PEOPLE
ON WAR

Country report Nigeria

ICRC worldwide consultation on the rules of war

Report by Greenberg Research, Inc.

EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS EVEN WARS HAVE LIMITS EVEN WARS HAVE

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

About the People on War project

To mark the 50th anniversary of the modern Geneva Conventions (on 12 August 1999), the ICRC launched its People on War project with the aim of building greater respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. At centre stage is a worldwide consultation giving the general public a chance to air their views on the many facets of war. The idea was that civilians and combatants alike would be able to share their experiences, express their opinions on what basic rules should apply in war, discuss why those rules sometimes break down and look at what the future holds.

With this in mind, the ICRC commissioned Greenberg Research, Inc. to design a research programme that would enable people to be heard in the most effective way possible. Under the guidance of Greenberg Research, ICRC staff and Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers carried out this consultation in 12 countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia/ Abkhazia, Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia and South Africa), conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews, group discussions and national public opinion surveys. Surveys on the basis of a questionnaire only were conducted in a further five countries (France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States) in order to reflect these people's perceptions of war.

Greenberg Research analysts then prepared a series of Country Reports on the basis of the findings. The reports open up this new, important discourse to a wider audience, while remaining conscious of the need to protect the safety of all those who participated.

By making this consultation public, the ICRC hopes to initiate a local and international debate on the humanitarian aspects of war — a debate that should be joined by the major political players, international and non-governmental organizations and aid specialists.

Greenberg Research, Inc.

Greenberg Research is an opinion research firm that has worked for over two decades to help organizations and leaders around the world advance their goals in the face of rapid change. It specializes in using advanced methods of opinion research — surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews — to help form strategies for political parties, corporations and non-governmental organizations.

Greenberg Research has extensive experience in Europe and the United States, but also in the Middle East, Asia, southern Africa and Central and South America. It has conducted research in war-torn, politically complex and remote settings. In its work for corporations and non-governmental organizations, it has explored a broad range of global issues, including landmines, genetic engineering, climate change, race and gender relations, trade and information technologies.

ICRC, Geneva, December 1999

Table of contents

Country context

Upon Nigeria's independence from Great Britain in 1960, serious doubts existed as to whether the disparate parts of the new Federal Republic would be able to co-exist peacefully. These doubts were due in large measure to the fact that various regions of colonial Nigeria had been arbitrarily joined together by the British in 1914 — without regard for the incredible linguistic and ethnic diversity within the colony's borders. The various groups that had been united by decree were so culturally and historically different that it seemed nearly impossible to unite them — even to the most optimistic of observers.

The friction this caused became evident in the years leading up to Nigerian independence. Primary amongst the differences was the disparity of educational levels between north and south — so vast that it was feared that the north would not have enough qualified civil servants to constitute a smoothly running government. In addition, economic development in the south had far outpaced that of the north. In the south, Nigerians had benefited from education and access to the colonial apparatus, while the north lacked an entrepreneurial and commercial class.

When independence was granted, the leaders of the new Republic embarked upon an aggressive campaign of social engineering to try and mitigate the differences in Nigerian society. These efforts came to an emphatic close when a prominent politician from the western region, Obafemi Awolowo, was tried for treason, found guilty and jailed. This sparked riots in the west, further exacerbated by allegations that post-independence elections in that area had been effectively rigged. A state of emergency was subsequently declared in the west, and a federal administrator was appointed in lieu of elected government officials.

Uncertainty and chaos continued until early 1966, when a number of young southern officers staged a coup. In the process of seizing governmental power, the officers also arranged to have a number of northern political figures slain while sparing politicians and government officials from the south. The coup actually failed, but the Nigerian Senate subsequently handed power over to Major-General Aguyi Ironsi, thus bringing about Nigeria's first military government. In a self-proclaimed attempt to stifle further political violence, Ironsi centralized governmental control by promulgating a Unification Decree. This only served to alienate northern leaders, who felt the coup to be the latest in a series of southern attempts to seize control of the government at their expense.

The result was a counter coup, led six months later by a cadre of northern officers hoping to break up the federal union and let the north secede. Although the putsch failed to divide the country, it aggravated already inflamed regional tensions. Eastern immigrants in the north were attacked by local populations, provoking a mass displacement of south-easterners returning home to escape the violence. Attempts by south-eastern leaders (with assistance from various international bodies) to ameliorate the situation by way of a reorganization at the federal level failed, and in 1967 the military government declared a "police state" in an attempt to rein in the eastern secessionist movement. The leader of the south-eastern region, Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, then declared his region independent, renaming it the Republic of Biafra, and sparking a bloody three-year war between Biafran troops and the Federal army.

During the conflict and after the Biafran surrender in January 1970, an estimated 3 million Nigerians died, with scores more injured, displaced or rendered homeless.[1] War victims suffered numerous medical and psychological traumas – many of which never fully disappeared. The international community mounted a vigorous campaign to aid the war victims, with the ICRC and the Catholic relief agency, Caritas, playing prominent roles. Following the cessation of hostilities, the military government immediately launched a programme to re-integrate the south-east back into Nigerian society under the slogan of the "Three Rs": Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation.

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[1] *Nigeria – A Country Study,* Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 1991, Chapter 1: Historical Setting, the Civil War, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Nigeria suffered from a political and economic boom and bust cycle. Following the discovery of oil in the south after the war, Nigeria joined OPEC and enjoyed robust growth until the price of oil plummeted in the mid-1980s. Today, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the most populous country on the continent and a major power in sub-Saharan Africa. Through its membership in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its attendant peacekeeping missions, Nigeria seeks an active role in the political development of West Africa.

Country methodology

The findings in this report are based on a consultation carried out by the ICRC in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The project was overseen by a multinational research team from Greenberg Research, with the participation of a local partner, Market Trends Nigeria, Ltd. (MTNL), a public opinion research firm based in Lagos. With their help and guidance, ICRC staff and members of the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) conducted the various components of the research.

The research included three components:

· Eight **focus groups** (FG), for which participants were recruited by specially trained ICRC staff. Professional moderators associated with MTNL facilitated the groups in English and Ibo. The moderators received additional training and instructions from senior Greenberg Research staff. Sessions were held with the following groups: journalists in Lagos, former Biafran field commanders, women who lost children during the war (the only group not conducted in English), female students in Enugu, former captured Biafran combatants, medical workers and primary school teachers in Port Harcourt, and former Federal Army commanders in Kaduna.

· Twenty **in-depth interviews** (IDI) carried out by NRCS staff. Greenberg Research trained NRCS staff in how to recruit participants and how to conduct a structured 45-minute interview. Each interview was audiotaped in English, from which transcriptions were made for further analysis. Respondents included teachers, professors, former combatants from both sides of the conflict, members of the armed forces and a professional soccer player.

· A **national quantitative survey** of 1,000 respondents of at least 18 years of age and stratified geographically according to population, with an oversample of 200 respondents in the area formerly encompassed by Biafra. The NRCS administered the survey under the supervision of Greenberg Research and MTNL. Greenberg Research, in conjunction with the ICRC and MTNL, developed the sampling frame for this survey. The survey took place between 5 and 30 June 1999. Percentages reported here are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points (at a 95 in 100 confidence level). Results in smaller segments, such as the 412 interviews in the south-eastern region, are subject to an error of +/- 7.0 percentage points.[2]

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[2] These estimates are based on population values of 50 per cent. Obviously, many reported percentages are lower or higher than that; higher percentages would have a smaller sampling error. For example, a reported percentage of 90 per cent for the total population would have a sampling error of +/- 2.7 percentage points.

Executive summary

Less than a decade after its independence, the Biafran war cut Nigeria into two unequal parts. Goaded by a distrust that erupted into ethnically partisan violence in the mid- and late 1960s, leaders of the south-eastern region seceded in 1967. Pitted against troops from the rest of Nigeria, the Biafran army engaged in a pitched battle largely fought on Biafran soil in what was generally considered a conventional war, with two armies fighting for control of territory and resources. More than 30 months of bitter fighting later, perhaps as many as 3 million Nigerians had died in combat or from hunger or sickness, and a million south-easterners and other displaced people crowded into what Biafran territory managed to survive the final Federal assault of the war.[3]

Although some aid organizations were active during the conflict and more of them after the cessation of hostilities, the Biafran war was characterized by the widespread suffering of civilians, mostly due to starvation and disease. Despite a vigorous attempt by the Federal government to reconcile the two sides, the effects of the war still linger in Nigerian society, even though more than half of its present-day population was born after the war ended. South-easterners still feel frozen out of many jobs in government and the civil service, and feel unwelcome in other parts of the country, where they had once set up thriving immigrant communities.

As revealed in this consultation, the people of Nigeria still have vivid and profound memories of the war, memories that very much affect the way they view war today, three decades later. The consultation explored the degree to which Nigerians experienced the negative effects of war. Of the 13 possible negative consequences examined by the ICRC project — ranging from imprisonment to sexual assault to the death of a close family member — those living in the south-eastern region were disproportionately affected. The percentage of south-easterners who experienced these consequences is far greater than in the rest of the country, in some cases by a factor of almost ten to one.

The concentration of the war in one area also affects the way Nigerians perceive the treatment of captured combatants, the rules of war and the Geneva Conventions, international aid and the role of the ICRC and Red Cross. While those who lived further away from the conflict are more likely to say they would adhere to certain limits regarding attacks on civilians and abuse of captured combatants, they are less likely to recognize the existence of laws that prohibit such actions. In turn, those who lived in or near the area of conflict are more likely to know of the Geneva Conventions and be familiar with their purpose, to be aware of laws governing conflict, to welcome international intervention and to identify the red cross emblem.

