

## **COUNTING THE COST OF VIOLENCE AND PEACE AMONG YOUTHS IN THE DAMATURU AXIS OF NORTH-EAST NIGERIA**

**Ola Olamakinde**

### **Article Info**

**Keywords:** Peace, violence, prosperity and youth empowerment.

### **DOI**

10.5281/zenodo.17084934

### **Abstract**

This study attempts to make an exposition on the cost of violence and peace among youth in the Damaturu axis of northeastern Nigeria. The burden of violence in the aftermath of crisis and chaos—largely caused by the over a decade-long insurgency—participates on the shoulders of the youthful population in Damaturu. Contextually, this study aimed to find out how violence has disrupted the original flow of events and in connection to the demands for peace in thematic areas, such as economic growth, educational opportunities, and easily accessible health facilities. The pragmatic worldview serves as the thrust of this study. Both qualitative and quantitative design, with a strong emphasis on narrative research as a form, are subscribed to. Data used include primary sources collected through a closed survey from one hundred and sixty-five (165) individuals, ages 20-29, across the eleven (11) wards in Damaturu. NPS was used for all selections. As the findings show, violence in the concerned axis has taken dear lives and remains life-threatening. On the side of the cost of peace, the offerings of the custodian of peace are frequently challenged by their own framework, and hence, are capitalized upon (for abuse) by the merchants of violence. This study concludes by arguing that concentrated efforts must be in place to empower the youth to be an economic pillar by providing them with periodic peace-for-prosperity training, accompanied by compulsory tertiary education and exposure to enterprising venture.

### **1.0 Introduction**

Violence in Nigeria's northeast geopolitical zone is now a familiar diction in the curriculum of narrative explanation of this part of the country. Over the past 13 years, the impact of the Boko Haram crisis has been strongly felt, especially in the northeast, the field of occurrence. The direct effects of conflict, such as death and injury, loss of livelihoods, displacement, and damage to infrastructure, are transformed into long-term economic impacts (UNICEF, 2023). Young people of Damaturu, the focus of this paper, counted and still count their cost, majorly loss, as it affects their own lives and means of living. Violent conflicts are associated with the loss of lives and injury to millions of people every year, the destruction of infrastructure, services, markets, assets, and

livelihoods, the displacement of families, communities, and growing fear and distrust (Justino, 2023). Of the global records of destructive variations, Yobe State has her share.

Circuitously, on the scale of eight (8), population wise, Yobe State is ranked in the 6<sup>th</sup> radar among the states in Nigeria, with the 2023 estimate of 4,350,401, which is more than Croatia, Uruguay, Eritrea, Qatar, and a host of other countries. While the dreaded insurgency that shakes the Nigerian security architecture and economy takes firmer root in Borno State out of the core (Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe) Northeast States, the brutal leader of the Boko Haram group, the late Abubakar Shekau, was born and grew-up in the Shekau community of Tarmuwa local government area (LGA), one of the seventeen (17) in Yobe State. Tarmuwa borders Damaturu. According to the National Humanitarian Development Peace Framework (2021-2025) of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Cohesion (FMHADMSC), the overall goal is to ensure peace and stability in Nigeria by promoting an innovative and home-grown approach to building capacity and strengthening government and other non-governmental institutions operating within the humanitarian and development sectors from community, state, and federal levels to proactively address critical humanitarian and development challenges (FMHADMSC, 2021).

Explicably, this study makes an exposition on the cost of violence and peace among youth in the Damaturu axis of northeastern Nigeria. The burden of violence in the aftermath of crisis and chaos—largely caused by the over a decade-long insurgency—participates on the shoulders of the youthful population in Damaturu. Contextually, this study aimed to find out how violence has disrupted the original flow of events and in connection to the demands for peace in thematic areas, such as economic growth, educational opportunities, and easily accessed health facilities. The pragmatic worldview serves as the thrust of this study. The qualitative design, with a strong emphasis on the form of narrative research, is subscribed to. Data used include primary sources collected through a closed survey from one hundred and sixty-five (165) individuals, ages 20-29, across the eleven (11) wards in Damaturu. NPS was used for all selections. As the findings show, violence in the concerned axis has taken dear lives and remains life-threatening. On the side of the cost of peace, the offerings of the custodian of peace are frequently challenged by their own framework, and hence, are capitalized upon (for abuse) by the merchants of violence. Understanding the nexus between the provision and impact of humanitarian and developmental support is vital for creating a peaceful atmosphere in Yobe State.

## **2.0 Clarifying Concepts**

Meaningfully, this study aims to enunciate the intricacies of violence and peace, the two phenomena upon which to torchlight, and both forms the content of the review. Violence, unlike conflict, is singly-phased. While conflict may lead to harmony or violence, violence has already wrecked its inherent havoc, and a loss is recorded. In the domain of causal and effect, violence is taken as an effect that is inclusively associated with a lack of means of production or sustainability—otherwise called poverty. Poverty reduces resilience to conflict by weakening government institutions and compounds vulnerability to insurgency at the individual and community levels by lowering the opportunity cost of mobilizing for violence. Meanwhile, high unemployment and inequality rates, combined with low levels of education and development, are thought to soften the ground for recruitment and provide motives to fight (Marks, 2016). In the confines of violence, the opportunity cost is attributable to the perpetrators; however, for the victim(s), the annihilative cost can be counted. Corrective, reactionary violence linked to socio-economic decline is a shortfall of its true sense. Violence is an alternative that is embraced, but can also be forgone.

Eruptively, conflict is often used interchangeably with violence. This is a red alert that has been abating literate understanding. Incautiously, a report compared the pre- and post-insurgency eras in the northeast and provided

an inroad to a simulation of what might have happened in northeastern Nigeria in the absence of conflict: “the No Conflict scenario offers a glimpse of a possible future of peace and steady progress in the region” (UNDP [United Nations Development Program], 2020). Unarguably, conflict is part and parcel of every society, from the individual and group’s decision-making engagements. It was not the presence of conflict in the northeast that made that part of the country hard to live, but the presence of violent-coated conflict. Conflict does not necessarily need to be violent, but violence necessarily stems from conflict. Bufacchi (2005) elucidates two concepts of violence: violence as force and violence as violation. While the former is an approach of the minimalist school of thought, the latter is a comprehensive school of thought approach. Expressively, a vicious act of violence can have both force and violation or either of the two. If a school is bombed by a terrorist group, destruction via force is established as a violation of the right to education.

