MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

Gender Relations in Borno

August 2019

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RESEARCH REPORT

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ACRONYMS

AOG	armed opposition group
CAF	Community Accountability Forum
CJTF	Civilian Joint Taskforce
CPSP	Community Peace and Security Partnership
DDRR	disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration
GBV	gender-based violence
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	internally displaced person
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province (Wilayat al Islamiyya Gharb Afriqiyyah)
JAS	Jama'atu Ahl al-Sunna li-l-Da'wa wa-l-Jihad
LGA	local government area
MCN	Managing Conflict in Nigeria
MDAs	ministries, departments and agencies
MHPSS	mental health and psychosocial support
MNJTF	Multi National Joint Task Force
MoRRR	Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement
MoWASD	Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development
NAPTIP	National Agency to Prevent Trafficking in Persons
NEDC	Northeast Development Commission
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NSCDC	National Security and Civil Defence Corps
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCNI	Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiatives
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SEA	sexual exploitation and abuse
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
STD	sexually transmitted disease
UMMWA	University of Maiduguri Muslim Women's Association
UN	United Nations
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VAPP Act	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act
VAWG	violence against women and girls
VSF	Victim Support Fund
VVF	vesicovaginal fistula
WFP	World Food Programme

INTRODUCTION

This year (2019) marks ten years since the death of Mohammed Yusuf and some members of his Yusufiyya while in custody of security operatives.[2] 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.[3]

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.[4] 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,[5] 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.[6] 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.[7] 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.[8][9]

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.[10]

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.

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[2] 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).

[3] 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.

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

[5] 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 Jentzsch, Stathis N. Kalyvas and Livia Isabella Schubiger, 'Militias in Civil Wars,' Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2015 59(5) 755-769.

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

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

[8] 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.

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

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

Figure 1: Map of Borno State
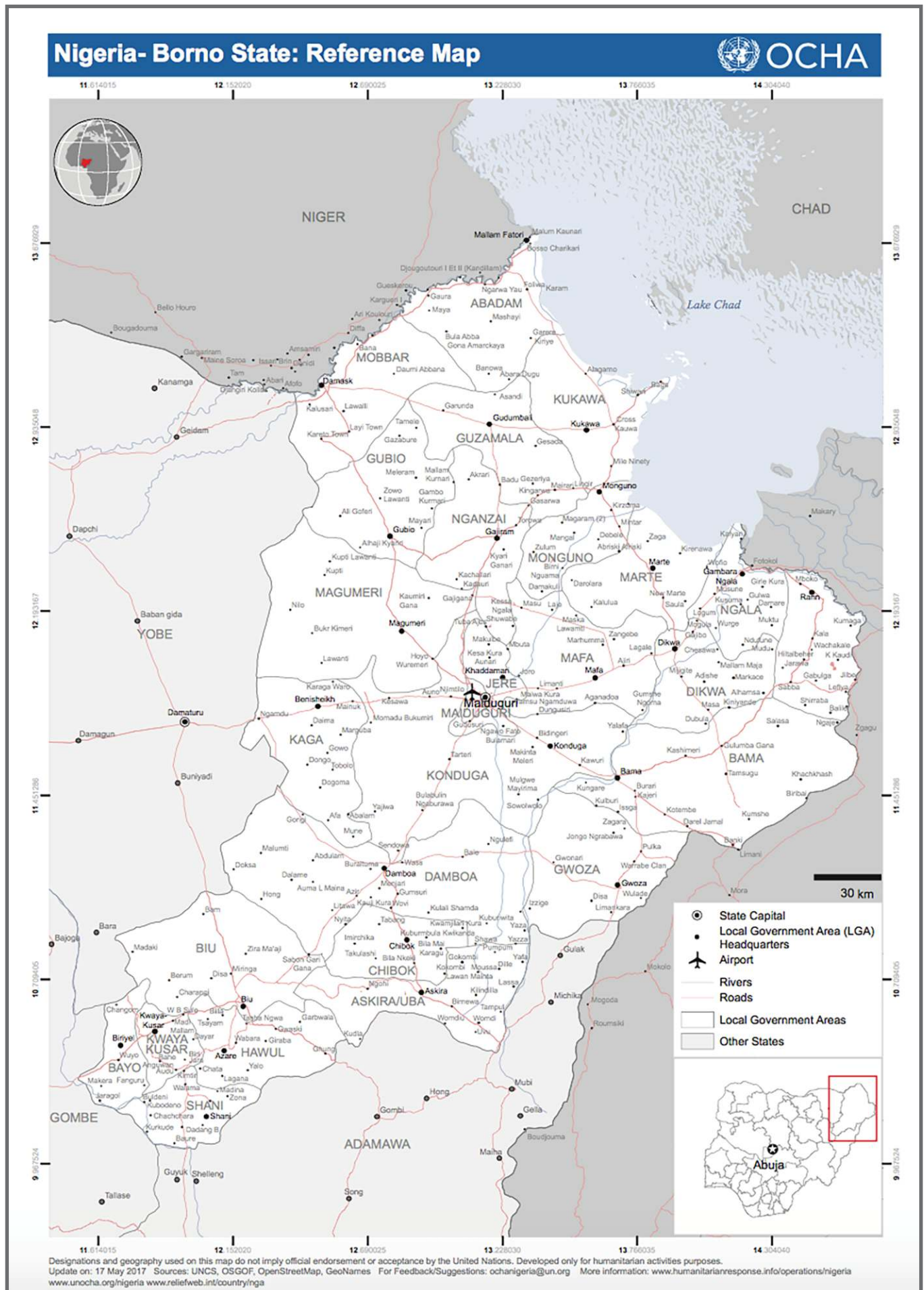
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In Borno, violence linked to the conflict between AOGs, the state and community militias affected all 27 local government areas (LGAs). In 2014, JAS controlled most of the state's territory declaring Gwoza to be its caliphate headquarters in August a few months after the abduction of almost 300 girls from the Girls Secondary School in Chibok that brought national and international headlines. The conflict has also strained relations between Christians and Muslims, exacerbated divisions along ethno-linguistic lines and created new identities along displacement. While conflict between farmers and pastoralists remains suppressed, civilians are increasingly concerned about current and future actions of gangs and community militias. Please see Figure 1 for a map of Borno state.

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 peace-building 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 for a complete picture, including historical perspectives, of gender dynamics in Borno 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.

After presenting the methodology used, this report provides context by highlighting 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 Borno since 2013. 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, although Borno has seen more research studies produced than neighbouring states, large gaps in research and insufficiency of data, particularly on VAWG incidence and trends identified in the 2017 assessment, remain. The author asked respondents questions on conflict and gender trends and assessment of programming and policy action to fill gaps due to this lack of conflict analysis and lessons learned papers.

The bulk of the findings in this report are drawn from interviews and focus group discussions conducted in Gubio and Maiduguri in July 2019. The author led two focus group discussions with 10 women and 5 men in Gubio. She also interviewed 32 people (11 women and 21 men) who work for government ministries and departments, security agencies, Borno-based and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and institutions of community leadership. 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 instead. Data collection in Borno was the most challenging of the three states. On the first day of data collection in Gubio, the team had to wait for three hours at a military checkpoint outside Gubio before being able to pass. This delay left only two hours in the town to collect information before the military shut the road out of Gubio. On the same day, ISWAP abducted and killed aid workers along the road between Gubio and Damasak. As a result of heightened levels of insecurity and military activity, the team decided to cancel planned further trips to Gubio. Meanwhile, some interviews planned for Maiduguri did not take place, partly as many actors had attended the Governors' Forum bringing together political leaders across the Lake Chad Basin together taking place in Niger. The team cancelled a planned trip to Biu to enable more time for interviews in Maiduguri that were talking longer to arrange than anticipated and the author conducted many interviews via telephone in the weeks following yet was still unable to speak with as wide a range of people as desired. The author has drawn on her experiences living and working in Borno since 2016, including interviews conducted in Askira Uba, Chibok, Bama, Biu and Gwoza the week before data collection, to fill resulting gaps.

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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 forthcoming and frank with their views and analysis and told their statements would remain confidential and not attributed to them. 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

Security in Borno remains highly dynamic, fluid, unpredictable and volatile with many people, mostly women and children, remaining in situations of humanitarian crisis, locations declared safe relapsing into violence and control of territory passing between the hands of AOGs and government. Although people have been able to rebuild their lives in certain parts of the state such as around the Biu axis, other areas of the state have experienced significant setbacks, for example with thousands of people displaced from Monguno and other parts of northern Borno at the start of 2019.

Fighting between armed opposition groups and the state

People interviewed in Maiduguri expressed uncertainty as to the status of the conflict, pointing to mixed government messages such as statements that AOGs are in retreat soon to be completely defeated contrasting with actions such as the August 2019 closure of the military base in Gubio leaving the stretch of road from Maiduguri to Damasak without any military presence. ISWAP in particular clearly retains the ability to launch attacks against military bases as shown as the capture of the MNJTF and naval bases in Baga and attacks on military locations in Bama, Bunduram, Cross-Kauwa, Kukawa, Kekeno, Monguno, Rann and other places in December 2018 and January 2019. June 2019 marked a high-point in ISWAP's campaign of attacks against the military with eight bases captured at least temporarily and the closure of at least ten forward operating bases across its area of influence between mid-June and mid-July. However, July 2019 was the first month AOGs were not able to capture military positions since June 2018. This could either be a halt to their progress, a temporary blip or due to the rainy season. These ISWAP successes may be responsible for increased JAS activity in order to 'stay relevant' and motivate fighters. 2019 has also seen a number of AOG attacks on Maiduguri, the state capital, as well along the road connecting Maiduguri to Damaturu, the Yobe state capital. While the government stopped reporting deaths of soldiers in 2018, at least 1,000 soldiers have been reportedly buried at one secret graveyard and official cemetery in Maiduguri since AOGs began an offensive last summer with total military deaths likely to be much higher.[11]

Analyst estimate that more soldiers could have been killed in 2019 than the annual death toll in all the previous years of the conflict.

Moreover, respondents reported a new phenomenon in 2019 of people willingly going to areas controlled by ISWAP to join their daula believing that life with the group was preferable to where they were currently living. According to one respondent, "They have a system in place which allows people to cultivate their farms. They are not attacked if they pledge allegiance and ISWAP have a full system of taxation. If you are there and documented and known, you are allowed to do your normal economic activity in exchange for taxes." Many people who have joined the daula are those who used to engage in fishing, farming and grazing activities along the Lake Chad shore and, having no other livelihood options in the IDP camps and informal settlements in which they now live, choose to return to live under ISWAP. A number of respondents had spoken with people who had recently left this daula and told them that ISWAP gives money to invest in businesses if you agreed to the terms and conditions of the daula then you can be "staying peacefully and nobody can harass you." This system is similar to the tactics used by JAS in its early days when they would engage in providing business loans and ask for protection money. One respondent said, they would "have a lot of money [through] steal[ing] money from banks, extortion [and other means]. [They would use it] to get supplies, come to the village, get somebody who will be given capital and be the largest trader and be collecting supplies from them. They would do it in such a way he can never pay back the money and he becomes entangled into cycle of poverty so they can collect

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[11] Joe Parkinson, 'Nigeria Buries Soldiers at Night in Secret Cemetery,' Wall Street Journal, 31 July 2019.

whatever they want without record. So, any time you say you want to disentangle, they will ask to pay back capital and you cannot. They do the same in the daula and enrich their supply chain." The extent to which this movement to the daula continues and whether it leads to increased ISWAP control of territory and recruitment of fighters is a dynamic that bears observation.

Since 2017, AOGs have also started targeting aid workers. Previous attacks on humanitarian vehicles were believed to be focused on the military convoy with which they were travelling and the killings and injuries of aid workers at a military base in Rann in March 2018 were believed to be as they were mistaken for soldiers. The abduction of Saifura Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa and Hauwa Mohammed Liman, midwives working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Alice Loksha, a nurse working for the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) during the same incident was thought to be opportunistic. The subsequent murder of Saifura Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa and Hauwa Mohammed Liman later on in 2018 marked the first time that aid workers were deliberately the focus of violence. On 18th July 2019, six NGO workers were abducted, another NGO worker killed and an NGO vehicle shot at in different incidents along the Kareto-Damasak road. As of August 2019, a total of 37[12] aid workers had lost their lives in Nigeria.[13] Whether these developments point to a shift in tactics with aid workers now seen as fair game, evidence of a need for financial gain as a result of abductions or are the actions of individual commanders is unknown but they are likely to lead to scaled back humanitarian presence in areas considered to be high risk with resulting unavailability of life saving humanitarian services to populations living there.

However, recent months have also seen increasing factionalism and fighting within and between groups that may lead to decreased effectiveness. This fighting between AOGs is reportedly the most intense it has been since the August 2016 split which led to the formation of two distinct groups. There have been a series of clashes between JAS and ISWAP around the southern shores of Lake Chad in Borno, on certain Lake Chad islands and across the border in Niger. In the Diffa region of Niger for example, there have been incidents of JAS fighters who have stolen food and abducted girls being chased by ISWAP members who have returned the items stolen and girls abducted to their communities. There are also indications of intra group fighting. Reports show some commanders are still loyal to Mamman Nur, who was reportedly killed in 2018 on the orders of Islamic State, and Abu Musab al Barnawi, who had

> " Previous divisions between tactics used by ISWAP, focused on attacking security forces and community militias, and by JAS, seen as more indiscriminate and leading to significant civilian harm, may be becoming more blurred as individual commanders of both groups take different positions on who is a legitimate target of violence. "

been replaced as ISWAP leader earlier in the year, while other clashes are rather attributed to disagreement over sharing of income from economic activities. While these clashes had subsided earlier this year, underlying tensions remain. Meanwhile, JAS also has seen considerable weakening of command and control from the centre with some commanders now operating more independently. As a result, previous divisions between tactics used by ISWAP, focused on attacking security forces and community militias, and by JAS, seen as more indiscriminate and leading to significant civilian harm, may be becoming more blurred as individual commanders of both groups take different positions on who is a legitimate target of violence. While security forces struggle to respond to increased threats posed by AOGs, the Borno State Government has increased its support to community militias, increasing monthly allowances provided to members and providing them with vehicles and guns. These militia members provide invaluable assistance to security forces given their knowledge of geographical terrain and local languages, customs and people but people are increasingly worried about their future trajectory and complain they face impunity for actions, including human rights violations. Moreover, their actions have prompted an increase in violence against civilians with the existence of a militia group in a community seen as an indication of its stance via à vis conflict parties. On the one hand, AOGs carry out indiscriminate retaliatory attacks against the general population in communities with community militias. On the other hand, Nigerian security forces view those who have not set up such community militias as sympathetic to AOGs and having made agreements with them that they will be spared from attacks in exchange for not setting up groups.

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[12] Please note that two of these aid workers, Faye Mooney and Matthew Oguche, were killed by armed gunmen in Kaduna rather than in any violence linked to northeast Nigeria.
[13] Peter Ekayu, head of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) in Nigeria, 'Speech delivered on World Humanitarian Day,' 17 August 2019, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/world-humanitarian-day-united-nations-office-coordination-humanitarian-affairs-speech, last visited 18.08.2019.

Displacement trends

Numbers of IDPs in Maiduguri have reduced over the past two years with a number of camps being shut down and people moved back to their LGA capitals. While some people have been able to return to their homes and start rebuilding their lives, many others have returned to towns to find their houses and shops destroyed, their farmlands inaccessible and their animals stolen. A significant number of people who live in villages outside towns have been unable to return and remain as IDPs in these towns. As IDP populations across the state have swelled, humanitarian agencies have reported challenges of land availability and camp congestion. In towns across Borno, the zone of safety remains the town itself and a radius of 2-5 kilometres outside it with the area outside this circle seeing AOG presence. There have been a number of attacks by AOGs with people who go to farm or collect firewood killed, abducted or raped and suspicion by soldiers that people who leave the town are doing so to pass on intelligence to AOGs to plan attacks. This limited space leaves insufficient room to shelter IDPs let alone pursue viable livelihoods. These high levels of insecurity are visible when driving around Borno with the majority of fertile land remaining fallow without any farming or grazing activity in the height of the rainy season. Moreover, there has been significant levels of repeated displacement from areas to which people had returned with a senior government official saying, "The context continues to be volatile and unpredictable. There are so many places where return was achieved, reconstruction activities took place then insurgents reappear and people need to move back to the state capital." Over 100,000 people were displaced between December 2018 and February 2019 within Borno and across borders to Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Many people fleeing violence came to Maiduguri where services were not provided to them with IDPs continuing to sleep on the streets and not receive food assistance weeks after arriving in the state capital.[14] Those who had fled to Cameroon faced a government who wanted to return these Nigerian refugees as soon as possible. In some cases, displacement has been caused by military actions. Residents of Jakana in Konduga LGA were moved to Bakassi IDP camp in Maiduguri by soldiers in April 2019. The reason given was to enable military operations in this area in response to reports of AOG presence. A month later, over 9,000 people were moved from Sabon Gari in Damboa LGA to the LGA headquarters after a number of AOG attacks and the ambush of a military convoy. These population movements have led to government and non-

government actors scrambling to provide humanitarian shelter and thousands of people newly displaced sleeping in the open without shelter.[15] Borno also sees cyclical movement with some people frequently moving between areas. For example, in Gubio town into which most of the inhabitants of the surrounding 36 villages are displaced, an area has been allocated to them as an informal IDP settlement. Some of these IDPs revolve between Maiduguri and Gubio town finding neither place conducive in terms of food, services and livelihoods. In some families, adult men have left in search of work leaving their families behind struggling to support themselves. The number one request of these IDPs is for increased security in their villages and a less 'harsh' attitude of security agencies conducting operations in the area so they can return, re-engage in livelihoods and be reunited with friends and family that still remain there, unable to come to Gubio town. Finally, many areas reported significant tensions between IDPs, returnees and host communities. These terms have become akin to identity categories with IDPs seen and seeing themselves as having fewer rights than host communities. At the same time, people who return to homes have found people who fled other areas to already be living there, leading to disputes over housing, land and property. There are also indications of suspicion of people who remained with returnees seen as having lived under AOG occupation and so either sympathetic to AOGs or having been forced to provide support to them.

