GENDER AND ARMED CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: EXAMINING ITS IMPACT ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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Abstract

Armed conflict in Nigeria has evolved into one of the most persistent threats to human security, but its consequences fall unevenly across gender lines. Women and girls, already situated within a social context shaped by inequality, bear unique and often disproportionate harms during periods of violence. This article interrogated the intersection between gender and armed conflict in Nigeria, offering a clear conceptual foundation before examining the country's complex conflict landscape from insurgency in the Northeast to communal clashes, banditry, and militancy in other regions. It explored how these conflicts undermine fundamental rights of women and girls, including the rights to life, dignity, education, health, personal liberty, and freedom from sexual and gender-based violence. The paper also evaluated the adequacy of existing legal and institutional frameworks, domestic, regional, and international that are designed to protect women and children in conflict situations. The doctrinal methodology style was utilized in carrying out this research. By providing a comparative outlook with the United Kingdom and South Africa, the work highlights practical models for prevention, protection, and reintegration that Nigeria can adopt or work with. Through this multidisciplinary analysis, the article demonstrates that gender-sensitive responses to conflict are not only legal and moral obligations but also essential for peace-building and national stability. It concluded with forward-looking recommendations aimed at reforming protection mechanisms, improving accountability for violations, and enhancing Nigeria's commitment to safeguarding the rights and welfare of women and girls during armed conflict.

Keywords: Armed Conflicts, Children, Gender, Rights, Women.

1.0 Introduction

Armed conflict has become one of the most enduring challenges confronting the Nigerian state, with far-reaching implications for national security, social cohesion, economic development, and human rights protection. Over the past two decades, Nigeria has witnessed an escalation of violent conflicts in different regions of the country, ranging from insurgency and terrorism to communal clashes, banditry, militancy, and separatist agitations. While armed conflict affects entire communities, its consequences are not experienced equally. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted, largely due to pre-existing gender inequalities, discriminatory social structures, and limited access to protection and justice mechanisms.[2]

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[2] UN Women, Gender and Conflict Analysis in Northeast Nigeria (2020) <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-and-conflict-analysis-in-northeast-nigeria> Accessed on 15 December, 2025.

The gendered nature of armed conflict is increasingly recognized in international law and policy discourse. Conflict situations often exacerbate existing vulnerabilities faced by women and girls, exposing them to sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement, trafficking, forced marriage, loss of livelihoods, and denial of access to education and healthcare. In Nigeria, these harms are particularly visible in conflict-affected areas such as the North-East, where insurgency has led to mass abductions, sexual violence, and the disruption of social institutions, as well as in other regions experiencing communal violence and insecurity. These realities demonstrate that armed conflict is not merely a security issue but also a profound human rights and gender justice concern.[3]

Nigeria's conflict landscape is complex and multifaceted. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East has resulted in large-scale civilian casualties and displacement, with women and girls frequently targeted for abduction, sexual slavery, and forced marriage.[4] In the Middle Belt, farmer–herder conflicts have displaced families and disrupted rural livelihoods, placing women and girls at heightened risk of violence and exploitation. Similarly, banditry in the North-West, militancy in the Niger Delta, and separatist tensions in the South-East have created environments where law enforcement is weakened and civilians particularly women and children are exposed to abuse. These conflicts reveal systemic gaps in state capacity to provide security and enforce legal protections during periods of violence. International humanitarian law and international human rights law provide a clear framework for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, with special consideration for women and children. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols establish fundamental rules on the humane treatment of civilians and prohibit violence to life, dignity, and personal security during armed conflict.[5]

These protections apply equally in non-international armed conflicts, which characterize most of Nigeria's conflict situations. Beyond humanitarian law, international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) impose obligations on states to eliminate discrimination and protect women's rights in all circumstances, including during emergencies and armed conflict.[6]
At the regional level, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which has been domesticated in Nigeria, guarantees the rights to life, dignity, liberty, health, and security of the person.[7] These rights remain applicable during armed conflict and impose positive obligations on the state to prevent violations and provide remedies where abuses occur. Complementing these

[3] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Nigeria: Armed Conflict and Protection of Civilians https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/africa/nigeria Accessed on 18 December, 2025.
[4] Osita Njoku Agnes & Chikere Princewill," Consequences of Boko Haram on women in Northern Nigeria" Applied Research Journal 2025 Vol 1(3) Pp 93-107.
[5] Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (adopted 12 August 1949, entered into force 21 October 1950) https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949
[6] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.html> Accessed on 16 December, 2025.
[7] African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights. Accessed on 16 December, 2025.

legal frameworks is the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, inaugurated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). The resolution recognizes the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and calls on states to ensure their protection, participation in peace processes, and access to justice.

Furthermore, Nigeria has adopted a National Action Plan to implement Resolution 1325, yet challenges persist in translating policy commitments into effective protection on those ground.[8] Against this background, this article examines the relationship between gender and armed conflict in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the impact of armed violence on the rights of women and girls. It begins by providing conceptual clarification of key terms such as gender, armed conflict, and vulnerability, which are essential to framing the discussion. It then analyses the nature and drivers of armed conflict in Nigeria, followed by a detailed examination of how these conflicts undermine the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of women and girls. The article further evaluates the adequacy of Nigeria's domestic, regional, and international legal frameworks in addressing these challenges and offers a comparative analysis of the approaches adopted in the United Kingdom and South Africa.

