

**INPUT OF THE NIGERIA NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION TO THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT ON  
CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY, INCLUDING ITS  
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**1. What are the main causes/drivers of homelessness in Nigeria?**

- a. Poverty, this is a vicious cycle because many persons do not have jobs because of lack of education (sometimes caused by poverty) and skills hence do not have access to available opportunities.
- b. Terrorist activities and Banditry, presently over 2million persons have been displaced from their homes in the northeast region, most parts of the north west and north central of Nigeria.
- c. Natural disaster such as floodings in parts of the country. The worst so far occurred between June 2022 to October 2023. It affected 31 out of the 36 states in Nigeria and caused the displacement a large number of persons in the country further to which the consequences of these floodings for instance have spread diseases such as cholera further resulting in more deaths.
- d. Forceful evictions, where government demolish accommodations either illegal or for overriding public interest
- e. Abuse and harmful treatments at home.
- f. Mental or physical disability.

**2. Is there evidence of persons experiencing homelessness being exploited in contemporary forms of slavery such as forced bounded labour, worst forms of child labour, sexual exploitation which might amount to slavery and other forms of exploitation in Nigeria?**

- a. The Almajiri system and Terrorists Network. In Nigeria the word almajiri refers to a seeker of knowledge. It is used to describe those who migrate from their homes to other locations in search of Islamic knowledge. However, in recent times begging has become synonymous with almajiri with a typical almajiri unable to afford a meal, shelter or formal education. These boys are removed from their homes before the age of 7 and left to fend for themselves on their own on

the street. They experience terrible conditions such as homelessness, poverty, cultural resistance and government negligence. Terrorists groups in need of more soldiers recruit these boys through a promise of personal worth, economic improvement and provision of bare necessities and force them into a life of criminality and terrorism which they might otherwise have not been a part of if they were not homeless<sup>1</sup>.

- b. A study conducted on 475 homeless children and youth in Lagos revealed that in order to survive, the children engaged in carrying goods or refuse, becoming bus conductors and the female ones resorted to prostitution<sup>2</sup>. These homeless children also suffer harassment from law enforcement and adult hoodlums. They also complained of sexual molestation, rape and harassment as the major dangers they experience on the street

**3. Are there examples of positive measures taken by your government to prevent persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including children in street situations or discharged from child or foster care, from being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery?**

In order to curb the menace of the almajiri children on the street and protect their human right the Federal Government in collaboration with the governments of Kano and Sokoto states established integrated boarding school referred to as Almajiri Integrated Model Schools (AIMS).

Rapid urbanization in developing countries such as Nigeria has caused the problem of inadequate housing for people especially persons within the low-income group therefore resulting in an increase in homelessness. In Nigeria the number of persons living within urban areas has phenomenally increased over the years thereby occasioning a rise in homelessness. The Nigerian government in a bid to fight homelessness has taken a number of steps including the building of over 5000 houses in 34 states under

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<sup>1</sup> Abbo U, Zain ZM and Njidda BA, "The ALMAJIRI System and Insurgency in the Northern Nigeria: A Reconstruction of the Existing Narratives for Policy Direction" (2017) 6 International Journal of Innovative Research and Development

<sup>2</sup> Edewor PA, "Homeless Children and Youths in Lagos, Nigeria: Their Characteristics, Street Life and Sexual Behaviour" [2014] Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences

the current Federal Government's National Housing Programme (NHP)

Nigeria, since 2011 has experienced heightened terrorism activities resulting in the displacement of over 2 million persons from their homes. The government in order to avoid mass homelessness and other consequences of such displacement established Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps where temporary accommodation is provided for these displaced persons. these planned camps are officially authorized by the Nigerian government to provide shelter, food and medical care for the IDPs

**4. Are there examples of positive measures implemented by civil society organisations or other non-governmental stakeholders in protecting and promoting the rights of persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and in preventing them from being victimised in contemporary forms of slavery**

There are several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria providing humanitarian services for the internally displaced persons, in particular, the northeast of Nigeria where there had been increased terrorism activities leading to forced displacement. Some of the NGOs include the following

- a. MSF a non- governmental organisation, has been providing sanitary and hygiene facilities and health services to the displaced persons.
- b. The Chris Igbokwe Foundation is a non- profit organisation who awarded the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) scholarship to 20 internally displaced persons (IDPs)

NGOs and CSOs have taken an active part in the protection and promotion of rights of homeless persons in Nigeria (apart from victims of terrorism). Some of these NGOs/CSOs and their activities are as follows

- a. Bread of Hope, an NGO in Ibadan Oyo State is said to have acquired 100 acres of land in Ibadan and is in the process of building structures on it to provide shelter, rehabilitate, educate, provide psycho social support and a haven for orphaned, abused, neglected, abandoned, homeless and at risk children, teenagers and young adults.

- b. The Destiny Trust is another non- governmental organisation launched a program called 1000HelpingHands campaign aimed at removing barriers to free education for homeless children and children from extremely poor families.
- c. Homeless Not Hopeless Nigeria is a student led non-profit organisation founded to address the issues of homelessness and its many consequences in Nigeria. It also seeks to prevent the projected future consequences of homelessness in Nigeria.
- d. World Nations Development Programme Initiative (WNDP) is a Non-Profit and Non-Governmental organisation established with the aim of helping the less privileged in Africa. The Organisation is in the process of building 5000 two-bedroom bungalows across Nigeria with health care centers and schools to assist in taking many children off the street and give them homes.

**5. What practical recommendations would you propose to overcome these ongoing challenges**

- a. Government at both the federal and sub- national levels should review land use laws and policies that will make land accessible and affordable to all categories of the society. There should also be policies that will reduce prices of housing materials which will have a multiplier effect on the people at the lower level of the social strata status to own houses of their own.
- b. It needs to be accepted that homelessness is a complex construct, being either structural, or induced by a person's vulnerability. It is also caused by poverty, increased deficiency of residential units caused by socio economic development and rapid urbanisation. Therefore, there needs to be increased effort in improving the earning powers of Nigerians across all sectors, increase the availability of low-income housing and housing subsidies.
- c. With regard to floodings being a source of homelessness, recent natural disasters have been said to be a direct impact of climate change, as well as the absence of water channels and the misuse of same, therefore to mitigate the occurrence of these catastrophic floods it is unnecessary that the country pays more attention to the reduction of its greenhouse emissions and take the issue of recycling and tree planting and forest conservation programs more serious. There should be more stringent laws prohibiting dumping of refuse in gutters and other water ways.