Vacuum of power and authority

There was weak governance, particularly outside LGA capitals, even before the conflict. As a respondent in Baga said in 2018, "Before the conflict, we didn't even know government. We were able to do things for ourselves and the only time we saw government was during elections when politicians would come and play politics." Despite efforts to encourage resumption of duties in LGA capitals, many areas see weak government presence with LGA chairmen and officials visiting rather than resident. No LGA elections have been held for years. By law, all chairmen are appointed by the Governor for six-month terms which can be renewed. They therefore owe their position to his grace rather than electoral votes. Although some chairmen are seen to be trying to do their best with limited resources and power, many people interviewed by the author in LGAs across Borno from 2016 to date, including for this assessment, are unhappy with government (in)action. Moreover, in some places, infrastructure constructed by federal and state governments, for example by the Ministry

[14] As stated in a number of humanitarian assessments and reports at that time.
[15] IOM, 'Flash Report: IDP Relation from Sabon Gari to Damboa (Update 2),' 27 May 2019, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/iom-nigeria-flash-report-idp-relocation-sabon-gari-damboa-update-2-damboa-lga-local, last visited 18.08.2019.

of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MoRRR) or Victim Support Fund (VSF) have been destroyed by AOGs or are in places no longer considered safe. Community and religious leaders also continue to stay away. The 2017 Gender Assessment discussed how respect for community leadership institutions had significantly eroded, with leaders perceived as corrupt at ward and village level even before the conflict and now seen as using their positions to divert humanitarian assistance to themselves and their families. This dynamic remains unchanged with respondents asking why their community leader continues to stay in Maiduguri purporting to represent their community without actually being present in it. Respondents expressed significant levels of anger against government officials and community leaders saying they felt abandoned. One woman in Gubio said, "Government does not care about us. Our houses were destroyed and up to now we have no houses in which we

can live. We have no food, shelter or clothes. Government is doing nothing for us and the lawans and emir aren't even here. Everyone is enjoying themselves in Maiduguri leaving us to struggle." The only part of the state as an institution with presence in some areas but which is not mandated to fulfil governance responsibilities is the military. In this vacuum, step in women who have played crucial roles in keeping their families and communities going, groups such as community militias to whom people turn for conflict resolution and AOGs. Particularly in more rural areas, ISWAP especially is fulfilling governance type functions as explained below.

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GENDER DYNAMICS

Gender relations differ between rural and urban areas, between areas still experiencing violence, where insecurity is high and where the situation is more stable and between areas of displacement and return. For example, women's status and roles in urban areas like Maiduguri are not the same as in more rural areas still experiencing violent conflict.

Association with perpetrating conflict and violence

People across ages and genders in Borno have played active roles in violence either by contributing directly to fighting, providing support or spreading conflict narratives. For example, in the context of farmer-pastoralist conflict in Borno which persists at a lower level, respondents spoke about how women contribute to conflict flaring into violence by rallying husbands. Women are also likely to hold valuable information about security and plans given the ease with which people in the community, including family members, talk with them. When it comes to AOGs, women, men, girls and boys become associated or sympathise with them for a combination of personal and political reasons due to family, community and business links, forced abductions, the influence of religious preaching and to escape restrictive models of patriarchy with age and gender hierarchies seeing all women and young men as having lower status.[16] Although the headlines tend to report only on abductions of schoolgirls, for example those that took place in Chibok in Borno state in April 2014 or in Dapchi in neighbouring Yobe state in February 2018, northeast Nigeria has seen thousands of people of all ages and genders abducted or forced to join.

Yet, as stated in the 2017 gender assessment, there is a spectrum encompassing abductions, coercion, pressure, circumstantial motivation and intrinsic motivation with women and girls as well as men and boys associated falling on the spectrum.[17] For those who chose to join willingly, there are some similar motivations across genders with women and men the author interviewed for another study talking about the persuasiveness of AOGs' preaching and the way they were able to tap into their emotions; the sense of family, comfort and belonging they felt in the group; how AOGs impressed them in how they were able to mould minds and change behaviour or those around them; and the respondents' desire for critical significance and to be part of shifting communities away from immorality, corruption and inequality. Some of the young women interviewed joined these groups hoping for increased access to (religious) education and for the chance to contribute to group aims and societal transformation, opportunities denied to them in mainstream society due to sexist gender norms. While there were some indications they play part in attacks in some circumstances, their main roles seem to be to defend AOG bases when men are engaged in operations elsewhere, recruiting particularly women and girls to the groups, spying and passing on intelligence, providing food and other supplies, cooking, cleaning and other support roles. Respondents spoke about women in towns hiding food and other items to the bush when they go to farm to deliver to AOGs. As a result, in some places the military has stopped people being able to go to farm, with attendant food security and livelihoods consequences. Meanwhile young men face social pressures to find employment, earn money, get married and head a household in order to meet gender norms of masculinity that confer respect and status in a context where a 'proper' man is expected to provide for his family. Yet, young men find it difficult to meet these norms given limited livelihood options in the context of nepotism, corruption and inequality. Frustration with inability to meet gender norms of breadwinner masculinity provide incentives for young men to join AOGs who provide access to girls and women, either those who are forcibly or willingly married to them or women enslaved, ensure they have power and status where young men often feel disrespected and offer a chance for excitement and reimaging society. Young women and men alike spoke of finding an 'ideal society' focused on religious observance and with clarity of purpose. They spoke of initial abundance of food and other items although this changed as military operations gained in intensity and the military

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[16] The next few paragraphs draw mostly on these study: Chitra Nagarajan, '"We were changing the world": Radicalisation and empowerment among young people associated with armed opposition groups in Northeast Nigeria,' (Equal Access, 2018) and International Crisis Group, 'Returning from the land of jihad: The fate of women associated with Boko Haram,' May 2019.
[17] Mercy Corps, '"Motivations and Empty Promises": Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth,' 2016.

started a strategy of deliberate starvation to areas which saw presence of AOG fighters. They spoke of their pride in the skills they gained, for example in handling weapons, and the actions they took, for example policing the behaviour of others in the area. JAS seems to have operated akin to a cult with attempts to weaken and sever ties with non-group members including through the killing of parents being rewarded.

Although some young women found meaning and purpose in the groups, others were disappointed by the groups' strict rules for women which limited what they were able to do. After marriage, many of the girls who had joined for political reasons were confined within the house except for times of religious study and restricted from visiting even female neighbours for fear that women would try to plot their escape. Women were policed with the threat of violence and experienced high levels of domestic abuse. For some women, their perceptions of potential empowerment prior to joining the group were a far cry from these restrictions and violence experienced once inside it. Women's power depends much on their age, with older women having more freedom, whether they had joined voluntarily or were abducted, and the position of their husbands with the wives of commanders having higher status. Women who were abducted, particularly those who refused to convert to Islam, report being raped by multiple men as 'sex slaves.' Women also reported changes in what they did and were able to do. During the time of JAS expansion, they played more active roles in recruitment, particularly of other women and girls. As JAS gained control over areas, they took part in policing behaviour, for example patrolling villages and threatening and reporting anyone who was found to be breaking rules. In the daula itself, they reported the restrictions mentioned above at the start but that these eased as the group came under increasing attack from the military with focus of the entire group now shifted onto survival. However, it is important to note that all the women interviewed for the earlier study[18] drawn on extensively for the paragraphs above had been part of JAS. The attitude of ISWAP towards women and girls and their involvement in statebuilding remains unclear although respondents for the gender assessment believed they were "more enlightened" in their attitudes and strategic in their actions. They cited the example of the girls from Dapchi who were kidnapped and subsequently released after negotiations as opposed to JAS who are less tactical. As a result, it could be that ISWAP have particular roles for women and girls in their daula, more akin to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. That attitudes and practices may differ between groups and be evolving

is highly possible. According to some respondents, as the delineation of JAS and ISWAP became more distinct and ISWAP developed an economic strategy to fund itself including the creation of pull factors from government-controlled areas, women have been part of moving back and forth. The conflict dynamics around ISWAP is becoming monetised in this manner with people having economic and security incentives to join ISWAP's daula. ISWAP has seen a strengthening of its networks and control. Women have been playing active roles in terms of economic activities, discussions around movement and passing information on to ISWAP fighters.

Yet, despite this nuanced reality of people's motivations, allegiances and realities, many people continue to take highly gender stereotyped views of people associated with AOGs. They view women associated with the group as victims, devoid of agency who were abducted then indoctrinated – even though some women and girls did join willingly. Conversely, they see men, even those who were forced to join, as active agents who are now dangerous and need to be 'deradicalised' before they can re-join mainstream society. These gendered perceptions are reflected in government policy towards people seen as associated with AOGs. While women and girls largely receive any support and are sent back to communities, with only assistance coming from NGOs working in some towns, men tend to be detained, sometimes for long periods of time, but receive higher levels of support around trauma healing, skills acquisition and reintegration. Dynamics around detention of men of fighting age from communities where it is thought recruitment was high or areas controlled by AOG fighters identified in the 2017 gender assessment continue. Many of these men are automatically assumed to be members or at least sympathisers unless proved otherwise. Soldiers speak frequently of areas of Borno where "there are no civilians' with everyone living there either an AOG member or providing material support to them, whether willingly or through force. While women and children are assumed to be trapped in these areas, men are more likely to be seen as active fighters. Sometimes, this detention can be longstanding. Since trials began in October 2017, most people prosecuted have been charged with providing material and non-violent support to JAS including in cases where they had little option to do so for example selling food to them or laundering their clothes. Some defendants tried had been detained since 2009. After concerns were expressed about the secret nature of trials, the Nigerian government opened subsequent trials to observation by NGOs and the media. Trial monitors have raised fair trial

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[18] Chitra Nagarajan, '"We were changing the world": Radicalisation and empowerment among young people associated with armed opposition groups in Northeast Nigeria,' (Equal Access, 2018).

and due process concerns and that many people who had been ordered by judges to be set free were still being detained.[19] Operation Safe Corridor, a government facility in Gombe, acts to counter AOG ideology, provides skills and livelihoods training and give trauma counselling to men associated who are subsequently released back into communities. However, as reflected below, attitudes of community members, community leaders and government officials have challenged this reintegration in practice.

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Government policies based on gender stereotypes in this way not only fail to address realities of motivations and actions but also lead to human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention without trial for men and lack of support for women. These attitudes can be reflected in community perceptions. One respondent characterised a common approach as being: "We don't see women as having any blame and needing to apologise as women are passive whereas men are active' and that women can still be stigmatised but do not need to apologise. Yet, fear around women and men who return from time with AOGs persist. Community members speak of women and girls re-joining husbands and children still with AOGs, as they no longer have social networks and to escape poor conditions, stigma and discrimination. They talk of needing to watch women and girls associated with the group who have returned as their allegiances are suspect and they may be passing information or providing material assistance to AOGs for example when going to collect firewood or planning to detonate as 'suicide' bombers. Women are seen to capitalise on being viewed with lesser suspicion, returning to act to "protect their men and boys" in this manner. While risks linked to women associated tend to be around helping fighters, partly out of desire to help family members, men associated are believed to be more likely to have hidden weapons which they will use to commit direct harm.

In general, community attitudes towards people associated with AOGs have become more nuanced, partly as a result of sensitisation programmes and campaigns. Respondents who work in this area spoke about perceptions when it comes to children associated with AOGs having altered with people increasingly understanding that violence has happened against their will, that they need to bring the child close to them and helping them to heal is the responsibility of the family and community. Since 2017, increased numbers of women and men have returned to areas controlled by the government from areas with AOG presence. They are unable to return to villages due to insecurity or because they no longer exist. As a result, in certain towns such as Bama and Dikwa, there are large concentrations of women previously associated with AOGs who either returned directly to these towns or were in IDP camps in Maiduguri which closed down. Less stigma and discrimination is reported against women associated with AOGs than in 2017, partly as communities believe this treatment pushes them to return to the bush and provide assistance to AOGs. People interviewed by the author in Bama, Damboa and Dikwa in late 2018 and early 2019 characterised community behaviour towards these women as being motivated as much out of a sense of self-preservation i.e. to prevent intelligence being passed on that lead to attacks on their towns and to encourage them to stay in their towns rather than re-join and continue providing support to AOGs as humanitarianism. According to one respondent who works on peacebuilding interventions, "Communities say demonstrating hospitality is what will get people out of the bush and get [the] conflict to stop." Even if they do not always see women as having actively perpetrated violence, they believe their contributions have been significant enough that they warrant blame. Equally, they also talk of particular men who had been part of an AOG settling in well as the fact they were forced to join was well known. Yet, attitudes towards men associated with AOGs remain largely resistant. Reintegration of 'ex-combatants' (always seen as men not women) is a topic with increased salience but remains a thorny issue. There have been cases of men who have gone through government processes having to leave communities into which they were released for their own safety. People are suspicious as to what extent these men have really 'repented', pointing at examples where a man has returned, been accepted and then tried to kill community members including his own father. This opposition to reconciliation cuts across gender lines with women and men taking similar positions. Leaders of some communities have said their power is limited in this arena

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[19] Please see Human Rights Watch, 'Nigeria: Flawed Trials of Boko Haram Suspects,' 17 September 2018, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/17/nigeria-flawed-trials-boko-haram-suspects, last visited 19.08.2019 for more details.

and even if they allow such people to return to areas, they will be attacked and killed by the people living there. These dynamics are exacerbated by interventions aimed at helping men formerly associated with AOGs to reintegrate, for example through skills training and cash grants. As one woman interviewed in Bama in July 2019 said, "They're helping them, who caused all our suffering, more than they help us." Many respondents pointed to the impossibility of expecting people who have seen their loved ones killed and/or abducted, their homes and livelihoods destroyed, experienced significant levels of violence themselves and continuing to struggle to rebuild their lives to accept back those they hold responsible for their situation in the absence of any government programmes around transitional justice, reconciliation and healing as well as provision of support to re-establish livelihoods.

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Women also play active roles in community militias such as CJTF, hunters and vigilantes.[20] While these groups continue to be dominated by men, women play crucial roles but are often marginalised by group leadership and membership as well as programmes of support. There are varying levels of women's participation in militias across Borno with only older women being involved in some areas while women of different areas are members in others. Although their roles in active combat are often not acknowledged with male militia members staying "they just search women," in reality women, particularly those in groups of hunters or from hunting families, have taken up arms to defend their villages and towns and pursue groups of AOGs. Women have been instrumental in searching homes for weapons, gathering intelligence from community members who may feel more comfortable going to women rather than men

members, and questioning suspects to glean information. Given AOG tactics of sending women and children with IED vests to areas to explode, their actions in searching women and girls in crowded areas such as markets, in checkpoints into towns and during screening processes have been instrumental to community safety and security. In many cases, they have detected people of all ages and genders wearing IED vests and managed to prevent them from detonating or controlled detonation to ensure minimal harm. Their importance has been recognised by security forces. The military has asked for women militia members to be deployed in certain locations, for example vigilante women from Adamawa are now working in Gwoza and women from Maiduguri were requested to move with the military to Dikwa shortly after they recaptured the town. Yet, there are few women among the group that the Borno State Government supports with monthly allowances with any remuneration women members receiving tending to be at the discretion of military officers posted to the area or their group leaders who may give them some of the share of money given to the group. They are usually not involved in CJTF leadership although some women leading groups of hunters, having inherited these positions from their parents. Women militia members spoke of how much they are appreciated by their communities and valued and praised for keeping them safe but said they can be often marginalised by male group members and leadership. For example, their names are seldom put forward by leaders to benefit from government, UN and NGO assistance such as skills acquisition programmes although some NGOs, such as MCN's partner HERWA, ensures that women members are included among beneficiaries of their interventions with the CJTF. Meanwhile, communities had significant fears surrounding men in community militias, the CJTF in particular. They spoke of tensions over access to women and girls with conflict between CJTF members and other young men as the CJTF, due to their status, power, influence and association with violence are seen to be 'taking all the women.' Moreover, members of the community spoke of ways CTJF members in particular commit harm, engaging in extra-judicial killings, punishments bordering on torture, restricting movement, committing extortion and diversion of humanitarian aid and engaging in sexual violence including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). While women members were seen to be engaging in these acts too, community members said most perpetrators tended to be men.

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[20] These paragraphs on community militias are drawn from interviews with civilians and militia members since 2014 and from Chitra Nagarajan, 'Civilian perceptions of the yan gora (CJTF) in Borno state, Nigeria,' (CIVIC, 2018).

Continuing physical and psychological impacts of violence

Women and men continue to face different physical risks throughout the conflict from all parties to the conflict. While women were also killed and arrested, there were more reports of death and disappearance among men. They are viewed with suspicion by both AOGs who force them to fight for them and by security agencies. They are vulnerable to being held in detention without trial due to suspicion of association with AOGs. For example, in the aftermath of military screening of individuals moved from Jakana to Bakassi IDP camp in Maiduguri - which took place without access given to independent observers - humanitarian actors noticed the absence of men and boys among the population. The total numbers of people detained is unknown but those who remain in many conflict-affected communities speak of family members having disappeared and not knowing if they are in detention or still alive. Although some activists are engaging in gathering information about people detained from their relatives and are demanding information and charge or release from authorities, very few people feel able to directly engage the military to ask about the whereabouts of their family members. The majority of those who are left behind are women and children. Women and girls also face risks of physical violence, whether this be gender-based violence which will be explored further below, or abductions, injuries or killing when going to fetch firewood or access farmland. Places with relatively new movement of IDPs report high numbers of widows and separated and unaccompanied children who struggle to provide for themselves as many men had already fled the area, been killed, were detained or had joined AOGs. Moreover, movements facilitated by the military for example from Jakana to Maiduguri and Sabon Gari to Damboa town were reportedly very physically taxing. A respondent spoke of women going into early childbirth and people with pre-existing health conditions having them exacerbated. Women can be placed at risk to safeguard men and are at the forefront of experiencing either the violence or opportunity that follows. For example, women were the first to be sent back when men wanted to leave AOGs to test the waters and report back on how they are received. Respondents said doing so was part of the calculation that men may be at higher risk of being killed or detained and also due to lesser value attached to women by male family members and the increased power that men hold to decide what will happen. There have also been cases where women have been asked by their husbands to go back to their homes to get hidden money or jewellery or where men fled ahead of violence leaving their wives and children behind. A respondent said there is a tendency to "value the dangers men face more than those that women face – [with the idea that] 'it's just rape.'"

