MIDDLE BELT,

NOT KILLING BELT!

The History, Dynamics and Political Dimensions of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in the Middle-Belt

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End poverty. Together. End poverty. Together. End poverty. Together.

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PREFACE

Conflict is a human phenomenon just as violence is a human problem. However, their manifestation, trends, character and dynamics are sharpened by local economic, social, political and cultural features. This publication reports on such features and their influences on the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

Diverse factors that have played influencing roles on the Middle Belt conflict were the focus of various studies commissioned by ActionAid Nigeria, in the region, in preparation for its intervention programme there. The researchers are at home with the issues and I have no doubt in my mind that researchers, development workers, organisations, students, policy makers among others will find the materials here helpful and handy the same way they have been useful as a guide to our intervention in the region.

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FOREWORD

Human Needs, Relational, Political and Transformative theories form the basis of understanding conflict . This publication logically considered these theories in order to foster understanding of the Conflict contexts in the Middle Belt of Nigeria..

Needs are very essential, we all have needs including; human, spiritual, social and physical needs and according to this theory, deprivation of needs is the root of all conflicts.

Conflict also arises as a result of interrelationship of people with different cultures, orientation, values and ideas. There must be interrelationship in the society, so conflict arises from poor communication, miscommunication and misrepresentation.

States power is central and at all times. worthy of being interrogated in all conflict studies. Apart from the fact that there is continuous competition for the organs of the state, the State often become an issue in conflict situations due to the fact that a conflict situation could also arise as a result of Failed State, Weak State or Poor State.

One of the assertions of this publication is that conflict is also caused by systemic and structural injustice triggered by conflicting institutional framework e.g. Traditional institutions, Religious institutions, Political Institutions e.t.c all having embedded in their structures, beliefs and practices contradictions that trigger conflicts.

Beyond identifying issues that trigger conflicts, the studies in this publication also seek to identify permanent structures (i.e. a more effective and sustainable early warning and early response mechanism) that are needed to address the shortcomings of existing intervention and prevention mechanisms.

Other areas of focus include, conflict prevention and intervention processes that can be developed in communities rather than outside the community as obtained in the past; how to strengthen capacity of communities to work with and respond to conflict intervention and prevention mechanisms; Theplace of Resource and Livelihoods issues in conflicts; The role of media

coverage and reporting during the conflict cycle.

It is hoped that the materials herein will be used to strengthen the capacity of the State, Communities and Civil Society to address the structural and root causes of conflicts on the bases of justice and equality as well as facilitate the emergence of a framework for conflict transformation and peace building. Especially by those working in and on conflict in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the key challenges faced by the post-military Nigerian state is that of the debacle of ethno-religious uprisings. The crisis would only be confounding to those who have chosen to ignore history. But for insightful analysyts there is some background. Thus, they have attempted to locate the roots in the fact that prior to its surrender of power the military only merely succeeded in suppressing rather than completely wiping out self-determination or ethno-nationalistic agitations. Its genie was certainly alive, even if it was bottled. In that context it could not have been otherwise that there would be near unanimity within ethnic formations and indeed across social and political divides that the military should just vacate power for a democratically elected government. The fundamentally expectation was that it would at least pave the way for the enabling environment to address contentious isssues of Nigerian nationhood among which concerns about nationality and minority rights ranked high.

If advocacy for a Sovereign National Conference strongly resonated in the early days of civilian rule under General Olusegun Obasanjo, it arose mainly from expectations like the above and was without prejudice to the fact that a government had emerged even if through disputed elections. General Obasanjo however differed and would not even touch the idea with a long pole. History would probably record that the death of the SNC dream was a major factor in the return to the ethnic trenches where poverty, joblessness, collapse of infrastructure, degradation of the environment etc combined to breed renewed militancy whose sometimes politically

unguarded nature meant that brothers and sisters would end up rising against one another. At least there must be an object against which erupting anger can be directed.

The tragedy of the middle belt can to a reasonable extent be situated within the above context as it became one of the geo-political zones enmeshed in the post-military ethnic miasma. Yet these same people had irrespective of language, cultural and religious differences, once spoken with one voice to demand for a Middle Belt state even as far back as the colonial days. Still, they fought for the unity of the country during the civlil war when the heroics of their infantry men became a legendary stuff.
Upon all the above, the Middle Belt remains the Nation's food basket, not to mention its potential to contribute to economic growth through its vast resource of solid minerals. So, what exactly went wrong; where did it go wrong; when did it go wrong; who made it go wrong; why did those responsible make it go wrong and how did they make it go wrong

To comprehensively answer these pertinent questions, a deeper probe into the conflicts in such an important region cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered a mere academic exercise.

We offer that as the key rationale behind the study upon which this report is based.

This report therefore identifies the dynamics and political dimensions of ethno-religious conflicts in the middle-belt. It reveals the historical trends of the conflicts, the political and social dimensions, the current dimensions of the conflicts; the major actors in the conflicts; the power relations and the ideological underpinnings; the relationship between the people and the political class and the character of the violence and the targets of such violence. It also identifies the domestic, national and international responses to the conflicts and the impact of such conflicts on politics, the economy and the society.

The study and the report principally made use of secondary data including books, journal articles, memoranda to panels or Commissions of Inquiry by

contending groups in the conflicts and the panels/commissions' reports.

The general structure of the conflict

The conflicts in the Middle-belt result from:

- ✍ The politicization of differences in culture, ethnicity, and religion.
- ✍ The disputes over ownership, allocation and access to land and natural resources, as well as the right of rulership and citizenship within the communities.
- ✍ The political question of domination, control and survival of the contending groups.
- ✍ The significant changes in law, governance and value systems and the decline of traditional structures.
- ✍ The social crisis caused by poverty and youth unemployment.

The Political dimensions

- ✍ There is a strong correlation between the conflicts in the Middle-belt and the politics within and outside the region. Both the elite and the non-elite in the respective communities are very much inclined towards fighting for political power, the access to which has implications for resource allocation.
- ✍ The elite competes for political positions by selfishly manipulating ethnic differences, which in most cases lead to heavy casualties among the non-elite, poor masses.
- ✍ The ethnic factor and the over-arching "indigene-settler" question interact with issues of power and economic competition to escalate the crisis.
- ✍ There is also a relation between the conflict and competititon for resources.
- ✍ Given the un-democratic context, and the zero-sum character of Nigerian electoral politics, those shut out of power always feared that those who have it not address their issues in an unbiased manner, hence the enlongation of the cycle of conflicts.
- ✍ Where communities lack representation, the fear of domination and associated feelings of marginalisation normally generate conflict.

The unrepresented communities therefore find it easy to mobilize support and propagate their grievances. But those who are represented would also find such moves threatening to their hegemony. The responses devised by Communities to deal with the situation include the legitimization of control of political power by those who have it using the factor of "indigeneship" status and the exclusion of those labeled "settlers".

Social dimensions

- ✍ The high level of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, especially amongst the youths make them susceptible to political manipulation. The youths have become veritable grounds for recruitment of political thugs ready for deployment in politically motivated violent conflicts.
- ✍ The high level of illiteracy due to low level of education.
- ✍ Demographic explosion due to migration or internal expansion has also been identified as one of the root cause of the conflicts in the middle-belt, particularly where an ethnic group's population expands at a more rapid rate, or where due to land scarcity that ethnic group has to migrate to neighboring areas, in search of land and economic opportunities.
- ✍ The general triggers noticed in the middle-belt region include: (a) Electoral competition and election malpractices (b) Boundary disputes (c) Individual political and chieftaincy appointments or challenges to established chieftaincy rights and means of succession by excluded groups (d) the use of thuggery and political assassinations (e) Creation of local government wards and districts (f) Individual disputes over land (g) Crop damage or theft or killing of cattle (h) Migration of displaced persons (i) Changes introduced by development projects (2002: 50 FGN)

The internal factors that have significant effect on the conflict include:

*   Arms proliferation because of the absence of tight border control

*   Failure to retrieve weapons from returnees from international peacekeeping operations

*   Failure to rtreive weapons from retrenched soldiers and police

*   Inadequate capacity of the security forces to respond to internal conflicts

The external factors that have significant effect on the conflicts include:

✍   The prevalence of conflicts in the West African region that results in arms proliferation

✍   The prevalence of foreign mercenaries in the zone.

The Actors

Security Actors:
The actors in this category include the State and Local Governments, security forces, ex-servicemen, mercenaries (both local and foreign) and vigilante groups

Political actors:
These comprise the political elite, the government, the state governors, the political parties or their factions, political thugs, traditional rulers or aspirants to the thrones.

Economic actors:
The prominent actors in this category include Herdsmen, farmers, businessmen and women etc.

Social actors:
These include ethnic groups from both the 'settler' and 'indigene' communities, religious leaders and organizations, women, youths (almajirai), students, community-based associations, non-governmental organizations and the media.

Impacts

✍   Ethno-religious conflicts in the Middle-belt region have:

-      weakened/fractured inter-personal relationship in the communities.

-      deepened political resentment amongst groups in the communities.

-      reinforced the perception amongst the disadvantaged groups in the society that the state is partial.

✍   Conflicts in the region have taken the form of population cleansing leading to:

-      displacement/relocation.

-      heavy economic losses by families whose small or large investments are destroyed.

-      withdrawal of investments by big and small business owners

✍   Conflicts in the region have led to humanitarian consequences including:

-      Outbreak of diseases in epidemic proportions amongst the displaced.

-      More hunger in the communities due to lack of food.

-      Decline in the quantum of farm output produced by the communities either because they have problems of access to large fertile lands or are perpetually involved in conflict.

✍   Disruption in Children's education and premature enlistment in the conflicts as child soldiers or militants

✍   Various forms of Human Rights violations such as torture, murder and violence against women and children through rape, child labour etc. Recommendations

✍   ActionAid should devote funds for the building of the capacity of youths in the Middle belt region to promote the creation of meaningful means of livelihood through self-employment in all areas of human endeavor.
ActionAid should also initiate discussion with the State Governments in the region with a view to collaborating on project design and implementation towards reducing youth unemployment.

✍   ActionAid should follow up its previous peace work in the region with the design of a peace-building program that focuses on religion and ethnicity, both of which feature very prominently in conflicts generation and expansion in the States discussed.

✍   ActionAid should design programs to engage politicians and retired military officers in the Middle Belt on how to maintain peace in

their domains by stopping the provision of small and light weapons to people to embark on destruction.

☞ ActionAid should design a political education program that seeks to promote political tolerance and highlights the benefits of peaceful existence.

☞ ActionAid should assist stalker holders in the region to build the conflict intervention capacity of State and local government officials. The emphasis of this capacity building which should include developing a warning template for the region, training of the staff to understand and operate the warning system, identifying warning monitoring sites at each of the local government areas and training the monitors on why, what, when, and how to monitor conflicts. (Albert and Sha, 2006)

Section I
Introduction

1.1   Objective of the Report

The report aims to discuss the dynamics and political dimensions of ethno-religious conflicts in the middle-belt. Against this background, the study:

(i)   Identifies the historical trends of the conflicts, the political and social dimensions and the current dynamics..

(ii)   Identifies the major actors in the conflicts.

(iii) Examines the power relations and ideological underpinning of the ethno-religious struggles and conflicts

(iv)   examines the relationship between the people and the political class

(v)   Examines the nature and structure/organization of violence and the targets of such Violence

(vi)   Identifies the domestic, national and international responses to the conflicts and the impact of such conflicts on politics, economy and society.

1.2   Method of Data Generation

The method used in developing this report has basically been a study of secondary materials which include books, journal articles, commission of Inquiry reports and memorandum to panels or commissions of Inquiry written by contending groups in the conflicts.

1.3   The Conceptual Definition of the Middle-Belt

There are two broad definitions of the Middle-Belt. The first definition emphasizes geography and defines the Middle-belt as a region that consist all political units that fall within central Nigeria. Coleman (?) sees it as the lower half of the northern region. Thus "the whole of Ilorin, Kabba, Benue and Plateau provinces, the Southern parts of Bauchi and Zaria provinces, the whole of Niger Province except for the area north of Kontangora town and the Numan Division of Adamawa province together with the Districts of Muri and Wurkun in the Muri Division of the same Province".( )

Politically, the Middle-Belt is described as consisting of the areas with the highest concentration of minority ethnic groups in the North in particular and Nigeria as a whole in terms of the culture, population, religious beliefs, language,, territorial claims and land ownership.

It is claimed that the minority political identity there developed as a response to the dominance of Islamic groups in politics and society in the north. IThe middle-belt was described in pre-independence period as a region that constituted opposition to the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) government; an opposition that was reinforced by anti-Islamic sentiments developed from the Christian religious identity. The middle-belt, following this description, included areas to be found in south-eastern parts of the Sokoto ruled Islamic society and the southern parts of the Borno centred Islamic society. (Logams, 2004: 786- 788) Currently, the Middle-belt

comprises areas such as Taraba, Adamawa, Plateau, Nassarawa, Benue, Kogi, Southern Bauchi, Southern Zaria, southern Kaduna.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The report is divided into five sections. The preceding section already introduces the report while the second outlines some of the conflicts that have been witnessed in the region.. Particular attention is paid to conflicts in Plateau, Benue, Nassarawa, Bauch and the Taraba. These conflicts are representative enough to help us explain the history and dynamics of conflicts in the region, which section four examines. In this wise, the history of the actors involved in the conflicts are discussed. Section five concludes the report.

Section II
Conflicts in the Middle-Belt

All the areas in the political Middle-Belt have witnessed conflicts. The conflicts are here outlined according to the states in the region.

a. Plateau

Plateau State, which derives its name from the Jos Plateau, is located more or less at the centre of the country. The State has an area of about 26,899 sq. km and shares common boundaries with Benue, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Bauchi, and Gombe States. Plateau State is a product of half a century of boundary adjustments arising on the one hand, from the ambition of the colonial masters to create a province which consisted largely of non-Muslims under one Resident, in order to protect the railway line being constructed at that time and guarantee the sustenance of Tin mining activities which began in 1902, and the strong desire of the peoples in the area for political self-determination, on the other hand.

In the formative years of British colonialism in Nigeria, much of Plateau State was part of Bauchi Province, but in 1926 the Plateau Province, comprising Jos and Pankshin Divisions, was carved out of Bauchi Province. At various times between then and 1976, the boundary of Plateau Province oscillated, paralleling the general trend of political development in the country, as the government of the day acquiesced to the agitation of different ethnic groups to be merged with their kith and kin that are of larger

concentrations in other provinces. During this period, therefore, some administrative units or divisions as they were then called, from neighbouring provinces were joined with or taken away from Plateau Province.

In May 1967, the Benue and Plateau Provinces were merged to form Benue-Plateau State, one of the twelve states into which the military administration of General Yakubu Gowon divided Nigeria in place of the then four existing regions. The division of the country into smaller semi-autonomous states was an attempt to introduce a sense of balance between the north and the south, and to save the Federation from total disintegration which was imminent from the polarization of the country along ethnic lines after the bloody military take-over of 1966 and the subsequent crisis which led to the abortive secession by the Eastern Region.

In the Northern part of the State, the following conflicts have been witnessed:
(i)   Jos North: Hausa Fulani ("settlers") versus Berom, Anaguta and Afezire ("indigenes");
(ii)   Jos South (Bukuru and Vom): Berom and Hausa-Fulani.
(iii)   Riyom, Basa, Barkin Ladi (Berom, Irigwe, Hausa and Fulani).

The Southern part has of recent witnessed the following:
(a)   Wase: Tarok and Hausa-Fulani conflict
(b)   Langtang North and South Local Governments: Tarok and Hausa-Fulani conflict
(c)   Yelwa Shendam: Hausa-Fulani/Muslims and Goemai conflict

The Central part of the State also witnessed the following:
(a)   Kanam: Tarok and Hausa/Fulani conflict
(b)   Pankshin; Members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) conflict. (Bagu Chom et/al 2994)

Benue

Benue is a middle belt state located in the east-central part of Nigeria with the capital in Makurdi. It was created on February 3, 1976 from the old

Benue-Plateau state and is named after the River Benue, the second Largest river in the country, and the state's most prominent geographical feature. It shares boundaries with five states namely; Nassarawa to the north, Taraba to the east, Cross River and Enugu to the south, and Kogi to the west.

Idoma and Tiv are predominantly spoken in the state that had a population of about 2.8 million in 1991.

Benue state possesses a rich and diverse cultural heritage and has been described as the breadbasket of Nigeria given its rich agricultural products such as potatoes, cassava, soya bean, guinea corn, flax, yams and beniseed while being full of rivers.

The new Benue State has twenty three local governments; fourteen from Tiv speaking area and nine from the Idoma speaking area. They are Ado, Agatu, Apaa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer East and Gwer West, Katsina-Ala, Konisshisha-Tse, Kwande, Logo, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Tarka, Otikpo, Ukum, Makmuni and Varideikya.

Benue state is largely a rural state. Given this fact, priority attention has always been given to rural development as a deliberate government strategy to improve the living standards of the people. The main thrusts of the efforts are the opening up of rural roads, provision of portable water, rural electrification and the establishment of cottage industries in the rural areas to arrest the perennial population drift to the urban centres.

The conflicts here have taken an inter-state character and they include:
1. Benue-Nassarawa (conflict between the Tiv and others)
2. Benue-Taraba (conflict between the Tiv and the Jukun)
3. Benue-Cross River (conflict between the Tiv and Igede versus Bete)

There are also conflicts within communities in the State. These include:
a. Ushongo Vs. the Konshisha communities (this is an intra-ethnic conflict and it is mainly among the Tiv ethnic group)
b. Ushongo Vs the Gboko communities (this is an intra-ethnic conflict and it is mainly among the Tiv ethnic group)
c. Kwnade Vs. the Ushongo communities (this is an intra-ethnic conflict and it is mainly among the Tiv ethnic group)
d. Apa Community (this is an intra-ethnic conflict and it is mainly among the Idoma ethnic group)
e. Ado community: there is conflict between the royal and non-royal lineage while there is a second a conflict between the Zi and the Za and the other communities in the LGA
f. The Tiv and the Jukun conflict in Guma LGA.
g. The Ishorov versus the Kusuv and the Etulo versus the Mbagen conflicts in Buruku LGA
h. Tiv versus the Igede communities in Koshisha LGA

Nasarawa

Nassarawa State is a state in central Nigeria. Its capital is Lafia. Nasarawa is made up of thirteen local government areas namely; Wamba, Kokona, Keana, Nassarawa/Eggon, Toto, Awe, Akwanga, Keff, Karu, Lafia, Obi, Doma and Nasarawa. It is bounded in the north by Kaduna state, in the west by the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, in the south by Kogi and Benue States and in the east by Taraba and Plateau States.

The state has agriculture as the mainstay of its economy with the production of varieties of cash crops throughout the year. It is also blessed with solid minerals notably salt and bauxite.

The following inter-state conflicts have taken place:
a. Nassarawa versus Benue communities (mostly involving the Tiv in Benue)
b. Toto versus Egbura communities
c. In Loko (Nassarawa) there has been a conflict between Ayale Iggah and Iggah Oyikwa communities

Kogi

Kogi is a state in the north-central zone of Nigeria. It is popularly called the confluence state due to the fact that the confluence of River Niger and River Benue is at its capital, Lokoja, which is the first administrative capital of modern-day Nigeria And a two-hour drive from Abuja, the current Federal Capital. It was in Lokoja, while gazing at the river that stretched before her, that Lord Lugard's wife coined the name "Nigeria."

The state was formed in 1991 from parts of Kwara State and Benue State.

The State as presently constituted comprises the peoples of the defunct Kabba Province of Northern Nigeria.

There are four main ethnic groups and languages in Kogi: Igala, Ebira, Okun (similar to Yoruba), and Bassa. There are many Mineral resources in Kogi, including Coal, Limestone, Iron, Petroleum and Tin. The state is home to the largest iron and steel industry in Nigeria as well as one of the largest cement factories in Africa.

There has been overt political violence in Lokoja and Idah LGA over the creation of LGAs

Niger

Niger State, previously Niger Province, was part of the North western State under the Gowon administration's twelve-state structure in 1967. In 1976, when a further state creation exercise was embarked upon by the General Murtala Mohammed administration, the previous North-western state was bifurcated into Sokoto and Niger States.

Niger State is located between latitudes 8°20'N and 11°30'N and longitude 3°30'E and 7°20'E. The state is bordered to the north by Zamfara State, to the northwest by Kebbi State, to the south by Kogi State, to the southwest by Kwara State; while Kaduna State and the Federal Capital Territory border the state to the northeast and southeast, respectively. Furthermore, the State shares a common international boundary with the Republic of Benin at Babanna in Borgu Local Government Area of the state. Currently the state covers a total land area of 76,000 sq. km, or about 9 percent of Nigeria's total land area. This makes the state the largest in the country.

The following conflicts have been witnessed:
1. Gbako versus Wushishsi communities
2. Mariga versus Mashegu communities
3. Lavum versus Zugurma communities
4. Lapai and Agale versus Paikoro communities
5. In Doko LGA, there are intra-communal conflicts over ownership of fish pond and the creation of LGA
6. In Borgu Emirate, there have been conflicts over traditional title
7. In Suleija Emirate, there have been conflicts over traditional title

Taraba

Taraba state is named after the Taraba River which traverses the southern part of the state. Taraba's capital is Jalingo. The state was created out of the former Gongola State on 27th August 1991, by the Military Government of General Ibrahim Babangida. Taraba state is bounded in the West by Plateau State and Benue states and on the eastern border by the Republic of Cameroon. Taraba has sixteen local governments, which are governed by elected chairmen. These include: Ardo Kola, Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Jalingo,Karin Lamido, Kurmi,Lau,Sardauna,Takum, Ussa, Wukari, Yoro, and Zing.

Taraba State lies largely within the middle of Nigeria and consists of undulating landscape dotted with a few mountainous features such as the scenic and prominent Mambilla Plateau. The state lies largely within the tropical zone and has a vegetation of low forest in the southern part and grassland in the northern part. The Mambilla Plateau with an altitude of 1,800 meters (6000 ft) above sea level has a temperate climate all year round.

The mian Rivers are the Benue, the Donga, the Taraba and the Ibi which rise from the Cameroon Mountains and flow across almost the entire length of the state (North and South) to link up with the River Niger. The major occupation of the people of Taraba State is agriculture. Cash crops produced in the state include coffee, tea, groundnuts and cotton. Crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, and yam are also produced in commercial quantity. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Manbilla Plateau, and along the Benue and Taraba valleys. Similarly, the people undertake other livestock production activities like poultry production, rabbit breeding and pig farming in fairly large scale. Communities living on the banks of River Benue, River Taraba, River Donga and Ibi engage in fishing all year round. Other occupational activities such as pottery, cloth-weaving, dyeing, mat-making, carving, embroidery and blacksmithing are also carried out in various parts of the State.

Adamawa

Adamawa lies in northeastern Nigeria with its capital at Yola. It was formed in 1991 from part of Gongola State with four administrative divisions namely: Adamawa, Ganye, Mubi and Numan. Adamawa is one of the larger states and occupies about 36,917 square kilometres. It is bordered by the states of Borno to the northwest, Gombe to the west and Taraba to the southwest. Its eastern border also forms the national eastern border with Cameroon. Topographically, it is a mountainous land crossed by the large river valleys - Benue, Gongola and Yedsarem. The valleys of Cameroon, Mandara and Adamawa mountains form part of the landscape.

Before it became a state in Nigeria, Adamawa was a subordinate kingdom of the Sultanate of Sokoto which also included much of northern Cameroon. The rulers bear the title of Emir (Lamido in the local language, Fulfulde). The name "Adamawa" came from the founder of the kingdom, Modibbo Adama, a regional leader of the Fulani Jihad organized by Usumaanu dan Fodio of Sokoto in 1804.
Modibbo Adama came from the region of Gurin (now just a small village) and in 1806 received a green flag for leading the jihad in his native country. In the following years Adama conquered many lands and tribes. In 1838 he moved his capital to Ribadu, and in 1839 to Joboliwo. In 1841 he founded Yola were he died in 1848. After the European colonization (first by Germany and then by Britain) the rulers remained as Emirs, and the line of succession has continued to the present day

Bauchi

Bauchi State with capital in Bauchi was formed in 1976 when the former North-Eastern State was broken up. It originally included the area now in Gombe State, which became a distinct state in 1996. What is now known as Bauchi was until 1976 a province in the then northeastern state of Nigeria. According to the 1991 census, the state had a population of 3,836,333 after Gombe state was carved out of it in 1996.

Bauchi state occupies a total land area of 549,260sq km representing about 5.3% of Nigeria's total land mass. The state is boarded by seven states; Kano and Jigawa to the north, Taraba and Plateau to the south, Gombe and Yobe to the east and Kaduna to the west.
Bauchi State has a total of 55 tribal groups in which Hausa, Fulani, Gerawa,

Sayawa, Jarawa, Bolewa, Kare-Kare, Kanuri, Warjawa, Zulawa, and Badawa are the main tribes. This means that they have backgrounds, occupational patterns, beliefs and many other things that form part of the existence of the people of the state.

Kaduna

Kaduna state is located on the southern end of the High Plains of northern Nigeria and extends from the upper River Mariga on the foot of the slopes of the scarp of Jos Plateau. Kaduna, the capital, is one of the largest cities in northern Nigeria and is considered by the northerners as their symbolic capital. The state has a large population of Christians who inhabit the southern parts. while the northern part is composed mainly by Moslems from the Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups. There are other significant groups from the Igbo, Yoruba and minority groups in the State who are involved in commerce and industry. The State has witnessed major violent conflicts between the contending groups particularly the Moslems and Christians. The causes are rooted in religious differences but heavily influenced by political and economic rivalries.

Section III
Dynamics and Political Dimensions of Ethno-Religious Conflicts

This section examines the nature and character of some selected conflicts in the middle-belt region of Nigeria by looking at the historical trends, the political and social dimensions and the internal and external factors in the conflicts. The section also identifies the role of power relations and ideological factors in the conflicts.

3.1.1 Historical Trends of Some Sample Conflicts

(a) The Jos City conflict of April 12, 1994
The violent conflict of April 12 1994 started because of disagreement over the appointment of one Alhaji Aminu Mato as the Chairman of the Care Taker Management Committee of Jos North Local Government Council during the Military regime of General Sanni Abacha in 1994. Alhaji Mato was believed to be a Hausa-Fulani from Bauchi State and this re-ignited the old antagonism between the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere on the one hand and the Hausa/Fulani on the other hand. On April 5, 1994, the former communities embarked on a peaceful demonstration to the office of the Military Administrator of the State, the Chairman of the Plateau State Traditional Rulers Council and the Gbong Gwom Jos, Dr. Fom Bot to reject

his appointment.

On April 6 the Military Administrator swore-in all the Management Committee Chairmen for the local government councils including Alhaji Mato. This further heightened tension, as the protesting communities vowed not allow Alhaji Mato to assume office. On the April 8, the date for the handing/taking-over by the departing and the new Chairmen, the protesting communities went to the Jos North Local Government Secretariat to prevent the exercise from taking place. The Plateau State Government then decided that the departing Chairman should hand-over the running of the local government council to the Director of Personnel Management of the Local Government Council apparently in attempt to appease the protesting 'native' communities of Berom, Anaguta and Afizere. This action of the State Government aggravated the conflict situation as the Hausa/Fulani community in Jos felt that the Plateau State Government was being intimidated to change its mind on the appointment and swearing-in of Alhaji Mato. (Details, 1995: 23)

On April 11, some Hausa/Fulani butchers demonstrated their anger over the suspension of the assumption of office of Alhaji Mato by slaughtering cows and other animals on the highway outside the Jos Abattoir. The Chairman of the butchers association was reported to have said that the "action was just the beginning in a series of what they intended to do until Altai Mateo (Mato?) was allowed to take over the administration of Jos North Local Government Area" (Details, 1995: 23).

In the evening of April 11, a meeting was convened by the Hausa/Fulani community near the Central Juma'at Mosque where the President of the Jasawa Development Association allegedly instructed the members to join a demonstration the following day. On April 12 the Jasawa youth flooded the streets as planned and anarchy engulfed the city. The Plateau State Government then set up a Commission of Inquiry headed by retired Hon. Justice J. Aribiton Fiberesima to look into the crisis. (Details, 1995)

The Fiberesima Commission's Report revealed that in the process of the violent conflict four people died while a mosque and stalls at Gada Biyu market were set ablaze. Another mosque at the Izala headquarters along Rukuba road was also set on fire as well as the Barkin Ladi Hall, of the Jos

Main Market, which the Report described as "the epicenter of the conflagration in the market". Also set ablaze were the property (houses, motor vehicles and a motor cycle) of the Jos Metropolitan Development Board, Nitel Plc., the Police and private individuals The Committee's Report estimated that property valued at N329, 278,659.80 were destroyed during the conflict. (Details, 1995: 24)

(b) The Jos conflict of September 7, 2001

The outbreak of the September 7, 2001 violent conflict was a response by the contending groups in Jos to the appointment of a Hausa-Fulani, Alhaji Muktar Mohammed as Coordinator and Chairman of the Monitoring Committee of the National Poverty Eradication Programme for the Jos North Local Government Area. In 1998, the same Alhaji Muktar had won elections to preside over the affairs of the Jos North Local Government Council as its Chairman, but was forced to step down, as he could not defend the accusation of falsifying his credentials. The appointment was resisted by the 'indigenes' because they believed that Alhaji Muktar was a 'non-indigene' Hausa-Fulani from Gombe State. The protest mounted against the appointment by the indigenes' took the form of petitions to the State Governor, circulation of leaflets and the organization of press conferences. Some groups believed to be 'indigenes' pasted threatening messages in the office which the local government authorities had allocated to Alhaji Muktar. Some read: "trace your roots before it is too late", "Run for your life, "You are warned once again not to step in", "This office is not meant for Hausa-Fulani or non-indigene", "Muktar Muhammad is a wanderer. If you want to stay alive don't step in". This certainly heightened tension and elicited the highly inflamed response from the Hausa/Fulani community in Jos. A group of Hausa-Fulani youths which called itself 'Under 25' authored and widely distributed leaflets which contained retaliatory threats. Some of them read: "Yes! The loss of a few families wouldn't bother us. After all for every single Anaguta's life and their allies; there are thousands of other Hausa/Fulanis. Let's see who blinks first", "Death is the best friend of HAMAS. Be rest assured that we will do it even better", "The seat is dearer to us than our lives. In that case, do you have the monopoly of violence?", "Blood for blood. We are ready. Let's see who has more deposit of ready strikers with a change of venue", "Operation Eagle: Jos kasarmu ce. [Jos belongs to us]…kowa yace yana iyawa, ga filin

nan…[if you have the capacity to fight, let us test our might in the battle field]".

The contending groups sent protest letters to the Governor of the state urging him to take urgent steps to prevent the already charged situation from degenerating. The Hausa/Fulani protested the marginalization they had suffered in Jos and urged the Government to call the 'indigenes' to order by allowing Alhaji Muktar to occupy the office (JASAWA, Letter to Administrator 2001:6) The 'indigenes' on the other hand protested over the incessant usurpation of their 'rights' by the government in favour of the Hausa/Fulani 'settlers' and urged the government to replace the poverty alleviation coordinator with an 'indigene'. (Plateau State Youth Council, 2001; BECO, 2001; Anaguta Development Association, 2001; Afizere Development and Cultural Association, 2001)

The above developments were definite signs that a state of anarchy was imminent. It is believed that this period was used for mobilizing forces to prosecute the threats mentioned above. Both small and sophisticated weapons such as sticks, bows and arrows, petrol bombs, knives, machetes, locally made and sophisticated guns were openly used. (Human Rights Watch, 2001:7) The accumulated tension was then ignited into a violent confrontation on Friday September 7, 2001 outside a mosque in Congo Russia close to Bauchi Road. A young Christian lady was reportedly trying to cross a barricade on the main road to her house, which had been mounted by the Hausa/Fulani worshippers (a usual practice in Jos). She was allegedly prevented from passing, and was urged to wait until the prayers were over or find an alternative route. Her insistence earned her a slap by one of the worshippers. She shouted for help apparently from her family whose house was close by and the family members found out that their daughter had been beaten. This led to the fight between the Hausa/Fulani and the family of the lady. The fight spread to Bauchi road where innocent persons were reportedly attacked, wounded or killed. Their vehicles were either set ablaze or damaged. The violent confrontation spread to other parts of the city. From September 8 to 12, 2001, the violence spread further to other parts of Jos and its environs. The reprisal attacks were still being witnessed in many peripheral parts of the Jos metropolis as at the time this report was being written. The attacks were executed in guerrilla fashion as

bridges were bombed (as in Bach it, Barkin Ladi Government Area, Wise, Wise Local Government Area) and family compounds burnt along with food and livestock at night (as in Vom, Jos South, or Wall in Bassa Local Government, Kwi and Kassa villages in Barkin Ladi LGA). Some homes were also burnt in the day time when their occupiers were on their farm (as in Lang tang North).

