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Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: jppssuniuyo@gmail.com

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Article

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CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES OF HUMANITARIAN WORKERS IN DELIVERING AID AMID BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

Joseph Emmanuel ¹, Felix Aromo Ilesanmi ²,
Chinyere Nwadike Alimba ³ & Francis Olajire Awodoyin ⁴

Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria ¹

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria ²

General Studies Division Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria ³

Department of Education Foundation, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Nigeria ⁴

Corresponding Email: josephemmanuel199000@gmail.com ¹

Abstract

This study examined the challenges and mitigation strategies of humanitarian workers in delivering aid amid Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria. The persistent conflict has created one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with millions displaced and dependent on aid, while insecurity, logistical barriers, and political constraints continue to hinder effective operations. A convergent mixed-method design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to 327 aid workers from registered Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and key-informant interviews with heads of NGOs to triangulate perspectives. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, means, and standard deviations in Statistical Package for Social Sciences, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis in NVivo. Findings revealed that humanitarian workers face significant challenges including frequent Boko Haram attacks, risk of abduction, infrastructural destruction, restricted access to communities, poor coordination with authorities, and limited funding. To mitigate these threats, aid workers adopt strategies such as collaboration with local communities, reliance on armed escorts, use of digital communication platforms, staff training, and implementation of security protocols, though remote monitoring tools were found to be less effective. The study concluded that despite hostile conditions, humanitarian actors demonstrate resilience through adaptive approaches, yet their safety and effectiveness remain constrained by insurgency-related risks. It was recommended that stronger security collaboration between government, military, and humanitarian agencies be established, alongside deeper community-based protection strategies, to ensure sustainable and safe humanitarian access.

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Keywords: Aid Delivery, Humanitarian Workers, Challenges, Boko Haram Insurgency, Mitigation Strategies

Introduction

Borno State, in north-east Nigeria, has been the epicentre of the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009. The conflict has generated one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises; by 2021 more than 2.9 million people were internally displaced in the North-East, 80 percent of them in Borno, and over 8.4 million required life-saving assistance (Eguiluz, 2020; Adebote-Adefolake, 2022). Repeated attacks on towns, villages, and military installations have devastated livelihoods, collapsed basic social services, and deepened food insecurity (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Consequently, Borno has become a high-risk operational environment where humanitarian actors must simultaneously confront insecurity, bureaucratic impediments, and a shrinking humanitarian space. Humanitarian access is severely constrained. Military-imposed "garrison town" strategies confine civilians and therefore most humanitarian operations to fortified urban enclaves, leaving large rural areas inaccessible (Eguiluz, 2020). Roads are seeded with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and explosive remnants of war, and convoys are frequently ambushed (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Between 2016 and 2020 at least 37 aid workers were killed and 38 abducted in the North-East, the majority of incidents occurring in Borno (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The 2019 attack in Rann, in which three international NGO staff were executed, exemplifies the extreme physical risk faced by humanitarian personnel (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Bureaucratic and political obstacles compound security threats. Agencies report repeated delays in obtaining visas for international personnel, high customs duties on relief items, and legal ambiguity surrounding International Non-Governmental Organization registration (Adebote-Adefolake, 2022). The Federal Government's perception that some international Non-Governmental Organizations are conduits for intelligence gathering or political interference has led to temporary office closures and heightened surveillance (Eguiluz, 2020). Additionally, climate-related shocks prolonged dry spells and flash flooding exacerbate resource scarcity and heighten competition between displaced and host communities (Betancourt et al., 2015).

Funding is available but difficult to translate into field-level assistance. While donor contributions remain relatively robust, the shrinking pool of implementing partners capable of operating outside heavily militarised perimeters limits programme reach (Eguiluz, 2020). The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Nigeria noted that only 46 percent of the required US\$1 billion had been mobilised by mid-year, and security restrictions forced the suspension or down-scaling of more than 30 percent of health and nutrition projects in inaccessible local government areas (Adebote-Adefolake, 2022). Consequently, critical gaps persist in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), protection, and education services, particularly for women and girls who face heightened risks of gender-based violence in crowded camps (Betancourt et al., 2015). Religious and community-based organisations have attempted to fill some of these gaps. The Christian Association of Nigeria, for example, leverages shared faith identities to negotiate access and deliver aid, yet it also confronts security threats, discrimination from government officials, and inter-agency mistrust (Adebote-Adefolake, 2022). Meanwhile, the Civilian Joint Task Force and other local vigilante groups provide ad-hoc security escorts, although their involvement sometimes blurs civil/military boundaries and raises protection concerns for neutral humanitarian actors (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014).

