one woman among three Senators representing Adamawa (Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed representing Adamawa Central who is also the only woman representing a northern Nigerian constituency in the Senate)¹⁸ and no women among its eight members in the House of Representatives.¹⁹ The Adamawa State House of Assembly decreased its female representation from two women members to a single woman (Mamuno Kate Raymon representing Demsa) among its 25 members. Raymon stated that men routinely marginalise women in politics while noting that 52 women had contested to be State House of Assembly members.²⁰ At the time of writing, the Adamawa State Governor had yet to announce Commissioners so the gender representation of the State Executive Council was not known. There has been more change at local levels of decision making.

Women are also more involved in local level politics yet women are still the minority with local councils usually comprising only one woman with the rest of the councillors being men. Yet, respondents felt that women even standing for local councils was a positive move.

Some community leaders have started to include women in their decision making. For example, women have been appointed as advisers and involved in decision making by the chief of the Numan Federation for the last three years. A village head in Yola South now also involves women in decision making. However, these examples are few and far between. Nevertheless, more women are now meaningfully participating in non-state arenas of decision making than was the case in 2017. As one woman in Mubi said, “Women are the ones organising themselves. Because of their problems and suffering, they need to organise themselves to advocate and get help.” Women involved in religious bodies often are asked to be representatives in community events and platforms.



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¹⁸ Binta Masi Garba representing Adamawa North lost her seat in the 2019 elections.

¹⁹ According to the website of the National Assembly: <http://www.nassnig.org>, last visited 23.08.2019.

²⁰ Jim Ochetenwu, 'What men are doing to us in the North – Adamawa female lawmaker,' Daily Post, 21 July 2019, available here: <https://dailypost.ng/2019/07/21/men-us-north-adamawa-female-lawmaker/> last visited 15.08.2019.

Women's increased participation and voice is due in some part to development, humanitarian and peacebuilding interventions from NGOs and UN agencies. They take part in community mechanisms and networks as representatives of specific groups of women in the community and in their professional roles. Respondents felt women are also speaking more in meetings, that they are increasingly being listened to and taken seriously and that men's attitudes on the importance of women's inclusion in decision making has changed. Men now realise that including women leads to inclusion of and outreach to different parts of the community as they not only reflect the experiences and realities of other women but also young people and children. Separate women only meetings that feed back into the main meeting have been key to ensuring women's concerns, expertise and realities are raised. There is still a long way to go however. Women's representation in these platforms can be as low as 5 to 10 percent and meetings still tend to be dominated by men. Moreover, women, who are juggling household, childcare and livelihood responsibilities, can have less time to be involved in these platforms than men. They are blocked from participation by their male relatives and community members and face gossip and people feeding back their comments and involvement to their families.

Often, the women who are able to participate tend to be older, non-disabled and with some level of power and influence. The perspectives of younger women and adolescent girls are hardly ever reflected in community decision making which means their concerns and needs are unaddressed and their ideas and capabilities not used for community good. Women with disabilities too are often mobilised for voting during elections but then barred from community decision making and "seen as a nuisance to politicians when you go to ask them to deliver on their campaign promises" according to one disabled woman leader. This exclusion of certain groups of women from benefiting from interventions shows that organisations need to take more intersectional approaches to support increased participation and voice from all women in communities, not only those with relatively higher status and power.

Gender-based violence

GBV cuts across ethnic and religious groups and the different parts of Adamawa state. Mostly directed towards women and girls, respondents also spoke of a number of cases of boys who had experienced sexual violence. Forms

of GBV raised were rape and sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and abuse, early and forced marriage and ritual killings. Perpetrators, while mostly known to survivors, spanned economic classes and came from different sectors of society.

There are particular categories of women and girls among whom GBV incidence is higher. Women with disabilities interviewed spoke of how men specifically target them as they tend to have weaker social networks. Violence usually takes place in the home and is committed by family members, family friends and neighbours. Studies from a number of other countries²¹ show women with disabilities are two to four times more likely than their non-disabled counterparts to experience intimate partner violence, that disability also increases risks of non-partner sexual violence, that probability of intimate partner and non-partner sexual violence rises with higher severity of disability but stigma both compounds risk and reduces ability to seek help.²² Yet, this assessment found no agency to be proactively reaching out to women with disabilities to increase awareness of rights or increase access to services.

Another group that faces higher incidence of GBV is adolescent girls who are very reluctant to report, as will be discussed later. Girls suffer all forms of GBV that are experienced by adult women plus face high incidence of early and forced marriage between the ages of 14-18 years. Organisations working with girls spoke of the length of time they need to work with them before they start to open up.

Sexual violence

Respondents spoke of a gradual increase in numbers of cases of rape and sexual violence against children reported. They said that people were becoming more aware of why it is important to report these violations, that they had come to know of health implications such as transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) if not reported quickly and that there had been some changes in responsiveness of security agencies such as the police and NSCDC. The results section below will further discuss these trends.

Children make up the majority of survivors in cases reported. For example, the SARC in Yola saw 22 girl patients in July 2019 of which nine girls were aged 0-9 years, girls were aged 10-14 years and 7 girls were aged 15-19 years. Police officers working in the state criminal

²¹ For example, Jill Astbury and Fareen Walji, 'Triple Jeopardy: Gender-based Violence and Human Rights Violations Experienced by Women with Disabilities in Cambodia,' AusAid Working Paper, (AusAid, 2013).

²² Kristin Dunkle, Ingrid van der Heijden, Erin Stern and Esnat Chirwa, 'Disability and violence against women and girls: Emerging evidence from the what works to prevent violence against women and girls global programme,' (What Works, July 2018).

investigation department (CID) agreed that the age range of survivors in cases reported tended to be three to 16 years. A woman lawyer verified this analysis saying that most cases are of minors aged 2 years and upwards raped by adult men with numbers dropping after the age of 10 years. Respondents shared the cases of a 6-month old baby left with a neighbour whose husband raped her before the mother returned and a 29-day old baby raped earlier in 2019 who died from injuries inflicted in the process. The details of these cases are horrific and will not be shared here. While some respondents could see no explanation for these young girls being raped apart from ritual purposes, other respondents believed these cases were indicative of a paedophilic culture in society with young girls sexualised. They linked these attitudes to the incidence of early marriage, pointing out that men who marry 12-year-old girls can have decided to marry them when they are even younger and purposefully choose to marry girls of this age as they are socialised by the incidence of early marriage to find them sexually desirable. SARC workers, police officers and women activists also speak about cases of rape and sexual violence committed against boys. In cases reported to the SARC, the boys tend to be poorer, without family and without means. For example, respondents talked about men raping boys who are almajirai or live on the street separated from families who may have abandoned them or been killed in violence.

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That few cases of rape and sexual violence against adult women are reported does not mean they do not take place. Respondents spoke of families and society at large being more likely to blame older girls and women for their violation with this victim blaming starting from the age of 13 years onwards. ”

Yet, very few cases of sexual violence against adults are being reported. All respondents said no cases of sexual violence against adult men were reported. This lack of reporting is necessarily indicative of lack of incidence but could mean men are unable to report due to fear of stigma and shame. There is also some confusion as to what sexual violence against men could mean with some respondents talking of attitudes that women's dressing 'enticing' men can be constitutive of violence (it is not). As with men, that few cases of rape and sexual violence against adult women

are reported does not mean they do not take place. Respondents spoke of families and society at large being more likely to blame older girls and women for their violation with this victim blaming starting from the age of 13 years onwards. Unmarried girls are told they will be unmarriageable if they have sex so many of them hide having been raped. In these girls, sexual violence is often exposed alongside discovery of resulting pregnancy. Married women also are more likely to worry of their husband's reactions if they are raped by another man and fear the blame and repercussions will fall on them.

Adding to this under-reporting among adolescent girls and adult women is the belief that a woman is required to have sex with her husband and cannot be raped within marriage. Women in all focus group discussions started by saying they do not know of cases where adult women have been raped. When asked if there are cases where husbands force their wives to have sex against their consent, there was widespread agreement that this takes place in all groups. Women spoke about husbands forcing their wives through the use of physical violence. They said there were many cases of marital rape and believed it to be increasing. They linked this rise to the economic dynamics mentioned above. They spoke of incidents where women have to spend the whole day cleaning the house, cooking, looking after the children, farming or engaging in other economic activities, fetching firewood or water and doing other work. As their tasks have increased and they see their husbands not working for the family, not only are they tired at night but they do not want to have sex with their husbands. In these cases, husbands will beat and force themselves on their wives. According to a woman in Mubi, “There are plenty of cases where husbands force their wives to have sex... the woman will be angry and not happy... she will refuse and he will force her. Women are tired as they are having to work the whole day and the man is redundant and not doing anything. He is [physically] well and not contributing anything to the household. How will women feel? They are not happy [to have sex] so men force [them].” Even if societal attitudes are that men have the 'right' to have sex with their wives at will, many women are unhappy about this marital rape even if they are unable to speak openly.

While conversations around sexual violence focused on rape, respondents also spoke of sexual harassment which goes largely unreported. Respondents spoke of harassment in secondary schools and higher educational institutions where girls are asked for sex in exchange for marks. Disabled women spoke of their male classmates using gaps in the walls to take photos and videos of them when showering as visually impaired women were unable to see them doing so. Women in Girei spoke about “having to give yourself as a token to get a job” with sexual

harassment not limited to the hiring process but continuing while in employment. Unmarried girls who are sent out by parents to sell products often face immense pressure to come home with enough money to support their families and are forced to present themselves in sexualised ways to do so. High numbers of cases of sexual violence against girl hawkers are likely to be the tip of the iceberg of incidence. Organisations aiming to prevent this violence call on parents to stop sending their daughters to hawk products. Such interventions are unlikely to result in any changes given the socio-economic conditions of many families who engage in this practice and lack of alternatives to earn incomes.

Women and girls reported restricted freedom of movement due to fear of harassment and violence. Those interviewed in Yola said they were unable to move freely as they were worried about theft and violence committed by *yan shilla*. The increase of incidents of sexual harassment and rape by adolescent boys and young men aged 16 to 22 years, including those linked to *yan shilla* and other gangs, has led girls to stop going to school in locations such as Girei LGA. The woman leader of a community there said, “Men are really violating the rights of women through violence, battery and rape. After 6pm, girls cannot go out at night as they can cover her mouth and do whatsoever they want.”

