

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE LENS OF PEACE EDUCATION: A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA'S NORTHEAST

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Abstract

The protracted Boko Haram insurgency has left indelible impacts on Nigeria's Northeast, creating a multifaceted challenge for peacebuilding interventions. Although the attacks have not entirely stopped, there is however, noticeable evidence of a considerable decline in their intensity, with a sizeable chunk of repentant insurgents laying down their weapons and embracing peace. Of particular interest to this paper is the effectiveness and relevance of peace education in the implementation of ongoing transitional justice initiatives in the Northeast. Drawing on a hybrid theoretical framework that integrates Transitional Justice Theory and Peace Education Theory, the research employs a qualitative approach and relies primarily on secondary sources of data. The significance of peace education as an integral component of transitional justice is emphasized in this study. For transitional justice to be successful and credibly acceptable, this research recommends that the affected communities should be at the heart of the process to foster a sense of inclusion, and the initiative should be sensitive to traditional values and peculiarities of the region. It comes to the conclusion that despite the complexities and challenges inherent in carrying out transitional justice in the Northeast, peace education as an instrument of social reconciliation can be a necessary catalyst for building the much-needed sustainable peace that the region urgently and deservedly needs.

Keywords: Transitional Justice, Peace Education, Boko Haram, Northeast, Violent Conflict

Introduction

The Boko Haram terrorist attacks have inflicted severe damage in Nigeria's Northeast, making the region a breeding ground for extremism and violence. Millions of people have been forcibly displaced, and thousands have lost their lives. These terrorist attacks have given rise to extensive human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture and sexual violence. The profound impact the conflict has had on the Northeastern region heightened pre-existing tension and rendered peacebuilding interventions more complex and challenging. Hassan and Tyvol (2018) emphasize that the substantial decline in the violent attacks and the growing agitation for an enduring peace beyond the use of physical force or direct military interventions underscored the urgent need for viable strategies to address the damage caused by terrorism and insurgency on communities in the Northeast (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2021). Adebajo (2021) affirms that this pressing challenge prompted the Nigerian government to establish the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programme in 2016 because the Northeast is in desperate need of reconstruction, so that people can return to their normal lives without fear or suspicion of one another. Above all, for the region to progress, the community must find a way to forgive and reintegrate the perpetrators of the insurgency (The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 2021).

This initiative, according to Ibrahim (2022), was in response to the multidimensional challenges posed by the terrorist group. DDR, otherwise known as Operation Safe Corridor (OSC), is designed to allow low-risk Boko Haram insurgents who have repented and surrendered voluntarily to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their

respective communities, including exposing them to psychosocial and vocational training. In furtherance of the ongoing efforts of restoring peace in the Northeast, the National Human Rights Commission in 2021 also initiated the process to develop and implement a Community-Based Non-Judicial Transitional Justice framework, focusing on human rights investigations, truth-telling, accountability, reparations, reconciliation, healing and social cohesion (Samson, 2022).

Given the massive violence and atrocities that have taken place in the region, along with the sheer numbers of people affected by and responsible for the crisis, the transitional justice project emerges as a promising initiative with the capacity to promote healing, build sustainable peace and facilitate reconciliation in communities that have been torn apart by violent extremism. Transitional justice initiatives are crucial not only for delivering justice for victims of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity but also for addressing the systemic inequality and injustice that breed conflict. In doing so, they help transform the very structures of inequality that enable such violence to persist (Jamal & Bell, 2018). NHRC (2021) explains that implementing transitional justice is a vital step toward healing; it provides victims and communities with the tools to find closure and the strength to rebuild their shattered societies. Ultimately, the path to ending insurgency lies in embracing reconciliation and transitional justice.