By adopting a rights-based and policy-oriented approach, this article argues that addressing the gendered impacts of armed conflict is not optional but fundamental to sustainable peace and development. Protecting the rights of women and girls during armed conflict strengthens social resilience, enhances post-conflict recovery, and promotes long-term stability. The article concludes by advancing practical recommendations aimed at strengthening legal enforcement, improving institutional responses, and ensuring that gender considerations are effectively mainstreamed into Nigeria's conflict prevention and peace building strategies.

2.0 Concept Clarification

Conceptual clarity is essential to any meaningful discussion of gender and armed conflict, particularly in a context such as Nigeria where violence, inequality, and weak institutional protection intersect. This section clarifies the key concepts that underpin the analysis in this article, namely gender, armed conflict, vulnerability, rights, and specific manifestations of harm experienced by women and girls, including sexual abuse, forced marriage, physical abuse, disruption of girl-child education, and psychological effects of armed conflict.

2.1 Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, attributes, and expectations that a society considers appropriate for women, men, girls, and boys. Unlike sex, which is biologically determined, gender is shaped by social, cultural, economic, and political factors and varies across societies and over time. These socially constructed roles often place women and girls at a

[8] UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) UN Doc S/RES/1325 <https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000)> Accessed on 17 December, 2025.

disadvantage, particularly in contexts of armed conflict where traditional protection mechanisms collapse and gender inequalities are intensified.[9]

In conflict settings, gender influences exposure to risk, access to resources, and the ability to seek protection or justice. Women and girls are often targeted not only as civilians but also because of their gender, making them vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation, and other forms of abuse. Understanding gender as a structural factor is therefore critical to analyzing how armed conflict affects women and girls differently from men and boys.[10]

2.2Armed Conflict

Armed conflict refers to sustained violent confrontation involving organized armed groups and resulting in significant humanitarian consequences. International humanitarian law distinguishes between international armed conflicts and non-international armed conflicts, the latter being the predominant form in Nigeria. Non-international armed conflicts occur within the territory of a state and involve government forces and non-state armed groups, or between such groups.

Nigeria's conflicts ranging from insurgency and banditry to communal violence largely fall within this category. Although such conflicts may not always involve formal declarations of war, they nonetheless trigger the application of international humanitarian law and impose obligations on the state and non-state actors to protect civilians, particularly women and children.[11]

2.3 Vulnerability

Vulnerability describes the heightened risk of harm faced by individuals or groups due to social, economic, legal, or structural disadvantages. In armed conflict, vulnerability is not inherent but is produced and intensified by unequal power relations, poverty, displacement, and discrimination. [3] Women and girls are often classified as vulnerable groups during conflict because of their limited access to resources, dependence on caregivers, exposure to sexual violence, and exclusion from decision-making processes.[12]

In Nigeria, factors such as early marriage, low educational attainment, poverty, and weak access to justice further increase the vulnerability of women and girls in conflict-affected areas. Vulnerability, in this sense, highlights the need for targeted legal and policy interventions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to civilian protection.[13]

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[9] H.C Ezebilo," Is gender a social construct? A philosophical appraisal (2023) Preorc Journal of Gender and sexuality studies Vol 1(1) 43-52.

[10] UN Women, Concepts and Definitions https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/gender-mainstreaming/concepts-and-definitions. Accessed on 18 December, 2025.

[11] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law? https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/armed-conflict-article-170308.html> Accessed on 18 December, 2025.

[12] Ibid.

[13] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Understanding Vulnerability https://www.undrr.org/terminology/vulnerability> Accessed on 19th December, 2025.

2.4 Rights

Rights, in this context, refer to legally recognized entitlements guaranteed under international, regional, and domestic legal frameworks. These include civil and political rights such as the rights to life, dignity, liberty, and security of the person as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, including the rights to education, health, and an adequate standard of living.[14]

Importantly, international law affirms that human rights obligations continue to apply during armed conflict, alongside international humanitarian law. Instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights impose obligations on states to protect women and girls from discrimination and violence, even in times of insecurity.[15] Violations such as sexual violence, forced marriage, and denial of education therefore constitute both humanitarian law breaches and human rights violations.[16]

2.5 Sexual Abuse of Girls

Sexual abuse in armed conflict includes acts such as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and other forms of sexual violence committed against civilians. Girls are particularly vulnerable due to their age, gender, and dependence on adults for protection. International law recognizes sexual violence in conflict as a serious violation of human rights and, in certain circumstances, a war crime.[17]

In Nigeria's conflict zones, sexual abuse has been used as a tool of intimidation, punishment, and control, with long-term consequences for victims, including stigma, unwanted pregnancies, and exclusion from education and community life. Such acts violate the rights to dignity, bodily integrity, and freedom from torture and inhuman treatment.[18]

2.6 Forced Marriage

Forced marriage occurs when one or both parties are married without their free and full consent. In armed conflict, forced marriage of girls is often used by armed groups as a strategy of domination, reward for fighters, or means of social control. It constitutes a violation of international human rights law and, where linked to armed conflict, may amount to an international crime.[19]

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[14] Amnesty International, Annual Report 2022/23. The state of the world's human rights (London:Amnesty International, 2023).