These are the other main findings of the ICRC consultation:

The war's toll. Although the war ended almost three decades ago, it still deeply affects Nigerian society. The uneven geographical distribution of the war meant that its negative effects were distributed unevenly as well.

· Nigerians experienced the war to varying degrees depending on where they lived; while 68 per cent of south-easterners lived where the war actually took place, only 16 per cent of those living in the rest of the country say the same.[4]

· Over three times as many south-easterners surveyed (59 per cent) as those living elsewhere in the country (17 per cent) say a family member was killed in the conflict.

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[3] *Nigeria – A Country Study*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 1991, Chapter 1: Historical Setting, the Civil War, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/.

[4] The south-eastern region in the survey, encompassing what was known from 1967-1970 as the Republic of Biafra, is defined as the following states within the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Bayelsa, Imo, Rivers, Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River.

· Looting and rape were comparatively widespread in the south-east. A majority in that area (59 per cent) report having their houses looted, compared with only 8 per cent in the remainder of Nigeria. Forty-seven per cent of south-easterners say they knew someone well who was raped, compared with only 7 per cent of those in other areas.

· The negative effects of the war were felt disproportionately. When presented with a list of 13 possible negative consequences, 38 per cent of south-easterners experienced eight or more, compared with an average of 3 per cent in the rest of the country. Conversely, 62 per cent of Nigerians living in regions other than the south-east report suffering none of these negative consequences, compared with only 14 per cent of south-easterners.

Protection of civilians. Although vast numbers of Nigerians died as a result of the conflict, and although many people recounted profoundly negative personal experiences in the focus groups and in-depth interviews, solid majorities in all communities feel that civilians should be protected during armed conflict.

· A majority of Nigerians — 60 per cent overall — think that combatants should leave civilians alone during war. Among those close to the fighting, 64 per cent of those who lived in an area where the war took place and 62 per cent of those living in the south-east support that statement.

· Nigerians' feelings about the protection of civilians are strongly rooted in norms and laws, rather than pragmatism. Among those who believe that there should be limits on what combatants can do, 65 per cent of Nigerians say that certain actions are "wrong" rather than that "they cause too many problems".

· A significant percentage of Nigerians refuse to condone the practice of kidnapping civilians. About three in ten (29 per cent) think kidnapping is "part of war". Thirty-three per cent of combatants and 32 per cent of those living outside the area of fighting agree.

Attacks on non-combatants. Despite three decades of relative peace, Nigerians' willingness to protect civilians who are seen to be assisting the enemy often falters. Just as the limits broke down during the conflict itself, so too do they break down when respondents are confronted with possible scenarios emphasizing the confusion and ambiguity inherent in war.

· A significant percentage of Nigerians (31 per cent) say that is allowable for combatants to attack civilians if they *voluntarily* provide food and shelter to enemy combatants — 36 per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict agree (compared with 26 per cent of those within), as do 35 per cent of combatants (compared with 29 per cent of non-combatants). When told civilians are being *forced* to provide such assistance, 23 per cent of south-easterners and 18 per cent of those living in the rest of the country countenance such attacks.

· A majority of Nigerians — 51 per cent — believe it is acceptable to attack civilians who are *voluntarily* transporting ammunition for enemy combatants. When told that the civilians are being *forced* to transport ammunition, that figure falls to 36 per cent.

· Significant fractions of Nigerians believe that attacking the enemy in populated villages or towns "knowing many civilians would be killed" is simply "part of war". Almost one-third of Nigerians, 32 per cent, agree with this statement. Thirty-four per cent of those who lived where the war took place and 30 per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict

think attacking populated villages or towns in such circumstances is acceptable. Furthermore, less than one-third of Nigerians (31 per cent overall, compared with 37 per cent in the area of conflict and 27 per cent outside it) believe there are laws that prohibit such behaviour.

Captured combatants at risk. As in the case of civilians, when presented with hypothetical situations in which they are required to make a personal decision about what they would do, Nigerians waver in their willingness to protect captured combatants.

- More than half of the respondents in both areas, 58 per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict and 51 per cent of those who lived in it, say they would refuse to help a wounded enemy combatant who had killed someone close to them. Similarly, more than half of those who report they lived outside the area of conflict (57 per cent) say they would not save a surrendering enemy combatant who had killed someone close to them — compared with 39 per cent who lived in the area of conflict.

- Most Nigerians are inclined to limit the rights of captured combatants. Close to half of Nigerians (48 per cent) would not allow captured combatants to contact their relatives; 51 per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict and 44 per cent of those within it agree. However, much lower percentages say they would refuse to allow a visit by a representative of an independent organization: 23 per cent of Nigerians overall would refuse to allow such a visit, as would 27 per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict and 16 per cent of those who lived within it.

- A significant number of Nigerians (58 per cent) approve of the use of torture in order to obtain important military information.

- When asked what they would do if the other side were killing its captured combatants, close to one in four Nigerians (22 per cent) say they would do the same.

The rules of war. Nigerians believe that rules of war keep conflict from getting worse, but they also consider that such rules only go so far and are liable to be frequently broken.

- Substantial majorities (71 per cent of all Nigerians surveyed, 78 per cent of south-easterners and 67 per cent of those living elsewhere in the country) believe that the Geneva Conventions keep war from getting worse.

- Awareness of the rules of war is low. Only 37 per cent of those who report living where the war took place and 25 per cent in the rest of the country think that there are laws prohibiting combatants from depriving civilians of food, medicine or water.

- Nigerians display varying degrees of willingness to punish those who have committed crimes during war. While around half of south-easterners, who comprise the largest percentage of people living in the area of conflict, think that there are rules that are so important that those who break them in wartime should be punished (52 per cent), support for punishment is lower among those in the rest of the country (39 per cent).

- Most Nigerians look to international, rather than domestic, bodies to mete out punishment. While a strong majority (66 per cent) of south-easterners think an international criminal court should be responsible for punishment, only 38 per cent of those in the rest of the country agree.

International institutions. All Nigerians, but especially south-easterners, look favourably on international institutions and their missions, and nearly all Nigerians, regardless of geography, think better days lie ahead for their country.

· Overwhelming majorities of all populations — 81 per cent of south-easterners and 84 per cent of those living elsewhere — say they would like to see more intervention from the international community to assist civilians during wartime.

· Most Nigerians (84 per cent) are familiar with the red cross emblem. While over one-third (35 per cent) of south-easterners accurately name what the red cross emblem protects — medical buildings and vehicles and Red Cross personnel — a significantly smaller percentage of Nigerians in the rest of the country (16 per cent) do so.

· A solid majority (60 per cent) of Nigerians believe the ICRC/Red Cross played the biggest role in protecting civilians during the conflict; 36 per cent say "international humanitarian organizations" played the biggest role. South-easterners are most likely to credit the ICRC/Red Cross (73 per cent), compared with 51 per cent of Nigerians in the rest of the country.

· The vast majority of Nigerians (82 per cent) are optimistic that the peace will last in the future. Only 8 per cent think there will be more war.

The war experience

Nigeria's civil war was a conventional war fought in the south-eastern part of the country, known during the secessionist period as the Republic of Biafra. The war yielded two very different experiences: one for those close to the violence and fighting, and one for those removed from the conflict. But the war has made an impression on every person in Nigeria, no matter where they lived, or even if they were not alive at the time.

Unlike most of the participants in the People on War project, the people of Nigeria view war through a long lens, backwards through time. Among the respondents in the ICRC survey in Nigeria, all of whom were over the age of 18, only 34 per cent were age 10 or older at the end of the war; 43 per cent of those surveyed were born after the cease-fire was declared in January 1970.[5] While the citizens of Colombia, Somalia or Afghanistan can relate stories of war remembered from youth, adulthood or even from past weeks and months, for the citizens of Nigeria, direct experience of war is either a distant memory or a lesson to be learned from history books, television or stories passed down from grandfathers and aunts, retired neighbours and distant kin.

There is no doubt, however, that the 1967-1970 Biafran war made an impression on those born after its end. It still shapes Nigerian life, as focus groups, in-depth interviews and survey results reveal; the long-term consequences of the war range from the overt, such as the string of military governments that have dominated Nigerian political life since the war, to the subtle tensions that still linger on today. As one journalist commented, "Nigeria has been [in peace] almost 30 years, three decades, and we still have Biafra war effects." (FG, journalists, Lagos)

Many Nigerians' concept of war and the rules that govern it comes not from direct experience of violence and bloodshed, but rather from direct experience of the consequences — displacement, poverty, and mistrust born of exaggeration or simple fear. Their responses offer a unique perspective on a war a generation past.

Regional conflict

Nigeria's 30-month civil war ranks as one of the bloodiest African conflicts of the 20th century. The physical destruction and trauma associated with the war — the shelling of villages, displacement of populations, air bombardment and bitter fighting between combatants — was generally confined to the country's south-eastern region.[6] Not surprisingly, then, a relatively small percentage of Nigerians lived in areas affected by the fighting — only 37 per cent claim the war took place in an area where they lived.

Participants in the focus groups and in-depth interviews repeatedly stressed the regional partisanship when describing the history of the war. Regardless of their point of view, they generally characterized the war as a vain attempt by outnumbered Biafrans to gain independence from the rest of Nigeria, whose population dominated the upper echelons of the military and Federal government.