The confrontation extended beyond the conflict between the 'indigenes' and the 'settlers' as it transformed into a Christians versus Muslims conflict. The victims of the violence were mostly men although there were instances when entire families were burnt to death in their homes. More than 1,000 people from? reportedly lost their lives in the conflict. ((Human Rights Watch, 2001:9) There were massive dislocations of families as the conflict took a dimension of cleansing. Families were forced to relocate to areas where they felt secured. These were locations inhabited predominantly by people of common ethno-religious identities.

The issues in the Jos conflict are applicable to the other conflicts in the State. They include:

1.Territorial claims: The Hausa-Fulani had long argued that they own Jos, apparently in order to enjoy citizenship rights that they feel are denied them. The 'indigenes' on the other hand have made spirited arguments (Tula Berom, 2001: 3) that no Hausa/Fulani chief had ever ruled over Jos or the 'indigenes' of the area. They claimed that the Hausa-Fulani community came to Jos and other parts of the Plateau as labourers in the tin mines while others came to trade.

2. Indigeneship and Citizenship Rights: The demand for ownership is related to the demand for citizenship and indigeneship rights. The groups are conscious that citizenship rights are fundamentally differently from 'indigene ship' rights in Nigeria. While the 'settlers' are struggling for inclusion, the 'indigenes' are pursuing the path of exclusion that they see as sure ways of benefiting from the available scarce resources.

The other issues which the 'indigenes' have raised to explain the unstable inter-ethnic harmony in Jos include the conflictual relationship between

farmers and cattle herdsmen promoted by the yearly destruction of food crops on their farmlands by the Fulani cattle herdsmen, the control over commerce exemplified in the "domineering attitude of the Hausa Fulani… and their accompanying exploitative behaviour through cheating" in trade (Tulsa Berom, 2001) and the fear of implementing Sharia in Jos North if the Hausa-Fulani take over control of the area. (Jos North Local Government LGC, 2001)

They are also concerned about the ethnic profiling and other isolated cases of provocation which the Hausa/Fulani are engaged in, the blockage of major streets in Jos and the environs during Friday Muslim prayers and the incessant harassment of innocent non-Muslims because of this practice (especially before September, 7th); "the use of loud speakers to disturb the peace of families and sometime to insult the sensibilities of the non-Muslim population"; (Tula Berom, 2001; Jos North LGC, 2001)

(c)   Conflicts in Bauchi

Bauchi is another hot bed of violent conflicts. Although the Hausa-Fulani have lived together in Tafawa Balewa area with the Jarawas and Sayawas for a long period, inter-personal relations have however been strained for several decades because the more numerous Sayawas, who are indigenous to the area, resent having a Hausa-Fulani emir, who also appoints community chiefs, as an overlord. Violent ethno-religious conflicts linked to either local chieftaincy or religious differences were recorded in 1942, 1973, 1991 and 1995,. The 2001 conflict occurred when the Bauchi State Government signed the law on the "Implementation of Sharia Legal System in Bauchi State," which took effect from June 1, 2001 and was to be implemented in full scale throughout the State. The posting of a Sharia Judge to the Tafawa Balewa area to commence the implementation of Sharia prompted a demonstration by Christian Youths..On June 18, 2001 which was to mark the commencement of the Sharia implementation in the area, some Muslim youths allegedly started chanting slogans like, "Sharia dole", meaning, "Sharia a must." This led to a clash between the Christians who saw Sharia as an imposition and the Moslems who saw it as obedience to Islamic injunction. Many people were reportedly killed and property destroyed including parts of a Bible College. Many people were internally displaced and IDP's settlements were created in places like Dass road, Bununu, Loman Katagum, Bauchi, Maraban Liman Katagum, Pankshin and Ranto. (Dogara, 2002: 32)

The Tafawa Balewa ethno-religious conflicts can be comprehended from the political history of the area which shows that there have been contestations over the perceived socio-cultural and political domination of the Sayawa by the Hausa dating back to the 19th Century. The Sayawa are predominantly Christians, while the Hausa-Fulani are Muslims and so the conflicts have assumed ethno-religious character.

One of the triggering factors has been the alleged actual or perceived discrimination at the level of appointments, which tended to favour the Hausa-Fulani and therefore has embittered the Sayawa who feel marginalised. The implementation of Sharia law simply compounds the already existing poor relationship beteen the contending groups in the area. (Dogara, 2002: 34)

From the three major Sharia-inspired conflicts, it would be plausible to suggest that these conflicts were as a result of one contending group's perception of another. Perceptions about potential and/or real threat to a group's survival do often trigger such conflicts as would be seen in the next section that discusses the perception of both Moslems and non-Moslems regarding the Sharia implementation.

(d)   Conflicts in Kaduna

Since the year 2000, the religious dimension to the tensions in Kaduna emerged more explicitly, as the conflicts began to center around the expansion in scope of Sharia law to criminal law. (HRW, 2003:3)

But before the implementation of the Sharia legal code, Kaduna witnessed religion inspired conflicts in 1987, 1992 and 2000. The 1987 conflict occurred as a dispute between students from different ethnic and religious groups in Kafanchan, and the violence spread to several other towns and areas. The February and May 1992 conflict took place in Zangon-Kataf and it was a conflict between the Hausa and the Kataf ethnic groups. It was sparked off by a dispute over the relocation of a market, which led to the killings of Hausa by Kataf people. This was followed by reprisal killings of Christians by Moslems in Kataf and other parts of the State (HRW, 2003: 3)

The 2000 ethno-religious conflicts again gained inspiration from the debates conducted by the Legislators and people of Kaduna State around the proposed introduction of Sharia in the State. The expansion in scope of Sharia, which was popular among many Moslems, was quite resented in the non-Moslems communities because they were directly or indirectly affected. For instance some non-Moslems protested the prohibition of the sale and consumption of alcohol, the prohibition of women from traveling with men in public transport vehicles. Non-Moslems also felt that Sharia, has expansionist motives of continuing the spread of Islam and perpetuating the historical political hegemony of the Moslem north over other minorities in the area.(Human Rights Watch, 2003: 4)

The 2000 violence in Kaduna occurred from February 21 to 25, following a march organised by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to protest the proposed introduction of Islamic law in Kaduna. Another conflict started in November 2003 with the decision to hold the 2002 Miss World contest in Nigeria and the riots that were sparked off by the ThisDay article. The hosting of the Miss World Beauty pageant attracted disapproval from sections of the Moslem community. It was initially scheduled to take place at the end of November, but it was eventually postponed to December 7, to avoid coinciding with the Moslem holy month of Ramadan. In the weeks preceding the violence in Kaduna, low-level protests against the event in various parts of the north were witnessed. Moslems critiqued the convening of the beauty contest on moral grounds and protested against Nigeria hosting it. (Human Rights Watch 2003: 7)

The publication of an article in the Saturday, November 16 edition of ThisDay newspaper, which supported the hosting of the pageant show, also suggested that Muhammed would have probably chosen a wife from among the beauty pageants. Though this statement provoked Moslems in different parts of the country, Kaduna was the only place where the protest took a violent form. On Wednesday, November 20, demonstrators protested against the content of the article and the demonstration quickly turned violent. The newspaper's regional office was attacked and burned.

The situation degenerated and three days after, there were killings and burning of corpses, and destruction of houses and other buildings, including a large number of houses of worship, schools, hotels and other properties by the contending groups. A variety of weapons, including machetes, knives, sticks, iron bars, and firearms were freely employed.

(e)   Conflicts in Taraba

The conflict in the Taraba-Benue area, which has been going on for decades, is principally between the Tivs, on the one hand, and the Jukuns, on the other; In recent years however, the Jukuns have formed a close alliance with the Fulanis. The Jukuns form the majority in Taraba, while the Tivs form the majority in Benue. There are also sizeable Tiv minorities in Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau states, and a small Jukun minority in Benue. The conflict in Taraba between the Tivs and the Jukuns has tended to center around competition for land, as well as control over economic resources and political power. Political battles have been especially intense over the control of Wukari, the traditional Jukun center in Taraba State. There have also been disputes over the boundary between Benue and Taraba states, respect (or disrespect) for boundary demarcations, and political control of the border towns and villages. In broad terms, the Jukuns claim to be the original inhabitants of Taraba State, or "indigenes," and consider the Tivs as 'settlers'. The Tivs reject this view on the basis that they too have been living there for several generations and therefore have equal rights; they complain of being marginalized and excluded in Taraba. Likewise, the Jukun minority in Benue also complain of marginalization, lack of employment opportunities, and insecurity.

There has been periodic fighting between these groups since the late 1950s, with sporadic outbreaks in 1964, 1976, and again in 1990-1992. Over the years, the communities have found it increasingly difficult to live together peaceably. Benue is often referred to as the Tivs' state, and Taraba as that of the Jukuns. Political polarisation has gradually turned into physical segregation too: an increasing number of Tivs have fled into Benue as violence intensified in Taraba,. Tivs have complained of persecution in Taraba and talk of a deliberate campaign of "ethnic cleansing," primarily by

the Jukuns, allied with the Fulanis, and now additionally backed up by the military. They claimed too that the operations were deliberately timed to ensure that the Jukuns had the political advantage in Taraba in the run-up to the 2003 elections. In addition, the rivalries between Tivs and Jukuns have always had the potential to escalate into an even more serious conflict at the national level, as both groups are well represented in the national army.

The violence in Taraba intensified in the second half of 2001. Organized bands of Tivs, Jukuns, and Fulanis were responsible for scores of deaths of civilians and widespread destruction of homes during this period, with attacks taking place on a weekly, and sometimes a daily basis. From the first week of September 2001 onwards, in particular, there was a series of attacks and counter-attacks by Tiv and Jukun armed groups, including the border towns and villages. These continued into December 2001 and January 2002.

Section IV
Structure of the conflict

4.1   Political Dimensions

The conflicts in the Middle Belt are about disagreement regarding citizens' right of residency, the right to engage in economic activity, the right to participate in the governance process, in addition to the right to control political power at state and local council levels. The conflicts in the region are therefore rooted in the crisis of citizenship. The issue of indigeneity has continued to be a recurring decimal as a cause of most of the conflicts. It is important to mention that most of the conflicts have arisen as a result of contestations over the control of the economy. (Sha, 2005).

The second point to note regarding the politics of the conflicts is the fact that state actions and class interests have profoundly impacted on the increase in 'settler-native' identity, consciousness and conflict. While the state and local governments in the Middle-belt over the years have tended to appease the contending sides in the conflicts through differential policies and actions, the federal state also attempted to appease the dominant groups for instance the Hausa/Fulani especially during the military dispensation in the country. Furthermore, the elite classes in the Middle-belt were found to

have participated in the perpetuation of ethno-religious conflicts. They were involved in appealing to ethnicity and religion and championing in a variety of ways, the use of violence in all the conflicts in the region.

The state policy on restructuring the economy also weakened the capacity of the government to fulfill the needs of the citizens. The adjustment policies inaugurated a process of citizens' withdrawal of loyalty to the state in order to protest its irrelevance. Such loyalties are transferred to primordial associations (composed of ethnic, religious, community associations, trade and service based associations) because of the practical relevance of these associations to their daily livelihood struggles. In this case ethnic and religious identities are constructed and flourish in order to facilitate access to state political and economic resources. When these happen conflicts become the order of the day. (Sha, 2005,)

4.2   Social dimensions

The social dimensions of the the violent conflicts in the Middle-belt have been influenced by the following social factors:
*   Youth alienation
*   Low level of education and illiteracy
*   Use of quota system in access to education and employment

The findings of a recent study by IFESH Nigeria in Plateau and Kaduna states point to the fact that the major single reason for youth involvement in violent conflicts is the high level of unemployment. 40 percent of the sample respondents say the combined effect of unemployment; ignorance and elite manipulation have propelled youths to be active participants in violent conflicts in the state. One respondent for instance described the conditions of the youth in Plateau State this way:
…the youths are poor, not well educated, not well exposed and they indulge in all sorts of vices like drug consumption, rape and theft…they are easily influenced by their peers and can easily be mobilized to undertake any action particularly when they are promised remuneration. …they are a vanguard of religious manipulation and many of them are fundamentalists…they are involved in conflict for survival and also to settle scores….they are unemployed or underemployed…some are poorly brought up by their parents…they are incited through the teachings of

doctrines by religious leaders who are interested in achieving their personal ambitions

4.3   Current dynamics

The current dynamics of the conflicts in the Middle-belt zone are heavily influenced by:
*   Feelings of exclusion and struggle for recognition
*   Fear of domination

But in general, the following factors have been mentioned as the causes of the conflict:
a.   Claims over the ownership of the areas of conflicts by the contending groups, usually the Hausa/Fulani and the 'indigenes' and the systematic efforts put in place to realize these claims.
b.   The struggle by the contending groups to establish their rights as indigenes of the areas.
c.   The 'indigenes' complaint that the 'settler' community try to impose alien and strange traditional ruling institutions over them.
d.   The 'indigenes' complaint over the domineering attitude of the 'settler'' community and particularly their elites in all spheres of life which tends to edge them out.
e.   The fear by the 'indigenes' that the 'settler' community particularly the Hausa/Fulani seek to implement Sharia law in the Middle-belt as well as the ethnic profiling and stereotyping which the Hausa/Fulani are alledged to have been engaged in against the Christian 'indigenes'.

Triggers of Conflicts

Some of the general triggers noticed in the zone include:
(a)   Electoral competition and election malpractices
(b)   Boundary disputes
(c)   Individual political and chieftaincy appointments or challenges to established chieftaincy rights and means of succession by excluded groups
(d)   Thuggery and political assassinations

(e)   Creation of local government wards and districts
(f)   Individual disputes over land
(g)   Crop damage or theft or killing of cattle
(h)   Migration of displaced persons
(i)   Changes introduced by development projects (FGN, 2002: 50)

4.4.   Internal and external factors

1.5.   Internal
∗   Arms proliferation because of the absence of a tiight border control
∗   Failure to retrieve weapons from soldiers returning from international peacekeeping operations as well as retrenched soldiers and police
∗   Inadequate capacity of the security forces to respond to internal conflicts

External factors
☞   The prevalence of conflicts in the West African region and the resultant arms proliferation. There is also the prevalence of foreign mercenaries in the zone.
☞   Globalization, which has weakened the capacity of the state to provide social welfare thus throwing up resistance by groups who feel that there security is better attained by the building of their identities.

4.5.   Actors

4.5.1   Internal and external factors
The prominent actors during the conflict situation in the Middle-Belt region are discussed below. They include:
∗   Security Actors: In this category are government security forces, ex-servicemen, mercenaries (both local and foreign) and vigilante groups.
∗   Political actors: These comprise the political elites, the governments and state governors, political parties or factions of political parties, political thugs, traditional rulers or aspirants to the thrones.
∗   Economic actors: The prominent actors in this category include herdsmen, farmers, businessmen and women etc.
∗   Social actors: These include ethnic groups from both 'settler' and 'indigene' communities, religious leaders and organizations, women, youths (almajirai), students, community-based associations and non-governmental organizations. The media too is an important actor in the region.

4.5.2   Power relations and the Ideological Underpinning of the struggle
One of the factors that triggered the conflict and the violence was the direct involvement of the state (federal or state government) in public policy formulation and implementation. Some of these conflicts were ignited by the appointment by the Government of representatives of the 'settler' community to the leadership of the local government council, which the 'natives' resisted. Some of these appointments took place during the military era, which is significant to us in terms of understanding the contributory role of the military in setting the stage for conflicts through its discriminatory and differential support to the groups.

These political elites have often appealed to religion sentiments as a mobilizing force and even manipulate it to suit their ethnic projects. The conflicts were outbursts of cumulative grievances of the contending groups in the city and all socio-economic classes were involved in their prosecution. This implies, first, that the various classes employed ethnicity and religion to prosecute their class projects. The wealthy classes have struggled for political representation by mobilizing the middle and lower classes for this purpose. The implication of this for theory is that ethnic consciousness can at particular moments, especially during conflict situations, override or overshadow class-consciousness thus elevating ethnicity and religion as the predominant explanatory factor. In every one of the conflicts studied, the Nigerian state played a direct or indirect role in their creation in an attempt to appease one section of the communities in Jos. All the conflicts are rooted in the crisis of citizenship based on the historic divide between civic and ethnic citizenship.

4.5.3   Responses
Government responses: State response to the violence in the region has often taken the form of:
∗   Security responses which involves deployment of police and armed

forces to conflict areas to keep peace. The responses are inadequate as those deployed do not have the capacity to confront armed groups. They are not used to early warning signals in conflict-prone areas.

* Relief responses which involves the provision of relief to victims of violence. The government in most cases try to reach the people, but often the response is usually late and becomes impossible if the actors in the conflict are heavily armed. Sometimes there is bais in the distribution of relief materials to groups in the conflicts.

* Political responses are usually in the form of the establishment of commissions and panels of enquiry on the conflicts. The Peace and Reconciliation Committees often went round communities to plead for peace and harmony. There is usually a problem of representation of the contending sides in the conflict on such panels while the reports are sometimes considered biased in favour of certain groups. Some of the reports are not made public.

* Social responses: This takes the form of enlightenment campaigns by government on the need for citizens and groups in the conflict to stop violence and embrace peace and tolerance instead.

Non-Governmental Responses

* Political responses: These are usually the response of traditional and religious leaders in the management and transformation of the conflicts through their interaction with the communities. The problem has always been that these leaders themselves often involved in the conflicts. Thus In a situation where some of them have the lost respect of their subjects, their role in the process can be minimal.

* NGOs responses: NGOs have been active in the provision of and the coordination of supply of relief materials to the affected communities. An identified problem with some of them is the absence of capacity.

Women in the Middle-belt region have often participated in the peace processes. There activities include provision of relief materials to affected persons; discussion with women on the effects of violent conflicts on families and sending of messages to the public through songs on radio and television in order to promote peace and harmony.

International Responses: Institutions involved in conflict resolution in the Middle-belt region include:

1. USAID: The agency has supported various conflict mitigation programmes among contending groups in the zone.

2. The German Embassy: The embassy has supported conflict mitigation in the zone by funding Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum to conduct interfaith workshops for student union officials in Plateau.

3. The Konrad Adenuar Foundation (KAF): The foundation has provided funds for peace work in the zone.

4.5.4 Policies

The first attempt by public authority is to make policy pronouncements directed at the promoting politics of inclusion and integration. In some cases pronouncement is made to the effect that there is no distinction between 'settlers' and 'natives'. The difficulty with this solution lays in the fact that conflict between the 'settlers' and the 'natives is exacerbated.

The second policy direction is aimed at strengthening the regime of individual rights at the expense of group rights. The difficulty with this prescription is its weak capacity to do away with the distinction between the 'settlers' and 'natives'. In addition, it may strengthen the 'settlers' and provoke opposition from the 'natives'.

A third area of policy is the reform of the constitution to provide for equity and freedom among the people and the groups irrespective of ethnic, religion and gender differences. However, the constitutional provisions on citizenship and indigeneity have been contradictory and sometimes vague, and therefore have been insufficient in deconstructing 'settler' consciousness amongst communities in Jos. It is recommended that constitutional provisions should be strengthened to remove the contradictions and the ambiguities and ensure equitable application of the citizenship law nationally. There is also the need to reform the very structure of the state, which has institutionally underwritten the distinctions between the 'settler' and the 'indigene'.

4.5.5 Impacts of Conflicts

At the level of socio political consequences, ethno-religious conflicts have weaken/fractured inter-personal relationship in the communities. Second, conflicts have led to deep political resentment amongst groups in communities. Third, conflicts have widened the divisions within political parties. Fourth, ethno-religious conflicts have led to increasing perception by groups disadvantaged in the society that the state is partial.

In terms of economic consequences, conflicts have taken the form of population cleansing leading to displacement/ relocation. In addition, conflicts have inflicted heavy economic losses on families whose small or large investments are destroyed. Furthermore, a state of instability produced by the conflicts have led to withdrawal of investments by big and small business owners

With respect to humanitarian consequences, the conflicts have led to illnesses in epidemic proportions amongst the displaced. Conflicts have also widened the scope of hunger in the communities due to lack of food. Farm produce are either destroyed on the farm or destroyed in granaries during conflicts. Furthermore, conflicts have led to decline in the quantum of farm output produced by the communities either because they have problems of access to large fertile lands or that the communities are perpetually involved in conflict. In addition, conflicts have led to the emergence of poverty-stricken conditions in the society. Women in conflict situations have suffered psychologically due to loss of husbands and usually children.who are either dragged prematurely into conflict or have their educational development permanently disrupted.

Human Rights Violations: it should noted that the types of human rights

abuse in situation of conflicts vary from torture, rape, murder, child labour and forced labour to the more recent cases of genocide, mutilations, ethnic cleansing and the use of refugees as "human shield". In addition, violence against women and children is another worrisome aspect of rights violation. Women and children constitute over 70% of the world's most vulnerable population during periods of conflict and war. (Agbu, 2000: 96) Women in particular, are major victims in times of war or armed conflict. They experience conflict in completely different ways from men. War invariably exacerbates the inequalities that already exist in different forms and to varying degrees.

Women and girls are usually raped and sometimes forced into sexual servitude. For survivors, physical and social dislocation, injuries and trauma take a toll that may last a lifetime. Another problematic area is the increasing involvement of children in internal wars. Some of the under-aged combatants have been used to commit the most atrocious crimes in countries like Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola. (Agbu, 2000: 97)

Section IV
Conclusions

From the preceding discussion, we have established that:

First, the conflicts have centered on the issue of 'settler' versus 'indigene', Secondly, the conflicts have assumed religious colouration because religion is being employed to mobilize support and prosecute the conflict. The talk about "Jihad" by the Hausa Moslems is conceived by the 'indigene' Christians as a way of eliminating them or forcing them to adopt Sharia as a legal code. This explains why churches and mosques were either burnt or flattened or why victims of the violent conflicts on both sides were often requested to recite the "Lord's Prayer" or some Islamic prayer.

Thirdly, the conflicts have taken ethno- religious dimension. This is because the boundary between ethnicity and religion could be thin or even blurred at times. The 'indigenous' population in the region is predominantly Christian and constitute the minorities, while the dominant groups particularly the Hausas are Moslems but which happen to be a majority ethnic group in terms of national politics. They both understood this and use this to prosecute their struggles.

Recommendations

✍ ActionAid should devote funds for the building of the capacity of youths in the Middle belt region to promote the creation of meaningful means of livelihood through self-employment in all areas of human endeavor.
ActionAid should also initiate discussion with the State Governments in the region with a view to collaborating on project design and implementation towards reducing youth unemployment.

✍ ActionAid should build on its previous peace work in the region with the design of a peace-building program that focuses on religion and ethnicity, both of which feature very prominently in conflicts

generation and expansion in the States discussed.

✍ ActionAid should design programs to engage politicians and retired military officers in the Middle Belt on how to maintain peace in their domains by stopping the provision of small and light weapons to people to embark on destruction.
ActionAid should design a political education program that seeks to promote political tolerance and highlights the benefits of peaceful existence.

✍ ActionAid should assist stalker holders in the region to build the conflict intervention capacity of State and local government officials. The emphasis of this capacity building which should include developing a warning template for the region, training of the staff to understand and operate the warning system, identifying warning monitoring sites at each of the local government areas and training the monitors on why, what, when, and how to monitor conflicts. (Albert and Sha, 2006)

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WOMEN, CHILDREN AND CONFLICT.

BACKGROUND

For about a decade Jos the plateau state capital played haven to people seeking refuge from other Northern Nigerian cities that had been engulfed in ethno-religious conflicts.The state's enviable record of tolerance and peaceful coexistence had earned it the reputation of being the "Home of Peace and Tourism". But the turn of events in the state would seem to have marred such reputation.

As in other states of the Nigerian polity, there have been several contestations in Plateau. However, the main political fault lines have been the separation between the presumed older communities and the assumed late comers. The last few years however have seen an intensification of tension and fission among these groups.
Earlier, in the 1940,s violent conflicts had been recorded in the city of Jos between the Igbos and the Hausa over the issue of Market. Much later in the

1980's and 1990's more destructive conflicts occurred such as, Mangu-Fier border conflict (1984), Bokkos- Mangu (1992,1995), Bukuru (1994), Jos 1994 and Bukuru Gyero road (1997) . The most virulent and destructive of these conflicts have however occurred in the last few years; on September 7' 2001 Jos for the first time in so many years shed off its peaceful and serene disposition to become a scene of mass massacre and devastation as a result of the sudden eruption of a violent clash between indigenous communities and Hausa/Fulani Moslems. The consequential loss of lives in that crisis has been put at 1000 people who were slaughtered like animals and set ablaze. For few days following the massacre, the streets of Jos were littered with charred bodies of the victims. Also, several residential and commercial buildings were destroyed and left in ruins, many Churches and Mosques were razed down, while remains of burnt and completely battered vehicles lined the streets for several days and weeks following.

Subsequently the battle arena shifted to the semi and non-urban areas of the state. From 2002 to 2004 the rural areas became sequentially engulfed in violent conflicts. In particular, the Southern Plateau became a hot bed of violent eruptions ,spreading like wild fire from one town to the other; very remote villages too were not spared as they became the targets of persistent attacks allegedly by pastoralists and so called settler groups. The worst hit areas included several villages in Wase, Mikang, Shendam, Lantang North and Lantang south local Government areas. The level of destruction and damage caused by the clashes was indeed immeasurable .Apart from the colossal loss of lives, whole villages were razed down and their inhabitants dislocated, Markets were completely burnt and farm crops and other economic sources of livelihood were destroyed.

In his response to the crises, President Olusegun Obasanjo described Plateau as "a flash point for setting the entire country ablaze" and thus requiring "extraordinary attention". He decided to proclaim a state of emergency in the state for a period of six months from May to November 2004. The immediate impact of the decision was the dismantling of democratic structures in the state and their replacement with an arrangement presided over by a former military General.

At the moment relative calm has returned to the State as a result of numerous conciliatory efforts both at the communal and official levels, but the sporadic nature of the eruptions still leaves one in doubt as to whether complete settlement has been achieved. While there is a general consensus among scholars that conflict is not necessarily undesirable, violent conflict particularly has disruptive effects on political, economic and social structures of society. This may enduringly impact on the living conditions and life patterns of different segments of the society in a manner that leaves people incapable of realizing their life aspirations and goals long after the conflict might have been been resolved. The clearly extensive scope and magnitude of the plateau crises and its persistence overtime has been the main attraction for this study. The intractable nature of the conflicts and the scale of destruction are expected to further weaken the position and increase the disadvantages of the weak, the vulnerable and the marginal groups of which women and children are the most conspicuous.

Study objectives
In general, this study investigates the specific ways in which the incessant conflicts that have rocked plateau state in the last four years and the resultant emergency situations have affected the conditions of women and children. It has the following specific objectives:

* To investigate the overall impact of conflicts and the resultant emergencies on the situation and conditions of women and Children.

* To identify the specific roles which women, children and their associations play during conflicts and the resultant emergencies.

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* To identify possible ways of reducing negative trends and strengthening and supporting positive roles which women and children could play in conflict transformation and long term peace-building in the state.

* To suggest effective measures and mechanisms that can be deployed during conflicts and emergencies to assure the protection and the guarantee of the rights of Women and children.

METHODOLOGY

Strategy and design

This is a study of the plateau crises since 2001.The overall strategy is to identify the impact of these conflicts and the attendant emergency situations on Women and Children and to determine how these rights can be upheld.

As part of an action-oriented development program, it adopts a participatory approach, commonly referred to as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), because of it's suitability for community development and Empowerment;

This is in line with prevailing trends in Development Studies. The PRA approach has capacity for transforming both researcher and the researched; for the latter,it helps them to come to terms with the reality of their own situation,engages them in the problem conception as well as the search for solutions to their own problems, thereby contributing to the transformation of the social structures responsible for their predicament. On the other hand PRA helps the researcher to identify with the researched who are the objects of his study (Igbuzor :75).

The practical implications of the PRA is that it begins with people who know much about their own livelihood systems (Pretty and Guijt in Mikkelsen,1995:60), and it involves them in the selection, design, planning and implementation of programs and projects that would affect them, thereby ensuring that local perception, attitudes, values and knowledge are taken into full account . Similarly, it ensures the incorporation of continuous and comprehensive feedback as an integral part of all development activities (Jamieson 1989,cited in Mikkelsen 1995); that way lasting empowerment is achieved. The study utilized the cross-sectional survey method, which involved five of the affected Local Government areas of the State, namely Wase, Shendam, Mikang, Lantang North and Jos North.

Research Instruments
The primary data for this study is generated through interactive methodology which enables the researcher to engage respondents in a mutually interactive manner. The instrument used consisted of a semi-structured interview schedule comprising open-ended questions which were developed to provide valid assessments of the impact of conflict on

women and children. Although comprehensive instruments for tracking the impact of Community conflict exist, these were considered too detailed for the specific kind of information sought in this study. The Interview schedule is therefore a condensed version of one such instrument consisting of 10 discrete items tailored to meet the stated objectives of the study especially in view of the limited time available for the study.

The interviews which typically lasted between 20 to 30 minutes focused on issues ranging from the nature of pre-conflict coexistence in the area, causes of conflict, the role played by women, children and their associations in the conflict and the specific ways in which the crises have affected these groups. Respondents were equally asked to suggest ways in which the positive roles of women and children could be emphasized and negative ones de- emphasized in conflict transformation. In addition focus group discussions were held in Wase, Shendam and Mikang Local Governments to supplement the individual interviews. Altogether, these are perceived as instruments for fostering the necessary dialogue for facilitating the developmental goals of Action-Aid.

Also, secondary sources comprising official and unofficial reports on the crises and other relevant materials were utilized. Additional information was obtained by visits to some of the conflict sites to assess first hand the level of destruction of physical structures. These visits afforded the researcher the opportunity to sample the general feelings of members of the affected communities about what had happened and to observe the level of post-conflict integration that had been achieved among the warring factions

The Respondents
The respondents for the individual interviews comprised altogether fifteen (15) women and five (5) men, making twenty (20) altogether. Five of the women were, women leaders in various capacities, while the ten others were either direct victims of the crises or were simply knowledgeable about the happenings in their areas. All the men in the sample were married; two of them were direct victims of the crises while the other two were community leaders. The inclusion of men in the sample provided a male opinion on the issues relevant to the study, especially the causes of the conflict. Respondents for the Focus group discussions were all women who were believed to have insight into or opinions on the issues of concern to the

study. The group in Yelwa-Shendam comprised four women who were widowed by the crises, a refugee sister of their deceased husband, a widowed daughter and another relation. The group in Wase similarly comprised six women refugees who had fled with their children from hostile villages for safety. Only four women constituted the focus group in Garkawa.

Although the study is on Women and Children, Children did not constitute part of the respondents. The idea of interviewing Children was dropped because the researcher's initial attempt to do so was unsuccessful, as it became obvious that they were neither knowledgeable about the issues nor held valid opinions on what had happened. However, given a more painstaking search it could still have been possible to find Children that were articulate and intelligible enough to be interviewed, but this was not possible due to time constraints. The present analyses of the impact of the conflict on children is therefore based on the experiences and perceptions of the adults who are their care-givers.

This report thus has two main limitations, namely: the size of the respondents which places certain limitations on the findings, and the exclusion of children from the sample which implicitly precludes the whole range of their personal responses and experiences during the crises.

Analysis
The Information obtained from the individual interviews and focus groups was content-analyzed ,and subjected to descriptive analysis, The analysis also includes oral narration of life stories by the interviewees. Such Information was supplemented with data on the Plateau conflicts obtainable elsewhere.

 THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PERSPECTIVE
Rights have been defined as those conditions of social life without which no man can seek in general to be himself at his best (Laski,1982 :p.91). These conditions by their very nature are universal as well as indivisible, and applicable to all societies. Similarly rights are inseparable from functions, i.e. they are meant to enable the individual contribute his/her quota to the realization of the social ends of the society. Implicitly, the issue of Rights is very central to the understanding and resolution of the problems of all forms

of inequality that plague most modern societies. Understandably, the rights of men/women customarily impose responsibilities on others including the family and the community, extending through a hierarchy of institutions to the state, both to uphold and to respect these rights. Particularly in the case of the State, the maintenance and support of these rights is cardinal to its existence, since it exists to create those conducive conditions for the pursuit of the individual's best. As a matter of fact, Harold Laski suggests that Rights actually give validity to the state's existence (P.91).

At the root of all forms of social discrimination and marginalization therefore, is the failure to recognize and uphold the Rights of certain categories of individuals or groups by those who must support those Rights. The issue of Rights has thus been severally applied especially by International Organizations in the assessment of the situation of disadvantaged categories such as Minorities, the Poor, the Disabled, the Women and the Children in various countries of the world. In the case of the latter two categories, UNICEF has classified these Rights into four clusters following the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1979 and 1989 respectively, and other relevant charters adopted on these issues. These include Survival, Development, Participation and Protection Rights (Hodges, 2001 : 4). Survival Rights involve the sustenance of life and are thus the most fundamental especially being the prerequisite for the realization of other types of Rights. Developmental Rights focus on the individual's ability to develop to his fullest potentials, while those of protection are basically centered on issues of security from physical,, emotional and psychological threats. Participatory rights offer liberty and freedom. Notably, this categorization is however not exclusive, and in most cases categories of rights do overlap according to individual experience. In respect to women and children Survival Rights would include issues such as Infant and Maternal Mortality, Morbidity, Disability and life expectancy that are primarily affected by Nutritional status,.diseases, pregnancy and Childbirth complications.