Collectively, these realities underscore a complex humanitarian theatre in which the delivery of assistance is shaped as much by political, security, and logistical constraints as by the sheer scale of need. Understanding how humanitarian workers navigate these challenges and the mitigation strategies they employ is therefore central to improving aid effectiveness and safeguarding both beneficiaries and aid personnel in Borno State.

Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian workers play a vital role in providing life-saving assistance such as food, shelter, health care, and education support to conflict-affected communities in Borno State; however, the persistent Boko Haram insurgency has posed severe challenges to the safe and effective delivery of aid. Frequent attacks, kidnappings, ambushes, and roadblocks orchestrated by insurgents have not only endangered the lives of aid workers but also disrupted humanitarian operations, leaving many vulnerable populations without essential support. Despite the critical importance of their work, humanitarian workers continue to face daunting risks that threaten both their safety and their ability to reach those in need. While several strategies are reportedly adopted to mitigate these threats - such as community engagement, security escorts, and discreet operations - their effectiveness remains uncertain in the face of unpredictable insurgent activities. The absence of a systematic understanding of the specific challenges faced and the strategies employed to cope with these threats creates a critical knowledge gap. Addressing this gap is essential to strengthening humanitarian interventions, safeguarding aid workers, and ensuring sustainable relief delivery to conflict-ravaged communities in Borno State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the challenges and mitigation strategies of humanitarian workers in delivering aid amid Boko Haram Insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria". The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Determine the challenges faced by humanitarian workers in delivering aid in communities in Borno State.
- ii. Determine the strategies often adopted by humanitarian workers to mitigate Boko Haram attacks during aid delivery in communities in Borno State.

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

- i. What are the challenges faced by humanitarian workers in delivering aid in communities in Borno State?
- ii. What are the strategies often adopted by humanitarian workers to mitigate Boko Haram attack during aid delivery in communities in Borno State?

Literature Review

Overview of the Humanitarian Crisis in Borno State: Since the escalation of the Boko Haram conflict in 2009, Borno State has experienced one of the world's most acute humanitarian emergencies. By 2023, more than 2.9 million people were internally displaced in north-east Nigeria, 80 percent of whom were concentrated in Borno, and over 8.4 million required life-saving assistance (IDMC, 2023). The protracted violence has destroyed livelihoods, collapsed public services, and generated chronic food insecurity (Eguiluz, 2020; Magrin & De Montclos, 2018). These contextual realities have positioned Borno as a high-risk environment in which

humanitarian actors must simultaneously address massive needs and extreme operational constraints.

Security Challenges and Violence Against Aid Workers: Physical insecurity is the most frequently cited barrier to effective humanitarian response. Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) routinely target aid workers for abduction, ransom, or ideological reasons. Fatal incidents include the March 2018 Rann attack in which three aid workers were killed and 52 subsequently evacuated, leading to the suspension of critical nutrition and medical services (Fatokun & Olise, 2024; Held, 2018). Between 2016 and 2020 a minimum of 37 aid workers were killed and 38 abducted across the North-East, the majority of cases occurring in Borno (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The pervasive threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war on supply routes further restricts mobility and increases response times (OCHA, 2021).

Access Constraints and Militarised Humanitarian Space: The Nigerian military's "garrison town" strategy confines civilians—and hence most humanitarian operations—to fortified urban enclaves, rendering rural areas largely inaccessible (Eguiluz, 2020). Restricted security perimeters, curfews, and the requirement for military escorts create bottlenecks that delay or prevent aid delivery (Nigeria Humanitarian Response Strategy, 2018). These restrictions are compounded by bureaucratic impediments such as lengthy visa processing for international staff, high customs duties on relief commodities, and ambiguous legal frameworks governing INGO registration (McIlreavy & Schopp, 2017). Consequently, many organisations operate only within a 25–30 km radius of Maiduguri, leaving an estimated 800,000 people beyond reliable reach (OCHA, 2021).