[The Biafrans] felt they are being eliminated in the north, then of course there was the 1966 coup, the first coup in the country… the north felt the purpose of this coup was to eliminate their leaders... (IDI, former journalist, Lagos)

[W]hat was known as south-eastern Nigeria, [the] south-eastern region was fighting the rest of Nigeria. (FG, former Biafran field commanders, Enugu)
They [the Biafrans] believe they were betrayed. This is something they started as a group, eventually they ended up fighting alone because it was to be [the] north

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[5] Forty-five per cent of Nigeria's 110 million people are under the age of 14; only 3 per cent are over the age of 65.

[6] The south-eastern region in the survey, encompassing what was known from 1967-1970 as the Republic of Biafra, is defined as the following states within the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Bayelsa, Imo, Rivers, Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River.

against the south but eventually it ended the south-easterners fighting alone. (IDI, female student, Lagos)

The survey reveals a wide gulf between the south-eastern region and the rest of Nigeria. The south-east, encompassing what for two and half years was known as the Republic of Biafra, bore the physical brunt of the war. While south-easterners constitute a plurality of those surveyed with 41 per cent, they make up a solid majority of those who experienced the horrors of war firsthand.

Sixty-eight per cent of south-easterners report that the war took place where they lived versus 16 per cent of those who live elsewhere in the country. Of south-easterners, 68 per cent lost contact with a close relative (compared with 22 per cent of those living in other regions); 59 per cent suffered the death of a family member (compared with 17 per cent of those surveyed in other regions); and 19 per cent were tortured (compared with 4 per cent in the rest of the country).

South-easterners also experienced the negative consequences of the war with greater frequency. While 62 per cent of those living outside the south-eastern region report that none of the 13 possible negative effects befell them, only 14 per cent of south-easterners can say the same. Conversely, 38 per cent of south-easterners experienced eight or more of the negative effects, compared with only 3 per cent of those living outside the area.

Indeed, the frequency with which south-easterners suffered the negative effects of the war is often orders of magnitude greater than than for those living elsewhere. The ratio of south-easterners to people in the rest of the country who knew someone well who was raped is more than six to one (47 per cent compared with 7 per cent), and for those who were tortured, more than four to one (19 per cent to 4 per cent). In fact, for the 13 possible negative effects of war, in no category does this ratio drop below three to one. (See Figure 1.)

The concentration of the war in the south-east is also evident when it comes to who did the actual fighting. While 9 per cent of Nigerians as a whole were combatants, more than twice as many south-easterners were combatants as those who live in the rest of Nigeria (13 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively).

Although the physical effects of the war were concentrated in one section of Nigeria, all Nigerians surveyed describe their personal experience of the war in negative terms, even if they were not alive at the time of the actual conflict. Despite the fact that the war was confined to one area — almost half of Nigerians say the war took place "somewhere else" (45 per cent) — only 1 per cent of respondents characterize it as "remote". Fifty-six per cent found the war to be "disruptive", 55 per cent describe it as "horrible" and 21 per cent as "hateful". (See Figure 2.)

The extent to which the Biafran war has permeated Nigerian society at all levels is also evidenced by the small number of respondents (2 per cent) who did not have an opinion or could not answer the question at all. Clearly, almost every Nigerian who participated in the survey has strong opinions about the war that once convulsed the country.

The chaos of war
Participants from all levels of Nigerian society and of all ages related traumatic experiences of war: the rules of everyday life were suspended and reality was turned upside down. A teacher in Port Harcourt recounted how she witnessed a mother decapitated by a mortar shell while holding her children. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt) A scholar, now living in Lagos, told of how he watched in horror as a helpless victim had acid poured on his body. (IDI, scholar, Lagos)

FIGURE 1
The war experience
(per cent of total population responding)[7]

	South-east	Rest of country
Lost contact with close relative	68%	22%
War took place where they lived	68%	16%
Forced to leave home and live elsewhere	68%	16%
Serious damage to property	67%	12%
Family member killed	59%	17%
Felt humiliated	56%	16%
House was looted	59%	8%
Combatants took food away	55%	8%
Knew someone well who was sexually assaulted by enemy combatants	49%	9%
Knew someone well who was raped by enemy combatants	47%	7%
Lived in area under enemy control	19%	5%
Tortured	19%	4%
Wounded by the fighting	15%	5%
Was a combatant	13%	6%
Kidnapped or taken hostage	13%	3%
Imprisoned	5%	1%

Focus group participants also related tragically surreal events brought on by the conflict. A former Federal Army commander described how his troops refused to believe a war had actually broken out, that is, until their defecting compatriots fired on them during a drill. "That was how the shooting started, just like a joke." (FG, former Federal Army commanders, Kaduna) An artist who served in the Federal Army described how his unit was cut off and had to fight its way out of enemy territory with heavy casualties, only to learn that the war had ended four weeks previously. (IDI, artist, Lagos)
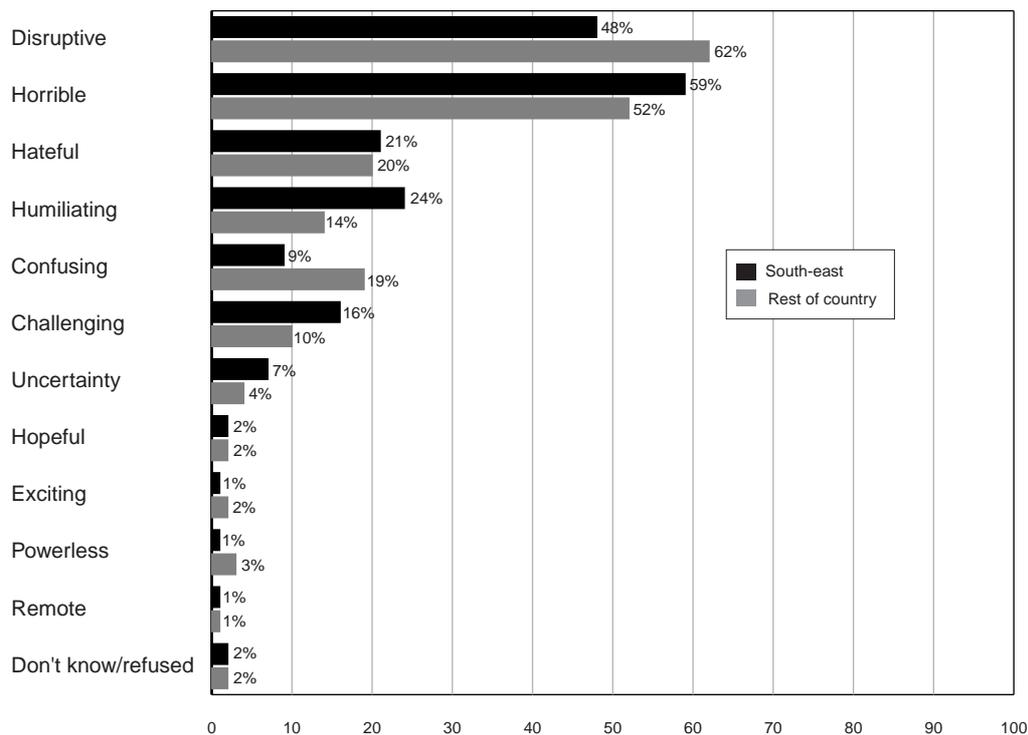
Participants in the focus groups told stories of terrible cruelty. A medical worker from Port Harcourt described how combatants forced captives to lie on their backs and stare into the sun. They also gave accounts of the reportedly widespread practice of burying people alive.

The worst thing I remember and could never forget, the Biafran soldiers asked my brother-in-law to dig a trench and ordered him to go inside They dug two, they were two, they ordered the other man to use the shovel to cover it. We were watching. They buried him alive, and after that they ordered the brother to enter the next one and they covered it too. I can never forget it in my life. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)

Yes sir. They buried the man alive. He dug the ground himself and they put him inside. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)

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[7] Respondents were asked to identify which of 13 experiences "happened to you personally" as a consequence of the war. These experiences covered a range of physical and psychological effects, from imprisonment to property damage to feeling humiliated. Figure 1 also indicates the percentage of respondents who say they were combatants, lived in an area where the war took place or lived under enemy control.

FIGURE 2
Personal description of the war
(per cent of total population responding)

	South-east	Rest of country
Disruptive	48%	62%
Horrible	59%	52%
Hateful	21%	20%
Humiliating	24%	14%
Confusing	9%	19%
Challenging	16%	10%
Uncertainty	7%	4%
Hopeful	2%	2%
Exciting	1%	2%
Powerless	1%	3%
Remote	1%	1%
Don't know/refused	2%	2%

Question: Which *two* of these words best describe the war for you personally?

Rape also was used as a fearsome and widespread weapon to terrorize civilians.