Perpetrators can be men known to the survivors, for example family members, family friends and neighbours, men in the community who are unknown and security agents. While those who are punished tend to be poorer men, sexual violence perpetrators span all socio-economic classes as those with power, money and influence are less likely to get caught and more likely to use their connections and money to escape justice. Respondents spoke of women and girls getting raped by armed robbers who come to the house to steal, male teachers or their fathers, uncles, brothers and neighbours. Family members are more likely to try to hide sexual violence particularly if the perpetrators is powerful or a family member. A SARC doctor recounted a case of a nine year old girl who was being raped every night by her 14 year old brother being brought into the Centre. She had to return to the house and her brother's presence after treatment. She also spoke of cases where stepfathers raping stepdaughters who felt unable to tell their mothers what was happening.

Perpetrators can also be security agents. For example, in Michika, a NGO which spoke with women and men around areas in which they felt safe and unsafe found that highly gendered patterns. While curfews and restrictions on the areas in which people could farm applied to all, women saw security checkpoints as places they fear going due to verbal and sexual harassment by soldiers and vigilantes running them. Here, verbal sexual harassment is prominent

with soldiers and vigilantes asking women to stay back and talk longer, giving them 'compliments' as well as commenting on appearance. As a result, there are certain places women feel unable to go, for example different wards outside or the other side of Michika town, because they need to cross checkpoints to get there. In some locations in Madagali and Michika, NGO case workers report that girls do not feel comfortable going to school because of the way military harasses them verbally and sexually on their way. Madagali and Michika also report many cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) perpetrated by the military. Leaders of several communities have been complaining about these actions of the military. Several respondents recounted one particular case where a marriage which had been planned had to be cancelled when a soldier took a liking to the bride. The soldier paid back the bride price that had already been paid so that the marriage would be called off and he could continue his sexual relationship with the young woman concerned. In such cases, the existence of consent is highly dubious. As a man working for a UN agency in the area said, “There is such a power imbalance. These soldiers have money and power and the girls are starving without money to eat and so are lured with food and the basic necessities of life.” When girls, women and their families try to speak out against this practice, they are likely to face physical violence. Indeed, many people are afraid to call attention to what is happening at all.

While survivors are able to seek healthcare and other support, NGOs operational in these areas are unsure how to help them gain access to justice or stop these violations from taking place. If perpetrators are soldiers, survivors and NGO workers fear retribution especially as there is no safe house accessible where survivors can be housed. Perpetrators are not only soldiers but also men who belong to the CJTF and vigilante groups who also face impunity due to their links with the military. SEA is also perpetrated by men in the community who offer food, protection and other goods in return for sex. There are also rumours that SEA is perpetrated by community volunteers linked to humanitarian agencies. That no such complaints have been formally made may be more indicative of the weakness of complaints and feedback mechanisms rather than such cases not happening. However, while this sexual violence by soldiers continues to be reported in Madagali and Michika, respondents say it has reduced in Mubi after women visited senior commanding officers to report seeing soldiers in their area without knowing the reason for their presence. They asked senior officers to stop their soldiers engaging in SEA and parents started reporting cases. As a result, senior officers started instigating some punishment. While actions are far from satisfactory (respondents spoke of offending soldiers

transferred to other locations, detained in the guardroom for a few days and/ or experiencing physical violence rather than processes of investigation, trial and court martial), they have reportedly led to reduced incidence.



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Respondents also spoke about consequences faced by survivors. Despite organisations working to encourage GBV reporting and strengthen institutions, very little work has been done on challenging stigma, marginalisation and victim blaming with the result that survivors, not perpetrators, continue to face repercussions of violence. As one woman from Yola said, “The girl will become the laughing stock of the community and will not have a marriage in her future but, as most men who rape, are from influential backgrounds, nothing will be done to them even if you take them to the police.” A focus group in Mubi spoke about the case of someone who, seeing a man talking with a young girl, followed and caught him about to rape her and about how parents try to keep what happened hidden: “When [men] rape their children, [they] do not want people around to know. Due to kunya. Parents are running away from discrimination as [they] know when [the] girl grows up and wants to marry, people will say no, this one has been raped.” In Girei LGA, women spoke of cases where parents have thrown daughters who have become pregnant through both sexual violence and consensual sex out of their homes. Homeless and with nowhere to go, these girls and young women often have no other option but to engage in sex work. Sometimes, they are able to come together to provide each other with mutual support. According to one woman, “There is one house called gidan wanka where all the teenagers sent away from home do prostitution as a business. They have no other option to support themselves. They did not go to school and live in poverty so when they have to go and look for means [to support themselves], they can only do prostitution.”

Rather than face this stigma and shame, many women and girls who have become pregnant through rape act to terminate pregnancy with or without the knowledge of their parents. One doctor said a girl with limited motor function in her legs and arms came into the clinic when her parents found out she was five months pregnant after having been raped. She and her parents asked the clinic to terminate the pregnancy but doctors were unable to do so given the pregnancy was so far advanced.²³ The doctor also spoke of another girl who was six months pregnant after having been raped requesting abortion. After the clinic refused to provide this procedure, she took herbs and successfully terminated pregnancy. Hospitals do provide post abortion care and health workers spoke of treating women and girls who have taken drugs or herbs to terminate pregnancy which results in uncontrolled bleeding or infection.

This stigma and victim blaming are exacerbated by a lack of confidentiality. Respondents spoke of cases of sexual violence being openly discussed in hospital waiting rooms. A woman in a focus group in Mubi even said she had contributed money for the doctor to buy gloves for medical examination during such a discussion of a case where a 60 year old man raped his 10 year old girl neighbour which took place in the hospital waiting room. She said, “When a rape case happens, everyone knows – there is no confidentiality. Sometimes, people gather and come to the hospital to see. There was a girl raped who was unconscious for two days and people were coming to see her.”²⁴ When this issue was raised with a member of hospital staff in Mubi General Hospital, he said there was confidentiality between patients, doctors and healthcare workers but a tendency of people coming to the hospital when cases ‘go viral’ to see for themselves what had happened. People find out about cases and follow patients to hospital. “You see them coming in crowds,” he said, “You tell the security to disperse them and not allow them to come close to the patient once they are in hands of hospital. Security has to be very serious as [people] always want to see. Then, [they] talk when [they] leave and stigmatise. We have had to have security at the gate stop people going to see a girl in a coma [after being raped].”

This combination of stigma faced by survivors and perpetrators' impunity in addition to threats by perpetrators against survivors and challenging investigative and judicial systems mean there is little if any incentive for reporting to even family let alone to police and pursuing cases through court processes. Women's

²³ According to Sections 232 to 236 of the Penal Code and sections 228 and 230 of the Criminal Code Act, abortion is a felony only permissible when the mother's life is at risk. Islam is more permissive, allowing abortion until the foetus has been 'ensouled' at around 4 months. In practice, an estimated 2.7 million abortions are likely to take place annually, 65.6 percent done in ways that are least safe (81 percent for women with no education and 82 percent for the poorest women) and unsafe abortion is a leading cause of maternal death: PMA 2020 Abortion Survey Results: Nigeria, April-May 2018, available at https://www.pma2020.org/sites/default/files/AbortionModule_Brief_111518.pdf, last visited 16.08.2019.

²⁴ After the author spent time taking about the need for confidentiality in such cases, women in the focus group said they should gather and sensitise people in this area as they are unaware of the importance of confidentiality and anonymity in sexual violence cases.

rights activists who support survivors through the investigative and court processes spoke of intense challenges persisting despite interventions focused on providing healthcare and counselling and improving police response. While the SARC provides medical care and counselling, there are no lawyers present. Women's rights activists talk about how, while the state CID are supportive, other police officers expect you to pay them money every step of the way. Getting lawyers can be challenging as the police lawyers do not have adequate experience and skills. Lawyers from FIDA are supposed to take cases forward free of charge but often prioritise paying clients. Survivors and their families cannot afford to hire lawyers particularly as these cases take months and keep getting adjourned yet lawyers need to be paid for every appearance. They also need to find ways to transport themselves to court, particularly if they live in rural areas. A woman activist spoke about a case where the man had confessed to raping a girl but it took over a year for the case to come to trial due to frequent adjournments. She said, "Unless you are tenacious and keep pushing, you will give up." Many cases are taken to the magistrates' court rather than the High Court where lesser charges such as 'an assault on women's decency' are brought rather than rape charges. A woman activist spoke of a case of attempted murder where a girl's throat was slit by a man she had rejected as a boyfriend who had been lying in wait for her at school. This case was tried in magistrates' court and a sentence of 7 years handed down. She believed the police file in the lowest courts possible due to lack of competence and as doing so has higher possibilities for bribery. Officials at the Ministry of Justice confirmed the High Court was less susceptible to bribery and corruption than magistrates' courts.

Given the challenges outlined above, it is unsurprising that police officers, lawyers and women's rights activists that work on these cases say many survivors and their families no longer want perpetrators taken to court. A woman lawyer recounted the case of a 8 year old raped by a neighbour whose father decided to drop the case as 'the community will frown on her and say they will not marry someone who has been raped.' In such cases, parents often do not bring children to court to provide testimony, sometimes even moving the child to stay with relatives so they cannot be brought to court. People working on GBV cases find it intensely frustrating when survivors drop cases and believe this continued impunity means there is no deterrence against committing sexual violence. However, this dynamic is unlikely to change without concerted campaigns that shift the shame and blame for rape from the perpetrator not survivor has to worry about marriage prospects, community attitudes and other consequences. It also needs case workers to accompany women and girls through the process beyond acting in

legal capacities. Proper programmes of protection for survivors and witnesses need to be in place so they do not face threats, physical violence and economic consequences. Court processes should be survivor friendly with judges, lawyers and court personnel trained in handling GBV cases. The challenges and recommendations sections below will explore these areas further.

Domestic violence and abuse/ intimate partner violence

While most GBV interventions tend to focus on sexual violence, respondents believe that incidence of violence and abuse between intimate partners, whether married or unmarried, is actually higher. NGOs working with communities receive more reports of violence committed by husbands against wives than rape and sexual violence. Women focus groups in Girei, Mubi and Yola all spoke at length about domestic violence and abuse in their communities, saying incidence had escalated in the last four years due to depressed economic conditions. According to a woman in Girei, "In my experience, men are beating their wives a lot. Women go to farm the whole day and when they bring home goods, the husband takes [them] to market to sell. Or [she] sells things and when [she] brings home money, [the] husband takes everything. When she speaks, it ends up in beating. The responsibility of men is now shouldered all on women – she has to look for what to eat [and after the] children's health and education. [This is] due to poverty – [the] husband [is] not employed or into women or drinking or drugs. When [he] gets any money, [he] goes to bars to spend money on drink and women. Any slightest mistake [by the woman] ends in beating. This is not all men. Others take responsibilities and do not beat their wives. But it is more now than it used to be." According to the representatives of the Girei CPSP, "Every home has domestic violence and beating. Men even beat their wives in front of their children so the children are seeing what is happening and thinking it is okay."