Issues of Developmental rights relate to Physical, mental and cognitive development (especially of young Children,) educational attainment, Literacy and skill-acquisition. In the particular case of women there is also

the issue of advancement. Major determinants of developmental status include early childhood-care, access to education, and for women, access to opportunities and resources. Issues of protection bother on all forms of abuses perpetrated against women and Children, such as child labor, child marriage, human trafficking and sexual abuse.

Factors which impinge on Protection Rights are family stress, coping capacity, harmful traditional practices, availability and quality of welfare service, quality of laws, efficacy of law-enforcement and juvenile systems and societal morality. Important also is the fact that communal conflicts and disasters affect the security and other Rights of women and children, which is the concern of the study.

Additional protocols of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights adopted in the August convention of 1949 in respect of victims of non-international conflicts provided for steps to be taken to ensure the reunion of children with their families, their removal from conflict areas and particularly their non-participation in hostilities. Participation rights are manifest in the level of access to information and participation by women and children, and especially the low participation of women in vital Institutions of society, including the exclusion of the girl-child from certain privileges. These also are affected by cultural perceptions on gender roles and implicit gender bias and gender-based discriminations. (Hodges, 2001:5)

WOMEN's & CHIDREN'S RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

Women
Although the status of women may differ from one country to another, they have generally been confined to low developmental levels due to various forms of discrimination perpetrated against them . Increasingly in many third World Countries Women have become principal victims of the combined effects of political, economic and social crises, and this is increasingly undermining their survival Rights. Going by relevant social indicators related to women reproductive functions and Maternal roles, Nigerian women still face a high risk of death in pregnancy with Maternal death rates hundred times higher than rates obtainable in Industrial countries or even in other African Countries (Hodges, 2001). In the same

vein, the highest prevalence rates of sexually transmitted and birth related diseases are recorded among women. The highest infection rate of HIV/AIDS is believed to be among women, especially those of child-bearing age, while Vesico Virginal Fistulae (VVF), a Child-birth related disability resulting form early marriage and teenage pregnancy has become quite common in the Northern parts of the country. All these are in addition to other hazards posed by endemic diseases which continually challenge the health status of the citizenry.

Similarly, while many Nigerians lack opportunities to attain their highest potentials, the situation of women is peculiar. Common barriers to the advancement and development of their potentials include low and declining literacy rates, which UNICEF put at 41% in 2001 ,with regional differences as low as 21% in some Northern states (Obanya, 2003 : 46) and reduced access to resources as well as family-related and other benefits. These are the result of barriers raised against access to opportunities as well as gender-based practices rooted in the family and the work-places.

In Africa especially, women have borne the brunt of the failure of Government economic programmes. The numerous structural adjustment and economic reform programs, which had become fashionable with many of these countries since the mid 1980's and their attendant consequences such as layoffs, unemployment, tight budgets and the like have wreaked untold hardships on the citizens. At the same time, the increasing stress on the family and accompanying degeneration in its caring and coping capacity has tended to skew the distribution of household roles against women. In several instances they are saddled with the complete burden of child care and other family responsibilities. Consequently, the advancement of women in any form is threatened through the increasing feminization of poverty. For instance, 70% of the 46% of Nigerians who live in abject poverty are women (IDEA 2000 : 19). They also earn barely 42% of men's income (UNDP, Cited in Obanya 2003: 46). Coupled with the above, the increasing pressures of modernizing society continue to engender social ills such as women trafficking, domestic violence, physical assault and sexual exploitation which pose challenges to Women's protective rights.

In a similar vein, Women's right of participation in decisionmaking

processes and other important spheres are relegated through discriminatory practices in both the public and the private sectors. While women have made significant contributions in the political struggles of Nigeria, especially towards the entrenchment of democracy, they have often received minimal share of the benefits. Also, Women's low Parliamentary representation and participation in public affairs remain a common lamentation in Gender related literature.

Although different Political regimes in Nigeria have made attempts to ameliorate the situation through political appointments, such measures, have at best been tokenist compared to the population and contribution of Women to Nigerian development. The Political reform conference initiated by President Olusegun Obasanjo where only 30 out of the 400 delegates/nominees were Women was an eloquentl testimony to the low political status of women in Nigeria. Nor is the law particularly protective of Women Rights; if any thing it enforces in certain respects the marginal status of women. It has been observed for instance that the declaration of the Sharia legal code in many Northern States exposes Women to the risk of a permanent low status (IDEA, 2000 :108). So far most of the victims of it's harsh punitive measures have been women.

Children

The interest of children in most third world societies similarly tends to receive little or no attention. Common challenges confronting the Nigerian child are numerous. Nigeria is believed to rank among the worst Nations in sub-Saharan Africa on vital Child quality-of-life indicators. For instance, Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) which indicate the status of children in respect to health, sanitation, food supply and the health of parents was put at 80 in 1995, which was far above the maximum of 50 prescribed for any society meeting basic human needs (Cited in Aborisade and Mundt P.28). Nigeria has also made less progress in the reduction of mortality rates among children under the age of five, as almost one out of every five children die before that age (Hodges 2001 :2). For many years, Nigeria maintained very low vaccine coverage rates said to be worse than the average ratios for sub-Saharan Africa, Recently however, official figures indicated the success of Government efforts towards combating the problem currently put as high as 94%. Even if this is real, the high prevalence rate of contagious and Water borne diseases, the increasing incidences of mother-child transmission of HIV/AIDS coupled with

Malaria, frequent outbreaks of epidemics as well as nutritional deficiencies and poor health facilities will persistently threaten the sustainability of these gains.

Similarly, inspiration for the long term development of Children continues to be dampened by diminished access to quality education either as a result of family impoverishment, low coping capacity or a declining educational system; in some states the problem is compounded by declining primary school enrolment with a national average of about 42.9% (UBE). Implicitly, the average Nigerian child is faced with an uncertain future as he grows into adulthood. Other malaises impinging the Rights of the Nigerian child include various forms of Child abuse, such as child labor, child trafficking, sexual exploitation and early marriage; in regard to these the girlchild is the most vulnerable. Especially because of the low social value attached to her person, she does not have full and equal access to education,while the persistence of harmful traditional practices, discriminatory nutritional practices and overburdening domestic duties continually inhibit her capacity for development. Altogether, these challenges cast a threatening shadow over the future of the Nigeria Child.

CONFLICT & THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

From the fore-going, it could be seen that the traumatization of society in any form correlatively results in the accentuation of the hardships faced by women and the Children they care for. As Ho-Won-Jeong has observed, while men and women are both victims of all forms of aggression including Human Rights abuses and poverty, some particular types of aggression do afflict women more than men. She pointed out that many sources of oppression do prohibit the realization of freedom for the former and violence against women represents a form of social control that limits their ability in every aspect of life (2000:75). Particularly, conflict and emergency situations such as wars, civil disturbances, ethnic fighting and insurrections which result in loss of lives, injury, loss of income, home and family support tend to disadvantage Women and Children the most (Vickers p.16).

Direct violence against Women and other vulnerable categories has been a major concern in many parts of the world. For instance, in consideration of

the travails of Women during organized conflict and emergencies, the United Nations Economic and Social Council had recommended to the General Assembly in 1974, the enforcement of the obligation on all states involved in armed conflicts and military operations in foreign and colonized territories to spare women and children from the ravages of war. Accordingly, measures such as persecution, torture, degrading treatment including all forms of repression, cruel and inhuman treatment, imprisonment, shooting, mass arrest, collective punishment, destruction of dwellings and forceful eviction typically committed by belligerents in the course of military operations were to be regarded as criminal offences (Vickers p.35).

But not withstanding the ratification of these principles by member Nations, Women and Children have continued to be the overwhelming victims of war crimes. For instance, 80% of the world's refugees are women and children. Even though they might be innocent bystanders, they may be physically assaulted, killed or injured, and since they are often defenseless against invasion, they suffer all kinds of abuses including forced impregnation, forced sterilization and sexual slavery by occupying troops; it is on record for instance that tens of thousands of Korean, Philipinno and other Asian women were forced to serve Japanese soldiers as prostitutes and "Comfort girls" during World War II, where, teenage and young women were sexually assaulted in the war fronts (Vickers,1993; Ho-Won Jeong, 2000) In the same vein the rape and forced impregnation of thousands of mostly Muslim Women in Bosnia Herzegovina by Serbian nationalists has been noted. Increasingly, systematic rape and other assaults on Women are being employed as an instrument of military strategy in many countries. In Nigeria, the violation of women Rights in times of war and conflict has become very common and with no consequences to belligerents and perpetrators.

One of the worst incidences of sexual exploitation of women in Nigeria in recent times was the systematic rape of defenseless Women in Oddi (Bayelsa state) by belligerent soldiers sent to quell youth insurgence in the area. In Northern Nigeria, where the largest number of ethno-religious conflicts have been recorded, assault on pregnant women is becoming a weapon of ethnic-cleansing during ethnic and religious fighting,such that mutilating pregnant women during violent clashes is not uncommon. Also

as a means of achieving ethnic cleansing, male children are often not spared the cruelty and inhuman treatment often meted to adult males.

Often too, women and children are not spared the perils of imprisonment by law enforcement agents. This was the case in the Tafawa Balewa communal conflicts of 1995 where women were assaulted at a refugee camp and hounded along with children into detention by security agencies. Several of those women were in detention for about five months without trial (Okoye, 2000).

Where they are not direct victims of personal aggression, women and Children still bear the brunt of the disruptive effects of the upheavals of war and conflict. These include partial or complete displacement and geographical and social dislocation., Coupled with shortage of food supplies and essential necessities amidst these travails, women , most of whom often have little or no capacity to manage household economies, are compelled to take full responsibility for fending for hungry children and sustaining the family. Because the higher rates of death usually involve adult males, a sizeable proportion of women are widowed or bereaved of male breadwinners, and while having to endure the loneliness and vulnerability of separation, the loss of male support and displacement often entails finding new sources of livelihood in order to cope with the new demands placed upon them. Their tensions and social hardships are thus excerbated and lead to long term deprivations.

Children also suffer the destabilising effects of conflict along with their care-givers. Apart from malnutrition, food shortage and inadequate access to medical facilities usually created by the situation, loss of parent(s), home and family income may imply relocating to live with relations, or even dropping out of school. It may also imply denial of relevant support for their social, educational and long term development; in some instances where the child is compelled to fend for him/herself, this might mean early child labor.

The long run effects of conflict-related deprivations are very telling on the social stability of the community as a whole; for as is generally observed, Women in poverty tend to raise children in poverty, who are less likely to enjoy good health, education, employment etc; in turn this breeds unstable

lives with long term consequences for the society.

Sometimes Women have been direct perpetrators of violence in conflicts where they are recruited in combative roles, or in non-combat roles as providers of military support and services such as cooking, tailoring or nursing. Vickers (1993) has noted that Women serving in these capacities are exposed to sexual harassment among their male colleagues (P.19).
In Africa and some previously colonized countries, women have participated in Human Rights and liberation struggles mostly in a non-violent fashion, but sometimes as direct fuellers of violence. Particularly, in connection to their care-giving roles women have been known to participate in the provision of welfare and other forms of social services to fighting troops and to refugees of conflict, where they have raised funds and relieve materials for victims.

Positively, Women have been instrumental in preventing or ending hostilities between conflictants in many countries, either as informal negotiators, campaigners or demonstrators (Vickers, 1993 :119), but they have been particularly absent from formal peace negotiations and formulation of policies on War and peace.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
The report of findings which follow immediately below is not by any means intended to apportion blame or take sides with any faction in the Plateau crises, therefore the mention of any religious group(s) is not meant to cast aspersion on their role but for the purposes of reporting divergent tendencies in the generally observed behavior of individuals and groups in crises situations, so as to forge a clearer understanding of the dynamics of these conflicts and thereby enhance the capacity for developing effective intervention strategies.

Nature of pre- crises existence
In all the local Governments surveyed, the conflict actors are Hausa /Fulani Muslims on the one hand and Local Communities on the other; and in almost all cases this division reflects an ethnic divide between the earlier comers, considered as indigenes and the late comers perceived as settlers. In Shendam LGA, it is the Hausa versus, predominantly, the Goemai, in Mikang it is the Hausa against the Garkai, Montol and others and in Jos North, it is the Hausa/Fulani against the indigenous groups. In Langtang

and Wase LGAs the acrimony has been between Hausa /Fulani and the Taraoh. In all of these areas the warring groups were said to have co-existed peacefully with each other, while social activities like weddings, cultural celebrations and naming ceremonies had brought them together and helped foster a camaraderie spirit between them. In Wase particularly a respondent intimated that they even kept custody of each other's farm products during harvest. Also, intermarriages between Muslims and Christians were quite common in Wase, Mikang and Shendam Local Government areas while in Shendam it was not uncommon to find converts to Islam among members of a Goemai family. Such was the nature of co-existence before crises broke out in these areas in 2002, causing a deep gulf of separation and acrimony between them.

Causes of conflict
Nigeria instituted several reforms in the late 1960s with a view to promoting a more equitable accommodation of Minority interests within the federal structure, but as Subaru notes, subsequent reorganization exercises have been guided mainly by the need to give satisfaction to distributive pressures emanating largely from Majority communities within the Nigerian divide (1996 :71) It is instructive therefore that most of the communal conflicts experienced in Nigeria have taken place in Minority areas of the country especially the Middle Belt; and as Egwu observed, each antecedent of ethno-religious conflict within this geo-political zone has tended to pitch the Majority Hausa /Fulani against smaller ethnic nationalities (2001 :44). This has tended to give most conflicts in the area a religious garb, but as Human Rights Watch rightly observed, the appeal to religious sentiments has been a potent weapon for the manipulation of popular emotions to incite and inflame built up grievances to the level of violence (2001: 2).

Although the causes of most conflicts are multidimensional and generalizations could becloud the specificities of each case, generally communal and ethno-religious conflicts in the Middle Belt have been found to center around issues of land ownership, power-sharing, identity, religious differences as well as dominant group versus Minority relations. Situated within this context, the root causes of the plateau crises revolve around issues connected to Indigene-Settler relations, and by extension those of Power- Sharing, as well as Land ownership; also, issues of identity

have been significantly indicated. However the immediate causes of each conflict might differ and new forms manifested.

The southern part of plateau is dotted with pockets of Hausa/ Fulani settlements surrounded by the host indigenous groups. In most cases the former is wealthier and has more political influence than the latter. This is particularly the case with Wase and Yelwa towns in Wase and Shendam LGAs respectively which constitute the economic nerve centers of these localities and whose relative prosperity could be contrasted with the poverty of surrounding villages of the host communities. Garkawa in Mikang local Government has a large concentration of Muslim settlers and is in a similar position. Often too, the settler communities compete with the host groups for political power and appointments within the immediate and larger political framework of the country and this has often created tension and disaffection between them.

Against this background, the immediate causes of the conflict in each of these areas might differ and certain intervening factors might be at play in each case of violent clash. In Jos North where there had been a long standing battle for the political control of the state capital between indigenous groups and assumed late comers, as well as economic rivalry between different ethnic groups, the appointment of a Hausa Muslim, one Muktar Mohammed as sole administrator over the affairs of the Local Government Council in 1994 was the cause of an outbreak of violence in the city that year and the mounting hostilities between the groups in subsequent years. Later in August 2001, the appointment of the same man to the strategic position of Poverty Alleviation Coordinator for Jos North Local Government by the Federal Government and the subsequent protests by the Non-Muslim indigenous groups became the cause of violent conflagration in that year. Although, it was the specific incident in Congo-Russia (in Nassarawa ward), of an argument between a young Christian girl and some few members of a praying Muslim congregation over the latter's determination to cross the road through the praying ground to her house that became the immediate cause of bloodletting and destruction in the city.

The Shendam crises were said to have been caused by Government's location of the seat of a newly created Chiefdom in Nshar among the Goemai rather than in Yelwa in 2002. This angered the Yelwa Muslims

who in turn embarked on systematic guerilla attacks on indigenous villages and travelers passing through the town. In the early morning of February 24, 2004, about 40 Christian worshipers were massacred in cold blood in a church in Yelwa.

Also indicated are questions of power-sharing; prior to the riots, there seemed to have been an informal understanding of power-sharing between the conflicting factions where for instance the Local Government chairman would be a Geomai, while his deputy would be a Muslim. The chairman of the transition implementation committee for Shendam local Government had boasted about the accommodative spirit of the local communities in an interview with a group of visiting journalists in April 2003. He stated: "it is only in Shendam in Plateau state that you will find a Pyem man who has become a deputy Local Government chairman; it is only in Shendam that you find a Berom man being a Mai Angwa " (NUJ, 2003 :13). However, the renunciation of this formula (as evident by the present power structure of the LGC) by the Geomai owing to the growing rivalry between them created disaffection with the Hausas.

In retaliation, neighboring Christians around Yelwa organized a reprisal attack on the Muslim community of Yelwa on May 3rd 2004, in which many Muslims lost their lives and property. The Yelwa crises had a ripple effect on neighboring local Governments like Lantang south, Lantang North, Wase and Mikang. For example, the center of the crises in Mikang LGA was Garkawa town where indigenous communities organized and attacked the Muslim community in Garkawa on February 26 ostensibly to revenge the Yelwa killings of Christians of Febraury 24. The riots spread to Tunkus, and few other places.

In Langtang North, rumors of plans by the Muslim community in Lantang to launch an attack on the community had caused a stir among Taroah youths who upon investigation allegedly found evidence of weapons and ammunitions in some Muslim houses to substantiate the rumors. Accordingly they sent the alledged culprits packing from the town. According to key informants, it was those who left that went to Wase to spread rumors of killings in Lantang and helped to organize reprisal attacks against the Taroah in that local Government. At the onset of the 2004 clashes in Wase , only the Taroah were singled out for attack by the

Muslims. Other groups were spared, although they were later joined together as enemies. Villages affected in that Local Government include Chapkwai, Duwi, Lamba, Safio, Unguwan Bala, Wadatan Arewa, Wadatan Garga, Mavo, Kagarko, Gandu, Salwe, Hamare, and Naki Bulala. Those affected in Lantang LGA include Dinjor, Yashi, Pishen, Zamadede, Unguwan Tabo, Unguwan Gani, Shilu, Zangwar, Ganglang, limun, Kuka and Karkashi.

In the case of Wase, the existence of the Fulani emirate (of Wase) in the midst of Plateau ethnic groups had irked these groups for a long time, but tension had been largely contained within bounds until July 2002. Apart from the contagious effects of the Yelwa crises on Wase there were mutual accusations of cattle rustling between the Taroah and the Fulani. Also, issues of power-sharing have been at the forefront of the rivalries, as the indigenes have been feeling marginalized in the distribution of political appointments alloted to the area inspite of their numerical preponderance. Similarly, two of the three respondents interviewed in Wase traced the 2004 disturbances in the area to disputes over farmland. As the area increasingly witnessed an influx of migrant farmers and Fulani herders moving southwards from desert encroached areas of the far Northern states in search of more fertile land and pastures, pressure was being exerted on available farm land, making it a subject of controversy with the sedentary farming communities. The informants observed at the time of the researcher's visit in March 2005 that tension was beginning to mount again in the area as farmers had began to clear their farms in anticipation of the early rains. On the whole, irrespective of the immediate causes of the disturbances in the different localities, women and children have always been the worst victims.

The Role of Women and Children

Women
In all the areas surveyed, Women did not play combative roles in the crises. Repondents were asked if they themselves or other women they knew participated directly in the perpetration of violence; all of them (100%) responded in the negative; this also was the response from the focus group discussions. However, women in Jos, and Yelwa contributed indirectly in sustaining fighting; supplying stones for the men, which were used as

ammunition as well as victuals. In Shendam, two of the three respondents interviewed individually confessed to having taken part along with other women in providing water and "Kunu", a local drink, for their male fighters. In Jos, all five respondents which account for about 20% of the overall sample for the individual interviews indicated that Women gave tremendous support to the men during the crises. One of them narrated how she saw her neighbor in Nassarawa ward and out of annoyance siphoned all the fuel in her car into bottles and distributed it to youths to carry out arson. Another said women in her ward provided daily rations of food, water and "Kunu" for vigilante youth groups guarding their ward from the "enemy's" attack. All five said that women gathered stones which men used as weapons. A woman in Garkawa similarly agreed that where possible women gave men support by providing food and drink, although the focus group thought otherwise; that most women were on the run and could not have had any time to organize support for men.

Respondents in Wase and Langtang were not sure if women gave support to the men possibly because of the nature of the conflict in those areas, especially its sporadicity which did not allow for any time to organize any form of support; as one of the respondents volunteered, "women did not participate because we were not prepared, and they too were running ". However, they did not rule out the possibility of helping the male folk if the situation had permitted. This mode of participation in conflict however appears to be possible only where the people had had an opportunity to strategize, otherwise majority of women tend to flee with their children for safety and only brave ones stay to render any support to men.

Although the study did not cover Neighboring Jos South Local Government, A respondent praised Birom Women for their brevity during the Bukuru Crises where so many of them along with young girls fearlessly stood their grounds against the enemy, some even used stones to fight the opponents while young girls followed the combatants, carrying petrol and water. Similarly, a key informant in Shendam intimated that she saw two Muslim women who were carrying petrol for their men who were killed by Christians.

Looting is another invidious way by which Women may participate in conflict, although it is believed that most Christian women are generally not

likely to do so as their religion alledgedly forbids even the men from looting during war. In Jos, a respondent claimed she saw some Women in Unguwan Rogo Ward looting along with Children from deserted and destroyed buildings.

Apart from their negative roles, Women also made positive contributions towards the transformation of conflict in the affected areas. For instance irrespective of their faith, all female respondents in the sample indicated that where possible they provided spiritual backing by way of organizing prayer support during the conflict for the protection of their men and the return of peace in the respective areas.

Also, Women not directly affected by the crisis in all the surveyed areas were relied upon by their communities to cook and provide food for refugees in the churches, mosques and police stations. Also, women groups were helpful in providing relief materials for victims, usually when violence had subsided. In this regard, the role especially of the National Council of Women Societies, (NCWS) is commendable; in all the focal areas of the study they visited and consoled fellow women affected by the crisis and provided food items, clothing and other forms of assistance to them. The association also sent a delegation to the state Government to stage a "black Wednesday' protest against violence and to demand for the return of peace. Religiousbased women organizations made similarly efforts at building bridges across the warring factions, by preaching forgiveness and encouraging women to talk to their husbands and Children against continued violence. Wife of the State sole Administrator, Mrs Dorothy Alli in response to the cry of victims of the conflict for assistance was moved to establish a local factory named" Wase Vita" where women would be taught soap-making and the processing of local food items such as Gari, dadawa and Ginger. At the time of the researcher's visit some of the products of the factory were available though not on a commercial scale.

The study also inquired into women's role in conflict resolution in the surveyed areas. It was discovered that Women generally did not play significant roles in the resolution of conflict in their communities. One respondent in the focus group at Garkawa said: "What can Women do? Once there is a fight, men do not listen to women, ……..so we don't know what role women can play " Another in Lantang simply said "Women are

not consulted on such issues.

Children

By CRC's definition, any person under age the age of 18 is regarded as a child. In most Northern conflicts a sizeable proportion of the combatants is usually drawn from youths in their late teens and early twenties. Expectedly, very young children do not participate in combat as they flee along with their mothers for safe havens, more so, parents tend to prevent them from coming out during crises. However, as this study found out, older children from the age of 14 were recruited into the fighting force in some of the places surveyed. On the Muslim side the ages of children engaged in the perpetration of violence could even be lower especially in the more urban areas. In Jos for instance many street children popularly known as "Almajiris" aged about 12 years or even lesser were conscripted to fight and reportedly introduced to hard drugs to toughen them to commit havoc and destruction. One of the interviewees in Jos claimed that she saw many children between the ages of ten and twelve walking about and brandishing Knives on the streets of Unguwan Rogo and threatening opponents. She also noted that a lot of children were involved in arson and looting on the instruction of adults.

A respondent in Wase observed a similar role played by Children in the crises in that area; she told of how in Kadarko, adults went around with a Van on a house to house looting spree with children in attendance to help load the booty.

Impact of the crises

On Women

The extent of the damage and destruction caused by the Plateau crises is exemplified by the fact that all 20 (100%) respondents to the individual interviews knew someone or a relation apart from themselves who were direct victims of the crises, having lost either loved ones, property or source of economic livelihood, This is also corroborated by the researcher's personal observation of the level of physical devastation in some of the conflict sites visited. The effects of the conflict on Women and Children during and after the crises are discussed below.

During the crises

Women were not spared the trauma of war as many lost their lives or suffered injuries; many of them got trapped in their houses and were killed, while others met their death in the course of running for safety. In Wase some women oblivious of the happenings in the village met their death either while on the farm or while returning.. In Shendam, a respondent narrated how her sister in-law along with five others were apprehended and killed on their way back from the Market. A respondent in Jos told of how a young girl was shot dead by a soldier in Alheri ward while carrying a gallon to beg for kerosene form a neighbor's house to enable her cook the family meal.

Much more disheartening is the travails of pregnant women during the crises. Since they are often unable to flee to safety on time, they could be victims of all forms of cruelty or mistreatment in the hands of combatants. All five respondents interviewed in Jos said they heard about how a pregnant woman was alledgedly gruesomely slit open by Muslim youths in Unguwan Rogo and killed thereafter. Another pregnant woman was said to have been apprehended by a militia group and set ablaze in the same ward while returning from ante-natal clinic. Outside Jos, an incidence of a pregnant woman who was shot repeatedly on the stomach was reported. Two respondents in Shendam similarly told of how a pregnant woman was allegedly buried alive along with a live donkey by one of the warring factions in a ritual purported to give them victory over their opponents. Some other respondents indicated that even though they did not witness any such incidence, they had heard of similar occurrences during the crises in other places.

Many women lost their husbands and sons in the crises; in Mavo village,,one of the hot beds of the crises in Wase Local Council, many fleeing Taroah men were said to have fallen into the hands of waiting armed Fulanis in the bush who alledgedly slaughtered all of them; in that village as well as Kagarko many women were bereaved of young male children, some taken from their mothers arms and killed in attempt to wipe out future generations of opponent groups. In some Wase villages, Women had to wear female clothes for their male children in order to escape with them, otherwise, "women who resisted with their male Children were killed along with them" says a respondent. Also, stories of women being compelled to painfully witness the ordeal of killing their loved ones abound especially in

the areas under study. In Kongo Russia in Jos, for instance a Woman watched as her husband was cut into two parts from the middle by some men. Another in Rikkos was forced to watch her husband being cut into bits and pieces by his assailants who later packaged the pieces into a bag, while her disabled brother in-law was bundled into a bag and carried away, never to be seen again.

Apart from the lost of loved ones many women suffered as they along with their Children abandoned their homes to seek refuge in refugee camps or remote villages. The researcher came across several such women in Wase popularly described as "Masun gudun Hijira", a catch phrase reminiscent of Prophet Mohammed's historical flight from Gudu to Medina. This is used in the area especially by Muslims to denote the flight of their refugee kindred from unsafe villages. Infact all members of the focus group discussion in Wase town were refugees in that category. Some of them from Wase ran naked into the bush and trekked for long distances before being clothed by sympathisers in other villages. A respondent in Jos trekked through the bush nesting her 10-year old sick daughter from Jos to the refugee camp at Rukuba barracks, a distance of many kilometers. Another said she was forced to flee Jos in her weak neo-natal state with her newly-born baby to avoid the suffocation of tear gas sprayed on civilians by security agencies. In Garkawa town, a woman recounted how she trekked for a distance not less than five kilometers with a heavy pregnancy before finding a motor bike that took her to a place of refuge.

Emergency situations such as those created by the crises obviously have telling implications on the health and psychological conditions of the victims Be it in the Churches, Mosques, Police stations, Army barracks or in the villages where many took refuge, Women suffered a lot of stress trying to provide for and keep their children and families alive in the face of hunger, food and water scarcity, lack of access to health care facilities and poor sanitary conditions. Some women gave birth under those strenuous circumstances and suffered tremendously due to lack of medical aid and attention. An informant in Jos told of how a woman gave birth at the Rukuba barracks refugee camp and bled profusely to death without medical assistance. Similarly, a male respondent in Yelwa recounted his wife's ordeal during the crises thus: "Women really suffered the most during the crises, my wife and daughter trekked for several kilometers and stayed in

the bush for one month with very little or no food and water to sustain them, they ate all sorts of things to keep alive, not long after she returned home, she took ill, possibly as a result of stress and unhygienic conditions in the bush and she died. "

Generally, where Women were not the direct victims, they undertook the responsibility of catering for the refugees, some of which they had to host in their homes while the violent clashes lasted.

Other forms of humiliation and degradation which some women had to endure included slavery and rape .According to an informant, some Taroah women together with other ethnic groups were enslaved in some Hausa homes particularly in Kadarko and other critical villages of the Wase crises where they were made to render domestic services in their captor's homes. In her words: "some women were taken prisoners and made cooks, those who could farm, were made to farm naked for them"

In the course of interacting with the respondents, the researcher sought to know if some women were raped during the crises, but only one out of the 20 (5%) respondents reported a case of rape, and that was in Utan Lane in Jos where soldiers allegedly caught a Challa girl and raped her. Other sources reported a rape case in Fajul in Lantang South by mercenaries brought in from Chad Republic to fight. While the low response implies that rape was not a wide spread phenomenon during the crises, the possibility that there might have been several other such incidences especially in other areas where security forces were drafted to keep peace might be strong, considering also that victims of rape are not likely to expose or report the crime out of shame.

After the crises
As at the time of the research, most of the ruins in Mavo village had been reconstructed, but the Taroah had particularly not returned to the village and only their houses were still in ruins.

The researcher was told in Lantang about how some women, not knowing how to face life without their lost loved ones, have become psychologically traumatized or even mentally deranged.

Many poor women affected by the crises and particularly widows and aged people who lost their bread winners are uneducated and unskilled and have had difficulty getting out of the circle of poverty which includes malnutrition, poor health and lack of education. Their struggle for survival has been made more difficult by the scarcity of resources and other effects of the economic decline which has follwed the crises in many areas; this has further accentuated the feminization of poverty in those areas. In Shendam, the group of widows who lost their husband stated that life has been very hard for them. According to them "Our husband died of hypertension shortly after the Shendam crises because of the stress of the crises. His shop had been burnt down including all our market things, now we have to fend for ourselves and children; only our husband's brother is helping us". At the time of the visit, their daughter, also a widow of the crises had gone to a neighboring village to sell petty items in order to provide food for her children now living together with her in her late father's house. Obviously, the devastations of war such as the destruction of property and markets limited the capacity of even friends and relations who might have been in position to help the widows. The economic decline which had resulted from the crises in the Shendam area was still very glaring at the time of this research; the once very busy road linking the commercial town of Yelwa to Shendam town had become a "ghost road" ,evident by the complete absence of vehicles during the researcher's 15-20 minute journey on that road.

Also, many women who lost their breadwinners have had to relocate to live with relations either within that same town or in an outside village. An informant in Lantang town who herself was hosting a refugee family observed that women either hosting or squatting with another family experienced deep tension and psychological stress trying to feed and care for their families in the face of diminished resources and limited accommodation. She stated: "some of my brothers were killed, their wives and children are living with us, right now they are trying to find something doing to survive, some have become domestic servants and fetchers of water and wood as a means of livelihood". Similarly an elderly woman in Yelwa said: "My house was broken into and vandalized and I was displaced, I feel that I am inconveniencing these widows with whom I am now living"

Generaly there has been an increase in the number of female-headed families in the affected areas. Women, who have to shoulder the entire responsibility for catering for themselves and their fatherless children, have to scramble for resources towards this end; this has implied a deterioration in the nutritional quality and living standards of these families.

Children

The fate of women is generally conjoined with that of the children, who expectedly were forced to flee along with their mothers into refugee areas, villages or safer zones. Many of the older children who joined the combatants as in Jos were killed along with adults, while some suffered injuries. In Wase and Mikang particularly, male children were killed with the intent of wiping family generations out completely. After the crises, some children who either lost parents or were temporarily separated from their parents were thrown into confusion and many wandered about for days without food and shelter. In Shendam and Jos particularly, such Children were catered for by the local Government council and the social welfare respectively for weeks before relations could be located to take them.

The crises have continued to have enduring repercussion on the living conditions of children with telling implications for their future development, especially in areas outside Jos. While the crises lasted children stopped going to school and in some instances dropped out of school completely. As at the time of the research many new refugee settlements dotted the geographical landscape of the southern Plateau, many of them very far from any nearby school. This would obviously hamper the educational development of children of affected families especially as some of them have abandoned the whole idea of schooling for their children. In Lantang, the researcher was told that so many such children from affected villages have left formal schooling to learn vocational trades in Lantang town, such as Mechanics, while others have become motor cycle riders ("going"). In respect of the latter, parents were already worried about the rising tide of accidents in the town since most of those children were inexperienced riders. Also, because of the economic hardships confronting some of the children who have lost parental support, some have taken to stealing and other social vices, such that some of the conflict areas reported a noticeable increase in the wave of petty crimes.