Many girls were captured by the Nigerian army, including married women. At times they raped the women in front of their husbands. If you talked they would shoot you. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)

When you get home as a farmer, you discover your wife has been raped, you are not a happy man. You are annoyed and you feel disappointed… You come back and meet them raped, you will never be a happy father again. (IDI, farmer, Lagos)

I noticed a man and his wife, they met each other in the presence of soldiers. [Moderator: Oh, they were asked to perform intercourse?] Yes. [In the presence of soldiers?] Yes. The soldiers asked them to do it in their presence. After the man climbed on top of the woman, they shot him. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)

Yes, they burn them alive. Then the women, they will bring them, lie them down, then before they burn the men, they would ask them to rape the women, then after they would burn them. (FG, female students, Enugu)

The young girls of those days, there was none that was not raped by force... (FG, women who lost children during the war, Enugu)

While many participants had strong opinions as to the roots of the conflict and the events that led up to it — geopolitics, economic need or ethnic discord — many Nigerians simply described a society that spun out of control. A former Biafran commander described the war as "genocide" (FG, former Biafran field commanders, Enugu) and a Red Cross volunteer described life as "survival of the fittest. There was no food, no money… so we have to fight for a living." (IDI, Nigerian Red Cross volunteer, Lagos) For those caught up in the fighting, it was a time of unfathomable wickedness. As one woman put it, the time of the war was an "[a]bomination, the work of the devil". (FG, women who lost children during the war, Enugu)

Respondents also detailed the effects of the war that went beyond actual fighting and bloodshed. In both focus group locations in what used to be Biafran territory (Enugu and Port Harcourt), they recounted stories of disease and starvation.[8] For many people in the world outside Nigeria, this was the face of the Biafran war: makeshift camps teeming with sweltering and malnourished displaced people.

This underlying context, formed of both direct war experiences and impressions of war gleaned from other sources, provided the setting for an examination of Nigerians' attitudes towards war and the manner in which they think it should be fought. As has been seen, the physical manifestations of the Biafran war took a devastating toll on those living in the south-east — both on those alive during the conflict and those born afterwards. And although little of the fighting took place in the areas in which they lived, residents of other parts of Nigeria clearly exhibit strong feelings on the topic of war.

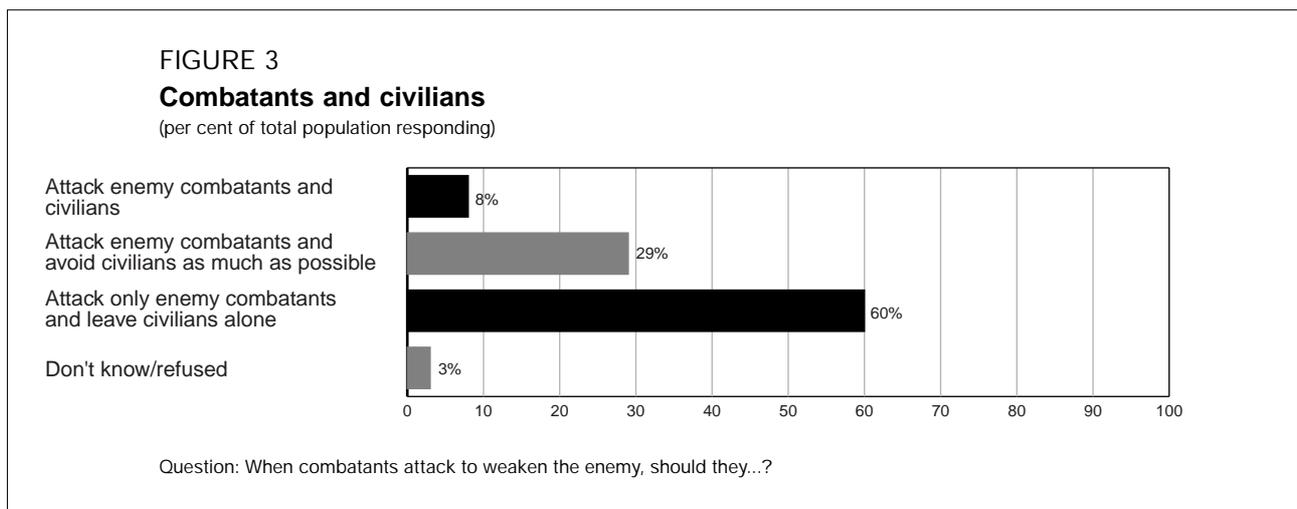---

[8] The malady known as kwashiorkor — a condition stemming from lack of dietary protein that causes the sufferer's skin to scale and turn red, hair to thin and fall out before he or she dies of malnutrition — is mentioned in every focus group.

Protection of civilians

While many Nigerians related vivid stories and expressed strong opinions on the horrors of war and its aftermath, their views on the treatment of civilians during wartime are far more complex and nuanced. When asked generally to volunteer their opinions, respondents were strongly supportive of limits that protect civilians. However, when the questioning turned from abstract concepts to specific scenarios, many respondents retreated into a more pragmatic, situational stance.

Limits and dissonance

Nigerians are generally in favour of limiting attacks on civilians. Of those surveyed, 60 per cent believe that combatants should "attack only enemy combatants and leave civilians alone", while only 8 per cent think that it is acceptable to "attack enemy combatants and civilians". (See Figure 3.)

FIGURE 3
Combatants and civilians
(per cent of total population responding)

Attack enemy combatants and civilians	8%
Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible	29%
Attack only enemy combatants and leave civilians alone	60%
Don't know/refused	3%

Question: When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they...?

Twenty-nine per cent of those surveyed choose the middle way, i.e., that combatants should "attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible". This conditional response opens the door into a grey area in which attacks on civilians are allowed — at least in certain circumstances — and in which the rules of armed conflict begin to break down.
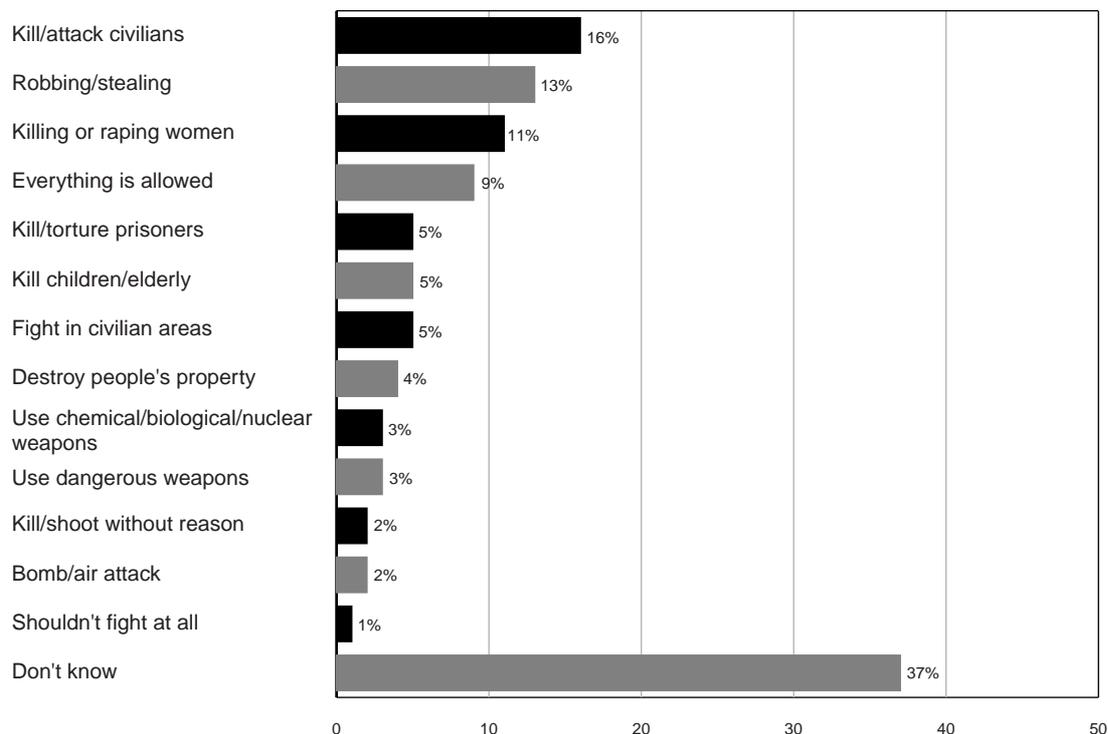
However, when prompted to volunteer their own guidelines for combatants, 37 per cent of Nigerians offer answers that promote the sanctity of civilians and civilian areas, while 9 per cent believe "everything is allowed". This divides down further into 16 per cent who believe combatants should not "kill or attack civilians"; 11 per cent who think that they should not "kill or rape women"; 5 per cent who believe they shouldn't "fight in civilian areas"; and 5 per cent who believe combatants shouldn't "kill children or the elderly". (See Figure 4.) However, 37 per cent of Nigerians surveyed do not name any act that they think should be prohibited. Among those distant from the conflict geographically (i.e., those who lived outside the area of fighting) and among those under the age of 40, the figure is even higher: 42 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively.

Similar gaps emerge when Nigerians consider what actions should not be allowed in war. While south-easterners rank robbing and stealing first (22 per cent), people in the rest of the country rank them at a distant 7 per cent. This may be explained by the fact that for south-easterners the war was fought on their home ground and they were the main victims of looting by combatants. For those living outside the south-east, the most often mentioned act is killing/attacking civilians (13 per cent), while for south-easterners it is ranked second, with 19 per cent. Nine per cent of all Nigerians surveyed believe "everything is allowed"; 15 per cent of combatants and 12 per cent of people who were kidnapped agree.

FIGURE 4
What combatants should not do
(per cent of total population responding) (open-ended question)

Kill/attack civilians	16%
Robbing/stealing	13%
Killing or raping women	11%
Everything is allowed	9%
Kill/torture prisoners	5%
Kill children/elderly	5%
Fight in civilian areas	5%
Destroy people's property	4%
Use chemical/biological/nuclear weapons	3%
Use dangerous weapons	3%
Kill/shoot without reason	2%
Bomb/air attack	2%
Shouldn't fight at all	1%
Don't know	37%

0   10   20   30   40   50

Question: Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting the enemy?