When communities are displaced, people with disabilities are often those who are left behind. Women with disabilities often lack finances and mobility aids such as mobility vehicles, hearing aids and white canes compared to their male counterparts to be able to escape violence as they face intersecting and interlocking axes of discrimination due to the disability and gender. For example, when high numbers of people were displaced from Rann in January 2019, one respondent said the approximately 200 people left behind were mostly people with disabilities including people who were elderly and had trouble with movement. While there have been many cases of non-disabled people helping people with disabilities to safety, facilitating their movement is not always possible in the flurry of activity and panic. People with disabilities are left to face the brunt of attacks and bombardment by military and AOGs alike. They often also have compromised abilities to hide. People with disabilities interviewed report being able to cluster together in such instances to gain mutual support and that AOGs have spared people with disabilities from violence and showed them how to escape from town. They also talk of cases where soldiers and community militia members have proactively gone to areas where military operations are planned to escort people with disabilities, pregnant women and very young children to towns to prevent their being caught up in violence. However, it is clear that not only has violence led many people to acquire disability but also that people with pre-existing disabilities are among the group who have experienced most direct harm. The author has come across some people with disabilities who, having experienced a period of bombardment and witnessed serious violence, are living with severe mental trauma including that which morphs into psychiatric conditions. Those that are left behind, including people with disabilities, can also face suspicion when territory is gained by security forces who assume everyone in the area is an AOG fighter. Although this wariness is often eased when soldiers realise their disability status, it may sometimes be too late with violence already having been committed.

People continue to experience psychological impacts of violence and need mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services. A number of respondents spoke of coming across or living with people with severe psychological disorders which had arisen due to violence. one respondent recalled seeing a woman during food distribution in Bama: "Out of people gathering, we saw a lady who was pale, heavily pregnant, with her veil sliding off her hair, who looked hungry. I told my colleague to give food. The woman grabbed [my colleague]. When I followed her, I was told she was mentally retarded. She was just traumatised, really hungry and desperate for help. There

are so many people like that." People in Borno continue perceive very high rates of drug use which they link to psychological distress, people trying to forget what has happened and a lack of love and care given separation from family. However, drug use was also reported to have decreased due to MHPSS services and interventions warning people about their effects.

There are also youth-led initiatives such as that by the University of Maiduguri Muslim Women's Association supported by MCN whereby former gang members and drug users reach out to current gang members and drug users. They serve as visible examples that alternative paths are possible, show them they have people who care about them and provide practical support, for example in (re)establishing livelihoods.

Often trauma is ascribed in different ways to women and men. It is a more familiar narrative to talk of women rather than men as needing trauma support. People engaging in trauma healing work say women and young people are the most traumatised groups. This imbalance is partly due to gender norms of masculinity that ascribe strength – physical or mental – to 'real' men but it also reflects gendered patterns of violence. Many men fled violence, were killed or are in other ways not around as they are either detained or fighting. Many women and children who have since grown to become young people on the other hand witnessed and experienced violence and continue to live with its consequence. This does not mean that men do not experience trauma – they do – but many of these men may not be present in accessible areas and the men who are present are much more likely to have escaped their areas prior to attacks. Nevertheless, levels of trauma seem to have subsided since 2017, partly as the number of MHPSS interventions mean many people in need in accessible areas have reached support. Respondents also spoke of psychological impacts of violence they had experienced or witnessed fading away with time and as they have started to rebuild their lives and keep busy. For example, women said how their time engaging in farming or sensitising their communities against election related violence means they are so busy they forget about their time under AOG occupation as opposed to previous years where not only was this fresher but they were unable to engage in activities and so spent most of their time reliving what had happened. Indeed, there is indication that women not only have shown higher levels of resilience than men but also have built their resilience since 2017. Women respondents spoke of how they feel the additional weight of responsibility on their shoulders as men are either not around or they are unable or unwilling to contributing to the household. They say this additional load weighs deeply

on their minds. Conflict has had severe negative impact on them leading to high levels of trauma but they are also more able to cope with their circumstances compared to before. Women who work with conflict affected women agree with this analysis. According to one women's rights activist, "Before, they were in more of a state of shock. They didn't have the skills of dealing with challenges as men are supposed to be always there to take care of you. So, [you have] no preparation for what happens when men, not your husband, are not there on a massive scale. There is no preparation from tradition or cultural context [for women] to be able to manage their lives, deal with trauma and move on." She sees this state of affairs having changed with women who were left to figure out how to enable their families to survive now having grown into this role and finding it easier. Despite these realities, narratives rooted in gender stereotypes continue about victim women and strong men. Not enough is said of men's vulnerabilities in violent conflict and women's strength and resilience.

Livelihoods and economic conditions

The 2017 gender assessment traced ways in which people in Borno had been impacted by violence. People had seen their homes, workplaces, equipment and stock destroyed. Their farmlands were insecure and inaccessible. Women experienced lower levels of employment. In the absence of men, many women have been left with the sole responsibilities of feeding, clothing, sheltering and educating their families. Husbands and fathers, even if around, were unable to earn livelihoods and provide for families leaving women forced to find ways to earn incomes and seek humanitarian assistance. In 2019, these dynamics continue. Women in Gubio complained about the scale of challenges they were facing, noting lack of food, lack of education for their children, inability to farm due to attacks on farmlands and loss of capital. One woman said, "Our husbands have been killed. Most of our houses were burned and government refuses to bring us things to rebuild our houses. Before, I used to do business and sell but now I cannot even afford to do it as I do not have money. We cannot afford to feed ourselves two or three times a day."

Across many parts of Borno, people are afraid to go to farmlands, collect firewood or go to surrounding areas to trade. There have been numerous cases of people who go beyond a certain radius being abducted, killed, mutilated and injured by AOGs. Conversely, they may be viewed with suspicion and attacked by security forces and community militias. In some areas, soldiers and community militia members provide armed escort which has contributed to

increased perceptions of safety and security. Yet, many people found that crops were harvested or destroyed by AOGs during the last harvest season after they had struggled to farm. In many areas, people said that military also stopped them going to farm. Even in areas where people are able to access farmlands, they do not have seeds or equipment to be able to plant if no such livelihood intervention is provided. They wish to start businesses but lack capital and equipment to do so.

Pastoralists have been one of the economic groups worst affected by the violence. Many of them have had their animals stolen by AOGs. Given increased population density, they have struggled to feed animals on diminishing available land which is both secure and fertile. If they stay away from these areas, they come across AOGs who either seize their cattle or attack them. If they are able to find ways to co-exist with AOGs, they come under suspicion by security forces. If staying outside towns in order to graze their animals, they are unable to access humanitarian assistance as actors find these locations inaccessible and security forces do not allow pastoralists to come into towns, collect food and other items and take them outside the towns as they believe, understandably, that these items will be stolen by AOGs. Pastoralist women, some of whom rely on the sale of milk and milk products for income struggle in the context of dwindling herds, increased security scrutiny on cattle, reduced market for these products and distance between them and cattle. They may live in government-controlled towns and villages while their sons and husbands graze cattle outside. According to one respondent who has worked extensively with Fulbe pastoralist communities, "The crisis has reduced the market. Fulani women cannot go out. They are restricted. They do not feel safe in conflict prone areas. If there are less cows, this means less milk and less feeding of cows means less production of milk."

Many respondents agreed that the situation had improved but stated they continued to face challenges. They pointed to military restrictions and other actions that limit livelihood options and made their conditions worse than they had been in 2017. One woman in Gubio said, "Before, we had one plot of farm but now military has dug [a trench] so we don't have space to farm. We had a gate here before to link to our farm but this has been locked and we don't have access to go out. [The military] have caused us a lot of damage as when we go to farm in the morning, we are sent back by the military." These military restrictions have increased since the start of 2019 and can be linked to a number of successful AOG attacks on military bases that have led soldiers to improve defensive measures. These measures have included the digging of trenches, limiting the movement of people in these garrison towns from

going outside the town as they fear intelligence to plan attacks is being leaked in this way and the closure of markets. Women in a focus group conducted in Gubio said their main challenge was the market which had been locked down and people beaten and chased out. They said, "Security agencies did it intentionally because of the conflict. if you close the market, you affect the poor ones and this [market closure] affected us." Even in Maiduguri, respondents spoke of people not accessing sources of livelihood, not being able to go to farm and economic stagnation. Peacebuilders said most conflict issues in Jere and MMC were as a result of dynamics between IDPs and host communities and lack of economic opportunities. They pointed to disillusioned and unemployed young men turning to petty crime, drug use and fighting over girls.

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Many respondents spoke of how they perceived soldiers to be benefiting from the conflict, whether this be in the form of corruption by senior officers which meant inadequate provision of uniforms, guns, bullets and other equipment to wage war or soldiers engaging in economic activities. Soldiers were said to be benefiting from the fish trade from Lake Chad. Respondents said they were engaging in farming activities, particularly along checkpoints on land that belonged to those who could no longer farm there. The author saw a soldier engaged in farming while driving through southern Borno in July. Respondents also spoke of soldiers buying cows at low prices from desperate pastoralists, fattening them up then selling them at profit. Respondents believed cutting of forests were more for the purposes of selling firewood and charcoal than enabling good sight of approaching AOGs. Not only did respondents report community displeasure over this economic activity which they saw as distracting military attention from securing space and protecting civilians, but they also were unhappy with military consuming alcohol, licentiousness and harassment of women and girls in drinking establishments in their areas. Respondents believed that many restrictions applied to them in the name of security

were really for economic benefit of soldiers. Although this is a widespread perception, the author was unable to ascertain military motives. Yet, this perception feeds into community grievances and can be one driver behind the movement to ISWAP's daula described above.

However, women who have been displaced for a number of years are now more eager to find livelihood sources to sustain themselves and their families rather than wait for humanitarian assistance which from their experience is insufficient to meet their needs, significantly delayed and appear sporadically. In 2017, experiences of violence and being left without men were more recent and many women still felt they had to try to find a man to support them or wait for assistance from government or NGOs in order to survive. Two years later, having had to strategise ways to do so during this time, women have realised they can support themselves and their families and, as will be discussed below, that men are often unable or unwilling to fulfil breadwinner roles. Women are seeking knowledge, enrolling their daughters in school so they have more options and learning new skills. According to a woman lawyer who works with conflict-affected women, "Women are more focused and have taken on the full responsibility of taking care of children. This was new before as they had been used to men providing. Now, the situation [has] changed as women are used to this and know how to manage." Adolescent girls help their mothers, head households, are more likely to access and desire education than previously and engage in livelihood activities to contribute to family coffers. There are also more cases of women reaching out to support other women. According to another woman's rights activist, "You see a level of resilience and women going out of their way to reach out to other women. They talk with each other and [provide advice and support]. Whereas before, they did not fully understand what has happened to them and didn't know what they could do for themselves let alone for other women." Women support each other across communities which have experienced tense relations, for example with Kanuri and Fulbe women supporting each other. Women have used safe spaces and learning centres to break down this prejudice and barriers. According to respondents, women are no longer viewing themselves along ethno-linguistic, religious or other identity lines but as a group of people the conflict has affected in similar ways, sharing analysis that women across these communities have common challenges in ways that men have not been as able to do.

The crisis of masculinity reported in the 2017 gender assessment with men feeling vulnerable to violence and having lost their breadwinning roles has remained. According to conflict analysts working in communities, "Men are not spending much time doing income generating

activities any more. They are playing cards in the streets and being idle." Women feel that men are using security as an excuse not to engage in livelihood activities, saying they cannot go to certain areas because it is too dangerous. While this element of threat from AOGs, security forces and community militias is real as described above, women are still finding ways to earn incomes. As mentioned in the continuing physical and psychological impacts of violence, women engage in tasks and go to areas men feel are too risky for them, have little option but to do in order to pursue livelihoods. Often, women are forced to hand over the fruits of their labour to their husbands. A man working for an NGO spoke about women refusing to collect some types of seeds during seed distribution as they were economic crops. They said that, after they had finished cultivating these crops, their husbands would commandeer the proceeds and use this money to marry other wives. They would rather not do the hard work only to be cheated of its benefits. Where women have cultivated these crops, their husbands have indeed appropriated the income and used it not for the benefit of the family but to marry an additional wife. According to this respondent, "men do a lot of things that short changes the woman." He said that even before the conflict, women preferred bumper harvests being in grains and crops that could be kept and used to feed the family rather than cash crops such as beans which would be sold so men could marry additional wives. Gender dynamics within families vary considerably across areas and ethno-linguistic groups. Whereas women in central and northern Borno reported the highest number of cases of men trying to control household income in this manner, many women in southern Borno, who have a longer history of earning incomes outside the household even before the conflict report different trends. Moreover, the link between women's increased incomes and household conflict is not always clear. Women respondents also report a reduction in conflict as their economic empowerment has increased as husbands are more relaxed. These dynamics will be considered in more detail below under gender-based violence.

Participation and voice in decision making and peacebuilding

Borno has seen a gradual increase in women's participation and voice in decision-making in recent years. Progress has been slow and restricted to community and informal spaces. Recent elections in February and March 2019 did not see improvement in women's participation as political representatives. There are no women among Borno's three Senators and only one woman (Zainab Gimba representing Bama, Ngala and Kala Balge) among its nine House of Representatives members. This lack of

> " Women are increasingly playing more active roles, stepping forward to offset impacts of violence and mitigating likelihood of it recurring. Respondents spoke of changed dynamics in these platforms with women speaking out more rather than feeling they are there just to fill in attendance sheets. While in previous years, women would sit at the back on the floor in community meetings or leave during the time for lunch and had to be persuaded to sit on chairs, this dynamic has changed. Women are now more comfortable sitting on chairs rather than disappearing into the back. They are now being more proactive about gathering other women. "

women's representation does not necessarily reflect voter biases. Respondents spoke about high probability of two specific women becoming Senators and more women House of Representatives members[23] if not for dirty dealings at the party primaries. They said women in particular who were winning primaries found their primaries disrupted by political thugs, moved to new locations, new delegates appointed and candidates favoured by those in power winning instead. Zainab Gimba has spoken out about facing harassment and assaults, including experiencing beating and teargas by police officers who entered the venue where the primary was taking place, political thugs attacking her supporters and party officials snatching ballot papers from delegates to write the name of her opponent.[24] These incidents mirror previous elections in Borno where women who would have won primaries were denied the opportunity to stand for election by disruptions to the primary process. No woman was elected into the State House of Assembly in 2019 and Zainab Gimba remains only the fourth woman elected to either state or federal legislature since the creation of Borno State in 1976.[25] Women also did not feel able to participate in discussions with contestants during campaigning. They wished to have a say in what was going to happen and participate in conversations around leadership and governance. A woman interviewed said, "If we had the opportunity and politicians gave us the microphone, we would have told them that if they don't make our roads okay, we will not vote for them. But rallies are for politicians to talk and we didn't have any chance to speak to them." At the time of data collection, Commissioners had not yet been appointed. Since then, the newly elected state Governor has appointed three women out nine appointments announced thus far, leading some respondents to hope women's representative in the Executive Council would be higher than during the last administration. LGA chairmen, all of whom had been men in the last administration with a high percentage of senior LGA officials also men, had also not been appointed.

However, women are playing greater roles in building peace, rebuilding communities and promoting reconciliation than ever before. An increasing number of women working in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding agencies are serving as role models for women, especially young women and adolescent girls, about what is possible and that women have alternatives beyond marriage. A number of women led organisations have been created by young women in the past two to three years and many young women have started to gather, mobilise, voice out their concerns and support other women. This change is not limited to younger women. Older women too have been at the forefront of investigating human rights violations and demanding for peace and justice. Even though most community platforms tend to be headed by men and women play fewer roles advising community leaders and councils than in neighbouring Adamawa, women are increasingly playing more active roles, stepping forward to offset impacts of violence and mitigating likelihood of it recurring. Respondents spoke of changed dynamics in these platforms with women speaking out more rather than feeling they are there just to fill in attendance sheets. While in previous years, women would sit at the back on the floor in community meetings or leave during the time for lunch and had to be persuaded to sit on chairs, this dynamic has changed. Women are now more comfortable sitting on chairs rather than disappearing into the back. They are now being more proactive about gathering other women. Respondents spoke of women they had engaged in their interventions taking steps to pass on this learning. A woman respondent said, "Women contributed N100 each, bought items, gathered women in Bulabulin (another area) to speak to them about what they have learned and

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[23] According to the website of the National Assembly: http://www.nassnig.org, last visited 23.08.2019.
[24] Abdulkareem Haruna, 'Borno's only female APC candidate speaks on rough road to victory at primary,' Premium Times, 10 October 2018.
[25] Ibid.

how they have changed… they try and do something for other women. We had 40 women when started the project and only three could sign their names. After learning things, they decided to set up an adult class in their community – now, 30 to 40 can sign their names and give their phone numbers. They are doing this on their own as they saw the needs and [were] able to reach out." Respondents spoke of women also being more likely to mobilise and engage with decision makers. They have higher confidence and self-esteem and realisation of their self-worth and skills. A respondent said, "Now, women are more conscious of their environment. When they see something that is not okay, could harm them and their children, [they] will try to speak to people involved or go to local community leader and say what they observed. If they do not intervene, will go straight to the security people themselves. They are taking their own initiatives without support."