According to Hamby (2017), a comprehensive definition of violence includes four (4) essential elements: (a) intentional, (b) unwanted, (c) nonessential, and (d) harmful behavior. While the first is accustomed to the perpetrator, the last three are to the victim’s perspective, to any degree. Ostensibly, violence, either as a force, violation, or attitude, is largely of choice. Spontaneous or consummated violence requires the consent of the perpetrator(s). Displacements that have been happening in the North-East meet these essential elements, as the acts were intentional of the insurgents, unwanted by the affected communities, nonessential to their growth developmental pattern, and immensely harmful to the people’s well-being and property. Violence includes physical, emotional, social, economic, and political. The violence that this paper stems from is physical violence caused by insurgents, which invariably relays into adaptiveness in social, economic, and political violence. These will be further articulated while considering the cost of peace attributable to the youth of Damaturu.

Peace is conservatively understood as the absence of war. However, the contribution of Galtung (1930-2024) to peace studies reflects positive and negative peace. Negative peace is disposed to the absence of direct violence (wars, chaos, crisis, etc.), whereas positive peace is centered on the absence of structural and cultural violence. Suffice to say, the absence of war is not sufficient for peace to reign. The absence of positive peace is an indirect invitation to crisis, chaos, and wars. Prior to the Boko Haram sect becoming an affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by the name Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 2015, there was a fertile environment for such, in terms of poor structural and cultural foundation for peace. Peace is seemingly sought at the evolution or maturity of crisis, acts of mediation or seize-fire are advanced at this stage, and peace building can later be introduced. In a definitive term, peace is a linchpin of social harmony, economic equity, and political justice (Webel & Kaba, 2020). Intuitively, peace radiates an atmosphere devoid of tension and apprehension, although it does not happen on its own accord. The vital element in ensuing peace is trust. Hence, to easily facilitate peace is to critically entrench trust. The collapse of trust warrants the dysphoria of peace.

Formatively, the inherent in peace is its progressiveness. In understanding peace, the global community is now situated with the positive attributes of peace. In this ambience, positive peace provides the optimal environment for human potential to flourish (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2024).



Diagram 1: The Pillars of Peace: An intuitive eight-part taxonomy for visualizing the key determinants of peace  
Source: IEP, 2021.

### 3.0 The Empirical Approach

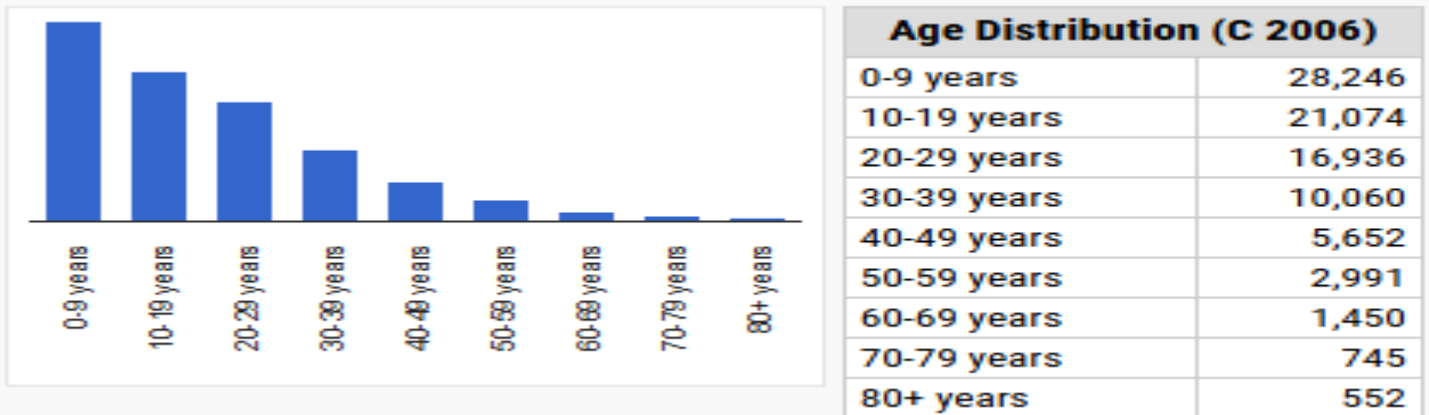
Pragmatically, this study engages the sampled population in field work. Pragmatism is derived from the work of Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey (Cherryholmes, 1992). According to Cresswell (2014), this philosophy has many forms, but for many, pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in post positivism). This study stems from the qualitative angle with the narrative lining. Damaturu, the state capital of Yobe State in Nigeria, is made up of 11 wards: Bindigari/Pawari, Damakasu, Damaturu Central, Gambir/Maduri, Kalallawa/Gabai, Kukareta/Warsala, Maisandari, Murfa Kalam, Nayinawa, Njiwaji/Gwange, and Sasawa/Kabaru. Non-probability sampling is utilized by administering a 10-question questionnaire. Data used include primary sources collected through a closed survey from one hundred and sixty-five (165) individuals, ages 20-29, across the wards. This age deviates from the United Nations (UN) definition of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 because Nigeria, like the UN, takes anyone less than the age of 18 as a child, and this study does not want to include children. Culturally, at age 30, concerns are on the increase from family members if not married (most especially for females), a status that shows the subject has left the youthhood to adulthood. The selection represented 15 respondents in each ward. According to the 2006 Population and Housing Census, Yobe State has a population of 2,321,339, whereas the population of age-range 20-24 amounts to 206,046 while 25-29 amounts to 185,134, giving a total of 391,180.

