

Internally Displaced Persons and the Post-Conflict Partitioning of Jos City



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Abstract

This paper examines the problem of internal displacement arising from a series of control by the indigene and settler categories and how it has led to the post-conflict partitioning of the City of Jos. The paper established that massive displacement of persons within the city led to the reconfiguration of the settlement pattern of the city, as people either relocated to places considered safe havens, leading to the creation of exclusive settlements along mainly, religious divides. This displacement pattern has led to the emergence of new settlements, mostly unplanned and 'illegal' and has also led to an increase in the density of slums in the city. Thus, this paper recommends that the Plateau State Government should intensify its commitment to the protection of life and property of all citizens residing in Jos, irrespective of ethnic or religious background; the Federal Government of Nigeria should massively mobilize and deploy resources in support of the Plateau State Government towards the redesigning the settlement pattern in Jos, in line with modernity; the diplomatic community should continue to impress on the Nigerian Government to be more practical in its commitment to the resolution of the Jos Conflict; and the donor agencies should provide continuous assistance to mediators working towards resolving the conflict in Jos.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons, Post-Conflict. Partitioning, Jos City

Introduction

Plateau State, in north-central Nigeria, has in recent years faced a series of crises; most of which have assumed ethno-religious dimensions, and which have also resulted in serious challenges; including the post-conflict partitioning of Jos City, due to the internal displacement of persons. Although the state has witnessed conflicts in its southern and northern Senatorial Zones over the years, the most notorious of such conflicts is that of

Jos North Local Government Area, which is tied to the struggle for political control of the area by mainly, the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere (indigenes) on the one hand and the Hausa and Fulani (settlers) on the hand. Nonetheless, Plateau State in North-Central Nigeria is home to a large number of ethnic minorities. At least over 58 small ethnic groups were counted during the Plateau Peace Conference in 2004. These indigenous ethnic groups include the Ngas, Mwaghavul, Mupun, Goemai, Montol, Ron-Kulere, Doemak and Feir, among others, are spread across the 17 local government areas of the State.

The Berom, Anaguta and Afizere are the three ethnic groups widely acclaimed to be the pre-colonial inhabitants of Jos. At the time, the British colonialists came in the early part of the 20th Century, these native groups were already spread across the area which came to be known as the Jos Plateau area. The Hausa and the Fulani groups are the predominant ethnic groups in the entire northern part of Nigeria. Historically, they inhabited areas which in contemporary times are known as Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States, and they are also in parts of Kaduna, Yobe, Borno, and Niger states. When the British colonialists faced the problem of a shortage of manpower in trying to run the tin mining industry, they fell back to the Hausa-Fulani areas to meet their manpower needs (Best, 2007; Bingel, 2007; Bagudu, 2004).

Jos North Local Government Area was created in 1991 by the then Federal Military Government of General Ibrahim Babangida, an action which the Indigenous groups felt was arbitrarily done to favour Hausa and Fulani groups, whom they claimed had an upper hand in the political affairs of the country at that time (PIDAN, 2010). The immediate issue that came up was the political control of the newly created local government areas between these contending groups. Each side started scheming towards having an upper hand in the politics of the newly created local government.

Although ethnicity was initially a source of mobilization by the parties for the achievement of their political objectives, soon it seemed religion was a factor. Generally, ethnicity and religion have been major factors of mobilization among Nigerians in the quest for political power since the years before and after the country attained independence in 1960. They equally served as sources of mobilization for violence in circumstances where competition for power and resources assumes a violent dimension. Both factors play influential roles in shaping identity in Nigeria's socio-political and economic life. At the core of the quest for identity is the drive to access the privileges and opportunities provided by the state, which may be political, economic or otherwise. It seems the manipulation of identities by different groups for the achievement of their objectives within a larger Nigeria federal framework is largely responsible for the crisis of citizenship Nigerians experience when it comes to the distribution of power and resources, both at the state and national levels. This may explain why most conflicts in Nigeria are driven by mostly ethnicity and religion, though they may be deeply rooted in economic resources (Alubo, 2008; Egwu, 2007). The first clash between the two sides took place in 1994, followed by the 2001 crisis

and then subsequent clashes in 2002 (the PDP Eto Baba Ward attacks on Berom, Anaguta and Afizere settlements (USAID, 2010).