Much of this change is due to the increased resilience and comfort in their new roles mentioned above in the livelihoods and economic conditions section as well as programmatic interventions by civil society organisations and government agencies. After many years of violence and displacement, women have found ways to negotiate their current circumstances, realised they cannot rely on anyone else – whether humanitarian agencies or government or their male family members – and found ways for themselves and their families to survive. They now feel that their ideas matter. They make their own decisions within the home and this translates to the community level as they are more proactive in responding to issues that affect the community. Having experienced so much suffering, they are more determined to speak out rather than keep to gender norms of women not being visible or outspoken, particularly in public places. They are also more resolute to act to reduce the likelihood of violence erupting and to reach out and support other women. While women were organising in communities across Borno before the onset of violence, respondents said they noticed a trend of increased action over the last few years. A respondent characterised this shift as such: "Women are coming out more. They are gaining confidence. Conflict has brought them out of their shell even in how they interact with other women. There is more solidarity among women and a sense that we need to help ourselves, we are in this together, we are the worst hit in the community. They talk about how the men are. There is [more] sense of awareness of themselves and that they need to come up to help themselves and their children." Interventions that build women's leadership, economic and mediation skills and knowledge of rights have also contributed to this change. Respondents who had trained women in mentoring, mediation and conflict resolution spoke of how women

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were now more able to mediate conflicts at household or community level and douse tensions. For example, a man who was about to divorce his wife publicly due to rumours that she was meeting another man was influenced by a woman mediator to change his mind. This happened after failure of mediation by a local community leader. In other cases, women have been able to challenge men in communities to change their minds and allow women and girls to go to school. The women and girls themselves strongly wished to go to school but were prevented from doing so by their fathers and husbands who did not allow them to even go for Islamic education. Other women in the community met men in the community, including community and religious leaders, and persuaded them to drop their objections and support education. While such instances were already happening at the time of the 2017 Gender Assessment, more cases were said to be taking place in 2019 in comparison.

However, barriers to women's participation and voice in decision making remain. In many cases, women are represented on platforms and encouraged to be active due to interventions of NGOs. While there is higher acceptance of the need for women's participation and some men in positions of power will ensure women are included, in reality, in most cases women continue to be edged out if continued focus and attention is not paid. While women are mobilising and acting on their own in the absence of interventions, the extent to which they are able to engage in platforms of community decision making without support from interveners or facilitate dialogue and mediate without training in relevant skills is low. Respondents spoke about patriarchal interpretations of religion and the conservatism that persist. These ideas are manifested in attitudes towards women and education considered to be 'western' in nature. An example cited of this was around the clothes that women were required to wear with a respondent saying "They see the himar as synonymous with western education so you need to wear a lapaiya as they believe it's the only thing which will cover your body as a woman." Respondents also spoke of inadequate government action to support increased women's participation and voice with many male officials

seen as trying to cling on to gender norms and roles that no longer matched people's realities. They asked for government action to equip more women in engaging in peacebuilding and community decision making. Community leaders were also seen to support women's participation in community structures to a certain extent but not extensively, for example by having a few women being members of these structures but not ensuring active participation through facilitation of meetings, focus on changing community attitudes or other means such as arranging meetings at times women are able to attend. Other respondents pointed out that definitions of community decision making and peacebuilding also tend to be inherently masculine with focus on the work of (male) religious and community leaders rather than attention paid to the more informal roles women play and ways to support and facilitate this. Women's roles in general are not seen as having as much value. While there is widespread acknowledgement that women can provide peace-making roles within the family setting which are highly influential, the second order effects this has in terms of affecting the broader community is invisible and erased. Moreover, the roles women play at community level are not much acknowledged. Rather, attention continues to be paid to (male) community leaders who, in Borno, are often not present in communities, are seen by some to be involved in diversion of aid and other corrupt practices and struggle to retain legitimacy. Moreover, the stepping forward process can lead to rumours and other actions aimed at keeping women in their place. Some women are vocal in their communities are accused of being sex workers with stigma and discrimination attached to this label as is discussed below in the GBV section.

Furthermore, intersectional approaches show that the increased participation and voice described above does not necessarily apply evenly to all women. There are significant differences between access and voice between older women and younger women. While younger girls may be able to participate in programmes when they are unmarried and often engage enthusiastically in conversations, this changes with age. Many adolescent girls and young women find their prospects for involvement in community life diminish upon marriage due to additional restrictions and men's need to socialise their young brides into living under their power and control. These restrictions only ease with age. While some young women and adolescent girls are more aware of their rights and are increasingly consulted in decisions now, this change does not apply across the board. Respondents spoke of finding it very difficult to get younger women in focus group discussions to speak. If there is a mix of ages in the group, only older women tend to speak and groups

of only younger women often lapse into silence and need high levels of encouragement before conversation starts. A respondent who works with communities said about trying to engage younger women, "The most heart-breaking comment in Ngala when asking their opinion was women saying we don't have any say in this, I have no agency and I have not even given thought to what my interests and needs are as [they] won't be considered anyway. So, I don't have anything to share with you." Another group of women that continue to be marginalised from decision making processes are women with disabilities. Even when gender and disability is taken into consideration when constituting platforms and committees, all the women tend to be non-disabled and all the people with disabilities tend to be men. Respondents spoke of programmes seeing men in the community as having roles and so participating in platforms as security agents, farmers, pastoralists or representatives of other groups while women's role is to be women who make up the 'women's slots' without thinking of any other constituency they may represent. As a result, all those who are chosen as representatives, including people with disabilities, tend to be men. Consequently, women who are farmers, pastoralists, young, religious leaders, disabled and part of other groups are left out. According to one respondent, "NGOs drop the ball around this all the time. It is huge and systemic – the default is men and women are [an] aberration of that."

Gender-based violence

Trends in GBV across the state compared with 2017 are highly variable. In some places, some types of GBV reporting has increased and others decreased while the pattern is completely different in other places. It is also unclear to what extent reporting is the same as prevalence. After all, increased GBV reporting is often a positive sign of survivors being more able to access services and report violations. For example, respondents working there said that MMC had seen an increase in rape and sexual violence reports including for SEA but a decrease in physical assault and domestic violence. It seems more people are reporting GBV in Maiduguri which is leading to increased conversations about this violence. Respondents spoke of increased impunity for GBV outside Maiduguri where there is more access to services for survivors and a higher fear of arrest. According to a male respondent working for an NGO, "You don't have human rights outside [Maiduguri] as you don't have as many actors there as here. Men have fear of being arrested in Maiduguri but not in localities [outside Maiduguri]. There, they can do what they want as they assume they can do and undo."

There are particular categories of women and girls among whom GBV incidence is higher. For example, women with disabilities were seen as "easily violated" and experienced higher levels of rape, assault, sexual exploitation and denial of resources due to lack of education, livelihoods and social networks as a result of societal attitudes. They were seen by respondents as being "at receiving end when it comes to sexual harassment or exploitation." A male respondent who works on women's rights said they can be misled by men who promise marriage and, "Men go to them to satisfy their sexual urges and leave them with the child to bear consequences." Studies from a number of other countries[26] 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.[27] 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 who face higher incidence of GBV are adolescent girls who face not only high likelihoods of early and forced marriage but also can be sent out by parents to have sex with men for money and food. This section will further discuss early and forced marriage and SEA below.

Perpetrators of GBV cut across all socio-economic classes. They range from AOG fighters, government officials working in IDP camps, soldiers, police officers, vigilante and CJTF members, religious leaders, community leaders, husbands, male relatives, neighbours and prominent men in the community. Survivors are less able to report when perpetrators have money, power and status with the result most cases where cases have proceeded from the police station tend to concern poorer men. In cases where religious leaders are alleged to have committed sexual violence in particular, survivors find it very difficult to report what has happened to anyone and NGOs working on GBV struggle to know what to do to bring the alleged perpetrator to justice.

Sexual violence

Contrary to popular discourse that warns women and girls against public spaces, most perpetrators are known to survivors. They are men in the community, neighbours and family. Respondents spoke of fathers, brothers, uncles,

Islamiyya teachers, school teachers and men who host IDP families as perpetrators. Sexual violence is even less likely to be reported as loyalties are divided and they wish to protect the perpetrator from criminal prosecution, maintain shelter or are afraid to report men in power. Respondents spoke of young adolescent girls aged 12 to 14 years returning from AOG captivity reporting several AOG fighters raping them for days. Other girls and women were forced to marry AOG fighters who regularly raped them. Respondents who work with them said they were quiet in sessions and found it difficult to engage as their minds are often locked in the traumatic incidents that have happened to them. There are many more women and girls who were raped and sexually violated outside Maiduguri in towns such as Bama which see regular new arrivals from the bush coming into town. Respondents also spoke of military personnel and CJTF members engaging in sexual violence. Investigations have also revealed sexual violence against girls, boys and women by security agents and inmates in Maiduguri Maximum Security Prison and Giwa Barracks.[28] Respondents reported cases where soldiers have used their power to enter houses to rape women in places like Mafa and Gwoza. They spoke about how CJTF members who rape women and girls face little impunity as people do not dare to report due to their perceived closeness with the military or as their leaders intervene to stop the justice process. These cases range from the use of physical force to rape to sexual exploitation and abuse, including of children. Adolescent girls are seen to get some financial and security gains from their relationships with soldiers. Respondents said they were lured by money as their parents were unable to provide food and other items for the household. Soldiers provide them with protection and security. These girls have increased freedom of movement. Both mothers and fathers are not able to stop this from happening. In one case, a 15 year girl was found to have reported her father to the police saying that if he does not allow her to follow a soldier with whom she had been having a relationship, she would kill herself. Soldiers were also seen to be sexually exploiting women who they marry for the time they are deployed in the locality with the aim of divorcing and abandoning them and any children born to them on redeployment. A male respondent working on these issues asked, "A military man has 3 wives in Gwoza that he married in one year and he is not from Gwoza and will leave. What is he doing?"

[26] 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).
[27] 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).
[28] Please see Amnesty International, 'Nigeria: Children and women face sexual violence in Borno prisons,' 29 April 2019, available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/04/nigeria-children-and-women-face-sexual-violence-in-borno-prisons/, last visited 02.11.2019.

Perpetrators of SEA are not limited to military personnel and community militia members. Respondents also spoke of politicians engaging in sexual violence and taking IDP women as mistresses, giving them little choice in the matter. Lack of livelihood options and irregular and sporadic humanitarian assistance is linked to SEA incidence. For example, in Konduga, women who are unable to access farmlands were said to be resorting to sex in exchange for money, food, shelter, protection and other items they needed. Moreover, respondents spoke of parents "pushed to the wall, out of desperation, compelled to send girls out to get money from sex." This practice had taken place even before the conflict with parents giving girls targets of the money to be made for the day from hawking which were difficult to obtain given the goods they were selling. Many girls felt they had to present themselves in sexualised ways as a result to be able to get men to buy their goods and even spend more money on their goods than the market value. However, according to a respondent working for a peacebuilding NGO, "conflict made it more prominent and pushed to extremes. Even in Maiduguri, you find a 15 year old girl selling kola nut worth N500 who goes out in the morning and comes back at 6pm. If she comes back with N1,500, nobody questions where she got the money from."

The majority of discussion on sexual violence is about sexual violence against children, mostly girls, with a partial breaking of the culture of silence and relatively higher reporting here. Sexual abuse against boys by adult men in the community is also discussed. However, people do not tend to talk about sexual violence against adults unless asked. Although sexual violence against women in particular, does happen (no information about sexual violence against men is forthcoming), it tends to not be reported. Respondents said this form of sexual violence is more likely to happen within marriage and, as marital rape is normalised, few women would report this. According to respondents who work in conflict-affected communities, some men resort to physical violence, denial of resources and rape if wives refuse sex. As one respondent said, "A husband takes advantage by beating up [his wife] if she refuses him, cuts [some of the family's] food ratio and sells out." Moreover, adolescent girls and adult women are more likely to be blamed and face continued stigma and shaming that young girls, a powerful incentive to remain quiet. Respondents also spoke of many cases of women and girls in relationships with young men in they are raped. In these cases, the blame often falls on the survivors with questions asked as to why they allowed themselves to be alone with the male perpetrators if they did not want to have sex and rumours spreading that they consented to having sex and

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only make allegations of rape because incidents were found out. While most people spoke of rape and sexual assault, respondents also spoke of sexual harassment which goes largely unreported. This sexual harassment happens in schools and religious educational institutions and in places of work, for example perpetrated against women who do labour on men's farms.

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 so survivors, not perpetrators, continue to face repercussions of violence they experience. A respondent working on community outreach around sexual violence said that even though the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Maiduguri provides free medical, psychosocial and legal support, many survivors still do not want to go there "due to stigma and as people often blame the victim and society is not kind to them." Their organisation works on sensitising people on the need to access healthcare to prevent pregnancy and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) including HIV and has had some success. Survivors have some access to healthcare and psychosocial support but still do not wish to report cases to the police. For example, of all cases reported to the GBV Information Management System in June 2019 in Borno, legal assistance was the type of service most likely to be declined with 42 percent of survivors declining this service.[29] According to SARC

records, at least 73 cases have been reported to the police who are actively investigating to charge these suspects to court but many of the survivors and their families in these cases are reluctantly engaging with this process. But, people do not wish to take the matter to the police due to the length of time it takes for cases to go through the court process and lead to conviction. According one respondent who works with survivors says that "parents, when asked why not take it to court, say it takes years, [they are] not rich [to be able to] spend this money, [they are] not sure of the outcome and our daughter's name will be all over and affect future prospects of getting a husband." He went on to say, "People like blaming the survivor and their family." Particularly if the perpetrator is wealthy or powerful, they are likely to go free. According to one respondent, survivors' families say that they are being asked to report the perpetrator to the police then take them to court but there have been cases where the perpetrators has been locked up for two days and you will see them free in the community on the third day. In these circumstances, the case has been dropped and perpetrator laughs at survivors and their families. The perpetrator can also threaten the survivor and their family with violence and societal marginalisation, particularly if they are security force personnel or men with power and influence in the community such as community leaders, religious leaders or wealthy. They can also offer money to settle the case which, in the context of the poverty in which many survivors and their families live and what they consider to be the impossibility in securing a conviction, is an offer many choose to take. There have also been cases where survivors who report violence have been forced to marry the perpetrator concerned. Activists are concerned how they will be treated in such marriages given previous disregard for bodily integrity and say some women and girls do not report violence because they are afraid they will have to marry the person who raped them. Communities also tend to blame survivors and their families for violence, for example blaming them for being in certain places at certain times, being friendly with the perpetrator or allowing daughters to leave the house. Respondents spoke of how religious leaders bring up the matter of how women and girls dress and tell them of ways to 'avoid' being raped. These cautions not only blame survivors for the violence that happened to them rather than their abusers but do not have any basis in reality given most perpetrators are known, abuse takes place within the home, workplace and educational settings and survivors engage in a variety of behaviour and dressing.

Rather than face these consequences, many women and girls who have become pregnant through rape act to terminate pregnancy with or without the knowledge of their parents. Often, doing so runs smoothly. For example, one

respondent spoke of a case where a girl of ten years was being sexually exploited and abused by a CJTF member who would facilitate getting food rations faster in return. This 'relationship' was occurring for two years before it was found out but by that time the now 12 year old girl was pregnant. She and her family found a way to abort the pregnancy with little adverse health consequences. However, other women and girls can be too far along in the pregnancy or take more dangerous methods of termination. If they go to health centres, they are provided post abortion care. However, many women and girls are unable to seek healthcare and die due to infection or excessive bleeding.

Some women are now pushing back due to the sensitisation carried out by NGOs. They ask whether they need to always be serving as bodyguards saying: "Must we always escort our daughters to school, the market? We can't always be there for them." They are taking their daughters and sisters for health care and to report to police stations, often over the protests of their fathers and husbands who tend to be more likely not to want to report. Yet, this victim blaming runs deep. A respondent told of a case where a 30 year old man raped a three year old girl. She said, "The community were justifying the incident by saying the mother was always leaving the child naked without any clothes. They were blaming the mother for not putting on clothes on her 3 year old daughter so perpetrator always seeing the girl naked." Here, community members, including women, were arguing for the perpetrator to go free because he was 'enticed' by the sight of a naked toddler. This victim blaming and sexualisation of children cuts across genders, education levels and locations with this particular incident taking place in Maiduguri and educated people, including a woman journalist, pushing this narrative.

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 the justice system. 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 survivor to perpetrator so they have to worry about marriage prospects and community attitudes. 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 conversations around GBV tend to focus on sexual violence, incidence of domestic violence and abuse is likely to actually be higher. Of reports to the GBV Information Management System in June 2019 in Borno, 77 percent of cases were of intimate partner violence and only 12 percent of sexual violence (6 percent child sexual abuse, 6 percent possible sexual slavery) with the remaining being cases of early marriage (5 percent) and harmful traditional practices (6 percent).[30] A respondent who works for a peacebuilding NGO and runs community platforms said domestic violence and abuse was being increasingly raised during platform meetings a result of focused work with women in the community as well as training provided to members on gender, human rights and access to justice. He said, "The sense from communities is that social dynamics, unemployment, poverty, frustration, tight living conditions, IDP camps, presence of soldiers and informal brothels forming has definitely increased domestic violence and abuse." Many members of these platforms believe that "a man has the right to discipline his wife but a lot of times, men are taking it too far." He gave incidents of severely beating, burning, or choking wives being considered as unacceptable and characterised a shift in attitudes from the idea that a man is allowed to do what he wants in his own home to there being lines of violence that men should not cross. His NGO facilitates conversation around domestic violence and abuse, including around the notion this constitutes any form of physical violence, even if it is not severe and says, "you can see people taking this in and processing information." Other respondents also spoke of changing ideas around domestic violence and abuse as a result of interventions. A respondent whose organisation engages with communities about gender relations said that while before, women would be blamed for having 'provoked' husbands to beat them, "Later on, communities have changed. They do not blame a survivor… Before, when [a] man beat his wife, [they] thought the wife was at fault but now ask why must you beat your wife? It is not right to beat."

However, this shift has been the result of focused programmes of intervention and has not taken place in many non-intervention communities. A primary reason given for an increase in domestic violence and abuse is

men "wanting to feel relevance" and assert their authority, power and control in contexts where women are now taking on all household responsibilities, as discussed above in the livelihoods and economic conditions section. Here, men who feel unable to live up to norms of masculinity or control the household through provision of money and food as they were doing before, resort to violence to assert their dominance and power. Respondents said that these dynamics can vary across ethno-linguistic groups with Fulbe people as well as Burah, Chibok and other groups in southern Borno tending to be more flexible as they are used to women earning money. These dynamics will be discussed in more detail in the section below. Moreover, most government MDAs do not take cases of domestic violence and abuse seriously. For example, police officers interviewed, after saying that there were no cases of GBV reported to them, went on to talk about hearing of marital disputes and husbands being violent towards wives.

