

# VIOLENT CONFLICT AND THE CHALLENGE OF FOOD SECURITY IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** This research work sought to examine the effect of violent conflict and the challenge of food security in the North Eastern region of Nigeria as well as its effects on other part of the country and neighbouring countries. Emphasis was placed on analysing the relationship between violence and agricultural productivity and investments in the region using contextual analysis based on both primary and secondary data. The theoretical perspective that was adopted is the frustration aggression theory which states that people will always resort to violence/aggression whenever they are excessively frustrated. This theory was therefore employed to understand causes of the problem of violent conflict in the North East. It was established that violent conflict has caused a lot of problems for the people living in that region most especially with regards to food security since most of the inhabitants of this region are subsistence farmers and since they have been displaced, cannot cultivate their farms to feed themselves. The study recommends that government should tackle the root cause of violent conflict and strengthen the fight against insurgency in order to bring lasting peace to the region. The study also suggested that the economy should be highly diversified and large scale mechanized farming should be encouraged in other parts of the country as this will help tackle the problems youth empowerment, poverty and restiveness in the region.

**Key Words:** Violent Conflict, Food Security, Food availability and accessibility.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Research reveals that the post-cold war political changes and the transformation of the global power landscape resulted in new forms of international interaction and engagement including violent conflicts. The grim but predictable bipolar world of super power rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union has been replaced by the uncertainties of a multi-polarity map of global power.

A growing body of scholarly writings argues that globalization has weakened the national security of states, as major security threat no longer consists primarily of military (traditional) challenges but takes the form of human security such as food security, terrorism, drug trafficking, disease, ecological disease and mass poverty (Paul, 2009). Two very strong factors predominant in the globalized era which poses challenges to states are the demographic movement of people and also threats and attacks by various extremist group practically those terms “threats from within a nation” (Simmons, 2006), and in the case of Nigeria notably in the North Eastern zone the extremist Islamic group name Boko Haram Sect (A Hausa term for western education is forbidden) has been an unending cause of conflicts in the region. Since 2009, they have attacked police stations and patrol, military barracks and check points, politicians, including village chiefs and members of parliament, religious leaders (both Christians and Muslim) schools and many other public facilities. It has also expanded its terrorist attacks in Nigeria to include international target such as the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja in August 2011. The group has also made significant leaps in its operational capability and there are indications that members of the group have received weapons and training in bomb making from other terrorist group in the continent (JSOU Report 2012). As a result of this violent conflict untold hardship and suffering has been imposed on the people living in the region, because among others it has produced developmental issues, ravaged the local economies leading to forced migration and a lot of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increasing refugee population, diseases, collapse of social trust and also acute food security problems (OCHA, 2012).

When communities in rural Africa are affected by violent conflict, the food security of their populace becomes threatened due to the effect that the conflict will have on food

production since they are mostly subsistence farmers that feed from their farm produce and also the alternative sources of income at the level of farm household will also be affected due to the conflict (Philip, 2012).

Food security as defined by the world food summit in 1996 is “when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (World Bank, 1986). Food security is a multi-dimensional concept which has many factors influencing it such as agricultural production, trade, income, food quality, clean water, sanitation, governance or political stability, level of education, application of technology, purchasing power, employment status, livelihood opportunities, market factors etc (John, 2008). Which if not properly considered can affect the food security status of a household and thus of that of a country. This definition brings to bare four main dimensions of food security which are physical availability of food, physical and economic access to food, food utilization and stability of the other three over time.

Before the oil boom, Nigeria had a vibrant economy and the country was food self-sufficient and a key earner/exporter of several agricultural commodities. As agriculture declined Nigeria became a key importer of food items while export of commodities declined. Today the sector is solely dependent greatly on small scale and subsistent farmers to feed the nation. Following over two decades of deregulation of the economy with much emphasis on the agricultural sector, there are challenges being face by the country on the issues of food security and the violent conflict in the North Eastern part of Nigeria which has crippled a lot of agricultural activities, owing to the fact that the zone is a major contributor to the food supply of the nation on strategic crops like wheat, rice, maize, millet, sorghum, vegetables, sugarcane, cassava etc (Cislac, 2012). This calls for great concern and has raised a lot of questions on Nigerian quest to achieve the goal of food self-sufficiency by 2020. This work seek to explore the extent to which violent conflict has affected food security situation in North Eastern Nigeria in values of physical availability and accessibility and the implications of these on the food security status of Nigeria as a whole as well as the Lake Chad basin.