Table 1: Figures reported by Yobe State in 2006

YOBE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,321,339</b>	<b>1,205,034</b>	<b>1,116,305</b>
<b>0 - 4</b>	<b>438,853</b>	<b>228,750</b>	<b>210,103</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>376,213</b>	<b>198,708</b>	<b>177,505</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>268,242</b>	<b>145,207</b>	<b>123,035</b>
<b>15 - 19</b>	<b>239,320</b>	<b>120,549</b>	<b>118,771</b>
<b>20 - 24</b>	<b>206,046</b>	<b>89,719</b>	<b>116,327</b>
<b>25 - 29</b>	<b>185,134</b>	<b>83,296</b>	<b>101,838</b>
<b>30 - 34</b>	<b>153,822</b>	<b>76,627</b>	<b>77,195</b>
<b>35 - 39</b>	<b>100,621</b>	<b>54,912</b>	<b>45,709</b>
<b>40 - 44</b>	<b>101,824</b>	<b>56,409</b>	<b>45,415</b>
<b>45 - 49</b>	<b>54,767</b>	<b>33,091</b>	<b>21,676</b>
<b>50 - 54</b>	<b>67,846</b>	<b>39,673</b>	<b>28,173</b>
<b>55 - 59</b>	<b>22,555</b>	<b>14,268</b>	<b>8,287</b>
<b>60 - 64</b>	<b>40,463</b>	<b>24,414</b>	<b>16,049</b>
<b>65 - 69</b>	<b>11,860</b>	<b>7,091</b>	<b>4,769</b>
<b>70 - 74</b>	<b>23,993</b>	<b>14,701</b>	<b>9,292</b>
<b>75 - 79</b>	<b>6,653</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>2,526</b>
<b>80+</b>	<b>23,127</b>	<b>13,492</b>	<b>9,635</b>

Source: Nigeria Population Projections and Demographic Indicators, 2000

Closely, and still going by the 2006 Census, Damaturu has a population of 87,706 according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette of 2009 signed by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. The population of ages 20-29 amounts to 16,936 as shown in the next diagram. There was immense preparation to conduct a census on May 3 and 7, 2023, but it was later postponed indefinitely by President Buhari in April, leaving it to the incoming government (now incumbent) of Tinubu to pick a new date.



Graph 1: Population Structure of Damaturu, 2006. Source:

[https://www.citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/yobe/NGA036003\\_\\_damaturu/](https://www.citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin/yobe/NGA036003__damaturu/)

The youthful community in Damaturu is largely unemployed and rendered with low-level education, which makes it challenging to contribute to society's advancement, for reasons not of their own making. The crisis caused by the insurgency has taken a toll on them, resulting in psychological and material deficiencies. Basically, this study aims to establish the cost of armed violence, similar to that of peace, as it affects the youth in the Damaturu local government area of Yobe State. Meanwhile, the specific objectives are to:

- (i) assess the cost of violence among the youth in Damaturu,
- (ii) assess the cost of peace among the youth in Damaturu,
- (iii) assess the provision of support to the youth in achieving their goals, and
- (iv) Examine the youth's confidence in the government to end armed conflict. This study attempts to answer the following questions:



- (1) What are the costs of violence among youth in Damaturu?
- (2) What are the costs of peace among youth in Damaturu?
- (3) Are the youth being supported to achieve their life goals?
- (4) Is the government perceived to be able to end the insurgency, thereby facilitating peace for prosperity?

**Study Area:** Damaturu, the study area, is a local government area that is also the capital city of Yobe State, one of the six (6) states in North-East geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Yobe State borders the Republic of the Niger to the north, Borno State to the east, Gombe State to the south, and Bauchi/Jigawa States to the west. Damaturu borders Tarmuwa LGA to the north, Kaga LGA (Borno State) to the east, Gujba LGA to the south, and Fune LGA to the west. Commercial activities have picked up compared to the downside of the days of heated insurgency. However, industrial-based activities must be improved upon. Bread and sachet water establishments are rampant, which are insufficient to meet the employment needs of the teeming youth. This study highlights the particularities that surround the violence and peace in Damaturu, as it affects the youthful population representing the strength of the society. Additionally, the recommendations of this study can help policymakers to concentrate on how to facilitate the ambience of lasting peace in the area of study and its environs, and also fortify the youth for a meaningful living, making them contributors in advancing the society. It can also be useful as information for researchers of similar topical interest, forming a bedrock of assessment. Furthermore, this study is significant because it juxtaposes the cost of violence to that of peace, a new entrant in peace and conflict discourse, forming an addition to extant knowledge.

#### 4.0 Findings and Discussions

The 10-question questionnaire tries to determine the cost of violence and peace. Research questions one and two (RQs 1 and 2) address the cost of violence, while RQs 3–10 address the cost of peace.

Table 2: Research questions and responses to the questionnaire

RQ	Yes	No	Blank	Total
1. During the heat of the Boko Haram insurgency, did you lose any of your nuclear or extended family members?	98 (59%)	67 (41%)	0	165
2. During the heat of the Boko Haram insurgency, did you, any member of your family, or a friend lose any business venture?	89 (54%)	76 (46%)	0	165
3. Have you participated in any peace training organized by the government since the insurgency began?	90 (55%)	75 (45%)	0	165
4. Are you economically buoyant in terms of addressing basic needs by earning the equivalent of a dollar per day?	51 (31%)	114 (69%)	0	165
5. Do you have easy access to health care?	55 (33%)	110 (67%)	0	165
6. Do you have pipe-borne water in your home?	45 (27%)	120 (73%)	0	165
7. Do you trust the government in ending the more-than-a-decade insurgency?	76 (46%)	88 (53.3%)	1 (0.6%)	165
8. Do you perceive a high level of corruption in society?	88 (53%)	77 (47%)	0	165

9. Do you believe that there is an equitable distribution of resources to the areas of the rich and the poor in Damaturu?	83 (50.3%)	82 (49.6%)	0	165
10. Do you believe that the business environment is sound enough to bring prosperity to the populace?	63 (38%)	102 (62%)	0	165