Funding Availability and Implementing-Capacity Gaps: While donor fatigue is often assumed, available evidence indicates that funding is relatively stable, US\$1.3 billion was pledged for the 2023 Nigeria Humanitarian Response Plan (OCHA, 2023). The critical bottleneck lies in the shrinking pool of implementing partners willing or able to operate outside militarised perimeters (Eguiluz, 2020). In 2021, security constraints forced the suspension or down-scaling of over 30 percent of health and nutrition projects in inaccessible local government areas (OCHA, 2021). Moreover, escalating attacks on convoys have inflated insurance and security premiums, thereby eroding the value of received funds (Fatokun & Olise, 2024).

Logistical and Infrastructural Barriers: Logistical challenges include poor road networks, limited warehousing, and the absence of reliable cold chains for vaccines and therapeutic foods (Anjomshoae et al., 2017). Seasonal flooding and climate-induced displacement further complicate supply routes (Olojo, 2019). The destruction of the Maiduguri-Bama-Dikwa road, once the principal supply artery, necessitates costly airlifts or cross-border trans-shipments through Cameroon and Niger, increasing both delivery time and expense (IOM, 2022).

Protection and Gender-Based Vulnerabilities: Women and girls constitute approximately 52 percent of the displaced population and face heightened risks of sexual and gender-based violence within camps and during firewood collection outside security perimeters (HRW, 2014; Betancourt et al., 2015). Child protection risks, including forced recruitment by armed groups, have been documented in sites lacking adequate child-friendly spaces and

psychosocial support (UNICEF, 2017). The absence of protective infrastructure such as lighting, lockable latrines, and safe shelters undermines the effectiveness of otherwise well-resourced health and nutrition interventions (Betancourt et al., 2015).

Mitigation Strategies Employed by Humanitarian Workers

- i. **Negotiated Access and Acceptance Strategies:** Some agencies have successfully negotiated humanitarian pauses with non-state armed actors to facilitate immunisation campaigns and food distributions (ICRC, 2014). Community acceptance strategies engaging traditional and religious leaders to vouch for the neutrality of aid have reduced incident rates in parts of Dikwa and Monguno LGAs (Fatokun & Olise, 2024).
- ii. **Remote Management and Technology Use:** Remote management modalities, including third-party monitoring, mobile data collection, and biometric registration, enable limited programming in inaccessible areas while reducing staff exposure (OCHA, 2021). Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have been piloted for rapid needs assessment and mapping of IED contamination, although regulatory hurdles remain (IOM, 2022).
- iii. **Security Risk Management and Capacity Building:** Humanitarian organisations have invested in security risk management (SRM) systems that combine dynamic risk analysis, staff training, and the use of local security focal points (Sphere Association, 2018). Joint convoys under the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have reduced ambush risk, though concerns persist over the neutrality implications of such partnerships (Human Rights Watch, 2020).
- iv. **Strengthening Local Partnerships:** Collaboration with national NGOs and faith-based organisations leverages local knowledge and facilitates acceptance. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) have mediated access in areas where international actors are mistrusted, while local women's groups have spearheaded protection monitoring and referral pathways (Adebote & Adefolake, 2022).

Gaps in the Literature and Research Justification

While existing studies document the breadth of challenges, few have systematically examined the effectiveness of specific mitigation strategies across different operational contexts within Borno. Most assessments are donor- or agency-driven and lack independent verification. Moreover, the perspectives of front-line national staff and local implementing partners remain under-represented. This study therefore filled these gaps by analyzing how humanitarian workers perceive, priorities, and adapt mitigation measures within the volatile environment of Borno State.