People working for NGOs in northern Adamawa also spoke of seeing increasing cases of domestic violence and abuse. A woman NGO worker mentioned a recent case of a husband who beat up his wife who was eight months pregnant, pressing down on the stomach until the placenta came out, because she had used N3,000 of her own money to buy a phone without his approval. NGO workers said there was both more reporting due to rising awareness and higher incidence linked to the changes in livelihoods and economic conditions described above. Respondents said these economic dynamics had brought more friction and conflict within households as women, frustrated with their increased responsibilities, asked men

to work to support the family and men told them they were unable to do so. These circumstances can flare into violence. As men are unable to earn incomes but see their wives finding ways to provide financially for the family, they feel the need to 'prove' their continued power and control which can manifest in violence. As the same woman worker said, "Before, men were doing some [income generating activities] but now they are more reluctant [due to] what they have lost. If they work again, [they think they] will lose again. They have lost hope. So, men do not go to farm during the farming season. Women farm then return and are beaten when they have not cooked food on time." Respondents believed men feel women are taking charge, taking on responsibilities and are no longer submissive to them. They see women having more access to livelihoods and controlling the flow of income in community as a form of disrespect and want women to continue giving them the money they earn as they were doing beforehand. This shift has come about due to the conflict-affected economic situation which has made women warier of giving money to husbands as they need to keep enough to provide for the family and the actions of NGOs who, having found assistance to men does not benefit families, distribute directly to women. Men, who do not earn incomes themselves and are less able to take the money earned by their wives as they were doing before, have reduced power over the flow of money and what comes into the house than before the conflict.

If given incentives and encouragement, women will speak more openly about domestic violence and abuse. Ministry of Justice lawyers spoke of more women reporting cases of domestic violence and abuse after being encouraged to do so by a prominent civil society man on a popular radio programme. Women would report cases to him directly and he would refer these cases to the Ministry of Justice for resolution. During this time, government officials said four to five cases a day would be reported to them. Since he has stopped appearing on radio, the numbers of these cases have fallen to one to two cases a week. In such instances, ministry lawyers try to mediate the case towards a written understanding that the husband should not commit physical violence against his wife but sit down to resolve matters and women should respect their husbands as the head of the family and that the matter will be taken to court if this agreement is not followed. Indeed, most government MDAs do not take cases of domestic violence and abuse seriously. Most (male) police officers interviewed were dismissive of such cases, attributing reports to jealousy and taking the husbands' side. One (male) police officer stated physical violence between husband and wife was not a criminal matter and needed to be resolved by religious leaders rather than the police. Meanwhile, the Family Support Units which should be handling such cases

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While women's increased control of resources was linked to men resorting to physical violence to prove their masculinity, many respondents felt increased women's economic empowerment could mitigate domestic violence and abuse... This is particularly so as women are more likely to leave their husbands due to previously the case. ”

saw their roles as rather fixed to cases of sexual violence and missing children with cases of domestic violence and abuse not even referred to them. Even in the cases where police officers take such cases seriously, family members of the couple will intervene and withdraw the case. When action is taken by police officers, vigilante members or CPSP members, it is usually the wife who is blamed for 'provoking' the violence through her 'stubbornness' and minimal attention is paid to the husband responsible for inflicting violence. In one example, where the husband complained his wife did not know how to cook soup properly which led to him beating her, the 'solution' was for the agency intervening to ask another woman to take the domestic violence survivor to buy food in the market and teach her how to prepare soup. In another case where the husband said he beat his wife because she did not greet him properly when he entered the house, it was the wife who was admonished that "this is not the way and she should make her husband welcome to not make herself be beaten."

While women's increased control of resources was linked to men resorting to physical violence to prove their masculinity, many respondents felt increased women's economic empowerment could mitigate domestic violence and abuse with one saying, "She is hustling for the family so that will stop the man from beating her anyhow." This is particularly so as women are more likely to leave their husbands due to domestic violence and abuse than was previously the case. However, such incidents are still kept quiet with families either trying to urge women to reunite with husbands despite violence or supporting separation but doing their best to not have the situation widely known. Marriage breakdown due to violence was said to be happening in all communities and across socio-economic classes. Pastors and imams are also preaching against domestic violence and abuse in religious places of worship which was said to be having some impact.

Respondents believed more agencies should be working on domestic violence and abuse as well as sexual violence rather than normalising its commission as a way of life that needs to be settled by family meetings, dialogue and mediation. Even people who work for NGOs, health facilities and security agencies were seen to have these attitudes. According to a woman NGO worker, “People see it as normal and not a problem. GBV responders need to change their attitudes as otherwise people will not come [to report]. The FSU needs to know that, if woman comes saying her husband beat me up or denied me access to food, this is part of their mandate. We need to strengthen government MDAs responsible as they also do not realise. When a person is beaten up outside, it is seen as a crime but not when woman is beaten inside her home by her husband.”

Denial of resources and links with poverty

The earlier livelihoods and economic conditions section discussed families of deceased husbands denying women their rights to inheritance and property. This denial of rights is most stark in places in northern Adamawa where many women have lost their husbands and have returned to their homes to find them taken over by his family. His brothers claim ownership of land, property and children and can give the woman concerned the 'option' to either marry one of the brothers or be destitute. Interventions aimed at increasing the economic status of widows and women headed households and supporting them to claim property rights remain inadequate to meet needs.

Early and forced marriage

Many girls in Adamawa continued to be married after attainment of puberty at ages as young as 12 or 13 years. Girls who are married early in this manner are often denied their right to (complete) education. They have health problems, particularly around childbirth, as their bodies have not developed completely with incidence of VVF high. Girls who remain unmarried are often insulted by community members who spread rumours that she is waiting for a rich man and so parents can rush girls into marriage so as not to seem greedy. Father who do not have economic means to support the family will often marry out a daughter to reduce the number of people they need to look after and gain some money in bride price that can support their sons to achieve. Mothers spoke about marriages being contracted without their consultation and going ahead despite their protestations. Respondents also linked early and forced marriage with increased drug use as girls who are forced into early marriage start taking drugs to cope. As discussed above, many of the girls and young women who are part of yan shilla were married early and joined the group to escape their marriages.

Adamawa has not yet domesticated the Child Rights Act which contains provisions against early and forced marriage with main sticking points being the age of marriage and the idea that children have rights. A draft Child Protection Law was passed by the last State House of Assembly with provisions around the age of marriage removed but was not assented to by the previous Governor before he left office.

Changing gender norms and realities

Adamawa is one of the most ethnically diverse states in Nigeria. While it is beyond the scope of this assessment to give a full overview of gender relations in the almost 80 ethnic groups in the state, some illustrative examples are provided below to show how gender dynamics and relations vary between ethnic groups.

As described in the livelihoods and economic conditions section above, in some ethnic groups such as the Higi and Margi who make up the majority in Michika and Madagali respectively, women often provided financially for the family as well as taking care of the household and children even before the conflict. However, doing so did not necessarily translate into more equal marital relations as husbands tended to take the products of women's labour and control the flow and expenditure of money. A Higi woman characterised gender relations as follows: “You are always told that men are the head and women are the tail. Higi men love being the head, being superior to women... Women are the breadwinners and also do the cleaning and cooking and looking after family. I don't know what the men do but they are the ones in control and with power.” This dynamic has intensified with men even less engaged in productive activities as a result of conflict in these communities. The Lunguda around Guyuk LGA also have a history of women breadwinners providing most of the family income although there is a lot of talk in Lunguda communities about the need for men to step up. Children are believed to belong to the mother and her family rather than the father and his family. Unlike other ethnic groups in Nigeria, if a Lunguda woman marries a man of another ethnic group, their children are still considered to be Lunguda. Male and female children are more involved in decisions taking in their mother's rather than father's families. However, even though women regularly farm land double that of men and earn more than men, this does not translate to increased household power as money made is often given to husbands who take the major decisions that affect the family.

Among Fulbe families, particularly those who still engage in migratory grazing, there has been a tradition of differential gender roles as described above with young men responsible for grazing and milking cattle while

women sell these milk products and engage in setting up and packing up camp. The work of both women and men contributes financially with women using the money from sales of milk and milk products for daily expenses and men arranging the sale of cattle to cover major expenses such as healthcare costs or school fees. Fulbe families, except if younger men are off grazing elsewhere in families that have settled in one place, tend to spend more time together and with their animals in smaller communities. Fulbe women interact with their neighbours but are not always visible in public gatherings and meetings outside Fulbe communities.

Meanwhile, Kanuri families tend to follow more of a model of breadwinner masculinity with men responsible for providing for the family through income generating activities and the women responsible for cooking, cleaning and physical and moral upbringing of children. Often Kanuri men and Kanuri women spend their days apart in gender segregated groups, coming together at night at home. Even in communities which used to have more of a breadwinner masculinity approach, women are increasingly having to shoulder the burdens of providing for the family.

However, across ethnic groups, the conflict has changed household dynamics with women now fighting to maintain some control and power over household expenditure as stakes are higher due to increased poverty levels and because they do not trust that men will act with the best interests of the whole family in mind. Some men are unhappy about this increased empowerment and feel women having control over resources in this manner will diminish their power. One way this is more marked is practices around kulle (seclusion). While fewer women and girls practice kulle than was previously the case as everyone needs to contribute to the family during these times of economic hardship, respondents reported newly married girls being restricted in their freedom of movement and not allowed by their husbands to leave the home for the first six months of marriage. During this time, they are unable to attend school, join community events or participate in programmes run by organisations, for example around skills acquisition. Respondents said husbands were a key barrier to girls' economic success and improvement. They believed the aim of this enforced seclusion was for men to exert power over their new wives and show girls their lives had changed and they needed to comply with instructions. After these six months, girls were often pregnant and faced restrictions in what they were able to do due to being in the later months of pregnancy and caring for newborn babies after which they had become socialised into their roles as caretakers of the family. Respondents felt that men tended to assert power more over younger women than older women in order to condition their minds to be submissive, stating that older

women had already been socialised in this manner. Older women also have knowledge and skills to navigate and negotiate marital life compared to younger women as well as grown children who can support them by sending money and in other way whereas the power dynamic between older men and younger women is starker.