Source: January 2025 survey data

The table above depicts that a higher number of respondents had lost a family member or friend. Loosing someone close to oneself at a young stage in life, especially as a result of insurgency actions, dampens one's hope in life. In June 2021, the United Nations Development Program reported that nearly 350,000 people had been killed by insurgents in the northeast of Nigeria as of the end of 2020 (Carsten & Onuah, 2021). That number has been on the rise since January 2025, with the activities of the insurgents on the rise. The Geidam, Gujba, and Yunusari local government areas in Yobe State have continued to witness the striking attacks from members of the ISWAP group. On Tuesday, January 28, 2025, there was a reported attack in Gujba where the ISWAP group burned down a building. The relaxation mood witnessed in Damaturu cannot be traced to the entire Yobe State. This alone subjugates and confines the freedom of those living in Damaturu.

Regarding economic loss, RQ2 asked whether you, any member of your family, or a friend lost any business venture during the heat of the Boko Haram insurgency. While 89 respondents answered in the affirmative, 76 accounted for not losing a business venture, and 54% affirmed loss of business venture, which will definitely have financial and psychological effects on the affected respondents. The Northeastern Nigeria, to which Yobe State belongs, is the most economically, educationally, and politically underdeveloped region in the country, with persistent insecurity playing a major part in this predicament (Mallami, Agu, & Babale, 2021). Pre-conflict Northeastern Nigeria is characterized by agriculture and commerce (UNDP, 2016). This area is largely rural with abundant arable space that supports agricultural engagements. Both cash crops and food crops are widely produced, including millet, sorghum, cowpeas, rice, sugarcane, cotton, groundnuts, gum Arabic, and ginger (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). However, with the volatile security disposition, farmers could no longer continue their livelihood activities. The atrocities that lead to the cut-shortening of economic activities make victims viable instruments for future atrocities. It is easy for victims of economic loss to become new perpetrators. The increase in thefts of motor bikes and other economic goods in the Obasanjo area of Damaturu attests to this. Conversely, the cost of peace is the investment in what guarantees peace. Responses to RQ3 indicate that 55% of respondents attended a peace training. Bringing the untutored 45% to the understanding of peace is critical to see the 55% yielding benefits. From the Yobe State 2024 budget tagged Citizens Budget, the Ministry of Youths did not feature among the top-20 expenditures.

Table 3: Largest spending ministries (including departments and agencies)

Which Ministries will be spending the Money, and on what?						
Expenditure by Ministry (Top 20)	2024 Budget					
	Personnel	Overhead	Other Recurrent	Total Recurrent Expenditure	Capital	Total Expenditure
Ministry of Health & Human Services	9,742,837,000	2,256,441,000	4,000,000	12,003,278,000	20,644,761,000	32,648,039,000
Ministry of Finance & Economic Development	7,654,241,000	7,469,540,000	12,210,000,000	27,333,781,000	751,645,000	28,085,426,000
Ministry of Works	345,058,000	45,573,000	-	390,631,000	25,130,722,000	25,521,353,000
Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education	6,404,272,000	6,026,270,000	10,600,000	12,441,142,000	11,790,061,000	24,231,203,000
Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology	7,199,210,000	1,754,997,000	6,000,000	8,960,207,000	5,461,000,000	14,421,207,000
Ministry of Transport and Energy	365,265,000	1,366,450,000	-	1,731,715,000	12,316,884,000	14,048,599,000
Office of the Secretary to the State Government	1,410,047,000	4,730,863,000	10,000,000	6,150,910,000	3,746,345,000	9,897,255,000
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Tourism	187,822,000	273,325,000	400,000,000	861,147,000	8,700,321,000	9,561,468,000
Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources	2,188,971,000	1,159,990,000	400,000,000	3,748,961,000	4,646,837,000	8,395,798,000
Ministry of Water Resources	550,526,000	258,166,000	-	808,692,000	6,810,000,000	7,618,692,000
Ministry of Housing & Urban Development	369,638,000	137,700,000	-	507,338,000	4,046,000,000	4,553,338,000
Governor's Office	425,208,000	3,707,882,000	75,000,000	4,208,090,000	318,000,000	4,526,090,000
Ministry of Environment	1,283,218,000	445,940,000	1,000,000	1,730,158,000	2,574,125,000	4,304,283,000
Ministry of Wealth Creation, Empowerment & Employment Genera	20,712,000	240,000,000	100,000,000	360,712,000	3,740,000,000	4,100,712,000
Yobe State House of Assembly	431,745,000	2,894,500,000	3,000,000	3,329,245,000	668,000,000	3,997,245,000
Judicial Service Commission	1,130,597,000	803,425,000	-	1,934,022,000	1,336,000,000	3,270,022,000
Office of the Head of Civil Service	440,063,000	1,873,001,000	-	2,313,064,000	908,000,000	3,221,064,000
Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs & Disaster Management	22,122,000	2,267,473,000	56,000,000	2,345,595,000	533,304,000	2,878,899,000
Ministry of Land & Solid Minerals	255,411,000	181,725,000	-	437,136,000	1,308,178,000	1,745,314,000
Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning	96,638,000	493,573,000	-	590,211,000	1,131,275,000	1,721,486,000
Other Main Orgs	2,337,031,000	2,232,676,000	73,300,000	4,643,007,000	3,559,500,000	8,202,507,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>42,860,632,000</b>	<b>40,619,510,000</b>	<b>13,348,900,000</b>	<b>96,829,042,000</b>	<b>120,120,958,000</b>	<b>216,950,000,000</b>

Source: Yobe State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, 2024.