Attacks against sex workers

Many respondents spoke of women and girls continuing to exchange sex for money, food, protection and other items. These dynamics can be characterised as SEA, survival sex or sex work and, in the context of Borno, these categories have become very blurred with particular incidents difficult to characterise. Rising narratives around morality and policing of others' behaviour linked to conflict and displacement have led to severe adverse consequences for women and girls who engage in transactional sex. Those who engage in transactional sex of any nature outside of the marital relationship are stigmatised, discriminated against and seen as 'harlots.' People across communities in Borno speak about sex workers and brothels in demeaning terms despite some understanding for the circumstances in which women and girls may engage in transactional sex, their lack of options and the reality that doing so may be the only way to feed themselves and their families, particularly given the impact of violence on individuals, families and communities. While there is unhappiness at the men that engage in transactional sex, particularly soldiers, the focus of distaste tends to be on the women concerned. Whereas sex workers before the conflict tended to cluster in houses where they provided each other with mutual support and assistance, many of these houses have been raided and the women and girls concerned forced to go underground, carrying on these activities in more precarious situations that are more prone to violence. Displacement, lack of livelihood alternatives and loss of family members have

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[30] Gender-based violence information management service monthly snapshot: June 2019.

also increased the numbers of women and girls who engage in transactional sex whether they be girls separated from family members or women who need to bring money and food to their families using any means possible. This transactional sex takes place in IDP camps, host communities, near military bases and in particular areas of towns. There have been cases where parts of town known for sex work taking place have been raided and destroyed by security agents. The men who used to patronise these places, including reportedly wealthy men and politicians, have faced no consequences, while the women and girls concerned have lost their homes and been subjected to violence. Authorities do need to act to address this issue, particularly in cases where girls are exploited and abused. One of these areas in Maiduguri was colloquially known as 'Pampers' because the girls found there were so young. However, this destruction of property with no interventions to engage and provide support to these girls has made their lives even worse. Some sex workers relocated from Maiduguri to Benisheik in the wake of these actions, where they were stigmatised even further by communities. According to one respondent, "People were suspecting them and thought they were carrying diseases. They didn't want to associate with them [to prevent] spread of the disease." Many of these women and girls have since left Benisheik and dispersed to different locations. Their current whereabouts and security and economic situation are unknown.

Denial of resources and links with poverty

Respondents also spoke of an increase in denial of resources with men reportedly more reluctant to provide for families as they believe women should rather go to collect food and non-food items from NGOs while they relax. They also spoke of cases where men have seized food distributed to women family members and sold it or where men have taken money women have earned. These dynamics will be further discussed below under changing gender norms and realities.

Early and forced marriage

Cases of early and forced marriage continue. In some areas of Borno, they have abated slightly due to improved economic conditions, increased power of women and girls' access and desire for education. Religious leaders have also been preaching on the dangers of early marriage in terms of loss of life during pregnancy and vesicovaginal fistula (VVF) and the importance of girl child education. Respondents said that while before, fathers would feel they had to marry off their daughters to reduce the family's economic burden, in some families, daughters are now

considered an economic benefit as they too are engaging in livelihood activities and contributing income to the family. Whereas men before would make decisions around daughters' marriage alone, the girls themselves are now more likely to be consulted and wives who are 'economically buoyant' have ability to veto decisions as opposed. Girls, who are now more aware of their rights, are also speaking out and expressing their desires for education, livelihoods and delay of marriage. The incidence of early divorce, for example of girls of 13 years being divorced after one or two years has also reduced with this reduction in early marriage.

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The 2017 gender assessment reported men visiting IDP camps in search of 'cheap brides' for whom they can pay as little as N2,000 in bride price. They would subsequently be abusive towards them before divorcing and leaving them back in IDP camps. This phenomenon has reduced due to humanitarian assistance that means people are not in as desperate situations as well as awareness and sensitisation programmes. Nowadays, after having witnessed so many cases, people are more likely to investigate and discover the background of suitors rather than readily arrange for these marriages to take place.

However, it is important to note that these dynamics are not uniform across the state with societal and economic pressure on families still present in some communities. For example, a respondent spoke of a community in which he works as identifying a particular street as "hellfire street' due to the high numbers of unmarried girls living there who were automatically thought of as engaging in sex work. His organisation identified those involved in spreading this narrative and stigmatising these girls for not being married and engaged them in dialogue but this example shows the widespread nature of social norms around early marriage being necessary otherwise girls will 'spoil.'

Changing gender norms and realities

The sections above have outlined how realities for all genders have transformed in the past two years. However, while roles and responsibilities have shifted, gender norms are taking longer to transform. Although many women and men are adjusting to these changes and Borno is seeing new models of femininity and masculinity emerge, there is some backlash which links to some examples of increased domestic violence and abuse. Gender norms differ according to ethno-linguistic groups and geographical areas of Borno. For example, as discussed above among minority communities such as the Fulbe, Burah, Chibok and other groups that live in southern Borno, women have always played a role in contributing to household income and spending. However, among the majority Kanuri group, gender norms specify that men engage in income generating activities while women focus on the home and children. Changing this socialisation and indoctrination among both women and men can be difficult, even despite changed circumstances.

Yet, there are always differences between the ways in which people live their lives and gender norms. Gender relations are not static. There have seen significant shifts through history. For example, women were prominent as advisers and leaders in the Kanem-Borno empire with at least one woman having ruled the empire. Yet, Kanuri culture by and large required women to be 'respectful' i.e. not mix with men and keep quiet when men are around. Realities had already started to change before the conflict as characterised by a male respondent talking about urban families in Maiduguri as follows: "Before, the male head of household was responsible from A to Z for family [economic] needs. But two things happened. First, education brought about changes where educated wives would go out and work bringing extra needed income. Second, the conflict came and the poverty level even in urban areas grew worse, bringing about greater need for the wife to chip in to keep family living standards." He went on to speak about how women had started engaging in trading, going as far as Kano, Lagos and even Cotonou and Dubai to buy things to sell in the city. Women also increasingly prepare cooking ingredients, soaps and perfumes. As a result, he said, women in Maiduguri across socio-economic classes are "becoming more assertive, economically independent and having greater say in the household." Practices around kulle[31] and covering up in front of un-related men have also changed, particularly in contexts of displacement inside and outside Maiduguri. A respondent, speaking about Bama said, "Ordinarily, you

wouldn't find a Kanuri woman uncovered but given circumstances in camp where each household headed by a woman is given small tent and they have to cook outside, the normal tradition of covering up has gone and veil come off. Women have gotten used to this and by the time the conflict has ended, so many things would have changed." He also spoke about women have learned they need to be more assertive, including in public spaces, for example when "pushing shoulder to shoulder" in queues waiting for humanitarian assistance.

As many men are missing or have died, those who remain have increased power in the marriage market and in marriages. There are cases of men aged over 70 years divorcing their wives of 50 years standing to marry a girl aged 14 or 15 years. According to a man from Maiduguri talking about IDP camps in the city , "There are not many men around so [they] think they are in high demand and able to divorce and marry whoever they like. Men did not have money before to marry four wives before but [they] now can as women have food vouchers [so they do not have to support their families] and they do not have to pay much bride price. They can pay as little as N500 to N2,000 now whereas it was above N5,000 before the conflict." If a man has an argument or disagreement with his wife, he "goes after other women outside to discipline the woman so she knows I am a man" according to a man from Maiduguri. Women are uncertain about what to do about this high rate of marriage and divorce. They feel they need someone to represent them in community decision making where men continue to be taken more seriously. This likelihood of easy divorce prevents many women from speaking out in marriages as they fear husbands will divorce them and they will not be able to find another husband as there are not many men around. According to a women's rights activist, "Divorced women are looked down upon but nobody calls a divorced man any names [even though] he is the one doing the divorcing. Iskanci[32] is two people but stigma is on one and not the other." At the same time, women whose husband is with AOGs or in detention can remarry before the seven-year period of separation provided for in Islam. Women and men of all ages are also entering into consensual relationships outside of marriage in higher numbers than was previously the case "for sexual satisfaction and to ease emotional pain... but not formalising this into marriage as men can already have three to four wives."

As described in the livelihoods and economic conditions section, many women have had to find ways to earn livelihoods as well as cook, clean, look after children, find

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[31] Seclusion
[32] Immorality.

firewood, work to get humanitarian assistance and fulfil community responsibilities. Women complain about now having to shoulder all the responsibilities. A respondent reported one woman in Gwoza as talking about how she has to spend the day doing all of these tasks only to come home and find that, "Even in the night there is no rest" as she is then expected to have sex with her husband. She contrasted this situation with that before the conflict when husbands took on more of the burden of providing for the family than they currently do. While some husbands will still try to take the money earned and humanitarian assistance obtained by wives for their personal use, 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 they do not trust that men will act with the best interests of the whole family in mind. In some areas, women have started to report their husbands to the military for resolution of household conflict. Doing so is a shift in how disputes are resolved in the community but women, in the absence of any other authority that will listen to them, often feel they have no other option. In these cases, soldiers often beat and disgrace the men concerned to force them to treat their wives better and stop taking the humanitarian assistance she collects to sell. However, in the weeks that follow, communities often perceive the woman who reported her husband to the military has some kind of sexual relationship with a soldier and rumours to this nature spread.

These dynamics are exacerbated by humanitarian assistance that tends to be distributed to men after the early years of the response. During this time, actors found multiple cases where distribution to men as heads of households led to some men selling food and non-food items and using this money to marry additional wives. In the absence of men not being able to earn a livelihood themselves when many of them had been relatively comfortable before the conflict but rather having been reduced waiting for others to distribute to them, marrying a second, third or fourth wife, potentially over the objections of their existing spouse(s) was one way of asserting their masculinity. Finding many women and children did not benefit from humanitarian assistance and men were distributing assistance to family members unfairly, many humanitarian agencies changed their mode of delivery to distributing to women as heads of household with a husband seen as part of the household of his wife/ wives rather than the other way around. Doing so has led to unexpected consequences. Women with monthly food vouchers or who are on lists for humanitarian assistance are now prized. In a context where many men are no longer

around, they have increased prospects of marriage. Their bride price is higher than that of other women. This kind of marriage even has a name: auren karti.[33] Conversely, a woman who is not bringing 'value' i.e. humanitarian assistance into a household can be more likely to be divorced. Some women can be more highly sought after in unexpected ways. For example, on respondent spoke of their work to support women who had returned from spending time with AOGs, whether having been abducted or having chosen to join. Community men, encouraged to marry them to promote peace and reduce stigma and discrimination, asked for the date of the wedding to coincide with the date of distribution of food. Men who otherwise would have shunned these women now wanted to marry them for purely transactional reasons as they knew these women seen as 'vulnerable' by humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors would be on lists for humanitarian assistance. As one respondent said, "A groom want to marry the lady to get food voucher etc. from partners because anybody who agrees to marry someone considered vulnerable benefits from what she gets."

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> Women complain about now having to shoulder all the responsibilities. A respondent reported one woman in Gwoza as talking about how she has to spend the day doing all of these tasks only to come home and find that, "Even in the night there is no rest" as she is then expected to have sex with her husband. She contrasted this situation with that before the conflict when husbands took on more of the burden of providing for the family than they currently do. "

There has been some backlash against these modalities of humanitarian distribution. One male government official interviewed said, "Culture matters. You cannot place male and female on the same footing…. Human beings are never grateful and women are even more ungrateful. You see women on the streets suffering for N200, not meeting [their] obligations as mothers. It is a concern as [they are] no longer thinking of [their] responsibility as a mother but spending time on street looking for support for NGOs." He rather suggests that humanitarian aid be given to 'heads of families' i.e. women's uncles, fathers and brothers with

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[33] Auren means marriage and karti means card.

conditions put on assistance that it be used for the family and not to marry other wives." He does not represent all government officials and others interviewed took a more measured approach, saying they understood the way distribution was done. However, there is some difference between the utterances of elite men such as government official and community leaders and men living in communities. There are age dimensions to this also with older men being the ones who tend to be more resistant compared to younger men and boys who are too young to have completely internalised pre-conflict gender realities or who only got married after having experienced violence and displacement. Reactions of men to these changes is more mixed than that reflected in the dominant discourse. Many men are glad for interventions that help women and, indeed, ask NGOs to bring interventions to help particularly widows in the community. There are increasing signs of acceptance of changed power relations and friction is starting to reduce. Men are pleased for wives to be able to contribute to the household as doing so reduces their burdens and means these wives and their children do not ask them for money or food which they are no longer able to provide. Respondents have also seen shifts in attitudes. They talk about how whereas men would complain previously that all attention is being paid to women who are no longer submissive to them in the past, men have changed to be more accepting of interventions. According to one respondent, "They are accepting the fact that the gender agenda is coming to stay and have seen the impact it's had on women and on their communities."

Borno is also seeing changes in models of masculinity. Some (older) men cling on to power and dominance over family members, which can lead to household conflict due to dynamics around livelihoods and humanitarian assistance mentioned above. Respondents spoke about changes in majalisa, a collection of men sitting together and sharing information usually under a tree or roof. Given many men are no longer engaged in productive work, these gatherings can serve as group catalyst for their frustrations. Levels of street sexual harassment and gossiping and spreading rumours, especially about women and girls, is rising. According to a male respondent, in majalisa, "Men while away time and gossip. They see who is passing. They engage in street sexual harassment. They talk about every person who passes by. They condemn to the extent that it brings problems in homes [due to the spreading of rumours]. This talk has broken down so many homes. Men shares issues with their wives and someone gives negative advice that they then implement." While not all men engage in these acts and many spend their time trying to find ways to support their families, women, who do not have time to sit and talk in this manner due to their increased workloads, are concerned that men are watching

them and what they are doing and saying about them. There are also increased rumours of 'lesbianism' in IDP camps. Whether this talk is part of general lamentation about 'immorality' in camps, a means that people discredit women who are seen as too independent and outspoken or an indication that practices more hidden in villages are coming to light in the cramped conditions of camps is unclear. Meanwhile, other men, especially those who are younger and seek the 'traditional' routes to manhood of marriage and livelihoods blocked for them, seek more violent modes of masculinity with conflict and tensions, particularly between CJTF male members and other young men over who 'has access' to women. As CJTF members have increased status, power and influence through their association with the military and as they have weapons, young men are unhappy with how they 'take' the women whether these be consensual non-marital relationships or marriages or through sexual violence including SEA. Actually, men with power and influence, whether these be wealthier men, soldiers or male members of community militias are seen as "being able to get all the good women" leaving those who are relatively poorer and of lower status feeling aggrieved.

In between these two group lie the men who have managed to adjust to the changed dynamics in more positive ways. They support the women of their families and communities to undertake livelihood activities, access education and take part in decision making and peacebuilding. They have become convinced of the importance of women and girls having increased opportunities and they believe 'the world is changing.' They have been more open to discussion around masculinities (as will be explored in the lessons section below). There are a number of men who were cited as now assisting in domestic work unlike was the case beforehand. According to a woman respondent who works with communities on these changing gender roles, "When conducting a training for community structures in Bakassi [IDP camp in Maiduguri], a man told us that he had lost his wife in conflict [-related violence] and was left with three children. Every day, he sets the fire, does the cooking outside and bathes the three children. When he is cooking, children come around and stand as they think it is strange. Other men say he needs to marry another wife but he says she may not take care of the children as he is doing and he is not ashamed and encourages other men to take on domestic responsibilities." A man respondent who works for a donor also agreed that men had changed saying, "Men are staying at home, looking after children and house and even cooking when women are out looking for work. They are doing things never would have considered before."

While these changes in gender roles among men have been much slower than those for women, opportunities for engaging men on masculinities exist. One woman who does mobilisation around masculinities and how they drive conflict and violence spoke about how she engages men on this topic: "In a typical community, when man clears his throat, everyone is scared. But even in the religion, it's not like that. Men fight wars when it is time for wars. But you are supposed to treat women with empathy, put yourself in their shoes. Prophet Mohammed even grinded for wives and sat down with them to work with vegetables. So, [after telling them this, I ask them] from where did you get your ideas around masculinity and violence? I normally go to use hadith when I engage men." She speaks to them around ideas of men as protectors reminding them about how, during the height of violence, it was not sons or husbands who would leave the house but women as men were targeted for violence and forced recruitment by AOGs and for detention by soldiers. Women in the towns went to market while women in the villages went to farm and collect harvest. She said, "You can engage [men] to understand masculinity. For instance, when it comes to the idea of [men providing] protection, women too provided protection during conflict. They dressed men in women's clothes and took them to safety." She went on to note that all these dynamics raise the question of who is considered a hero in Borno today? She spoke about a young woman whose mother was arrested and imprisoned twice by the military. The young woman started engaging in sex work, became an informant to AOGs and had a very difficult life. After outreach and interventions by the respondent's NGO, she is now selling street food, is financially independent and reaches out to other women. Women would call her a 'prostitute' and not want to be involved in the group which they considered to be for yan iska[34] but she won them over with her confidence and abilities. She is now considered a leader in her community. The respondent ended by saying, "Women are building for themselves and ignoring what the community is doing and saying about them."

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[34] People engaged in immorality.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

After having outlined the conflict, security and gender dynamics in Borno State, this section turns to examining the key results achieved and challenges faced by 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 Borno 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 actor working in the state.

Result

Increased access and programming outside Maiduguri: In 2017, actors were struggling to work outside Maiduguri due to security and logistical challenges. As of 2019, programming is taking place in LGA capitals in most of the state with humanitarian actors in particular able to move out. However, as the challenges will discuss, the fluidity of the security situation has consequences on continuity of even life-saving programming with staff having to evacuate from places like Kukawa, Kala Balge and Monguno in late 2018 leaving almost 400,000 people targeted for humanitarian assistance.[35] Further, an estimated 823,000 people live in areas inaccessible and hard to reach.[36]

Rising awareness of human rights, including those of women and girls, and (some) reporting of human rights violations: Respondents spoke of how 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. People not only know their rights but are aware of where they can be supported when violations have taken place. People are more aware of and able to respond to violence than was previously the case. The culture of silence is partially breaking in cases of GBV, especially when it comes to sexual violence committed against children and even in domestic violence and abuse in areas where concerted interventions have been implemented. Moreover, girls are forming part of youth networks and speaking out. 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.