USAID (2021) acknowledges that transitional Justice has evolved as a valuable tool deployed in societies transitioning from war and in post-conflict societies to assuage the grievances of the victims through reparations and dispensation of justice. It is a set of judicial and non-judicial processes developed to address past human rights abuses and promote accountability, with the aim of establishing a strong foundation for a durable peace and just society. Over the years, DDR and transitional justice have been widely employed as post-conflict tools to support peacekeeping and

peacebuilding efforts worldwide. At their core, these programmes offer former combatants the assurance that they will be reintegrated into their communities, rather than subjecting them to punitive measures (Mustafa, 2021).

There is no universally applicable method of implementing transitional justice. It is conceptualized based on the peculiarities and specific requirements of the targeted country or community. Transitional justice is a comprehensive framework comprising diverse approaches and procedures, with the preferred method dictated by various factors, including the prevailing context and the available resources.

However, a fundamental element that has proven effective in promoting successful implementation of transitional justice is the integration of peace education (Davies, 2015; Ramírez-Barat & Duthie, 2015; Davies, 2017; Ramírez-Barat & Duthie, 2017; Sommer, 2018). Peace education, whether an academically structured or informal educational system, is described by Santori (2023) as programmes designed to teach people the art of resolving conflicts through peaceful means, with the central objective of equipping individuals with strategies to act in a non-violent way when relating with others. It is a process that teaches people about the values of tolerance, non-violence, human rights, and conflict resolution, which are essential for building a more just and peaceful society.

Peace education can play a vital role in building the capacity of local communities to participate in transitional justice. The importance of peace education as a key pillar of transitional justice has therefore become increasingly evident in addressing the legacy of violence and facilitating the healing process from the wounds of war. The enormity of the fall-outs resulting from Boko Haram violence and the yearning for peace necessitate the need for the inclusion of peace education as an indispensable component in the transitional justice interventions in the Northeast. It is within this

context that this study examines the current transitional justice initiatives in Nigeria's Northeast within the paradigm of peace education, as a means of achieving sustainable peace. In this paper, peace education connotes institutionalized and non-institutionalized educational efforts acquired in schools and by the whole society. It extends beyond conventional classroom settings because integrating school-based peace education with all possible channels of societal influence and interaction enables a rapid and effective response to the distinctive challenges in the Northeast region.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: After the introductory section, which provides a background analysis of the topic, the second section provides an insight into the paper's methodology approach. The third section contextualizes the current transitional justice efforts in the Northeast. The fourth section discusses the contributions of peace education to the advancement of transitional justice. The conclusion and the way forward form the last part of the paper.

Theoretical Framework

This research examines transitional justice in Nigeria's Northeast through peace education, drawing on established theories in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The primary framework integrates Transitional Justice Theory with Peace Education Theory, emphasizing their synergies for sustainable reconciliation. Together, these frameworks explain how peace education functions not merely as a pedagogical tool but as a structural necessity for the success of transitional justice in post-conflict settings.

Transitional Justice Theory posits that addressing past human rights abuses via mechanisms like truth-telling, reparations, accountability, and non-judicial processes

fosters societal healing and prevents recurrence. In the Northeast context, this aligns with DDR (Operation Safe Corridor) and NHRC's community-based initiatives, but gaps in victim inclusion and perpetrator accountability hinder effectiveness. Ramírez-Barat and Duthie (2015) argue that transitional justice shapes education reforms to contextualize abuses, promoting rights-respecting norms.

Peace Education Theory complements this by equipping individuals with non-violent conflict resolution, tolerance, empathy, and human rights values, transforming conflict cultures. Davies (2017) highlights peace education's role in post-conflict settings to build community capacity for transitional justice participation, addressing root causes like poverty and radicalization. Bar-Tal et al. (2009) emphasize shifting sociopsychological repertoires toward reconciliation, vital for reintegrating repentant insurgents amid community distrust.

Together, these theories form a hybrid framework where peace education acts as a catalyst within transitional justice, enhancing legitimacy through local sensitization and curriculum integration (e.g., NEDC-led programs). This approach counters criticisms of top-down DDR by prioritizing community-driven processes sensitive to cultural values like Sulhu.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, relying primarily on desktop research and documentary analysis. Given the non-empirical nature of the research, the methodology is grounded in the systematic review and critical analysis of existing secondary sources of data.