## **2. CONCEPTUALIZING VIOLENT CONFLICT:**

Etymologically, the term conflict is derived from the latin word “conflictus” meaning strike together. Conflict means clash, contentions, confrontations, a battle or struggle, controversy or quarrel (Nwalise, 1997). It is interesting to note that conflict may be either violent or non-violent. It becomes violent when an illegal method of physical coercion for personal or groups end are employed and there is destruction of lives and properties but when it is not occasioned with threat or actual destruction of lives and properties it is non-violent. Conflict has been conceived in different ways by different scholars in their bid to describe the nature and meaning of conflict. Conflict can also be defined in terms of good or bad depending on the outcome, when the outcome of a conflict scenario is positive, it is defined as a functional or constructive conflict those that end up in negative or bad outcomes is regarded as dysfunctional conflicts.

Francis (2006) conceives conflicts as an ‘intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence’. Hence, he defined Conflict as the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. Hellriegel and Slocum (1996) posited that conflict is an opposition arising from disagreement about goals, thoughts or emotions with or among individuals, teams, department or organization. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) also described conflict as a felt struggle between two or more independent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, goals or difference in desires for esteem, control and connectedness.

From the definitions above according to Aloysius-Michaels (2009) practically demonstrate clearly that conflicts are largely the expressing of opposing interests. Conflict can be defined as manifestation of hostile attitude in the face of conflicting interests between individual, groups or states. These conflicting interests can be over resources, identity, power, status or values. It has been generally seen as a situation in which two or more parties strive to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time (Wallenstein, 2002; Onu, 2009).

Conflict would generally incorporate perceived differences in issue positions between two or more parties at the same moment. Conflict stems from the basic fact of human

interdependence for individuals to meet even their basic needs, they depend on the active participation of other individuals (Foltz 1991).

Conflict arises from the interaction of individuals who have partly incompatible ends, in which the ability of one actor to gain his ends depends on an important degree on the choices or decision another actor will take. Conflict can also be described as a situation of incompatibility, struggle or unhealthy competition or rivalry between individuals or groups in a condition where there is a strong desire on the part of one party to carry out the means or achieve the ends, or the distribution and allocation of collectively owned resources which are, or appear to be incompatible with others. Conflict is thus a manifestation of a struggle to resist or overcome opposing forces or powers in a condition of opposition, antagonism or discord (Phil-Eze, 2009 as cited in Olufemi, 2012). In the dialectics of human existence, it has been recognized that no human society is an island, no matter how developed or civilized that society might be. Human society has been seen as a collectivity of political, social, economic, cultural activities of individuals which gives them access to the basic necessities of life. So, by nature man is a dependent creature that depends on his environment and others around him. So, for self-preservation humans consciously or unconsciously relates with each other for their interest. This presumes that interdependence is a central feature of all human societies constant and basic. Thereby, for natural anarchy theorist like Thomas Hobbes (1958) he argues that the natural state of man is that of war in which everyman is pitched against everyman, thus making life solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short, thereby seeing humans as selfish and prone to violence by nature.

For the Marxian viewpoint Karl Marx espoused is theory in his *Das Capital* that conflict is the dominant character of human relations, he sees conflict as a result of oppression by feudal lords and capitalist, therefore in his materialistic conception of history he posits that human society is the history of class struggle. So, to him what prevails in society is not order, solidarity or consensus but struggle between groups for control of the means of subsistence and livelihood (as cited in Ayokhai, 2013; Olufemi, 2012). Though the two theorists both Hobbes and Marx sees conflict as an integral part to human and group relations in society, the Marxist sees it as the engine that drives revolutionary transformation and development . So, in a sense it has been equated with competition or treated as a derivative of competition. But according to Ayokhai (2010) he notes that the prefix of violence to conflict complicates it and takes it well out of the realm of competition since it entails the taking up of arms by a group against another within a state or against the state itself. Since human relations are interdependent, the extent and degree of this interdependence in social group relations must necessarily entail or breed conflict and a constant fact about conflict is that it is an ever present phenomenon in any given social relations because it is predicated on the assumption that individual interest in a society differs and as such human society and the relations in it as logically antagonistic and conflicting. It's been noted that due to the striving of man conflict occurs because in the course of promoting some of his ideas, objectives and goals either intentionally or unintentionally upsets and directs to negative uses, instead of strengthening along beneficial lines some of the arrangement that ought to benefit man (Ayokhai, 2010; Olufemi et al 2013).