Focus group and in-depth interview participants also reveal strong feelings about the protection of civilians. As one woman eloquently summed up, killing civilians violates the laws of simple common sense: "So if then they attack the civilians, who then will be left after the war?" (IDI, student, Lagos)

The combatant soldier under no circumstances is expected to go and attack the civilian population. (FG, former Federal Army commanders, Kaduna)

It is wrong because the soldiers are with weapons while the civilians are with empty hands, civilians don't have arms. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)
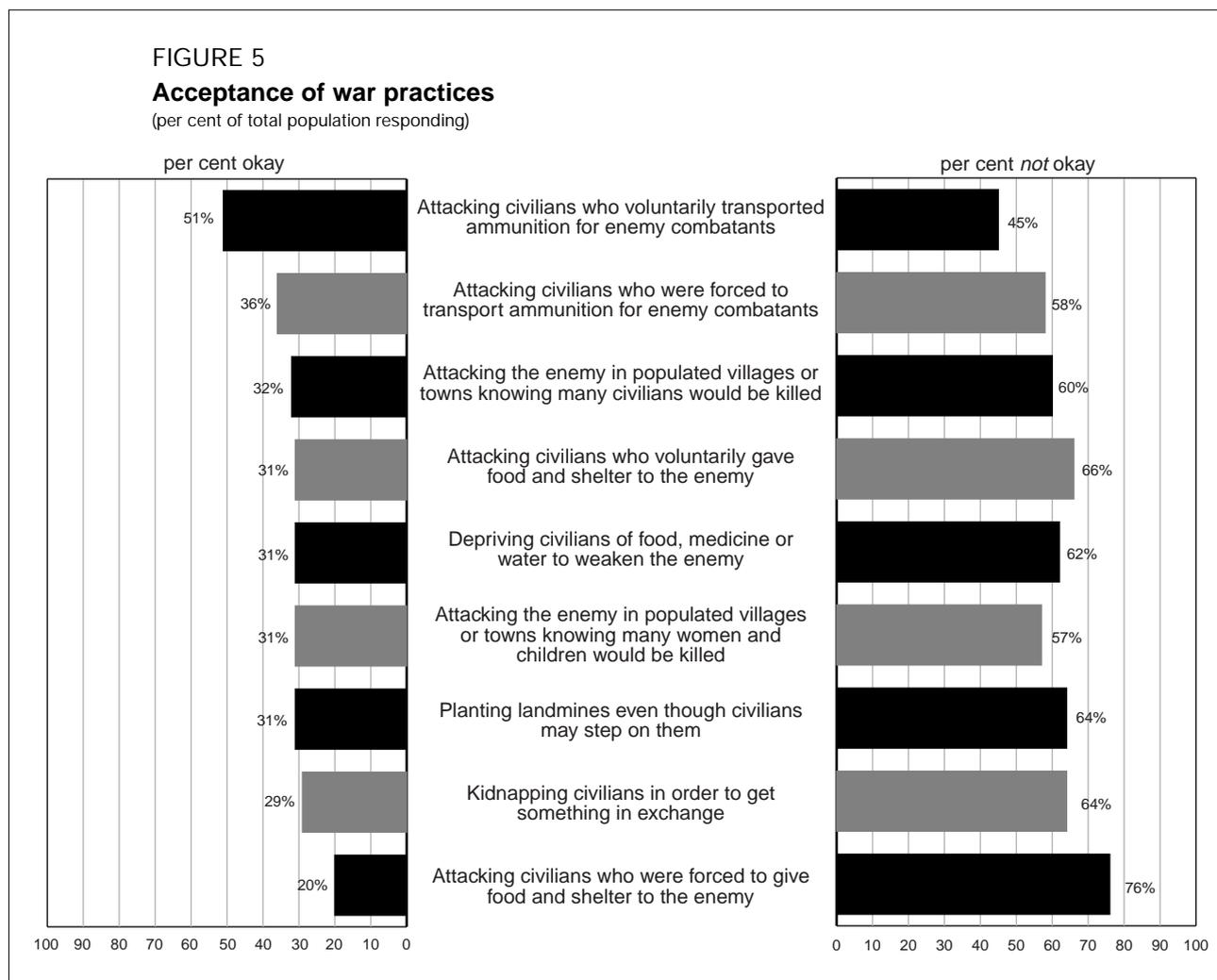
[Moderator: Should combatants be allowed to do anything they want in fighting their enemy?]

No, no, certainly not. That will amount to giving a blank cheque to somebody. If you say that then they can just be allowed to do anything they want, it means they can rape women, it means they can loot properties of people, it means they can destroy the sources of livelihood… (IDI, scholar, Lagos)

The principal work of a soldier is to defend and protect the lives and property of civilians, do you understand what I mean? And the civilians are those who are not armed, they are not trained, they are not soldiers, so you are to fight to defend them, to protect them and when you turn to fight them, then, it is wrong. (IDI, disabled Biafran war veteran, Lagos)

While these kinds of opinions clearly serve as a starting point for viewing Nigerians' feelings about war, they are not absolute. When presented with possible situations that often occur in war — many of which happened in the Biafran conflict — the ideological walls protecting civilians clearly begin to crumble.

When told that civilians are *voluntarily* providing food and shelter to the enemy, the percentage of Nigerians who approve of attacks on them rises to 31 per cent. When respondents are told that civilians are being *forced* to provide food to combatants, that percentage falls by about one-third, to one in five (20 per cent). Similarly, when asked if it is acceptable to attack civilians if they are *forced* to transport ammunition for the enemy, more than one-third of Nigerians surveyed (36 per cent) say it is. If civilians are *voluntarily* transporting the ammunition, that percentage jumps to a slight majority — 51 per cent. These increases are not in themselves surprising, they represent the real-life dilemmas inherent in modern conflict, conflict that often blurs the line between civilians and combatants. (See Figure 5.)

FIGURE 5
Acceptance of war practices
(per cent of total population responding)

Perhaps not surprisingly, south-easterners are more likely to say that depriving civilians of food, medicine or water is wrong than are Nigerians in other parts of the country (68 per cent versus 57 per cent), probably reflecting the memories of the widespread famine and deprivation that gripped Biafra during the fighting and in the period following the war.

The opinions of those who actually fought in the war are comparable to those who did not. While 53 per cent of combatants sanction attacks on civilians who *voluntarily* supply ammunition, 51 per cent of non-combatants agree. Similarly, of those who think that combatants should "attack only enemy

combatants and leave civilians alone", 50 per cent agree that is acceptable to attack those who *voluntarily* provide ammunition, while 36 per cent in the same category think it's acceptable to attack civilians who are *forced* to provide ammunition to combatants.

These are vivid examples of how specific situations challenge Nigerians' preconceptions as to who should be caught up in war. Indeed, in many key areas regarding the treatment of civilians and combatants, the answers of those who give the unqualified response ("attack only enemy combatants and leave civilians alone") are statistically identical to those of the people who take the conditional response ("attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible"). For instance, as mentioned, one-half of those who give the unqualified response say they would approve of attacking civilians who *voluntarily* transport ammunition for the enemy – but this is only one percentage point lower than those who gave the conditional response.[9]

This pattern holds true when respondents are asked about civilians *voluntarily* providing food and shelter to enemy combatants — 29 per cent of those giving the unqualified response say they support attacks on civilians in such circumstances, while 32 per cent of those giving the conditional response agree. Similarly, when told that civilians are *forced* to provide ammunition, those giving the unqualified response match those who give the conditional response (36 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively). Again, the same pattern is found when respondents are asked about civilians who were *forced* to provide food for the enemy (18 per cent versus 17 per cent).

Nigerians have mixed views about whether kidnapping, which was used as a tactic during the Biafran war, is acceptable. While 64 per cent of survey respondents overall think "it's wrong" to kidnap civilians for exchange, 29 per cent believe it's simply "part of war". Those who lived where the war took place are somewhat less likely to say they approve of kidnapping than are those who lived elsewhere — 26 per cent to 32 per cent. Similarly, older Nigerians are more likely to condone kidnapping than are younger Nigerians — 23 to 31 per cent.

Again, it appears that conditional answers creep in and threaten lawful wartime behaviour. When given a clear-cut choice in the survey as to whether kidnapping is "wrong" or "part of war", Nigerians frown upon hostage-taking as a means to get something in exchange. When presented with the same situation during focus groups and in-depth interviews, however, participants provide more nuanced opinions, but the conditional nature of adherence to rules governing war remains evident.

> [I]f a civilian is kidnapped, it depends on what he is kidnapped for. If a soldier finds a civilian who is a very important person who is not a soldier, the army can capture the person... (IDI, disabled Biafran veteran, Lagos)

> If I'm in trouble and I need to get out of it, any person I can lay hands on, I'll make use of the person, both kidnapping or whatever you call it. (FG, former Biafran field commanders, Enugu)

> To me I say kidnap is sort of defence. The army get information from these civilians they kidnap. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)

An array of norms
The vast majority of Nigerians offer normative reasons for opposing certain actions during wartime. The great majority of respondents (69 per cent) believe there are certain things combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting the enemy.[10] Among these, 65 per cent choose a normative reason, "it's wrong", rather than a more pragmatic one, "it just causes too may problems" (32 per cent) to defend

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[9] Seventy-three per cent of those who support attacking both combatants and civilians sanction such attacks.