[15] S.F Arvonne, ''Becoming Human;The origin and development of women's Human Rights 2017, Equality and non-discrimination under International law 1(2) 215.

[16] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.html> Accessed on 19 December, 2025

[17] The United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General of the UN on conflict Related sexual violence, january- December 2016, S/2016/361, available at www.un.org.

[18] African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights. Accessed on 20 December, 2025.

[19] A.I Chukwuma Okoli, ''Gender and Terror: Boko Haram and the abuse of women in Nigeria'' Georgetown Journal of International Affairs 2022, Walsh School of Foreign Service.

Forced marriage denies girls autonomy, exposes them to sexual violence, and often results in early pregnancy, health complications, and the termination of education. It undermines multiple rights, including the rights to personal liberty, dignity, health, and education.[20]

2.7 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes acts of violence such as beatings, torture, mutilation, and other forms of bodily harm. During armed conflict, women and girls may experience physical abuse during attacks on villages, in detention, or while fleeing violence. Such acts violate international humanitarian law protections for civilians and constitute grave breaches where serious injury or suffering is inflicted.[21]

Physical abuse often co-exists with other forms of violence, compounding harm and limiting victims' ability to seek assistance or rebuild their lives after conflict.[22]

3.0-Armed Conflicts Problem in Nigeria

Nigeria's armed conflict situation is complex, protracted, and multifaceted, reflecting deep-rooted political, economic, ethnic, religious, and governance-related challenges. Rather than a single, uniform conflict, Nigeria experiences multiple overlapping forms of violence occurring simultaneously across different regions. These conflicts have collectively undermined national stability, weakened state institutions, and generated severe humanitarian and human rights consequences, particularly for women and girls.[23]

3.1 Overview of Armed Conflict in Nigeria

Armed conflict in Nigeria is predominantly non-international in character, involving confrontations between state security forces and non-state armed groups, as well as violence between organized non-state actors. While Nigeria is not formally at war, the intensity, duration, and organization of violence in many regions meet the threshold for the application of international humanitarian law. The failure to address underlying drivers such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, weak governance, corruption, and competition over land and resources has allowed these conflicts to persist and mutate.[24]

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[20] Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) art 7(1)(g) https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf> Accessed on 20 December, 2025.

[21] Brookings-LSE, "Improving the protection of internally displaced women: Assessment of progresss and challenges,brookings Institution, Washington D.C(2014) 5.

[22] Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949. Accessed on 20 December, 2025.

[23] Meredeth Turshen," The political economy of violence against women during armed conflict'' Social research Journal 2020 Vol 67(3) 803-822.

[24] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law? https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/armed-conflict-article-170308.html> Accessed on 21 December, 2025.

3.2 Insurgency in the North-East

The Boko Haram insurgency, which emerged in the early 2000s and escalated into widespread violence from 2009, represents Nigeria's most internationally recognized armed conflict. Operating primarily in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States, the insurgency has resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions of people.[25] Women and girls have been particularly affected through abductions, sexual violence, forced marriage, and recruitment into armed groups.[26]

The abduction of schoolgirls from Chibok in 2014 and Dapchi in 2018 illustrates the deliberate targeting of girls and education as tools of warfare. These acts violate international humanitarian law and human rights norms protecting civilians and children in armed conflict.[27] Despite military efforts to degrade insurgent capacity, insecurity persists, compounded by humanitarian access challenges and limited reintegration support for survivors.[28]

3.3 Banditry and Armed Violence in the North-West

The North-West region has experienced a surge in banditry characterized by armed attacks on villages, mass abductions for ransom, cattle rustling, and sexual violence. These armed groups operate in largely ungoverned spaces, exploiting weak security presence and porous borders. Women and girls are frequently subjected to rape, forced marriage, and prolonged captivity during abductions.[29]

Banditry has severely disrupted rural livelihoods and education, with many families withdrawing girls from school due to fear of abduction. The resulting displacement and insecurity exacerbate gender-based vulnerabilities and limit access to justice, as victims often lack effective avenues for reporting abuses.[30]

3.4 Farmer–Herder Conflicts in the Middle Belt

In Nigeria's Middle Belt, competition over land and water resources between farming and pastoralist communities has escalated into violent clashes. These conflicts, driven by environmental degradation, population growth, and weak dispute-resolution mechanisms, have displaced thousands of families. Women and girls in affected communities often experience sexual violence

[25] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Lake Chad Basin Region (UN Doc S/2020/241) https://undocs.org/S/2020/241. Accessed 21 December, 2025.

[26] Esther Emmanuel;'' The Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on women and children in North Eastern Nigeria: Towards a better protection'' NIALS Publication july 2025.

[27] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Lake Chad Basin Region (UN Doc S/2020/241) https://undocs.org/S/2020/241. Accessed on 22 December, 2025

[28] Ibid

[29] Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: Bandit Attacks and Abductions in the North-West https://www.hrw.org/africa/nigeria. Accessed on 23 December, 2025.