One insidious effect of the conflicts has been the militarization of children. Having learnt to handle light weapons for the purpose of killing, children who participated in the massacres have been taught to disregard the fundamental rights of others, especially the sacredness of life. Similarly, once having been introduced to the excitement of hard drugs during the crises, some children who participated in fighting have taken to it as a way of life. The focus group in Shendam noted with concern the development of a new tendency in the area, where children are seen around street corners modeling and dramatizing war among themselves.

Summary of findings

The study has affirmed that Women and Children were the worst affected victims of the Plateau sectarian crises. Women faced diverse forms of the horrific repercussions of war, including the loss of lives - male bread winners, children and loved ones - personal injury, loss of home and property, displacement coupled with sexual violence and horrific cruelty and psychological trauma. Similarly, many children lost their lives or those of their parents, while many were injured. Still others suffered temporary separation from parents as well as displacement and loss of schooling.

However, inspite of the fact that they had much to lose, Women and children contributed to the sustenance of violence during the crises, for children, through the direct involvement in the perpetration of acts of violence and destruction, and for women mostly through non violent support to the men. Although women associations made positive contributions especially in the area of post-disaster relief provision, they were generally not proactive in the prevention and resolution of conflict.

The observable long-term consequences of the conflicts include the increase in the number of female-headed households, declining school enrolment rates, increasing crime rates, and general economic decline leading to diminished resources and life prospects.

Weakening Women and Children's negative roles in Conflict

Not withstanding the fact that women and children were the worst victims of the Plateau sectarian crises, the Women were found to have contributed towards the sustenance of violence during the crises in mostly non-violent ways such as supply of stones, fuel and arrows to the conflict militias as

well as the provision of food and drink for them. though some participated in the looting. Similarly, teenagers and some young children were among direct perpetrators of violence, destruction and looting. These negative roles can be discouraged through a number of measures.

The availability of a large pool of out-of-school children appears to be an incentive for combatants to resort to violence as a means to resolving differences. This phenomenon can be largely checked by ensuring that education at the primary level is free and mandatory for all children of school age. As Abdu (2000) has suggested, solving "Almajirai" problems is like addressing about half the problems of religious crises in Northern Nigeria. Accordingly, reorganizing or formalizing their school system to afford the pupils some form of vocational training and skills acquisition that would enhance their future prospects of earning a living would discourage their participation in communal crises (P. 86).

Attitude change is a very essential ingredient in the achievement of a non-violent conflict resolution, and indeed the transformation of conflict. Unless Children are socialized into the values of tolerance, equality and respect for the rights of others, they would continue to cooperate with those who see conflict resolution only in terms of violence. While such socialization must fundamentally take place at the informal level of the home front under the oversight of their care-givers, especially mothers, formal socialization is also necessary. For instance a culture of peaceful co-existence can be inculcated in the future generation through, peace-education programes for children which specific focus on aspects like tolerance, sharing and cooperation among groups, social justice and non violent conflict resolution. In addition, these aspects can be incorporated into the school curricula from primary to secondary levels of education.

Since the veneer of religion has been a vital instrument in the demarcation of socio-political fault lines between the conflict actors in all the areas surveyed, inter-religious cooperation should be encouraged in all schools with a view to eliminating thepromotion of religious bigotry among school children .

In respect of Women, Mahadma Ghandi (cited in Vickers 1993) once stated that only women could save the world. Implicitly, women must become

proactive in championing issues of peace, security and cooperation. But first they must acquire an understanding of the evils which communal violence unleash on their situation and life conditions to enable them take a stand of non-cooperation with men in the perpetuation of violence. Women groups must therefore provide such understanding to all fellow women as well as champion advocacy against negative forms of participation by Women during sectarian crises. In this vein, peace workshops could be organized for women.

Strengthening Women's positive roles in Conflict Transformation
Conflict transformation has been defined by Mial et al (1999) as the deepest level of change in the conflict resolution process which implies a deep transformation in the parties, their relations and in the situation that created the conflict in the first instance (P.21).

The study has also established that women played positive roles towards the amelioration of the impact of crises on victims, but this was mainly in terms of organizing post-disaster relief for conflict victims. Although there is not much evidence that they were proactive in preventing conflict in the first place or resolving it after the damage had been done,. however positive roles can be enforced in several ways.

The exclusion of women in most communities from decision-making responsibilities implicitly denies them involvement in efforts to prevent or resolve community conflicts, inspite of the fact that they have so much to lose during crises. It is necessary that women play a leading role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives and their specific skills and abilities in decision-making be brought to bear on these processes. Since most crises start at the community level women must have more power within their communities; their participatory rights must be enforced in order that they can exercise pressure on their community towards preventing violent conflicts and for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This calls for the design of effective measures to overcome constraints against women participation in social life and policy making, particularly at levels that have implication for decision making in the areas of conflict and peace-building.

Women organizations must take active part in anti-violence movements,

through peace conferences and demonstrations against the use of violence in conflict resolution.

Women can form networks of peace-makers and forge strong sisterhood bonds accross religious boundaries comprising women activists and stakeholders, with a view to forging inter religious and inter ethnic friendship and harmony. Such networks should aim at raising the consciousness of women and communities on matters of peace and discourage women's negative participation in conflict.

In addition, Women peace societies can take up potentially conflictual issues at the community level and together with Government preempt the eruption of violence.

The capacity of Women groups and associations in the provision and management of post disaster-relief should be strengthened, for instance, by building and runing peace camps for displaced persons.

Protecting Women's and Children's Rights during conflicts
In the kind of community conflicts witnessed in the area under study, any form of havoc could be expected because the combatants know little about the conventional rules of war (Shawulu 2001) and have little incentives to observe any. Thus, conflict once allowed to erupt into violence can be expected to lead to destruction and the violation of the rights of women and children. Therefore in order to prevent violent conflict, the root causes of conflict must be addressed and lasting solutions found to the deep seated problems of Settler-Indigene relations, power-sharing and land matters which normally cause internal conflicts in Plateau State.

The Government at the State level needs to develop expertise in the detection of sources of tension, prevention of conflict and rapid response to emergencies. This calls for the development of strong early warning systems and the strengthening of an emergency- preparedness mechanism in the state. The role of formal security agencies must be supplemented with the activities of inter-religious Early Warning Committees comprising individuals truly committed to the prevention of violent conflict at the community and Local Government levels.

Similarly, Government in collaboration with Non-Governmental bodies committed to conflict resolution and crises management must develop strong and adequate institutional responses to emergencies, incorporating provision of heath care facilities, evacuation of vulnerables to safety, food supplies as well as post-disaster relief.

In connection with the above, the Police and security forces should be given training in conflict management, and with a strong Human Rights component, to respond to crises without the excessive use of force and violation of human rights. Indeed, they must be trained to respond proactively to crises, rather than intervene after large scale killings and destruction might have taken place.

Since communal crises have become endemic in the state, and since they could be expected to be barbaric in outcome, the violation of the rights of women and children can be minimized through community awareness and, media programs aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the travails of women and children under armed conflict and in general issues of violence against women.
The Media and other mediums should equally be utilised effectively to canvass support for internationally ratified conventions on the rights of women and children under conflict situations. As a matter of fact the definition of war crimes must take children and gender concerns with much seriousness and Government must seek to formalize ways of identifying perpetrators and enforcing punitive measures against them.

Similarly, the issue of violence against women must be included in the agenda of all peace-negotiations while the adequate representation of women in peacebuilding initiatives should be addressed. As Naveen Qayyum (2004) has rightly suggested, this helps to bring to the fore in these fora, the missing dimensions of Women's experiences in conflict situations, thereby giving immediacy to those issues.

Government should ensure the proper management of refugee camps especially during crises by providing resources and necessary services for the refugees.

Post disaster-relief is one promising area through which the amelioration of negative repercussions of human rights abuses on Women and Children which occur during sectarian crises can be achieved,.although they may face discrimination in the distribution of such relief. Shawulu notes for instance (with example from the Maitastine crises of Kano in 1981) that when it comes to compensation from government, women are often discriminated against even if they lost properties in the course of the crises (2000 C : 145). Such discrimination violates women's constitutional and conventionally enshrined rights to equality and ownership of property. This study however did not verify this in respect of the surveyed areas. However, postdisaster relief should focus on the re-integration of internally displaced persons, especially women and children in their communities and the institution of rehabilitation programs for them. In this vein the self-reliant capacities of affected women should be promoted through rehabilitation and economic empowerment programmes, to enhance their coping capacity with their new life and family situations.

Government must take on the burden of providing good education to conflict orphans.

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YOUTHS IN CONFLICTS AND EMERGENCES, THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS DIMENSION: A CASE STUDY OF PLATEAU STATE

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Executive Summary

This study entitled "Youth in Conflicts and Emergency, the Sustainable Livelihoods Dimension: A Case Study of Plateau State" was undertaken to generate information that will produce a deeper and clearer picture of the contradictory roles played by youth during conflicts and the resultant emergency situation while examining the particular place of access to sustainable livelihoods in the whole dynamics. This study relied on the use of qualitative data generated through primary and secondary sources. While key informant interview, focus group discussion and direct observation instrument were utilised to generate primary data, secondary data were garnered from books, journals, government documents, newspapers, etc. The study was executed in Jos North, Wase, Langtang, North and Shendam LGAs respectively as some of the major flash points in the state between 2001 and May 2004.

Major findings of the study include: youths played negative roles in Plateau conflicts through cattle rustling, killing of persons, burning of houses, looting of enemies' properties, raping of women and girls; youth also played positive roles in the Plateau conflicts and the resultant emergency situation by sometimes protecting women and children, helping people from the other divide to escape being killed, using associational platforms to mobilise support in aid of victims of the conflicts; provision of relief materials to distressed victims, engaging in preaching peace messages to help stop carnage and provision of first aid services to victims. Some

youths suffered heavy losses leading to loss of sustainable means of livelihoods.

On the basis of these findings, the following recommendations were made:

☞Re-introduction of teaching of civics to aid in evolving a civic culture which thrives on dialogue and persuasion;

☞Support for youth organizations to promote their developmental aspirations;

☞Community leaders should monitor closely the activities of youth;

☞UN should evolve platform to mobilize and train the youths in the administration of humanitarian services;

☞NDE should be adequately funded to impart relevant skills in the youths for self-reliance;

☞Farm centres should be established by all levels of government to engage the unemployed youths;

☞Science and technology education should be promoted at all levels in the country's educational system;

☞Improvement on the existing social infrastructure such as NEPA to boost the culture of small and medium scale enterprises; and

☞Sustained commitment to combating corruption to free resources f o r the benefits of all in the society.

SECTION 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

The phenomenon of conflict, historically, has been the enduring motive force of all human societies. This perhaps, motivated Marx and Engels (1971:35) to put forward a thesis that "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle". This Struggle is frequently waged between the dominant and the dominated classes which may either end in a revolutionary and fundamental reconstitution of a society or in the common ruin of the contending parties. The Marxian notion of conflict is in a significant sense, a progressive one because it closely ties conflict with societal progress. There is therefore, a considerable sense in the argument that no human society is totally impervious to the phenomenon of conflict as the driving force of societal progress. This however, is not to suggest that all human societies experience the same scale and intensity of conflict. This is far from the point. It is just to underscore the point that conflict is an undeniable fact of human existence. It is as inevitable and pervasive as

human cooperation.

Conflict expresses itself in either verbal disagreement between two parties or overt physical violence. It produces either functional and positive, or disruptive and dysfunctional consequences for the society. In other words, conflict can either help in advancing the frontiers of national development or liquidating the foundation for enduring progress of the society depending on its nature. Otite and Albert (1999:ix) have articulated the view that "conflict is a fact of life and could be precursor of positive change as it challenges the rational man to think of alternative ways of meeting contesting human needs and interests". The experience of most societies including Nigeria is a far cry from harvesting this positive role of conflict as expressed by Otite and Albert. This positive view of conflict fades into insignificance when juxtaposed with the frequency of outbreak of violent conflicts in Nigeria since the return of civil rule on May 29, 1999. Indeed, there is scarcely any part of Nigeria which has not experienced one form of violent conflict or the other between 1999 and 2004, (Human Right Watch, 2002).

Plateau State of Nigeria, widely reputed for its peaceful and serene social environment had its own baptism of fire in 2001 with the eruption of large scale violent ethno-religious conflict in Jos North LGA and environs. As the Jos flame was gradually simmering, the Southern Senatorial Zone of the state went up in frightening flame in 2002 and remained inextinguishable for a considerable length of time. There is in effect, the fracturing of peace in a state that has earned for itself, the epithet of "Home of Peace and Tourism". This identity and resource-based conflict has consequently, created a context in which mutual suspicion between the two mutually exclusive identities 'Christian versus Muslim' and 'Indigenes and Settlers' is heightened.

It is against the preceding brief background that Actionaid International, Nigeria, an International non-governmental organisation has undertaken to painstakingly study the role of youths in conflicts and emergencies: the sustainable livelihoods dimension with particular reference to Plateau State. It is expected that the study will reveal the extent of involvement of youths in the conflicts and the nature and patterns of such involvement as it

relates to livelihoods dimension.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Frequent eruption of violent conflicts has some deleterious effects on the socio-economic development of any society. First, the culture of investment is discouraged as a result of perceived insecurity. Second, the social elements (people) in the society become excessively socialized into the culture of violence thereby threatening the evolution, growth and consolidation of credible civic culture. Third, the youths in the society who are looked up to as builders are turned into destroyers. Resources which would have been invested in expanding the frontiers of societal development are rather used to respond to emergencies generated by the violent conflicts. It can be safely argued that the greatest disservice any society can do to itself is the tendency to neglect the youths thereby making them vulnerable to the sinister manipulation of conflict entrepreneurs. This has been the experience across the length and breadth of Nigeria where the youths have taken up arms against fellow youths and other members of the society. More often than not, because of their role as key actors in violent conflicts, they are easily killed, maimed and rendered psychologically dislocated.

In any conflict that is characterized by massive violence, there is always an emergency situation which requires both governmental and non-governmental responses to narrow the range of social, economic and psychological hardship experienced by the victims. In most cases, the vulnerable groups are the worst victims in any violent conflict. Disruptions of sustainable means of livelihoods during violent conflict often generates greater disposition to violence by those affected. Consequently, conflicts become rather protracted and nearly intractable as the Plateau State experience has shown. The study is guided by the following probing questions:

(i) What are the patterns of the role played by youths in conflicts and emergencies in Plateau State?
(ii) What is the impact of conflicts and emergencies on the conditions of the youths in Plateau State?
(iii) What is the impact of the pressures around access to sustainable means of livelihoods on the disposition of youths to violent conflicts in the

state?
(iv) What concrete measures can be prescribed to narrow the range of negative roles played by youths in the Plateau State conflicts while enhancing the positive ones?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to generate information that will produce deeper and clearer picture of the contradictory roles played by the youths during conflicts and the resultant emergency situation, examining the particular place of access to sustainable livelihoods in the whole dynamics. The specific objectives are:

(i) track the trends/patterns of the role played by youths in conflict and emergencies in Plateau State;
(ii) indicate the negative and positive trends in the role played by the youths and their organisations in conflicts and resulting emergency situations in Plateau State;
(iii) identify the nature and impact of conflicts and emergencies on the situation and conditions of the youths in Plateau State;
(iv) examine the impact of the pressure around access to sustainable means of livelihoods on the disposition of youths to violent conflicts in the state;
(v) identify and propose effective, viable and durable measures and mechanisms that can strengthen the positive roles the youths play or can play in conflict transformation and long term peace building while weakening the negative roles; and
(vi) propose and explain measures and mechanisms for assuring unfettered access to sustainable means of livelihoods by youth and how they can be put in place.

1.4 Conceptual Clarification

Conflict is arguably, an inescapable fact of human existence. This fact is accounted for by the diversity of human nature. As we have stressed in the introductory remarks, conflict could either express itself positively or negatively. Positive oriented conflict does not involve the use of violence to settle disagreements. It begins and ends with verbal expression of hostile feelings by parties involved. In the case of negative or dysfunctional conflict, there is quick progression from verbal expression of hostile

feelings to the use of violence to slug it out. Wright (1990:15) views conflict as "opposition among social entities directed against one another". This view of conflict centres on two mutually exclusive social forces pursuing incompatible goals in the society.

Feliks (1966:163) views conflict as the "escalation of antagonism involving mustering of forces and preparation for a direct clash of adversaries". This notion of conflict captures a violent condition which involves the extensive use of arms to neutralize each adversary's offensive capabilities. This is the extreme form of conflict which is expressed when the issue in question is too fundamental and critical to either of the antagonists to be easily capitulated. This form of conflict may involve individuals, families, groups, communities, nations, etc. This form of conflict is more destructive than constructive because it involves massive destruction of lives and societal assets.

A critical point worth stressing here is the fact that destructive or dysfunctional form of conflicts is often associated with the youths in the society. We are using the concept of the youth here to refer to people between 18 and 45 years of age. People within this age bracket "possess the most vitalising attributes of all stages of human development" (Abacha, 1994:111). Then youth constitute a reservoir of energy and dynamism for any national development if they are correctly guided, mobilized, and fully integrated into the social fabric of the nation. However, they may also constitute a threat to national survival and stability if they are allowed to drift, are unemployed, undisciplined and morally bankrupt. There is hardly any society aspiring to a major national greatness and prosperity that can afford to ignore the youths and allow them to constitute a major social problem (Political Bureau Report, 1987:163). Impoverished, neglected and abandoned youths are so gullible and easy recruits for any kind of sinister, parochial and sentimental mobilisation. Youths that suffer these social disabilities become malcontent and constitute veritable source of instability in that society. They are prone to violence because of obvious lack of feeling of stake in the existence of a peaceful society.

1.5   Literature Review
A considerable body of literature exists on the interface between the youths and conflicts particularly its violent expression (Imobighe, 2004; Yah,

2000; Abubakar, 2000; Obadare, 2003; Adejumobi, 2000). The youths in any given society constitute a critical and strategic constituency, which must be well catered for if the abundant energies they are imbued with are to be positively optimised. Imobighe (2004:14) has poignantly articulated the following view in respect of the disposition of the youths to violent conflict in Nigeria. According to him:

The Nigerian youths are increasingly realizing that the country's ruling elite have no plan for them in the scheme of things in their country. They see them as self-serving. In their desperation, they now constitute the angry brigade all over the country ready to cash in on ethnic and inter-communal conflicts, which they see as opportunities for taking their pound of flesh from a society that has compromised their future. Thus, in any small crisis, these jobless youths break into both public and private properties and cart away whatever valuables they can find. With graduate unemployment running into millions Nigeria is perhaps the only country in modern times with so much resources and yet has chosen to play with the destiny of its youth.

There is in a sense, a pronounced neglect and marginalization of the youths from the mainstream socio-economic and political processes in Nigeria by the ruling elite. Consequently, the neglected youths are easily predisposed to violent behaviour. This viewpoint is well articulated by Ibrahim (2001:186):

The major characteristic of the urban crisis in contemporary Africa is the precariousness of life. Daily subsistence needs of life such as food, housing, health care and education cannot be met by a large proportion of the population. There is serious pressure on modes of livelihood, both formal and informal. More and more people are being pushed into the informal sector. The breakdown of the social fabric and family bonds is producing a hempen culture characterized by delinquency, violence, prostitution and other vices of a similar nature.

This viewpoint fits into the basic human needs theory as a critical motivation for engaging in violent behaviour. Fundamentally speaking, there is the need to pay attention to the economic motive in the incidence, escalation, persistence and termination of religious and ethnic conflicts

(Alemika, 2002). More often than not, the religious and ethnic identities are carefully constructed as credible platforms for effective mobilization. The substantive interest in any conflict which expresses itself along any of these identities is economic in nature, For instance, in the Plateau conflicts, the economic interest of the parties was drowned by the issue of indigene/settler syndrome which expressed itself along Christians/Muslims divide (Plateau Resources. 2004). These identities are conveniently used to mar the real underlying economic motives of violent conflicts in Nigeria generally and Plateau State in particular. For instance, in the case of Plateau State it is argued that the influx of people fleeing from some troubled states in the North had led to increase in economic pressures, leading in turn to the scarcity of some goods. Resources therefore became acutely stretched and tensions began to rise steadily culminating in the September 7, 2001 violent conflict in Jos (Human Rights Watch, 2001:5). However, one critical factor responsible for frequent eruption of violent conflicts in Nigeria, and which has not been sufficiently stressed is the acute poverty of civic culture engendered by protracted military rule. The culture of violence, largely seen as an aftermath of military rule, has effectively displaced and supplanted civic culture in Nigeria. The youths in particular are the most influenced by this unprogressive culture of militarism because most of them were born and bred during the pernicious military rule and have had no significant experience of a civic-culture-driven polity. Analysts have argued potently that the youths in Nigeria today cannot be expected to be civic in their behavioural orientation because of the profound influence of military rule on them (Ejiogu, 2005). It would therefore, amount to fallacy of a single factor for any analyst of the phenomenon of violent conflicts in Nigeria to focus exclusively on economic factors to a near total neglect of civic culture factor. A holistic insight into any conflict dynamics would require paying equal attention to both factors even though they may not necessarily exert equal degree of influence on the conflict dynamics.

1.6   Methodology
In executing this field research, a multi-method approach was adopted. This approach was preferred because it enabled the researcher draw considerable benefits from the application of multiple methods for data collection. More significantly, the unique advantage this method offered was that the weaknesses of some could be overcome by the strengths of others.

Data for this study were generated from two main sources. These were primary and secondary sources. Primary data were generated through survey techniques involving interviews, focus group discussion and direct observation. Secondary data were derived through a painstaking survey of extant literature on the subject under investigation. Accordingly, books, journals, informed opinions in newspapers, magazines and official documents were consulted. Essentially, the secondary data were used to complement data obtained through survey techniques. Data used for this study were largely qualitative in nature.

1.6.1   Primary Source of Data
Three main instruments were used in garnering primary data in the filed. The first of these was the interview instrument. Some key informants in the field were identified and interviewed to obtain useful information from them. Given the sensitive nature of the issue under investigation, the choice of informants was guided by the principle of fair representation especially in those communities characterized by social pluralism. The second one was focus group discussion instrument. In each of the communities surveyed, 8 to 12 respondents were seated in a circular pattern so that the moderator would be able to observe group dynamics during the question and answer session. The same set of questions used for key informant interview was used for the FGD. The third instrument used for generating primary data was the direct observation instrument. This involved the researcher looking out for concrete evidence such as remains of burnt houses, destruction of property and the presence or otherwise of people within the communities surveyed. This approach was carefully considered and adopted because evidences we looked out for in the field were concrete and not behavioural and therefore, the reliability profile was reasonable.

1.6.2   Sampling Technique
In mapping out the communities in Plateau State for purposes of generating information for the study, we adopted a purposive sampling technique because we were interested in communities that had direct experience of the conflicts in the state. Accordingly, we picked Jos North, Langtang North, Wase Local Government Areas and Yelwa in Shendan LGA. Since our target respondents in the field were the youths, all respondents for the KII

and Focus Group Discussion were picked from this category. The sampling was done in a way that would reflect the diversity of actors in the conflicts so as to capture their diverse perspectives on the role of the youths in conflicts and emergencies as they concern the livelihood aspect. One key informant was picked from each of the communities mentioned earlier. In addition, Focus Group Discussion was arranged and held in each of these communities so that the information generated from this could complement the one obtained through KII.

1.6.3 Data Management and Analysis

The researcher painstakingly took comprehensive notes during both the KII and FGD. These notes were then analysed to establish points of convergence or divergence on the responses of the various FGD groups and KII. The analysis of the data was qualitatively done. Several excerpts from the field notes were used to emphasize the opinions, views and perceptions of respondents on the issue under investigation. Where Hausa language was used for easy comprehension and expression, the English version was provided in the course of the analysis.

1.6.4 Problems Encountered in the Field

Like in every research enterprise no researcher would be naïve to expect to have a smooth sail in the field. In some of the communities surveyed, not much cooperation was received. The attitude of the target respondents was that of suspicion which could have constrained them from providing adequate responses. The researcher was perceived to be an agent of government seeking to identity those who were actively involved in the conflicts for punitive measures. The researcher strenuously explained the purpose of the exercise and in addition, tendered the letter of introduction from Actionaid International. The attitude of suspicion only changed when they sighted the letter of introduction and were convinced about the fact that the exercise was not sponsored by government.

Another critical problem encountered in the field was the high cost of organizing FGD in the communities. Perhaps, because of their previous experiences, target respondents in the field insisted on negotiating how much they would be paid for their time and ideas. One of the respondents in Wase LGA remarked in Hausa "Ya kamata ku kawo mana judi ka abinci tukuna mu sauraraku" (You are supposed to bring us money or food before

we pay attention to you). Although one could appreciate the context in which the demand was made, it showed how deep the culture of materialism has permeated the grassroots. This kind of demand offended the moral sensibilities of the researcher but because of the need to obtain information at all cost, one had to yield to the pressure.

In some cases, key informants in the field kept postponing the appointed time to suit their convenience. In Langtang and Yelwa communities, the researchers made repeated visits to secure the participation of the key informants. This particular problem actually affected the time frame within which this research was to be executed. This problem is part of the changing dynamics of Nigeria society where everybody's personal convenience precedes that of another person.

By and large, the field work components of this research was quite an exciting experience and a rewarding one in the sense that what one used to take for granted in the Plateau conflicts were adequately clarified in the course of interaction with target respondents.

1.7 The Survey Context

Plateau State where the survey was executed is one of the 36 states of the subsisting Nigerian federation. The state derives its name from the geographical landscape that predominates in this part of the country, which is often referred to as the Jos Plateau. This is the higher of the Plateaux found in Nigeria, the other one being the Mambilla Plateau in Adamawa State. Plateau State has a land area of about 53,585 square kilometres with a population of about 3.28 million (1991 Population Census figure: 243). Located in the heartland of the Middle Belt zone of Nigeria, Plateau State lies within latitude 80 24[1] and 100 24[1] North, and langitude 80 32[1] and 100 38[1] East. It is bounded in the North-West by Kaduna State, North East by Bauchi State, South West by Nasarawa State and South by Taraba State. Plateau State was created in 1967 and was then known as Benue-Plateau. In 1976, following the state creation exercise of the then Murtala/Obasanjo administration, it became known as Plateau State. In October 1996, Nasarawa was carved out of the state by the then General Abacha government.

As it exists today, Plateau State comprises 17 Local Government Areas

namely: Bassa, Jos North, Jos South, Riyom, Barkin-Ladi, Jos East, Mangu, Bokkos, Pankshin, Kanam, Kanke, Langtang North, Langtang South, Mikang, Shendam, Quaan Pan and Wase Local Government Areas respectively. The State is divided into three Senatorial districts: Northern Senatorial district (Jos North, Bassa, Riyom, Jos South, Jos East and Barkin-Ladi); Central Senatorial district (Bokkos, Mangu, Pankshin, Kanke and Kanam) and Southern Senatorial district (Langtang North, Langtang South, Mikang, Shendam, Quaan Pan, and Wase).

The state is largely characterized by semi-temperate climate with a mean annual temperature varying from 20^0C on the Plateau to 30^0C in the low-lands. It has an annual range of 10^0C while annual rainfall varies from 131.75cm to 146cm in the Southern part of the state. The months of December, January and February are particularly very cold due to the dry harmattan winds.

Plateau State has been aptly described as miniature Nigeria because it contains numerous ethnic groups. It has over 50 indigenous ethnic groups with no single group large enough to claim majority status in terms of numerical strength. Some of the ethnic groups include: Tarok, Berom, Angas, Goemai, Chanria, Afizere, Inrigwe, Youm, Mupun, Mwaghavul, Montol, Kwaka, Piapung, Ron, Kulere, Challa, Anaguta, Pyem, Chip, Rukuba, Marnyang, Fier, Bogghom, Aten, Tal, Kwangka, Jere,, Aino, Buji, Fulani, Hausa and a host of others. The state is indeed, a microcosm of the Nigerian society because of its complex social heterogeneity. The major religions of the people are Christianity and Islam.

The state is essentially an agrarian state whose mainstay is agricultural production. It possesses geographical conditions favourable for the production of a wide range of crops such as cassava, millet, yam, rice, sorghum, sugar cane, cotton, groundnut, acha, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, bambara nut, vegetables, maize, beniseed and a host of others. Agriculture offers the greatest employment opportunity to the people of the state where there is a dearth of industries, which also explains the high rate of unemployment. Many young school leavers are not gainfully employed because of the limited capacity of the state civil service to absorb them. Many of these young men have turned to commercial motor cycle operation as a means of livelihood in both the urban and rural areas.

There is in effect widespread poverty in the state and the impoverished people are constantly engaged in keen competitions for the declining resources of the state sometimes leading to violent confrontation. Since Agriculture serves as the mainstay of the economy, there is pressure over the limited size of arable land thus fuelling land disputes. The parlous condition of the economy of the state also accounts for the scramble for political power as a means of having unlimited access to the scarce but allocatable resources.

SECTION II

2.0 FINDING / RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
The presentation of the findings/results is organized around the key objectives as contained in the Terms of Reference (TOR).

2.1 Socio-Economic Composition of the Community Surveyed.
Both key informants and Focus Group Discussion respondents in the field admitted to the fact that no community in the areas that experienced conflicts was 100% monolithic in terms of ethnic or religious composition. Even in Langtang North Local Government Area where the Tarok people predominate, some pockets of other ethnic groups from within and outside the state were living peacefully and engaging in legitimate economic pursuit before the eruption of violent conflict in the area in 2002. In Wase Local Government Area, different ethnic groups have had peaceful coexistence before the outbreak of violence in 2002. In Yelwa community in Shendam LGA, numerous ethic groups had fostered harmonious inter-

group relations preceding the outbreak of violence in 2002. In Jos North LGA which serves as a melting pot, different ethnic groups were living in harmony with one another even though relationship between the Hausa/Fulani community and the indigenous groups (Berom, Anaguta and Afizere) has always been characterized by mutual suspicion and unexpressed hostility. Both Muslims and Christians in all these communities had coexisted peacefully prior to the eruption of violence in the state.

Major economic activities identified in all the surveyed communities include farming, petty trading, transportation, commercial motor cycle operation and to a limited extent, civil service work. Petty trading and farming in particular thrive in nearly all the communities surveyed. An Hausa speaking respondent in Yelwa-Shendam has this to say in respect of socio-economic characteristics of the community in the pre-conflict days" "Da muna harka tare da wadansu kabilu, saboda haka, alumman mu tana cin gaba kwanai-lokocin sallah, muma kai ma abokanin mu christa a bincin sallah kamman Yadda christa sukan bamu abincin christimati" (We used to interact with all ethnic groups and because of this, our community was making steady progress. During Sallah celebration we took food to our Christian brothers just as they did during Christmas celebration). If indeed, people of different ethnic-religious background had evolved mutually beneficial inter-group relations as demonstrated by the Yelwa experience, why did the same people pick up arms against one another? The volume of information garthered from the field would probably shed light on this.

2.1.2 Sudden Change in the Pattern of Inter-Group Relations from a Mutually beneficial one to a Mutually Destructive one:

On September 7, 2001 in Jos North LGA and some parts of the Northern Senatorial Zone, violent conflict erupted leading to the disruption of peace in the area. At the Focus Group Discussion session, respondents who were drawn from diverse social backgrounds expressed their various perspectives on the conflict. A Berom speaking respondent blamed the conflict on the Jassawa community (Hausa/Fulani). According to him, "Hausa/Fulani settlers in Jos North were bent on claiming ownership of the area which does not belong to them. They were influencing major political appointments in their favour leading to the marginalization of the indigenous groups." In response to this, an Hausa/Fulani speaking

respondent controverted this perspective by arguing that "even before the eruption of violence on September 7, 2001, we know that we were the target of envy of the so-called indigenous groups because of our rising socio-economic status in Jos North. Even the claim that they own Jos North is false because we preceded all groups in arrival in what is today called Jos North" This two conflicting perspectives can never be reconciled because each group is seeking to project the image of a defender and not an aggressor. This same tendency played out in Yelwa-Shendam where the Christians respondents at the FGD blamed their Muslim brothers for igniting violence while the Muslim respondents did not waste time in countering this. A Christian respondent had earlier argued that "the violence in "Yelwa was a response to what happened in Jos North in 2002. The Muslims in Yelwa felt their brothers in Jos were killed by Christians and they must retaliate" In a quick response to this, the muslim respondents in unison shouted 'Kariya' (false) and proceeded to argue that the Christians in the community have always envied them because of their economic fortune. They did this by warning their girls not to befriend Hausa/Fulani person but because of their relative prosperity, the girls defied such warning by coming to us for economic assistance" But how could this have engendered violent conflict in the community? An opinion leader in the area responded this way: "All these claims and counter claims by the different groups cannot help us to have a good comprehension of the conflict in the area. The point is, government should take full responsibility for the violence for failing to engage the youths productively. As it is now, the teeming unemployed youths do not have a stake in peace here. What have they to lose to the conflict?" This view, even though appears persuasive, is more or less simplistic because government even in the developed countries has limited capacity. However, government can rightly be accused of failing to create an enabling environment to encourage people particularly the youths to engage in meaningful economic activities that could generate prosperity for them.