Data for this paper were sourced from a wide range of relevant literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, policy documents, and reputable media publications. Key sources from the literature provide theoretical and conceptual grounding on peace education and transitional justice. Institutional reports from relevant organizations were also critically examined to understand the contextual dynamics of transitional justice interventions in Nigeria's Northeast. Additionally, investigative reports from media outlets were utilized to capture contemporary developments, including human rights allegations and community responses to the DDR programme.

The data collected were subjected to thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of patterns, gaps, and intersections between peace education and transitional justice mechanisms. This approach enabled a comprehensive situational analysis of the role peace education can play in fostering reconciliation and sustainable peace in the conflict-affected regions of Northeast Nigeria.

A Contextual Analysis of Transitional Justice Components in the Northeast

The Office of the Nigerian National Security Adviser (NSA) and the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) are the two recognized entities of the Federal Government currently carrying out different components of transitional justice in the Northeast. While both have distinct mandates, their activities are complementary in supporting the region's recovery from the insurgency. Understanding the framework guiding the approaches of these two bodies is crucial in evaluating how transitional justice mechanisms are implemented and perceived by the affected communities.

(a) Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programme

According to Adebajo (2020), the military-led DDR Programme, which became operationalized in 2016, is part of the strategies employed by the Nigerian government to curtail the Boko Haram crisis and entrench peace in the Northeast. As the region started transitioning towards a relatively peaceful environment in the wake of a gradual decline in the terrorist attacks, the government recognized the imperative of building a lasting peace in the conflict-ridden Northeast. The Operation Safe Corridor (OSC), as the DDR is called, is overseen by the country's National Security Adviser. The low-risk repentant Boko Haram/ISWAP members are given the opportunity to embrace the ceasefire and voluntarily submit themselves, after which they would undergo screening and profiling to assess their suitability for the programme. The successful ones are moved to a facility for rehabilitation that includes vocational training, counseling and religious education. Afterwards, they will be transferred to the reintegration camp where they will receive further training and resources to start a new life (Mustafa, 2021).

The former terrorists were subjected to various vocational training and rehabilitation activities such as tailoring, cosmetology, welding, shoe-making, carpentry, theology, civil education, and drug abuse.(Adebajo, 2020),. However, there were no provisions for the inclusion of peace education where they would have learned the values of peace, human rights, and conflict resolution, as well as an act of forgiveness and tolerance for one another. This deficiency constitutes an obstacle to creating a conducive environment for healing, reconciliation and building positive communal relationships between the perpetrators and victims of Boko Haram. While the programme primarily concentrates on the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants, the fundamental factors that originally fueled the insurgency, such as massive unemployment and deep-seated poverty are paid less attention. Peace

education, with its ability to raise awareness and tackle the underlying causes of violence, could have played a significant role in addressing some of these challenges.

Adebajo (2021) and Makama (2024) reveal that the DDR programme has since graduated several repentant Boko Haram members and reintegrated them into their various communities after undergoing series of deradicalization and vocational training. In 2024 alone, about 40,042 repentant Boko Haram were transitioned into civilian life. Although the initial arrangement for the former insurgents was to spend three to six months at the OSC facilities/camps, but many of them ended up staying longer than necessary. Some of them had to protest their prolonged stay, including embarking on hunger strikes before they were releasedt from the camp. Contrary to the expectations of the ex-terrorists, the processes have, in some instances, been characterized by dashed hope, unfulfilled promises and derisory support in terms of financial, shelter, business opportunities, and so forth.

Meanwhile, findings by Brown (2018) indicate that the reintegration of ex-combatants into their respective communities without holding them accountable has been opposed strongly by the local residents. This negative reaction is even more resounding and pronounced within the larger society as evidenced by the rejection of the proposed bill at the National Assembly for the establishment of the National Agency for Deradicalization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Boko Haram members (Young, 2020; Jimoh et al, 2020). The resistance stems from fear that letting them into the society may encourage terrorism and give insurgents the confidence and assurance that they can wreak greater damage without facing repercussions for their crimes. This concern is further heightened by the special treatment and support the offenders receive, while internally displaced people and other victims of insurgency rightfully deserving of reparation, are either neglected or

not getting adequate support. However, the exception was demonstrated in Borno State (the epicenter of the crisis), where a law had been passed in 2023 to provide special support to victims of Boko Haram (Uthman 2023, Matazu, 2025).