[10] Thirty-seven per cent don't know or refused to volunteer an answer and 9 per cent say "everything is allowed".

that position. South-easterners respond similarly, with 68 per cent saying "it's wrong" and 30 per cent saying "it causes too may problems".

When asked to choose from a list of reasons why some things are wrong, respondents point first to the protection of human rights (51 per cent) and second to religious principles (42 per cent).[11] Comparable numbers of those who lived in the area of conflict and those who didn't choose "human rights" as a justification for why certain actions are wrong (50 per cent versus 52 per cent). Yet, there are marked differences between the two categories when it comes to religion (52 per cent in the area of conflict who say certain things are against their religion versus 31 per cent elsewhere) or the law (24 per cent in the area of conflict who say certain things are against the law versus 37 per cent elsewhere). (See Figure 6.)

FIGURE 6
Basis for the norm
(per cent of total population responding "it's wrong") (top two choices)

Category	Percentage
Against human rights	51%
Against your religion	42%
Against the law	30%
Against your personal code	12%
Against what most people here believe	8%
Against your culture	5%

Question: When you say, "it's wrong", is it primarily wrong because it is...?

South-easterners primarily base their objections to atrocities on their religious beliefs, with more than half of them (53 per cent) choosing religion as a basis for the norm. Although the vast majority of those living in the south-east are Roman Catholic, there is no specific evidence that points to religion as a more important aspect of society in the region, so this preference for religious norms may be yet another echo of the war. As the war left Biafra devastated and stripped of the bare necessities, those who survived may have turned to the Church for both spiritual comfort and material aid to a greater degree than did the rest of their compatriots. South-easterners may also feel frustrated about being denied independence and perhaps not fully allowed back into Nigerian society, thus requiring them to turn to institutions within their own community.

Similar findings were also uncovered in the focus groups and in-depth interviews, in which participants were able to present more detailed responses and offer their own array of choices, rather than picking from a list.

There is divine rule. There is an order in the Bible that thou shalt not kill. (FG, journalists, Lagos)

There is law… I think it is international human right law. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)

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[11] Respondents were allowed multiple responses.

[Killing civilians] is against the rules. Everything has rules. (FG, former Biafran field commanders, Enugu)

[Moderator: Where did the law come from that instructed you not to kill civilians?]
From the headquarter. [Who?] The commandant. (FG, former captured Biafran combatants, Port Harcourt)

As shall be seen, the variety of responses as to why Nigerians think certain actions are wrong carry over into the way in which they view the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war in general.

Breakdown of limits

While most Nigerians feel that there should be specific limits applied to wartime conduct, many can also easily construct situations in which it is inadvisable or impossible to follow the rules. The causes of any breaches in the limits vary — ranging from hatred to confusion to simple expediency. Whatever the reason, Nigerians are frequently quite willing to acknowledge that limits amount to general guidelines more so than hard and fast rules governing every aspect of wartime behaviour, in every situation.
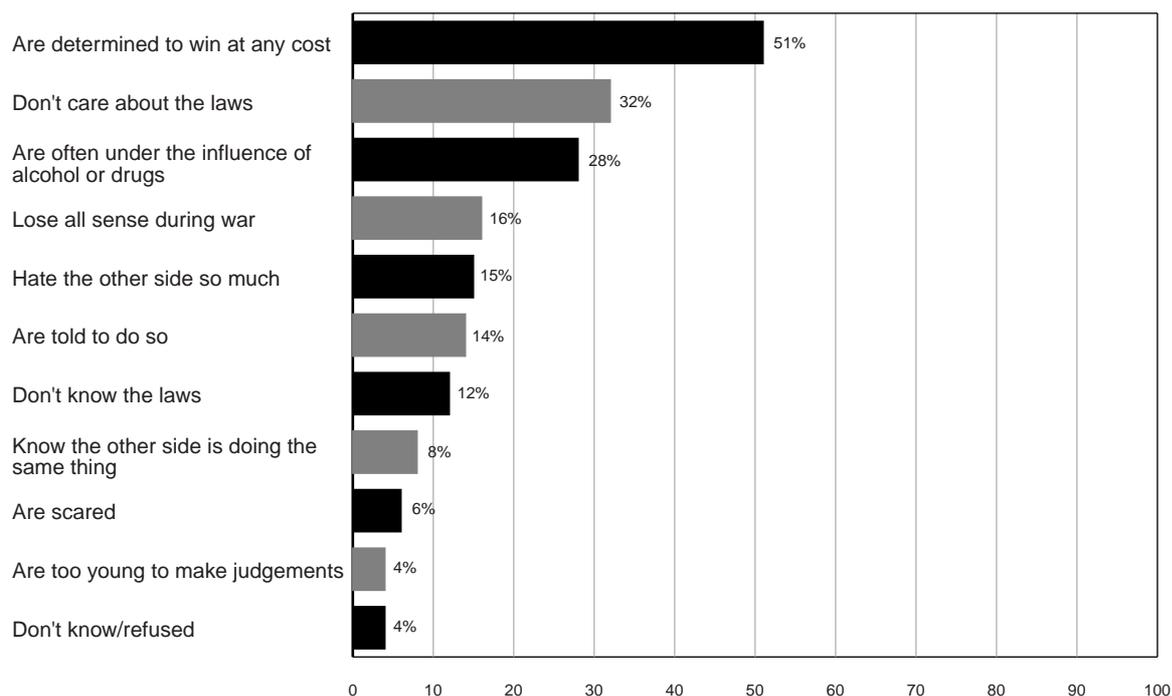
Erosion of restrictions

Nigerians are clearly of the view that civilians come under attack during war, regardless of the existence of limits or laws. When asked exactly why they think combatants attack civilians, more than 80 per cent of those surveyed believe that combatants commit violent acts because they are determined to win (51 per cent) or simply don't care about laws (32 per cent). Conversely, much smaller percentages attribute the breakdown of limits to ignorance of the laws (12 per cent), fear (6 per cent) or even sheer hate (15 per cent). In other words, Nigerians are inclined to put attacks on civilians down to expediency rather than to intent. (See Figure 7.)

FIGURE 7
Why combatants attack civilians
(per cent of total population responding) (top two responses)

Reason	Per cent
Are determined to win at any cost	51%
Don't care about the laws	32%
Are often under the influence of alcohol or drugs	28%
Lose all sense during war	16%
Hate the other side so much	15%
Are told to do so	14%
Don't know the laws	12%
Know the other side is doing the same thing	8%
Are scared	6%
Are too young to make judgements	4%
Don't know/refused	4%

Question: Which *two* of the following reasons best explain why combatants attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay or maybe against the law. Is it because...?

These are descriptive, rather than prescriptive, answers. They admit to a general breakdown of limits once combatants are thrown into a conflict, but are a poor indicator of exactly why those limits failed in the first place. In part, people's preferences can be attributed to the general idea that war is itself a state of lawlessness — that war represents a fundamental breakdown of everyday civil norms. If this is the case, it is important to investigate exactly why Nigerians think that the chaos that accompanies war happens in the first place.

On the topic of why combatants attack civilians, those closer to and more distant from the fighting display interesting differences. While 57 per cent of south-easterners think that combatants attack civilians in order to "win at any cost", less than half (47 per cent) of those living in the rest of the country agree. While almost one-third (32 per cent) of south-easterners think that civilians are attacked because combatants are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, only one in four living in the rest of the country agree. Nigerians over the age of 40 also believe combatants who attack civilians are under the influence of alcohol or drugs (32 per cent).

When asked to volunteer their own responses rather than choose from a list, a significant portion of Nigerians offer explanations to the effect that civilians are attacked because they are in league with the enemy. Almost one-quarter of those surveyed (23 per cent) think that combatants attack civilians because those civilians are either harbouring the enemy (12 per cent), acting as spies or saboteurs (8 per cent), or because it was thought that the civilians were acting as disguised combatants or guerrillas (3 per cent).

Focus groups and in-depth interviews help reveal why the limits were shattered. Respondents point to three major reasons as to why events escalated to the point at which limits no longer mattered. First, regional tensions initially led Nigeria to the brink of war and then over the edge — sowing doubt and confusion. Second, once a cycle of violence was set in motion, civilians became inexorably swept up in the violence and as it spiralled further, both sides found themselves faced with the dilemma whereby they did not feel safe observing the rules of war, lest this would put them at a disadvantage in the fighting.

Regional tensions

For Biafrans, this was a war that engulfed all of society. Indeed, it is likely that many from the south-east see it as a war *on* their society — by other groups denying the Biafrans the right to self-determination through the use of force. This point of view is reflected in Nigerians' responses as to why limits were broken. While one in six Nigerians overall (15 per cent) attribute the breakdown of limits to hatred of the other side, views differ between those who lived in the area of conflict and those who lived outside it: 13 per cent of south-easterners think atrocities are caused by hatred, while the remainder of the country is more inclined to think hatred plays more of a role (18 per cent). This points to differing perceptions of the secessionist conflict. While south-easterners are widely considered to have been the instigators of the civil war by people in the rest of Nigeria (one former Federal field commander claimed the south-easterners were "trying to gain the upper hand"), Biafrans no doubt see themselves as having defended their homes and families, and not motivated by spite or politics.