In Langtang North LGA, the youths at the FGD session and the key informant interviewed - the immediate past Secretary of the Local Government Council - noted that they got involved in the conflict because of the unprovoked attacks unleashed on their kiths and kins in Wase LGA by the Hausa/Fulani militia. They argued that the massive influx of Tarok people from Wase into Langatang and the insistence of the Hausa/Fulani to

pursue them to where they were taking refuge was what provoked them to pick up arms and engaged in self-defence. In Wase LGA, two conflicting perspectives of the conflict were expressed. The Hausa/Fulani respondents at the FGD averred that "the Tarok people of Wase have been dominating them politically by cornering key political appointments for themselves leading to their marginalization." The Tarok speaking respondents reacted to this claim thus "we are treated as slaves by the Hausa/Fulani emirate in Wase. Even though we preceded the Hausa/Fulani in arrival in Wase, they set their emirate system to emasculate us politically and economically. We pay for the lands we cultivate even as taxpayers. To show their dislike for the Tarok of Wase, they come up with a slogan of 'Wase banda yergam' in 1996 to exclude Tarok from all political representations.

It is exceedingly difficult to establish the veracity of the claim of each of the two actors. However, one fact which could not be controverted by both groups in the Wase conflict was the ownership of Wase and the subsisting system of land administration as key issues in the conflict.

2.2.3   Role of Youths in the Plateau Conflicts.

In nearly all the communities surveyed, the conflicts were ignited, fuelled and sustained by the youths. A key informant in Jos North expressed the view that the youths from both divides played negative role in the September 7, 2001 conflict which nearly engulfed the whole of the northern Senatorial zone. A group known as Hausa/Fulani under-25 had issued several threats regarding the alleged opposition of the indigenes to the appointment of one Alhaji Muktar as the National Poverty coordinator for Plateau State. The Plateau Youth Council in response to this issued counter threats against the Hausa/Fulani under-25. All the burnings and killings were undertaken by youths from both the 'Christians/indigenes' side and the 'Muslims/Settler side. At the FGD session, consensus crystallized around the point that the youth played leading role in the onflict. Respondents admitted to the fact that they were engaged in the manufacture of local bombs, shooting of adversaries, setting houses ablaze using petrol mostly supplied by commercial motor cycle riders and burning of vehicles and looting of shops forsaken by owners during the violent conflict. Each side was interested in outdoing the other in terms of killings and burning of estates.

In Langtang North LGA, a key informant told us that the youths practically

defied the order of the elders who were seeking to restrain them from engaging in violence. There was in effect, a breakdown in the traditional social order when elders could no longer exercise control over the youths. Youths in the Local Government Area organized themselves into groups for counter offensive and to engage in looting of the victims' property such as cattle, goat, wives, foodstuff and electronic gadgets among others. All the respondents at the FGD session confessed that they had no good reason organizing the attacks and the counterattacks other than the huge economic gains they derived from doing so. One of them made this confession "I was not feeling find one day when they organized for an attack in Lamba. I was tempted to go with them because of what my friends brought from one of the attacks the previous day. I nearly got killed because I could not run fast enough when enemies put us in the reverse gear." On the strength of this confessional statement, one cannot but argue that the primary motivation for youth engagement in violent conflict is economic in nature. During conflict situation multiple opportunities are generated for promoting economic interest of a relatively stronger group. To corroborate this view, a respondent at the FGD pointed at a motor cycle which he got from one of the attacks against the enemies. Another respondent broke down in tears when he recollected the violent death of his younger brother who was burdened with two turkeys he collected from a community under attack and could not outpace the enemies when they were pursuing them. They caught up with him and made mince meat out of him.

In Wase LGA, respondents at FGD shared similar experiences. One of them remarked in Hausa: aimina wamnan domin mu samu mu rayu. Gaskiya shine a lokaci kman hak, kowa na nema hamyar da zai tainaka ma kansa" (We do this thing because it is a means of livelihood. The truth is that at a time like this, everybody is striving to help himself). In addition to looting, burning and killing, raping of women captives was the order of the day. The key informant revealed that about thirty women between the ages of 18 and 30 were captured during one of the attacks and camped for the sexual pleasure of the captors. In a sense, girls and women were recklessly sexually abused. Given the high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS from unprotected sex, it cannot be ruled out that some of the victims might have contacted the disease and possibly died as a result.. Women are particularly at risk because of their vulnerability to sexual and physical abuses during conflict situation.

Meanwhile, the youths at the FGD also confessed that before setting an enemy's house on fire, they would first of all do a thorough search to ensure economic resources were carted away first.

In Yelwa-Shendeam, the experience was not different from other communities. The youths confessed that in the build-up of tension, they had stored considerable quantity of petrol because of anticipated scarcity. The petrol was used to burn the houses of enemies and bath the enemies before setting them ablaze. Churches and mosques were not spared in the burning spree. Raping of girls and women was also a common thing in Yelwa-Shendam community.

All the preceding testimonies were corroborated through careful observation as the researcher moved from one location to the other. One could see burnt vehicles and houses. What one could glean from the information gathered is the fact that youths as key actors in the conflicts were fundamentally driven by economic consideration. Most of those that participated in the conflicts were secondary and primary schools leavers who could not be engaged productively by either the state, local or federal governments by way of gainful employment. Consequently, survival had proved difficult and only in conflict situation like this that some relief from the severe pressures around survival could be provided. However, in spite of this negative role largely dictated by economic motive, some positive roles were played by youths in the Plateau conflicts.

2.2.4 Some Positive Roles Played by Youths in the Plateau Conflicts:

As a result of the preceding negative roles played by the youth in the conflicts, emergency situations arose as people were rendered homeless and without any means of livelihood. Women and children were going without food for a good number of days thereby making them venerable to certain preventable diseases. However, the same youths who generated the emergency situations turned around to play some positive roles in response to the challenges of the emergencies. Youth-based organisations such as Plateau Youth Council, Tarok Progressive Youth Association, Wase Youth Development Association, Berom Youth Movement, Yelwa League of Youths, Red Cross Society and a host of others played very critical role in the management of the emergencies. All these youth organizations were actively engaged in mobilizing relief materials from their members and

other well meaning individuals in aid of distressed victims of the Plateau conflicts. For instance, the Plateau Youth Council was able to mobilize funds from its members to purchase reasonable quantity of foodstuff for distribution to the distressed victims. The council was also involved in taking care of those who sustained serious injuries during the conflicts.

The Tarok Progressive Youth Association demonstrated considerable sympathy towards victims of the conflicts in the state, particularly in Langtang North and South Local government areas. The association solicited funds from its members and other public spirited individuals to help reduce the socio-economic hardship inflicted on the victims of the conflicts. Cloths were generously donated by members in aid of distressed victims of the conflict.

It is also worth stressing the point that some youths were not outrightly violent in their role in the conflicts. For instance, at an FGD session, a respondent has this to say: "Wani lokaci, muna tausayewa ma mata da yara da an gudu and bar su abaya. Muna kwacesu mu kai ga police station domin a tare su" (Sometimes, we sympathize with women and children abandoned by some family members. We took them to Police State for protection). At another session, a respondent revealed how he saved an entire family from being burnt into ashes: "Wadansu sun zo gida na domin sun san akwai christa da na boye. Sun so su kone gidan amma na gaya masu ni na riga nayi alkauri cewa babu abinda zai samu wande suna gida na" (Some people came to my house because they knew that I was sheltering some Christians. They wanted to burn my house but I told them that I had already promised those people nothing would happen to them). This is a sharp contrast to the tendency where enemies from the other divide would have mercilessly slaughtered and burnt them into ashes.

In some places, youths were actively involved in organizing for the burial of those killed in the conflicts by conveying their corpses to the graveside. It was quite an interesting dialectics seeing youths who were responsible for generating emergencies turning around to face the challenges thrown up by the same situation. This point only goes to show that much as the youths are imbued with violent tendencies, they could also exhibit some high level of compassion for victims of their own making. Their roles in the conflicts were not totally negative after all. It is therefore a hardly controvertible fact

that a society that is sympathetic and caring to its youths may not be as vulnerable to the destructive tendencies of this constituency compared with one that is insensitive to the needs of this constituency. Economically marginalized and excluded youths fall easy prey to conflict entrepreneurs in the society. These poorly informed masses can 'uncritically' surrender their lives to defend certain interests that are incomprehensible to them.

2.2.5 Impact of Conflicts and Emergencies on the Conditions of the Youths in Plateau State:

From the volume of information gathered from the field, the conflicts and emergencies have left the youths worse off than even the pre-colonial situation. Even though the conflict situation promoted looting spree, such loots were quickly expended on basic needs such as food and clothing. Some of the youths lost their livelihood to the conflicts, especially, motor cycle operators and taxi drivers and artisans like blacksmiths, roadside mechanics, vulcanizers and a host of others.. Consequently, the pressures around survival have pushed some of the youths into crime such as armed and petty robbery using the weapons that were illegally acquired and used during the conflicts but which have become means of survival..Some respondents attribute the sharp rise in robbery to the proliferation of arms during the conflicts and the inability of the state to disarm the possessors.

Similarly, some youths have withdrawn themselves from school either because they could not continue because they have lost their sponsors or because they are compelled by circumstance to do so in order to attend to the basic needs of family members. In Wase LGA, for instance, a female participant at the FGD confessed that before the eruption of violent conflict in the area, she was an SS1 student in GSS Wase. But since her two parents were killed during the conflict, she had to withdraw herself from school to enable her engage in petty trading to take care of her four younger ones. The burden according to her was so much that she could not afford to send any one of them to school. The conflict has indeed killed the life ambition of most families as the case of the lady respondent in Wase indicated. If the dominant belief is that conflict is positively correlated with poverty in the society, the future may not hold any promise of peace and stability after all.

Also as a result of the conflicts, it has become exceedingly difficult to dissociate some young and energetic youths from their employment as

sycophants. Some respondents confessed that since they have lost their means of livelihood to the conflicts, they have converted themselves into sycophants as a source of livelihood. One of them expressed this in Hausa "muna yi wannan domin mu ci abinci ne tun da bamu da a binyi kuma" (We do this just to survive since we have nothing to engage us anymore). The rising phenomenon of sycophancy can therefore be properly located in the socio-economic and political dynamics of poverty. In a sense, it can be argued that the failure of the Nigerian State to be adequately responsive to the basic needs of its citizenry has been the driving force behind all the violent conflicts so far experienced since the inception of civil rule on May 29,1999. The vulnerable and excluded social groups in particular have always turned out to be the worst victims of any violent conflict. Although there is the biblical saying that "the stone the builder rejected has become the cornerstone", so also the vulnerable and excluded groups whose sight repels the privileged groups end up becoming the beautiful bride of conflict entrepreneurs. It is the vulnerable and excluded group that is carefully mobilized to prosecute the violent conflicts which often times, end up leaving the group worse than its pre-conflict condition. This is so because at the end of the conflict, members of this group would have lost their beloved ones or modest possessions.

2.2.6 Impact of pressures around access to sustainable means of livelihoods on the disposition of youths to violent conflicts in Plateau State.

Plateau State, as earlier noted in the section on **survey context**, has limited opportunities for its populace. Consequently, a vast majority of the people, particularly young school leavers who are not positively predisposed to engaging in agricultural work, are left unemployed. Thus, one could see some idle youths playing snooker or congregating around relaxation spots in the day time. Many of our respondents described as parlous the socio-economic condition of the youth in the state. They generally believed that the civilian government in the state has not done enough to promote the developmental aspirations of the youths. This condition has only bred frustrated and disillusioned youths who do not feel they have a stake in a peaceful and stable Plateau State. Instead they become political tools of some desperate politicians seeking to promote their political aspirations through any means possible.

The pressure on youths in the state are enormous with unemployed, extended fairly members making some frivolous demands on them. For example, one of our respondents in the field, a commercial motorcycle operator stated his experience this way in Hausa "yanzu din nan akwai yannwani na wanda su na gida suna jirani in basu kudin makaranta domin su koma makaranta. A yadda nake yanzu, nawa ne nikan samu da babur na? Gwamnati ya kamata ta bada ilimi kyauta a kasanmu domin ka wa ya samu doma" (right now, some of my younger ones are waiting at my house to collect school fees from me so as to resume school. As I am now, how much do I realize from operating the motorcycle to be able to meet their demands? Government should provide free education so that people can have opportunity to acquire education). How can this kind of fellow not be tempted to engage in anything that promises to impove his situation? Herein lies the underlying motive of youth involvement in violent conflicts. However, beyond this, the role of deep-seated poverty of civic culture must be appreciated in seeking explanation for the phenomenon of violent conflicts in the Nigerian society. Civic culture promotes dialogue and persuasion as critical mechanisms for resolving differences. But the protracted and pernicious military rule in the country has undermined the foundation of civic culture and replaced it with the culture of militarism in Nigerians. Even in a democracy, this culture has remained resilient as the spate of intra and inter-ethnic conflicts has shown. A combination of poverty of civic culture and socio-economic pangs experienced by the youths have not only consolidated the culture of violence but also bred a populace with a severely weak sense of patriotism.

SECTION III

2.3   Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion
From the preceding presentation and analysis of findings of the study, it is obvious that youths in the state are not inherently violent but are influenced by some objective factors to exhibit violent behaviour. The inability of government to expand opportunities for engaging the youths, acute poverty in the state and enomous pressures on the youths by family members are some of the factors that push the youth into violent conflict. All these factors have combined to frustrate the youths leaving them with no option than to cash on any opportunity that promises them good return. Conflict situation offers them such opportunity because they have a near unlimited access to the property of enemies. Even though they played negative role in the conflicts, we must not lose sight of the positive role they played in the same conflicts, particularly during emergencies generated by the conflict

dynamics. It may sound contradictory that youths who engaged in killing, looting and burning of assets would turn round to help rehabilitate victims of such conflict, but it simply proves a point that the youths are human beings imbued with moral sensibilities. It also means that the youths have compassion for fellow human beings in the society and are not monsters that cannot be tamed. Their violent behaviour is a product of the deep-seated poverty of civic culture foisted on Nigerians by successive leaderships in the country. The Plateau conflicts and the seeming contradictory roles played by the youths could only be explicated in this context.

2.3.1   Recommendations

Against the background of the findings and analysis, two major sets of recommendations are articulated here. The first set relates to measures and mechanisms that can strengthen the positive roles the youths play or can play in conflict transformation and long term peace building, while weakening the negative roles. The second set relates to measures and mechanisms for assuring unfettered access to sustainable means of livelihoods by the youths.

2.3.2   Measures and Mechanisms for Strengthening the Positive roles of Youths in Conflicts.

2.3.2.1 Both government and non-governmental organizations should build effective partnership to promote civic education in Nigeria. This is necessary in order to imbue the youths with good sense of patriotism, non-violent methods of resolving differences of whatever kind and to develop the value of mutual compassion for each other. This could be achieved through seminars, workshops and conferences jointly organized by government and non-governmental organizations. It is also suggested the teaching of civics be re-introduced in primary and secondary schools so that a new generation of youths with considerable sense of patriotism can gradually be cultivated in Nigeria.

2.3.2.2 Youth organizations should be encouraged and supported by government to promote their developmental aspirations. Most youth organizations, in Plateau State in particular, are moribund because of lack of adequate resources to keep them afloat and promote their objective. Majority of the members cannot pay membership dues to support the organizations. It is believed that government support can make them more effective so as to impact positively on their members. They are likely to play more positive roles in conflicts and emergencies when they have enough resources at their disposal. For instance, they can embark on social mobilization aimed at raising the consciousness and awareness of their members about the imperative of living in peace and inculcating in members the spirit of discipline, self-reliance and service to the community.

2.3.2.3 Community leaders should ensure that the activities of youths in their domains are not incompatible with the objective of promoting peaceful coexistence. There should be effective control of youth activities to avoid their negative involvement in conflicts. This can only be done when community leaders themselves exhibit high sense of moral probity and effective commitment to service.

2.3.2.3 At the United Nations level, credible platform should be constructed to mobilize and train the youths in the administration of humanitarian services in conflicts and emergencies. This can help in narrowing the range of negative involvement of youths in violent conflicts by instilling in them the values of empathy and compassion for distressed human beings.

2.4   Measures and Mechanisms for Assuring Unfettered Access to Sustainable Means of Livelihoods by Youth

2.4.1 The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should be revitalised for improved performance in the area of imparting basic vocational skills in youths to promote the culture of self-reliant among them. It is observed that most of those involved in playing negative roles in conflicts in the case of Plateau State are the school dropouts and idlers who have no viable means of livelihoods. Adequate funding of NDE could lead to genuine employment of youths thereby freeing them from negative tendencies.

2.4.2 Government at federal, state and local levels should open farm centres where unemployed youths could be engaged productively for a prescribed fee. The benefits to be derived from this are enormous. First, it will reduce the problem of unemployment in Nigeria; it will also boost food national security and it will afford the youths the opportunity to earn and save money for productive economic enterprises.

2.4.3 Science and technology education should be promoted at all levels

in the country's educational system so that after graduation, youths do not have to look up to government for employment but can decide to be self-reliant by engaging in high return yielding enterprises.

2.4.4 Government should take urgent and decisive steps to improve on existing basic social infrastructure such as electricity to boost small and medium scale enterprises. The epileptic nature of power supply in the country is a major disincentive in the area of small and medium scale enterprises. If the performance of NEPA could be substantially improved, it could encourage youths to develop interest in small and medium scale enterprises that thrive on regular supply of energy thereby assuring them of unfettered access to sustainable means of livelihoods.

2.4.5 Unfettered access to sustainable livelihoods by the youths can be guaranteed through effective fight against corruption. It is only when corruption is effectively tackled that resources will be freed for the benefits of all members of the society. As long as corruption remains endemic in the society the state cannot but remain unresponsive to the basic needs of the youths in particular. The current anti-corruption drive of the federal government must be pursued with vigour and missionary commitment.

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A Study of the Role of the Media in Conflict and Emergencies with Specific Reference to the Crises in Plateau State (September 2001 May 2004)

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DEDICATION

To All Those Who are on the Lowest Rung of Society, Who are Assailed by Poverty and Who are the Direct Victims of Any Crisis Situation.

SECTION I:
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Preamble

The history of Nigeria to Victor Kalu "is the history of a dependent African nation steeped permanently in crises: the crisis of production; the crisis of integration; the identity crisis and the crisis of legitimacy". (Kalu in Ukaeje, 2000, p. viii). The recent crises that bedevilled Plateau State left in their wake, wanton cruelty, destruction of lives and property, insecurity and untold hardship, until the declaration of a State of Emergency in the State. The economic and the socio- political activities of the state were stultified by the recurrent crises. Unfortunately for the masses, who were always the first casualties, the state government failed to pre-empt the crises of September 2001 to May 2004. As a result, interventive or conflict preventive measures needed for controlling the crises were often, not forthcoming or there were delays in their implementation. Similarly, there were many rumours, accusations and counter accusations regarding the recurrent crises. Yet the state government was alleged to have either missed them all or was slow to heed the warnings. Furthermore, the security agents were accused of shirking their responsibilities or not adequately managing the conflicts. As a result, the September 2001 to May 2004 crises in Plateau State have had many negative reverberations beyond the confines of Plateau State (Azuike, 2002 p.3).

1.2   Problem Statement/Objectives Of Study

The disagreements between different political groups in Plateau State culminated in the violent crises in Jos North, Wase, Yelwa-Shendam, Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Langtang North and South and Kanam Local Government Areas, among others. The coverage of the crises in the aforementioned areas, by the media, was relatively biased and sometimes provocative (Galadima, 2003, pp. 1- 5). As a matter of fact, media reporting during any crisis can add to the problems of people as a result of distorted and sensationalized descriptions of events and crowd behaviour. According to Enoch Arnold, Benneth (1995, P. 166). "Journalists say a thing that they know isn't true in the hope that if they keep on saying it long enough it will be true".

This study, therefore, sets out to firstly, analyse the role and the nature of media reporting and coverage of the Plateau crises with the aim of determining if the role(s) of the media contributed to mitigating or to escalating the conflict situations, which led to the declaration of a State of Emergency in Plateau State. Secondly, the study hopes to indicate negative and positive trends in media coverage or reporting and determine which trend was more readily adopted during the Plateau conflicts. Thirdly, the study intends to identify measures which can be taken to weaken the negative and strengthen the observed positive trends in media practices, thereby preventing any future breakdown of law and order in the state. Lastly, the study shall examine the nature and pattern of ownership of the media and determine the impact of this on trends in media reporting and coverage of conflicts and emergencies with particular reference to Plateau crises.

1.3   Theoretical Framework

Many diverse theories and approaches exist that are useful for analyzing violence and conflicts. The review of the various newspapers and magazines selected for this study will help to show the need to adopt the "objectivity" theory which, in turn, helps us to focus attention on the role of the media in the reporting and coverage of crises. Objective criticism focuses on the work itself and does not encourage an undue use of emotive words in writing. Similarly, it strives for certain qualities of style: simplicity, conciseness, directness, originality, clarity, neutrality and accuracy. Crises, accidents or violence are serious events, which do not need to be dramatized with adjectives and superlatives to capture listeners (Stephens, 1980, p. 24). Media reporting should also avoid personal opinions of the reporter or the journalist. The journalist is merely an objective observer who must present relevant facts and not give advice. In other words, adding subjective adjectives to writing weakens the journalist's authority as an objective observer (Stephens, p. 41).

Events should be presented without bias of opinions. However, the weakness of the objectivity theory is that, more often than not, media reporters do not know where to draw the line between news and personal opinions. This, inevitably, leads to biased reports.

1.4   Methodology and Scope of Study

The contents of selected Nigerian newspapers and magazines are analysed in the study. The method of content analysis strives for the "objective, systematic and quantitative description of the content of communication" (Baran, 2002, p. 410).

Content analysis is often used in violence and attitude change research and in studies of the impact of media on gender, ethnic, and racial stereotyping. The strength of content analysis resides in its efficiency and ease. Content analysis also allows researchers to study trends in Mass Communication over long periods of time as well as over geographic space (Baran, p.410).

The study focuses on the Plateau crises of September 2001 to May 2004, which ultimately led to the declaration of a State of Emergency in Plateau State. The Newspapers and magazines analysed are as follows:

Newspapers
✍Daily Champion
✍Sunday Champion
✍Daily Trust
✍Weekly Trust
✍The Guardian
✍Nigerian Tribune
✍Vanguard
✍This Day
✍The Post Express
Magazines
✍ Tell
✍ Newswatch
✍ The News

1.5   Review of Related Literature and Aspects of Data
Lewis Coser (1956, p.30), observes that social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict groups are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals. In order to prevent conflicts, political grievances and discontent that cause conflicts need to be addressed.   This way, social disturbances, rebellions or revolts are prevented.

Violence is one of several means of conducting conflict. Max Weber (1947, p. 333) tells us that:

Violence is the use of force with the intent of inflicting damage or injury upon one's opponent in order to coerce him against his will… And that group violence represents a failure to regulate and resolve social conflict through non- violent and institutionalized channels.

The past four years in Plateau State have witnessed many bloody, communal and sectarian conflicts, which have ensured the truncation of lives and the destabilization of the state. Disagreements between different political groups have given way to many violent crises. The September 7, 2001 crisis in Jos acted as a trigger for a series of strikes and conflicts all over Nigeria. For instance, the 2001 and 2004 crises in Plateau State were blamed on some unresolved ethno-religious differences. As a result, there was a rapid spread of both crises to other parts of Nigeria, particularly to Kano State. However, the 2002 crisis in Plateau State was due, mostly, to political reasons and was more confined to Jos.

There were unquantifiable destructions of lives and property during all the crises. This was largely due to the unpreparedness of security agents and the residents of Plateau State. The result was a huge massacre of people. In the 2001 and 2004 crises, many churches and mosques were razed to the ground. As a result, the reason for the crises was attributed to religious intolerance or was given a religious connotation. Let us briefly consider the following excerpts on the 2001 crisis in Jos:

Over ten churches, private houses, and thousand vehicles were destroyed. (Daily Champion September10, 2001, p.1).

The biggest catholic church in Jos, Our Lady of Fatima has been razed down… This is in addition to COCIN and the Assemblies of God Church that were razed down on Friday. (This Day September 10, 2001, p.1).

All over the town, churches, mosques, residence, businesses and property lay completely razed (Weekly Trust, September 14, 2001, P.1).

In the May 2004 crisis, media reporting, again, attributed the cause of the crisis to ethno religious intolerance as the following excerpts would reveal:

Tension currently reigns Jos (Sic) the Plateau State capital, following last

week's clashes between Hausa, Muslim settlers and the largely indigenous Christian tribes in Yelwa, Shendam area of Plateau South (The Guardian, May 9, 2004 p.1).

The May 2004 crisis was centred on the Yelwa region of Plateau State before spreading to Kano. It is interesting to note that while Plateau State was on the boil, crises also erupted almost simultaneously in Nasarawa, Benue and Taraba States.　The offshoot of the communal feud in the aforementioned places had, largely, some political undertones than religious ones. There were thousands of casualties and displaced persons. However, media report had estimated that the damage to lives and property in the Jos, 2004 crisis surpassed all others as the following excerpt would reveal:

The extent of damage to lives and properties in Plateau State had far exceeded those of Lagos, Shagamu, Odi, Zaki Biam and Niger Delta put together (The Guardian, May 9, 2004 p. 2).

Among other reasons for the May 2004 Yelwa　Shendam mayhem in Plateau State, poverty was highly a contributory factor as The Guardian newspaper would report.
The economic situation has forced people to become reactionary …
So this attitude of condescending to disagreement that leads to violence or killing is merely employing religion and ethnicity as excuses (The Guardian, May 9, 2004, P.2).

Political reasons were also the bane of the Yelwa-Shendam crisis of May 2004.　However the immediate cause of the mayhem was attributed to the retaliatory moves made by Christians in Yelwa-Shendam against previous destruction of churches, lives and businesses by Muslims (particularly in 2002). Massive killings were, thus, carried out in Langtang North, Wase

and Yelwa areas: predominantly in Hausa Fulani settlements.

Following the Yelwa onslaught, media reports blamed the Joshua Dariyeled state government for gross dereliction of duty and further published the unanimous vote of the people of Plateau State (particularly the Arewa Youth Consultative Forum) for a State of Emergency. The Arewa Youth Consultative Forum also called on Governor Joshua Dariye to immediately resign his post due to "his incompetence to manage the crisis" (The Guardian, May 9, 2004) and also for his " inability to protect the lives" of innocent people in the state.

On May 18, 2004, President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, Commander in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, proclaimed a state of emergency in Plateau State. "The imposition of the emergency rule came like a rude shock to many Nigerians. And it elicited variegated reactions…" (The News Magazine, May 31, 2004, p.13). With the state of emergency, the State governor, his deputy and all the elected members of the State House of Assembly were sacked. President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed a sole administrator in the person of former Chief of Army Staff, rtd General Chris Alli, to take charge of Plateau State for the initial six months.

SECTION II:
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

2.1　The Media Reporting and Coverage of the Plateau Crises.

Media reporting and coverage of the Plateau crises were grossly inadequate, as our findings would reveal. For instance, media reporting of the crises failed to point out that the Plateau crises were more politically premeditated than they were ethno-religious in nature. Evidence would show, in this study, how media reporting and coverage of the crises were acutely sensationalized or were intensely distorted. Rather than the printing of realistic stories on the pages of the newspapers and magazines, many of the media reporters succeeded in producing inflammatory remarks and inflammatory stories which contributed immensely to the escalation of the crises. Furthermore, the criticisms that were levelled against the Joshua Dariye led state government led to a massive loss of confidence in government. All eyes, therefore, turned to President Olusegun Obasanjo to expedite his plan(s) for lasting peace to return to Plateau State. The result

was a declaration of a State of Emergency in the state.

Following this declaration, many residents of Jos, the Plateau State capital and its environ still failed to come to grips with the implications of the declaration due to negative newspaper reporting and news coverage. Rather than allay their fears as regards the state of affairs in the state, what many residents of Plateau State read on their newspapers struck more terror into them. In addition to negative print media reporting was the poor manner in which the reports were written. In other words, most media reports were not clear or succinct. Instead, they were written in unacceptable and confusing ways. Reporters sometimes used unduly "sophisticated words, strange jargons or stiff constructions" (Stephens 1980, p.20) which made the understanding of news a lot more difficult for the common man.

2.2   Negative Trends in the Reporting of the Print Media in the Plateau Crises.

One major role of the media in resolving conflicts is to help to remove the blocks and the distortions in communication process so that mutual understanding may develop (Deutsch, 1973, p.383). In addition to this, it is mandatory that reporters or journalists carry out their job of reporting as effectively as they can. Hence, writing and reporting through the media must be clear, precise, realistic and above all, devoid of personal opinions. Furthermore, "if reporters fail to behave responsibly at news events, they can subject already distraught people to additional torment" (Stephens, p. 140). Causing the distraught people more distress was mostly the case with media reporting and coverage during the Plateau crisis. To start with, the reports on the death statistics were blown out of proportion or were highly exaggerated. The media also made sensationalized statements about the state of victims of the crises and their property. Let us consider the following cover report on the victims of the September 2001 crisis:

Tears freely flowed on the faces of the Muslim Community who had brought the corpses in a trailer after painstaking hours of washing the dead bodies at the Jos central mosque… (The weekly Trust, September 14 20, 2001, p.1)

The news report above was not objective at all. The reporter was totally oblivious of the anger which his words would generate among the people particularly in the Muslim community. In addition, bodies being brought into town in a trailer would conjure a picture of a bloody carnage where an entire Muslim community was wiped out by a rival group, the Christians. The provocative and inflammatory statement printed above by the Weekly Trust would also unleash the full force of Muslims' rage against the Christians and there would be no end to the killing.

Daily Champion of September 10, 2001 also published the following negative and equally inflammatory story on the victims of the Jos crisis:

The conflagration that engulfed Jos raged on … with the number of victims reaching an astronomical rate. Mutilated bodies littered the streets … as students, traders; many of THEM IGBOS, as well as INDIGENES grieved over the loss of dear ones… the perpetrators of the crises, described as Muslim fundmentalists …. (p.2).

The emphasis placed on the "Igbos" and the "indigenes" as mostly owners of the mutilated bodies would certainly trigger a series of reactions all over the country. To further aggravate the situation in the town, some newspapers and magazines went on to predict that the escalation of the crisis would be due to retaliatory moves made by rival groups or grudging parties who have lost dear ones. This Day newspaper of September 10, 2001, carried the following "unconfirmed" report:

There are fears that retaliatory measures may have been planned by feuding warlords raising the spectar that more lives might be affected (P.2), [Emphasis mine].

Again, the statement made above would, naturally, generate a colossal fear in the residents of Plateau State and beyond. The statement would also act as the instigator of the plot to commit murder all over the country. As a matter of fact, retaliatory killings took place in Kano, Onitsha, Kaduna and Enugu. These killings would have been averted if media reporters were more cautious with their report.

Magazine reports on the Yelwa carnage were also gruesome. TELL Magazine (March 15, 2004) reported that:

What began as a mere cow theft snowballed into a gruesome massacre of some 73 Nigerians in a single day in Yelwa, Shendam Local Government area of Plateau State. Mostly women and children, 35 of them were herded into a church and slaughtered like rams (p.21).

Another gory description of the killing of an old man in the presence of his wife was made by TELL magazine (March 15, 2004):

In a corner of the church, Gboboro and his wife cuddled in fear, perhaps praying for divine intervention. In one swift stride, another member of the murderous gang moved towards the awe-stricken couple and yanked the old man off his wife … The old man, according to his distraught wife, … was slaughtered like "Sallah ram", and then dismembered (p.22).

The last statement in the excerpt above, had successfully painted a pathetic picture of the mayhem unleashed on Plateau State by the recurrent crises. However, comparing the slaughtering of the deceased husband to that of "sallam ram" would have definitely incited more violence rather than quell it.
Many reasons were proffered for the recurrent Plateau crises. However, the media failed to specifically point out the real trigger of the series of strikes, violent actions and reactions that led to the crises in Jos and its environs. Media reporters were quick to blame ethnicity and religion for the uprising in Plateau as the following would show:

These differences (between the Beroms and the Jasawa) have been exploited by other persons who used the banner of religion to express themselves (Daily Trust, September 17, 2001).
There were, however, other fundamental reasons like poverty and politics which the media failed to fully acknowledge. According to Simon Pam, Director of Personnel Management in Bassa LGC.

Once your family is poor, there is the tendency that you are brought up in crime. Once your family is poor, there is the tendency that someone will

come and give you twenty naira and a sword and instruct you "Go into the streets and kill". And in all of this, it is the poor that are mainly the victims. The children of the priviledged are protected behind barbed wires and tall walls (Kwande et al, 2003, p.72)

The Guardian of May 9, 2004, however, correctly identified economic and political factors as contributing to the Plateau crises, as earlier mentioned:
The economic situation [of the country] has forced people to become reactionary. (p.2).