These economic dynamics have been linked with increased rates of domestic violence and abuse as described above but also higher rates of separation and divorce. In Mubi, respondents spoke of men divorcing women once the food her parents have provided for her on their wedding day has run out as he is unable to take care of her. They spoke of young men getting married in spite of their inability to provide and how this leads to cancellation of the wedding or divorce on the instigation of the girl's family sometimes within a matter of months. While young men are seen by brides' families as having deceived them into thinking they have more money that is the case in reality, young men feel trapped. Society requires them to marry and set up a household in order to be seen as adults and gain community respect so, not having the means to be able to do, they often resort to embellishing their wealth. Men of all ages spoke about how these changed realities had affected their sense of self. They shared feelings of hopelessness saying there was nothing they could do as circumstances were beyond their control. They remembered the number of bags of crops they used to harvest and give away which seemed like a distant memory. They spoke of psychological impacts and physiological manifestations such as hypertension. Many men were grateful for their wives and sisters for stepping up and providing but said older women tended to be the ones more patient with older men, perhaps because they had had a longer history of passing through good and bad times together. They claimed younger men had more difficulty and felt their wives were not submissive and respectful but would seek divorce if you were unable to provide. One man in Girei LGA characterised women as "taking all the credit as children see they cater and bring everything to the house. It is the mother who cooks and brings food to the child and the child also sees that she is the one that goes out to get money. They don't see their father doing anything. The love and care they used to have for the father is now on one side – it is all on the mother now." However, some men also spoke of roles shifting as times had changed. They spoke about men taking care of small children, engaging in cooking and house chores or fetching charcoal and firewood when the woman was outside the home pursuing livelihood activities. Their wives appreciated their doing these tasks and these men claimed they had happier and more supportive marriages than the men who did not do any housework or childrearing but expected their wives to fulfil these roles as well as generate income for the family.

This section has outlined how realities for all genders have shifted in the past two years, largely due to conflict and security dynamics. However, while gender roles and responsibilities have changed, gender norms are taking longer to transform. Some interventions such as those by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) which engage women to increase their economic empowerment are sensitive to these dynamics, bringing in spouses and teaching couples how to manage the household economy, budget and plan. Couples are encouraged to discuss and make joint decisions about household finances and interventions are in place to dissuade men from being violent through the following of a curriculum over many weeks. According to a woman respondent who works with communities on these changing gender roles, “Men now see more reason why they need to support their wives and involve women in decision making at home. They both discuss needs and prioritisation. One man in Mubi asked us why are you coming with this approach just now? It means I have been a perpetrator for years, women have been dying in silence and I have not been doing anything.”

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POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

After having outlined the conflict, security and gender dynamics in Adamawa State, this section now turns to examining the key results achieved and challenges faced of policy and programmatic interventions as well as lessons that can be learned. While the author spoke with a number of people working for government ministries and departments, security agencies, international and Adamawa based NGOs and UN agencies, asking each to reflect on results, challenges and lessons what follows is far from comprehensive as it was not possible to meet every MDA, NGO and UN agency working in the state.

Results

Improved policy and legislation: As of 2017, legislation applicable in the state gave a maximum of 14 years with the option of fine and the prosecution had to produce witnesses and prove penile penetration to sustain a conviction of rape. According to lawyers who tried GBV cases, many cases failed as the evidence produced did not meet the beyond reasonable doubt standard. Even where courts convicted perpetrators of rape, sentences given were could be as little as two or three years in length. Adamawa State has since amended its Penal Code (gazetted in May 2019) with the new legislation specifying a minimum sentence of 21 years and maximum of life imprisonment for rape without the option of fine. The Penal Code expands penetration to include objects and any part of the body and removing the requirement to have witnesses. It also included new offences of sexual assault and sexual harassment. It increased the punishment for kidnapping, cattle rustling and abduction. The state also passed the Proceeds of Crime Act and Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA). The latter provides witnesses and the accused the right to counsel during police interrogation and promises to reduce time taken from the start to conclusion of a case. The Ministry of Justice has also renovated courts outside Mubi with the support of partners such as the European Union funded Rule of Law and Anti Corruption programme (ROLAC) programme, which is implemented by the British Council. There are currently five High Courts in Yola and judicial divisions in Ganye, Gombi, Mubi and Numan and plans to create divisions in Guyuk and Michika. These divisions have resident counsel and the MoJ has posted lawyers to work with judges in these areas. While many MoJ lawyers have gone through training on alternative dispute resolution (ADR), no mediation centres exist in the state and the multi-door

court system planned by the former Attorney General whereby people could come to one building for mediation before escalating to the court has yet to reach fruition. Nevertheless, the ACJA opens the possibility of setting up Special Courts, for example for GBV. ROLAC started discussions with the Chief Judge of Adamawa State about the possibility of setting up a Special Court for GBV and he was open to this idea. A GBV Special Court could redress some of the problems with court procedure outlined above by training prosecutors, defence lawyers, judges and court personnel on how to handle GBV cases, the Chief Judge issuing a practice direction and requiring special protective procedures for survivors such as providing testimony in camera. The State House of Assembly also passed legislation on disability rights that included provision for an attached Commission. Two years later, no such Commission has been established although the State Government now says it will create a Special Rights Agency which has departments focusing on children's rights, disability gender rights and human rights. The law creating such an agency has yet to be passed. Similarly, the last administration established an Adamawa State Agency for Peace, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction by executive order. Its mandate included conducting mediation with conflict parties, undertaking commissions and inquiries into violence and making these findings public. An Executive Chairman was appointed and staff seconded to start work. However after elections led to political transition, the current Governor dismissed all heads of agencies. He is currently considering next steps for the Agency.

Increased access to services: While access to service remain challenging, particularly for IDPs and people in areas with significant levels of insecurity, many respondents reported improvements. Children are now

more able to go to school with communities having recovered from fear of abduction to some extent. Attitudes towards education are also changing. For girls in particular whose parents removed them from schools after abductions in neighbouring states, this trend has been welcome although parents still refrain from sending girls to school in highly insecure areas with worries having been re-triggered by the abductions from Dapchi in Yobe state. Before many girls would be neutral about education, rather focusing on marriage, now, girls are starting to express their desire to go to school and start a business, even if they are already married and have children. Yet, children continue to face barriers to accessing good quality education in the state. While Adamawa does not provide free education, the current Governor has announced plans to introduce free education in all primary and secondary schools. Interpretations of religion continue to be a major barrier particularly for girls who are not allowed to go to school or who are withdrawn from school in their early teenage years so they can get married. There are insufficient special education needs teachers for the children with disabilities in the state and special education needs schools are in urgent need for renovation. Girls with disabilities in particular are less likely to access education as parents think their gender and disability status makes education not relevant or important for them. When it comes to healthcare, as a result of interventions by NGOs, philanthropists and agencies such as the Victim Support Fund (VSF), many health facilities have been rehabilitated. New products and equipment provided, health centres are better stocked and personnel are engaging in public outreach, for example on family planning, and immunisations. As a result, health workers have seen improvements in health status with provision of free vaccines and mosquito nets leading to reduced cases of cholera and malaria. Response to cholera outbreaks have been smoother due to the support of agencies such as Medecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the Red Cross. Health personnel also spoke of more pregnant women coming for antenatal check-ups than before due to outreach on its importance and accessing health clinics for delivery. However, accessing healthcare remains challenging, particularly in rural areas of the state. Respondents shared stories of men preventing women from accessing healthcare and not allowing their children to be immunised against diseases. Many women in rural areas continue to give birth at home with no antenatal check-ups. As a result of early marriage, there have been many young girls who have given birth who experience vesicovaginal fistula (VVF) and are ostracised from families if they do not receive treatment. Not only do barriers to affordable healthcare lead to disability for example through untreated snakebites, lack of polio vaccinations or cataract surgeries that are too expensive but people with disabilities interviewed spoke of

not receiving proper healthcare at clinics. They said that health personnel often have little knowledge of their condition, that premises are not accessible and that there are no interpreters through whom they can communicate with doctors, nurses and health workers. Agencies have also constructed and rehabilitated water points to enable access to clean drinking water. However, progress in this area is less marked and many communities in Adamawa state do not have good water supply with people drinking from rivers or local wells and having health issues as a result. Some areas experience annual flooding which not only leads to displacement and damaged homes but high levels of water have the potential to contaminate drinking sources leading to cases of cholera. In 2018 and 2019 there had been recent cholera outbreaks in Mubi and Yola with fatalities recorded in Mubi. In Mubi, people also complained about water shortages as boreholes become dry and people have to travel far distances for drinking water. The Mubi CPSP engaged the Ministry of Works to address these issues of water shortage and flooding and ministry officials mapped out problem areas and solutions but this area of work stopped due to lack of funds. Women's access to public spaces, particularly for those with disabilities, remains challenging. Women with disabilities spoke of problems accessing public spaces in general whether this be banks, markets, schools, health clinics, courts and places of employment. They spoke of not being able to fetch water, either as they were not able to reach water points or as others would jump their place in the queue as they were unable to see them doing this. They told stories of not being able to access security agencies. According to one woman in Yola: "If we take cases to the police station, they do not consider our cases professionally. They are not educated to know how to handle cases. There is no way to communicate if you are deaf or blind. They cannot deal with our issues if cannot communicate." She also shared a story of a soldier dragging her from her vehicle at a checkpoint and slapping her because she took time to exit her vehicle. Of security agents she said, "They treat people with disabilities differently than nondisabled people. Some of them do not know the case of disabled people and offer no consideration while others actively maltreat you." Respondents were appreciative of efforts made to develop a list of sign language interpreters for the justice system supported by ROLAC to expand access to deaf and hearing-impaired people but said that this was the only concrete intervention that aimed to expand their access to services. Respondents also reported improved levels of security and lower levels of human rights violations by hunters, vigilantes and other such groups. While police have not returned to many rural areas post-conflict or were not there even before violence, these groups fill gaps in security provision yet their actions have caused

problems, for example when they engage in arrests, physical violence and detention of suspects. However, respondents reported improvements as a result of MCN's interventions in Mubi and Girei. Members spoke of how they were now enlightened, understand their limits and better engage with the police. They said they had stopped beating, molesting and using undue force to restrain suspects and now hand them over for investigation and prosecution as well as join forces with the police in joint patrols where they used to operate independently. It is still early days for this intervention and medium to long term results remain to be seen.