Young (2020) maintains that being the direct victims and most affected by the insurgency, the communities perceive the reintegration of former terrorists as an affront and insensitive because they were not sensitized and their inputs not sought in a crisis that has caused them immeasurable pain and irreparable loss. Additionally, the deadly attacks by the insurgents are still vivid in their memories, making it hasty for them to warmly welcome and forgive the repentant terrorists. Incidentally, some soldiers within the military ranks share this resentment, claiming that they were demoralized and displeased with the release of suspected and repentant Boko Haram members responsible for the deaths of soldiers on the battlefield (Owolabi, 2020). Peace education can positively shape the mindset of local communities by encouraging their active participation in transitional justice and ensuring the process is both productive and beneficial for them.

The Military-led DDR programme, as Oguns (2021) points out, has always maintained that the surrendered terrorists had sworn an oath of allegiance to the government, with the assurance of reintegrating them to become responsible citizens instead of punishing them for their crimes. Without strong evidence, ensuring non-recurrence of violence will be difficult to guarantee, given several allegations suggesting that some of the repentant terrorists have been spying on security arrangements in host communities with the intent of going back to rejoin the terrorist group (Owolabi, 2021; Bassey, 2025). A poorly planned and badly executed DDR programme could result in violent retribution or civil rebellion, particularly the reintegration of repentant terrorists. This could jeopardize the relative peace that currently exists in the region and may cause a resurgence of the conflict or ignite a

new outbreak of violence. Beyond their stark impunity and lack of competence to deliver on the programme's mandate, the military forces are seen as part of the problems they want to address, and this in itself undermines public confidence and support needed for their credibility. The major drawback of DDR lies in the fact that it is designed to attract low-level and less dangerous Boko Haram fighters, leaving the deeply entrenched and committed hardcore insurgents who possess strong ideological loyalty in their hideouts. However, the Nigerian government seems to have taken note of this public concern with the DDR programme currently under review (Bello, 2026).

(b) Community-Based Non-Judicial Transitional Justice

The concept of community-led non-judicial transitional justice is a relatively recent approach that has gained popularity in recent times in response to the limitations of conventional transitional justice. Countries like South Africa, Colombia, Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo have adopted this method due to its cost-effectiveness, inclusiveness, responsiveness to the needs of the local communities and its emphasis on healing and reconciliation rather than punitive measures (Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust and Heal Zimbabwe Trust, 2016; Hassan & Tyvol, 2018). The National Human Rights Commission is spearheading community-driven transitional justice in the Northeast across the three Boko Haram most affected states (Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa). The project, which began in 2021, is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by NHRC in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (NHRC, 2021). Ibrahim (2022) reports that this initiative is built upon three pillars and rooted in the communities' values, beliefs, culture and tradition for easy adaptation: community mobilisation and sensitisation; transitional justice mechanisms; and

reconciliation and reintegration as a foundation for post-conflict recovery in the Northeast.

CL-NJ transitional justice has made some progress in media advocacy, public consultations and community enlightenment to build people's confidence and trust in the project. It also provides capacity building on reconciliation, mediation, and other components of transition justice to critical stakeholders including the government officials, and traditional and religious leaders. so they can assume ownership of the project at the community level (Ibrahim, 2022). A major obstacle that could impede the CL-NJ transitional justice from achieving its objectives is the profound suspicion and animosity harboured by the people of the region towards anyone linked with Boko Haram, regardless of whether they were captured or sought repentance. Bassey (2025) argues that the community members are so resolute in their determination to reject them because of the belief that they can never be reformed and that their show of remorse is merely a smokescreen. The gravity of violence and abuses suffered from the insurgents, and even the military, can further complicate the move for cultivating sincere forgiveness and reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators.