Max Weber in conceptualizing the state contended that violence is legitimate in the rule over men, but to Wolff (2006) violence is the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desire of others. For Chaturvedi (1999) violence is destructive action undertaken against property or persons it can be deliberate or spontaneous, undertaken by government or private individuals. It therefore embraces a wide range of actions including intimidation, terrorism, repression, riots, revolutions and all forms of warfare. It does not just refer to conflict but the use of arms and other means to cause havoc, mayhem, harm and injury. There are different categories of violence it can be small or large –scale depending on the intensity. According to Coady (1999) large scale violence is difficult to control and its consequences are hard to predict. It can also be categorized as physical or psychological. Physical violence is an act that palpably involves physical means such as bombardment, whipping, stabbing to death, over powering, poisoning, forceful intrusion, malevolent intrusion among others and its destructive effects are swift and direct while psychological violence is an act of violence in the absence of a violent act. The destructive effects are gradual and cumulative; it involves brain washing, indoctrination and threats (Turpin and Kurtz, 1999). Violent conflict has high direct and indirect cost and as seen it is the pathway to poverty and a major challenge to the development of most countries embroiled in conflicts in Africa. In Nigeria for instance, the various violent conflict it has experienced have taken a heavy toll on its

development. The insecurity of lives and properties which tends to prevent foreign economic relations to jump-start the economy is one major implication of persistent conflicts in the country. Saheed (2012) noted that victims of ethno religious conflicts while taking refuge in refugee camps are cut off from optimal engagement in economic activities; thereby they cannot make meaningful contributions to the development of the country (Adeyemo, 2006; Saheed, 2012). One area in Nigeria that violent conflict often emanates from is the religious sphere. There are people who are fanatical about their religion and most times it caused by aggressive evangelism, jealousy, incitement, misuse of the media, selfish religious elites, poverty etc like what is happening in the North Eastern part of Nigeria.

### 3. ON FOOD SECURITY:

The concept of food security gained prominence at the World Food Conference of 1974, becoming associated with the food self-sufficiency of individual countries (Babu and Quinn, 1994). The world food crises which occurred in 1972-74 that originated from a combination of factors including adverse conditions in several parts of the world which reduced global grains supplies and subsequent dramatic increase in demand for grains imports that resulted to the increase in international grains prices. This threatens the food security status of food importing nations. As a result the first world food conference held in 1974 focused on the problem of global production, trade and stocks. Numerous definitions of the concept have been developed as it has shifted from food production and importing capabilities at the macro-level to focus on individuals and their ability to avoid hunger and under-nutrition (Foster, 1992). Reutlinger (1986) defines food security as "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life," a definition that is widely accepted by agencies such as the World Bank and nongovernmental organizations. For the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 1994) food security means that "All people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food". This requires not just enough food to go around. It requires that people have ready access to food-that they have an "entitlement" to food, by growing it for themselves, by buying it or by taking advantage of a public food distribution system. Such a definition echoes a central concern in addressing food security that emphasizes its importance as a basic human right (Dreze and Sen, 1989; Kutzner, 1991; Sen, 1981, 1995). Tweeten (1997) further clarifies the concept of food security, noting that it has three dimensions. The first dimension, food availability, refers to the supply of foodstuffs in a country from production or imports. Others are food accessibility, utilization and stability of food.

Hence, the original food security debate focused on adequate supply of food and ensuring stability of these supplies through food reserves. Subsequent food security efforts focused primarily on the production and storage mechanisms to offset fluctuations in global supply and ensure the ability to import when food is needed. However, it became obvious that an adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security. For food security, there must be a reliable supply of food, and individuals must be able to acquire it and also derive nutritional well-being from it. Similarly, Uvin (1994) notes that food security concerns are food shortage, poverty, and deprivation. Food shortage concerns the supply of food available to the population within a geographic area. That also prompts the definition of food security by the world food summit in 1996 as "food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". (Tollens, 2000 as cited in Adebayo). Also In the 1996 Rome declaration on world food security, food security is defined as:

*Food that is available at all times, to which all persons have means of access, there is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality and variety, and is acceptable within the given culture (cited in Clover, 2003:).*

Form this definition we can see that food security is a multi-dimensional concept that supports other notions of food security which says that for a nation to say it has food security it must have these dimensions complete, for which they are: physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilization and stability of the other three dimensions over time.

### *Physical Availability of food*

Food availability addresses the “supply side” of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade. So, even if people have money, if there is no food available in the market, people are at risk of food insecurity and vice versa. It refers to the amount, type and quality of food that a unit (individual, household, community, region or nation, depending upon the scale of analysis) has at its disposal to consume. It may be produced locally, imported, or reflect a change in stocks. Availability may vary seasonally or by geographic location, as well as a host of other bio-geophysical and socioeconomic factors (FOA, 2008; John, 2008; Walter, 2010).

Three main categories of determinants are – production, distribution and exchange.

- **Production:** this aspect deals with how much and which types of food consumed (by a given unit) are available through local production. The determinants of availability from local production include seed varieties, land-holding sizes, resource tenancy arrangements, irrigation availability, cropping cycle, labour availability, human capital, energy sources, input and output prices, available and adopted technologies, and the control local producers have over their own products.
- **Distribution:** here, how food for consumption is made available (physically moved), in what form, when and to whom. The determinants of distribution include transportation and infrastructure, public safety nets, storage facilities, availability of post-harvest processing, governance (power distribution, corruption, whether food has worth beyond consumption), security, and the enforcement of trade barriers and borders (regional and international).
- **Exchange:** deals with how much of the available food is obtained through exchange mechanisms such as barter, trade, purchase, or loans. Determinants of exchange include income levels and purchasing power, informal social arrangements for barter, local customs for giving and receiving gifts, migration, gender and age structure, markets, terms of trade, currency value, and subsidies.(John, 2008; Walter 2010; FOA, 2008).