[30] Prof. Ine Nnadi and Ojiaka Chigoziri," Insurgency, internal displacement and violence against women: A critical nexus, 2025 Gender and the Law: A compilation on published materials on gender issues 113-130.Zubic Infinity Concept Publishers.

during attacks and displacement, while loss of farmland and livelihoods increases economic dependency and exposure to exploitation.[31]
The communal nature of these conflicts complicates accountability, as perpetrators are often embedded within local communities, and traditional justice mechanisms may prioritize reconciliation over the protection of women's rights.[32]

3.5 Militancy in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta conflict, rooted in environmental degradation, resource control, and economic marginalization, has involved militant groups attacking oil infrastructure and engaging in armed confrontation with state forces. Although large-scale militancy has declined following amnesty programs, insecurity persists through criminal violence and localized armed groups. Women and girls in the region face displacement, environmental health risks, and sexual violence linked to militarization and economic instability.[33]

3.6 Separatist Violence and Communal Clashes in the South-East

The South-East has witnessed increased violence linked to separatist agitations and clashes between security forces and armed groups. This has resulted in civilian casualties, destruction of property, and disruption of economic and educational activities. Women and girls bear the indirect burden of these conflicts through loss of livelihoods, increased care giving responsibilities, and exposure to violence during security operations.[34]

4.0 Implications for Women and Girls

Across all regions, armed conflict in Nigeria produces common patterns of harm: displacement, breakdown of social protection systems, weakened law enforcement, and limited access to justice. Women and girls experience these harms in gender-specific ways, including heightened exposure to sexual violence, forced marriage, trafficking, and denial of education and healthcare. The cumulative effect is the erosion of fundamental rights and the entrenchment of gender inequality in conflict-affected communities.[35]

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[31] Nnam ,M.U (2025) Violent herder-farmer conflicts and human security in Nigeria:A focus on food security.Development in Practice, 1-12.
[32] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Farmer–Herder Conflicts in Nigeria https://www.fao.org/nigeria/programmes-and-projects/farmer-herder-conflict/en/
[33] Amnesty International, Nigeria: Niger Delta Human Rights Issues https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/nigeria/ Accessed on 23 December, 2025.

[34] Ekeledirichukwu .C.Njoku,''The IPOB Question: Separatist Agitation and state Repression in South East Nigeria, 2025 African Journal of social and behavioural Sciences (AJSBS) VOL.15(6) 2306- 2320.
[35] UN Women, Gender and Conflict Analysis in Nigeria https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications> Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

4.1 Impact of Armed Conflicts In Nigeria On The Rights Of Women And Children

Armed conflicts in Nigeria have had profound and far-reaching consequences on the enjoyment of fundamental rights by women and children. Beyond the immediate loss of life and destruction of property, conflict situations weaken legal protections, disrupt social structures, and expose vulnerable groups to sustained patterns of abuse. Women and children, by reason of age, gender, and social positioning, bear a disproportionate share of these harms. This section examines how armed conflict in Nigeria undermines specific rights guaranteed under international, regional, and domestic legal frameworks.[36]

4.2 Violation of the Right to Life and Personal Security

The right to life and security of the person is among the most fundamental human rights recognized under international and regional instruments. In Nigeria's conflict zones, this right is routinely threatened by indiscriminate attacks, raids on villages, suicide bombings, and violent reprisals by armed groups. Women and children are often killed during attacks on civilian populations or while attempting to flee violence.[37]

In addition to direct killings, the collapse of healthcare systems, food insecurity, and displacement caused by conflict indirectly endanger the lives of women and children. Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children face heightened risks of preventable death due to lack of medical care and humanitarian access, particularly in insurgency-affected areas of the North-East.[38]

4.3 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

One of the most severe impacts of armed conflict on women and girls in Nigeria is the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This includes rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, sexual exploitation, and abuse during captivity or displacement. Such acts are frequently used as tools of intimidation, punishment, and control by armed groups.[39]Sexual violence constitutes a violation of multiple rights, including the rights to dignity, bodily integrity, freedom from torture, and non-discrimination. Under international law, rape and other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. Survivors often face stigma, social exclusion, and barriers to justice, further compounding the harm suffered.[40]

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[36] Oluwatobi Alabi," The impact of Armed Conflicts on women and children in Nigeria, 2024, Published in Understanding Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria Pp 245- 275.

[37] Grace Umezuruike, '' Appraisal of the Impact of Boko Harm Insurgency on women and Children in Nigeria. 2019 IDOSR Journal of Arts and Humanities Vol 49(1) 1-11.

[38] African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) arts 4–6 https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights

[39] UN Women, Gender and Conflict Analysis in Northeast Nigeria (2020) https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-and-conflict-analysis-in-northeast-nigeria Accessed on 23 December, 2025.

[40] Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) arts 7(1)(g), 8(2)(e)(vi) https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf

4.4 Forced Marriage and Child Exploitation

Armed conflicts in Nigeria have also contributed to the widespread practice of forced marriage, particularly involving girls.[41] Armed groups have used forced marriage as a means of rewarding fighters, exerting control over communities, or assimilating abducted girls into their ranks. Forced marriage violates the right to free and full consent to marriage and exposes girls to repeated sexual violence, early pregnancy, and long-term health risks.[42]

Children are also subjected to other forms of exploitation during conflict, including forced labour, trafficking, and recruitment by armed groups. These practices violate international child protection standards and undermine children's rights to development, education, and protection from abuse.[43]

4.5 Denial of the Right to Education

The right to education is significantly disrupted by armed conflict in Nigeria. Schools are frequently destroyed, occupied by armed groups or security forces, or rendered unsafe due to attacks and abductions. Girls are particularly affected, as families often withdraw them from school due to fear of sexual violence, abduction, or forced marriage.[44]