Upon featuring, the Ministry of Youths' budget for local training, initially as at December 2023, had 70 million naira budgeted, and by September 2024's revised budget, had 220 million naira (YSMBEP, 2024). Some youths received peace training from non-government organizations that were treated as that of the state government. For instance, Plan International, an international non-governmental organization (INGO), trains selected youths in Damaturu communities on peace building and reconciliation, among many other INGOs and local NGOs. Tilting to the side of economic buoyancy, 69% of the respondents answered that they were earning the equivalent of a dollar in a day. Undoubtedly, the national economic condition is tough on all fronts, from the number of companies closing down due to high cost of operations coupled with rise in inflation, electricity tariffs, fuel price, etc., it is tougher for youths in Damaturu, a pro-agro area hampered by the grips of insurgency. When asked if easy-access to health care service is being enjoyed, 67% of respondents did not have easy-access. The depopulation of neighboring LGAs into Damaturu also has a toll on health facilities within the city of Damaturu. The increased utilization of services at facilities also created pressure on health infrastructure, and primary healthcare workers regularly signaled the potential impact of this on service quality (Ager, Lembani, Mohammed, Ashir, Abdulwahab, Pinho, Delobelle, and Zarowsky, 2015). The cost of hospital usage is another point entirely, bringing bear to not just accessibility but also affordability. A larger proportion of the population reverts to out-of-pocket purchase of medications without the consultation of medical doctors, that is, for those who have the money in their pocket.

Conversely, 73% of respondents responded that they had no access to pipe-borne water in their houses. Enhanced living standards have a positive impact on peace. Embarking on kilometers to get water or buying water from vendors, a common occurrence in houses in Damaturu dissipates the foundation of peace. In a semi-arid region such as Damaturu where precipitation remains the main groundwater recharge, the fluctuation in the amount of annual precipitation in the area has affected the groundwater water-table, quantity, and quality (Agada & Yakubu, 2022). Damaturu and its environs depend heavily on groundwater for their domestic and industrial water supply (Agada & Satendra, 2023). In the 2024 budget, the Yobe State Ministry of Water Resources appropriated 2.7 billion naira for boreholes and other water facilities, which was later revised to 1.7 billion naira. The Don Etiebet and Commissioner's Quarters axis of the city enjoy the pipe-borne public water to some extent, but this cannot



be said to be happening across the Damaturu metropolis. Water equity should not be overridden by gender equity—a phenomenon that every government now wants to be associated with.

Evidently, the level of trust among the youths in the government by the efforts to end the insurgency is low. While 46% believe that the government can achieve the feat, 53% believe otherwise. Trust-building is immensely powerful in peace building. Although the security architect basically confronted the insurgency to answer to the federal government, the state government has always claimed to be handicapped. This is one of the reasons why the call for the State Police has been strengthened and has received support from a high number of people in the Nigeria Governors Forum. Even with that, the perception of the populace is low that the military can end the insurgency soon. The perceived high level of corruption is another factor that is consuming the fabrics of peace, and 53% believe so. Even when fraudulent acts could not be openly traced to the financial operations of public officials, the wide gap between people in political power and those who are not is seen to be fueled by the proceeds of corruption, when the salary of the office is compared with the lifestyle of the office holder. According to Transparency International, the corruption perception index of 2024 ranks Nigeria as 140 out of 180 countries (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024>). The field survey for Damaturu reflects the perception of corruption in the country. High perceived corruption reduces trust in governance and hinders the peace structure.

### **5.0 Effects of Violence on Youths**

Violence is usually defined as aggression with the goal of causing extreme physical harm, such as injury or death (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010). The economically ill-grown ones are easily manipulated, becoming a tool in the hands of the chief perpetrators of violence. In June 2013, young suspects who were released by the military claimed that Boko Haram had paid them 5,000 naira each (about \$30 U.S. dollars) to set schools in Yobe and Borno States on fire and spy on soldiers (Onuoha, 2014). According to a previous study, 95% of the Boko Haram members are between the ages of 13 and 30 years, and less than 5% of them are above 40 years, as reported by those who had direct contact with members of Boko Haram interviewed at various IDP camps (Umaru, Mohammed, Dibal & Liman, 2018). The toll of unemployment on youths is susceptible to engendering violence, thereby endangering peace. In Nigeria, the unemployment rate increased from 5.0% in Q3 2023 to 5.3% in the first quarter of 2024, while the percentage of youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET Rate) was 14.4%. Indicating a 0.7 percentage point increase from Q3 2023 (NBS, 2024). There is a cyclical causal relationship between unemployment and violence. The former has the potency to cause the latter, just as the latter the former. The impact of the heinous activities of Boko Haram terrorism on the socio-economic and political structure of Yobe State is overwhelming and devastating (Dauda, 2014). Insurgency-driven violence heaps tension that does not support the quest for prosperous exploration. With the devastation witnessed during the atrocious engagement of the insurgents, it becomes difficult for business ventures to be invested. LGAs like Gujba, Geidam, and Yunusari show a dearth of youthful enterprise compared to the pre-insurgent era.

Largely, the emigration of youths from Yobe State is a common occurrence, as the cities of Damaturu and Potiskum, which remain relatively peaceful, could not boast of meeting the aspirations of youths across the State, in relation to the high cost of renting accommodation when compared to what is obtainable in the LGAs of first-hand residence vis-à-vis the profitable economic engagement. From the respondents that recorded loss of business enterprises, it has been a very difficult task to bounce back to normalcy, as the business environment is being stifled due to the emergence of unfriendly economic indications in the form of inflation and high tariffs. In 2024, the city of Damaturu witnessed damage to the electricity supply into the city by non-state armed groups (NSAGs), paving the way for a total blackout that lasted for at least one month. The last for that year happened on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September and was restored between 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of October, lasting for over a month (Egobiambu, 2024).

Small businesses that relied solely on public power supply were undoubtedly affected, income reduced, and health-stress increased.

Supportively, some of the youths in Damaturu are engaged as volunteer teachers by NGOs in the State to teach in both formal and non-formal primary schools in an effort to regain the lost educational decency caused by the insurgency. Even with that, the Stop-work Notification issued by the administration of the United States President, Donald Trump, in January 2025, had an odious effect on humanitarian and developmental projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USIAD). This announcement alone has returned many youths to being out of earning and discontinuing the guide to honing their teaching skills, which unequivocally is an opportunity for self-development doubling to that of service.