Food security exists at both the macro and micro levels. National Food Security (NFS), the macro dimension, is possession by a nation of the capacity to procure enough food through production or imports to feed its population.

This is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for household food security and individual food security (micro dimension) since food availability on a national scale does not preclude the lack of adequate access to such food by many of the inhabitants due to weak markets, poor infrastructure and information system, and inequality in resource and income distribution also civil unrest (Adebayo, 2000).

It should be noted that availability of food alone does not seem sufficient to explain the attainment of food security in a country. Food can be available in a country because of effective agricultural policy; good harvest in a particular year or massive importation of food; or food hand-out (aid). That is why according to Foster (1999) Shortages/availability should not be the sole focus of research however, for there is a global surplus of food available, but nations are still food insecure. Thus, one should consider also a second dimension of food security, food access, or the ability to acquire food for consumption, be it through purchase, production, or public assistance. Food may be abundantly available but not necessarily accessible. Thus, Tweeten (1997) reinforces the UNDP notion that food security is about more than just growth in agricultural productivity; it also considers questions of distribution.

### *Accessibility of Food*

Access to food refers to ability of units to obtain access to the type, quality, and quantity of food they require. Concerns about insufficient food access have resulted in a greater policy focus on incomes, expenditure, markets and prices in achieving food security objectives. Food can be accessed through trade, barter, collection of wild foods and community support networks; it can also be received as a gift. An adequate supply of food at the

national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security. Three main groups of determinants contribute to accessibility of food: affordability, allocation, and preference.

- **Affordability:** this is the purchasing power of households or communities relative to the price of food. The determinants of affordability include pricing policies and mechanisms, seasonal and geographical variations in price, local prices relative to external prices, the form in which households are paid, income and wealth levels.
- **Allocation:** this is the mechanisms governing when, where and how food can be accessed by consumers. Markets are a key determinant of food allocation; government policies are often designed to correct market failures by allocating food to remote areas or at lower prices. Social capital (as a function of age, class, gender) influences informal allocation processes (e.g., within households), while at a broader scale social/political capital in urban areas influences where supermarkets are located. Both social and political capital influence rules for fishing, hunting and gathering in rural communities.
- **Preference:** this is the aspect of how social or cultural norms and values influence consumer demand for certain types of food. Determinants may be religion, season, advertising, preparation requirements, human capital, tastes, customs and female labour force participation etc.

### *Food Utilization*

Also, there is food utilization, which concerns the physical use of food derived from human consumption. It may be true that food is available to individuals who have access, but vitamin deficiencies or health problems may result from the imbalanced diet of food that is consumed. Finally, utilization means that food security encompasses questions that link availability and access to a country's ability to meet the basic health needs of its population. Utilization is commonly understood as the way the body makes the most of various nutrients in the food. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals is the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, diversity of the diet and intra-household distribution of food. Combined with good biological utilization of food consumed, this determines the nutritional status of individuals. General hygiene and sanitation, water quality, health care practices and food safety and quality are determinants of good food utilization by the body. Each of these can be further broken down as follows the three elements of food utilisation are nutritional value, social value, and food safety.

- **Nutritional value:** how much of the daily requirements of calories, vitamins, protein, and micronutrients are provided by the food people consume. Both over- and under-nutrition are issues. Determinants of nutritional value include diversity of food consumed, type of primary protein (animal or vegetable), disease incidence (which affects food absorption), education, facilities for cooking and preparing food, access to clean water, and hygiene practices.
- **Social value:** this encompass all of the social and cultural aspects of consumption, for example, eating meals together may be an important part of kinship, or it may be very important to always have food for guests, or special foods may be an integral part of important holidays. In some places eating locally- or organically-produced food is highly valued. Understanding the determinants of social value requires insight into the community and household relations, as well as cultural customs.
- **Food safety:** this refers to the dangers introduced from the addition of chemicals during production, processing and packaging, and food-borne diseases. The main determinants of this are the procedures and standards and regulations (or lack of) for food production, processing and packaging.