A large portion of the Nigerian population lacks confidence in the government's ability to investigate and bring to justice cases of human rights violations committed by the security forces. This skepticism is traceable to a prolonged history of impunity among security personnel. The hardened and ideologically committed Boko Haram insurgents are still on the loose and unwilling to surrender due to fear of facing prosecution. The rights of the victims may not be upheld without holding the real perpetrators accountable and providing commensurate reparations for the victims.

This poses a challenge in addressing the origin of the crisis and the effective implementation of CL-TJ. (Bassey, 2025).

Promoting social justice and investigating human rights abuses committed during the insurgency are central to the mandates of CL-TJ, but the focus has predominantly been on Boko Haram combatants with comparatively less emphasis on human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces. The reluctance to acknowledge abuses committed by security forces may be borne out of the fear that it could demoralize them since they are still actively engaged in the counterinsurgency operation. Already, the Nigerian military is facing grave accusations of human rights violations in the course of counterinsurgency operations including mass killing of civilians, torture, massacre of children, infanticide, and forced abortion of pregnancies which have garnered local and global attention (Ibekwe, 2015; Amnesty International, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2020; United States Department of State, 2021; Carsten et al, 2022; Mom, 2022; United Nations, 2022; Levinon, 2023; Adeyemi, 2023)

Downplaying the severity of these abuses could undermine the credibility of the CL-TJ process, making it difficult to guarantee impartiality and fairness in delivering justice. Additionally, it will gauge how effective transitional justice mechanisms are in tackling the fundamental causes of conflict and deepening sustainable peace. Only when human rights abuses committed by the security forces are fully investigated and culprits prosecuted without fear or favour, can the transitional justice in Nigeria's Northeast be truly meaningful and successful. And empowering local communities will lay the groundwork for an enduring peace against the legacies of insecurity, violence, and conflict.

Peace Education as a Catalyst for Transitional Justice

For a society that is enmeshed in an intractable conflict or emerging from protracted conflict, peace education can be used as an instrument for conflict prevention and social reconciliation (Isaac, 1999; Bar-Tal et al, 2009; Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009). And reconciliation, being a key element of non-formal education (Barrios-Tao et al 2017), deals with one of the causes that can trigger the recurrence of conflict (Sommer, 2018). Although the offenders must voluntarily accept to render sincere apologies to genuine victims and admit to any prior agony they might have caused them. Peace education instills the importance of cultivating trust among different contending parties within the society, as well as in the institutions responsible for driving transitional justice, which is central to the successful implementation of transitional justice. However, the reverse is the case in Nigeria's Northeast.

A United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2021) study on transitional justice and alternative dispute resolution in the Boko Haram-affected communities reveals how the Nigerian government is deliberately pardoning the offenders by claiming victims' status without consulting the communities who are the true victims. If peace education is not prioritized in a country with a history of violence, there is a substantial risk of the situation relapsing into conflict (Kapuwa, 2021).

The divisive interventions in the Northeast's DDR programme exemplify what Johnson and Johnson (2005) describe as "imposed peace" because it is built on dominance, power, imposition, and enforcement, which might temporarily halt the conflict, but will neither address fundamental grievances nor build lasting relationships among the contending parties. Hence, the mistrust and animosity that have persisted in the Northeast communities towards the deradicalization and reintegration efforts. Peace education represents a key determinant in reducing

tension between former insurgents and the local communities and ultimately contributing to their successful reintegration. People will be more favourably disposed to transitional justice when they understand its importance and the benefits they stand to gain from such efforts. As peace education plays a complementary role, it raises awareness about transitional justice and builds the capacity of local communities to participate actively in the initiatives.