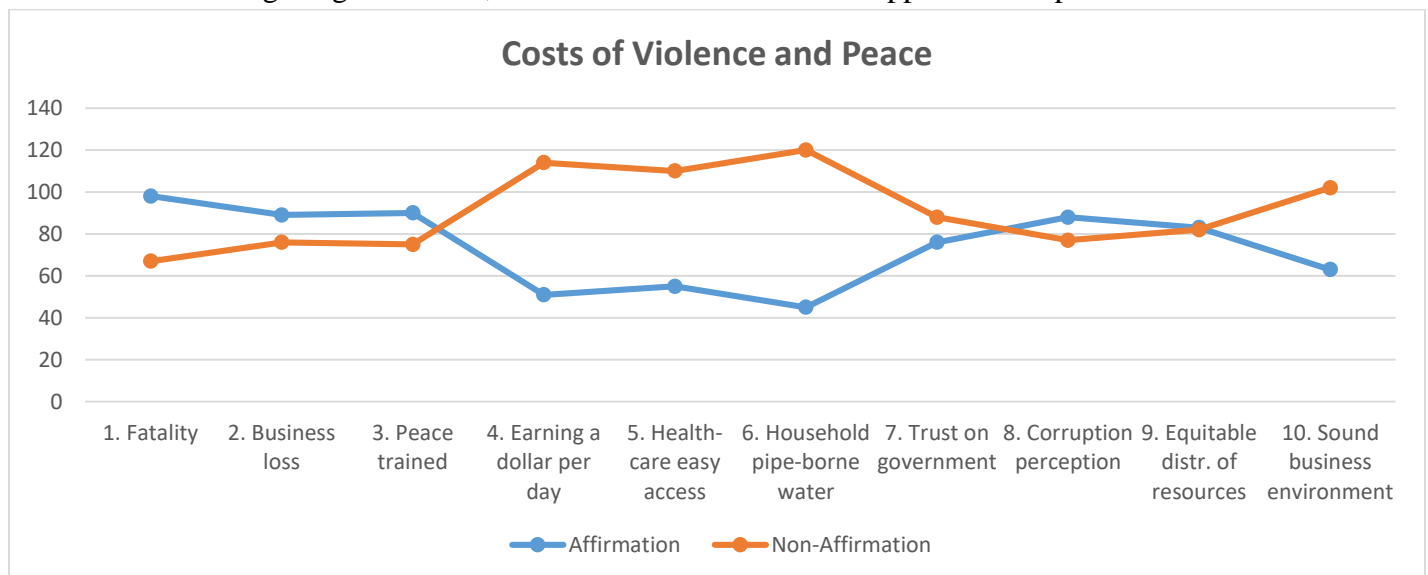
### **6.0 Prospects for Peace for Prosperity**

Entrenching peace in a society hitherto ravaged by crisis and chaos is not a mean task. Imaginably, peace is not a self-emanating phenomenon; it stems from the confluence of interwoven ideals. Part of the findings in this research situate the belief that lack of basic amenities and trust in the government enflames the seeds of peace, largely indirectly. Studies have shown that a lack of firm education and poor social amenities with an increased level of poverty all contributed to making the North-East fertile for insurgent activities. The earliest leaders of the NSAG found it easy to recruit members, with little support. This sought-peace is critical because of the enormous accrued loss. Since 2009, nearly 15 million people have been affected by the violence of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, also known as Boko Haram, and the resulting military operations in northeastern Nigeria. The fighting became particularly intense in 2014, leading to the loss of an estimated 20,000 lives and the displacement of 1.8 million people directly attributed to the violence, while further aggravating the weak economic development of northeastern Nigeria with an estimated infrastructure damage of US\$ 9.2 billion and accumulated output losses of US\$ 8.3 billion (The World Bank, 2015).

The World Bank (2015) identified three critical areas of focus: peace building, stability, and social cohesion; infrastructure and social services; and economic recovery. With various interventions from the government and the NGO community, reasonable support has been witnessed in the affected communities. However, the challenge still remains in areas that could not be accessed due to security volatility in LGAs in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. Returning to the area of this study, the prospects of peace remain a task for all, especially to the government focal persons entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining peace, not just negative peace (absence of crisis, chaos, or war) but also positive peace (atmosphere where peaceful conducts allow for societal prosperity). When optimally imbibed, the pillars of peace become worthwhile. From the field survey undertaken by this study, the cost of violence was increasingly noticed in association with the loss of lives and business enterprises. The prospects for peace in this regard will include possible efforts to forestall terrorism acts perpetrated by NSAGs. With the application of kinetic (direct confrontation with NSAGs) and non-kinetic (deradicalization and rehabilitation of surrendered NSAGs members) approaches, there is a need to towing the path to root support for the aggressive acts that have been threatening the peace. The functional root-support is traceable to ISWAP (Islamic State of West Africa Province), which pays allegiance to ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), whose agenda is to establish a global Islamic caliphate among territories where Islam is age-long entrenched. Rethinking Nigeria's governance structure in terms of permeability to regional governance, which allows full-scale operations of Islamic tenets and governance in northeastern Nigeria, remains vital. In any case, this is not an appeal to the extremist approach of ISWAP, but a move to properly reflect the nature of cultural responsiveness.