### *Stability of the other three dimensions over time:*

Even if your food intake is adequate today, you are still considered to be food insecure if you have inadequate access to food on a periodic basis, risking a deterioration of your nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) may have an impact on your food security status. The phrase “at all times” refers to the stability dimension of food security. It emphasizes the importance of having to reduce the risk of adverse effects on the other three dimensions: food

availability, access to food or food utilization. For food security objectives to be realized, all four dimensions must be fulfilled simultaneously (John, 2008; FOA, 2008, Walter, 2010). It is vital to add that Amartya Sen has been credited with initiating the paradigm shift in the early 1980s that brought focus to the issue of access and entitlement to food. Food insecurity is no longer seen simply as a failure of agriculture to produce sufficient food at the national level, but instead as a failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food at the household level. Today, most common definition begin with individual entitlement, though recognizing the complex inter-linkages between the individual, the household, the community, the nation and the international community (as cited in Clover, 2003).

Availability, access and affordability are all elements of food security complex issues that encompass a wide range of interrelated economic, social and political factors – internal and external which challenge Africa's ability to address food security. Food security is embedded in structure, globalization, politics, and the international political economy and has important social consequences especially for those most vulnerable to stratification. A poor nation may increase its food production, national food self-sufficiency and economic growth to lift itself upward in the poverty statistics, but sections of its people may remain food insecure because of other factors that affect their access to the food. Therefore, it is true to say that developmental indices that focus on increased production of food alone are inadequate to capture the pattern of its distribution between populations and within populations (Akanji, 2002).

Food security is not about the food or the commodity but about people and hunger (IFPRI, 1991). Nominal production of food does not guarantee affordability to the poor or accessibility to non-producers. In the last two decades, world output of food has doubled but the world's population of the hungry has also doubled. In parts of the developing world food insecurity is undeniably a socio-economic reality. The situation in Nigeria is no less. Recently, the prices of food rose astronomically, presenting a confounding puzzle. A critical examination of the scenario from post-independence era revealed clearly that the level of food production lies below demand. In Nigeria, the issue of food security is of major concern because food security is dependent on food supply at any given point in time. The supply of food is dependent on several factors such as environmental conditions, inputs and seed material, resources, water, technological developments, civil unrest etc. Thus, food supply defines the availability of food to the general populace. The major sector involved in the production of food is the Agricultural sector; therefore there is relationship between food security and agriculture. The access to food is no doubt the ability to have the necessary resources to purchase the available food. Thus, poverty alleviation and security to life and property are major component of food security (CISLAC, 2012; Akanji 2002, IFPRI, 1991).

#### **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

##### **Frustration – Aggression Theory**

The frustration-aggression theory argues that frustration causes aggression and when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. The exponents of the theory scholars such as Feud, McDougal and John Dollard (1939) identified major conditions in which the individual or group deploy violence. To them the obstruction or blockade of the efforts by the individual intended to achieve desired ends such as power, wealth, social status, security, equality and freedom leads to frustration that breeds violence (Dowse and Huges, 1982). The frustration-aggression theory states that aggression is the outcome of frustration and that in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual is denied either directly or indirectly by the way the society is structured, the feeling of disappointment may lead such a person or group to express his/their anger through violence that will be directed to them. This have drawn a link between unfulfilled rising expectation and violence, here it's believed that tension arises from unfulfilled expectation of people who have experienced hardship or enslavement but suddenly promised improved material condition or freedom. Also, there have been drawn a link between relative deprivation and violence, here it is believed that the objective material condition is believed not to nurture violence but rather the sense of deprivation in relations to others around them, or their own past condition is believed to be responsible for violence with the intent to redress the situation (Dowse and Hughes, 1982 as cited in Sunday, 2009).

In line with this Ogiunwo and Eke (1999) posited that an individual whose basic desires are thwarted and who perceives the importance of the desire is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behaviour to perceived thwarting object. For Nna and Ibaba (2011) the central point of departure of the theory is that when the desires of a community of people are thwarted and they consequently experience a profound sense of dissatisfaction and anger they are likely to react to this condition by directing aggressive behaviour at what is perceived as being responsible for thwarting those desires. From these we can say that studies have shown that violence has been perceived as an instrument of survival under difficult circumstances. So, it is believed that when a critical yet undefined proportion of people with a given society becomes frustrated they allegedly opt for conflict as an option for self-release and preservation (Sunday, 2009; Pabon, 2015 monograph).

## **5. VIOLENT CONFLICT AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE NORTH EAST:**

With the outbreak of violent conflict in the North East region whose economy is basically agrarian with vibrant agricultural activities, the agricultural activities are abandoned, crops are destroyed and communities that made substantial income from the sales of agricultural produce now have to depend on relief supplies. For instance, in DoronBaga, a predominantly fishing and farming community, the satellite image after an attack showed that many of the wooden fishing boats that were spotted on the shoreline before the attack are no longer visible. Many villagers had fled by boat in panic across Lake Chad (BBC Report, 2012). Violent conflicts in the North East region have caused a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing the region which have severe hardship for them. According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix Report 2013, there are over 650,000 IDPs in the North east region. The violent conflict in the North East have affected them adversely because conflicts involves resource allocation and expenditure as well as most often revenue raising to cover cost and processes of accumulation of assets and capital. Violent conflict in the North East have highly mobilizes and reallocates labor power and also affects the quality of the labor force as well as market participation in the region. This have greatly affected the lives and livelihood of the people in the region, The scarce resources available have been diverted to increased military spending and the domestic use of military force and thereby reduce capital and recurrent spending on social and economic infrastructure, including transportation, communication, infrastructure, health and education provision, agricultural marketing facilities and extension services provided by the government (Scalan&Jenkin, 2001; Stewart, 1993).