The long-term consequences of disrupted education are severe. Girls who miss schooling due to conflict face reduced economic opportunities, increased dependence, and a higher likelihood of early marriage and poverty. The denial of education during conflict thus perpetuates cycles of inequality and undermines post-conflict recovery.[45]

4.6 Right to Health and Access to Basic Services

Armed conflict significantly impairs access to healthcare, clean water, sanitation, and adequate nutrition. Health facilities are destroyed or abandoned, and medical personnel are displaced or killed. Women and children, particularly pregnant women and young children, are disproportionately affected by these disruptions.[46]

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[41] Nimra Ali, Zainab Iqbal, Nadia Khadam,''Forced marriages in times of Armed Conflict: An Implicit Paradox of modern Slavery under International Humanaitarian Law'' 2024 Journal of Human Rights Practice, Vol16(3), Pp 934-944.

[42] UNICEF, Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage> Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

[43] Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) arts 19, 32, 38 https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> Accessed on 25 December 2025

[44] Seun Solomon Bakare,'' Boko Haram and the Child's right to education in Africa: Examining the accountability of non-state armed groups'' 2018 AHRLJ Vol 18(1) Pp 146-170.

[45] UNESCO, Education Under Attack https://www.unesco.org/en/protect-education-attack

[46] World Health Organization (WHO), Health in Conflict and Emergencies https://www.who.int/teams/health-in-conflict-and-emergencies> Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

Sexual violence survivors often lack access to reproductive healthcare, psycho-social support, and legal assistance. Malnutrition, preventable diseases, and untreated injuries are common among displaced children, reflecting systemic failures to uphold the right to health during conflict.[47]

4.7 Psychological and Emotional Harm

Beyond physical injuries, armed conflict inflicts deep psychological trauma on women and children. Exposure to violence, loss of family members, displacement, and prolonged insecurity often result in anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Children who grow up in conflict environments may experience long-term emotional and developmental challenges.[48] Mental health services in Nigeria remain limited, particularly in conflict-affected regions, meaning that psychological harm is often untreated. The failure to address mental health needs undermines recovery, reintegration, and the ability of survivors to exercise their rights meaningfully.[49]

4.8 Displacement and Loss of Livelihoods

Armed conflict has led to large-scale internal displacement across Nigeria. Displaced women and children often live-in overcrowded camps or host communities with limited access to food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Displacement increases exposure to exploitation, trafficking, and abuse, particularly for unaccompanied children and female-headed households. Loss of livelihoods further entrenches poverty and dependence, making it difficult for women to assert their rights or seek redress for violations.[50]

4.9 Erosion of Access to Justice and Legal Protection

Conflict situations weaken law enforcement and judicial institutions, creating an environment of impunity for violations against women and children. Victims of abuse often face barriers such as fear of reprisals, lack of reporting mechanisms, stigma, and inadequate investigation or prosecution of offenders.[51]

The absence of effective accountability mechanisms undermines confidence in the legal system and perpetuates cycles of violence against women and children.[52]

5.0 Legal Framework on Armed Conflict and the Rights of Women and Children

The protection of women and children during armed conflict in Nigeria is grounded in a layered legal framework comprising constitutional guarantees, domesticated regional instruments,

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[47] Deraney, Alex and Hafsteinsson,''Armed Conflict, Health and Human Rights' Human Rights & Human welfare journal 2004 Vol 4(1) Article 28.

[48] Ibid

[49] World Health Organization (WHO), Mental Health in Emergencies https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-in-emergencies Accessed on 25 December, 2025.

[50] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Nigeria: Internal Displacement Overview https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/nigeria> Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

[51] Protection in Armed Conflict,a publication from UNHCR emergency handbook toolkit 2024.

[52] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Accountability for Human Rights Violations in Conflict https://www.ohchr.org/en/conflict-and-human-rights. Accessed 25 December, 2025.

international humanitarian law, and international human rights treaties, alongside specific national legislation addressing violence, gender equality, and child protection. These legal regimes collectively impose obligations on the Nigerian state to prevent conflict-related harm, protect vulnerable populations, ensure accountability for violations, and provide effective remedies for victims. However, the persistence of violations during armed conflict highlights the gap between normative commitments and practical enforcement.

5.1 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (CFRN) remains the primary legal instrument for the protection of fundamental rights in Nigeria. Chapter IV guarantees enforceable rights including the right to life (section 33), dignity of the human person (section 34), personal liberty (section 35), and freedom from discrimination (section 42). These provisions apply to all persons within Nigeria's jurisdiction, including women and children affected by armed conflict.
Section 34 is particularly significant in conflict contexts, as it expressly prohibits torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery, servitude, and forced labour acts commonly associated with conflict-related sexual violence, forced marriage, and child exploitation. Although the Constitution does not expressly regulate armed conflict, its supremacy clause imposes a duty on the state to prevent violations by both state and non-state actors. Judicial enforcement of these provisions provides an avenue, albeit limited, for redress where conflict-related abuses occur.[53]

5.2 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights occupies a distinctive and elevated position in Nigerian law, having been domesticated through the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act. As a result, its provisions are directly enforceable in Nigerian courts. The Charter guarantees the rights to life (article 4), dignity (article 5), liberty and security of the person (article 6), health (article 16), and education (article 17).