Attitudes towards education are also changing. For girls in particular whose parents removed them from schools after abductions in neighbouring states, this trend has been welcome although parents still refrain from sending girls to school in highly insecure areas with worries having been re-triggered by the abductions from Dapchi in Yobe state. Before many girls would be neutral about education, rather focusing on marriage, now, girls are starting to express their desire to go to school and start a business, even if they are already married and have children. ”

Community conflict management structures and agencies more inclusive and responsive: In the last two years, some communities in Adamawa have seen practices of individuals and agencies working together to solve community issues starting to become institutionalised and, at the same time, institutions whether these be state security agencies or those of community and religious leadership become more inclusive and responsive in their decision making. These changes are largely limited to areas where organisations such as MCN and SFCG have supported CSOs to bring together and support multi-stakeholder conflict mitigation and peacebuilding mechanisms but results are promising and such interventions could have wider ranging impact if implemented at scale. SFCG takes a tiered approach with peace architecture at community, ward, LGA and state levels acting, referring and reporting to each other. These systems not only take more proactive action than was

previously the case but result in information sharing to government actors which have responsibility to act to prevent but did not know to what was happening at community level and/ or did not have advocates urging action to facilitate timely respond beforehand. MCN takes common approaches at LGA level and its CPSPs have been hands-on at mitigating the potential for conflict, for example through demarcating grazing routes and reserves and ensuring farmers do not plant along them. GIZ's programme to improve ward and LGA governance is also starting to yield results with Maiha LGA starting to implement a master plan for action which included active involvement of people living in Maiha, including women, in its development. At the time of writing, this process was about to start in Mubi North and Mubi South LGAs with plans for Gombi and Hong in the future. Institutions are also becoming more welcoming and responsive to people who turn to them for help. For example, police officers in the FSU in Girei spoke about how they had changed their approach after undergoing MCN training. One of them said, “We realised what we were doing was wrong. Now, we know more about rape, how to welcome complainants into the station and build rapport whereas before would interact in a rough way with people. We advise colleagues also to be welcoming as otherwise people will fear to enter the police station.” They speak of the creation of the FSU leading to police in their area being more responsive to rape survivors and leading to improved investigations. Women in the area validated these claims. However, progress has been far from even with the FSU in Mubi North reporting no cases of sexual violence brought to them since its creation in October 2018 and officers not engaging in any outreach to let people in Mubi know of the FSU's existence and encourage reporting. Even agencies working on GBV in Mubi were unaware of the existence of the FSU in the town saying the police do not give survivors any incentives to report by not talking about the services available and assuring them of good care and confidentiality.

Community leaders starting to be more inclusive and responsive: MCN interventions have also focused on training community leaders, scribes and women relatives on conflict management, human rights and record keeping. This intervention has been met with high levels of appreciation from the community leaders who have undergone it with all community leaders interviewed talking of how it changed their thinking and decision making. The actions of the Haikimi of Girei, who is trying to replicate the training for all the Mai Jimilla, Ardos and Mai Angwa who report to him using the resources of the Adamawa Emirate Council to do so, is a signifier of how well this intervention has been received. Community leaders spoke of how they are required to engage in

mediation, dialogue and conflict management processes but receive no training in how to do this. Their conflict management capacities have improved as have practices of keeping records of decisions made so people are able to refer to these decisions in case of future disputes. As a result of this intervention, leaders have set up *salhu* committees that manage problems, for example through examining crop damage in farming areas and fixing an appropriate compensation amount for the pastoralist whose animals were responsible to pay with this resolution documented in writing or by ensuring grazing routes and reserves are kept free for pastoralists. Despite this promising start, results have yet to be felt in changed perceptions and increased effectiveness of community leaders in all areas. Respondents spoke of the challenges surrounding these institutions and perceptions of bias, corruption and self-interest although some of them also said that leaders were starting to be more responsive, for example helping rape survivors to access healthcare. While respondents in some areas felt leaders had worked with communities to proactively reduce the likelihood of conflict, for example through interventions to bring farmers and pastoralists together, respondents in other areas felt these leaders still failed to offer “a listening ear” and should be more pre-emptive, for example by telling farmers not to farm on grazing routes and pastoralists that they will be arrested in they damage crops in farming areas.

Rising awareness of human rights, including those of women and girls, and (some) reporting of human rights violations: Respondents said many communities showed higher levels of rights education due to a number of sensitisation campaigns on human rights, including the right to bodily integrity and freedom from GBV. These campaigns have taken the form of advocacy visits to religious leaders who then use their time in churches and mosques to preach about GBV, programmes on radio stations and in person sessions in communities. The culture of silence is partially breaking in cases of sexual violence committed against children although it still holds firm for sexual violence against adults and other forms of GBV including marital rape, domestic violence and abuse and early and forced marriage where attitudes remain little changed. While more women are wanting to be involved in community and family decision making and some men show some increased openness to women's participation in decision making, change has been more felt for older women rather than younger women and girls. Respondents also found attitudes between men in urban and rural areas differ with more intense interventions required to shift perceptions of men in rural areas while most programming

tends to focus on urban men. Nevertheless, campaigns have led to increased reporting of cases of sexual violence against children to health centres such as the SARC which had provided free services to 155 survivors between April 2018 and July 2019. They have also led to some higher levels of reporting to police stations although survivors are still more likely to seek healthcare compared to going to the police station. The Yola State CID receives two to three cases of rape a week from all over the state, mostly of minors up to the age 16 years. Reporting has increased with the establishment of the SARC as well as ongoing sensitisation and awareness. People are now more aware of the possibility of health interventions preventing HIV transmission and pregnancy. Having an established FSU and NSCDC desk officer for GBV means survivors and families know to whom in security agencies to report unlike before although problems remain as discussed below. Having a SARC which contains doctors and nurses trained in providing free medical care and counselling had led to improved level of services and increased reporting as survivors and their families know where to go although challenges remain as will be discussed below.

Respondents also spoke of some girls being more able to delay marriage compared to two years ago. While early and forced marriage is still widespread, in some families, girls are able to convince their parents and mothers are able to speak up for their daughters. Increasingly, girls tell parents they want to continue their education and learn skills before getting married. According to a girls' rights advocate, girls in some communities are now marrying aged 16 to 18 years whereas they would marry between 13 and 15 years four years ago.

Challenges

Organisational bureaucracy and release of funds: This challenge cuts across many organisations operating in Adamawa, including MCN. It was raised by respondents working for government MDAs, NGOs and UN agencies. When it comes to MCN, at the time of writing, no CPSPs are meeting in Adamawa state for this reason. CPSP facilitators spoke of conflict that may have been resolved non-violently if work had continued. For example, the Yola South CPSP was conducting mediation between Njoboli and Njoboliyo, neighbouring communities which had land issues. This work stopped due to lack of funds. In July 2019, conflict led to destruction of property and injuries. Whether the CPSP's intervention could have stopped this is unknown but this incident is one example of conflict on which MCN was working which led to violence in the absence of interventions.

Reduced and decreasing funding levels for Adamawa:

As of 31 July 2019, \$326.9m of the \$847.7m or 38.6 percent of funds required for humanitarian response for Adamawa, Borno and Yobe in 2019 had been received.²⁵ Most of this funding is for Borno which remains more conflict affected and in humanitarian crisis than its neighbouring states. However, this lack of funds for Adamawa has significant impact. Many agencies have shifted their programming away from Yola, even though some IDPs continue to live in the state capital, to northern Adamawa with work run out of offices in Mubi. While many agencies were present in Adamawa in 2017, not many are operational in Yola now and the ones that remain tend to be UN agencies and a couple of NGOs who battle to access funding. As a result, high level advocacy and conversations are focused on funding and prioritising action rather than strategic engagement. Respondents further spoke of funding for northern Adamawa reducing and the likelihood of having to close down this work also. OCHA carried out an assessment on inter-communal violence to see how organisations can respond but there is even less funding available for humanitarian needs caused by this kind of violence as it is seen as political in nature and donors do not want to engage. Some communities have queried this differential approach asking why actors are responding to displacement caused by AOG linked violence but not farmer-pastoralist conflict despite high levels of needs. While humanitarian programming is scaling down, development and peacebuilding programming has yet to scale up. Yet, needs remain. As mentioned above, Madagali, Michika and Mubi see cyclical displacement and the context revolving between emergency and recovery due to AOG attacks and clashes with security forces causing people to flee. A respondent said, “The biggest change in Mubi is availability of service providers on ground – this keeps decreasing day by day and people complain there are no services.” The number of health services in particular has fallen which particularly affects work on GBV. At present, no healthcare is provided free of charge in Mubi with organisations working on health tending to focus more on Michika and Madagali. Moreover, despite best efforts, protection, gender sensitivity, equality and mainstreaming in humanitarian response have suffered as a result. According to the latest humanitarian funding overview, only 12.4 percent of funds needed to work on GBV and 16.4 percent of the funds required for child protection in 2019 have been received over halfway into the year.²⁶ In general, respondents spoke about lack of both resources and capacity when it comes to protection. A respondent characterised programming taking a more blanket approach and not considering different needs according to age, disability and gender. While some organisations support people with disabilities, for example by distributing mobility vehicles, disability analysis and programming is

uncommon. Agencies that were working on women's inclusion in peacebuilding, such as UN Women, have seen funding come to an end. A representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) who had been working on addressing human rights violations with agencies referring cases to him for discussion with the military, security agencies, NHRC and other relevant actors, left Adamawa in June 2019 due to lack of funding. The Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG), a coordination mechanism for actors working on protection, led by UNHCR, has weakened with protection monitors in communities struggling to report violations. Issues with funding the humanitarian response overlay lack of finances and budgetary issues when it comes to the state government. Although the Ministry of Justice undertook an assessment meant to set up a multi-door courtroom system, championed by the former Attorney General, and ministry officials were trained in ADR, there were insufficient High Court judges to meet present needs let alone start engaging in ADR. Implementation of ACJA will require more judges to be hired by the state to deal with increased High Court case load. The State Government has also struggled to maintain infrastructure such as boreholes built by humanitarian actors. The Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiatives (PCNI) donated an ambulance to the SARC but it remains parked as there is no money to hire a driver and pay for fuel and maintenance. This lack of transportation makes it difficult for the SARC to respond to calls for assistance, particularly those that come in the evenings and night and to survivors who live outside Yola. Nurses and doctors on duty have provided their own money for transportation to survivors from out of town in many cases. The SARC steering committee is also unable to reach places with high GBV prevalence for sensitisation due to transport challenges. People also struggle to access security agencies who often require them to pay to investigate cases or to buy case files, statement sheets and forms. According to a police officer working in the Girei LGA FSU, finances is one of the biggest challenges the FSU faces: “It is mostly poor parents who bring cases [of sexual violence] and do not have money or resources to [give us to] carry out assignments.” He said police officers sometime pay for items from their own pockets and transport survivors in their own cars as there is no official vehicle to take them to hospital, saying “All this deters people coming to the police. The survivor needs support and by asking them to bring things, you are adding more trouble to them.” Police officers in Yola agreed with this evaluation, adding that lack of comprehensive investigation due to insufficient finances leads to delays in evidence collection and means they do not have the corroborating evidence required to bring prosecutions.

²⁵ OCHA, 'Nigeria: Humanitarian Funding Overview,' 31 July 2019

²⁶ Ibid.