The North East also suffered from lack of basic infrastructure in particular passable roads, markets with few buying or selling offers and lack of entrepreneurs due to frequent attacks by Boko Haram insurgents, this have led to a less competitive market and higher transportation cost which have further tapered the profits of the traders and due to fear of attacks from the insurgents and the number of check points on the road market activities are brought downs to the barest minimum (SalisuKiyari, 2012). In fact, roads that lead to major markets in Maiduguri have been deserted like Baga road that leads to the popular Baga Fish market, Kashim Ibrahim road and custom round about road both of which led to Gomboru market. Few vehicles now ply the road, thus leading to increase in transportation fare and increase in the prices of food items beyond the reach of ordinary consumers. One respondent identified as KR 1 cried out on the high cost of transport he said, "Before the time when Boko haram never fight us we usually pay less transport fare with our goods to the market but when Boko haram came the transport fare increased with over double the amount to reach the market"

The insurgents' activities have in turn affected food production and consequently raised prices of foods that are majorly cultivated in these places like pepper, tomatoes and onions, cowpea as well as production of fish etc. The region known for mass rearing of cattle, which made meat available to other part of the nation is not the same as of today, many rural farmers have been displaced, while others restricted from going to their farms because of checks and the militaristic counterterrorism approach of the government having strong economic impacts, great loss associated with farmlands, diminishing fortunes of agricultural productivity in the region which adversely affects the country at large that depends mainly from the agricultural produce of these rural farmers. Since, the nation depends on the rural farmers to feed them and the farmers are displaced due to the violent conflict in the region it becomes difficult to meet up with the demand of feeding the nation as each region contributes to the feeding of the country so when one region with vibrant agricultural activities is engulfed in violent conflict it affects other regions adversely and also put pressure on them on the scarce resources that they



might have left. As it is, the country faces a looming crisis with a growing population that is increasingly dependent on imported foods there is great possibility of food wars in Nigeria. The once dominant subsistence-oriented farm economy is at risk of gradual marginalization due to violent conflict.

Before the menace of Boko Haram, an estimated 200 trucks of tomatoes, pepper and onions used to leave the Northern region for the Southern region every day. However, today the number of the trucks has reduced significantly, representing shortfall in the supply of foodstuffs, which has, in turn, increased the cost of the available output (bizwatchnigeria.ng). Before the conflict in the region a cowpea wholesaler as indicated by a survey carried out (MGI, 2014) would transport 600-1000 kilograms bags of cowpea to the South each week but during the conflict the number of bags have reduced to 25 bags per week with an increased transportation cost of over 20%. Another trader recounted was dealing on fruits and vegetables as a wholesaler and also a producer of water melon but due to the conflict, retailers from the village do not even come to buy from him and he has lost his business to the conflict (AGI, 2012). So, the problem of insecurity in the North East have not just affected the food situation there it has also extended greatly to other parts of the country and its neighbours. The low supply of product from North East has further affected other segment of the crop value chain. The conflict has caused a sharp and substantial increase in prices of key northern agricultural crop export to the rest of the country, even to other neighboring countries like Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

Maiduguri the capital town in Adamawa state is a commercial center that attracts people of other towns, states and nationals. It is located in a strategic position, along the famous trans-Sahara trade route and that place it in an advantageous position in the area of inter-state and international trade, and as a commercial center, it acts both as a shipment port and a leading commercial center of the border region (Profile on Maiduguri, 2007). The agricultural products grown and produced in the 27 local government areas in Borno state are brought in to Maiduguri and traded among the three major markets of the Baga fish market, Gomboru market and the Monday market. Gomboru market, located within the capital city, is located between the major roads that leads to the Gomboru/Ngala border town to Cameroon and Chad. The market is known for its cheap perishable products that attract the masses; just as it serves as a depot for products like groundnut oil and animal skins which are being exported to Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR) and Libya. The Baga fish market is situated along Baga road in Maiduguri that leads to Lake Chad Basin. The market is the hub of activities for fish businesses within and outside Nigeria to the Republics of Cameroon, CAR and Niger. The Monday market attracts both elites and the masse, it is strategically located to connect the ancient part of Maiduguri with the modern area of the township: the market serves as a vital chain for food distribution and supply in and outside Nigeria. Owing to several attacks in these markets by members of Boko Haram, the economic activities have declined in the city and over 30 people were reportedly killed in February, 2012 (Vangaurd, 20 May, 2012). As observed also a trader in Maiduguri laments that across the city, many corner shops, business centers and other outfits have shut down (Ali Baba Inuwa 2012; as cited in Awodola 2013).