Progress made on changing attitudes and meeting MHPSS needs: In 2017, some key influencers were hostile to the idea that Borno's population had MHPSS needs and stigma attached to mental health, prevalent in many societies worldwide, remained. This resistance contrasted with MHPSS needs that people, especially those who had witnessed or experienced violence, were starting to discuss openly. Since 2017, even more space has been created to talk about post-traumatic stress and there are increased levels of awareness about MHPSS among community members, government officials and community leaders. Language around trauma has entered into the lexicon. Due to the widespread psychological impact of living through violence on most of the community in many areas, the stigma around mental health is not present, leaving opportunities for actors to step into the space and take advantage of this shift. As described above, some people are also starting to recover in terms of their mental health as they are increasingly able to provide for families, recover their lives, access education and livelihood opportunities and after having benefited from MHPSS services which many actors have been engaged in providing. More work in this area is needed with many people, particularly those living in inaccessible areas and where security is uncertain and repeated attacks have taken place, continuing to experience trauma. Also, actors need to better integrate MHPSS into conversations and programmes. For example, conversations around people returning to their LGAs tend to rather sterile, focused on ensuring basic infrastructure and living conditions are conducive. These aspects are important but actors also need to realise that these physical spaces hold histories and memories that live on within the physical, emotional and intellectual being of individuals.

[35] OCHA, 'North-east Nigeria: humanitarian situation update,' January 2019.
[36] 2019-2021 Humanitarian Response Strategy: Nigeria, December 2018.

Increase in youth engagement due to interventions: Peacebuilding actors, particularly before the 2019 elections engaged in sensitisation and outreach for young people around knowing their rights and the need to work for peaceful, free and fair elections rather than engage in violence for politicians. While there were significant amounts of vote rigging and political thuggery, particularly around primaries, some locations saw no violence for the first time in years as a result. Young people have also mobilised to improve their communities. Interventions that spread awareness of the harms and risks associated with drug use and gang involvement have had some impact. Some young people are changing their behaviour and being supported to take ownership of their lives and engage positively in the community. Where such interventions have worked best is where they have supported young people to mobilise for themselves and reach out to other young people rather than have older people coming in and lecturing them on behaviour. In some areas, relations between older and younger people who feel marginalised and not cared for, have started to improve.

Increased access to education for girls and boys: This report has already spoken interventions bringing about increased access to education and changing attitudes of families and communities as opposed to prior aversion towards forms of education seen as 'western'. While early and forced marriage and denial of education is still widespread, some girls are able to convince their parents and mothers are able to speak up for their daughters to delay marriage in favour of education.

Women's increased resilience: As described above, women show increased resilience. As well as the factors mentioned above in terms of women having been able to adjust to current realities and women reaching out to support each other, many actors have focused on empowerment programmes, particularly around women's economic empowerment. Several government and non-government agencies support women headed households in particular with livelihoods programming. As a result, according to one government official, "The resilience of women has increased [and] women have been empowered to do so many things that they could not in the past... [Our interventions have] lifted them to a level which is significantly above the level they were two to three years ago."

Community leaders starting to be more inclusive and responsive: MCN interventions have focused on training community leaders, scribes and women relatives on conflict management, human rights and record keeping.

While some community leaders have been unresponsive and resistant, asking for financial benefit in exchange for support, this intervention has helped participants improve skills. Community leaders are required to engage in mediation, dialogue and conflict management processes but receive no training in how to do this. This intervention aims to change this dynamic. It is early days and results have yet to be felt in changed perceptions and increased effectiveness of community leaders in most areas. Respondents spoke of the challenges surrounding these institutions and perceptions of bias, corruption and self-interest although some of them also said leaders were starting to be more responsive, for example helping rape survivors access healthcare.

Increased democratisation in decision making: Humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors have supported the creation of fora which are more inclusive than previously existing community decision processes. As a male government official said, "In these forums, you even see the disabled, different groups represented and giving a say to everyone." Whereas having this mix of people in a room where previously women and men would not sit together to discuss or community numbers would sit on the floor while the leader sits on the chair has been a culture shock with some power holders not reacting positively, most communities have adjusted. According to the same male government official, "People are gradually beginning to know the importance of bringing people to brainstorm on what affects the community, [that it is] beneficial as everyone is able to contribute openly. Dealing with outsiders and development partners [being] there makes you feel free... Everyone opens up and contributes [their] quota and views... whereas before [it] used to be the District Head and five people who take decisions on behalf of the community."

Community conflict management structures and agencies are starting to be more inclusive and responsive with some normalisation around multi-stakeholder decision making: In the last two years, some communities in Borno have seen practices of working together to solve community issues starting to become institutionalised. At the same time, institutions whether these be state security agencies or those of community and religious leadership have become more inclusive and responsive in their decision making. While many of these platforms are based to some extent on structures existed previously, levels of inclusivity are new. Now, civil society, representatives of government and security forces, including some women, people with disabilities and members of ethnic and religious minorities, come together to discuss issues and present solutions. Communities,

government actors and security agents have really seen the value of this inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach. These changes are largely limited to areas where organisations such as MCN, Mercy Corps, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and others have supported civil society actors to bring together and support multi-stakeholder mechanisms but results are promising and such interventions could have wider ranging impact if implemented at scale. These NGOs have also increased peacebuilding capacity and mediation capacity among many individuals in the community who have helped better manage conflict in non-violent ways.

Reduced tensions between IDPs and host communities if humanitarian agencies put in place conflict sensitive approaches: Previous conflict assessments[37] showed significant conflict between IDPs and host communities in different parts of Borno. Pilot projects that explore the nexus between social cohesion and humanitarian programming and implement conflict sensitive approaches show reduced tensions of this nature. The agencies involved are planning to scale up these methodologies to other areas.

> **Several government and non-government agencies support women headed households in particular with livelihoods programming. As a result, according to one government official, "The resilience of women has increased [and] women have been empowered to do so many things that they could not in the past… [Our interventions have] lifted them to a level which is significantly above the level they were two to three years ago.**

Changed attitudes towards people associated with AOGs perceived to be 'innocent': Perceptions of people associated with AOGs differ considerably according to the mode with which they became associated as well as characteristics such as age and gender. According to a male peacebuilder who works on reintegration issues, "In 2017, once you have stayed with [AOGs] whether liberated by military or not, [the community] will be arresting you and taking [you] back to military but now, if liberated, people

are celebrating the 'innocent ones' returning. Now, they differentiate those who were abducted, forced to fight etc." Women and girls associated with AOGs have been increasingly, with support, been able to overcome the trauma they experienced and create social networks with and support from other women and girls when once they would have been shunned. Interventions focused on generating livelihoods as well as community dialogue have helped this to shift as these women and girls are now financially independent and are engaging in economic interactions with community members. Whereas organisations working on reintegration of women and girls associated with AOGs were seen as 'working for AOGs' before, communities have started to change their perceptions with those who were initially resistant now being champions of such programmes and providing practical support. According to a woman respondent who also works on reintegration, "Other women who are not survivors show sympathy by bringing physical materials to them such as wrappers. They visit them at home to say you are not alone to reduce stigmatisation."

Some reintegration of people associated with CJTF: Many agencies have also engaged with the CJTF, helping them to develop a register of members, training members on human rights, civilian protection and laws of armed conflict, and engaging members in skills acquisition. Some members who have subsequently been able to (re)-establish livelihoods have left the CJTF. Women members have been missing from the interventions of many of these agencies and talk about how they are purposefully not included in lists of participants provided by male leaders. Where they are included, significant progress is made. For example, an NGO that provides training to CJTF members spoke of two young women members trained in electrical installation "becoming stars within their areas' as they are called to do manual repairs within homes with both women and men in households being happier that women workers can do the work needed. However, most of these interventions do not engage other community militias operational in the area, leading to some concerns of attendant grievances may lead to conflict between militia groups.

Some changes in practices and attitudes around women's participation and voice: In many communities, women are more able to contribute to family and community decision making than was the case previously. Women are more involved and visible in different arenas whether this be the women from the women's wings of

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[37] For example, Chitra Nagarajan, Conflict Analysis of Northeast Nigeria: Biu, Bursari, Gombi, Hawul, Hong, Jakusko, Jere and Kaga Local Government Areas.

religious bodies taking part in preaching on radio programmes, women's cooperatives or women's engagement in platforms of decision making. According to a male respondent who runs a community peace and safety partnership (CPSP) funded by MCN, "Even the most conservative sections of societies have changed on gender inclusion. There are substantial numbers of women included for example women representatives in CPSP and they are talking more than more." The attitudes of some men have also changed with men including women activists known for fighting for the rights of women in meetings and platforms. Religious leaders, some of whom were resistant to the idea of women's participation in community decision making beforehand, have started to preach that women are part of society and need to be part of every decision-making process due to interventions by other religious scholars. Another male respondent who does community level work said "constant awareness creation and advocacy" has led those in power to understand there is a need for women to come and be part of discussion table pointing to increased representation and participation of women in meetings that he is part of facilitating. He went on to say that "If one or two prominent men change, the rest are more likely to follow." Respondents believe that women's presence during community discussions has changed perceptions and narratives. Whereas many men and a substantial number of women believed that women stay at home and have little to contribute to community decision making before, now they see what change having women involved can make. A third male respondent spoke about how platforms supported by his organisation were initially male led at first with women seemingly put into platforms as afterthought for the sake of balance but still community leaders, CJTF members and police officers doing the talking but "as project has evolved, it has shown impact that providing women with deeper role in peacebuilding can have. They have steered platforms to address domestic violence issues as a major issue."

(Limited) progress on GBV access to services and reporting: Although many challenges remain when it comes to GBV, as the challenges section below will discuss, many agencies have been working on strengthening GBV response. More survivors are now reporting violations and accessing services such as the SARC in Maiduguri partly due to awareness campaigns that let the general public know that a place which free medical, psychosocial and

legal support to SGBV survivors exists. Support structures in communities whether this be women's committees or community leaders who have been trained on GBV response are now in place in some areas that are able to refer survivors for services. Respondents spoke of increased reporting, improved access to services and some cases now being pursued through the criminal justice process. They also spoke of the need for increased monitoring, feedback and follow up, better advocacy with security agencies, building capacity of service providers and change at policy and legislative levels.

Promising results from those who do GBV prevention work: While progress on prevention is slow, limited to areas where actors engage in prevention interventions and yet to reach a tipping point, approaches are promising. For example, host community men going into IDP camps to find 'cheap brides,' abusing them then divorcing them a few months later has reduced due to awareness by NGOs and humanitarian interventions that address people's basic needs. Cases of early and forced marriage and attendant early divorce have been averted or delayed as a result of provision of education, increased awareness of rights and ability of girls' and their mothers to speak out. The government has acted to sanction some perpetrators of sexual violence in IDP camps and NGOs have worked to mitigate its occurrence. For example, an organisation that engages with the military, militias and communities supported community protection committees to meet military and CJTF leadership to discuss CJTF members perpetrating sexual violence in the IDP camp. While these discussions did not lead to prosecution, the military and CJTF leadership spoke with and warned CJTF members, set up new systems whereby CJTF members were not allowed to enter IDP camps unless they lived and established feedback mechanisms. Incidence of sexual violence committed by CJTF members reduced as a result of these actions. An organisation that engages men in programmes of discussion and sensitisation to become allies for women and girls, supports women and girls and builds community awareness and ownership has seen some shifts in attitudes and incidence of domestic violence and abuse. According to a woman respondent who works this organisation, "There are a lot of behavioural changes in men. They become more aware and conscious that women are not our slaves but part of us, like ourselves, so we need to mitigate risks against women and girls."

Challenges

Organisational bureaucracy and release of funds: This challenge cuts across many organisations operating in Borno, including MCN. It was raised by respondents working for government MDAs, NGOs and UN agencies. When it comes to MCN, respondents spoke of how good progress was being made but then work stopped to wait for the next tranche of funds to be released. Not only are these delays affecting programme delivery but they also impact relationships with partners and communities in which MCN engages.

Reduced and decreasing funding levels: 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.[38] Even though most funding is for Borno, it is insufficient to meet needs. Despite best efforts, protection and gender mainstreaming in humanitarian response has suffered. 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.[39] In general, respondents spoke of lack of resources and capacity on protection. High level advocacy and conversations are focused on funding and prioritising action rather than strategic engagement. While numbers have dropped, people still arrive into towns from the bush with needs that cannot all be met. Respondents in Maiduguri spoke of an increased number of people begging in the street. Respondents across Borno complained about insufficient food and non-food items being distributed, struggling with shelter particularly in the rainy season and inadequate access to water. Even in communities which had food distribution, provision can be uncertain and interrupted due to logistics issues, delays in military clearance or blocked supply routes. Given funding constraints, local NGOs are further squeezed. They feel funds are "hijacked by [those] that share your story but do not properly collaborate." While some international NGOs follow principles of genuine partnership, doing so is not true across the board. Local NGOs say results suffer as agencies "can come and claim they have done something and not done it but problem is still there while attention is drawn away... It is not [about] the money they are taking but the problem they are leaving unsolved that they are telling the world is solved." They also complain about staff being poached by these organisations who pay better and provide benefits which means efforts put into training benefit others. Peacebuilders also spoke of mismatch between donor expectations and programme length. Peacebuilding funding can run for one year or 18 months but donors expect significant shifts "because you gathered 30 participants once a month" for this time whereas meaningful change requires a longer timeframe.

Access and security hinder programming plans and results: All respondents spoke of how security risks had increased compared to early 2018. Actors were unable to access certain communities due to high insecurity and military restrictions. There are many locations to which it is unsafe to travel by road due to ambush and attacks. The services of the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) are invaluable yet access challenges remain, especially for areas to which UNHAS helicopters do not fly. There has been significant displacement from areas to which people returned. A senior government official said, "The context continues to be volatile and unpredictable. There are so many places where return was achieved, reconstruction activities took place then insurgents reappear and people need to move back to the state capital." Spikes in insecurity and sudden displacement affects continuity of programming. Humanitarian actors scramble to find funds and deploy services needed while those engaged in longer-term work find people disperse. According to a woman respondent, in some locations, "We are not able to reach or to measure impact on behaviour as things change. We start for two to three weeks then stop. You cannot have 20 people in a group complete a cycle of intervention." The killing and abduction of aid workers is a new dynamic since 2017 which has led to agencies having to pull out of locations temporarily or stop work altogether.

Systems cannot deal with displacement caused by insecurity: The events of late 2018 and early 2019 show systems are not yet in place that can deal with sudden displacement. During this time, many of the over 100,000 people who were displaced within Borno and across national borders had limited access to humanitarian services, including food and shelter. It took weeks for mechanisms to be set up to provide adequate assistance.

Uneven transition from humanitarian to development: Between 2014 to 2016/7, interventions were more focused on emergency response and meeting life-saving needs but, as security stabilised, actors started to move to longer-term support to assist people to recover and rebuild. Conversations and planning reflect increased talk of the 'humanitarian-development nexus.' There has been some resistance by humanitarian actors, especially as some areas have seen over-hasty withdrawal of

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[38] OCHA, 'Nigeria: Humanitarian Funding Overview,' 31 July 2019.
[39] Ibid.

humanitarian assistance before results of livelihood programming have manifested, leading to adverse consequences, for example in terms of food insecurity. What this nexus means in practice remains unclear. It is more at theoretical or ad-hoc levels rather than systematised and made concrete into strategies and methodologies. Some actors talk of establishing a coordination mechanism of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding action led by government but this remains to materialise.

Absence of authorities to engage at community level:
As described above, many locations still have not seen the permanent return of local government officials or community leaders. This creates a vacuum of authority and means crucial government services are missing. According to a man deputised for his community leader in Maiduguri, "Up to now, we are facing challenges with the state government. They can't even come to us let alone do anything for us. We lack houses, water supply, food – everything we are requesting they are not providing. We are expecting a lot from the state government but do not see anything yet. The state government is over our power so we cannot reach out and talk with them." This lack of presence makes it very difficult for programmes, especially those engaging on good governance. Respondents spoke of interventions aimed to helping participants interact with LGA government officials on decision making but these officials being in Maiduguri which makes any improvement in good governance very difficult to achieve. The new Governor is reportedly thinking of finding ways to require all LGA officials to be based in their areas.

Increasing polarisation between and within groups:
There is increasing division along identity lines both old and new. Tensions are often around distribution of humanitarian assistance with community leaders seen as being discriminatory and rather distributing goods to their own ethno-linguistic group. While tensions within and between different groups have eased in some areas as a result of different groups seeing their common challenges, the community coming together and due to peacebuilding interventions, relations have worsened in other areas. A woman respondent spoke of one incident: "We organised an event with all traditional leaders seated and one of the high-ranking traditional leaders made demeaning statement about Christian women, similar to calling them arne[40] but in Kanuri, which caused rancour and chaos." Being an IDP has now become an identity. According to a male respondent, "Whereas all would think of themselves as Hausa, Kanuri, mutanen Borno etc [before], now we have

polarisation. We have a state where some call themselves yan hijira - IDPs - and have [a] perspective that they are not equal to people in the host community."