Article 18 of the Charter imposes a specific obligation on states to protect the rights of women and children as recognized in international declarations and conventions. This provision is particularly relevant in armed conflict situations, as it reinforces the duty of the Nigerian state to take positive steps to protect women and children from violence, exploitation, and abuse. Nigerian courts have repeatedly affirmed the binding nature of the Charter, strengthening its relevance in conflict-related human rights litigation.[54]

5.3 United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a comprehensive framework for the protection of internally displaced persons, including those displaced by armed

[53] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) Section 33–42 https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nigeria_2011.pdf
[54] African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9 LFN 2004; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights. Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. Although the Principles are not legally binding, they reflect existing obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law and are widely regarded as authoritative.

The principles place particular emphasis on the protection of women and children against sexual violence, forced recruitment, family separation, and denial of access to education and healthcare. Given Nigeria's large internally displaced population, especially in conflict-affected regions, the Guiding Principles play a crucial role in shaping humanitarian responses, government policy, and judicial interpretation relating to displacement and civilian protection.[55]

5.4 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)

The Kampala Convention represents a landmark development in the legal protection of internally displaced persons, being the first legally binding regional instrument dedicated exclusively to internal displacement. Nigeria ratified the Convention in 2012, thereby assuming binding obligations under international law.

The Convention requires state parties to prevent arbitrary displacement, protect and assist internally displaced persons, and address the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including women and children. It expressly prohibits sexual and gender-based violence, child recruitment, and exploitation in displacement contexts. Despite Nigeria's ratification, the absence of comprehensive domestic legislation implementing the Convention has limited its practical impact, underscoring the need for stronger domestic incorporation.[56]

5.5 Geneva Conventions of 1949

The Geneva Conventions of 1949, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, form the bedrock of international humanitarian law governing the protection of civilians during armed conflict. Nigeria is a party to the Conventions, which apply to the non-international armed conflicts that characterize most of Nigeria's security challenges.

The Conventions prohibit violence to life and person, cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity. They afford special protection to women against rape, enforced prostitution, and indecent assault, and require that children be provided with care, education, and protection from recruitment. These rules impose obligations on both state forces and non-state armed groups and constitute an important legal basis for accountability for conflict-related abuses.[57]

[55] UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/guiding-principles-internal-displacement Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

[56] African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) (2009) https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-protection-and-assistance-internally-displaced-persons-africa> Accessed on 25 December, 2025

[57] Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949> Accessed on 26 December. 2025.

5.6 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most comprehensive international instrument on children's rights. It guarantees rights to life, survival, development, education, health, and protection from all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Nigeria ratified the CRC in 1991 and domesticated it through the Child's Rights Act 2003. Article 38 of the CRC specifically addresses armed conflict, requiring states to respect international humanitarian law applicable to children and to take all feasible measures to protect children from direct participation in hostilities. The CRC thus provides a clear normative framework for assessing Nigeria's obligations toward children affected by armed conflict.[58]

5.7 Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

The Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict strengthens the protections afforded under the CRC by raising the minimum age for compulsory recruitment and direct participation in hostilities. It also obliges states to criminalize the recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups.

In the Nigerian context, where reports of child recruitment by armed groups persist, this Protocol provides a critical legal basis for prevention, prosecution, and rehabilitation of affected children.[59]

5.8 Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography addresses exploitative practices that often intensify during armed conflict and displacement. It requires states to criminalize these acts, protect child victims, and ensure international cooperation. This instrument is particularly relevant in Nigeria's conflict and displacement settings, where children especially girls face heightened risks of trafficking and sexual exploitation.[60]

5.9 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015

The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 represents a significant advancement in Nigeria's legal framework for addressing violence against women and children. It criminalizes rape, sexual assault, forced marriage, harmful traditional practices, and other forms of gender-based violence.

Although its application depends on state adoption, the Act provides an essential statutory basis for prosecuting conflict-related sexual and physical violence and for providing remedies to victims.[61]

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[58] Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

[59] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000) https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol-convention-rights-child-involvement> Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

[60] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000) https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol-convention-rights-child-sale> Accessed on 25 December, 2025.

[61] Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 https://www.lawyard.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/VAPP-Act-2015.pdf

5.10 Child's Rights Act 2003

The Child's Rights Act 2003 gives domestic effect to the CRC and establishes comprehensive protections for children's rights, including protection from abuse, exploitation, early marriage, and involvement in armed conflict. However, uneven domestication across states continues to limit its effectiveness, particularly in conflict-affected regions.[62]

5.11 Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill

The Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill seeks to domesticate CEDAW and strengthen gender equality protections in Nigeria. Although not yet enacted, the Bill reflects ongoing efforts to align domestic law with international gender equality standards. Its continued non-enactment highlights gaps in Nigeria's legal protection regime for women, especially in conflict contexts.[63]

Taken together, these legal instruments establish a comprehensive normative framework for the protection of women and children during armed conflict in Nigeria. However, persistent violations reveal a significant implementation gap. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms, domesticating outstanding instruments, and integrating gender-sensitive approaches into security and justice institutions remain critical to translating legal commitments into meaningful protection.