Also, there is large infrastructural decay and depreciation; it brings about damaged roads, bridges thereby restricting mobility, increasing scarcity of consumption goods and productive inputs and raising their prices, making markets less accessible and harder for people to access schools, and also health care facilities. As cited in Awodola (2013) a trader expressed his frustration about the state of insecurity which has restricted the movement of the people. According to him, most of the food items selling in Maiduguri are brought in from other local government areas of the state, transporting these food items into market in Maiduguri has been cumbersome due to fear of attacks from Boko Haram and the number of check points on the road (SalisuKiyari, 2012). In fact, roads that lead to major markets in Maiduguri have been deserted like Baga road that leads to the popular Baga Fish market, Kashim Ibrahim road and custom round about road both of which led to Gomboru market. Few vehicles now ply the road, thus leading to increase in transportation fare and increase in the prices of food items beyond the reach of ordinary consumers. One can therefore deduce from these experiences that the hike in transportation would lead to increase in the cost of food items with consequences on the purchasing power. Furthermore, Henk-Jan and Hendrix (2011) noted that rising food prices may contribute to food insecurity and may worsen the threat to human security.

This has greatly affected the food security status of households in the region; since many of the people are subsistence farmers and a substantial part of crops production occurs for own consumption. Hence, the disruption of the production process due to violent conflict and the resultant inability to cultivate directly affects the command of food by the households. Violent conflict in the North East has made thousands of households to abandon their farms and take refuge elsewhere and stay at the mercy of others. This has led to the drastic reduction of output of crops even for those that still remained to cultivate their fields.

Prices of essential commodities and food products have skyrocketed making them unaffordable to the common man, caused by well-meaning but seemingly impractical policies of the federal government in these segments.

**TABLE 1**

Table: indicating differences in food prices and percentage of increment before and during the crises period.

s/n	Food item	quantity	Previous price (N)	Current price (N)	Increase in percentage
1	Millet	Per bag	5,000	9,000	80
2	Maize	Per bag	5,000	7,500	50
3	Wheat	Per bag	12,000	16,000	33.33
4	Soya beans	Per bag	10,000	13,000	30
5	Irish Potatoes	Per basket	5,000	7,000-8,000	50
6	Fish	Per carton/basket	21,000	27,000-30,000	35.71
7	Cattle	Per one	45,000	80,000-120,000	122.22
8	Goat	Per one	6,000	8,500-10,000	54.16
9	Red beans	Per bag	20,000	25,000	25
10	White beans	Per bag	18,000	20,000-21,000	13.89
11	Sweet potatoes	Per basket	3,400	4,000-5,000	32.35
12	Tomatoes	Per basket	3,300	6,000	81.82
13	Pepper	Per basket	5,000	13,000	160
14	Onions	Per basket	4,000	5,000	25
15	Water melon	Per one	800	1,150	43.75
16	Groundnut oil	Per gallon	8,500	9,500	11.76
17	Orange	Per bag	8,000	10,500	31.25

**Source: Awodola, field work 2013**

The table above clearly shows the high rate of increase in food prices in Maiduguri the capital city of Borno state and its environs. The food situation in Nigeria is especially vulnerable to global trends since the country is a net importer of major food items which shows urgent need of government to enhance the agricultural

system in the country, and to achieve this all sectors including the private sector must chart a course of action the achieve food security in Nigeria.

According to the famine early warning system's price bulletin in Nigeria for February 2013, cowpea, maize, millet sorghum and rice prices were all above the five year average for 2008-2012. The ordeal of farmers to the level of price increases from 45 to 130 percent, this rise in price is mainly due to a decrease in agricultural output, uncertainties at markets and an increase in transportation cost. Drastic drop in production of cowpeas maize, millets, rice and sorghum from the start of the violent conflict in the North East to this period has clearly shown that the situation of food security in the North East region is a huge problem to Nigeria at large.