Access to areas: Many respondents spoke of not being able to access certain communities due to high levels of insecurity and as roads are not passable, especially during the rainy season. Work has had to be postponed in locations where it was planned and contracts awarded due to lack of access. Some locations require military escort to access and organisations, particularly after abductions of aid workers in Rann and near Damasak in Borno by ISWAP are understandably reassessing their security protocols. While Madagali continues to bear the brunt of fighting between AOGs and security forces, most actors are in villages such as Gulac and Shuwa rather than being able to work in Madagali town. The agencies such as Danish Refugee Commission (DRC) and World Food Programme (WFP) that do work in Madagali town are overwhelmed, unable to meet needs and focus mostly on livelihoods and food distribution. Despite the high numbers of women who experienced abduction by AOGs and reports of SEA committed by soldiers, CJTF and vigilante members as well as richer community men, there are no GBV actors working in Madagali town.

Lack of coordination between agencies and with government: While mechanisms exist in the state which are supposed to bring together government MDAs, UN agencies and Adamawa based and international NGOs, working together remains challenging. For example, a number of actors are engaged in separate work on domesticating the Child Rights Act when a coordinated approach based on common stakeholder mapping and political economy analysis, pooling of resources and joint engagement with legislators, executive and communities would yield more fruit. Some key agencies (including the British Council) were seen as not engaging in relevant sector meetings where such strategising and joint working could take place. However, there are signs of improvement. The sexual and gender-based violence working group in Mubi was said by its members to be getting stronger by the day with regular GBV case management conferences and relevant training conducted for all stakeholders.

Political will, joined up approaches and sustainability: Adamawa is currently experiencing political transition between parties after the elections in March 2019. The new Governor who took up office at the end of May had yet to announce Commissioners at the time of writing. From Madagali, one of the LGAs worst hit by violence, himself, respondents believed he would be more receptive and proactive when it comes to northern Adamawa compared to the previous administration which respondents felt lacked will, was uninterested in engagement, slowed down planned activities due to onerous bureaucracy and focused on closing down IDP camps as it did not want to be known as 'an IDP state.' Signs are more promising with the present

administration and State Humanitarian Forum meetings held monthly now see more representatives from MDAs than was previously the case, showing increased government interest. Yet, respondents felt the new Governor, despite acting as Governor for a few months in 2014, lacked experience of taking peacebuilding approaches and working with humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors. Some respondents criticised what they saw as overly militarised or security force heavy actions, for example through increased deployment of police and checkpoints and crackdowns on *yan shilla* rather than engagement. They believed this heavy-handed approach was creating more tensions and asked for government to engage with citizens in more meaningful ways. Respondents also cited the Governor's statement that he wanted to approve all activities in the state and proposal that all funding to NGOs and UN agencies would go through the Office of the Accountant General as examples of non-constructive ways of engaging with civil society. More efforts are needed to bring together government MDAs, NGOs and UN agencies in the spirit of genuine partnership. Opportunities to rework relations between NGOs, UN agencies and the state must be maximised once Commissioners are appointed. Continued sustainability of interventions and government ownership have, so far, proved to be disappointing. Over 500 cases of cholera, an easily preventable disease, have been reported this year. Boreholes built by humanitarian agencies costing millions of Naira were handed over to the government. They are now not working as repairs costing relatively little have not been made and people of surrounding communities no longer having proper access to water. There is an urgent need to rethink means of systems strengthening, capacity building and sustainability by humanitarian, development and peacebuilding agencies and relevant government MDAs alike, particularly given reduction in donor funding and prospects for resources to reduce even further in coming months.

Capacity and commitment gaps and pursuit of personal benefit among MDAs and civil society: Respondents spoke of government officials and civil society representatives in Adamawa starting from a lower capacity base than their equivalents in other parts of the country such as Lagos. As described above, there is no institutionalised system of training community leaders in mediation, conflict resolution, leadership, gender or human rights despite the important roles they play. While government officials have been trained and retrained a number of times, for example Ministry of Justice officials on ADR and Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development officials on gender, capacity gaps remain in MDAs as training on all key subjects has not been possible for all officials. Furthermore, while many officials showed

clear passion, some of the people assigned to work on particular issues show little genuine interest in this work. For example, when it comes to GBV, some SARC steering committee members representing ministries and department regularly miss meetings and show little commitment and some police officers assigned to the FSU make little efforts to encourage people to report or investigate cases. While some CSOs and NGOs in Adamawa are long-standing, many organisations are registered for political reasons by people who plan to run for political office or were started with the coming of humanitarian actors to apply for funds as partners. As a result, the depth of civil society, particularly outside Yola, is not ideal with many organisations now dormant. Indeed, many respondents shared stories where government officials and politicians have asked for interventions in their particular geographical areas and asked for their 'own take' in return for cooperation of their MDA. There have been cases where MDAs have asked for project funding to go via them, believed to be in order to maximise opportunities to inflate prices so individual officials can benefit personally. This pursuit of personal benefit from humanitarian and development funds is not limited to government. Respondents spoke about cases where they discovered selection of beneficiaries had been skewed to benefit certain families, ethnic groups or religious groups who have relative power. Often community leaders who are asked to select participants, were said to pick their own family members rather than the people who were meant to benefit for both meetings to discuss programme plans as well as interventions themselves. According to one man, "You see them invite ten people from their own house so they make up 10 out of 40 people picked. This is not fair. When you choose people, you should pick people from different places and groups, gather them and ask for input into intervention so people are involved [in design]." Another respondent spoke of distributing farm inputs and machineries for group use only to find that the person with money and power would give the rest of their group a small amount of money and take the equipment for himself. Women can often be left out of these processes. According to a woman in Mubi, "The help does not reach all people. NGOs will ask who is the village head and he will bring mostly men and some women." It has proven difficult to strengthen the capacity of all government officials, civil society representatives and community leaders due to finite time and funding. For example, Adamawa has thousands of community leaders so MCN has had to make specific decisions about which level of community leadership to engage and in what areas. While it has plans to train all the Haikimis in Adamawa with hopes that they will step down training received to those who report to them, the level this will trickle down in practice without concerted training of trainer approaches and supervision is unknown.



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Weak and politicised media: The primary media of transmission of information in Adamawa, as in the rest of northern Nigeria, is radio, yet media in the state tends to be weak, politicised and engaged in inaccurate reporting. According to one peacebuilder who engages with media, "State and private media are working to counter one another so what state media reports is different from what the private media is reporting." It is difficult to get media owners, who are themselves involved in politics, to agree ways to improve the level of journalism in the state. There are also areas in the state which are little covered by state media and do not have any local media in operation. This state of affairs makes it difficult to dispel rumours. For example, a number of respondents spoke of times where Mubi residents were in fear and planning to flee to Yola due to rumours of AOG attacks which turned out later on to be false. The nature of Adamawa's media landscape impacts negatively on the conflict. Journalists engage in political rhetoric and conflict insensitive reporting. Adamawa residents do not have sources of accurate, unbiased and fact-based reporting. In this way, media are likely to contribute to inflamed tensions rather than engage in responsible journalism that contributes to peace.

Lack of domestication of human rights laws: While Adamawa has made significant progress since 2017 with the passing of the amended Penal Code, ACJA and disability rights legislation, there are five human rights laws, particularly those concerning the rights of women that are yet to be domesticated by the state. Domestication of these laws is necessary to provide the bedrock of protection of human rights required for work

around realisation of these rights. The first is the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act) which was passed by the last State House of Assembly but did not receive executive assent before the elections. While some VAPP Act provisions, for example expansion of the definition of rape beyond penile penetration, have been reflected in the amended Penal Code, the rest of it needs to be domesticated into Adamawa state law. The second is the Child Rights Act which faced particular resistance in the last administration due to provisions around the age of marriage and pushback against the idea of children having rights. Its name was changed to the Child Protection Act with provisions around the age of marriage dropped and was at the committee state in the State House of Assembly when elections took place. Concerted advocacy is needed, particularly to build community support for prohibition of early and forced marriage if this Act is to be passed in a way that has any meaning. The third piece of legislation is the Gender and Equal Opportunities Act which was also at the committee stage before the 2019 elections. The current Governor has made initial statements against this legislation so engagement with him is required. The fourth law is that creating a Special Rights Agency. As mentioned above, this agency would look at children's rights, gender, human rights and people with disabilities and complement the role of the NHRC. The final law is domestication of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa also known as the Kampala Convention.

Slow pace of institutional change on sexual violence: A number of agencies have engaged in institutional strengthening to improve GBV response such as training police officers and health workers. However, they have struggled to implement many of areas taught in these sessions. Representatives from the Yola State CID had three main issues with the way that the police continue to operate. Firstly, though trained in the importance of confidentiality and anonymity in sexual violence cases, they are not able to offer these to survivors due to institutional set up and attitudes of other officers. As their office is within the main building, survivors and their friends and family need to pass through main areas to access the FSU. According to one officer, "When people see a little girl coming, they know it is case of rape and will start to interview. There is no confidentiality and [the survivor] goes through a lot of [police] process. It is not supposed to be so." In line with best practice, they want a separate office for the FSU only to be established to make the police more welcoming for survivors and so other officers not trained in handling these cases do not start conducting interviews of

survivors who later on need to be re-interviewed by FSU officers. Next, they also criticised the lack of separate places of detention to keep children alleged to be perpetrating crime with the result that people under 18 are kept with adult detainees. Lastly, although cases of sexual violence are supposed to be transferred by police stations around the state to state CID according to the directive of the former Commissioner of Police, in practice police officers at LGA level continue to investigate some cases and take them to magistrates' court while referring others to state CID. Moreover, attitudes towards the importance of cases of sexual violence and the FSU differ across the police. In many cases, rape has been charged as assault which attracts a lesser sentence. Some of the police officers trained to run FSUs have since been transferred to another location or to another division within the same police station and struggle to balance these responsibilities. In at least one police station, the FSU was closed down before being reopened due to NGO intervention. During the course of the assessment, it also became clear that knowledge of amendments to the Penal Code and ACJA was not widespread.²⁷ Police officers in a number of FSUs in different LGAs and magistrates were unaware of and had not seen this new legislation. As recently as mid-July, there was at least one case of a magistrate sentencing a man convicted of rape to a four-year prison term in contravention of the new maximum term of 21 years provided by the amended Penal Code. Cases of sexual violence continued to be settled out of court by police officers, vigilante groups and families alike.