6.0 Comparative Outlook on Gender and Armed Conflict: United Kingdom and South Africa

Comparative analysis provides an opportunity to assess how different legal systems respond to the gendered impacts of armed conflict and insecurity. Although the United Kingdom and South Africa differ significantly from Nigeria in their conflict profiles, both jurisdictions offer valuable insights through their legal frameworks, institutional practices, and policy responses to gender-based violence, civilian protection, and post-conflict accountability. Examining these approaches highlights practical lessons that can inform Nigeria's response to the protection of women and children in conflict and post-conflict settings.

6.1 United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has not experienced sustained internal armed conflict in recent decades comparable to Nigeria's current security challenges. However, its response to armed conflict particularly in relation to overseas military operations, counter-terrorism, and post-conflict reconstruction demonstrates a strong commitment to integrating gender perspectives into security and humanitarian policy.

The UK is a party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and has incorporated international humanitarian law into domestic law through instruments such as the Geneva Conventions Act 1957,

[62] Child's Rights Act 2003 https://www.lawyard.ng/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Child-Rights-Act-2003.pdf

[63] Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (Nigeria) https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Gender-and-Equal-Opportunities-Bill.pdf

which criminalizes grave breaches of the Conventions. This provides a clear legal basis for accountability for violations against civilians, including women and children.[64]

In addition, the UK has been a leading proponent of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, both domestically and internationally. It adopted a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which outlines commitments to prevent sexual violence in conflict, protect women and girls, and promote women's participation in peace-building and security decision-making. The UK's WPS framework explicitly recognizes sexual violence in conflict as a security issue and prioritizes survivor-centred approaches.[65]

The UK has established specialized mechanisms to address conflict-related sexual violence, most notably the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) launched in 2012. The PSVI focuses on strengthening international accountability, supporting survivors, and improving documentation and investigation of sexual violence in conflict.[66]

Domestically, the UK maintains strong legal protections against sexual and gender-based violence through legislation such as the Sexual Offenses Act 2003, which provides comprehensive definitions of sexual crimes and safeguards for victims. Although primarily applicable within the UK, these standards inform the country's broader approach to protecting women and girls affected by conflict.

6.2 South Africa

South Africa's experience with internal conflict during the apartheid era and its subsequent transition to democracy provides a valuable comparative perspective. The country faced widespread political violence, systemic discrimination, and gross human rights violations, many of which disproportionately affected women and children.[67]

In addressing these challenges, South Africa adopted a constitutionally grounded, rights-based approach to post-conflict justice and reconciliation. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 entrenches equality, dignity, and freedom from violence as justiciable rights. This constitutional framework has been instrumental in shaping South Africa's response to gender-based violence and civilian protection.[68]

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[64] Geneva Conventions Act 1957 (UK) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1957/52/contents> Accessed on 22 December, 2025.

[65] UK Government, UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2022 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security> Accessed 23 December, 2025

[66] UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/preventing-sexual-violence-in-conflict-initiative> Accessed on 23 December, 2025.

[67] Dr Jared O. Bell,'' The Conflict for Compromise: An analysis of South Africa's post-Apartheid Transition period, 2016 International Journal of Advanced Research,2285=2290.

[68] Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution-republic-south-africa-1996

South Africa has enacted robust legislation addressing violence against women and children, including the Domestic Violence Act 1998 and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 2007, which expanded the definition of sexual offences and strengthened protections for victims. These laws reflect a deliberate effort to confront gender-based violence as a human rights and societal issue.[69]

South Africa has also adopted a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, aligning domestic policy with UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. The Plan emphasizes prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.
A key feature of South Africa's post-conflict approach was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which documented human rights violations and incorporated women's experiences into its findings. Although not without criticism, the TRC demonstrated the importance of acknowledging gendered harms and providing platforms for victims' voices in post-conflict processes.[70]

South Africa's emphasis on constitutional litigation has also enabled victims of violence to seek redress through, the courts, reinforcing accountability and state responsibility.

7.0 Lessons for Nigeria

The UK experience underscores the importance of:

- Integrating gender perspectives into national security and defence policy.
- Establishing specialized mechanisms for addressing conflict-related sexual violence.
- Prioritizing accountability and survivor-centred justice.

Nigeria can draw from the UK model by strengthening its National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, improving investigation and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence, and enhancing coordination between security, justice, and humanitarian institutions.
South Africa's experience highlights the value of:

- Strong constitutional enforcement of gender equality and dignity.
- Comprehensive legislation addressing sexual and gender-based violence.
- Transitional justice mechanisms that recognise and document gendered harms.
- Access to courts as a tool for accountability.

Nigeria can draw lessons from South Africa by strengthening constitutional enforcement, improving survivor access to justice, and exploring context-appropriate transitional justice or truth-seeking mechanisms in conflict-affected regions.
Both the United Kingdom and South Africa demonstrate that legal frameworks alone are insufficient without effective institutions, political commitment, and gender-sensitive implementation. While Nigeria's conflict dynamics differ, the comparative experience reveals that:

[69] Domestic Violence Act 1998 (South Africa); Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 2007 https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1998-116.pdf Accessed on 26 December, 2025.

[70] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, Final Report https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/> Accessed on 27 December, 2025.

Gender-sensitive security policy improves civilian protection.

1. Accountability mechanisms deter violations against women and children.
2. Survivor-centered justice enhances trust in state institutions.
3. Constitutional and legislative clarity strengthens enforcement.