The cultural and ethnic differences that fuelled the war were also revealed in a number of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Participants occasionally mentioned that the enemy was defined not as those fighting or in uniform, but those of another ethnic group — and that anyone in such a group became a de facto combatant. As a student in Port Harcourt commented, "They have been told that any Ibo you see, kill, civilian or non-civilian it doesn't matter, the important thing is that the person is an Ibo." (FG, female students, Enugu)

Confusion and doubt

A number of findings in the survey can be attributed to the spiral of chaos that combatants, often poorly trained young men, are thrown into during combat. Sixteen per cent of respondents think that combatants "lose all sense during war", while a combined 10 per cent think combatants were either scared or too young to make judgements (6 and 4 per cent, respectively).

Many focus group participants felt that attacks on civilians were often caused by confusion and doubt on the part of combatants, that ambiguity is in the very nature of combat, in which anyone unlucky enough to be there is confronted with the best of two bad choices. They also mentioned

combatants as often being forced into an untenable dilemma — in which the only way to discern the difference between civilians and combatants disguised as or among civilians, and still adhere to the rules against killing civilians, is to wait to be fired upon.

> If you are fighting a war, you are fighting your enemy… Sometimes, he may even use civilians, people you would not even expect they have ammunition. And if because one thing or another, you are not going to attack that person, you might be killed, because the order is: shoot on or be shot. (FG, journalists, Lagos)

> You don't know who is who. (FG, former Biafran captured combatants, Enugu)

> [W]hen war starts, violence starts, violence on a large scale there is nothing like rules. Rules and regulations break down, there is nothing like law. So in such a situation, anything can happen… (FG, journalists, Lagos)

> At times the military men when they get to a place, they charge, they can use civilian clothes but they are having their own weapon with them so if you as a uniform man, as a combatant, when you saw a civilian suddenly open fire on you, you will believe that the civilians are behind the soldiers. So you will have no choice but to start picking some of them. (FG, former Federal Army commanders, Kaduna)

> The reason is that some civilians are spies. When you get such spies and you leave them because they are civilians, they may get you into trouble. So in [the] event of stopping any possible problem, you can attack… (FG, former Biafran field commanders, Enugu)

> [A soldier] might not be able to obey certain instructions and when he is to attack, the civilians become an obstacle for him to face an oncoming enemy. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)

Cycle of violence leads to dilemma

Once the rules had been broken, it became difficult or nearly impossible for combatants to observe the rules of war. In this environment, confusion and partisanship merged, and a war culture took over from civil culture as the medium of daily life. Participants said that once the situation had escalated to this point, they felt resignation more than rage or revenge. For them, civilians being attacked had simply become "part of war".

> It is part of war. In war they have their tactics. They have their ways of getting at their enemy. (IDI, journalist, Lagos)

> When there is a war it is necessary to do it but it's not right.
> [Moderator: Is that wrong or part of the war?]
> It's part of the war. (IDI, primary school teacher, Lagos)

> War is war, once you are fighting a war, you are planning of how to destroy your enemy. (FG, journalists, Lagos)

> Well, that is part of war. Once that happens it becomes a choice between allowing them to stay in [a] populated area and inflicting damage on you or going after them in those populated areas and weaken that resolve and killing civilians

in the process. But this is war, and in war sometimes sticking to principles and
basic moral rules may not work… (IDI, soccer player, Lagos)

This cycle of violence often brought out the worst in people. Many focus group and in-depth
interview participants noted that the war gave those with the desire to wreak destruction and commit acts
of cruelty full license to do so. One woman likened combatants with battle lust to drug addicts, who search
out their next murder as an addict would search out his next fix. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)
Sometimes, knowledge of the rules and the wisdom of years failed to make a difference:

[Moderator: Are there any laws or customs that say you should not…]

No law! No law! No law! No by law even the commander will be happy… For
instance, if the civilian, if he use tactics to get rid of you, you are not with them,
you can take the law into your own hands, then you massacre them.
[You are saying it is good?]
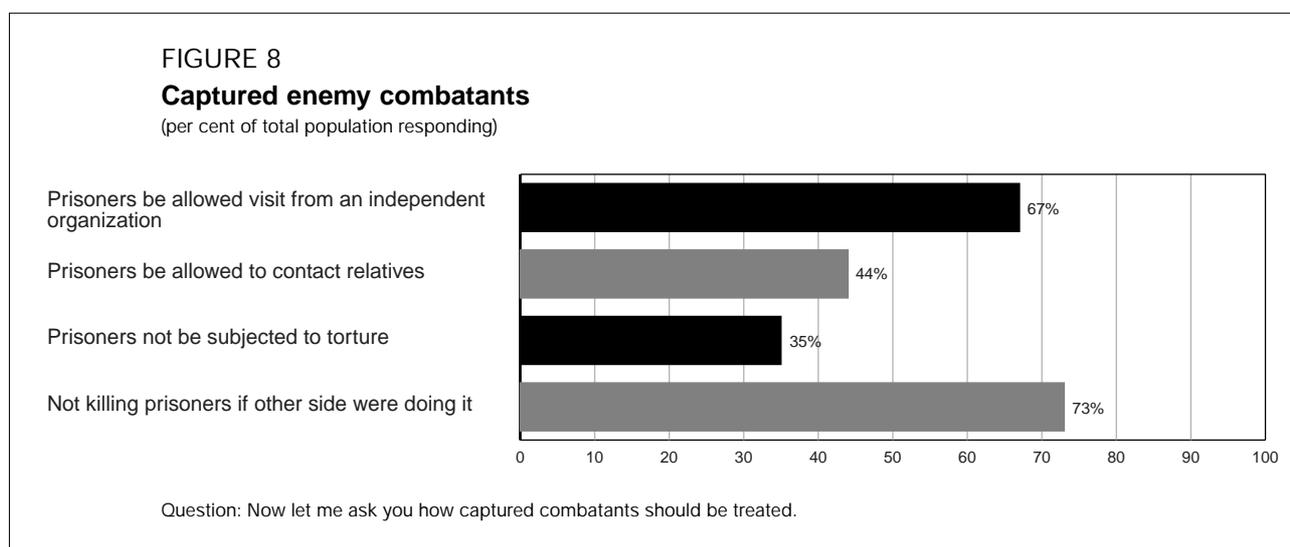It is good! It is good! (IDI, former combatant, Lagos)

When asked about the causes of war and why combatants often break laws or inflict cruelty
on their fellows, many respondents were flatly fatalistic, often leaving it in the hands of God, the devil or
other metaphysical powers. Fatalism allowed them to explain the unexplainable, as one woman stated
about what happened to her in the war, "I don't understand the wrong that I could have done." (FG,
women who lost children during the war, Enugu) Similarly, one participant wondered aloud at whether
violence and war were not simply just human nature:

A war is created and everybody begins to die simply because somebody
intended to cling to power… we find examples in Liberia, close to us in Benin
Republic, you find it in Ghana, you find it in all parts of African countries and one
begins to wonder if something is really wrong with the way and manner we
govern ourselves as human beings. (IDI, scholar, Lagos)

Captured combatants at risk

In much the same way as they feel about civilians in war, Nigerians who participated in the consultation actively support the fair and humane treatment of captured combatants. Eighty-one per cent of Nigerians surveyed believe that enemy combatants do not deserve to die, while only 16 per cent think they do. In turn, almost three-quarters of those surveyed (73 per cent) would not approve of killing captured combatants, even if the other side were doing so. (See Figure 8.)

About one in five Nigerians (22 per cent) say they would approve of killing prisoners in retribution, that is, if the other side were doing so. This fraction remains relatively constant through different subgroups: 20 per cent of those who lived where the war took place (compared with 23 per cent who lived elsewhere) and 21 per cent of south-easterners agree (as opposed to 23 per cent of those living in the rest of the country). Furthermore, almost one-third of combatants, 29 per cent, would approve of killing prisoners if the other side were doing so. In an interesting flip, while those closer to the fighting (those living in the area of conflict and south-easterners) are more inclined to protect civilians in war, it appears that they are no more inclined to say they support the fair treatment of captured combatants than their counterparts in the rest of Nigeria.

FIGURE 8
Captured enemy combatants
(per cent of total population responding)

Prisoners be allowed visit from an independent organization	67%
Prisoners be allowed to contact relatives	44%
Prisoners not be subjected to torture	35%
Not killing prisoners if other side were doing it	73%

Question: Now let me ask you how captured combatants should be treated.

Focus group and in-depth interview participants echoed these sentiments and often gave unequivocal and unqualified opinions as to the treatment of captured combatants.

There are certain do's and don'ts which you have to observe, so killing of prisoners of war is definitely wrong. (FG, former Federal Army commanders, Kaduna)

They should not kill war prisoners. (FG, former Biafran captured combatants, Port Harcourt)

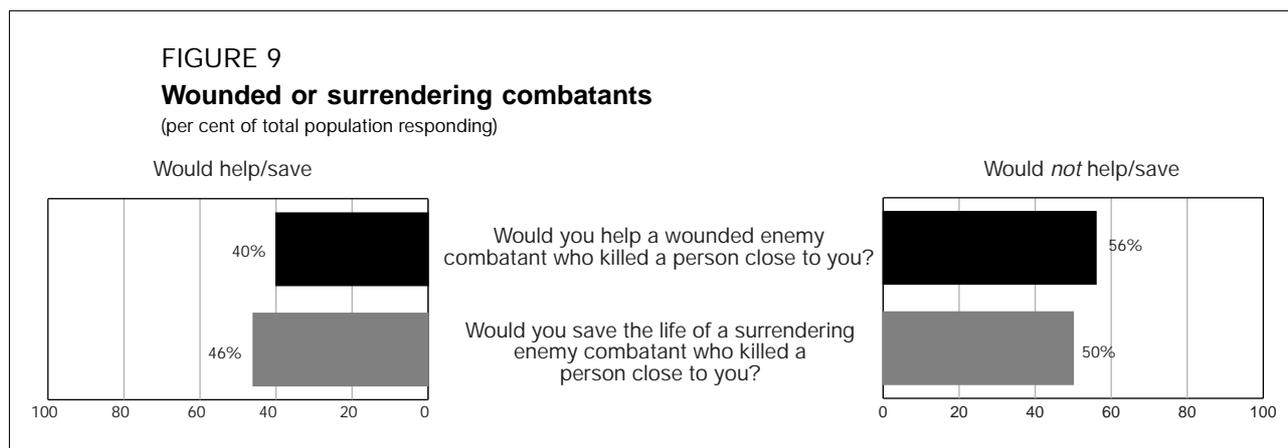[Moderator: Is there any time when it's okay to kill such prisoners?]