Patriarchal norms hinder women's participation and voice without concerted efforts: Despite significant efforts made to sensitise and change attitudes, patriarchal norms continue to be a barrier to realisation of the human rights of women. Two areas where this is most felt are when it comes to involvement in family, community and political decision making and ending GBV. Socialisation into certain beliefs prevents women from participating and sanctions them if they do. Women of all ages are not supposed to speak up in public, particularly if (older) men are present. Many times, women continue to be excluded from decision spaces which tend to be all-male affairs. As a result of this exclusion, women often lack the information necessary for participation even in spaces to which they are invited. While these norms are changing with women more represented in decision making spaces, they hinder meaningful participation as many women and men have internalised this taboo around women being outspoken. Similar norms prevent young people of all genders from taking part in community discussions. These norms are

²⁷ Please note that plans are underway to distribute copies of these Acts to all police stations and judges in Adamawa state and to conduct training on their provisions which may address this lack of knowledge.

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why holding separate discussions for groups of women and young people to spread information, articulate issues and plan to bring them to the table are so needed. However, many programmes have not sustained emphasis on enabling women's participation and voice. MCN will be used to illustrate how, despite the best intentions, focus can slip. The sulhu committees set up by CPSPs have between 10 and 12 members including community leaders, religious leaders and representatives of farming and pastoralist communities but very few women. This lack of women's representation points to insufficient work done on the importance of women's inclusion and the need to rethink who has influence in and can represent communities. Moreover, attention can tend to focus on making up numbers without looking at quality of representation, either by supporting women to contribute for example through women only sessions before main meetings or by ensuring women who are invited have the skills and capabilities to reach out to other women and girls to reflect their concerns. For example, MCN trained women title holders, mostly the wives and sisters of community leaders, so they would be better able to resolve disputes but has found it difficult to measure effectiveness. While some of these women play important roles in their communities, doing so is not automatic just because of links to male community leaders. Although male community leaders were asked to fill in and submit training forms, keep records in record keeping centres of decisions made and provided with ongoing mentoring for months, there were no such systems put in place for women trained. A better approach would have been to map the women with power and influence in communities to whom people turn, train them in leadership, conflict resolution, human rights and other skills and work with them to mobilise women to articulate concerns and reflect these into community platforms including CPSPs, CAFs and sulhu committees. While MCN has trained women involved in community groups in dispute resolution, this training was not as intensive as for community leaders, on-going mentoring is not provided and processes are not in place to ensure feedback and monitoring of activities.

Lack of holistic responses makes progress on GBV

difficult: The GBV section above addressed challenges currently faced by survivors. At present, interventions have focused on service provision without taking steps to institutionalise health and psychosocial care and on taking cases to court without taking steps to incentivise reporting and pursuit of cases. Although the SARC in Yola was widely praised as providing an easily-identifiable place for survivors to go for help which was provided at high quality and free of charge, service provision outside the state capital is weak. In these cases, survivors can attain services at the SARC if aware of its existence and with the means to come to Yola, pay for health services in their locality where personnel are not adequately trained and confidentiality is not guaranteed or not access services. As a result, many survivors outside Yola do not even access healthcare let alone counselling and psychosocial support. Moreover, levels of education on GBV in rural communities are very low with most people unaware of what to do and where to go and the culture of silence around GBV still strong. There is very high demand across Adamawa for SARCs to be established at the LGA level that not only provide services but bring relevant stakeholders together to improve response and conduct community sensitisation. Furthermore, there are few interventions focused on removing survivors from situations of violence, for example if the perpetrator is a member of the family, resulting in a number of cases where violence has been repeated. SARC steering committee members spoke of “women coming in who have nowhere to stay and so experience multiple sexual violence.” SARC personnel said they had women coming into the SARC having experienced sexual violence on multiple occasions. There have been cases of girl survivors of sexual violence brought to hospital or police station by passers-by whom nurses or police officers have had to house in their own homes before any guardian was found. In the absence of protection programmes for survivors and witnesses of violence and no accessible safe house where they may stay, survivors also face threats and attacks if they report violence and pursue cases. The lack of work combating stigma means not only is the stigma survivors experience

a form of re-victimising and violence in and of itself but survivors disincentivised from reporting. A major gap continues to be lack of work on prevention of GBV. At present, community sensitisation tends to focus on informing people on the content of laws, telling women, girls and their families to be careful and encouraging survivors to come forward to seek healthcare and report to the police. Such work can be counterproductive as the focus is on the behaviour of (potential) survivors and the need for punishment of (alleged) perpetrators rather than trying to change attitudes and behaviours that prevent survivors seeking help and lead to lower levels of GBV being perpetrated. IRC is one of few organisations that integrate preventative approaches into some of its work. Its Engaging Men through Accountable Practices methodology is a 16-week programme which encourages men to change their attitudes, stand up for and become allies to women and girls. At the same time, IRC encourages women action groups to stand for and support other women and girls and provide psychological first aid before referring for further treatment. It brings women and men to talk about ideal society and homes free from violence and is starting to see impressive results.

Not reaching most marginalised such as particular ethnic groups, young women and people with disabilities: Programmes have also found it difficult to reach some of the most marginalised in society. This difficulty in doing so is partly due to lack of proper context analysis. For example, respondents working in Madagali and Michika were self-reflective of the fact that they had not involved any members from the Matakam community in their platforms and interventions only to realise the extent of their marginalisation after working in the community for some time. They now believe that their efforts are not reaching Matakam people as a result of this oversight despite their greater need compared to other groups. Many interventions focused on women's empowerment have also failed to reach adolescent girls and young women who face particular barriers and challenges as discussed above. As a result, while some older women are now more able to participate in decision making and have been helped to rebuild livelihoods, these interventions have not benefitted a younger cohort who have different needs and concerns and are often not able to articulate these fully to older women. A third group that have seen little change in their status and options are people with disabilities. Respondents spoke of no progress having been made despite a number of government and non-government interventions in their localities. There were notable exceptions to this trend with ROLAC which works on improving access to justice and IRI which focuses on political participation mentioned as being particularly inclusive of people with disabilities in design and

implementation of programmes but many people with disabilities spoke of their non-inclusion in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming.

Lessons

Work at the institutional and structural level is slow and painful but necessary and needs to be balanced with individual and community level interventions:

Supporting institutional change is a long-term process, subject to setbacks and frustrating due to bureaucracy, rent-seeking behaviour and lack of political will. Potential is high but seeing any results at all takes time. Conversely, interventions focused on individuals and communities, although not without challenges, can yield quicker impacts but not at scale. Given weak governance, individuals, communities and families tended to take responsibility for themselves even before conflict and welcome any assistance. Both sets of interventions, individual and community empowerment and structural change, are required to bring about positive change. For legislative and policy level change, actors should not focus on only a few Commissioners but talk with and work to get the buy in of as many Commissioners and legislators as possible.

Longer-term engagement and proper analysis is required for sustained impact: Agencies who took the time to do a proper context and conflict analysis inclusive of gender and social inclusion dynamics and build community confidence, trust and ownership found programming went smoother. Communities were engaged not resistant even when it came to potentially sensitive issues around women's empowerment. Interventions were likely to have longer-term impact. Respondents noted projects done quickly in finite timelines where results were not sustained.

Programmes need to balance demand and supply interventions: The previous section discussed challenges around sustainability of interventions. Many actors reflected that, alongside supplying services and infrastructure, they should have engaged with communities, civil society and media to make demand more visible to persuade government to act, either contributing to these interventions or really taking ownership to ensure continued sustainability.

Collaboration, coordination and partnership rather than competition delivers results: Respondents from government, UN agencies and NGOs alike spoke of seeing agencies competing over scarce resources to remain relevant even if actions were beyond their mandate. These dynamics had led to chaos and duplication. Conversely, progress was more visible where actors came together.

The sexual and gender-based violence working group in Mubi is one example of this as members discuss together how to manage GBV cases in ways that leverage on their comparative strengths.

Proper community engagement needs to be at all levels (not just top down):

Good community engagement cannot rely on assuming those with relative power will spread information. Some actors who focused on government officials and community leaders in community entry reflected on the need to ensure buy-in of the entire community. Doing so includes reaching out to communities particularly marginalised such as the Matakam, people with disabilities, women of all ages and young men in intervention design and implementation. It also means participation in town hall meetings and conducting regular information sharing sessions and talks to mitigate the risks of misconceptions. Otherwise, actors run the risk of elite capture, perceptions of their closeness to those seen as corrupt and rumours of their 'real purpose' taking hold.

Even those seen as uninterested or resistant in engagement can be responsive if you reach out to them in the right way:

Across different areas, respondents spoke about how communities and groups were unexpectedly welcoming of interventions around peacebuilding, women's empowerment and GBV - if approached in sensitive and constructive ways. Peacebuilders engaging on inter-communal violence shared how pastoralists, often perceived as "the problem type who do not cooperate," were eager to participate in dialogue, came out in large numbers and spoke at length about how they did not want to see people fighting. Women activists who went to rural communities about GBV said they were met with real appreciation for rights education provided as GBV was a topic seldom publicly discussed around which people had little knowledge.

Adults speak for younger people but do not know their issues and have their own biases:

Young people, women in particular, tend to be excluded from meaningful engagement in community platforms and discussions. Even when present, they can feel and be discouraged to talk. As a result, adults tend to speak about adolescents and young people without actually knowing their issues or allowing them to speak for themselves. Young people interviewed spoke about how adults started from biased perspectives, for example blaming girls for rape because of the way they dress or talking about how unemployed young men will become a 'menace to society'. Actors need to find ways to directly engage with youth and support them to mobilise, advocate and be involved in peacebuilding themselves rather than have others speaking for them.

Interventions need to be designed to facilitate meaningful participation of women, youth, people with disabilities and other groups usually marginalised:

Without focused programming, the most marginalised in society will not be included. Earlier sections have discussed how certain groups such as young women, adolescent girls, people with disabilities and the Matakam ethnic group have not benefited from interventions to the same extent as others. Inclusion and benefit needs sustained engagement from design onwards. Concrete ways of doing so is to set up separate feedback sessions with different groups for example women with disabilities during design and community entry processes. ROLAC, which people with disabilities praise for engagement, holds regular information sharing, feedback and joint planning sessions to ensure their ideas influence programme direction. For livelihood projects, setting up separate women's and men's cooperatives is needed as women often get shut out in mixed groups. Facilitating discussions in groups segregated along age, gender and other lines of marginalisation first, for example organising separate groups of women and young people to encourage sharing of information, analysis and concerns to bring to the main group, has proved successful in engendering participation in community groups. When training women and facilitating women only groups, it can be best for facilitators to be women to encourage comfort and openness.