Likewise, the indicators in accounting for the cost of peace reflect that the public good in terms of easy access to health and water remains challenging for the youths in Damaturu. The government needs to scale up in this area. Notably, the trust-burst effect reveals the relationship between the populace and the government-led. Trust in the government is low, corruption perception is high, and a sound business environment is believed to be weak. In building trust, legislative efforts should be in place to prohibit high-level government officials and their nuclear family members from using educational and health facilities outside of the State when in service. Curbing economic and financial crimes, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), at the state level, should frontally sensitize the populace on the need to have the Commission's Eagle Eye App on their phones, for easy reporting of perceived economic and financial crimes. Download of the app should warrant a gift of higher internet data than the initial cost. If there is a recovery from the discovery, then the reporter of the case should be compensated handsomely, while the perpetrator of such crime should be punished vehemently. Facilitating compulsory education (with the option of enjoying monetized scholarship) from primary to tertiary level should be in place, with the possibility of full-time or part-time learning. The educational cost for those who opt for the monetized scholarship can then be re-paid to the government coffers in monthly installments when the graduate becomes employed or begins a start-up business. Toward building a healthy society, access to health services should be free, and the common wealth of the state can conveniently take care of this when loopholes of public-fund diversion are adequately blocked.

Empowering the business community will warrant supportive decisions that will enrich the economic strength of the populace. Investment in production-oriented industries of comparative advantage across the 11 wards within Damaturu will transform the business environment, and the success can then be copiously carried out in neighboring peaceful LGAs. From the graph below, high concerns are toward socio-economic constraints. These areas should be the government's core focus, while other areas can be resolved. Elements of trust in peace are often neglected, but understanding how to build trust remains an easy inroad to peacebuilding. When the populace is fortified in trusting the government, it becomes an instrument of support that dispels the merchants of violence.



Source: Field Survey data, 2025.

## 7.0 Conclusion

This study showcases the costs of violence and peace among youths in the Damaturu axis of northeastern Nigeria. It argues that concentrated efforts must be made to empower the youth to be an economic pillar by supporting

them in periodic peace-for-prosperity training, with accompanying compulsory tertiary education and exposure to enterprising ventures. According to the Yobe State Government (YSG), the state is currently developing a 25-year development plan with key focus areas based on addressing pressing challenges while leveraging existing opportunities. Flowing from that plan, a three-year mandate is set to reach 2.8 million people (536,000 IDPs and returnees; and 2.3 million other displacement-affected people) with a total budget of 2.1 trillion naira in the space of three years, 2025-2027, while the State Government commits to allocating 5% of the State's budget for a period of three years (YSG, 2025).

Table 4: Summary of the implementation costs of Yobe State Solutions Pathways

<b>PATHWAYS</b>	<b>TARGET POP</b>	<b>TOTAL COST (₦)</b>
<b>RETURN (HH PACKAGE)</b>	<b>355,000</b>	<b>1,314,146,561,900.20</b>
<b>RETURN (AREA PACKAGE)</b> Damaturu, Potiskum, Gujba, Geidam, Nguru, Bade, Fika	<b>1,797,457</b>	<b>151,685,710,362.78</b>
<b>LOCAL INTEGRATION (HH PACKAGE)</b>	<b>156,000</b>	<b>384,617,895,189.60</b>
<b>LOCAL INTEGRATION (AREA PACKAGE)</b> Damaturu, Potiskum, Geidam, Bade	<b>1,141,457</b>	<b>28,894,279,721.02</b>
<b>RELOCATION (HH PACKAGE)</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>177,018,079,631.50</b>
<b>RELOCATION (AREA PACKAGE)</b> Damaturu, Fune	<b>612,600</b>	<b>28,841,213,575.78</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,808,157</b>	<b>₦ 2,085,203,740,380.88</b>

Source: Yobe State Action Plan on Solutions to Internal Displacement, 2025

Finally, this study advocates a people-centered approach to governance in bridging the gap between the reached and the unreached, a departure from the common classification of rich and poor. Further empirical assertions will be instrumental in unpacking the solutions pathways of the government on how it will benefit the youth population and the entire populace at large.

## References

- Agada, L. & Satendra, S. (2023). 'Investigation of Groundwater Potential in New Jerusalem Area of Damaturu, Yobe State Nigeria, using electrical resistivity method', Dutse Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences, Vol. 9 No. 1b March 2023 ajol-file- journals\_579 \_articles\_244884\_submission\_proof\_244884-6807-587857-1-10- 20230331.pdf retrieved on February 15, 2025
- Agada, L., & Yakubu, M. (2022). 'Investigation of Groundwater Pollution in Pompomari Area of Damaturu, using Geophysical and Hydrochemical Methods'. Journal of Sciences, 6(5), pp. 82-90. Citing Agada and Satendra (2023) ajol-file- journals\_579 \_articles\_244884\_submission\_proof\_244884-6807-587857-1-10- 20230331.pdf
- Ager, A.; Lembani, M.; Mohammed, A.; Ashir, G.; Abdulwahab, A.; Pinho, H.; Delobelle, P.; and Zarowsky, C. (2015). 'Health service resilience in Yobe state, Nigeria in the context', Journal of Public Health, 58, pp. 57-76. Of the Boko Haram insurgency: a group dynamics analysis building', Conflict and Health

(2015) 9:30 DOI 10.1186/s13031-015-0056-3

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282646135\\_Health\\_service\\_resilience\\_in\\_Yobe\\_state\\_Nigeria\\_in\\_the\\_context\\_of\\_the\\_Boko\\_Haram\\_insurgency\\_a\\_systems\\_dynamics\\_analysis\\_using\\_group\\_model\\_building](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282646135_Health_service_resilience_in_Yobe_state_Nigeria_in_the_context_of_the_Boko_Haram_insurgency_a_systems_dynamics_analysis_using_group_model_building)

Bufacchi, V. (2005). 'Two Concepts of Violence', *Political Studies Review*: 2005 Vol 3, pp. 193-204, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304612711\\_The\\_Concept\\_of\\_Violence](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304612711_The_Concept_of_Violence) Retrieved on January 2, 2025.

Bushman, B. & Huesmann, L. (2010). 'Aggression', In S. T. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (5th ed.), pp. 833–863. New York, NY: Wiley. Cited in Bushman et al. (2016). *Youth Violence: What We Know and What We Need to Know*. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290442848\\_Youth\\_Violence\\_What\\_We\\_Know\\_and\\_What\\_We\\_Need\\_to\\_Know](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290442848_Youth_Violence_What_We_Know_and_What_We_Need_to_Know) [accessed Feb 17 2025].

