

# **Review Paper**

## **Assessing the Legal Frameworks for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the North-eastern Nigeria**

### **Abstract.**

Force displacement is a daunting challenge facing international community as a result of armed conflicts, insurgency and communal tension. In the same vein, Nigeria has been experiencing the problem of internal displacement as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. More than two million Nigerians have been internally displaced as a result of Boko Haram insurgency that has been bedeviling the country since 2009. Internally displaced persons differ from refugees, though they have similar characteristics. The sources of displacement of refugees and IDPs may be the same and requires equal treatment. However, IDPs have been excluded under the protection of international refugee law. This is because IDPs do not crossed international borders and therefore they should be under the protection of their national governments. Sometimes the national authorities are behind their displacement or unable to protect them. This is one of the reason IDPs have been experiencing neglect and inadequate protection. Accordingly, Nigerian IDPs have not been adequately protected, as there is no national or international legal framework that is directly addressed the plight of Nigerian IDPs. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to critically assess the efficacy of the domestic and international legal frameworks on internal displacement in Nigeria. The study has adopted the use of secondary data extracted from the journals articles, books, magazines, newspapers and reports. It employs descriptive method of data analysis. The finding is that Nigerian policy on IDPs is not effective as it has not been domesticated or implemented.

**Key words:** Protection, internal displacement, Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, Legal framework

### **Introduction**

The post-Cold War era has witnessed the declining of the conflicts between/among the states and that period coincides with the emergence of “new wars” such as civil wars, insurgencies,

43 ethnic conflicts, genocides and other violent conflicts perpetrated by human beings against  
44 their fellows. Unlike conventional wars that normally occur between states, “new wars” wage  
45 by organized armed groups against the states or other groups within the states (Kaldor, 2012).  
46 These groups use different modes of violence to achieve their aims, which include bombings,  
47 guerrilla tactics, hostage taking, maiming, killing, raping, and so on (Oberschall, 2010). In  
48 this type of conflicts, it is difficult to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants as  
49 indicates in the law of war. Mostly civilians become the target and that ensued mass  
50 casualties and forced displacement of population from their homes or places of habitual  
51 residence. Also, the period witnessed brutal neglect of human rights and deliberate disrespect  
52 of the rule of international humanitarian law (IHL). This has led to massive forced  
53 displacement of people within the borders of their own countries. This category of people has  
54 been described as internally displaced persons (IDPs). According to the Guiding Principles on  
55 Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons are

56  
57 ...persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to  
58 leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in  
59 order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence,  
60 violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not  
61 crossed an internationally recognized border (UNOCHA, 1999: 1).  
62

63 The causes of the displacement of IDPs and refugees may be the same but the only difference  
64 is that IDPs remain within the boundaries of their countries, whereas, refugees cross  
65 internationally recognized borders.  
66

67 Arguably, about 65.3 million people have been forcibly displaced globally in 2015 as result  
68 of conflict and generalized violence. IDPs have accounted for about 40.5 million, whereas  
69 refugees recorded 21.3 million globally (Wieling, 2017; Ferris, 2016). Similarly, another  
70 report shows that 30.6 million have been newly internally displaced as a result of conflict and  
71 disaster in 2017 across 145 countries. Furthermore, a total number of 48.5 million remained  
72 IDPs as of the end of 2017 including those who have been returned or relocated but have not  
73 found truly durable solution (GRID, 2018). However, the current trend of global forced  
74 displacement reveals that IDPs outnumbered refugees. But, IDPs have been legally exempted  
75 from the international protection afforded to refugees by virtue of their displacement within  
76 their own countries. Legal status has been granted for the refugees but none for the IDPs. In  
77 fact there is no any international law exclusively responsible for IDPs’ protection. The ever-

78 increasing number of IDPs has posed serious challenge to the international community that  
79 necessitates the formulation of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in 1998 through  
80 the effort of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights. It is remained until today  
81 the only international non-binding norms, customary or soft law that serves as a global  
82 principle for the protection of internally displaced persons. The Principle 3(1) of the Guiding  
83 Principle Internal Displacement states that the primary responsibility for IDPs protection lies  
84 with the national governments. It maintains that IDPs are entitled to enjoy full rights and  
85 freedom like any other citizen of the state. Ironically, in some instances the national  
86 authorities might be the causes of the displacement or unable to adequately protect them.  
87 Internally displaced persons have been described as the world's most vulnerable people  
88 (Alberto del Real Alcala, 2017).