Peace education has the capacity to develop the skills and knowledge that people require to actively participate in transitional justice processes. Given that such processes often involve intense emotions, peace education becomes an essential resource for promoting reconciliation and the spirit of forgiveness among the people affected by violence. It also nurtures people's capacity for empathy and compassion, even towards those who may have inflicted harm on the victims. Bar-Tal et al (2009) clarify that even when peaceful conflict resolution is placed on the social agenda as a societal objective, there is a need for additional efforts to transform the conflict culture embedded in the shared sociopsychological repertoire and create a new repertoire that supports the establishment of peaceful coexistence among society members. Peace education is pivotal in facilitating this societal psychological transformation which results in the reconciliation process

Since 2013, Boko Haram has kidnapped over a thousand children in Northeastern Nigeria (UNICEF, 2018) and conscripted them into their ranks as child soldiers. In conflicts where children have been involved in violence as soldiers, Sommer (2018) argues that education serves a larger purpose than solely teaching peace. Peace education can function as a means to help child soldiers to heal from their experiences, build their lives, prevent youth's involvement in violence, and reintegrate them into their communities. The involvement of young people is critical

in breaking intergenerational cycles of conflict and impunity. While they may be vulnerable to violence, they can be a positive change agent of peace. Hence, building an enduring peace in societies recovering from violent conflict depends heavily on active participation and meaningful youth inclusion (Impunity Watch, 2022).

Peace education, according to Johnson and Johnson (2005) has proven to be one method of institutionalizing mutually beneficial peace because it emphasizes building mutuality among all citizens and instilling in them the skills, dispositions, and beliefs necessary to establish and uphold cooperative systems, constructively resolve conflicts and sustain principles that promote peace. Peace education therefore, serves as a valuable strategy for peacebuilding, particularly in post-conflict situations or as an efficacious means of proactively averting violent conflicts in the first place (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2010). Based on the principle of transitional justice, Murphy (2017) affirms that the education sector is distinctively situated to contribute significantly to the mending, rebuilding, and reparation of injustices, divisions, political repression, and human rights abuses and also, to rectify some of the underlying issues behind the earlier abuses (Ramírez-Barat and Duthie, 2017).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization[UNESCO] (2011) maintains that in addition to being a silent victim of violent conflict, education plays a crucial role in both preventing conflicts and rebuilding post-conflict societies. Ramírez-Barat and Duthie (2015) posit that education has a substantial impact on memory retention, memory transfer, and peacebuilding in the aftermath of a conflict situation. Due to its formative influence, education possesses the ability to facilitate new norms, reconcile competing historical narratives, and foster a culture of respect for human rights that lasts for generations. These succeeding generations bear the

responsibility of maintaining the new standards and protections established during the nation's transition and/or for continuing to correctly identify and address historical wrongdoing and its impact on individuals, communities, and society at large (Murphy, 2017).

Instances abound where peace education has been employed to strengthen transitional justice in some countries. In South Africa, peace education was instrumental in aiding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's efforts to probe human rights abuses under apartheid (Ramírez-Barat & Duthie, 2015). Rwanda utilized peace education in the recovery to rebuild the country following the 1994 genocide (Ramírez-Barat & Duthie 2017). While in Colombia, peace education is being used to support the implementation of the 2016 accord between the government and the guerrilla group called Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (Ramírez-Barat & Duthie, 2017; López-Martínez, 2023).

Conclusion

The prolonged years of insurgency and the attendant widespread violence suggest that it might not be a walk in the park assuaging the anger of the people and mending broken relations in a fractured Northeast region. However, peace education as an instrument of social reconciliation can be a catalyst to promote peace and solidify peaceful co-existence in the Northeast. Transitional justice, when complemented with peace education, can serve as a driving force to rebuild trust, strengthen cohesion, aid forgiveness, heal wounds of past misdeeds, promote reconciliation and empower communities to deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner. The situational analysis presented in this paper has underscored peace education as an indispensable ally in the pursuit of transitional justice in the Northeast. It also recognizes the value of allowing local communities to have a strong sense of belonging by putting them at

the forefront of transitional justice's planning and implementation processes. The fusion of peace education into the region's ongoing journey towards transitional justice is a promising approach that presents a foundation for a just and secure future, ultimately ushering in the long-lasting peace that the Northeast is in dire need of.