**Table 2**

Reported Typical Harvests Before and During Conflict in Borno State

Productions (metric tons)				
Identification numbers of the farmers	Crops	Typical harvest before conflict (2003-2008)	Typical harvest during conflict (2009-2013)	Percent change
1	Cowpea	1.0	0.3	-70
2		2.0	0.5	-75
1	Maize	2.8	0.4	-86
2		4.8	1.0	-80
3		15.0	2.2	-85
1	Sorghum	0.8	0	-100
4		20.0	6.4	-68
3	Rice	3.0	1.5	-50
4	Millet	5.0	1.1	-78

**SOURCE: AGI REPORT 2014**

This table shows a drastic reduction in the production of major crops grown in the north east region due to the activities of the violent conflict going on in that region. Nigerian's foreign direct investment dropped 23% from 2011-2012 and this drop is highly attributed to the activities of Boko Haram in the North East. Trade and other cross boarder activities also have been greatly affected along the border town since the government closure of the borders along Adamawa, Borno and Yola State. Owing to the fact that agriculture contributes greatly to the GDP of the country and the North East is a major contributor definitely there are negative effects on the food security status of the country. According to one expert he acknowledge the fact that the GDP of the Nigerian agriculture was badly affected in 2010 he said, *"In 2010 the GDP in agriculture hit a record low of 2594759.86 million in the first quarter this can be attributed to the internal violent conflict in the North Eastern zone of the country"*.

The prevalence of violent conflict have also reduced investors' confidence in the region, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria from 2009-2013 the mean amount of loans accessed from Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme (CACS) a fund established by the central bank of Nigeria and the federal ministry of agriculture and water resources to provide loans for agricultural projects was drastically lower in the North East 2.4 billion naira, compared to the North Central area of 4.5 billion naira. The mean number of projects executed by the

CACS was also lower for the North East with 2.2 projects completed compared to 5.9 projects in the North Central region (CBN, 2012; 2013).

The trade flows between Nigeria and her neighbors also have been affected Nigeria is the largest producer of cereals in West Africa and the world's leading producer of cassava, but due to the insurgency production of sorghum and millet in these regions have reduced drastically exports to Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Sudan and Central African Republic have declined steeply, with importers staying away because of the insecurity in the North East. The Boko-Haram related conflict has made agricultural trade between markets in North East Nigeria more difficult to access. The proliferation of checkpoints and roadblocks – especially in Borno state delay the movement of food and push up the cost of trade. The conflict has disrupted trade flows and forced transporters and traders to use new trade routes.

The violent conflict has affected strongly the food security situation of the people since they suffer serious restrictions to their livelihood which depends strongly on agriculture and livestock rearing. Causing about 6.3 million people estimated to be facing extreme food insecurity in the Lake Chad region and about 478,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

## **6. CONCLUSION:**

From the foregoing, it is noted that the issues and challenge of violent conflict has a wide range of implications, it has led to the destruction of lives and properties, destruction of farm lands and food and also the destruction of political and social lives of the people (schools, church, hospitals, businesses) shut down properties worth millions of Naira all destroyed (Obasanjo, 2004). Also the study reveals that place based farmers are displaced thereby causing high migration of these subsistence farmers from their farms, large proportion of land are left uncultivated and livestock rearing totally stopped or slowed down there are activities which are supposed to be adding value to the overall food production of the country but has been reduce to nothing due to violent conflict. Violent conflict has reduced human mobility, access to inputs and markets, increased theft of various assets and increased prices of inputs and products.

As noted earlier, violent conflict in the region has caused a rippling effect on states around them thereby putting high pressure on the economies which can lead to disruption and the dislocation of some other activities. It has produced large number of internally displaced persons and this has put pressure on the neighboring states and even Nigeria at large, thereby there is the possibility of provoked crises which can lead to food wars when the relatively scarce resources will be scrambled for. The large influx of these IDPs caused by violent conflict is a huge burden on the government and also have the tendencies to precipitate more violent conflict just as Homer-Dixon (1999) rightly puts it that decrease in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth and resources scarcity can cause reduced economic productivity both for the larger groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies, this can trigger ethnic conflict or deprivation conflicts either way.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION:**

Considering the level and effect of the violent conflict in the North East, drastic actions should be taken by the government to address the problem from the root so that the conflict we are experiencing now will not result or escalate into more drastic food wars as experienced in other countries due to the scarce resources that will result from displacement and pressure and also hike in food prices because these are threat and multiplier factors. Improved and sustained humanitarian access to IDP populations as well as populations located in active conflict zones is urgently needed and thus improved access should be accompanied by a substantial increase in the provision of lifesaving food, health, nutrition and any other assistance that can be given beyond what is already provided by national and state emergency management agencies, NGO partners and other stakeholders also additional collection of food security, nutrition and mortality information is also important to gather as it will allow for an improved understanding of the extent and severity of the current emergency situation. Also, the government should provide food safety nets and social safety nets like insurance for its populace to assist them in

times of need and alleviate their food security problems and for the IDP populations and recent returnees immediate needs and livelihoods support is needed.

This study recommends that the government should largely encourage diversification of the nation's economy, private sector and individuals should be encouraged to get actively involved in highly mechanized farming in other regions or zones that are peaceful thereby encouraging employment of labor for the teeming youth population and also encourage inputs from our local farmers instead of importing food, to make agricultural businesses to strive and encourage investors and as well as providing the needed food supply for the people.

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