89  
90 Against this backdrop, violent attacks by *Boko Haram* insurgents displaced many people in  
91 the North-eastern Nigeria. Some of these people have moved to other parts of the country and  
92 others to the neighboring countries to avoid the havoc wreaked by the *Boko Haram*  
93 insurgents, thereby creating devastating humanitarian crisis that call for dire humanitarian  
94 intervention. Those displaced within the Nigerian borders facing serious protection problem.  
95 This can be partly related to the lack of legal framework for the protection of internally  
96 displaced persons. Quite number of credible reports has described Nigeria as a country with  
97 the worst and highest Number of IDPs, following Syria and Columbia. About 3.3 million  
98 people have been displaced within the Nigerian border as a result of insurgency which started  
99 since 2009. The figure of IDPs in Nigeria has been significantly increased since 2013 and it  
100 reaches over four million in 2015 (CISLAC, 2015). The 2015 report of the International  
101 Organization for Migration (IOM) shows that about 2.2 million people have been internally  
102 displaced in the North-eastern Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. These  
103 traumatized victims have been neglected, abused and deprived of the most basic elements of  
104 dignified life. However, Nigerian government unable to provide any explicit national legal  
105 framework for IDPs protection despite the vulnerability and abuse suffered by the Nigerian  
106 IDPs for many years. There are only general Constitutional provisions of the fundamental  
107 human rights entitled to all Nigerian citizens and other draft policies on internal displacement  
108 that is yet to be implemented (Addaney, Boshoff & Olutola, 2017).

## 110 **Global Trend of Internal Displacement**

112 Recently the displacements of civilians within their national borders have outnumbered those  
113 displaced outside the internationally recognized borders. This is because of the so-called new  
114 wars that have risen after the Cold War period, which ensue gross violation of human rights  
115 and wanton destruction of life and properties. The era has witnessed civil war, insurgency and  
116 other deliberate killings that uproot many civilians from their homes (Loescher, Betts and  
117 Milner, 2008). Mostly these victims of conflict have been displaced within the borders of  
118 their own countries. This is because of the unfavorable refugee and asylum laws that restrict  
119 movement across the border difficult for many victims. As a result of that victims have opted  
120 for internal migration (Korn and Weiss, 2006). This represents a dramatic change on the trend  
121 of forced displacement with the IDPs outnumber refugees. However, international regime  
122 has accorded protection to the refugees but not to the IDPs.

123 The first IDPs data compiled in 1982 and it comparatively shows that for every one IDP there  
124 were ten refugees (Weiss and Korn, 2006). In line with this, United States Committee for  
125 Refugees (USCR) reported that in 1982 there were 1.2 million people displaced within their  
126 own countries across the globe. But, at that time the number of refugees was 10.5 million,  
127 and considerably higher than internally displaced persons (Weiss, 1999). Nevertheless,  
128 during the period of three years the number of IDPs has dramatically increased and reached  
129 to about 9 million. This was the remarkable increased of the number of IDPs that call for  
130 separate report on IDPs by the USCR. The total number of IDPs had increased from 11.5  
131 million to 14 million by 1986 across twenty countries. The trend of global internal  
132 displacement continued to growing and by 1987 there were 15 million IDPs (Weiss and Korn,  
133 2006).

134 By 2002, the USCR reported that more than 20 million had been internally displaced  
135 worldwide as result of violent conflict, human rights violation and generalized violence. Out  
136 of this number, the UNHCR was rendering assistance to about 6 million IDPs among its  
137 “persons of concern” (Robinson, 2003). Ever since 2003, violent conflicts have resulted to  
138 considerable increase of global trend internal displacement that produced more IDPs.  
139 Between 2003 and 2016, it is estimated that about 5.2 million incidents of displacements  
140 occurred yearly, which equates about 14,000 people forced to flee every day (IDMC, 2016)

141  
142 The figure of IDPs has reached about 25 million by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At same  
143 time, the number of refugees has decreased to about 10 million (Deng, 1999). The crisis of  
144 IDPs has covered the whole planet; no region in the world was without IDPs crisis. About 40

countries had been facing IDPs crisis during that time. Violent conflict has been identified as the prime caused of these displacement, even though some people has been displaced as a result of natural disasters. Arguably, between 1993 and 1994, armed conflict forced about 10,000 people to leave their habitual residents on a daily basis. Whereas, some crossed international border, others remained displaced within their countries as IDPs (Cohen and Deng, 2012). However, Africa has been considered as the worst affected region recording more than half of the global figures of IDPs annually. Nevertheless, until recent conflicts in the Middle East and the resultant mass migration crisis in the region, Africa had the largest numbers of IDPs.