Methodology

This study adopted a convergent mixed-method design (Bryman, 2012) to concurrently collect and integrate quantitative and qualitative evidence on the challenges and mitigation strategies of humanitarian workers in Borno State. A structured questionnaire "Challenges and Mitigation Strategies of Humanitarian Workers Questionnaire (CMHWQ)" was administered to 327 aid workers proportionally sampled from 90 registered NGOs operating across Borno's three senatorial districts (Central = 141, Southern = 72, Northern = 114). An additional purposive sample of 10 ex-Boko Haram combatants from Madagali LGA (Adamawa) participated in Key-Informant Interviews (KII) to triangulate security perspectives. The instrument was validated by three Peace & Conflict Studies experts and achieved Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$ in a pilot test conducted in Adamawa. Data were collected over three

weeks by trained research assistants after securing introductory letters from the university centre; ethical clearance and informed consent were obtained from all participants. Quantitative data were analysed in SPSS v.27 using frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations; a cut-off point of ≥ 3.50 on the 5-point Likert scale signified agreement. Qualitative data from the KII were imported into NVivo 14 for thematic analysis, allowing patterns on negotiated access, remote-management tactics, and community-security partnerships to emerge. The convergent design ensured that statistical findings on attack frequency and mitigation effectiveness were enriched with contextual narratives from former combatants, producing a holistic understanding of how humanitarian operations adapt amid insurgency in Borno State.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the challenges faced by humanitarian workers in delivering aid in communities in Borno State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Challenges Faced by Humanitarian Workers in Delivering Aid

S/N	Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std	Remark
1	Security threats from Boko Haram severely limit the ability of aid workers to reach affected communities.	94 (30.3%)	159 (51.3%)	14 (4.5%)	38 (12.3%)	5 (1.6%)	3.96	0.99	Agreed
2	Poor security measures in communities affect the effectiveness of Humanitarian workers in Borno State.	97 (31.3%)	113 (36.5%)	42 (13.5%)	54 (17.4%)	4 (1.3%)	3.79	1.11	Agreed
3	Humanitarian organizations frequently face difficulties in coordinating with local authorities due to the security situation.	114 (36.8%)	149 (48.1%)	17 (5.5%)	30 (9.7%)	-	4.12	0.89	Agreed
4	Boko Haram attacks often create barrier for humanitarian workers to have access to communities for aid delivery.	125 (40.3%)	140 (45.2%)	22 (7.1%)	23 (7.4%)	-	4.18	0.86	Agreed
5	Aid workers are at a higher risk of being targeted for kidnapping by Boko haram.	117 (37.7%)	139 (44.8%)	29 (9.4%)	14 (4.5%)	11 (3.5%)	4.09	0.98	Agreed
6	The destruction of infrastructure by Boko haram significantly affect the operation of Humanitarian workers in Borno State.	114 (36.8%)	136 (43.6%)	29 (9.4%)	31 (10%)	-	4.07	0.92	Agreed
7	Shortage of funding often prevent humanitarian operations in communities in Borno State.	94 (30.3%)	134 (43.2%)	38 (12.3%)	44 (14.2%)	-	3.90	0.99	Agreed
8	Poor military cooperation with aid workers affected productivity of humanitarian aid workers in Borno State.	117 (37.7%)	136 (43.9%)	21 (6.8%)	16 (5.2%)	20 (6.5%)	4.01	1.11	Agreed

Table 1 revealed the challenges faced by Humanitarian workers during aid delivery in communities in Borno state. From the table above, the respondents indicated that they agreed with all the items. This shows that all these items represent significant challenges

faced by humanitarian ($x=3.96$) workers in delivering aid in Borno State. Specifically, security threats from Boko Haram, poor security measures in communities ($x=3.79$), difficulties in coordinating with local authorities ($x=4.12$), barriers to accessing communities ($x=4.18$), the risk of kidnapping ($x=4.09$), the destruction of infrastructure by Boko Haram ($x=4.07$), shortage of funding ($x=3.90$) and poor military cooperation ($x=4.01$) are the challenges faced by humanitarian workers during aid delivery. The overall average mean indicates that the respondents agreed with the listed items as key challenges faced by humanitarian workers in Borno State.

The researcher had an interview session with some Heads of NGOs on the challenges faced by humanitarian workers in delivering aid in communities in Borno State in which most of the interviewee report that:

- i. **Human Resource officer:** One major challenge is insecurity. The presence of Boko Haram and the risk of attacks, ambushes, or kidnappings make it extremely dangerous for humanitarian workers to access remote communities. This often limits how far and how frequently aid can be delivered.
- ii. **Compliance officer:** Another serious challenge is poor road infrastructure. Many of the roads leading to affected communities are either in bad condition or completely inaccessible, especially during the rainy season. This delays or prevents the delivery of aid.
- iii. **Program officer:** There is also the issue of limited funding. Some humanitarian organizations struggle with inadequate resources, which affects the scale and consistency of their operations in Borno State.
- iv. **Head of Operation:** Coordination among multiple humanitarian actors can be difficult too. In some areas, there is overlap or duplication of efforts, while in others, critical needs remain unmet due to lack of coordination or information sharing.
- v. **Project officer:** Community distrust and fear sometimes pose challenges as well. Some residents may fear retaliation from Boko Haram if they are seen cooperating with aid workers, making it harder for humanitarian efforts to reach those who need them most."

