

THE IMPACT OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

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Northeast Nigeria is currently the epicenter of insurgency in the country. Conflict in the zone has not only taken a heavy toll on the resources of Nigeria but has adversely affected women and girls who are the principal victims. This vulnerable group constitutes the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons who are frequently subjected to rape and diverse kinds of sexual assaults perpetrated on them by the insurgents as well as military personnel. Many women have been denied their rights to earn a living, since they are forced to flee their homes, thereby abandoning their means of livelihood. Women and girls often assume responsibility for caring for aged parents, children, and invalids during and after conflicts. Young girls are victims of abduction, conscripted as suicide bombers, killed, turned into sex slaves, and, in many instances, married off against their will. Generally, young girls are also deprived of their rights to education because of the attacks on educational institutions and the insecure environment. I recommend legislation ensuring that the rights of women and girls are protected during conflicts, as well as the rights being mainstreamed in the conflict resolution process.