Recently, IDMC has reported that in 2014 about 38 million people were internally displaced globally. About 11 million were newly displaced by violent conflict. The report has shown that one person forced to flee in every three seconds (IDMC, 2015). A total of 40.8 million were internally displaced by armed conflicts and natural disaster in 2015 (IDMC, 2016; Abebe, 2016). (Giving a figure for two different subjects is not reliable.)

Furthermore, there has been lack of accurate and available data on internally displaced persons because of the improper country recording and monitoring of IDPs trends. Most of the data monitoring has been done by international organizations such as the IOM, IDMC, ICRC and UNHCR, and with the absence of core responsibility by any of these institutions, there is often the tendency that information may not comprehensively cover the entire scenario, and there is also likelihood of duplication or inflation. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Commission has been resourceful in providing data and information on IDPs globally. However, this is also not without discrepancies and irregularities. For example, in 2014, the IDMC published that Nigeria had 3.3 million IDPs, But a year later, the IDMC noted that the figures were inflated because variations in data collection expertise in-country. The figures in 2015 reflected a much lower number of just over 1 million (IDMC, 2014).

### **Developments and Gaps in International Legal Framework for IDPs Protection**

For many decades international humanitarian concerned for the refugees, a group of people who migrated from one country to another as a result of conflict, violence or persecution. This has resulted in the advancement of an international refugee law and the formation of the

1951(Geneva)<sup>2</sup> Convention and its 1968 Protocol( ??) in the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with the mandate to protect refugees. However, IDPs as the largest group of forcibly displaced have not been granted special status similar to that of refugees. Indeed, the concept of internal displacement is less recognized under international law. Hence, over the years, managing internal displacement has been considered a matter of state sovereignty. Even though, since 1920 internally displaced persons have receiving assistance from the international community (Abebe, 2016).

Nonetheless, internal displacement has began to be recognized as global ‘problem’ during the late 1980s, when two international conferences was held on war refugees from Southern Africa and Central America. By 1990s, the displaced persons who remained within their countries began to be treated by the international community as specific “persons of concern” different from refugees. There was widespread recognition that there was a need to develop a coherent and effective legal basis for protecting IDPs and to establish a new international agency to provide them protection and assistance (Loescher, 2001). This period marked the beginning effort of the international community to address the plight of internally displaced persons. During the same period, nongovernmental organizations have presented the global problem of internal displacement to the agenda of the United Nations through the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR). As a result of that, the UN Secretary General appointed the Special Representative on IDPs and that led to the drafting of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in 1998 by former SR on IDPs, Francis Deng and his team members (Cantor, 2018).

The Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement have set important global principles that serve as a soft law for the protection of IDPs. Although, the principles are not legally binding instrument, but have played a vital role in promoting separate body of ‘IDPs law’. Also, UN agencies (including UNHCR) have been making reference with the Guiding Principles in justifying their involvement in IDPs situations. Furthermore, these Principles have set a ground for regional organization in Africa, Europe and America to develop Conventions/Treaties that encourage their state members to integrate Guiding Principles into their national law (Meron, 2009). For example, the council of Europe and American organization has advocated the incorporation of Guiding Principles into their domestic legislations. Additionally, African Union (AU) has made a greater effort by transforming Guiding Principles into the first regional binding law on the protection of IDPs. AU Kampala

Convention has created special protection regime for IDPs protection. The Convention was initiated in 2009 and came into force in 2002. Many African states have domesticated the Convention into their national laws, whereas others are yet to do so. Again, a treaty has been adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lake Region (ICGLR) in 2008. The aim was to enforce states to domesticate the Guiding Principles into their national laws. Indeed, Guiding Principles have helped the materialization and development of different bodies of IDP laws at both national and international fora (Abebe, 2016).