One disturbing effect of the violence in Jos is the massive displacement of people in various communities, which were hitherto integrated. This has led to the segregation of the settlement pattern in Jos. This forms the basis of this paper. How has the problem of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) led to the post-Jos City? What are the implications of the post-conflict partitioning of Jos City for stakeholders to address the challenges associated with the problem of IDPs and the post-conflict partitioning of Jos City?

Conceptual Clarification

The issue of internal displacement has gained international prominence in recent times, attracting the attention of governments, international organizations and scholars alike. However, a single definition of the term remains to be agreed upon. Questions of who should be considered in this category, and whether it serves for humanitarian interventions are widely debated. The most commonly applied definition is the one coined by the former UN Secretary-General's Representative on IDPs, Francis Deng, and used in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP):

Internally Displaced Persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (UN OCHA, 1999).

Hickel (2001) is of the opinion that an "IDP is a person who has been obliged to move within the borders of his or her own country because of armed conflict or internal unrest." This definition suggests that the displacement of persons is a result of two factors which are armed and internal unrest. The United Nations views IDPs as persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers as a result of armed conflicts, internal strife, systematic violation of human rights or natural disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country.

The Draft National Policy on IDPs in Nigeria defines IDPs as:

... a group of people who are still in any part of Nigerian territory, but forced out of their homes or natural place of habitat by communal violence, fear or threat to their lives and the members of their families, due to their political and religious beliefs, general insecurity or human right abuses, or communal boundary disputes, natural calamities such as flood, erosion, earthquake, desertification, fire outbreak, and people of Nigerian citizenship who are displaced in other countries, hereby referred to as returnees.

The critical component in defining IDPS revolves around coercion as an inducement of displacement, human rights consideration and the propriety of assurance

protection of the affected by their national government. The main difference between IDPs and refugees is that the internally displaced remain within the borders of their own country. Refugee status entitles individuals to certain rights and international protection while being an IDP is not a legal status because IDPs are still under the jurisdiction of their government and may not claim any rights additional to those shared by their compatriots. However, IDPs are often in need of special protection, not least because the government responsible for protecting them is sometimes unwilling or unable to do so, or may itself be the cause of displacement.

Despite the differences in legal status and entitlement to aid from the international humanitarian community, the causes of displacement and the experience of being displaced are often similar for both IDPs and refugees. Much like refugees, IDPs often feel like strangers in their place of refuge, where the local population may be from a different ethnic and/or religious group and/or may speak another language. Consequently, IDPs may not feel welcomed, despite sharing the same citizenship as the host population. The number of IDPs in Nigeria has been on the increase over the years. This fact is illustrated by the Norwegian Refugee Council where it established that as of June 2004, there were more than 250,000 IDPs in Nigeria, largely occasioned by ethno-religious conflicts and border disputes.

More importantly, on the issue of IDPs in Nigeria is that at present, the country has no national policy on IDPs. This has resulted in a lack of will and capacity in addressing the plight of IDPs by both the Federal and State governments. Consequently, responses to displacement are varied and dependent on the goodwill and concern of the officials of concerned states. Though there are emergency management agencies at these levels of governance, the absence of a policy on actualizing the management of displaced persons has made responses fragmented and at times unethical. Nevertheless, IDPs are usually victims of mainly, armed conflicts or natural disasters, who have been forced out of their rightfully owned habitation and have consequently been deprived of certain rights.

An Overview of Conflict in Jos

As we have already mentioned in the preceding sections of this work, Jos, the capital city of Plateau State in the North Central part of Nigeria has witnessed a series of violent conflicts over the political control of Jos North between 1994 and 2010. The area has increasingly experienced violence, resulting in the destruction of lives and property, which has led to massive displacement of persons and has in turn, led to a change in the settlement pattern of the city along identity fault lines (Best, 2011; Samuel, et al).