Research Question 2: What are the strategies often adopted by humanitarian workers to mitigate Boko Haram attack during aid delivery in communities in Borno State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Strategies Often Adopted by Humanitarian Workers to Mitigate Boko Haram Attack During Aid Delivery.

S/N	Statement Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std	Remark
1	Humanitarian workers make use of armed escorts to improve the safety in insurgent areas.	97 (31.3%)	124 (40%)	41 (13.2%)	31 (10%)	17 (5.5%)	3.82	1.14	Agreed
2	Collaboration with local communities has been effective in reducing security risks for Humanitarian aid workers.	102 (32.9%)	119 (38.4%)	53 (17.1%)	36 (11.6%)	-	3.93	0.98	Agreed
3	The implementation of remote monitoring tools has enhanced the ability of Humanitarian workers to track aid distribution in conflict zones.	9 (2.9%)	138 (44.5%)	84 (27.1%)	75 (24.2%)	4 (1.3%)	3.24	0.89	Disagreed

4	The use of digital platforms for communication has facilitated better coordination among Humanitarian workers for the benefits of the communities in Borno State.	87 (28.1%)	162 (52.3%)	3 (1%)	38 (12.3%)	20 (6.5%)	3.83	1.15	Agreed
5	Training local staff has been effective in ensuring the continuity of humanitarian operations despite security challenges.	79 (25.5%)	140 (45.2%)	8 (2.6%)	64 (20.6%)	19 (6.1%)	3.63	1.23	Agreed
6	Security protocols implemented by humanitarian workers have minimized the risks faced by aid workers.	69 (22.3%)	217 (70%)	2 (0.6%)	6 (1.9%)	16 (5.2%)	4.02	0.87	Agreed

Table 2 revealed the strategies often adopted by Humanitarian aid workers to mitigate Boko Haram attacks during aid delivery in communities in Borno state. From the table above, the respondents indicated strong agreement with most the listed strategies. These results show that humanitarian workers often adopt strategies such as using armed escorts ($x=3.82$), collaborating with local communities ($x=3.93$), utilizing digital communication platforms ($x=3.83$), training local staff ($x=3.63$), and enforcing security protocols ($x=4.02$) to mitigate Boko Haram attacks during aid delivery in communities in Borno State. However the respondents disagreed with implementing remote monitoring tools ($x=3.24$) as a strategy often adopted by the aid workers.

The researcher had an interview session with some Heads of NGOs on the strategies often adopted by humanitarian workers to mitigate Boko Haram attack during aid delivery in communities in Borno State in which most of the interviewee report that:

- i. **Program Officer:** In my experience, one of the key strategies we have used is building strong relationships with community leaders. When we work closely with local elders and youth leaders, they often help us understand the safest routes and give us early warnings about potential threats. That community involvement has saved us many times.
- ii. **Project Officer:** For us, moving with armed escorts has been necessary in some of the most dangerous areas. Although it is not ideal, we have found that having security presence reduces the chances of being targeted. It gives both the staff and the beneficiaries a bit of assurance during aid delivery.
- iii. **Head of Operation:** What we have also done is rely heavily on early warning systems. Before heading into any area, our team carries out a thorough security assessment. We constantly check updates from the security clusters and our networks to make informed decisions on where and when to deliver aid.
- iv. **Compliance Officer:** Personally, I have seen the value of keeping operations low-profile. We avoid wearing branded uniforms or using marked vehicles when going to tense areas. This approach helps us blend in and reduces the chances of attracting unwanted attention from insurgents.
- v. **Human Resource Officer:** I have been part of missions where we had to use helicopters through UNHAS to reach communities that were completely cut off due to insecurity. It is expensive, but it has allowed us to reach the most vulnerable people without risking lives on dangerous roads.