However, until today there is still yearning about specific international legal status for the IDPs. Although, the early confusing dilemma about the normative standard on internal displacement has drastically declined, but the notion of the binding international treaty for protection of IDPs has been increasingly resisted. This is because, the concept of state sovereignty and non-intervention have been served as an obstacle for international protection of the people displaced within their national borders (Schmidt, 2003). Habitually, if the issue of IDPs present to the United Nations, the states refer to the principle that international intervention should be base on the request of the state concerned. Also, states make reference with the United Nations' Charter prohibition of "the threat of force or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, and intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" (Abebe, 2016: 6). Accordingly, the Guiding Principles has been criticized as a tool for intervention. The Guiding Principles have been drafted outside normal state-centric method for producing international law and they are not source of international law. Rather, their legal authority has been analogous with international human rights law and international humanitarian law (Kälin, 2001; Weiss and Korn, 2006). Consequently, Alborzi (2006) argues that it is very difficult to overstretch international law to effectively tackle the problem of IDPs.

Despite all the international effort to address the challenges of internal displacement, there is still 'clear legal distinction' in the institutional responsibilities created for refugees and IDPs. Thus, IDPs are effectively excluded from the protection under the Refugee Convention, and remain outside the scope of assistance, and protection provided by the UNHCR. A report by the UNHCR affirms this:

[W]hen the international legal and institutional regime to protect refugees was set up 50 years ago, it did not include internally displaced persons. In keeping

with the traditional notions of sovereignty, internally displaced persons were seen as falling under the domestic jurisdiction of the state concerned. The result is that the response of the international community to the problem of internal displacement has been inconsistent, and large numbers of internally displaced persons have remained without effective protection or assistance. (Cutts, 2000: 214).

Nonetheless, the UN General Assembly has endorsed UNHCR role in protecting IDPs in 1993, but subject to the request from UN Secretary General and consent of the state concerned. Furthermore, the core mandate of the UNHCR is to protect refugees and do not have the exclusive role in IDPs protection. Rather, the IDPs issues have been shared among the UN various agencies. This approach is called “cluster approach” (Morris, 1997).

Additionally, it is now two decades after the adoption of Guiding Principles, but the solution to the problem of internal displacement is yet to be achieved. In 2018, the Global Report of Internal Displacement (GRID) has published a report about 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Guiding Principles and affirms that;

There is...little to celebrate. More than 30.6 million new displacements associated with conflict and disasters in a single year is not a sign of success by any measure; nor is the persistence of new displacements in the last decade. Progress in the development of normative frameworks and policies has not been matched by implementation and adequate investment in preventing and ending displacement (GRID, 2018:1).

On the other hand, international law contains fundamental norms and standards that are applicable to internal displacement. These relevant norms can be identified in the field of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. They are (a) prevention of forced displacement, (b) identifying the basic human rights of all including IDPs, (c) protection from expulsion, (d) state responsibility to address the plight of displacement. Nonetheless, these norms of international law may serve as a source of legal protection for IDP, but there are still ‘gray areas’ and ‘gaps’ in the international legal protection of the IDPs. For instance, international human rights law prohibits only arbitrary displacement and their application may be hindered by idea of derogation. Likewise, international humanitarian law does not prohibit all form of force displacement. Certainly, international law is still uncertain about internal displacement (Abebe, 2016). Therefore, lack of a specific legal framework comprehensively addressing internal displacement, and the failure of the response



system remained a major gap which needs to be filled.

## **State Responsibility and the Nigerian Quest for Legal Framework for the Protection of IDPs**

The International Law Commission (ILC) clearly shows that international law today saddles more responsibility on the state with regard to the treatment of its citizens (Abebe, 2016). This indicates that the states have the primary responsibility to protect and assist the internally displaced persons (IDPs) within their territorial borders. For this reason, there has been an increasing concern of the application of the state responsibility by studying appropriate law for IDP protection (Goodwin-Gill, 2004).

### **Nigerian Constitution and IDPs Protection**

The Nigerian IDPs has been living under deplorable condition with lack of food, social amenities, health facilities, high infant and maternal mortality, prostitution among others. Nigerian government bears the primary responsibility of protecting IDPs within its national borders. Arguably, internally displaced persons have been under the protection of their national governments since they do not cross their national borders. IDPs are entitled to fundamental human rights which consist right to human dignity, rights to life and other inalienable rights. Their fundamental human rights need to be preserved and protected by the national government. However, the degree to which these rights can be protected is contingent to the legal framework for the protection of IDPs and the mechanisms to ensure compliance with the established laws (Hassan and Collins, 2017).