The development of conflict in Jos is deeply rooted in the historical process by which the city emerged and developed. The discovery of Tin in the early part of the 20th Century by the British colonialists and the subsequent economic opportunities this development offered brought together many people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds across Nigeria, leading to the emergence of Jos as a cosmopolitan city. Indeed, Jos can be said to be a miniature Nigeria due to the way it has attracted people from almost all parts of the country, cutting across ethnic and religious affiliations, since the discovery of the Tin mining industry in the area.

It should be noted that even when the Tin mining industry became dormant in the later part of the Century, more and more people continued to flood into Jos. This is due to first, the rich agricultural potentials the Plateau area, upon which Jos is located offers, in addition to the commercial opportunities it offers; being strategically located in the central part of the country, linking several states in the southern and northern parts of the country, and secondly, due to massive movement of people from neighbouring states of the north, which have witnessed series of religious crises over the years; especially from the time of the Maitatsine riots in the 1980s to the time of the Shariah riots in the early 2000s (Best, 2009).

It has been attested that these three main ethnic groups, the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere, who embraced Christianity from the European missionaries were the original inhabitants of the Jos area before their coming in the early part of the twentieth century. Other ethnic groups, especially the Hausa and Fulani, mainly Tin mining industry by the British colonialists in the early 1920s. The Tin mining industry came with it, large commercial opportunities, which further attracted people to the area (Best, 2007; Bingel, 2007; Bagudu, 2004). The conflict in Jos as it is known today could be traced to 1991 when the then Federal military government of General Ibrahim Babangida created the Jos North Local Government Area. This issue gave rise to conflict escalation in the area because of the ensuing competition between the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere on the one hand, and the Hausa and Fulani.

A brief chronology of violent clashes in the area reveals that the immediate cause of the first crisis in 1994 was the appointment of Alhaji Sanusi Mato, a Hausa by ethnicity as the chairman of Jos North management committee by the then Military Administration in Plateau State. This was vehemently protested against by the natives, leading to the immediate withdrawal of the appointment. It was the ensuing counter protest by the Hausa and Fulani groups that escalated the violence witnessed that year (Fwatshak, 2007). Suffice it to mention that the scale of violence at that time was very low, as the protesters used mostly clubs and machetes. Accordingly, the casualty rate was minimal, recording only three deaths. On September 7th 2001, Jos City was again engulfed in violence.

Again, this time, like the previous one, it was a result of a protest over the appointment of Mallam Muktar, a Hausa by ethnicity as the coordinator of the National Poverty Alleviation Program (NAPEP) for Jos North Local Government Area. The NAPEP as the name suggests, was a poverty alleviation programme put in place by the newly inaugurated democratic government in Nigeria, headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was an institutional framework for poverty reduction through skill acquisition and extension of financial support to people considered to be living below the poverty line.

In the case of the 2002 Crisis, the immediate cause was an attempt by the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) to conduct a party congress to hold primary elections for the emergence of a flag bearer for the party as a build-up to Local Government elections in the area. The exercise was situated in Eto Baba Ward in Angwan Rukuba, one of the largely Christian-dominated areas in Jos City. The attempt by both parties to clinch the PDP ticket by all means, being the party that was tipped for victory in the forthcoming council polls, was responsible for the escalation of violence during the hat exercise.

It should be noted that the political control of Jos North is at the heart of the conflict in the area. The political control of the area implies access to power among other things, preside over federally allocated revenue; and issue indigene certificates, with which individuals can seek either political appointments or appointments into the federal civil service, and even admission into Federal Universities in Nigeria. The 2008 Crisis was an extension of the previous ones as this time around, the November 27th State Elections merely served as a trigger to it. This time, the polarization was driven almost exclusively by religion. The Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere, along with people of other ethnic groups who are mainly Christians supported the People's Democratic Party (the State's ruling party's candidate, while the Hausa and Fulani, along with people from other ethnic groups, who are mainly Muslims supported the opposition All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP). It was the allegation and counter allegation of rigging, which followed the process of collation of the election result that sparked the violence of that time. However, the violence erupted before the result of the election was declared.