It does appear that the present government is failing in its responsibility of assuring Plateau indigenes and their neighbours in Taraba and other states that their safety and economic well-being can be left in the hands of government (p.18).

[People] now resort to old, barbaric methods of killing and maiming to secure their lands and economic property (p.18), [Emphasis mine].

The political reason for the crises was given as follows:

The politicians are using this crisis of ethno religious problem and suspicion to further their political agenda. The politicians are the ones fanning the embers of hatred among these peoples… The crisis in Plateau is all about who gets what, when and how. Everybody should do a thorough soul searching. The Moslems don't hate the Christians and vice versa. (The Guardian, May 9, 2004, P. 2).

Provocative headlines and utterances in the media certainly acted as contributory factors to the fuelling of Plateau crises. There were many of such headlines like:

- ✍   630 killed in Yelwa, says Red Cross.
       (Daily Trust, May 7, 2004).

- ✍   Plateau Crisis displaces 258, 000.
       (Daily Trust, August 5, 2004).

- ✍   Police take over government house, Jos

(Daily Trust, May 19, 2004)

? Obasanjo lambasts CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria) Chairman
(Daily Trust, May 14, 2004).

Weekly Trust, went ahead to capture the highly inflammatory statements made by governor Dariye, in which he referred to the Hausa-Fulani as "strangers", "settlers" and "tenants" who had over stayed their welcome in Plateau State and deserved to leave:

Governor Dariye referred to the Hausas of Plateau as "strangers", "settlers" and "tenants". The governor's contention was that these people came from other states of Nigeria, so even if they lived in Plateau for 150 years, they couldn't become indigenes of the villages or local governments where they lived. (Weekly Trust, May 15 21, p.2).

The Nigerian constitution is of contrary opinion to the governor's claim above. Nigerian citizens, indeed, have a right to live wherever they wish and for as long as they wish it. The governor's unguarded remarks, published in the news media couldn't have been an appropriate solution to the crises that had gripped Plateau State. Governor Dariye was actually reported to have issued a quit notice to those he considered settler tenants in Plateau State (Daily Trust, May 14 2004, P. 40). This move contributed, in no small measure, to the escalation of the Yelwa crisis in 2004 because many people saw the governor's remarks as highly inflammatory. Another worrisome trend in the Yelwa crisis was that fingers were pointed at the state governor for explicitly fuelling the indigene settler dichotomy which was seen as the genesis of the crisis (Daily Trust, May 17,2004). Governor Dariye's infamous statement about the Hausa-Fulani was also printed in the Saturday Champion newspaper of March 20, 2004, among others.

2.3 Positive Trends in the Reporting of the Plateau Crises.
During the Yelwa crisis of 2004, the security agents were more efficient in their attempts to rescue victims and to curb violence. According to the caption in TELL magazine of March 15, 2004:

Security agencies… tried their best. They went to the proper location…

But two policemen were killed. And the police got scared… (p.25).

Media coverage of the Plateau crises were also positive in the area of finding a lasting solution to the crises. The arrest of perpetrators of the crises and the encouragement of dialogue between warmongers were among the measures taken for initiating peace in the state. The newspapers, radio and television stations in the state also took pains to ensure that the following "peace messages" were relayed intermittently (Galadima, 2003):

? *Dem say … dem say …. Kai! Who talk am?*
No spread am oh!

? *Violence brings pain, peace brings progress. Embrace peace.*

? *Plateau State is Home of Peace and Tourism. Please don't destroy that peace.*

Furthermore, the Police Commissioner, Innocent Ilozuoke admonished the people of Plateau State "to learn to tolerate each other so that they could live together as they were doing before" (The Guardian, May 9, 2004, p. 19). These positive trends in reporting and news coverage were laudable ones although the negative trends, observed in this study outrightly overshadowed them.

2.4 Measures to be taken for the Promotion of Positive Reporting and News Coverage
Nigerian Journalists and reporters need to under-go training in "conflict reporting and editing" (Galadima, 2003). During the Plateau Crises, people were appalled by the ineptitude of news coverage and report. It is the duty of the media, as mentioned earlier, to help to remove the blocks and the distortions in the communication process so that mutual understanding may develop among grudging parties. Positive reporting also entails translating news effectively in order to ensure the mutual understanding mentioned above. According to (Kwande et al 2003, P. 37):

Nigerian Journalists simply love to sit within the comfort and safety of their cosy offices engaging in the harmless, gratuitous chores of re-writing press releases into news and rehashing a million times over, platitudinous editorial comments and opinions or reporting government and corporate

functions held in the capital city. For these, they are invariably rewarded with the ubiquitous "brown envelope", some government appointment or contract.

Reporters should be incorruptible. THEY MUST NEVER BE BRIBED! They also need to ensure the correctness of their facts and figures before publication. Finally, news reporters need to guard against the distortion or the manipulation of their facts; which is more common with government controlled newspapers. "Unfortunately, the history of the Nigerian press, which is overwhelmingly dominated by the press along the Lagos/Ibadan axis, is a history of lots of distortions of and fabrications about the sociology, politics and economics of this country" (Daily Trust, June 30, 2004, p.40).

2.5   Measures to be Taken to Promote Positive Trends in Print Media Practices

A good newspaper to Arthur Miller (1995, p.168), "is a nation talking to itself." Newspapers and magazines are written for the eye whereas broadcast news is written for the ear. The eye and the ear have different tasks to perform and they certainly have different tastes. According to Stephens:

Eye witnesses at a scene of crime give better accounts of incidents because the eye is sharp enough to take its information straight and fast... The ear, on the other hand, is a less sophisticated instrument. It easily gets confused, bored, etc... hence some facts are easily distorted (p.19).

Positive media reporting is not meant to distort facts. It is not written to impress but to communicate information. Its language is simple. There is no room for unduly sophisticated words. A good media reporting should also strive for clarity, relevance, honesty and conciseness. It should help to promote peace, especially in times of trouble. However, Mohammed Haruna opines that "the mass media is the No. 1 culprit for the socio-political mess in which we have found ourselves" (Daily Trust, June 30, 2004, p.40). The role of the mass media should largely be a positive one. ThisDay newspaper of 5th September, 2001, for instance, tried to urge the Plateau Stage government to expedite plans for averting the violence and the disaster that loomed over Plateau State prior to the September 2001 Jos

crisis. The story, captured simply as "Religious Crisis Brews in Jos," warned that:

The relative religious Peace enjoyed by residents of Jos, the Plateau State headquarters may elude them if URGENT ACTIONS ARE NOT TAKEN by relevant authorities to avert AN IMMINENT showdown between Christian

indigenes of the area and the Hausa Fulanis, who are mainly Muslims (p.8)

From the above positive reporting, one would see why Joshua Dariye's government was accused of complacency and a dereliction of duty to its citizens (Galadima, 2003). In order to further promote positive reporting and to achieve the desired objectivity in media coverage, reporters need to confirm their stories and verify their facts before such facts are published. Making provocative allusions or unnecessary assumptions need to be avoided in media reporting and coverage. The following excerpt is a discouraging article printed by The Post Express of February 25, 2002 on a "multi-national state" like Nigeria:

Multi national states are prone to ethnic instability [More than the] poly ethnic States. This explains partly why the majority ethnic- groups in Nigeria feel marginalized (p.10). [Emphasis, mine].

Unless such assumptions made above are removed from the pages of our newspapers, social change in Nigeria may remain a mirage. We should be stronger, more committed and more united in our ethnic diversity than we should accommodate divisive and destructive ethnocentric rivalry or competition which has antisocial effects. Finally, reporters should avoid undue sensationalism, which can shock the people or contribute to the escalation of conflicts rather than help to smother them.

SECTION III:
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

3.1 Summary and Conclusion

For a sustainable democracy, Nigerians should shun religious, ethnic and political crises. In political terms, recurrent crises make democratic governance very difficult. Progress is retarded on several fronts. The government's energy that should have been channelled into the provision of other amenities is diverted to the reconstruction and the replacement of damaged facilities; facilities which were in short supply before (Azuike, 2002, p.3).

The radio, television and newspapers are mediums of communication, which can be used to promote peace in times of crises. Therefore, media reporting of crises needs to be fair and objective. The September 2001 to

May 2004 crises, which reverberated around Plateau State, also affected neighbouring states like Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, Taraba, Gombe, Benue and Nasarawa. Negative media reporting and coverage contributed to the spread of violence to the aforementioned areas. Furthermore, negative media reporting also resulted in seething hatred and mutual suspicion between the indigenes of Plateau State and the non-indigenes

The media coverage of the Plateau crises abysmally fell short of expectations because rather than raw facts, volumes of news, opinions and editorial comments were written and broadcast on the crises (Kwande et al 2003, p.38). The resultant effect was a series of secret killings and unwanton destruction of property. The way and manner in which the media covered events and reported the news also showed bias and smacked of prejudice. However, there were some unbiased media reports on how the political authorities in Plateau State had failed to react promptly in order to avert danger in the state. Rumours were peddled and warnings were issued with regard to impending trouble in Plateau State. Yet, the state government failed to take heed of them all.

On the May 18, 2004, a State of Emergency was imposed on Plateau State- specifically due to the continuous eruption of violence in the state. In a nation-wide radio and television broadcast, the President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, CommanderinChief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, suspended the state governor, Joshua Dariye, whom he accused of complicity in fuelling the Plateau crises. The governor and his deputy, Michael Botmang, and the State House of Assembly were suspended for an initial period of six months. President Obasanjo appointed a sole administrator, Chris Alli, a retired Major-general and former chief of army staff to help to restore lasting peace and stability to Plateau State.

3.2 Recommendations for a More Peaceful Plateau State

Civil or political unrest can be avoided through patient dialogue, compromises and mutual understanding between people (Azuike, 2002, p.4). This is largely the way out of the recurrent crises which seek to become permanent features of life in Plateau State. Furthermore, the government of Plateau State, in its efforts to restore lasting peace in the state should regularly organize a series of peace summits where all stakeholders in the state can gather to reflect on the problems that may assail Plateau

State. The recommendations for a more peaceful Plateau State also include the following:

  ✍   Arrest, detention and prosecution of perpetrators of violence

  ✍   Security agencies should be more alert to crisis indicators.

  ✍   Voices of the poor or the marginalized should be heard and respected at all times.

  ✍   Security agencies should double their efforts in the quick detection and prevention of the outbreak of violence.

  ✍   Tolerance, patience and forgiveness are very important and necessary for genuine reconciliation and peace building.

  ✍   The citizens of Nigeria have basic rights which should be respected. One of such rights is the freedom to live in any part of the country and be treated fairly.

  ✍   Freedom of worship for all should be emphasised and encouraged.

  ✍   The problem of "indigeneship" or "settlership" in Plateau State should be resolved as this contributed to the conflicts that bedevilled the State, especially in 2004.

  ✍   Conflict Management workshops should be organized for the youth in Plateau State.

  ✍   Government should also address the unemployment problems of the youth.

Finally, provocative reporting and the spread of rumours should be discouraged by the media. On the other hand, the use of jingles with scriptural references from the Holy Bible and Quran should be encouraged (Kwande et al 2003, p. 91). These would contribute, in no small measure, to the promotion of good neigbourliness, love and mutual trust among the people of Plateau State.

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CITIZEN, ETHINICITY AND NATIVE/SETTLER DIVIDE

Executive Summary and Advocacy Issues

✍ The spate of ethno-religious and communal conflicts in Plateau State is rooted in historical issues of injustice, and can be explained in terms of the politicization of ethnic, regional and religious identities, rather than social atavism and re-emergence of old quarrels.

✍ The pressures generated by the forces of democratization and the interface with issues of poverty, the absence of social citizenship and the differentiated system of citizenship based on ethnic identity and "state of origin", among others, have accounted for the recurrent ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State.

✍ The conflicts have resulted in massive destruction of lives and properties as well as the physical displacement of thousands of people under the most vulnerable conditions in dilapidated primary schools and open fields in police and Army barracks.

✍ The conflicts have also resulted in the most egregious violations of rights perpetrated by individuals, groups and agencies of the state.

✍ The long term solution lies in issues of state and policy reforms aimed at decentralization of power, accountable and transparent government, and the promotion of development and welfare of the Nigerian people through the elimination pf poverty.

Against the backdrop of these findings, the advocacy issues that need to be addressed are as follows:

1. Constitutional Reform Issues:

✍ There is the need to intensify advocacy on constitutional reform that draws attention to the inadequacy of constitutional provisions on citizenship, especially the clause in Section 147 on "indigeneity" or "state of origin". There is the need to introduce a residency requirement rather than entrenching criteria that emphasize descent and ethnic origin.

✍ There is the need for advocacy that would make constitutional provisions on the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy justiceable.

✍ There is the need for the review of the legal framework for elections and the electoral system in a way that modifies the present First Past the Post (FPTP) system by introducing elements of Proportional Representation (PR) as a means of ensuring diversity in representing and addressing the peculiar needs of the minorities.

✍ There is the need to entrench Independent Commissions that deal with issues of equity and justice in ethnicity, gender, and other forms of diversity.

2. Governance Issues and Statecraft

✍ There is the need to sustain advocacy aimed at promoting accountability and transparency in government so that issues of social welfare, social justice, equity and the elimination of poverty can be addressed.

✍ There is the need to develop inclusive policy framework that takes into account both the sensibility and representation of all segments of the population, including respect for ethnic diversity and other territorially

distributed differences as well as gender.

✍ There is the need to promote self-determination through decentralization of power and the strengthening of institutions that promote unity and cohesion at the centre.

✍ There should be a deliberate effort to promote economic

empowerment for marginalized and excluded categories such as women and youths.

3. Conflict Management and Peace-Building

✍ There is the need for the establishment of an integrated Early Warning System (EWS) for the purpose of pro-active response to potential conflict situations as opposed to fire brigade approach to conflict management.

✍ The is the need to train the Police and other security agencies to adopt a right-based approach to the management of communal conflicts and violence.

✍ There is also the need to educate government relief agencies responsible for the management of humanitarian crisis to demonstrate awareness regarding the rights of victims, and to appreciate the peculiar needs of women and children.

4. Civic Education

✍ There is need to intensify awareness campaigns targeted at the Nigerian people on the positive elements of diversity, and the need for mutual respect and tolerance among different Nigerian groups.

✍ There is a need to intensify human rights education among the youth and the populace at large to draw attention to the implications of rights violations in communal conflicts.

Analysis and Impact Assessment of the Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Plateau State

1. Introduction

The focus of this study is the analysis and the assessment of the impact of the ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State. It is a study of the transformation of ethnic identity and inter-group relations in Plateau State in more recent times, traversing the entire spectrum of conflict and cooperation, and the impact of this on the socio-political and economic life of the people. The research therefore seeks to examine the dynamics of competing identities, simultaneously marked by cooperation and building of cross-cutting cleavages on the one hand, and conflicts and antagonism on the other, and how these dynamics have played out in the spate of ethno-religious conflicts that engulfed Jos, the capital of Plateau State from the mid-1990s, and subsequently spread to other parts of the State.

On 12 April, 1994 Jos experienced the outbreak of a communal violence which pitched the "indigenes" of Jos - the Afizere, Anaguta and Berom, against the Hausa/Fulani community, widely regarded as the "settlers". At the core of the conflict was the appointment of a Hausa man, Alhaji Aminu Mato, as the Chairman of the Caretaker Management Committee of Jos North Local Government. The opposition of the "indigenes" to this appointment led to the chain of events that metamorphosed into an open confrontation between the two groups, and thus marked a turning point in what had been characterized by latent antagonism and low intensity conflicts arising from the contestations over access to power and resources. The latent antagonism came out clearly in the controversy that trailed the split of what used to be known as Jos Local Government into Jos North and Jos South Local Government Councils. As usual, the Government of Plateau State, which reversed the appointment, set up a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the remote and immediate causes of what the government had characterized as a "riot".

The report of the Commission was yet to be made public when a more deadly confrontation took place between the two groups in September 2001. Like the April 12, 1994 crisis, it was sparked off by the appointment of Alhaji Muktar Mohammed, another Hausaman, as the Coordinator of the Federal Government's National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in Jos North Local Government. Another round of opposition from the "indigenes" to the appointment started a series of exchanges and ethno-religious mobilization that resulted in a violent outburst in which over 1000 lives were lost. The Jasawa Development Association, an organization that had become the platform of agitation for the "Hausa/Fulani community, and a coalition of youth groups drawn from the entire Plateau state which claimed to be speaking on behalf of the indigenes engaged one another in ethnic and religious mobilization as each sought to espouse the positions of the groups at conflict. Coupled with the apparent deficiency in statecraft on the part of the Chairman of Jos North Local Government and the Governor of Plateau State in particular, the situation degenerated. Consequently, on September 7, 2001, following a minor incident that occurred at the Muslim praying ground in Congo Russia between some Muslim worshippers, and a Christian lady, Rhoda Audu, the city of Jos erupted in a major ethno-religious conflagration. Although peace was subsequently restored, the Jos

conflict had snowballing effects on the rest of the Plateau State.

The entire Plateau South Senatorial District became engulfed in communal conflicts, at the height of which the Federal Government imposed a State of Emergency on Plateau State in May, 2004. The Governor of the State and the State House of Assembly were suspended from office for a period of six months. However, the spate of ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State is by no means an isolated event. It is a part of a dominant trend in post-transition Nigeria in which different communities and ethno-cultural groups are pitched against one another with dire consequences for human rights, democratization and nation-building.

However, in explaining conflicts of this nature in post-colonial Africa, nothing can be more misleading than the tendency to dismiss them as atavistic tendencies, the recrudescence of old animosities and the display of the natural impulses of the African people rooted in primordial identities. It is a tendency, for example, that is replete in primordial accounts of ethnic conflicts in Africa. Such a tendency ignores the very nature of contemporary African ethnicity, and the fact that the conflict spiral it generates occurs, more often than not, in the modern (public) domain characterized by elite competition for power and resources, and the social and political mobilization of ethnicity the competition has engendered. This tendency, therefore, does not only ignore the role of "ethnic entrepreneurs, it also ignores the flexible character of ethnicity and related identities as well as their changing character as dictated by the content and context of struggles over scarce values and resources.

Recent trends in political and social conflicts rooted in ethnic, religious and regional identities point to some widely shared characteristics out of which two tend to stand out clearly. First, is the tendency for leaders to play the "communal card" and cash in on the strong ethnic and religious fervor among the majority of the people. Second and perhaps related, is the tendency for people to heed ethnic and religious appeal as opposed to appeals grounded in their social conditions. If one were to accept a position which portrays ethnicity as "false consciousness", it would mean that people are mobilized around a cause which in the first place is responsible for their own disempowerment. These tendencies should draw our attention to the context of the contemporary resurgence of identity politics namely,

the reality of globalization, the ascendancy of ideology, the rolling back of the state, and the increasing tendency of people to rally round ethnic and religious identities for social provisioning in the face of the contraction of the state. The de-emphasis on ideology, and the salience of ethnic identity in the survival strategy of the people, to a large extent, explains the dramatic twist in the profile of conflicts as ideological wars have been replaced by ethnic and communal conflicts.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

The entire Plateau State and Jos in particular, share the features of Nigeria's deeply divided society. The reality of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural life in Jos and its environment is depicted by patterns of migration into the area, traversing the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. James (2000), for instance, points to two important periods of the southward migration of Hausa into the Middle parts of Nigeria prior to the onset of colonial rule in the early 20th century. The second wave of migration into the Middle Belt area was during the 18th century Jihad. Although the Jos Plateau was not conquered by the Jihadists, several communities in the southern part of Plateau State such as Wase and Quanpan were subjected to considerable Hausa-Fulani influence, including the setting up of ruling dynasties (see for instance, Bagudu, 2005). However, it was colonialism and the emergence of the Tin Industry that accounted for migration into Jos, of Nigerians (and even foreigners) of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The significance of Jos as an urban centre, therefore, came to be underscored by the impetus provided by colonial extractive (especially tin mining) activities, and much later, its emergence as an important administrative and commercial centre (Plotnicov, 1967).

The colonial period and the response of British colonialism to the Native Question, especially in the context of the erstwhile northern Nigeria had significant impact on inter-group relations. The construction of a "northern Nigerian" identity from the inception of colonial rule was rigidly defined as Islamic and Hausa, thus, elevating the social categories Islamic and Hausa into a more politically dominant position within the area (Kuna, 1998: 83). The implication of this was to subject minority groups to profound cultural and linguistic influence of the Hausa. In Jos, the British pursued deliberate

policy of demarcating and segregating settlement of the native population along ethnic cum cultural lines, and, indeed, declared Jos a Hausa town (Egwu, 2003; Best, 2004). The consequence was the animosity and suspicion that characterized the relationships between the different ethnic groups.

Despite the occasional outbursts of violence between the different ethno-cultural groups in Jos from the colonial period, the city maintained an unprecedented record of inter-group harmony, for which Jos, and, indeed, the entire Plateau State came to enjoy the appellation of "Home of Peace and Tourism". However, as the recent experience in Plateau State tends to show, there has occurred a transformation in ethno-regional and regional identities, creating new boundaries for the purposes of exclusion and the definition of "otherness". For instance, despite the conscious attempts by the colonial state to create separate ethnic awareness between the Hausa and the "indigenous" ethnic groups in Jos, they all perceived themselves largely as northerners up to the end of the civil war, and were in alliance against the southerners. Infact, Plotnicov (1967) has shown that in the ethnic and communal killings that preceded the civil war in Jos, both in 1945, and in the 1966, northerners perceived the Igbo and southerners as enemies and they all jointly took part in the hostility against them.

In contemporary Nigeria, the situation appears to have dramatically changed as a result of the ethnic processes at the national level. While at one level the notion of a pan-Nigerian identity is being questioned, identity constructed on the basis of regional ideology which prevailed in the first Republic is progressively being weakened, reflecting in a very important sense, the ambivalence characteristic of the Nigerian ruling class in relation the national question (Mustapha, 1986). Added to this is the reality of differentiated citizenship, partly dictated by Nigeria's multi-ethnic political existence and the opportunistic manipulation of differences by a group that could be described as "ethnic entrepreneurs". The consequence is the emergence and reconstruction of new identities, with implications for group relations. One form, in which this is expressed, is the increasing tendency for groups to revert to their original names in place of pejorative names given them by more powerful Hausa neighbours. Examples include: Gwari (now Gbagyi), Yergam (now Tarok), Sura (now Maghaavul) and Bachama (now Bwatiye), to mention just a few examples (Salomone, 1993;

James, 2000; Tyoden, 2000). This trend, in Plateau State, appears to have sharpened the ethnic question, and the element of difference between the Hausa-Fulani and the "indigenous" ethnic communities. It is precisely as a result of this that the discourse on rights as well as the construction and reconstruction of rights need to be contextualized within the changing nature of transformation of identity and the consequence it has for power relations among groups.

Thus, while alongside other minority groups they are known to be strong advocates of national unity, they appear to be more immediately concerned with the issue of "Hausa-Fulani" domination, religious victimisation and subtle Islamization of predominantly non-Muslim population (Mustapha, 1998). The salience of resistance to perceived Hausa domination evident in the spate of ethno-religious violence in Jos and other parts of Plateau State becomes obvious in the fact that it takes precedence over other contentious issues involving the indigenes. Sha (1998), for instance, draws attention to the dominance of Igbo and Yoruba in Jos in commerce and business, aided by their larger ethnic networks to sources of credit and political power. There is also the question of competing ethnic claims and the struggle for power and resources involving the three "indigenous" ethnic groups in Jos - the Beroms, Afizere and Anaguta. The formation of strong ethnic associations virtually among the ethnic groups and the establishment of ethnic networks are closely related to the struggles for scarce resources and opportunities. Sha (1998), has further suggested a particular pattern of political party identification and affiliation associated with these ethnic and cultural associations.

Not unexpectedly, the spate of conflicts and ethno-religious violence has occurred in the context of struggles for access to local power, economic opportunities, and contestations over citizenship rights. Thus, in the context of Jos, as it is in other parts of Plateau State, distinction based on "indigenes"/"non-indigenes" dichotomy, and the consequent patterns of exclusion, tends to generate tension, animosity and violence. A common feature of this contestation is intense "production of history" as each group resorts to history as the basis for construction of identity and claims. This process of production of history is characterized by articulation of group positions through selective deployment of historical facts and the desperate search to legitimize claims through account of history of migration.

In the face of pervasive scarcity, exacerbated by the deepening crisis of the Nigerian economy, and the imposition of market-based adjustment, the intense struggles for power and resources has resulted in protracted ethno-religious conflicts. Conflicts and violence associated with it as witnessed in several parts of Plateau State have serious implications for the rights of the people in more ways than one. To begin with, the mere occurrence of a violent conflict raises the possibility of rights violations at three levels: impunity involving individuals, groups and the state. While the first two levels occur as individuals and groups are involved in the killings and maiming, the impunity of the security forces and other agencies of the state in responding to conflicts is a part of the challenge.

Issues of rights violations and abuses also occur in the context of the massive displacement of persons and the attendant problem of humanitarian emergencies associated with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The unique challenge of human rights violations and state obligation to recognize, respect and promote the rights of IDPs in the context of domestic conflicts has led to the development of a new international legal regime and instruments for promoting the rights of displaced persons. The United Nations General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, at the instance of governments as expressed in various resolutions, have developed Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which sets forth the rights of IDPs and the obligations of governments towards them. However, as experience suggests, most governments have failed in their responsibility to the IDPs. As the Brookings Institution has lamented:

The overwhelming majority of displaced populations are women and children. They experience particular protection, assistance and reintegration needs, which routinely are overlooked or not addressed with priority. Moreover, women and children, in particular, girls, frequently face discrimination in obtaining assistance, having documents in their own name, accessing education and income generating opportunities, and having their voices heard (2005:9).

Indeed, the Guiding Principles (Principle 4 (2) draw attention to the special

needs of women and children, Walter Kalin (2005), with particular reference to the experience of IDPs in Asia that women and children suffer "vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, especially in camps, where the risks also include increased level of domestic violence, child abuse and alcohol-related violence"

Worse still, is the possibility of re-occurrence of these conflicts given the inadequacy of public policy response. Despite setting up several commissions and panels of inquiry, there has been no policy response aimed at addressing the concrete issues involved. What is acclaimed as the solution to the Plateau crisis so far, is the resolution made by the Plateau Peace Conference to the effect that the Hausa community in the state are "non-indigenes" (Plateau State Government, 2004)..

Set against the foregoing background, the research seeks to answer a number of questions. What are the underlying causes of the protracted ethno-religious violence in Plateau State? What has been the impact of these conflicts on the groups at the conflict and the society in general? What are the implications of ethno-religious conflicts and violence for the rights of victims? What has been the response of the state at the different levels? And what kind of approaches to the management of conflicts can best address the question of the rights of the people?

1.2   Research Objectives
The broad objective of the research is to study the spate of communal and ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State, using a rights-based approach to understand the underlying causes, the dimensions, the level of impact, and extent of rights violations as a basis for an intervention programme that primarily seeks to protect and promote the rights of victims. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i.   investigate the underlying economic, political, social and cultural basis of the Plateau State crisis.
ii.   examine the courses and dimensions of the conflicts, and, by so doing, identify the groups at conflicts and their claims.
iii.   determine the impact of the crisis on individuals, groups, communities and the nation at large, and

iv.   harness the voices, perceptions, feelings and preferences of the contending groups and the participants as well as the victims in formulating a right-based approach to conflict management and conflict transformation.

1.3   The Methodology of the Research
This study was carried out within the framework of a quantitative research methodology of Community Rapid Assessment (CRA), although where necessary, it drew from data and information generated from survey research and baseline study for complimentary purpose. As a method, it seeks to build local theories about social phenomena, and to seek answers to questions in the real world based on what you can see, hear and read from people and places, and from events and activities.

Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA).
The PRA is favoured over other approaches because its orientation enables the researcher to engage the respondents in a mutually interactive manner. The primary purpose of deploying this research technique was to enable the generation of new understandings that can be used in rights-based approach to issues of ethno-religious conflicts and violence in Plateau State. Furthermore, this approach enhances decision-making on practical issues and is judged by its effectiveness in helping policy makers, practitioners and participants themselves to make decisions and act to improve the human condition.

The following PRA tools were employed in the gathering of data in the four local governments selected for the study namely, Jos North, Wase, Shendam and Langtang North.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD):
FGD was used to gather information from victims of conflicts, participants in the conflicts and opinion leaders within the communities. A total of four FGDs were conducted, one in each of the selected Local Governments:

i.   Key Informant Interviews/In-depth Interviews: For the purpose of choosing the key informants, emphasis was placed on those who properly understood the local terrain and therefore can be a gateway i n t o

the existing local knowledge. A total of eight Key Informants Interviews were held in the four local government areas selected using semi-structured interview format.

ii.   These tools of Community Rapid Appraisal were complimented with secondary data obtained from published sources such as official reports of panels set up to investigate conflicts/crises and the written submissions of different parties to the conflicts.

1.4   Literature Review

This section reviews the relevant literature to the study. The subject of this research relates to issues of identity, and the patterns of conflicts and violence generated in the context of struggle for power and resources. These issues are connected to wider questions of national unity, democratisation and development. For this reason, the review of extant literature will focus on ethnicity and religion as forms of identities, and the interaction between these identities and the wider political, economic and cultural issues.

Contrary to the general assumption, it is not in all cases that conflict and violence characterize the outcome of inter-ethnic and other forms of inter-group relations. Harmony and cooperation, in varying degrees characterize inter-group relations as well. There is, therefore, the need to recognize the manifold character of the role played by ethnicity in social and political life. Ethnicity, for example, as we are always reminded, is amenable to static analysis; its Janus-faced character, combining elements of imagination and reality, both determining and determined, fixed and yet, ever-changing, or simultaneously providing ideology of domination and resistance, has to be recognized (Nnoli, 1978; Egwu, 1998). The dialectical trajectories of ethnicity as providing basis for accommodation and compromise on the one hand, and the basis for conflict and violence on the other, are united in the sense that they are linked as political resources in the armories of ethnic leaders. But even more fundamental is the fact that ethnicity is a very comprehensive social category, and does provide a spatial framework for other identities, including clan, class, religion and regional identities (Otite, 1990).

There is a consensus regarding the resurgence of ethnic identity, its political mobilization as a part of the prevailing system of seeking power and

authority, and as a part of the strategy of attaining material and psychological survival (Egwu, 1998; Hendricks, 1997). For Hendricks (1997:105), ethnicity and other politically salient identities must be seen as different methods of consolidating statehood and the contradictions generated by the process. In other words, ethnic, regional and religious identities are part and parcel of the technology of power of the African ruling elite. But it should not simply be dismissed as a form of false consciousness in which the ruling elite manipulate the masses for their own narrow political and economic ends. The objective interests of the people, and their real or imagined belief that ethnicity promotes their interests is important in order to be able to deal with conflict dynamics at both levels of the elite and the masses (Nnoli, 1978).

A very important sense in which the political salience of ethnicity becomes critical in Africa is the way it frames notions of citizenship and the construction of rights. Citizenship describes rights attributable to the individual as a member of a political community. Citizenship is applicable to a person endowed with full political and civil rights within the context of the modern state (Whitaker, 1964; Ofoegbu and Nwosu, 1986). Equally central to the notion of citizenship is a notion of reciprocity of rights and obligations between state and citizens, and because it is about membership of a political community, it has often involved some degree of participation (Held, 1989:198). In the extant literature, it has been sufficiently established that the history of citizenship is bound with the emergence of the bourgeois revolution and the ascendancy of the liberal democratic state (Held, 1968; Whitaker, 1964). Liberalism as it emerged rested on two main foundations. One, the assertion of the abstract or formal rights of the individual in opposition to the state and two, the sanctity of private property based on the interest of the atomistic individual. These define the context for the emergence of the liberal democratic state and the transformation of "subjects" into "citizens".

The distinction between formal citizenship as a set of civil and political rights on the one hand, and social citizenship on the other, is widely recognized in the literature (Held, 1989). The subsequent generation of rights that had been won through the concerted struggles of groups and social classes such as the right to employment, education, housing and the provision of basic needs to citizens tend to approximate the notion of social

citizenship, and are incompatible with the logic of a market-driven society. It is important to note that historically, a constellation of forces and social movements such as gender, class, nationality, and race, in definite historical contexts, have tended to shape the struggle for citizenship rights, and, have given them unique political and social contents.