Constitution has been regarded as the national legal document which normally specifies the rights and duty of the government. It states the functions and responsibilities of the government, including the role of protecting the citizens of the country. The constitution has

313 been used as the basis upon which various organs of government operate. It empowers people  
314 to legally claimed protection against any potential or real danger (Chemerinsky, 2016).  
315 Basically, constitution is the existing national law where internally displaced people can  
316 legitimately proclaim their rights to sufficient and decent protection against any threat to their  
317 lives. The constitution obligates the national government to safeguard the citizens of the  
318 country. Consequently, Constitution can serve as the national legal framework for the  
319 protection of the internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, Nigerian constitution does not  
320 specifically laid down any provision for the protection of the internally displaced population.  
321 This can be partly related to the rigidity of the amendment procedures of the Nigerian  
322 Constitution (Seidman & Seidman, 2017).

323  
324 The Nigerian Constitution has been considered as the supreme law of the country and any  
325 other law is supplementary to it. Thus, any law which is inconsistent with the Nigerian  
326 Constitution shall be declared null and void or invalid. Conversely, Chapter IV of the 1999  
327 Constitution as amended, clearly states that the fundamental human rights of the Nigerian  
328 citizens. These fundamental human rights contain under sections 33 to 46 of the Constitution.  
329 Therefore, these rights are inalienable and shall be protected by the national authority. Also,  
330 the Constitution delineates the rights and obligations of the government, and at the same time  
331 develops instruments by which the government discharges its obligations as sanctioned by  
332 the Constitution (Black, 2017). The Constitution mandates the state with the responsibility to  
333 protect the rights of its citizens from any abuse. Legally, the state is the primary custodian of  
334 the rights of all Nigerians and it is under obligation to protect these rights. Although, the  
335 Nigerian government has the primary responsibility to safeguard the citizens, and internally  
336 displaced persons does not exclude from the citizens. But, the Constitutional role for the  
337 protection of IDPs is absent in the Nigerian Constitution (Ezeanokwasa, Kalu & Okaphor,

2018). Even though, the primary responsibilities for IDPs protection lie with the government concerned

In spite of these rights contain in the Nigerian Constitution, but IDPs are invariably and tactically denied access to these rights or are not enjoying the rights available to the general citizens. Unlike Nigerian Constitution, the Ugandan Constitution obliges the national authority to discharge its fundamental responsibility to the citizens, including IDPs on basis of social justice, equity and economic development (Alley, 2017). Also, the Constitution urges the government to ensure that all people enjoy equal rights and opportunities to decent life, shelter, education, food security, health facilities, portable water, decent clothes and social amenities among others. Therefore, the Ugandan Constitution states that the government has responsibility to protect and provide social services to the general populace, including internally displaced persons. The government has to ensure adequate protection for both IDPs and other Ugandan citizens (Santner, 2013).

The national responsibility needs to be effective for the protection of internally displaced population. In so far the IDPs remain within the national borders of their country, the primary responsibility for their protection lie with their national authority. At the same time, the national government needs to safeguard its citizens from any displacement in the first place. This principle is in lines with Guiding Principle on Internally Displacement and the African Union (Kampala) Convention on IDPs (Adeola & Viljoen, 2017). Furthermore, the role of the state in this aspect has been captured by the international law and emphasis in national and international declarations. The most prominent international statement on the state's responsibility for safeguarding the victims of conflicts or natural disaster is the UN Resolution 46/182 (1991) which states that "Each State has the responsibility primarily to

take care of victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory”. However, previous studies reveal massive violation of IDPs rights despite the existing provision of the fundamental human rights contained in the Nigerian Constitution. The IDPs protection in Nigeria has been suffered by legal problem which virtually deny IDPs adequate protection (Shedrack and Nuarrual, 2016).

Abegunde (2017) the Nigerian response to the IDPs’ predicament is largely inadequate and fragmented because of the lack of legal framework on internal displacement. As a result of that the internally displaced persons have become the most vulnerable and defenseless to any kind of mistreatment, neglect, abuse and exploitation. However, previous studies focus on the role of the state in protecting IDPs, instead of focusing on the role of international organization in protecting IDPs.