Way Forward.

There is no doubt that years of massive violence and atrocities in the Northeast have left many people deeply traumatized and extremely disgruntled. Confession of sin and admission of guilt for past and current abuses is important in seeking justice, promoting reconciliation and consolidating peace because justice is crucial in building peace within a society undergoing justice in transition. Although acknowledgment of past misdeeds serves as a stepping stone in mending relations nevertheless catalogue of human rights violations must be seen to be addressed to provide valuable prospects for delivering justice and ensuring accountability.

Reparation for the victims can further address some of their grievances, aid forgiveness and serve as a healing balm for crimes committed by the insurgents. Apart from material benefits and monetary support, some countries such as Colombia, Chile, Nepal, Brazil, Sierra Leone and Peru have included educational support as part of reparation interventions in the form of subsidized school fees, tuition reduction/waiver, full scholarship and so forth. The Nigerian government can adopt a similar approach by enrolling and providing free education to the children of the victims up to the university level as part of reparations. This initiative is particularly necessary, more so that miseducation or a lack of education has contributed to the indoctrination and recruitment of youths into groups like Boko Haram.

Before the insurgency, the Northeast faced a fundamental challenge of underdevelopment, characterized by some of the worst cases of socioeconomic vices in Nigeria, such as poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy. These conditions have been identified as factors forcing many people to join Boko Haram. It is commendable that a state like Borno has invested heavily in educational infrastructure, including teachers' recruitment, human empowerments and rebuilding of schools. This is an important step in addressing some of the root causes of Boko Haram insurgency. Other affected states should equally prioritize education and human capital development to accelerate social progress, economic development, and ultimately a peaceful and prosperous future for the region

The Northeast is not yet in a post-crisis state, but clearly, the conflict has subsided, paving the way for a significant number of repentant terrorists to surrender their weapons and enroll in the DDR programme. However, sustainable peace in the Northeast requires putting community needs first to ensure legitimacy and acceptability, with peace education forming an integral part of the entire transitional justice process. These approaches can be effective in bringing the transformation and the enduring peace that the region deserves to overcome its challenges.

Nigeria currently has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world with the majority coming from the Northeast, occasioned by the insurgency attacks. Several children have fallen victims of mass abduction carried out by Boko Haram. Therefore, many children who lack or have missed formal education, including those who were used as child soldiers can be reformed and reintegrated into society through the transformative powers of peace education and transitional justice. In doing that, transitional justice embedded with peace education should be driven by

the affected communities themselves and inspired by traditional values and local realities for effective transitional justice initiatives.

South Africa and Rwanda are typical examples of countries where peace education has made positive impacts. In the aftermath of the genocidal attacks in Rwanda, the government utilized peace education called the Rwanda Peace Education Programme as a powerful instrument of applying lessons from the past to prevent division and violence in the future through peacebuilding and reconciliation. Nigeria does not have a standardized curriculum for peace education. However, North East Development Commission (NEDC), as the coordinating body charged with the responsibility to oversee all intervention programmes in the region can spearhead the design of a peace education curriculum that is sensitive to local contents and peculiarities of the region.

The NHRC should not restrict community engagement and sensitization to town halls and meetings with only traditional rulers, district heads and religious leaders. The affected communities and wider societies should also be carried along, and the enlightenment campaign must be far-reaching and all-inclusive, using platforms like mosques, churches, and social and traditional media. Communities should be granted the privilege of having a sense of inclusion and empowered to facilitate justice and reconciliation processes that are convenient and acceptable to them in order to secure an enabling environment for the pursuit of sustainable peace and successful transitional justice. Some of the local justice mechanisms such as oath-taking and *Sulhu* derived from the Holy Quran can be factored into the initiative. The design and implementation of transitional justice should go *pari passu* with peace education programmes to tackle the root causes of the conflict and address the legacies of human rights violations.

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