Carsten, P. & Onuah, F. (2021). 'Northeast Nigeria insurgency has killed almost 350,000 - UN', Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/northeast-nigeria-insurgency-has-killed-almost-350000-un-2021-06-24/>

Cherryholmes, C. (1992). 'Notes on Pragmatism and Scientific Realism'. *Educational Researcher*, 13-17 cited in Cresswell (2014).

Cresswell, J. (2014). 'Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method'. SAGE Publications, Inc. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91320 E-mail: [order@sagepub.com](mailto:order@sagepub.com)

Dauda, M. (2014). 'The Effect of the Boko Haram Crisis on Socio-Economic Activities in Yobe State', *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* Volume 1 issue 4 2014 page no.251-257 ISSN: 2349-2031

Egobiambu, E. (2024). 'TCN Restores Power Supply to Gombe-Damaturu-Maiduguri 330 kV Line', Channels Television, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/11/01/blackout-tcn-restores-power-supply-to-gombe-damaturu-maiduguri-330kv-line/> retrieved on Tuesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Cohesion (2021). 'National Humanitarian Development Peace Framework (2021-2025)', [https://nema.gov.ng/documentations/National%20Humanitarian%20Development%20Peace%20Framework%20\(2021-2025\).pdf](https://nema.gov.ng/documentations/National%20Humanitarian%20Development%20Peace%20Framework%20(2021-2025).pdf) retrieved on January 2, 2025.

Hamby, S. 2017. 'On Defining Violence, And Why It Matters'. *Psychology of Violence* 7(2): 167-180 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315967513\\_On\\_defining\\_violence\\_and\\_why\\_it\\_matters](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315967513_On_defining_violence_and_why_it_matters) retrieved on January 2, 2025.

Institute for Economics & Peace (2021). 'Positive Peace Implementation Guide, A User's Guide to the Positive Peace Framework', Institute for Economics and Peace'.



<https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Positive-Peace-Implementation-Guide-web.pdf>

- Institute for Economics & Peace (2024). 'Positive Peace Report 2024: Analyzing the Factors that build, predict and sustain peace', Sydney, 2024.
- Marks, Z. (2016). 'Poverty and Conflict'. GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack No. 52. Available from: [https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Poverty-and\\_conflict\\_RP.pdf](https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Poverty-and_conflict_RP.pdf) cited in Dauda R. (2021). 'Conflict and development in the North-East, Nigeria: the case of Boko Haram insurgency', <https://www.mondopoli.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CONFLICTS-AND-DEVELOPMENT-IN-THE-NORTH-EAST-REGION-OF-NIGERIA.pdf> retrieved on January 2, 2025.
- Mallami, M., Agu, M., & Babale, S. (2021). 'Insecurity and Performance of Small Scale Business in Yobe State, Nigeria: The Mediating Role of Socio-Economic Development', Nasarawa, State University, pp. 57-76. Available from: <https://keffi.nsuk.edu.ng/server/api/core/bitstreams/b5508283-297b-4021-8c55-fe9dba8651e7/content> retrieved on Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- NBS [National Bureau of Statistics] (2017). 'Nigeria Data Portal- Agricultural Data'. <http://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/data#topic=Agriculture&region=NG-AD>
- NBS [National Bureau of Statistics] (2024). 'Nigeria Labor Force Statistics Report Q1 2024'. National Bureau of Statistics, No. 1, Wole Olanipekun Street, formerly Plot 762, Independence Avenue, Off Constitution Avenue, CBD, Abuja NLFS, [https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/\\_Q1\\_2024\\_Report.pdf](https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/_Q1_2024_Report.pdf) was retrieved on Monday February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Onuoha, F. (2014). 'Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram?' Special Report, United State Institute of Peace, 2301 Constitution Ave., NW • Washington, DC 20037 • 202.457.1700 • fax 202.429.6063 Available at: [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR348-Why\\_do\\_Youth\\_Join\\_Boko\\_Haram.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR348-Why_do_Youth_Join_Boko_Haram.pdf) was retrieved on Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- The World Bank (2015). 'Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) for North-East Nigeria', International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria>, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/753341479876623996/pdf/110424-v1-WP-NorthEastNigeriaRecoveryandPeaceBuildingAssessmentVolumeIweb-PUBLIC-Volume-1.pdf> retrieved on Wednesday February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Umaru, H.; Mohammed A.; Dibal, M.; & Liman, S. (2018). 'The Effect of Insurgency on Education in the North-Eastern Nigeria Case of Boko Haram': Scientific Research Journal (SCIRJ), Volume VI, Issue X, October 2018 ISSN 2201-2796 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331092013\\_THE\\_EFFECT\\_OF\\_INSURGENC](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331092013_THE_EFFECT_OF_INSURGENC)

Y\_ON\_EDUCATION\_IN\_THE\_NORTH-EASTERN\_NIGERIA\_CASE\_OF\_BOKO\_ HARAM was retrieved on Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

United Nations Development Program (2016). 'Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Survey: North-East Nigeria', Abuja: UNDP

United Nations Development Program (2020). 'Assessing the Impact of Conflict on Development in North-East Nigeria', published by United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2020, Plot 617/618 Diplomatic Drive, Central Area District, Central City, Diplomatic Zone, Garki, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Available from: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/ng/Assessing-the-Impact-of-Conflict-on-Development-in-NE-Nigeria---The-Report.pdf> retrieved on January 2, 2025.

Webel, C. & Kaba, M. (2020). 'Definitions of Peace.' In: A Cultural History of Peace in the Modern Age. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347307074\\_Definitions\\_of\\_Peace](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347307074_Definitions_of_Peace) on Friday, January 3, 2025.

Yobe State Government (2025). 'Yobe State Action Plan on Solutions to internal Displacement'. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/en/download/148096> on Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

Yobe State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (2024). 'Approved Revised Budget 2024', <https://budget.pfm.yb.gov.ng/approved-budgets/> retrieved February 15, 2025