In all these clashes, people numbering over ten thousand were displaced. A total of 18,000 persons, for instance, were said to have been displaced in the 2010 crisis (Kwaja, 2011). More importantly, these crises led to the massive destruction of communities in Jos, and their subsequent resettlement in alternative areas within the city (areas considered to be safe havens), which has in turn led to the post-conflict partitioning of Jos City. The pattern of settlement is the subject of discussion in the next section of this paper.

Pattern of Displacement in Jos City

The series of violent crises in Jos, from 2001, resulted in massive displacement of persons. An estimated 18,000 people were said to have been displaced during the 2010 Crisis (Kwaja, 2011). Settlements that were formally integrated became exclusively inhabited by people of particular religious affiliations. In places like Angwan Rogo, Rikkos, Angwan Rimi, Bauchi Road, Yan Shanu, YanKaji, Ali Kazaure, and parts of Nassarawa-Gwom, among others, Christian and native ethnic groups who were living in those communities were displaced due to the violence, and were forced to relocate to other areas where they think their safety will be guaranteed; usually in areas dominated by people who share the same religious affinity with them, or in entirely new settlements in the suburb of the city.

Similarly, in places like Apata, Angwan Rukuba, Jenta Adamu, Alheri, U'Than, Rukuba Road, Farin Gada, Kabong, Tina Junction, parts of Nassarawa-Gwom, Laranto, Jos-Jarawa/Dutse Uku, and Tudun Wada, among others, people of Hausa and Fulani backgrounds and indeed, Muslims, were forced to relocate to other places whereof characteristic in common. First, these areas are characterized as slums, with high population density, the majority of people being low-income earners. The people live in shanty conditions where basic infrastructure such as good road networks, healthcare facilities, and educational facilities, among others, are nearly absent. This situation can be likened to the structural violence of Johan Galtung, and to a large extent, can be said to be a major source of frustration for the residents of these areas (Galtung, 1969).

Another dimension of the displacement of people in Jos due to the violence witnessed in the area over the years is that several people moved into neighbouring states which share boundaries with Plateau State. These states are mainly Bauchi, Kaduna and Nasarawa. Some people from different states were forced to go back to their states of

origin in different parts of the country. The implication of this development to peace and security in Jos forms the central focus of this paper and will be discussed shortly.

Implications for Peace and Security in Jos City

One of the consequences of internal displacement is that IDPs are typically denied safety and dignity, and are deprived of the essentials of livelihood, which include food, shelter, clothing medicine, and education, among others. In addition to these, several challenges which have implications for peace and security have arisen from the conflict in Jos. First, there is the problem of the breakdown of law and order, a threat to food security, and an increase in crime, prostitution and other social vices which greatly pose a threat to peace and security in the area.

Another effect of internal displacement in Jos is that of 'unofficial partitioning of Jos City' leading to the emergence of exclusive/segregated settlements, some of which we have mentioned in the preceding section of this work. The conflict in Jos has led to the unofficial partitioning of the city, leading to strong feelings of territoriality on the part of the parties involved. This is because the parties view themselves as exclusively in charge of the territory within which they live. This development hampers the free movement of people to certain areas as they are afraid of targeted attacks by people who do not share the same religious identity as them (Best, 2011).

Presently, in Jos it is difficult for Christians to go to Muslim-dominated areas like Angwan Rogo, Kwararafa, Rikkos, Yan Shanu, Bauchi Road etc, likewise, Muslims find it difficult to visit Christian-dominated places like Kabong, Jenta Mangoro, Hwolshe, Angwan Rukuba, Apata, etc, for fear of being attacked. A segregated settlement pattern does not encourage post-conflict reconciliation, in addition to further deepening of suspicion among the parties in conflict. Again, it provides secret enclaves for criminal elements in those communities who perpetrate acts such as arms stockpiling and making of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), that have been used to carry out a series of attacks against mostly churches, among others.