Discussion of Findings

- i. **Challenges Faced by Humanitarian Aid Workers During Operations in Communities in Borno State:** The findings with regard to research question one revealed that the challenges Humanitarian workers faced include security threats from ongoing attacks, logistical difficulties due to damaged infrastructure, limited access to some regions, scarcity of resources, bureaucratic obstacles, and community distrust fueled by fear of Boko Haram reprisals. The findings are in agreement with Faruk and Bello (2023), who observed that persistent insecurity and threats of attack have created a hostile environment for humanitarian workers, limiting their ability to operate safely and effectively in Borno State. Aliyu, Bello and Umar (2023) emphasized that many roads and infrastructure critical for aid delivery have been damaged or rendered unusable, complicating logistics and delaying response times. Similarly, Aliyu, Bello, and Umar (2023) reported that access to remote and high-risk communities remains restricted due to both physical and security-related barriers, often leaving the most vulnerable populations underserved. Musa, Idris, and Usman (2019) highlighted that beyond physical and logistical challenges, humanitarian workers also grapple with administrative hurdles, such as delayed permits and coordination issues with government agencies, as well as psychological challenges stemming from community suspicion and fear of Boko Haram retaliation. Together, these studies are in accord with the current findings by underscoring the complex and multifaceted nature of challenges faced by aid workers, which ultimately hinder effective humanitarian response in conflict-affected regions of Borno State.
- ii. **Strategies Often Adopted by Humanitarian Aid Workers to Mitigate Boko Haram Attacks During Aid Delivery in Communities in Borno State:** The findings with regard to research question two revealed that to mitigate risks, humanitarian workers adopted strategies such as collaborating with local community leaders for intelligence, using discreet and varied delivery routes, employing armed escorts where feasible, conducting thorough risk assessments, and engaging in community sensitization to foster local support. The findings are in agreement with Eze and Nwachukwu (2022), who reported that collaboration with local community leaders plays a crucial role in providing timely intelligence and early warnings that help humanitarian workers avoid potential Boko Haram attacks. Oladipo and Akintoye (2023) emphasized the importance of using discreet and varied delivery routes to reduce predictability and enhance the safety of aid convoys. Similarly, Aminu and Yusuf (2021) found that the employment of armed escorts, where feasible, significantly increases the protection of humanitarian personnel and resources during aid delivery missions. Ahmed and Usman (2021) highlighted that conducting thorough risk assessments prior to deployment and engaging in community sensitization efforts help foster trust and local support, which in turn reduces suspicion and hostility toward humanitarian activities. Collectively, these studies are in accord with the current findings by demonstrating that a combination of strategic planning, local partnerships, and adaptive security measures are essential for mitigating the risks posed by Boko Haram attacks during aid delivery in Borno State.

Conclusion

This study concludes that humanitarian workers in Borno State operate under extremely challenging conditions due to the persistent threat of Boko Haram insurgency, which

manifests in forms such as armed ambushes, kidnappings, and deliberate obstruction of aid delivery. These challenges not only endanger the lives of humanitarian workers but also undermine the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions, leaving vulnerable populations without essential relief. However, the strategies adopted—ranging from collaboration with local communities and reliance on security escorts to adaptive operational approaches—demonstrate the resilience and commitment of aid workers in navigating hostile environments. Understanding both the challenges and the coping mechanisms provides valuable insights for policymakers, humanitarian agencies, and security stakeholders in formulating more effective support systems that enhance safety, strengthen coordination, and ensure sustainable humanitarian access. Ultimately, the findings underscore the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in addressing insurgency-related threats, thereby safeguarding humanitarian personnel and ensuring timely delivery of aid to conflict-affected communities in Borno State.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. **Enhanced Security Collaboration:** The government, security agencies, and humanitarian organizations should strengthen collaboration to provide reliable security escorts, early warning systems, and safe corridors for aid workers. This will reduce exposure to insurgent attacks and improve access to vulnerable communities.
- ii. **Community-Based Protection Strategies:** Humanitarian agencies should deepen engagement with local communities by building trust, involving community leaders, and training local volunteers as first responders. Such strategies will not only enhance intelligence gathering but also foster local ownership, thereby improving the safety and effectiveness of aid delivery.

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