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> Up to now, we are facing challenges with the state government. They can't even come to us let alone do anything for us. We lack houses, water supply, food – everything we are requesting they are not providing. We are expecting a lot from the state government but do not see anything yet. The state government is over our power so we cannot reach out and talk with them. "

Community resistance to reintegration: The results section described how community attitudes towards children and women associated with AOGs started to change due to interventions. This relative acceptance does not stretch towards men associated with AOGs, particularly in places like Gwoza which saw AOGs committing a lot of harm. Every respondent asked about reconciliation and reintegration of ex-AOG combatants said this area was incredibly sensitive, with lots of frustration and anger expressed. Respondents spoke of using different approaches to open up conversations and lay foundations for reintegration such as talking of the need for an end to violent conflict and how peace will only happen if AOG members leave the bush and are accepted by communities. The main barrier when it comes reconciliation and reintegration is lack of transitional justice, reconciliation and healing processes. Many community members have responses like, "I cannot accept someone who killed my father without him at least saying sorry first" and call for government programmes around this. While people have been talking of transitional justice at policy levels for years, no process is yet in place. Communities feel government is not only forcing them to have people associated with AOGs who committed harm live next to them but also giving them more support than provided to survivors of violence. They find this imbalanced approach particularly distressing given their own material circumstances which they blame those getting support for causing. Organisations that work on reintegration, especially that provide livelihood and other material support, are often seen as 'favouring' AOG members with potentially negative consequences in terms

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[40] Similar in meaning to pagan or heathen in Hausa.

of safety and security of staff as well as community relations. There have been some reports of people refusing to serve in community platforms as they fear being asked to work on reintegration of people associated with AOGs and are unwilling to do this or fear the consequences of doing so.

Non-intersectional interventions mean all in communities, especially most vulnerable and marginalised do not benefit to equal extent:
Programmes have found it difficult to reach the most marginalised in society. This difficulty in doing so is partly due to lack of proper context analysis and wide community engagement processes. For example, many interventions focused on women's empowerment do not reach adolescent girls and young women who face particular barriers and challenges. 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. Another group that have seen little change in their status and options are people with disabilities. Respondents said no progress had been made despite a number of government and non-government interventions. According to a male representative of a Maiduguri based NGO, people with disabilities are "left out of interventions and not included in decision making. They are seen as just going out to beg and not [able to] serve as leaders as one part of [their] body is not functioning. They are stigmatised, isolated, rejected and feel a burden" Respondents interviewed further spoke of a sense among the humanitarian community that reaching out to include people with disabilities in general, let alone thinking in ways that disaggregate age, gender and disability type and severity, is too difficult and expensive. There is increasing donor scrutiny on ensuring inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian response[41] but results to date tends to be on including them as 'beneficiaries' rather than supporting their agency. Moreover, while peacebuilding interventions have been better at including people with disabilities in decision making platforms, these 'slots' tend to be taken up by men while the 'women's places' are filled by non-disabled women. Neither group has full understanding of women with disabilities' needs and how discrimination on gender and disability intersects to affect realities and prospects. A humanitarian worker asked, "Who gets onto distribution lists? Women of a minority group? Women with disability? Even when lists prioritise women, this is not an intersectional response." She went on to say, "Engagement

of women tends to be tokenistic and misses out those with even less voice by focusing on hajiyas[42] rather than all groups of women including younger women."

People with high levels of trauma find it difficult to engage in programming interventions: Trauma manifests in different ways. For example, some people may find it difficult to concentrate while others are unable to control anger. Respondents spoke of people in discussions visibly having minds be elsewhere. Organisations that engage in trauma healing alongside peacebuilding or educational interventions reported positive benefits. Participants expressed need for trauma healing once space opened up for them to do so and reported benefit from this intervention. They also were more able to engage in other programmatic interventions as a result.

Difficulty maintaining interest in peacebuilding giving pressing nature of critical needs: While many individuals and communities see the need for conflict mitigation and peacebuilding to prevent future violence, it can be difficult to sustain interest given critical needs around food, shelter, water, healthcare and livelihoods. For example, community platforms often disperse if food distribution starts. Some members express gratitude for peacebuilding work but ask for help to restart livelihoods or get food to feed their families also. According to a man who works to build peace in communities, "Not being a humanitarian actor in a humanitarian setting and convincing people of the importance of peacebuilding in a climate where the expectation is 'what are you bringing?' and also there is deep need on part of communities for food and medical interventions is difficult. When you are working for an extended period of time with them, they see the value. But before, they say always talk, talk, talk – we want to see something on ground. Enough dialogue, we want to see food." In areas where issues raised by communities as being of concern are rather drug use, domestic violence and abuse and criminality rather than a need for conflict resolution (of non-household conflict) and people's priorities are around employment, income generation and livelihoods, peacebuilders struggle to do work that is meaningful.

Programmes continue to view women through gendered stereotypes not as conflict actors: Many actors continue to view women as victims, devoid of agency, and do not even understand dynamics around women's perpetration or sustenance of violence. As a result, women do not benefit from reintegration programmes for AOGs or from most interventions on

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[41] For example, the UK Department for International Development commissioned a disability audit of its humanitarian programmes and is supporting its partners to implement recommendations.
[42] Older women who command some respect in the community.

community militias despite women who having played critical roles as conflict actors, including having taken part in combat. According to a woman respondent, "Women and girls get put into in these narrowly constructed roles, void of agency – as victims, formerly in captivity, at risk of getting abducted, young girl wearing IEDs on her body– not talked about as having ideology but being manipulated. When we talk about ideology, we talk about men not women."

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Difficulties working on men's vulnerabilities means nobody is working on this: Men's physical vulnerabilities tend to be associated with conflict parties in terms of killing and forced recruitment by AOGs or detention by security agents. Consequently, working in this area is more difficult than working on risks faced by women and girls in areas actors can access. However, actors have also not thought of innovative ways to engage on protection of men. For example, despite many men and older boys detained by security forces, sustained advocacy to military and political leaders in this area are lacking. Those that took part in monitoring of trials linked to AOGs tend to be national human rights organisations rather than people working in the northeast. Very little concerted engagement takes place on screening processes and advocating how security agents can undertake screening in ways that centre human rights and protection.

Patriarchal norms hinder women's participation and voice without concerted efforts: Despite significant investment of 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 their involvement in family, community and political decision making and ending GBV against them. 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 and women 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 particularly in front of certain types of men. For example, respondents said women were less likely to speak in community meetings if police representatives were present. Similar norms prevent young people of all genders from taking part in community discussions. These norms are why holding separate discussions for women and young people to spread information, articulate issues and plan to bring them to the table work to increase voice in community discussions. Unless concerted efforts are made to support women to speak and persuade men to allow women to contribute, women will not be able to meaningfully participate. Moreover, attention needs to be paid on how selection is done. Respondents spoke of community leaders asked to draw up lists of people to participate in community meetings, dialogues or workshops, will choose his own wives, sisters or other female family members as the women on the list. There is some improvement in this regard. As one respondent said, "If you provide list of 10 men [to take part in a programme], even the mallams will criticise the list that there is no women and say you need to give women a chance." However, many programmes have not translated this inclusion into enabling women's meaningful participation and voice. Attention can tend to focus on making up numbers without looking at quality of representation by supporting women to contribute for example through women only sessions before main meetings or ensuring women invited have the skills and capabilities to reach out to other women and girls to hear concerns and reflect this in their participation. 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 the effectiveness of this training. While some of these women play important roles in their communities, doing so is not automatic 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 who are the women with power and influence in communities and to whom people turn, train them in leadership, conflict resolution,

human rights and other skills and work with them to mobilise women in their communities to articulate concerns and reflect these into community platforms including the CPSP. MCN has trained women involved in community groups in dispute resolution but this training was not as intensive as that provided to community leaders, on-going mentoring is not provided and there is no way of ensuring feedback and monitoring of activities. Rumours and community perceptions hinder women's abilities to engage. Women who achieve financial independence are often viewed as sex workers as people ask how they can be making money otherwise. There can be similar narratives around women accessing safe spaces and women who speak up in discussions can be viewed askance for breaking gender norms.

Male dominated security agencies hinder women's and girls' access to security and justice: Outside Maiduguri, particularly in areas with volatile security dynamics, there are often no women security agents among soldiers, police officers or NSCDC officers. These areas may have had women security agents in the past but these women have often been transferred out due to conflict. For example, as of July 2019, Gubio had 32 police officers who were all men. As a result, many women and girls are unable to approach security agents with security and justice concerns. This reluctance is exacerbated by incidence or fear of sexual violence including sexual harassment and SEA and rumours that surround women and girls who do approach security agents.

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 Maiduguri provides 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. Survivors are unable to come to Maiduguri to access SARC services given lack of financial means as well as insecurity on roads. Respondents spoke about referral pathways in places for cases of GBV continuing to be weak despite several attempts to review and strengthen them. This weakness is partly due to competition and duplication and as services listed as existing in a particular LGA either are not present or are only partially available with referrals including to medical services not working due to limited resources. It can take hours to see medical personnel. Doctors are reluctant to write up reports or testify in court as they do not have time due to shortage of personnel. Medical staff, although often contributing their own personal funds to support survivors, were also reported to

not have good attitudes to dealing with survivors. Even referrals from primary health centres involve cost implications including transportation, food and accommodation. While there are fewer issues with the SARC in Maiduguri, a member of its steering committee spoke about shortage of drugs and commodities due to lack of passing on information to MCN which provides these in time for them to be restocked before they run out. When it comes to meeting survivors' psychosocial needs, respondents said gaps in provision continue. While international NGOs are meeting gaps at present, what will happen after they leave communities is uncertain as government institutions are not, at present, able to step in. The state as a whole has a few psychiatrists who are Maiduguri based but go around the state to attend to people needing assistance. Insufficient numbers of people trained to provide MHPSS services remain. While the provision of legal assistance has improved compared to 2017 and these services are more likely to be available, other challenges remain. The gender-based violence section has already discussed barriers to survivors bringing perpetrators to justice through the criminal justice system. Most people do not have confidence in the legal process, cannot afford to hire lawyers and feel taking cases to court wastes their time with little benefit. Survivors that need food cannot be easily referred to food distribution providers. Sometimes, even if they are able to be included on lists for food distribution, they need to wait weeks until the next distribution cycle with no flexibility built in to provide food beforehand particularly if certain agencies are in charge. Unavailability of food is directly linked to sexual violence with women and girls who are being sexually exploited and abuse continuing to experience violence as a result. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (MoWASD) has the responsibility to provide shelter but is not able to do so. At present, National Agency to Prevent Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is one of very few organisations providing shelter services. This shelter is only to the survivor and provided for six months periods (which can be renewed). Many survivors are unable to bring their families to this shelter and so cannot avail of it. There are few interventions focused on removing survivors from situations of violence, for example if the perpetrator is a member of the family. In the absence of protection programmes for survivors and witnesses of violence and no safe house where they may stay, survivors often face threats and attacks if they report violence and wish to pursue cases. Moreover, while some organisations engage in community sensitisation work that includes the need not to stigmatise or blame survivors, lack of work in this area means not only is the stigma survivors experience a form of re-victimising and violence in and of itself but survivors are disincentivised from reporting. Some agencies are engaging with communities to change attitudes but focus continues to be on changing

the behaviour and restricting the movements of women and girls rather than potential perpetrators. Such work can be counterproductive as the focus is on actions 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. Some agencies that work on challenging stigma and preventing GBV have achieved promising results, as outlined above. IRC is one of a 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 results.

People hustle for inclusion in order to benefit from programming even if interventions are not focused on them: Many respondents talked of diversion of humanitarian aid or people that do not meet selection criteria participating in meetings, platforms and other mechanisms and events. Many actors still tend to enter the community by male community leaders and ask them to identify suitable people for programming. These leaders can mobilise their family and friends to benefit from interventions they do not need. They also tend to pick more men than women despite explicit instructions to the contrary. A respondent spoke of asking for a split of 60 percent women and 40 percent men for a platform only to find the community leader had put down representatives of whom 70 percent were male. He said, "While transport allowance is insignificant, people in impoverished situation see this as a way of getting additional income so men still muscle their way in."

Politicisation of movement/ displacement/ return: IDPs moving from Maiduguri back to LGAs, even if this 'return' is to situations of displacement in LGA capitals rather than their homes, has come to be seen as the sign of military and political success. As a result, policies to facilitate return are seen to have been put in place for political benefit rather than in response to the context. As shown above, 100,000 people who returned to areas were subsequently displaced due to attacks and insecurity. According to a woman respondent, "People also do want to go home but how do we support them to do so? This should be a choice. We don't talk about freedom of movement enough... It has become so politicised... and seen as part of the victory of the state."

Lack of community engagement and reflexibility by capital-based managers and technical advisers leads to uncertain quality of interventions: Many people based in Maiduguri, government official and NGO worker alike, do not spend enough time outside the state capital in the communities in which their agencies are working. They either rely on short day trips or their junior staff who live in these communities. Not only does this mean that colleagues outside Maiduguri do not receive adequate support and oversight but also that decision makers have insufficient knowledge of current contextual dynamics on which to base policy and programming. Some agencies, such as the World Food Programme (WFP) have recognised this gap and decided to deploy senior staff to be based in locations around Borno to help improve their work and that of their partners. Yet, by and large, community engagement is sporadic. There are severe issues with how government and non-government agencies communicate with communities and their understanding of what community engagement means. According to one respondent, "They need to know that communicating to local leaders is not enough. There should be transparency about how long they have funding for and the challenges and delays for example when it comes to food distribution so people can plan ways of finding sufficient food. Having a hero complex is not helping in this context."

A male dominated sector especially in LGAs outside Maiduguri limits ability to engage with women and girls or model women's leadership and participation: Women staff spoke about ways in which having a workforce predominantly of men, both in positions of leadership and based outside Maiduguri hinder ensuring proper gender transformational approaches in policy and programming. Women government officials said their male counterparts, who themselves have internalised attitudes about women and girls, were not adequately sensitive of women's different realities or did not think they had importance. Women in the humanitarian sector complained of the dominance of men in positions of humanitarian leadership and listed a number of sexist comments made, including about women humanitarian workers. Having primarily men in locations outside of Maiduguri raises problems as many women find it difficult to talk in front of men, particularly around issues of GBV. This skewed gender human resourcing means agencies find it difficult to engage with women and girls.

Lack of coordination between implementers: While mechanisms bring together government MDAs, UN agencies and Borno based and international NGOs, working together remains challenging. This lack of coordination leads to duplication and means agencies do

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not maximise opportunities and results more likely with a coordinated approach based on common stakeholder mapping and political economy analysis, pooling of resources and joint engagement. Some agencies (including the British Council) were said to not engage in relevant sector meetings where strategising and collaboration could occur.

Lack of measurement of gendered impact and intersectionality of programming: NGOs and UN agencies are all required to discuss gender in programme proposals and explain how programmes deliver for men, women, boys and girls. However, donors said this is not sufficiently being reported on and data disaggregated to provide a clearer picture of programme participants. As one donor said, "We told them they need to really disaggregate data – not just x women and y men but what kind of women – heads of household? Rural women? They need to break it down so we know how the programme is affecting everyone."

Insufficient attention paid to sustainability: More efforts are needed to bring government MDAs, NGOs and UN agencies together 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. There is an urgent need to rethink means of systems strengthening, capacity building and sustainability, particularly learning from experiences in neighbouring Adamawa and Yobe states where funding has already dried up and 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 Borno starting from a lower capacity base than 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, capacity and commitment gaps remain in MDAs as training on all key

subjects has not been possible for all officials. Some of the people assigned to work on particular issues show little genuine interest in this work. Indeed, many respondents shared stories where government officials and politicians have asked for interventions in their own geographical areas and asked for their 'own take' in return for their MDA's cooperation. This pursuit of personal benefit from humanitarian and development funds is not limited to government. As described above, respondents spoke of cases where they discovered selection had been skewed by community leaders and others to benefit certain families, ethnic groups or religious groups with relative power. It has proven difficult to strengthen the capacity of all government officials, civil society representatives and community leaders that need this support due to finite time and funding. Moreover, while some CSOs and NGOs in Borno are long-standing, many organisations started to respond to needs arising from conflict and try to mitigate violence. They were doing this work long before the coming of international actors and will continue to engage after they leave. Yet, representatives of local NGOs spoke of how their staff, often in whom they have invested significant capacity building efforts, are hired away by INGOs and UN agencies. As a result, they are left scrambling to do another round of capacity building, not knowing if recipients of this training will stay for their NGO to reap the benefit. Relationships between international actors and local NGOs also tend to be transactional in nature, contracting out parts of programmes for them to deliver rather than based in genuine partnership or capacity strengthening. There is some sense that international actors are subcontracting the most difficult, dangerous but meaningful programming to local NGOs who deliver results with little monitoring, support and supervision.

(Lack of) political will for gender equality and women's rights: Many respondents spoke of a mismatch between public statements of government officials and key politicians who speak the language of valuing women and girls and what they see manifesting in practice. They called this 'virtue signalling' and said operationalisation of these statements was lacking. They spoke of distribution in LGAs going only to men with women not even knowing the distribution is taking place let alone put on a list. They also raised what happened during the primary elections with

women candidates purposefully squeezed out in favour of men. Whether this will change with the new administration is unclear. The state government is reportedly trying to develop a strategic plan for the state to look at different sectors as they relate to post conflict reconstruction and beyond. The extent to which Borno women will be part of this process and whether this plan will be gender transformative is unknown.

Non- domestication of human rights laws: The legislative domain of Borno when it comes to human rights related laws remains unchanged since the 2017 gender assessment. Borno has yet to domesticate the Child Rights Act or Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act), both passed at the federal level in 2003 and 2015 respectively. It has yet to pass a Gender and Equal Opportunities Act or domesticate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa also known as the Kampala Convention. While President Buhari signed the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act into law in January 2019 following nine years of advocacy by rights groups and activists, this law has yet to be domesticated in Borno.

Government/ civil society dynamics: Relationships between state government and civil society have been rocky in the past few years with accusations by high level politicians that NGOs and UN agencies are providing support to AOGs, detention of aid workers on suspicion of this and gaps in terms of project implementation. These dynamics were intensified at the time of writing by the newness of the administration with Commissioners not yet appointed leaving agencies unclear about with whom to talk about their plans and ongoing programme implementation. There was also confusion as to the role the North East Development Commission (NEDC), meant to replace the previous Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiatives (PCNI), would play as it was not yet fully operational in Borno. Respondents also spoke of lack of intra-government information sharing which meant they had to engage and have the same meetings with different MDAs and key individuals. State MDAs were seen as being highly engaged in humanitarian coordination structures involving different actors but this coordination was seen as lacking at LGA level. Conversely, government officials talk of international actors coming in to work in Borno without going through proper instituted authorities, leading to waste of resources and lack of implementation of strategic thinking with different actors responsible for programming in different sectors. Respondents also spoke of closing civil society space and felt criticism of NGOs and UN agencies was a way for military and government to deflect from the realities of the security and humanitarian situation. There have been attempts to pass legislation at the federal level

which would severely restrict independence, impartiality and effectiveness of NGOs. Representatives from NGOs and UN agencies welcomed any additional scrutiny but asked that questions be also directed to local, state and federal level government actors and be motivated by desire to improve programming not political reasons.