The number of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SAWLS) used from the January 2010 Crisis justifies the assertion that segregated settlements serve as secret enclaves for the stockpiling of such SALWs. Bomb attacks in Jos City have escalated to the level of suicide bombings, as the recent experiences of the bombing of worshippers at the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) and St. Finber's Catholic Church showed. The introduction of bomb attacks in the Jos metropolis started on 24th December 2010, when multiple local IEDs went off in two Christian-dominated residential areas (Kabong and Angwan Rukuba), killing about 80 people and injuring more than 50 others. The Islamic fundamentalist group, Jamaatu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda Awati Wal Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram has always claimed responsibility for the bomb attacks in Jos. The problem of internal displacement in Jos has also led to the emergence of unplanned settlements in the area. This situation in turn has resulted in to increase in the number of slums in the various parts

of the city. This phenomenon has, in addition to the increasing level of criminal activities in those areas, raised the level of diseases and insecurity.

Finally, another serious challenge of the post-conflict partitioning of Jos due to the phenomenon of internal displacement is what is commonly known in the area as “silent killings”. This happens mostly in the aftermath of any violent incident, whether it is a bomb attack or any form of attack. Youths immediately mobilize and carry out reprisal attacks, and in the days following, it is risky for people to pass through areas dominated by people not of their religious affiliation.

Conclusion

Based on the issues raised in this work regarding the internal displacement of persons, and their implications for peace and security in Jos, we have offered the following recommendations:

The first set of recommendations goes to the Plateau State Government.

1. First, it should intensify its commitment to the protection of life and property of all citizens residing in Jos, irrespective of ethnic or religious background. This will give every citizen a sense of accommodation, and it will go a long way towards eliminating the sense of exclusion that has become entrenched in the psyche of some sections of society.
2. Again, it should immediately commence the implementation of recommendations of past Commissions of Inquiry set up to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the conflict in Jos. The inability of the government to implement those recommendations remains a major weakness on the part of the State Government in its efforts towards tackling the problem.
3. Moreover, IDPs who though, have found alternative settlements should be adequately compensated for the loss of their original homes. Most of these IDPs are living in squalid conditions; lacking basic needs of life.
4. Furthermore, the State Government should immediately embark on a policy of redesigning the settlement pattern of Jos, in a manner that is better planned in line with modernity. Experience of other societies has proven that well-planned cities, which have the necessary infrastructure that support modernity have lesser threats to peace and security than those that are not. This fact is in line with the theory of 'architecture of peace', which draws the link between city planning and peace.

Second, to the Federal Government of Nigeria:

1. First, it should massively mobilize and deploy resources in support of the Plateau State Government towards redesigning the settlement pattern in Jos, in line with modernity.

2. Again, it should urgently embark on a constitutional amendment that addresses the gap between citizenship and indigeneship. In giving effect to this, it should urgently address the ambiguous criteria for appointment into government and government institutions and, in addition, put in place a disarmament policy to mop up all illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Third, to the diplomatic community:

1. First, members should continue to impress on the Nigerian Government to be more practically committed to the resolution of the Jos Conflict.
2. Again, they should intensify support for on-going peace initiatives at all levels towards resolving the Jos Conflict.

Fourth, to donor agencies:

1. First, they should provide continuous assistance to mediators working towards resolving the conflict in Jos.
2. Again, they should assist the Plateau State Government, especially in restructuring the settlement pattern of Jos, which is encapsulated in the "Jos Master Plan".
3. Moreover, they should assist Local and International Non-Governmental Organizations towards addressing the plight of IDPs in Jos.

This paper traced the problem of IDPs in Jos to the violence witnessed in the area as a result of a series of ethno-religious crises since 2001. It particularly illustrated that violence was carried out along ethnic and religious fault lines. This was occasioned by the displacement of people perceived to be of opposite faiths by both parties to the conflict. This development led those internally displaced to move to areas they feel are safer, resulting in the post-conflict partitioning of Jos along religious lines; the implications to which the paper has discussed. The paper argued that the post-conflict partitioning of Jos city due to internal displacement of persons has further made fragile, the security situation in the area, in addition to polarization of the people along religious lines. Accordingly, we have offered some recommendations to various stakeholders, which when implemented, will address the problem.

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