In much of contemporary Africa, as a result of the history of state formation, the questions of group identity and rights have come to be prized above individual rights. Thus, as the Nigerian example shows, regional, ethnic, sub-ethnic and communal forms of identity appear to be dominant in framing discourses on citizenship rights. But it is not very clear in the literature whether ethnicity and related cleavages justify the exclusive basis for the construction of political identity and citizenship. In respect of Africa, for instance, Ntalaja (2003) has suggested that attachment to one's community, and, through it, to the soil of the ancestors or the homeland, is a fundamental dimension of citizenship. This tends to form the basis for what is widely regarded as "sons/ daughters of the soil" syndrome in the African context. In Nigeria, it is reflected in the dichotomy between "indigenes" and "settlers" Exclusive claim to the land and its resources by "natives", at the expense of those perceived as "settlers" is more often not justified on this ground. But this trend is challenged by the history of integration of people of different ethno-cultural origins in pre-colonial Africa (See for example, Mustapha, 1998). Nevertheless, what appears significant in the literature is that the issue of citizenship in Africa and Nigeria in particular, is immersed in the wider dimension in which political discourse is impacted by ethnicity. Momoh's (2001) analysis of the pathologies of citizenship in many ways coincide with Mamdani's conclusion that what prevails in Nigeria is ethnicized notion of citizenship as legitimized in the 1979 Constitution and those that have followed.

In the contemporary Nigerian context, three issues make ethnicity problematic in relation to discourse on identity and citizenship. First is that ethnic identity is not a fixed form of identity. It is subject to frequent reconstitution and redefinition. Both boundary breaking and reconstitution are enduring qualities of ethnic identity. In this sense it is even more problematic in the Nigerian context where, as Salamone (1993), reminds us, ethnic identity is quite recent, and, therefore, in constant need of

redefinition. The second arises from the state of unequal ethnic relations defined in terms of access to state power and resources Finally, is the impact of prolonged military rule and the accompanying over-centralisation of power and resources, precluding any democratic framework of negotiation, compromise and accommodation.

The foregoing suggests antinomies between citizenship rights as formulated by the liberal project of modernity in which the political goal of the nation-state was the building of a homogenous national identity, and not the promotion of a separate ethnic identity that could amount to the reification of difference. Such a liberal democratic conception of the state becomes inadequate in Nigeria's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting, where the tendency is for groups to appeal to notions of identity and differences that leave little room for promoting and nurturing a common citizenship. In other words, the consequence is the difficulty of evolving a common political identity built around the nation-state (Nnoli, 2003:30).

Multi-ethnic political existence practically leads to the problem of establishing a notion of citizenship that accommodates the multi-cultural character of the population and the rights of the individual as a member of the political community. Although it would appear that according separate rights to groups is at variance with a notion of common citizenship, it is obvious that fractured and differentiated citizenship is a basic aspect of the political life of societies with deep ethnic divisions and cleavages (Kymilicka and Norman, 2000: 3). If anything, according rights to minority groups who are alienated or who feel unwanted may represent a strategy of inclusion (Nnoli, 2003).

At the core of the dilemma over the citizenship question in a multi-ethnic society is the need to respect group dynamics. The meeting point of these dynamics can be located precisely between the tendency of some groups to dominate, and a corresponding tendency on the part of those being dominated, to resist the domination. In more practical terms however, this appears to be the driving force behind the need to protect the rights of groups who perceive that they are grossly disadvantaged, whether such fears are real or imagined. As Jinadu has argued, group rights must be recognised, promoted and protected precisely because "the hypothetical

market place is not a level playing field, and because the conditions of perfect competition do not exist in the market place, and the state itself is not a neutral body or agency" (2003:10).

What this means is that beyond the nation-state which is assumed to be difference-blind, the liberal conception of the state hardly anticipates other rallying points of identity such as ethnicity and religion. It is precisely for this reason that the state as conceived in the project of modernity is incapable of dealing with the challenge of citizenship constituted by a multiplicity of ethnic identity. As Jinadu (2003) has suggested, the continuing salience of the ethnic phenomenon is symptomatic of the inadequacies of the liberal state in so far as it is exploding the myth of the nation-state as an indivisible unifying entity. The heterogeneous rights of peoples united by blood ties are calling to question the position of the state as the representation of general interests. This trend has become so generalized that even in countries like the United States of America, Britain and France, the illusion of a 'melting pot' has been finally laid to rest (Grillo, 1989). Consequently, policies of out-and-out assimilation of immigrant populations have been abandoned in favour of a more pluralistic solution based on multiculturalism.

A key issue in the literature about the challenge of managing diversity and pluralism relates to the very nature of liberal democracy, especially the nature of political demands which it is in the position to effectively process. The original problematic of liberal democracy was to expand the frontiers of freedom and rights for the individuals, precisely because it was meant to be the political and ideological superstructure of the capitalist society. In other words, liberal democracy focuses on individuals whose claims are ultimately placed above those of the collectivity (Ake, 2000). For this reason, as an integral part of the project of modernity and the nation-state, it is impervious to notions of collective and group rights. Simply put, it cannot guarantee equality between political, social, ethnic, religious and economic majorities and minorities (Alemika, 2003:11).

The literature also draws attention to the importance of the decline of social citizenship in providing the dynamics that have sustained identity-based conflicts in the context of the struggle for citizenship rights (Egwu, 1998;

1999). It is in this respect that two observations are necessary in coming to terms with the interface between different layers of identity and the question of citizenship. First, is the fact that violent ethno-religious conflicts have tended to occur in the context of economic decline, state failure and the imposition of harsh economic policies in the form of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Second, is the fact that these conflicts have occurred in relation to the struggle for power and dwindling economic opportunities, and appear to have provided a meeting point between socio-economic deprivations and exclusion based on ethno-cultural identities.

Finally, there is the impact of prolonged military rule and the accompanying over-centralisation of power and resources. This has accounted for the centralizing logic of the Nigerian federal system, the absence of democratic norms and values, and the implantation of a culture of arbitrariness and lack of respect for the rule of law. Not only do these make the struggle for access to power at all levels bitter and acrimonious contests, the survival of military dictatorship itself, rests on a patron-clientele network which is often ethnic and regionally-based. This makes it possible for specific ethnic groups to advance its material and political interests at the expense of groups who have little or no national voice. More often than not, they are ethnic minorities who are disadvantaged in terms of access to power and resources. This has consequences for inter-group relations in many ways. First, the return to a liberal democratic form of governance with emphasis on multi-party system and elections often reinforce existing social cleavages, and produce gainers and losers along ethnic and communal lines. Second, the freedom and liberalization of the political environment guaranteed by democracy encourages groups who had been oppressed for long to register their views and positions, and in most cases demand justice. It is in this sense that post-transition periods, are often marked by high levels of communal conflicts and violence.

Some of the factors that made co-operation possible up till September 7, 2001 were the fact that all the inhabitants of the state especially the diverse ethnic groups domiciled in Jos North saw themselves as their brothers' keepers' in spite of the apparent differences in ethnic or religious leanings and beliefs. Trade was also a fundamental factor that necessitated co-operation between these ethnic groups, there was no discrimination or

segregation of any form, and of course there was not any form of bitter rivalry or competition between the Christians and the muslins, it was a relationship predicated on trust and mutual respect, hence economic activities went on unencumbered by any religious or ethnic consideration or segregation.

2.   The Research Setting and the Overview of the Plateau Crisis
Between September 2001 and May 2005, much of Plateau State, so to speak, was deeply involved in a series of communal and ethno-religious conflicts that had assumed a violent dimension. What started in Jos, the state capital in the form of a series of low intensity conflicts from the mid-1990s reached its peak on September 7, 2001 with a deadly confrontation between the "indigeneous" ethnic communities in the Jos area the Afizere, the Anaguta and the Berom   on the one hand, and the Hausa/Fulani community who are generally characterized as "settlers" on the other. Precisely because the ethnic divide line coincides with the religious divide, the crisis which had its root in conflicting ethnic claims to power and resources assumed ethno-religious dimension, sometimes pitching all the Christian populations against the Muslims, or northern ethnic minorities in the city against the Hausa/Fulani community. All in all, ethnic and religious identities remained recurring decimals.

For the purpose of this research, the discussion of the research setting and overview of the Plateau crisis will be limited to the two senatorial districts that have been the hotbeds of the most violent ethno-religious and communal conflicts: Plateau North and Plateau South. Plateau North Senatorial Districts consist of five local governments namely, Jos North, Jos South, Jos East, Bassa, Riyom and Barkin Ladi local governments. While Plateau South consist of Langtang North, Langtang South, Mikang, Shendam, Wase and Quanpan local governments. First, we give an overview of the conflicts in the Jos metropolis and its environment before proceeding to the Plateau South Senatorial District. The picture as presented in this section derives from existing studies (Egwu, 2003; Bagudu, 2005; Best, 2004).

The main ethnic groups found in Jos North Senatorial District, and are relevant in the social and political life of Jos metropolis, as well as the contestations over rights and access to power and resources include the

Berom, Anaguta, Afizere, Buji, Amo, Rukuba and Irigwe. These groups historically were the first inhabitants of the Jos area. Other ethnic groups include the Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and a host of other ethnic minorities from the Middle Belt of Nigeria such as the Tiv, Igala, Idoma, Nupe and several others.

There are three main religious groups in Jos: the Christians, the Muslims and Traditional African religionists. Although it is not easy to draw the line of demarcation in terms of ethnic identity given the trans-ethnic character of religious identity, or the trans-religious life of ethnic identity, it can be said that a majority of the "indigenous" ethnic groups in Jos, and, indeed, on the Plateau are Christians. On the other hand, a significant majority of the Hausa/Fulani population in Jos are Muslims.

Historical accounts regarding the origin Jos abound (Plotnicov, 1967; Egwu, 2004; Best, 2004). The history of the city is closely tied to colonialism and the Tin Industry in the early part of the 20th century. The establishment of colonial administration, the development of the Tin Industry and the growth of commerce led to mass influx of people from all parts of Nigeria and even West Africa. The massive influx of people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds threatened to submerge the identities of ethnic groups such as the Berom, Afizere and Anaguta who were the original inhabitants of the settlements around Jos. In particular, because of the resistance of the local population to the forceful take over of their land and mineral resources, and the persistence of their resistance, the British favoured the recruitment of mine labour from the northern parts of the country such as Sokoto, Kano and Maiduguri. This pattern of labour recruitment together with the previous waves of migration predating the Jihad accounted for the heavy concentration of the Hausa population in the city. Subsequent British policies in respect of ethnic segmentation of residence, the imposition of the Native Authority System and the Alkali Court, and the appointment of a succession of 12 Hausas as Sarkin Jos between 1902 and 1948, all gave the impression that Jos belonged to the Hausa. But more importantly, this made possible pervasive Hausa political, cultural and religious influence among groups who were predominantly non-Islamic, but had a long history of successful resistance to Hausa political and cultural influence.

However, towards the end of colonial rule, and following the upsurge in

community were forced to seek refuge at the 302 Field Artillery Barracks in Umuahia. In the Jos metropolis, the main theatre of the mayhem, over 1000 persons lost their lives. Estimates of losses presented by the Second Hand Motor Dealers Association, the Evangelical Churches of West Africa, the Yoruba community and individuals ran into millions of Naira. In reaction to the conflicts, the ethnic and religious map of the city was re-drawn as people had to relocate their residence to areas they considered to be safe. But more significantly, social interaction between groups and individuals had come be defined through ethnic and religious prisms.

The second theatre of ethno-religious conflicts is the Plateau South Senatorial District, which is a fairly large area inhabited by small ethnic groups, mostly made up of independent polities with either loose or centralized political organizations prior to colonial intervention. For the purpose of the research, however, Plateau South can be demarcated into four distinct areas, each corresponding with a local government: Wase, Shendam, Quanpan and Langtang. Although they all share a common feature in terms of ethno-cultural configurations, there are minor variations in terms of dominance of groups from one local government to another. In Wase, for example, the most significant ethnic groups in relation to the discourse on the conflicts in the area include the Tarok, the Jukun, the Basharawa, Fulani, Bogghums, Abakwariga, Youm and the Hausa. Historical accounts suggest that the Jukun whose presence in Wase dates back to the 17th century following the collapse of the BYE-PI (the Kwararafa Kingdom) were the first settlers in Wase. The Tarok were said to have met the Jukun near the present town of Wase and sought permission to settle well before the arrival of Ḧassan, the Madaki of Bauchi who established the Hausa/Fulani ruling dynasty in Wase in 1920. Although the establishment of the Hausa/Fulani dynasty in Wase upstaged the rule of the Jukun, it did not ensure the conquest of the other groups, especially the Tarok by the Emirate in Wase.

But British colonialism changed everything and brought the Tarok and other groups such as the Garkawa and Ankwe under the rule of the Hausa/Fulani Emirate in Wase. Largely dictated by the primary pre-occupation with law and order, the British undertook frequent administrative re-organizations which ensured that the Tarok and the Garkawa came under Wase rule in 1919, but got removed from Wase

domination in 1926 (See, for example, Bagudu, 2004).

The former Shendam District is made of small ethnic groups and nationalities which include the Ankwe (the largest ethnic group), the Montol, Piapun, Kanam, Yergam (who migrated from adjoining Yergam territory in Langtang), Jorto, Bwol, Kwolla, Abakwangas (the name given to non-Muslim Hausa), and Garkawa. Many of these groups share a lot in common in terms of historical ties and culture. For instance, the Ankwe who are closely related to the Jukun exercised nominal control over several of these ethnic groups through the institution of the Long Goemai, while from 1913, both the Yergam and the Garkawa, were brought under the rule of the Ankwe until 1926 when the northern protectorate was re-organized into group of provinces.

The ethno-religious conflicts in the southern Senatorial District can be divided into two phases. The first wave started from about 1999 in the form of intermittent and sporadic violence in the different local governments such as Quanpan, Shendam, Langtang and Wase. On April 24, 2001, the government of Plateau State set up a nine-member Commission of Inquiry under Justice Jummai Sankey on the Wase crisis. The Commission was also assigned the task of conducting inquiry into the outbreak of a similar crisis on May 30, 2001. Another six-member Commission of Inquiry was set up under Justice Felicia Dusu to investigate the conflicts in Shendam, Langtang North and Wase Local Government Areas on August 19, 2002. While the white papers of these commissions were being eagerly awaited, the area experienced a second wave of violence in February 2004 with an impact which reverberated throughout the whole region.

Given the organic link between the two waves, it is important to describe these conflicts, even though briefly. In Quanpan Local Government the first major incident of inter-communal hostility occurred on March 27, 2000 when the Tiv community in Kundum ward of Bakin Ciyawa village in Kwande district was attacked by a group of people believed to be of Kwalla origin. The attack which resulted in the killings of persons of Tiv origin and their displacement was believed to be a retaliatory measure for the alleged killing of a wealthy Kwalla farmer, Anthony Daafan and members of his family. Although the inter-ethnic violence pitched the Tiv against the Kwalla, it has to be understood in the larger context of competition for land

among the different ethnic communities including the Anga, Tarok and Ankwei in which the Tiv (the bulk of whose population is in Benue State) were labeled as non-indigenes and "land colonizers", despite the fact that in the strict sense of the "native/settler" divide, only the Gama are natives of the area. By the end of April nine people had been killed with property worth millions of Naira destroyed. In addition to the conflicts between the Tiv and other indigenous ethnic communities, there were also incidences involving the indigenous communities in Yelwa-Shendam. Although the key parties to the conflict were the Tarok and the Hausa/Fulani community, it assumed a religious dimension leading to attacks on places of religious worship. At the core of the conflict were a number of contentious issues including the alleged bias of government in creating a District for the Hausa/Fulani community in 1991 despite a groundswell of opposition, the inability of government to fill the vacant position of a Village Head since the death of the former as far back as 1992, and the election of a Muslim Councillor to represent the ward. It was apparently the Yelwa-Shendam conflict that partly triggered the conflicts between the Tarok and the Hausa/Fulani community in Wase much later.

By the end of March and the beginning of April 2001, the crisis had spilled over to Shendam Local Government. Bandits launched attacks on the Tiv community in Yamini village in 2002 resulting in the killing of about seven policemen. According to media reports about 34 of the bandits who were arrested confessed sponsorship by some influential politicians (This Day, 24/10/2005), but the consistent targeting of the Tiv for attacks pointed to the link between the conflict and the patterns of exclusion based on the distinction between natives and settlers.

However, the conflicts in Nasarawa village in Lamba District of Wase Local Government between April 11 and 15, 2001 took place between the Tarok and the Bogghom as a result of which 8 people were killed. Although the immediate trigger was the disagreement between two farmers from the two ethnic groups over economic trees, the larger context was the intense competition for land and related resources which had poisoned their relationships over time. Although the Grade 1 Area Court in Wase entered judgment in favour of Patrick Kunfa, the Tarok claimant to the land, and against Sumaila Danladi Kutrm, the Bogghom rival claimant, in 2001 when

the dispute first broke out, the matter could not be resolved because of the larger group claims based on different historical narratives. The conflict between the Tarok and the Bogghom inevitably brought the Hausa/Fulani community directly into the arena of conflict because of the mixed nature of Bogghom and Hausa identity since the overwhelming majority of Bogghom are Muslims. It therefore became part of the wider issues of conflict between the Tarok and the Hausa/Fulani community which centred on a number of wide ranging issues.

The Tarok community in Wase alleged marginalization and exclusion from the economic and political life of the Local Government Area. For instance, they alleged denial of access to land and confiscation of their land in the Jukun settlements of Wase. They also alleged their exclusion from traditional political institutions with only one Tarok ward amidst several Bogghom wards and village heads despite the preponderance of Tarok population, as in Lamba District, for example. Other allegations include their exclusion and marginalization in the affairs of the local government as exemplified in the imposition of District Heads, refusal to create Tarok chiefdom, denial of indigeneship certificates to persons of Tarok origin, and their exclusion from the control of the apparatus of the local government.

On their part, the Hausa/Fulani community in Wase alleged incessant physical attacks on persons of Hausa/Fulani and Islamic identities as was the case when some personnel working in Langtang South Local Government were attacked in June 2002, the series of attacks on Wadata and Kardako believed to have been masterminded by the Tarok, and the impeachment of the Hausa/Fulani Chairman of Wase Local Government in 2002. This was on the grounds that he not only excluded persons of Tarok origins from being issued certificate of indegenship, but also that he schemed out his Vice-Chairman, a Tarok from the running of the affairs of the Local Government. All these incidences prepared the ground for the second wave of ethno-religious and communal conflicts in Plateau South Senatorial District.

The second wave centred on alleged theft of cow and pitched the Fulani against the Tarok who were believed to be the culprits. However, the wave of violence spread to other parts of the Senatorial District as revenge-

seeking Fulani herdsmen were said have attacked one village after another. However, the most deadly round of violence started in Yelwa between February 21 and 22. 2004. It followed the alleged rounding up of persons suspected to be behind the serial cow thefts. As a result, people were freely attacked, persons killed and maimed and places of religious worships razed to the ground. This initial incident which occurred in Yamini spread to Yelwa where more carnage and destruction took place, including the killing of 43 persons rounded up in the Church of Christ Nigeria (COCIN). This was quickly followed by another round of violence in Yelwa on February 24, 2004. The attacks, launched on the settlement by some invaders early in the morning, and the equally violent response of the residents, lasted until late in the evening. In the aftermath, places of residence, commercial buildings and property worth millions of Naira were destroyed. Hundreds of people who were rendered homeless, and were confronted by the spectre of insecurity, were forced to flee into the neighbouring Taraba and Nasarawa states. What made the attacks and the outcome more deadly was the re-drawing of the ethno-religious map of Yelwa following the earlier waves of violence in 2002. For instance, the following the conflict, the indigenous ethnic groups established a separate and more flourishing market at Nshar, thereby seeking to alter previous patterns of economic hegemony and social power. But such increasing spatial differentiation contributed significantly to tension and conflicts, and made it easier for parties at conflict to locate the target of the adversaries.

What really exists in Wase is a tripartite claim to ownership of the land involving the Hausa/Fulani, the Tarok and the Jukun, although it is the conflicting claims of the "native" Tarok and the Hausa/Fulani community that provides the basis of conflicts and animosity. As usual there is intense recourse to history with each group using historical accounts of migration and historical sequence of inhabitation to prove ownership of the local political space. As pointed out already, in Lamba District of Wase where a violent conflict that preceded the 2004 conflict in Wase occurred, the Tarok and the the Huausa/Fulani are the main contending parties in which a majority of the Bogghom, on account of their Islamic religious identity are regarded as allies of the Hausa/Fulani community. While in Yelwa, the disputes involved the Goemai, Jarawa, Huasa/Fulani and the Saiyawa. However, the two major parties to the conflict were the Goemai and the

Huasa/Fulani with the predominantly non-Muslim populations from the Jarawa, Garkawa and Tarok joining forces with the Goemai against the Hausa/Fulani and other Muslim groups who were labeled as "settlers".

The second wave of communal conflicts in Southern Plateau in 2004 received national attention because of the responses in other parts of the country in the form of reprisal killings. Partly because families of victims did not consider it safe to treat the wounded and the maimed in near-by health facilities, and partly because of the need to generate sympathy, many of the victims of the carnage, including corpses were taken to neighbouring states like Bauchi, Kano and Nasarawa. This inflamed passion and led to another wave of violence. It took the deployment of the Army and the police to restore law and order. As part of the immediate response, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo suspended the elected government structures in Plateau State for a period of three months in May, 2004. By this time, however, the crisis had left behind a heavy trail of humanitarian tragedy. For example, in the aftermath of the conflicts, not less than 69,000 persons had been scattered in 30 different locations across five states Nasarawa, Kaduna, Bauchi, Kano and Taraba. Most of the refugees lived in makeshift accommodation with no facilities, including even mats. Government agencies such as the National Commission for Refugees and the National Emergency Relief Agency handled the distribution of relief materials alongside international and local NGOs such as African Refugee Foundation, Voluntary Services Overseas, the Red Cross, and several others, including faith-based organizations. A number of state governments also assisted in providing relief materials.

Allegations of official theft and diversion of relief materials by government were rampant. There were also allegations that Christian and Muslim refugees were not given equal treatment by the government in the distribution of relief materials. Nevertheless, the most disturbing aspects were the reported cases of rape and other forms of gender-based violence. Furthermore, the poor sanitary environment made many refugees, especially the women and children, to be vulnerable to different kinds of infection and diseases.

3.   Analysis of the Causes, Dynamics and Dimensions of the

Conflicts

This section presents the analysis of the causes, dynamics and dimensions of the Plateau conflicts on the basis of the information generated approach anchored on Community Rapid Assessment. In what follows, we have identified the underlying basis of the conflicts as including: differences based on ethno-religious identity, resource competition, the political question, contestation over citizenship rights, and the nature and character of the state. It is however, important to stress two points. First, each of the underlying cause identified here merely represents a framework that has overlapping boundaries with other causes, and therefore it is possible for any other analysis to arrive at a different itemization of the issues involved in the Plateau conflicts. For instance, bifurcation of people into "indigenes" and "settlers" and the conflicts arising from such distinction is identity-based, while the political question is intricately woven with the debate around citizenship rights. Second, all the parties agreed that prior to the outbreak of conflicts, inter-group relations were marked by some degree of tolerance, cooperation and accommodation. Indeed, there was unanimity of positions across ethnic and religious divide that prior to the outbreak of conflicts and the chains of violent reactions that followed, relationships between the various groups were marked by a considerable high degree of tolerance, cooperation and mutual respect, despite awareness of difference and perceptions regarding the relevant "Others". As Orgah told us in an interview in Langtang, "Prior to the conflicts, all the inhabitants lived in harmony, ate together, drank together and cooperated on issues critical and not critical to our mutual interests".

3.1.1   Citizenship and the Political Question

Communal conflicts framed by the contestations over citizenship and rights are by far the most debilitating. As experience has shown, the most deadly communal conflicts have occurred in the context of attempts to exclude people on the grounds of indigeneship which is made possible by the conflict between "national citizenship" and "state citizenship". For instance, attempt by "indigenes" and "natives" of a particular state or local government to exclude "non-indigenes" and "settlers" is matched by the determination of the latter to resist such exclusion. In this sense the crisis of citizenship has dire consequences for inter-group relations in both urban and rural situations as the struggle for public goods and scarce resources tend to assume the form of competition between different ethno-cultural

groups. But even more fundamental is the way in which contestations over citizenship and rights are directly tied to the political question since the distinction between "indigenes" and "non-indigenes" becomes the basis for excluding the relevant "Others" from political participation and civic life.

The struggle for local power provides the context for one of the most deadly expressions of communal conflicts. Such struggles, however, are expressed in diverse forms, ranging from the struggle for the control of the apparatus of local governance, location of local government headquarters and the chieftaincy institutions. Given that local government councils are a miniature representation of the Nigerian state, the struggle for its control is often fierce, based on perceived benefits to the groups at conflict. In both urban and rural situations, characterised by multi-ethnic (and multi-religious) existence, such struggles tend to assume ethno-religious dimension. Meanwhile, the location of local government headquarters and the perceived benefits to the local elites could also be a vexed issue. In the same manner, it may be useful to look at chieftaincy institutions as part and parcel of the Nigerian state system where occupants of traditional offices operate within the framework of domination and legitimacy functions of the Nigerian state and its patronage system.

First, it is important to establish the point that indigeneity is a powerful ideology in political discourses among the "indigenous" ethnic communities in Plateau State. As it has come out from the interviews and the FGDs, the idea and the consciousness generated on this basis has acquired a life of its own in a manner that surpasses the imagination of those who crafted the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. There is also a tendency for those who defend it as the basis of exclusion to rely on constitutional provisions and the reality of differentiated citizenship.

For those who cling to the "indigene" ideology in pushing for the exclusion of the Hausa community from the enjoyment of certain benefits, they contrast the position and claim of the Hausa/Fulani community with the positions of other groups such the Igbo and the Yoruba. As one of the participants in the FGD from Langtang North argued: "Igbo and Yoruba inhabitants in the Local Government trace their indigeneship to their places of birth either in the South-East or in the South-West" (FGD: 27/2/2005).

The only challenge to their claims, they allege, comes from the Hausa/Fulani community who appear bent on changing the history of the Plateau area. As Y. Y. Orga puts it, the Hausa "have attempted to change the history of the area:….It is necessary to note that we are all Nigerian citizens, so we cannot refuse to relate to one another on account of ethnic, religious and cultural differences. But what needs to be emphasized is that we must refrain from interfering in each other's religious and cultural beliefs and our God-given rights. We here cannot demand for an inch of their land in Kano" (Interview: 26/2/2005).

Perhaps, a more interesting analogy was given by Lipdo Nangwang as follows: "Our dilemma can best be described as a case of a stranger who came into your home and requested to spend the night on the verandah or balcony. You obliged his request. The next day, he cashed on your permission to request to sleep in your living room and you also conceded. Then a few days later, he arrogantly asks you to vacate your bedroom to allow him sleep with your wife. Is that not a declaration of war?"

However, what is often ignored here, perhaps, is the very interesting history of a Northern Nigerian identity which had Hausa/Fulani identity at its epicenter, and, which, historically encouraged the migration of generations of Hausa/Fulani into the Middle Belt region in the post-colonial period, and the forging of common ties between the so-called Hausa/Fulani and some elements in the Middle Belt based on a common Islamic faith.

The Hausa/Fulani community in Jos, however, have a different position on the issue of "native" versus "settler" claims as demonstrated in the Jos FGD. According to one Alhaji Nuhu Suleiman, "the native/settler distinction is not only a vexed issue in Jos; it is not in anyway justifiable, as it is very difficult to make a distinction between an indigene and a citizen. The fact that I have lived all my life in Jos, having been born and bred in Jos automatically makes me an indigene looking at it in the context of the Nigerian constitution. For this reason I cannot be considered an indigene elsewhere" (FGD) Alhaji Sulaiman certainly captures the dilemma of hundreds of members of the Hausa community whose parents and grandparents migrated into the Tin Mines or even earlier, and, therefore, belong to second or third generations of the Hausa community in Jos. He would go on to assert that if one were to strictly adhere to the

"native/settler" distinction, not even the Berom should qualify as "indigenes" because they too migrated from the Niger Republic at some point.

In a similar vein, Alhaji Audu Danladi Mashal said his great grand parents were born in Jos North, and that the fact that they had migrated from other states should not serve as justification of his "settler" status. His conclusion is that all citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have equal status and therefore must enjoy the rights and privileges all citizens enjoy irrespective of the location of their domicile. Citing the examples of Igbo candidates that have won elections in both Jos and Kano, he insisted that reducing any Nigerian to the status of a "settler" amounts to an infringement of the fundamental human rights guaranteed within the context of the Nigerian constitution.

Our research findings clearly show that citizenship is one of the key issues in the spate of conflicts in Plateau State. Many of those interviewed and participants in the FGD in Wase expressed the feelings that the fratricidal "inter-tribal" wars in Wase town and its environment is primarily political. One of the participants bluntly suggested: "As far as I am concerned the problem here is political, religion merely provides a tool in the prosecution of this political battle" (FGD, 26/2/2005). Infact, there was a unanimity of view among the male participants in the Wase FGD drawn largely from the Tarok and other non-Muslim communities that the Hausa and their allies in Wase area, especially the Bogghum, feel politically threatened by the demographic strength of the Tarok which is a key factor in an electoral system that is based on majoritarian principle. The Tarok in Wase are aware of the advantage conferred on them by their numerical strength hence they express the position that any political calculation that failed to recognise the Tarok factor in the area is a fruitless calculation, a claim that previous trends in elections tend to support. On the basis of this, the Tarok concluded that they were targets of the ethnic "cleansing agenda" of the Hausa which was meant to achieve the purpose of driving all the Tarok from Wase as a strategy of upstaging the political balance in favour of the Hausa.

Information generated from interviews with some members of the Hausa/Fulani community in Wase provides a strong indication that the question of who controls power in Wase Local Government is central to the

conflicts as they accused the Tarok of seeking their exclusion from the running of the affairs of the Local Government with the case of the impeachment of the Chairman of Wase fresh in their minds. However, both the Hausa/Fulani and the Tarok in Wase lay claim to the indigeneity of Wase, and one calls the other a "settler". The Tarok, for example, claim that they are "indigenes" of Wase whose settlement in the area after the Jukun predated the Jihad and the subsequent establishment of emirate rule over Wase. Despite the wide acceptance of historical sources which establish Jukun claims as the first settlers in Wase, Tarok people who participated in the FGD argue that quite to the contrary that the Tarok are the natives, and that the influx of other groups over the years have altered the ethnic configurations of the area. Other arguments used to justify the claim of ownership include the demographic dominance of the Tarok, the number of districts occupied by the Tarok, and by extension, the dominant position enjoyed by the Tarok in the electoral politics of Wase. They even suggested that many of those that have adopted Hausa ethnicity are actually foreigners from Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. It is apparently this group of people that is constantly referred to as mercenaries by the Tarok and other indigenous groups on the Plateau.

Against the claims of the Tarok is the argument of the Hausa/Fulani community that they possess the "indigenous" status in Wase dating back to the establishment of the Emirate in 1820. They maintain the position that the Tarok in Wase are "settlers" and "colonizers" whose presence in Wase is as recent as twenty-five years ago. And it would seem from all indications that the demographic strength of the Tarok as evident in their clear dominance in many wards is the source of apparent unease on the part of the Hausa/Fulani community.

It is against this background of construction of identity through historical narratives and other forms of production of history that the political question becomes quite obvious in the spate of communal conflicts in different parts of the Plateau State. In the Jos metropolis, for example, the conflicting claims between the indigenous ethnic communities the Berom, Afizere and Anaguta on the one hand, and the Hausa/Fulani community on the other, is framed by the existing system of differentiated citizenship. The refusal of the former to issue the latter with indigenship certificates, restriction of access to employment, and to political positions in the local

government becomes a key issue in the conflicts. Not surprisingly, the rejection of the appointment of Muktar as the Coordinator of NAPEP precipitated the series of events that culminated in the carnage of September 2001.

A critical dimension of this was the tendency for the political elites to engage in opportunism and "playing the communal card" as a strategy of winning votes. For instance, participants in the FGD in Shendam alluded to the electoral promises made by the Speaker of the Plateau House while persuading voters to give a second mandate to himself and the Governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, as a contributory factor to the escalation of tension and violence. It was mentioned that one of the electoral promises was to create a separate local government for the Hausa/Fulani community in Shendam as a ploy for being elected along with the Governor for a second term. Unfortunately, this electoral promise was never delivered.

3.1.2 Lack of Government Neutrality and the Crisis of Governance

It is well recognized that the character of the state, its interface with society, and the way it is perceived by the various ethno-cultural aggregates plays an important role in minimizing or increasing the prospects for conflicts. This recognition derives from among others, the failure of the post-colonial state in responding to the crises of capacity, governance and security. The sum total of the consequence of these crises is the difficulty to relate to the different cleavages present within the political community in a neutral manner so as to win the confidence of all in carrying out routine functions of accumulation and legitimation. As Ibrahim has argued:

The legitimacy of the modern state is linked to its capacity to present itself as a provider of public goods and, more important, a neutral arbiter that guarantees the security of all sections of the society. When the state is generally perceived as serving the particularistic interests of one group, it starts losing its legitimacy and, indeed, its authority. As state capacity declines, fear of the other rises and people resort to other levels of solidarity religious, ethnic and regional in search of security" (1999:94).