Anti-NGO sentiment: There has been some increase in anti-NGO sentiment in recent years. While some of this has political roots, other drivers include lack of effective community engagement, suspicion about motives of actors doing work around reintegration of people associated with AOGs. There are many conspiracy theories and narratives as communities see those providing support to former combatants that they themselves do not receive without any community preparation or discussion let alone processes of transitional justice, reconciliation and healing beforehand. There is also some dissatisfaction and pushback with how interventions support women and girls and contribute to changing gender relations in terms of perceived lesser power of men over women and reduced submissiveness of women to men. However, many respondents at community level were also grateful to UN agencies and NGOs seeing them as providing life-saving assistance in the context of insufficient support from government.

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. It can be immensely frustrating due to bureaucracy, rent-seeking behaviour and lack of political will, commitment and interest. While potential is high, seeing any results at all can take time. On the other hand, interventions focused on individuals and communities, for example livelihoods support to women to restart businesses or creating child protection networks, although not without their challenges, can yield quicker impacts. 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 institutional change, are required. 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 for policy work and implementation of legislation.

Longer-term engagement and proper analysis are 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 on potentially sensitive issues around women's empowerment and interventions were likely to have longer-term impact. There are contextual differences across Borno, even in neighbouring communities, so analysis needs to be specific to communities of engagement. Design also needs to build in flexibility so programmes can learn and adapt quickly to changing dynamics. Respondents pointed out a number of projects which were done quickly in finite timelines where results were not sustained and the extent to which regular analysis had led to more effective and conflict sensitive programming.

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 spoke of seeing agencies competing over scarce resources to remain relevant even if actions were beyond their mandate and led to duplication. These dynamics had caused chaos and people working in areas where similar programmes were already underway. Conversely, progress was more visible where actors came together.

Proper community engagement needs to be at all levels (not just top down): Actors cannot rely on assuming those with relative power will spread information and opportunities across the community including to minority ethnic and religious groups that may be marginalised by dominant groups and to women and girls often excluded. Some actors who had focused on government officials and community leaders in community entry reflected the need to inform and ensure buy-in of the entire community. Doing so includes participation in town hall meetings, conducting regular information sharing sessions and talks to mitigate risks of misconceptions, including communities particularly marginalised in intervention design and implementation, talking with people with disabilities and reaching out to women in the community. Otherwise, actors run the risk of elite capture and rumours of their 'real purpose' taking hold.

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 knowing their issues or allowing them to speak for themselves. The young people interviewed spoke about how adults started from a biased perspective, 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.

Rights awareness and education needs to be the bedrock of all interventions: Agencies engaging in this work have changed these dynamics to some extent but two years ago, there was very low levels of understanding and internalisation around human rights particularly in rural areas. Knowledge of human rights is the pre-requisite for many interventions ranging from good governance to anti GBV. Any new programme, particularly one working in communities in which not many actors have engaged or with groups unused to interventions should run a basic programme of rights awareness and education alongside their interventions.

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Supporting communities to act works – and should have been done earlier: People are eager to do work themselves rather than wait for assistance from others but can lack resources, especially in new areas and circumstances. For example, respondents said people involved in committees set up to manage conflict were very appreciative of these platforms and asked they had been so late to support initiatives where communities take ownership and drive change. They were able to see results in their localities, for example the holding of violence free elections for the first time since the 1980s. They engaged

with power holders to advocate specific interventions, for example repair of roads to make market access easier, and seen what they advocated for come to pass. Respondents that work with such groups said once training on skills such as advocacy, leadership and conflict mapping is provided and people encouraged, individuals and groups act themselves. They also spread this work into neighbouring communities. According to a woman who works with communities, "With a little engagement, things can move. We are working with what communities want in the sense of involving them, letting them participate, letting them own the project and they will sustain it without any kobo of ours. We did not come with idea of what was best for them but talked with them about what they needed and had allowance for what they needed to change the project to incorporate it. This works better than coming up with a jacketed activity. A little versatility in what you are doing means you can impact now."

Interveners need to build capacity first before bringing livelihoods interventions: Some respondents spoke of the need to strengthen financial skills and capacities before giving grants. One of them said, "If we went to [the community] with packages of money as grants, [they] would have spent it by now but [we] did preparatory work to build capacity so when [we] give money, women are able to go forwards. Building capacity is not three to six months' training but changing psyche or it won't last." She spoke of working with women to build confidence and self-esteem as well financial literacy and planning before giving money to start or invest in livelihoods. However, many actors rather provide short programmes of training in skills such as carpentry before giving grants and materials and expect these interventions to provide sustainable livelihoods.

Time required to build meaningful relations among interveners especially engagement with local civil society and community-based groups: Respondents spoke of the need for stronger relationships between international actors and local civil society on principles of genuine partnership rather than those of a transactional funding nature.

Trauma healing interventions are important in themselves and a pre-requisite to engagement for effectiveness: Interventions can have little impact if they work with populations with MHPSS needs they do not meet. Alternatively, programmes that did trauma healing work alongside other interventions report not only they are meeting participants' MHPSS needs but better results.

DDRR programmes will face stiff resistance without transitional justice, reconciliation and healing: All respondents engaging in work around reintegration of people associated with AOGs reported backlash from

communities. Emphasis needs to be on reinforcing of communities and social cohesion rather than focusing on people associated with AOGs in isolation. Issues of atonement, justice, reconciliation and true peacebuilding approaches need to be addressed but doing so is difficult in the absence of a true state framework around this. The government should start as a matter of urgency since processes around release of former AOG combatants have already started. Communities need a mechanism to present their grievances and be heard and understood. Respondents warned that if this groundwork is not laid now, it will not happen down the road and Borno is more likely to see ongoing cycles of violence. Communities do not feel listened to. They feel their pain and suffering is actively disrespected by current processes.

Women mislead on truths of association to get sympathy and lessen stigma, discrimination and suspicion, limiting effectiveness of interventions: Given gendered stereotypes around people's association with AOGs, some women and girls present themselves as 'innocent victims' who were abducted rather than having to join AOGs and participated in committing and encouraging violence. As a result, interventions focused on them, for example provision of MHPSS services, have limited benefit as they can make up stories during counselling sessions. This narrative also does not always match community experiences and what people in their neighbourhoods have seen. Mobilising gendered notions of all women and girls as innocent survivors means results of reintegration work can be partial.

Having women in the room is insufficient if organisations do not provide ongoing support alongside ensuring this inclusion: Several respondents spoke of actions their organisations had taken after they realised including women in events did not lead to meaningful participation. Many spoke about holding women-only sessions before larger plenary meetings with men to give women space to discuss their issues. At the same time, having women speaking on radio brings in more women callers as opposed than if speakers are men. When training women and facilitating women only groups, it can be best for facilitators to be women to encourage participants to feel comfortable and speak freely. They found women will be enabled to talk if this safe space is created. When women are supported with building of skills and self-esteem, encouraged and are able to mobilise in safe spaces before mixed platforms, they play crucial roles in promoting good governance, managing conflict and mitigating violence, building peace and rebuilding their communities. For example, a respondent who supports communities in Dikwa spoke of trying to find out the reason for low levels of women's participation in dialogue. When asked, women "said that every time, when men are taking decision, they do not involve them in this. They say there are a lot of issues they know of but when it comes to

participate, they are told to keep quiet." This NGO then spoke with men in the platform who agreed to change their behaviour, encourage women to speak and listen to and act on what they say. The NGO had to monitor if this, in fact, took place and provide ongoing support to women before women felt able to speak and started to be taken seriously.

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 women's active participation, without continued focus, this outcome can slide. For example, government officials and community leaders, even if asked to send equal numbers of women and men to participate in meetings, trainings and programmes, can provide a list of predominantly male names which, if attention is not paid, can go unchallenged. Alternatively, even if there is good representation of women in community platforms, if their timing is changed to a time women have household and childcare responsibilities, women will not be able to attend.

If women self-organise, key power holders can be receptive and supportive to their demands: In contrast to ideas of men in power resisting women's empowerment, several men have acted in support of demands after women have mobilised. For example, dialogue bringing soldiers and civilians together have found the military, including senior leadership being receptive to women's requests, for example for patrols to accompany them when to go to farm or collect firewood.

Interventions need to be designed to facilitate the meaningful participation of women, youth, people with disabilities and other groups usually marginalised: Sustained engagement from design onwards is needed to ensure inclusion and benefit. Concrete ways of doing so is to set up separate sessions with different groups for example women with disabilities during design and community entry processes. 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 has proved to engender participation in community groups as discussed above.

Protection work is imbalanced if it does not look at men's threats: Few actors are working on addressing and mitigating men's vulnerabilities. Much needed work is not happening and men continue facing these risks that also impact on women in their lives. For example, high on the list of demands of many women and girls is the return of husbands, fathers and sons from detention.

GBV prevention work shows promising results but needs to be scaled up and undertaken by multiple actors in a range of communities: While some progress has been made in improving service provision, little work has been done in the arena of prevention. The projects that organisations have undertaken show good results.

Opening up conversations around changing gender roles and supporting individuals, families and communities through this change can mitigate backlash and violence against women and girls: Gender realities have transformed while gender norms remain slower to shift. As long as norms perpetuate unequal power relations where men feel they need to have power over women to be valued, any change in gender realities has the potential to lead to increased VAWG as men feel the need to 'prove' their power and control. Programmes that address engage women and men separately and together help individuals, families and communities to adjust are showing results.

Expansion in women's roles without working on masculinities adds to women's responsibilities and burdens: Across communities affected by violent conflict in Borno, women and men said women were required to fulfil responsibilities of income generation, cooking, cleaning and childcare while men struggle to be as resilient. 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 response to sexual violence against children. However, this not only constitutes just one type of GBV committed in Borno. It tends to be low-hanging fruit for action more likely to achieve widespread support and, if the violence occurs outside marriage, does not challenge social norms around GBV. Yet, incidence of domestic violence and abuse, sexual harassment, early and forced marriage and martial rape is higher but not taken as seriously. These types of GBV tend to attract a form of fatalism as they are conflated with tradition and culture which people assume to be unchanging even though society has evolved 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 through community mobilisation and media meant more people knew of its existence and how to access its (free) services. Yet barriers to access remain, particularly for people outside Maiduguri largely unable to access the SARC or services more locally available for which they need to pay money they do not have. 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 interventions on gender-based violence are needed to make progress: This assessment finds focusing on a few areas is insufficient to strengthen GBV prevention and response. As barriers and challenges have different drivers, interventions need to be multi-faceted and inter-linked. It flags a number of areas where interventions are required. The first is strengthening service provision, particularly beyond Maiduguri. The second is case workers in place to support survivors (beyond court appearances) to recover and rebuild her life and seek punishment in court if she wishes it. The third is an anti-stigma campaign with the removal of stigma both preventing further violence and encouraging help seeking and reporting. The fourth is to strengthen police and court systems to be more responsive to survivors. The fifth is a proper programme of victim and witness protection including through provision of alternative accommodation, for example through a safe house. The sixth is changing attitudes, practices and norms so violence is prevented. The recommendations section will provide further details.

Actors need to programme in different languages to ensure access and inclusion: Planning to work in Hausa and Kanuri alone is not sufficient to reach everyone, particularly members of ethno-linguistic groups already marginalised. Some members of these groups may speak Hausa, Kanuri or English but people included in programming will be those with these language skills. This leaves those with less opportunities, particularly women, excluded. Respondents spoke of facilitating sessions outside Maiduguri in Kanuri, Hausa, Fulfulde and Shuwa.[43]

Build in flexibility between humanitarian and development programming: The higher levels of insecurity Borno has experienced in the past year show that, contrary to previous hopes, the crisis is becoming protracted with little signs of abating. Actors need to take cognisance of this ongoing active emergency and current and future displacement.

Limited impact of work without government presence and action requires rethinking what is possible: Programmes engaged in good governance and systems strengthening work in particular should re-strategise what it means to do this work where government officials are not on ground.

It is better to go deep to ensure meaningful change rather than going wide to reach as many participants as possible: Several respondents shared how they had cut programme participant numbers to have tangible results as spreading interventions among larger numbers of participants is not sufficient, for example to help someone who is traumatised come out of trauma or communities to change their position on stigmatising women associated with AOGs.

Trauma support for staff is needed: Several respondents spoke candidly of the mental health impacts of their work and reported levels of vicarious or secondary trauma. Those whose organisations put in place trauma support and structures said this had been greatly benefited.

Put in places checks and balances to guard against diversion and elite capture: Respondents shared strategies for ensuring elite capture did not take place while making power holders feel included and valued. For example, one organisation put in place committees in each community with whom they go over activities planned and selection criteria. Committees consist of people who represent different stakeholder groups including women, young people and people with disabilities as well as community leaders. Women associations and groups are deliberately chosen to be part of these processes. This procedure creates accountability for community leaders and reassures people that selection is done in a fair manner rather than leaving selection to community leaders who were likely to bring 'their own people' as was happening before.

Agencies need to plan for future reduction in funding: Experiences of what have taken place in Adamawa and Yobe should serve as salutary lessons to encourage putting in place better sustainability strategies than what exist to date.

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[43] Please read Translators Without Borders, '"Are They Listening?" The Challenges and Opportunities of Multilingual Audio Communication in Borno State,' May 2019 for more details.

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 the MCN programme.

To the Governor:

- Support speedy passage and assent to all outstanding human rights legislation namely Administration of Criminal Justice Act, Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Child Rights Act, VAPP Act, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act and domestication of the Kampala Convention once passed by the State House of Assembly

- Take steps to implement the State Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security Set up a process bringing together all relevant MDAs to develop a programme of transitional justice, reconciliation and healing to run alongside DDRR processes with meaningful participation of community members (including women of all ages, young men, people with disabilities of all ages and genders, members of minority ethno-linguistic and religious groups and victims' groups)

To the State House of Assembly:

- Pass all outstanding human rights legislation namely Administration of Criminal Justice Act, Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Child Protection Act, VAPP Act, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act and domestication of the Kampala Convention

To the Ministry of Health:

- Include the SARC in 2020 and future budgets, building in a mechanism in place for continued championing of this and budgeting also for expansion of the SARC model to LGAs in northern and southern Borno

To the Ministry of Justice:

- Set up a Special Court on GBV that is a part of the existing High Court and operates in Maiduguri 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 knowledge and training skills

To the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement:

- Include community members in development planning, ensuring women of all ages, young men, people with disabilities of all ages and genders and members of minority ethno-linguistic and religious groups are supported to meaningfully participate

- Develop recovery and urban planning strategies for Maiduguri and major towns as not everyone will return to their villages even when the security situation improves

- Plan transformation into more permanent settlements in locations where presence of IDP communities looks likely to continue for the foreseeable future through consultation with people living in these areas (including women of all ages, young men, people with disabilities of all ages and genders, members of minority ethno-linguistic and religious groups and victims' groups)

- Improve and widen processes of community engagement around reintegration of men formerly associated with AOGs

- Work together with humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisations to develop plans to increase access to areas that are currently hard to reach.

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

- Set up a safe house for survivors of GBV in Maiduguri as well as in two other locations, one in northern and one in southern Borno and post and train people to run it

To SEMA and NEMA

- Develop a process that ensures quicker planning and implementation of response to sudden displacement that comes about due to heightened insecurity

To the military:

(Re) train military personnel in the theatre on human rights, international humanitarian law, protection of civilians and community engagement

- Implement a zero-tolerance policy for cases of GBV which includes giving orders for military commanders to tell officers and soldiers that perpetrators will face consequences; reach out to NGOs in the area to encourage (but not force) reporting even if this is of trends rather than specific incidents; and publicise court martials for GBV so justice is seen to have been done

- Provide mixed military and community militia patrols in areas of insecurity to enable people to go to farm, graze animals and collect firewood

To the Commissioner of Police:

- Deploy women to LGAs to enable better access to security and justice for women and girls

- Provide hazard pay to all police officers working in dangerous areas

- 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 in the state to work with officers posted to the FSU to increase awareness of the FSU among the general public through engaging in outreach

- 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 throughout the process.

- Provide adequate funds to provide materials and vehicles for proper GBV investigations

To the Commandant of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps:

- Deploy women to LGAs to enable better access to security and justice for women and girls

To MCN and other programme implementers:

- Improve financial and operations systems to mitigate future delays

- 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; 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 groups

- Develop effectiveness of the current SARC by 1) providing refresher training for staff on how to interact with patients;[44] 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 can 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

- Create additional SARCs outside Maiduguri with steering committee include all agencies working on GBV prevention and response as well as security agents, community women, members of child protection networks and any government officials and community leaders present. Ideally, there would be additional SARCs in the northern and southern geo-political zones, for example in Biu

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[44] 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.

and Monguno where services would be provided, community stakeholders sensitised and trained in handling GBV, a programme of community outreach including around anti-stigma and anti-victim blaming carried out and a multi-stakeholder steering committee established. Any plans for additional SARCs should be first discussed with the GBV sector working group and with NGOs and UN agencies working in proposed locations on protection and GBV

- 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 evaluate[45]

- 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

- 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 in Maiduguri and other locations where security allows

- Increase engagement in coordination structures around GBV and child protection

- Institutionalise training of community leaders through engagement with the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs on a training of trainer model so all incoming community leaders in the future are trained in human rights, gender, conflict resolution, mediation and leadership before resuming their post

- Increase women's participation and voice across all MCN interventions by linking women only forum with CPSPs and Community Accountability Forums (CAFs) and asking women what support they need to be able to more meaningfully participate

- 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 trained in dispute resolution

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[45] https://www.whatworks.co.za/

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