#### **NEMA Act and National Policy on IDPs in Nigeria**

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is an institution saddles with the responsibility to manage disaster with all its repercussion. The agency establishes in 1997 and it develops from the work of inter-ministerial body establishes by the Nigerian government in 1990 to deal with natural disaster reduction strategies in conformity with the United Nations International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). It creates through Act 12 as amended by Act 50 of 1999 to handle disaster in Nigeria. The main objectives of NEMA are to manage human and material resources to achieve affective disaster prevention, training, alleviation and resilience to disaster in Nigeria. However, the NEMA Act produces essential legal framework for IDPs protection in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, NEMA Act does not mention “internally displaced persons”, but they have been recognized as the victims of disaster (Oluwole, Eme, & Rowland, 2017). This considers as the major gap of the Act, and it invariably negates the legal capacity of the agency in managing and protecting the IDPs.

Lack of proper laws and policies about IDPs protection in Nigeria has placed overburden responsibilities on NEMA. This is because it is the only domestic agency with the ability to quickly respond to urgent situations by virtue of its roles or functions. Although NEMA has certain unit devoted for the IDPs related issues. As a result of that the agency has been facing the problem of scarce resources to involve in all the emergency situations and this has hampered its ability to provide adequate protection to the IDPs in Nigeria (Ekpa and Dahlan, 2016). However, presently the bill has been presented to the national assembly of Nigeria to amend the NEMA Act and the bill has passed through the second reading. The purpose of the bill is to formally include IDPs in the amended Act in order to formally assign NEMA with the responsibility of IDPs protection (Ladan, 2015). Arguably, the ability of the Nigerian government to adequately address the issues of the IDPs depends on the speedy action to pass this bill into law.

NEMA has been involving in disaster management by giving out relief materials to the victims of disaster, but these efforts do not last long because in most cases the victims are eventually left on their own. Therefore, the new Act needs to introduce practical method of preventing, reducing and participating on post disaster rehabilitation and reform. Furthermore, most states and local governments rely heavily on NEMA to tackle their humanitarian challenges of their areas. States and local governments hardly make laws to address humanitarian concerns of their various constituencies. However, some states have

relevant disaster management institutions, but most of them are weak, incapable and lacks adequate resources to perform well, for that reason they depend on NEMA (Mbanugo, 2012).

However, in 2003 Nigerian government establishes committee with the mandate to draft national policy on internal displacement so as to address the existing legal gap about IDPs protection. The idea to establish national policy on IDPs protection has been initiated by the National Commission for Refugees (NCFR) and the draft has been prepared in 2003. Also, the committee charges with the responsibilities to create preventive measures of internal displacement, effective practical methods of managing IDPs, mitigating IDPs suffering during displacement, and better ways of protecting the fundamental rights of the internally displaced persons. Furthermore, in 2011, the committee comes up with a draft and presents it to the Nigerian government. Regrettably, the draft has become mirage given the fact that it is yet to be domesticated. On the other hand, National Commission for Refugees (NCFR) is a Nigerian agency with a legal and institutional responsibility to protect refugees in Nigeria. It has been established by Section 3 (1) 14 of the NCFR Act. The Commission has been supervised by the Secretary of the Federal Government of Nigeria (Kolawole, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

There is no international legal framework for the protection of the internally displaced persons. Nonetheless, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement was establishes in 1998, but it is a non-binding instrument and therefore not enforceable on states. The problem of internal displacement has not been directly addressed by any global legal framework. However, the Guiding Principles clearly states that the states have the primary responsibility to protect IDPs. However, there is absent of effective domestic response from the Nigerian government to protect and assist Nigerian IDPs. The Nigeria government has

signed and ratified the Kampala Convention, but it is yet to domesticate it. Accordingly, this research finds that, there is no dedicated national legal instrument for the protection of IDPs in Nigeria. Therefore, IDPs suffer because of the lack of commitment by the Nigerian government to protect and assist them. Likewise, they suffer from the absence of specific international legal and institutional frameworks for their protection when their states fail to do so. On the basis of this, that this study recommends that the Nigerian government shall domesticate the long-waiting draft national policy for the protection of IDPs. This policy should be in line with the African Union (Kampala) Convention on the protection of IDPs in Africa. Also, there is need to amend the Nigerian Constitution and incorporate the rights of the IDPs.

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