The study reveals that the state and key agencies and apparatuses of governance at all levels are key actors in the crisis that engulfed the entire Plateau State. This view is shared by both the "indigenes" of Plateau State

and members of the Hausa/Fulani community in their narrative of the history and sequences of events that resulted in the series of communal violence. But in so doing, they cite examples that fit into the position of each group. For instance, the "indigenes" of Jos pointed to the local government creation exercises in 1991 and 1994, as well as the initial appointment of Aminu Mato into the position of Caretaker Chairman of Jos North, and the appointment of Muktar in 2001 as Coordinator of NAPEP in the same Local Government, as examples of the Hausa/Fulani using their influence and political connections at the national level to carve out a hegemonic position in Jos. For this reason they perceive a decidedly outright bias on the part of the government at the national level in favour of the Hausa/Fulani community. On the other side, the Hausa have a pervasive sense of insecurity based on the feelings that government machineries at both the state and local government are designed to exclude them because they are controlled by the "indigenes". The sense of betrayal and anguish they harbour in this regard is reflected in the interviews and FGDs. Members of the Hausa/Fulani community said they could not understand why government had to reverse the appointment of Aminu Mato in 1994 in the first place. The refusal by the Chairman of Jos North to issue certificates of "indigenes" to children of Hausa/Fulani origins which has implication for their access to educational facilities and employment featured among the demonstrable evidence of bias towards the Hausa/Fulani community.

These same kinds of sentiments reflecting the divide are found in the responses to interviews and FGDs in Plateau South Senatorial District. For example, sentiments were expressed to the effect that the federal government tended to listen to the fabricated stories of the "settlers". There was also a widespread belief that government unleashed violence against the indigenous communities because of the belief that the Hausa /Fulani "settlers" were being persecuted. According to Y.Y. Orgah "The Hausa/Fulani are good talkers, and sometimes charismatic; that gives them some leverage in convincing government security officials and agencies against the Tarok (Interview, 22/2/2005). In the FGDs in Wase and Langtang, this view finds confirmation in the swift response of the Federal Government which followed calls by the Council of Ulama and other leading northern voices for declaration of a State of Emergency in Plateau State. The "indigenes" of Plateau were united in the perception that the President, in taking the drastic political action of declaring a State of

Emergency, had been misled by the Hausa who they said had a national voice, and who succeeded in making him to believe that the Tarok were the belligerent side in the conflict. They also argued that the apparent inaction of the Federal Government during the first wave of attacks in which the indigenous ethnic communities and Christians were the target, and resulting in the burning of churches and the killing of over 70 worshippers in Yelwa Shendam, and the immediate intervention following the reprisal attack was evidence of lack of neutrality in the disposition of government.

Furthermore, there was a suspicion on the part of the Tarok and other "indigenes" of Plateau in the Southern Senatorial District that the government may have supplied weapons to the Hausa-Fulani during the crisis which crippled the security forces which appeared overwhelmed and helpless in the face of actions of persons who appeared to be above the law. There were allegations on the part of the Tarok that the Emir of Wase had played a leading role in promoting the conflicts, and that this role had undermined whatever peace dividend came from the Commission of Inquiry set up by the government following the outbreak of conflicts in Lamba District of Wase in 2001.

Not only is the deep animosity and the depth of carnage that attended the spate of communal conflicts related to the role of the state as a neutral arbiter, there is a related issue of the absence of rule of law. Our key informants and participants in the FGDs in Wase and Shendam local governments persistently made the point that in several cases and disputes between the "indigenes" and the Hausa/Fulani elements centred on farmlands and destruction of crops, they were frustrated in getting their grievances addressed by the relevant authorities. As one of the participants in the FGD in Wase claimed, "All complaints about forceful seizure of farmlands and wanton destruction of crops by the cattles owned by the Fulani fell on deaf ears". They therefore argued that it was the recurrent nature of such incidences and the failure to get expected responses that drove them into the extreme of violence. They also complained that the control of political power in Wase Local Government emboldened the Hausa/Fulani elements to disregard unfavourable court rulings on issues of land disputes.

The overall picture that emerged from the study is that government played a key role in the conflicts. Although our informants and participants in the FGDs commended the military for its swift reaction and bringing the situation under control, they blamed the Plateau State government, for being partly responsible for the eruption of the conflict. They suggested that despite the fact that it was duly informed about the security situation even before the eruption of the crisis, and had access to security reports about the impending danger, its response was characterized by callous indifference and complacency. This, they believed, accounted for the high level of mayhem witnessed in the city of Jos and its environment in September 2001. Some even accused the government of masterminding the conflict through its evil manipulative machinations. They pointed, for instance, to unguarded utterances of top government officials, including the State Governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, as contributing to the inflammation of passion.

3.1.3 Ethno-Religious Identity and Self Determination

Interests constructed around ethnic and religious identities as well the desire for self-determination appear central in the violent conflicts that have been the lot of Plateau State in recent times. More often than not, ethnic and religious identities provide the bases for discourse on power and access to resources around which the struggle for self-determination is fiercely waged. It is important however, to understand the essentially dynamic nature of identity politics in this regard because of the existence of layers of identities. For instance, internal differences within these two identities could provide the basis of struggle for access to local power and resources in the same way in which inter-group difference could be the basis for construction of interests. Self-determination expresses the desire of a group or groups of people who form a component of the larger political system for varying degrees of autonomy as a means of protecting difference, or of overcoming perceived disadvantage. Demands based on aspirations of a people to govern their own affairs, and shapen their destinies which are at the core of self-determination, have provided the basis for one of the most successful and passionate political movements in human history. However, like other forms of identity politics, the demand for ethnic and religious self-determination may not only be driven by the sense of 'imagined community', or interests formulated on the basis of such community-wide interests. Such demands and struggle for self-determination may be a guise for pushing class and elite interests which are

then, for the purpose of legitimacy and mobilization, presented as the interest of the community.

Although there was recognition on the part of many of those interviewed and participants in the FGDs regarding the limits to which the conflicts can be attributed to differences in ethnic, religious and cultural identities, it was obvious that differences rooted in these identities played a crucial role. To begin with, these identities provided the main lines of animosity, and there was a tendency for differences rooted in economic and political issues to be fought out at the level of ethnicity, religion and culture.

The conflicts in Jos metropolis bring into bold relief, not only the role of differences rooted in religion and ethnicity, but also the ease with which one identity collapses into the other. At the height of the crisis when emotions were still very high and most of the people, government and relief agencies were still grappling with the humanitarian aspects of the crisis, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria, Dr. Datti Ahmed, was quoted as saying: "Jos if you like it or not is a Hausa Town. It [Jos] was established by the Hausa, though it is a Berom territory. The Hausa were those who established the city" (The Guardian, September 14, 2001).

The FGD in Jos North made up of adults drawn from a mixture of Hausa, Jarawa, Igbo and Yoruba conceded that one cannot deny the role of ethnicity and religion in the conflicts on 1994, and particularly, that of September, 2001. One explanation for this, according to participants, has to do with the fact that the immediate source of the conflict was the incident that occurred when a Christian lady insisted on crossing a barricade set by Muslims observing Friday prayers. According to one of the participants, it is always important to note that the conflict involved the Hausa-Fulani who are predominantly of the Muslim faith and some other ethnic groups within Jos North and its surrounding who are of the Christian faith. The pattern of alliance according to another participant, Alhaji Marshal Danladi, was one that pitched the Christians of all the other ethnic groups in Jos North against the Muslim adherents who are mostly the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba extraction (Jos North, FGD: 23/2/2005). Mallam Bala Saidu went further to assert that "although the crisis initially had nothing to do with religion; people later began to give it a religious connotation" (Ibid).

Many Christians in Shendam, from the responses to the interviews and the FGDs, believed that the Muslim community in Shendam unilaterally declared Sharia, a point which triggered fear and necessitated the formation of alliances with the other non-Muslim population in the Local Government. The fact that the eruption of the conflict coincided with the 40th Anniversary of the Jihadist movement which was celebrated with a lot of fanfare in the core north appeared to justify the fear and apprehension of the non-Muslim population of the area. The position of the Tarok in Wase is quite similar. For them the genesis of the renewed violence of 2004 could be traced to sometime in 2002 when the Hausa community formed "Al-Umma" which was basically an association drawing together all the Muslims from diverse ethnic backgrounds including the Hausa, Jukuns and other groups in Wase. This association, they alleged, became the organizational platform for mobilizing against the Tarok and the non-Tarok Christians living in Wase (FGD, 26/2/2005).

The salience of religious identity resonates powerfully in the patterns of attacks and the identification of the relevant "Others" in the course of the conflicts. Apart from the perception on the part of the indigenous ethnic groups in Plateau South areas that the Kano Emirate fuelled the crisis by providing logistic| support to the Muslim groups, the pattern of the attacks provides strong evidence. For instance, the Tarok accused the Hausa/Fulani in Wase and other places of targeting non-Muslim groups such as the Goemais, Youms, and the Saiyawa from Bauchi for attacks. Similar charge of genocide directed at the minority Muslims by the Christian majority were made by the Hausa/Fulani community.

Finally, there were several instances in which candidates standing for elections were opposed on the ground of their identities. For instance, in Shendam, the rejection of a Goemai candidate for elective position into Shendam local legislative Council in 2003 on the ground of being an "infidel" generated so much tension.

3.1.4 Resource Competition and Communal Conflicts

The centrality of competition for scarce economic resources and goods provides clear evidence that atavistic explanations are not enough in accounting for the protracted communal conflicts in Nigeria in general, and

in Plateau State in particular. The recurrent issues include land ownership and access to land for productive purposes as well as access to market and commerce. In all the cases, the land question stands out very prominently, and it is closely related to the agrarian question. The latter, in a broad context, relates to the penetration of capitalism into agriculture, land concentration, and the efforts of the state to promote capitalist agriculture through land reform, and the attendant social differentiation within the peasantry (Byres, 1995:565). The totality of state policies aimed at restructuring agrarian relations in Nigeria from the mid-1970s, and the Land Use Act of 1978, all have profound implications of encouraging the penetration of capital, both local and foreign, into agriculture, and increasing the phenomenon of land grabbing and alienation in the countryside. The land question on the other hand, draws attention to the need to accord land its full meaning in the African discourse. Land, for example, is a key issue in ethnic based communal conflicts, because ethnic identity formation is intricately tied to the ideology of territorial possession, by which ethnic claims are made on a definite territory. Second, the importance of land is not limited to its economic value in agrarian societies. Land has wider political, cultural and ideological meanings. Shipton and Goheen (1993: 307) capture the situation most aptly when they suggest that the purpose of land is "not just to produce the material conditions for survival and enrichment, but also to gain control over others, and to define personal and social identities". So diverse are the uses to which land is put in Africa that it is difficult to say which land is idle.

In rural situations characterised by multi-ethnic existence, the situation appears more acute as the combination of population explosion, the phenomenon of land grabbing and alienation by urban bigwigs, the demand for more land in response to economic hardships occasioned by economic decline and adjustment, as well as the emergence of new rural actors tend to put more pressure on available land and the social relations that regulate access to land (Egwu, 1998). More often than not, those targeted for exclusion are those designated as "strangers" and "settlers" who equally tend to resist such exclusion based on their own construction of history and identity. Furthermore, the significance of land in political and communal conflicts has tended to increase under the conditions of massive economic decline and the mass disempowerment that tend to accompany implementation of orthodox structural adjustment programme. In trying to

cope with the economic hardship associated with these, peasant communities are forced to expand the lands they have under cultivation in order to provide basic social needs to their families at a time when costs of basic commodities have risen to high levels. The lineage system, therefore, becomes the basis of the coping mechanism of peasant households. Despite remarkable adaptation and dynamism of peasants in the face of sustained pressure, the additional need to cope with the reality of ethnic diversity can place severe stress on the social relations that regulate the acquisition of land and allocation of labour. The consequence is that, in some cases lineage members have, as a response to increasing land scarcity, tried to regain land that has been sold to individuals, whether these be kinsmen or strangers (See Egwu, 1998).

That competition for resources accounts for the spate of ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State is not in doubt as strongly indicated by the data generated on the basis of CRA methodology. Although this did not come out quite strongly in the case of Jos, the responses from the interviews and the FGDs in the Southern Senatorial District lend credence to the visibility of economic factors. However, a common threat that flows from the deluge of complaints and concerns is the alleged seizure and control of farmlands by the Hausa/Fulani community in the area, and their dominant position in terms of access to economic opportunities and the control of commerce. For example, participants in the FGD in Shendam, especially the Goemai, identified three underlying economic reasons for the protracted conflicts in the Local Government Area. First, they pointed to the undue control exercised by Hausa/Fulani "settlers" over land for farming purpose which is the natural possession of the Goemai. Second, there had been long standing quarrels between the "indigenous" ethnic communities and the Hausa/Fulani community over the control of the Yelwa market which had to be resolved by the construction of a new market site for the former. A number of "indigenes" that were interviewed strongly believe that the relative success of their market and the corresponding decline of the market for the Hausa/Fulani was a source of tension and animosity in Yelwa. It is possible to conclude from the aggressive competition for land between the farmers and grazers, the inter-ethnic competition for land between the Goemai, Tarok and other ethnic groups in the area on the one hand, and the Hausa/Fulani "settlers" on the other, that land is an important factor.

The Wase crisis provides evidence regarding the central role of competition for scarce resources, especially land. For in addition to the series of skirmishes and confrontation between Tarok farmers and the Fulani herdsmen or grazers which was the initial source of tension, the Tarok perceive the Hausa as a source of threat to their own access to land. Of particular concern was the question of forced seizure or occupation of land belonging to Tarok "natives" by the Hausa/Fulani elements invoking the influence of the Wase Emirate. Besides, there are issues that relate to competition for economic resources. As one of the Tarok participants in the FGD in Wase told us, "The experience was so painful to all Tarok people who were engaged in one business venture or the other that they remained subservient and subjected in relation to the Hausa. Certain areas of business must not be ventured into by the Tarok or the non-Muslims in Wase" (FGD: 26/2/2005).

3.2 Assessment of the Impact of the Plateau State Conflicts

The spate of ethno-religious and communal conflicts that occurred in Plateau State beginning from the September 2001 conflicts in the Jos metropolis, and which culminated in the imposition of a State of Emergency on the State following a second wave of conflicts that plagued Pateau South Senatorial Zone, had significant impact on the economic, political and social landscape of the entire state, and the nation at large. This was obvious from the responses to questions regarding the positive impact of the crisis. Perhaps, the only exception to the negative image of the conflicts came from some of the FGDs, especially in Langtang and Shendam where participants mentioned that they considered as positive the consequent displacement of the Hausa/Fulani population and the take-over of businesses and commercial ventures in which they exercised dominance by the indigenes. They mentioned butchering and trade in cereals and other commercial ventures as those that had now been taken over by the indigenous ethnic communities.

The heavy impact of the conflicts can be attributed to a number of factors. For instance, the conflicts were the outcome of bottled up anger following several decades of authoritarian rule, and the absence of democratic framework of resolving and managing differences. Such bottled up anger found expression in the liberalized political environment made possible by the return to constitutional framework of governance. There was also a

sense in which the absence of good governance and deficiency in statecraft on the part of the political leadership escalated the conflicts as the perception that the state had failed to be even-handed in its relationship to the various ethno-religious communities inflamed communal passion and violence. All these were compounded by the absence of an integrated Early Warning Signal (EWS). Indeed, from all indications, government's initial response was poor because of the assumption that the matter would die naturally. And when it chose to intervene, government security forces were actually confounded by the dynamics of the conflicts, and, indeed, appeared helpless.

The discussion on the impact of the conflicts in this section is largely based on the information generated from the Community Rapid Assessment. The discussion covers, among others, the impact of the conflicts on the National Question, the physical displacement of people, and the impact on different social categories of people as well as democratization.

3.2.1 Plateau Conflicts and the National Question

One important area in which the conflicts in Plateau State have had negative impact is in respect of the National Question, and how this relates to the wider issues of nation building, development and democratization. Like several other communal conflicts, the Plateau conflicts have led to increased polarization of Nigerian communities along ethnic and religious lines, and, accordingly, have reinforced the sense of social distance among different Nigerian groups. And this has happened at two levels: at the national level and the level of the local communities as suggested by the evidence available from the study of the Jos crisis and the series of conflicts recorded in Plateau South Senatorial District.

The outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, for example, brought to the foreground three lines of cleavages. At one level, it was understood as the conflict between "natives" and "settlers", although the latter was understood strictly as members of the Hausa/Fulani community in Jos. At another level, it was understood as struggle between Christians and Muslims. At yet another level, it appeared as political conflicts which pitched all northern minorities against perceived Hausa/Fulani hegemony. These cleavages were simultaneously at play in the patterns of conflicts and the definition of the relevant "Others". But even more fundamental was the

impact of the conflicts on ethnic, religious and regional identities at the national level. For instance, both the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jamatu Nasril Islam (JNI) were directly brought into the conflicts, trading accusations regarding the religious motives of the crisis, and each coming to the assistance of its members in terms of distribution of relief materials.

It was even more so with respect to the 2004 conflicts in the southern part of Plateau State. The outflow of internally displaced persons from the theatre of carnage into neighbouring Nasarawa, Bauchi and Kano states unleashed another wave of violence. As ethnic and religious organizations continued to trade accusations and inflaming more passion, the Federal Government clamped emergency rule on Plateau State. What followed was unprecedented ethnic and religious tension, bringing to the fore the tragedy of the pursuit of nation-building. Many of our respondents admitted that the conflicts have resulted in the redefinition of relationship between the Christians and the Muslims in the face of the breakdown in the trust and confidence that once existed. For instance, we were told Christians and Muslims have stopped sharing pleasantries as was the tradition during festive periods. However, the reality of polarization and social distance between different communal groups is most graphically reflected in the pattern of residential settlement. In Jos North Local Government area, ethnic and religious polarization in residence is palpable. While Angwan Rogo and Bauchi Road areas are now strictly for Muslims, Hwolshe and Jenta Adamu have become predominantly Christian settlements. According to Alhaji Bala Saidu, a participant in the Jos North FGD, such polarization only reinforces the sense of distance already existing.

3.2.2   Violence and Population Displacement
One remarkable area in which the conflicts impacted adversely on the people and society is the level of carnage and the physical displacement of the population associated with the spate of ethno-religious and communal conflicts in Plateau State. Many of the informants and participants in the FGDs confirm the killings, the level of destruction of property, and the level of displacement as alluded to in the section on the overview of the Plateau State conflicts above. As one of the participants in the FGD in Jos North summed up the situation, "The effect of the crisis was indeed devastating.

Apart from the loss and destruction of property, many people were displaced and rendered homeless; it was such a painful experience that left everybody especially the victims of the conflict traumatized and psychologically displaced" (FGD: Jos North: 22/2/2005).

A related dimension of the violence was the loss of business ventures and means of livelihood for many people. Jos Main Market, considered the economic life wire for for many and a huge source of revenue for the government was destroyed, as one person suggested, in a mysterious circumstance. Again, as one of our informants told us: "A lot of people never recovered from the impact of the loss, so poverty crept back into their lives to a point where to scratch for a precarious existence has now become somewhat a Herculean task" (Interview: 18/2/2005).

It does flow naturally from the foregoing that psychological violence was a pronounced feature of the impact of the conflicts. Reverend Mamshall whose house was burnt and could not remove even a pin from it said: "Some people lost everything, including the loved ones". While suggesting that the loss included peoples' entire business ventures, he said further: "Looking at Wase today, you do not even need a soothsayer to tell you the difference between yesterday and today".

3.2.3   Violations of Rights and the Culture of Impunity
Rights violation and the enthronement of a culture of impunity on the part of individuals, groups and government institutions is yet another important dimension of the impact of the Plateau conflicts. As stated in the section dealing with the overview of the Plateau State conflicts, the conflicts led to wanton killings and destruction of lives and properties perpetrated largely by individuals and groups. Indeed, there is a practical difficulty in making a distinction between violations perpetrated by individuals and groups since such individuals rationalized their actions and behaviours by invoking group positions, be it ethnic or religion. Despite several arrests that were made during the Jos crisis of 2001 and the series of conflicts that followed in the other parts of the State, there was a groundswell of opinion that justice was not carried out. This was in addition to several cases of detention without trial which, for many, became a deliberate ploy used by government to unduly punish groups and individuals targeted for persecution.

However, the dimension of rights violations that is often ignored, for obvious reasons, is the one perpetrated by agents of the state and the security forces. The culture of impunity that seemed to characterize the behaviour of the police and army personnel attracted the criticisms of our informants and participants in the FGDs who, despite commending them for arresting the drift, upbraided them for extorting money and routinely subjecting innocent citizens to physical molestations at the various checkpoints. Many of them told us that it became a nightmare for the civil populations to travel from Amper in Kanke Local Government to Langtang in the immediate post-conflict period because of the heavy cost in tolls at the different police and army checkpoints.

Finally, there were cases of rights violations targeted at vulnerable groups such as women and children in the various refugee camps. Although there is a tendency for cases of rape and other forms of gender-based violence, perpetrated by both refugees and security forces to be under reported for several reasons, including cultural factors, our discussion in the overview of the conflicts made very strong allusion to this dimension of rights violations.

3.2.4   The Impact of Democratization

The ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State provide evidence regarding the tension that could result from the interface between democratization on the one hand, and the political mobilization of ethnic and religious identities on the other. Thus, relationship between Christians and Muslims, and between "indigenes" and "settlers", is defined by mutual suspicion and antagonism. But this is most aptly felt in the realm of politics and competition for power. According to one of our informants, politics is no more a rational competition to select men and women that are competent and credible to manage our common concern irrespective of their ethnic or religious backgrounds; it has now become a battle field between the so called Natives (Christians) and the so called settlers (Hausa Fulani) to capture political power at all costs" (Interview: 18/2/2005). As Nuhu Suleman, a participant in the Jos North FGD puts the matter, "consideration for voting is no more rested on the provisions of basic or essential services as a requisite for wining elections, but a competition that is marked by bitterness and strife, conducted with no respect for the rules of the game"

(Jos FGD: 22/2/2005).

4.   By Way of Conclusion: The Way Forward

Thus far, we have attempted to examine the underlying causes of the Plateau State conflicts as well as the analysis of the impact of the conflicts. The foregoing analysis has thrown up a number of issues we need to confront in practical terms. It has shown that Nigeria faces a major challenge in the management of diversity, and cultivating the positive elements of plurality of identities expressed in ethnic, religious and regional terms. Secondly, the carnage and destruction arising from opportunistic manipulation of differences and the political mobilization in general create enormous challenges to nation-building, development and democratization. The tendency for communal violence in one location to elicit reprisal attacks in other parts often lead to national tension and the increasing sense of social distance between and among various Nigerian groups. More than any other form of politicized identity, the distinction between "natives" and "settlers" is a major fetter to national progress as defined by the political ideals of national integration and democratization.

However, it is instructive to note that there are three elements in the "native/settler" divide that needs to be mentioned. First, those who are targeted for exclusion on the ground of not being "indigenes" suffer such fate in the context of the struggle over power and resources in which they are perceived as threats or potential threats. Second, the dynamics of the Plateau State conflicts shows the reality and the superfluous nature of the distinction between "settlers" and "indigenes". For instance, within the Jos metropolis, the status of "settlers" is restricted to the Hausa/Fulani community and other ethnic groups outside Plateau State, as it hardly applies to Angas, Tarok, and Ron in Jos, despite the fact that the historical basis for conferring the status ordinarily limits it to the Berom, Afizere and Jarawa. Similarly, in Shendam Local Government, it is only the Goemai that can be described as "natives" while other Plateau groups who migrated into the area are "settlers". However, as the basis of exclusion, it is restricted in practice to the Hausa/Fulani community and the Tiv, but not the Tarok and the Kwalla who, by the same historical logic, are "settlers". Again in Wase, the Tarok and the Hausa/Fulani are migrants going by the

historical narrative that provides the basis of "indigeneity", but it is only the latter that is defined as the "settler". What is obvious, therefore, is the changing boundary in the definition of the relevant "Others".

Third, despite the reality of ethnic and religious identities as the outward forms in which the conflicts over power and resources are expressed, our informants told us that the way out lies in implementing programmes of social justice, promoting inter-group tolerance, and according recognition to every group and the right to self-determination. For instance, the Tarok in Wase complained that despite their overwhelming population in Wase, they had been denied the chiefdom. Also mentioned was the need to create employment for the youths. Issues of social justice and equity are equally implied in relation to persistent complaints about access to land for farming purpose among the various groups.

Besides, there is an urgent need to develop a rights-based approach in the conception and implementation of development programmes as well as the management of conflicts arising from difference and the politicization of identities. Alongside this, there is a need to pay special attention to the peculiar needs of women and children in situations of conflicts, and to develop the capacities of the state at all levels to deal with humanitarian crisis that flow from the protracted ethno-religious and communal conflicts in different parts of Nigeria

Notes and References:

It is instructive to note that identity formation is a complex issue in Jos as it is elsewhere. One striking example is the case of Hausa identity which is actually conferred on a number of people who were not Hausa by blood, but by religious identity, and having been absorbed into a network of social ties and obligations that derive from membership of the Islamic religion. Specifically, there are several elements of northern minorities such as Igala and Nupe who, over time, have adopted Hausa ethnicity.

However, what used to exist as Langtang Local Government has been split into

Langtang North and South local governments.

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Appendix

Advocacy Issues in Resource Issues in Conflict in Plateau State
Arising from the recommendations advanced in the report of the study on the above subject and in order to ensure peace in Plateau state, advocacy built around the issues highlighted below are necessary.

Civic Awareness Building about Citizenship
There is the need to build civic awareness around the issue of citizenship in

a plural setting. As a long term measure, there should be civic education in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. As a short-term effort, awareness and sensitization workshops about citizenship could be targeted at youth organizations, women groups, community leaders, and religious leaders.

Capacity Building for Selected Organizations and Pressure Groups that could push Citizenship Question for national Discourse and Dialogue
Since the issue of citizenship is a constitutional matter that can not be handled by one state, it is very important for organizations and pressure groups of the state to have the capacity to push such issues for national dialogue so that they can be resolved at the national level. Therefore there is the need for workshops on capacity building for some selected organizations and pressure groups in the state to enable them articulate positions that they can push in respect of citizenship question in Plateau state and other areas faced with this problem in the country.

Religious Organizations as Agents of Peace
Plateau state is a religious state. This explains why it is hosting the headquarters of Christian organizations like ECWA and COCIN and Islamic organizations such as JA'AMATU NASRIL ISLAM among others. Therefore leaders of these organizations can be used to reach their members by carrying the message of peace each time they have interactions with them. There is therefore the need to create fora for these leaders to meet at intervals to talk out their differences as perceived by their members and resolve those differences.

Inter-Ethnic/Group Dialogue
Information gap between the ethnic groups and other groups in the state can breed suspicion and therefore heighten tensions. It is therefore important to create forum for inter-ethnic and group dialogues. During the forum, drama sketches around the theme of peaceful inter-communal living can be used to deliver the peace message. Also, radio jingles on peaceful inter-communal living can used as a supplement.

Poverty Alleviation Programmes

As indicated in the report, the role of poverty in generating conflicts is very significant. In order to engage the youth in gainful employment, there is the need to embark on post-school skills acquisition workshops. Training acquired from these workshops could help them to create their own employment and as well easily fit into employment of organizations. Also, basic inputs for economic activities such as farm inputs, markets, basic infrastructures, etc should be made accessible to people.

Media and NGOs as Watchdogs on the use of Public Resources
Over time the Press has turned praise singer for the governments even in the face of their massive failures and misuse of public resources while the NGOs have generally been passive.. There is the need for sensitization and awareness workshops for the Media and NGOs to enable them act as watchdogs on the use of public resources. The voice of The League for Human Rights on this issue is commended but remains a lone ranger in the wilderness and needed to be supported by the Media and other NGOs in the state.

Effective Post-Conflict Recovery Programmes
Most post-conflict efforts of the governments and other organizations have always been in the area of delivery of relief materials. There is the need to go beyond this. Programmes that could give a sense of belonging to the victims, properly rehabilitate the victims, and bring the warring communities to talk over the issues in conflict need to be put in place. The stakeholders in these must include the State government, Local governments, and the Community leaders.

Demand for Accountability and Good Governance
There is the need to build people's awareness to demand for accountability and good governance from those in charge of public resources. On the other hand, those in charge of public resources must be responsive to the demands of the people. Awareness and sensitization workshops could be organized for various groups, institutions and organizations in the state to enable them play their roles effectively.

Capacity Building Programmes for Women Groups
Women are best suited for advocacy for peace but do not have the capacity for this effort now that they are most needed. Workshops on capacity

building should be organized for various women groups in the state to enable them effectively sue for peace.

About Us

ActionAid Nigeria

ActionAid is an International Non-Governmental organisation registered in The Netherlands and headquartered in Johannesburg South Africa. ActionAid International works in 45 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. 25 of these country programmes, affiliates or associates are in Africa and are led by Africans. All country programmes have since 2003 been operating as equal partners with equal say on how we operate.

ActionAid was founded in the United Kingdom in 1972 and was then known as Action in Distress. It was formed as a child sponsorship agency. It also commenced operations on the continent of Africa in 1972 and in Nigeria since 1999.

The organisation started programming with service delivery, especially assistance to orphans and poor children to access primary education. Now, we utilise Rights-based Approach in our work.

ActionAid works with the poor and excluded, promoting values and commitment in civil society, institutions and governments with the aim of achieving structural changes in order to eradicate injustices and poverty in theworld.

The ActionAid Nigeria programme commenced programmatic operations in January 2000 after a Country appraisal which found poverty in the midst of plenty. We commenced work then through a Country Agreement signed with the National Planning Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Our works are defined in *Five Thematic Areas* of (i) **Reproductive Sexual Health and Rights (HIV/AIDS)**; (ii) **Right to Education**; (iii) **Right to Human Security in Conflict and Emergencies** (iv) **Women's Rights** and (v)**Right to Just and Democratic Governance**. Linking all these is our geographically based integrated **Partnerships Against Poverty (PAP)** which is being implemented in twelve states of the federation. We are building on the experiences and lessons learnt from the initial work, and where appropriate creating linkages with existing thematic areas. Promoting the right to just and democratic governance and Women's Rights are cross-cutting themes which apply across the whole programme, but also have stand alone initiatives.

Vision & Mission

Our vision is a world without poverty and injustice in which every person can exercise their right to a life of dignity.

ActionAid's mission is to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate

poverty and injustice.

GOALS

Following are our goals, derived from the vision and mission above:

1. The poor and excluded people and communities will exercise power to secure their rights

2. Women and girls will gain power to secure their rights

3. Citizens and civil society across the world will fight for rights and justice

4. States and their institutions will be accountable and democratic and will promote, protect and fulfil human rights for all.

VALUES

We have also set for ourselves the following values:

Mutual respect: recognising the innate dignity and worth of all people and the value of diversity

Equity and justice: requiring us to work to ensure that everyone (irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, gender and religion) has equal opportunity for expressing and utilizing their potential.

Honesty and transparency: requiring us to be accountable for the effectiveness of our actions and open in our judgments and communications with others.

Solidarity with poor, powerless and excluded: so that our only bias will be a commitment to the interests of the poor and powerless.

Courage of conviction: requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative-without fear of failure- in pursuit of making the greatest impact on the causes of poverty.

Independence: from any religious or political party affiliation.

Humility: recognising that we are a part of a bigger alliance against poverty and requiring our presentation and behaviours to be modest

Our Identity

We are a one united international organisation, with long-term supporters and volunteer base numbering over 460,,000. We have had direct and long-term relationships with poor and excluded people.

AA's Distinctive approach

We take sides with poor and excluded people, using a rights-based approach, forming partnerships and alliances. ActionAid adopts a partnership approach and works with other civil society, private sector, government and development partners for pro-poor reforms in the interest of poor people.

Our adoption of a rights-based approach to our work also includes putting women's rights strategically at the centre.

While ActionAid will work towards meeting practical needs, its work will focus primarily on rights with a view to leveraging poor people's ability to claim their basic rights. We have always done our job by having critical engagement with people, government & institutions. Our approaches range from co-operation to confrontation but always non-violent.

We act both locally and globally, making a difference to poor people's lives now.

Core Interventions

Our core intervention strategies include:

1. Participatory analysis and awareness
2. Organising and mobilising
3. Strengthening capacity
4. Working with social movements
5. Addressing immediate needs
6. Advocacy and campaigning
7. Using research to develop and promote alternatives

Our Strategic priorities

We have over the years evolved six rights-based themes which overlap and intersect with each other in line with our international strategy *Rights to End Poverty*. These are:

1. Women's rights

2. the right to education

3. the right to food

4. the right to human security in conflict and emergencies

5.   the right to life and dignity in the face of HIV/AIDS

6.   the right to just and democratic governance

The emphasis in recent times has been on the Rights To End Poverty (RTEP) with the sole aim of bring all on board to **End Poverty Together**. In this we focus on the following issues:

1.   Rights
2.   Advocacy and campaigns
3.   Constitutional change and policy change
4.   Girls and women and their movements
5.   Networks, coalitions and movements
6.   Capacity building

CONCLUSION

ActionAid International is a unique organisation with strong values and committed staff.

We are a learning organisation.

And we are committed to Partnership approach to development.