Adapting these lessons requires contextual sensitivity, but they offer valuable pathways for reforming Nigeria's approach to gender and armed conflict.

8.0 Conclusion/Recommendations

Armed conflict in Nigeria has revealed, with painful clarity, the deeply gendered nature of violence and insecurity. While conflict affects entire communities, women and girls experience its consequences in distinct and often more severe ways through sexual violence, forced marriage, displacement, loss of education, and long-term psychological trauma. This article has demonstrated that these harms are not incidental outcomes of conflict but reflect entrenched structural inequalities, weak institutional responses, and persistent gaps between legal norms and lived realities.

Addressing the gendered impacts of armed conflict in Nigeria requires more than legal recognition of rights; it demands deliberate, coordinated, and gender-responsive action across legal, institutional, and social systems. Drawing from Nigeria's existing obligations and comparative lessons from the United Kingdom and South Africa, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Strengthen Enforcement of Existing Legal Frameworks

Nigeria already possesses an extensive legal framework protecting the rights of women and children during armed conflict. However, weak enforcement remains a central challenge. Government authorities must prioritize the effective implementation of existing laws, including the Child's Rights Act 2003 and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015.

This requires: ensuring full domestication of the Child's Rights Act across all states.:encouraging state-level adoption and enforcement of the VAPP Act; Training law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judges on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Effective enforcement would reduce impunity and enhance victims' confidence in the justice system.[71]

2. Domesticate and Implement the Kampala Convention

Although Nigeria has ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), it has yet to comprehensively domesticate and operationalize its provisions. Nigeria should: enact national legislation specifically implementing the Kampala Convention.

Integrate gender-sensitive protection measures into internally displaced persons camp management; establish accountability mechanisms for violations against displaced women and

[71] Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015; Child's Rights Act 2003 https://www.lawyard.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/VAPP-Act-2015.pdf https://www.lawyard.ng/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Child-Rights-Act-2003.pdf> Accessed on 24 December, 2025

children. Such steps would significantly improve protection for internally displaced women and girls who face heightened risks of sexual violence and exploitation.[72]

3. Strengthen Nigeria's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Framework

Nigeria has adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, recognizing the role of women in peace and security. However, implementation remains uneven.

To strengthen the WPS framework, Nigeria should: a) Allocate dedicated funding for NAP implementation: .b) Ensure meaningful participation of women in peace-building and security decision-making.; c)Integrate WPS objectives into military and counter-insurgency operations. Evidence from the United Kingdom demonstrates that sustained political commitment and institutional coordination are critical to effective WPS implementation.[73]

4. Improve Access to Justice for Victims of Conflict-Related Violence

Women and children affected by armed conflict often face significant barriers to justice, including fear of retaliation, stigma, poverty, and lack of legal awareness. Nigeria should: a) Establish specialized courts or fast-track procedures for gender-based violence cases. b) Provide free legal aid and psycho-social support for survivors.

c)Protect victims and witnesses through confidentiality and security measures. Ensuring access to justice not only promotes accountability but also contributes to healing and social reintegration.[74]

5. Protect Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected Areas

Armed conflict has had a devastating impact on girls' education in Nigeria, particularly in the North-East. Attacks on schools, forced displacement, and early marriage have significantly reduced school attendance and retention.The government should: a)Strengthen security around schools in conflict-affected areas.b)Implement safe-school initiatives in line with international best practices. c)Support reintegration programmes for girls who have dropped out due to conflict. d)Protecting education is essential to preventing long-term gender inequality and breaking cycles of poverty and vulnerability.[75]

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[72] African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-protection-and-assistance-internally-displaced-persons-africa> Accessed on 23 December, 2025.

[73] UK Government, UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security> Accessed 24 December, 2025.

[74] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Guidance on Access to Justice for Victims of Sexual Violence https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/guidance-access-justice-victims-sexual-violence> Accessed on 25 December, 2025

[75] UNICEF, Education Under Attack https://www.unicef.org/reports/education-under-attack> Accessed on 24 December, 2025.

6. Address Psychological and Social Impacts Through Trauma-Informed Care

The psychological impact of armed conflict on women and children is often overlooked. Survivors of sexual violence, abduction, and displacement frequently experience long-term trauma. Nigeria should: a) Integrate mental health and psychosocial services into humanitarian and post-conflict programmes. b) Train healthcare providers on trauma-informed care. c)Support community-based rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives.

Addressing psychological harm is critical to restoring dignity and promoting sustainable peace.[76]

7.Strengthen Data Collection and Monitoring Mechanisms

Accurate data is essential for effective policy development. Nigeria currently lacks comprehensive, dis-aggregated data on the gendered impacts of armed conflict.

The government should:

a) Improve data collection on conflict-related violence against women and children.
b) Ensure gender dis-aggregated reporting by security and humanitarian agencies.
c) Collaborate with civil society and international organizations to monitor compliance with legal obligations.

Reliable data will enhance transparency, accountability, and evidence-based policy-making.[77]

[76] World Health Organization, Guidelines for the Management of Conditions Specifically Related to Stress https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241505406> Accessed on 24 December, 2025

[77] UN Women, Women, Peace and Security: Global Study https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/10/women-peace-and-security-global-study> Accessed on 24 December, 2025.,