

## Understanding Psychological Distress and Protection Issues among Children Associated with Armed Groups

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**Abstract :** The primary objective of this research study is to contribute to and deepen the understanding of the realities and conditions for which children recruited by violent extremist organisations in Nigeria live, as well as ascertain the state of their mental health following their reunification with either family or protection workers. The research is intended to contribute to a more focused child protection programming agenda for children associated with armed forces and groups in Nigeria and the wider conflict setting. The extent to which violence has affected the psychological well-being and mental health of children abducted and exposed to activities of Violent Extremist groups remains a largely empirical question. This research attempts to answer the following research questions with the aim of providing further evidences for informed programming: I. What are the demographic characteristics of children associated with armed groups? II. What is the state of their mental health? III. What is the relationship between their background and their mental health?

**Keywords :** counterterrorism, psychosocial support, psychological distress, children, armed groups

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