Continued and sustained focus is needed to ensure women's participation and inclusion as (some) men tend to continue to exclude:

Even if interventions are designed to maximise likelihood of women's inclusion and active participation, without continued focus, this outcome can slide. For example, government officials and community leaders, if asked to send equal numbers of women and men, for events, provide lists of predominantly male names which, without attention, can go unchallenged. Alternatively, if women are invited to community platforms held at times during which women have household and childcare responsibilities, they will not be able to attend.

More attention needed to integrate gender across MCN interventions and link interventions:

While MCN has achieved some success in ensuring gender cuts across interventions, gaps remain. For example, vigilante groups trained by MCN continue to mediate GBV. One vigilante leader in Mubi spoke of asking perpetrators to pay money for 'damage to the girl' or marry her, only taking cases to the police if he refuses. In cases where the survivor is very young, the group brokers an agreement between the parents that he will marry her when she is older or his parents will pay a fine. MCN should emphasise gender in engagement with vigilante groups and link interventions.

For example, the head of the FSU should attend meetings between police, vigilante and hunters to ensure GBV is treated seriously and such ways of 'settling' sexual violence do not happen.

Opening up conversations around changing gender roles and supporting individuals, families and communities through this change can mitigate backlash and violence:

Gender realities have changed significantly while norms remain more or less unshifted. As long as norms perpetuate unequal power relations where men feel they need to have power over women to be valued, any movement in gender realities can lead to increased VAWG as men feel the need to 'prove' power and control. Programmes that engage women and men separately and together on these issues can help individuals, families and communities to adjust.

Expansion in women's roles without working on masculinities adds to women's responsibilities and burdens:

Even in ethnic groups where gender norms require women to take on income generation, cooking, cleaning and childcare, burdens have increased. Interventions focused on women's empowerment add to dynamics. Women are increasingly burdened while men struggle with feelings of redundancy and inadequacy. Yet, men in families where responsibilities are split more evenly with husbands and wives both sharing work by looking after the children, cooking and cleaning as well as earning incomes report feeling happier and having less household conflict.

Most work on GBV focuses on sexual violence against children, missing other types of GBV such as domestic violence and abuse, sexual harassment, early and forced marriage and sexual violence against women:

Commendable progress has been made on increasing awareness and improving response to sexual violence against children. However, this constitutes only one type of GBV and is low-hanging fruit. Acting against sexual violence against children, if it occurs outside marriage, is likely to have widespread support and does not challenge social norms around GBV. Yet, incidence of other forms of GBV is higher but is not taken as seriously. These types of GBV tend to attract a form of fatalism. They are conflated with tradition and culture which people assume to be unchanging even as society evolves considerably in other aspects.

One-off sensitisation can improve access to services but has limited other impact: The number of cases reported to the SARC increased substantially after sensitisation meant more people knew of its existence and how to access its (free) services. Yet barriers to access

remain, particularly for people outside Yola who are largely unable to access either the SARC or (paid) local services. Moreover, one off sensitisation events in the absence of campaigns led by people in the community have little impact in preventing violence, combating stigma or ensuring convictions.

Holistic GBV interventions are needed to make progress:

Focusing on a few areas is insufficient to strengthen GBV prevention and response when interventions need to be multi-faceted and inter-linked. This assessment flags areas requiring action. The first is strengthening service provision beyond Yola. The second is having case workers in place to support survivors (including but not limited to court appearances). The third is an anti-stigma campaign as removal of stigma prevents further violence and encourages reporting. The fourth is to strengthen police and court systems to be more responsive to survivors. The fifth is victim and witness protection including through provision of accessible safe houses. The sixth is changing attitudes, practices and norms to prevent violence. The recommendations section will discuss further.



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After having examined conflict, security and gender dynamics in the state and outlined key results, challenges and lessons from policy and programming interventions to date, this final section turns to making recommendations for government MDAs and MCN.

To the Governor:

- Assent to all outstanding human rights legislation namely the Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Child Rights Act, VAPP Act, legislation creating a Special Rights Agency and domestication of the Kampala Convention once passed by the State House of Assembly

To the State House of Assembly:

- Pass to all outstanding human rights legislation namely the Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Child Rights Act, VAPP Act, legislation creating a Special Rights Agency and domestication of the Kampala Convention

To the Ministry of Health:

- Include the SARC in 2020 and future budgets, building in a mechanism for continued inclusion
- Disperse funds to ensure the operation of the SARC ambulance by employing a driver and fuelling and maintaining the vehicle

To the Ministry of Justice:

- Set up a Special Court on GBV as part of the existing High Court to operate in Yola and other judicial divisions with prosecution and defence lawyers, judges and court personnel trained in handling GBV cases, a practice direction sent out, procedures drawn up to protect survivors and suspects and outreach conducted to the police, NSCDC and communities

To the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs:

- Set up a programme of training and retraining community leaders to build skills and knowledge in conflict resolution, mediation, leadership, gender and human rights through a cadre of qualified trainers with subject matter knowledge and training skills

To the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development:

- Increase accessibility of and quality of services provided by existing safe houses to survivors

To SEMA and NEMA

- Engage in contingency planning to offset prospects of severe food insecurity in Madagali and Michika through working with NGOs and UN agencies

To the Commissioner of Police:

- Institute protection services and engage with survivors and witnesses on protection needs
- Re-issue a directive that all GBV cases need to be transferred to state CID
- Provide funds for materials and vehicles to ensure proper and timely investigation of GBV
- Increase outreach on Police Complaints Response Unit to NGOs and communities so people can report if police officers are found wanting
- Give clearance to the state CID head of gender to speak on radio programmes about the FSU
- Give instructions to DPOs to work with FSU officers to increase awareness of the FSU among the public through engaging in outreach e.g. in CAFs and meetings with vigilante groups
- Instruct state CID to inform FSUs how cases are progressing so they can inform survivors
- Institute a proper victim and witness protection programme and direct state CID and FSU officers to engage with survivors and witnesses about protection needs

To MCN and other programme implementers:

- Improve financial and operations systems to make outstanding payments and mitigate the risks of future delays as they are having severe consequences on programme delivery

- Expand scope of work on GBV to look at other forms of violence beyond sexual violence against children through 1) reframing the SARC steering committee into a GBV response team along the lines of Lagos state; 2) including other forms of GBV within the FSU's remit and re-training police officers; and 3) integrating gender awareness including on different GBV forms into training provided to CPSPs, CAF facilitators, community leaders and vigilante group
- Develop effectiveness of the current SARC by 1) providing refresher training for staff on how to interact with patients;²⁸ 2) setting up a system where requests for drugs and other items are made well in advance to ensure timely release; 3) integrating legal assistance on SARC premises; 4) deploying more women staff so survivors have the option to have women counsellors, nurses and doctors if they wish; 5) expanding the SARC steering committee to include more GBV experts including representatives from INGOs and UN agencies and its remit to cover GBV in the state; 6) training SARC staff in how to engage with women with disabilities including through having the roster of sign language interpreters already developed by ROLAC to hand
- Create an additional SARC in Mubi and continue providing support to the Numan SARC to reach GBV survivors in more locations. If an additional SARC is created in Mubi, its steering committee needs to include all agencies working on GBV prevention and response and have strong links to the sexual and gender-based violence working group
- Fund women's rights organisation to do sustained community engagement through case work, anti-stigma and prevention work. In addition to ongoing case work to support survivors, this organisation should mobilise groups for example of adolescent girls, mothers, grandmothers and young men who engage in peer to peer campaigns, appear in radio programmes with wide listenership and engage men in positions of power such as religious and traditional leaders. It should map out the area and develop strategies to engage and reach out to women and girls usually marginalised such as women with disabilities. The focus of these community-led campaigns should be anti-stigma work and changing attitudes and norms to prevent all forms of GBV. MCN and its implementing partner can draw on a rich body of knowledge of what works to prevent violence to design, implement and evaluate²⁹
- Explore alternative means of punishing perpetrators through increasing community censure and stigma and decreasing income generation and marriage prospects for men who commit GBV rather than relying solely on the criminal justice process to punish and deter
- Retrain police officers posted to the FSU as many officers have been re-assigned and to update them about legislative developments. MCN has trained five people from four FSUs but there is a need for this training to also reach officers in the remaining 17 LGAs in Adamawa. Where FSUs exist in these LGAs, MCN should include officers posted to the FSU. For LGAs that do not have a FSU, focal points should be identified and trained. This workshop should not only aim to impart skills and procedures but also help officers develop action plans about what they will do once they return to their post to spread awareness of the existence of the FSU and encourage reporting
- Work with ROLAC and other actors to support the Ministry of Justice to establish a Special GBV Court through advocacy to the new Attorney General, training of prosecution and defence lawyers, judges and court personnel, drafting of a practice direction, drawing up of procedures to protect survivors and suspects and outreach to the police, NSCDC and communities. This Special Court should be a part of the existing High Court and operate not only in Yola but in the judicial divisions around the state
- Increase engagement in coordination structures around GBV and child protection
- Start engagement on marginalisation of Matakam people based on sound analysis of conflict dynamics, stakeholders and entry points that integrates gender and social inclusion
- Institutionalise training of community leaders through engagement with the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs on a training of trainer model so all community leaders are trained in human rights, gender, conflict resolution, mediation and leadership

²⁸ Some respondents praised the SARC for its work but said some staff required training as they were observed to be asking questions in a manner that suggested lack of empathy.

²⁹ <https://www.whatworks.co.za/>

- Improve systems for increasing women's capacities for mediation and dispute resolution by setting up systems for monitoring and mentoring women title holders and women's groups
- Support young people to self-mobilise and be involved in peacebuilding and anti GBV campaigns using peer to peer approaches. Examples of ways forward here are training young people in dispute resolution and mediation and supporting peace clubs in schools
- Organise an exchange with the University of Maiduguri Muslim Women's Association to see how their model of working with gang leaders and members can be applied to yan shilla by working with former yan shilla to engage others still in the group away from violence
- Support people with disabilities (women and men separately and together) to mobilise, build social networks, interact with platforms and demand change
- Better integrate gender transformative approaches in (re)training of CPSP members, CAF convenors and VPS, ensuring women are part of platforms leadership, benefit from training and all participants in training have better understanding of gender and how to increase women's participation and voice and respond to security challenges faced by women and girls
- Engage the military on human rights violations including GBV by working with other actors and MCN colleagues in Maiduguri where military leadership for Adamawa is based
- Start working on sustainability, learning from what has (not) worked for other organisations so the tempo of work is sustained after MCN ends

The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme aims to support Nigerians with conflict resolution, at both the state and community level. Our work focuses on reducing violence, promoting stability and strengthening resilience so that Nigerians feel more safe and secure in their communities. We work in North Eastern Nigeria in three focal states – Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe – some of the country’s most conflict-affected regions. The four-year programme (2017-21) is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.

Find out more
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