No time. If you have them, you don't kill, keep them until after the war, release them. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)

[Moderator: When is it okay to attack prisoners?]

[All] Never. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)

They [prisoners] should be allowed to live to relate the history of the past. People would learn from their experience. (IDI, Red Cross volunteer, Lagos)

But as seen when discussing civilian protection, when presented with life-or-death scenarios that affect them personally, people are less willing to protect captured combatants. When asked if they would save or help a surrendering or wounded enemy combatant whom they knew had killed a person close to them, a majority of Nigerians say they would refuse to do either: 56 per cent of Nigerians say they would not help a wounded enemy combatant who had killed a person close to them and 50 per cent would not save a surrendering enemy combatant who had killed a person close to them. (See Figure 9.)

FIGURE 9
Wounded or surrendering combatants
(per cent of total population responding)

In Nigeria, the population that was most affected by the war and its aftermath is more likely to advocate the humane treatment of defenceless captured combatants. While a solid 56 per cent of Nigerians as a whole would refuse to help a wounded enemy combatant who had killed someone close to them, people who were distant from the fighting appear even less likely to help. Fifty-eight per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict say they would not help in this scenario, while 51 per cent of those who lived in the area of conflict say the same. While an even half of Nigerians as a whole (50 per cent) say they would not save a surrendering enemy combatant, 57 per cent of those who lived outside the area of fighting would refuse to do so, as opposed to 39 per cent of those who lived in war-torn areas.

A majority of Nigerians decline to place priority on the humane treatment of captured combatants — 44 per cent of respondents agree that prisoners should be allowed to contact their relatives. Of those who lived outside the area of conflict, only 40 per cent would allow contact with relatives, while a slight majority of those who lived in conflict areas (51 per cent) would do so. Combatants are even less likely to allow such privileges to captives: 47 per cent of non-combatants would allow contact with relatives, compared with only 27 per cent of combatants. However, combatants are no more or less willing to allow prisoners to be visited by a representative of an independent organization (67 per cent of combatants compared with 69 per cent of non-combatants).

Yet even focus group participants who maintained that captured combatants ought not to be subjected to abuse admitted that, when faced with a life-or-death situation in which they were confronted with a helpless enemy combatant, they might actively participate in his demise.

I will save his life. Later, I will kill him. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)

As far as war is concerned, we have registered in our mind that we are fighting. If I capture a person, I will kill him. (FG, teachers, Port Harcourt)

I will first of all get as much information before I kill him. (FG, female students, Enugu)

It depends on the mood you are [in]. If your spirit says forgive him, you can forgive him. If it says kill him, you will kill him. (FG, journalists, Lagos)

That is fighting, we are fighting. But after he was wounded and picked up to me, if I'm aware that by using him, I'm going to get useful information from him, I may not kill him but otherwise, I'll kill him. (FG, former Biafran field commanders, Enugu)

The only focus group in which every respondent agreed that captured combatants should be protected absolutely was the former Federal Army commanders in Kaduna. As one of these professional soldiers remarked, "Those are the evils of war, that will be signing out a vendetta – taking law into someone's hands." This is perhaps because, as members of the officer corps, these commanders had greater access to education and information regarding the rules of war than did rank and file or irregular soldiers.

Torture

Nigerians also see torture as an acceptable tactic in warfare. A solid majority of 58 per cent believe captured combatants can be subjected to torture in order to obtain important military information. This acceptance extends to other subgroups as well. Sixty-eight per cent of combatants think torture is acceptable. The number of those who think torture is acceptable remains relatively constant among those who did or did not live in areas affected by fighting (56 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively). However, there are significant differences when it comes to those who think torture is *not* acceptable; 32 per cent of those who did not live in a war-torn area would not allow torture, compared with 40 per cent of those who lived where the war took place.

In contrast to the survey data, though in the focus groups and in-depth interviews there were traumatic references to torture, ranging from rape to live burial to acid baths, individuals focused more on their personal experiences than on the utility of torturing prisoners to obtain military information. In other words, while survey respondents appear willing to make allowances for the use of torture as a tool during warfare, focus group and in-depth interview participants do not address torture in this way, but instead discuss it on a purely personal level. This is likely part and parcel of a conditional attitude towards the protection of both civilians and captured combatants. While survey respondents would clearly afford protection to captured combatants in general terms, when presented with the dilemma of a making a personal decision, their commitment wavers.
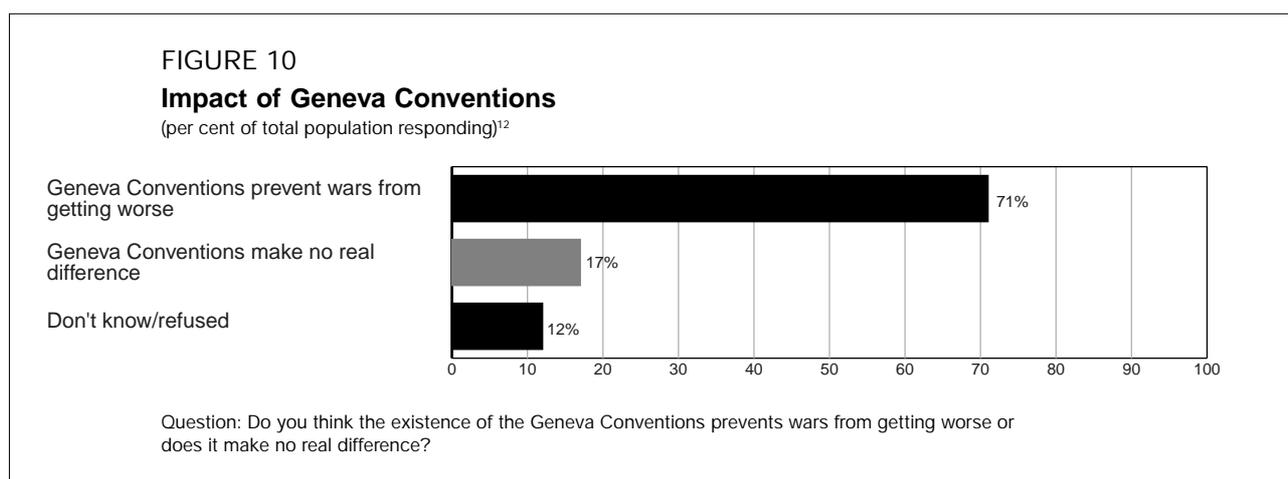
Geneva Conventions and limits in war

Nigerians are widely supportive of laws governing conflict. While only a limited number of Nigerians display awareness or knowledge of the Geneva Conventions, a significant majority are supportive of rules and limits in war.

A relatively low percentage of Nigerians are aware of the Geneva Conventions. A quarter of Nigerians surveyed (25 per cent) have heard of them. Of these, 65 per cent were able to describe them accurately, yielding 16 per cent of Nigerians overall who have a working knowledge of the Geneva Conventions. However, considering that Nigeria has not seen widespread fighting in over a generation, it is unlikely that the rules of wartime conduct have been foremost in its people's minds.

Awareness of the Geneva Conventions runs evenly through most levels of Nigerian society. Awareness is somewhat higher among men (33 per cent, compared with 17 per cent of women) and those over 60 years of age (31 per cent), and jumps significantly for those with more than a secondary education (47 per cent – the highest of any subgroup). Those with direct experiences of war have a greater awareness of the Geneva Conventions. Among captured combatants who report being mistreated, 43 per cent have heard of the Geneva Conventions. Forty-four per cent of combatants have heard of them, as have 32 per cent of those who lived in the area where the war took place.

Among those familiar with the Geneva Conventions, most replied that their purpose is to set limits in war (19 per cent), ensure and promote peace and protect civilians (both 13 per cent). Combatants believe the Conventions mitigate or end armed conflict: 33 per cent believe that they aim to limit war or promote peace, and an additional 10 per cent think that their purpose is to broker peace treaties.

After hearing a description of the Geneva Conventions, an impressive percentage of Nigerians — 71 per cent — believe that they prevent wars from getting worse, while only 17 per cent think they make no difference. This percentage rises among those who have been directly affected by armed conflict. Seventy-eight per cent of those who were mistreated while imprisoned think the Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse (18 per cent think they make no difference). (See Figure 10.)

FIGURE 10
Impact of Geneva Conventions
(per cent of total population responding)[12]

Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse	71%
Geneva Conventions make no real difference	17%
Don't know/refused	12%

Question: Do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions prevents wars from getting worse or does it make no real difference?
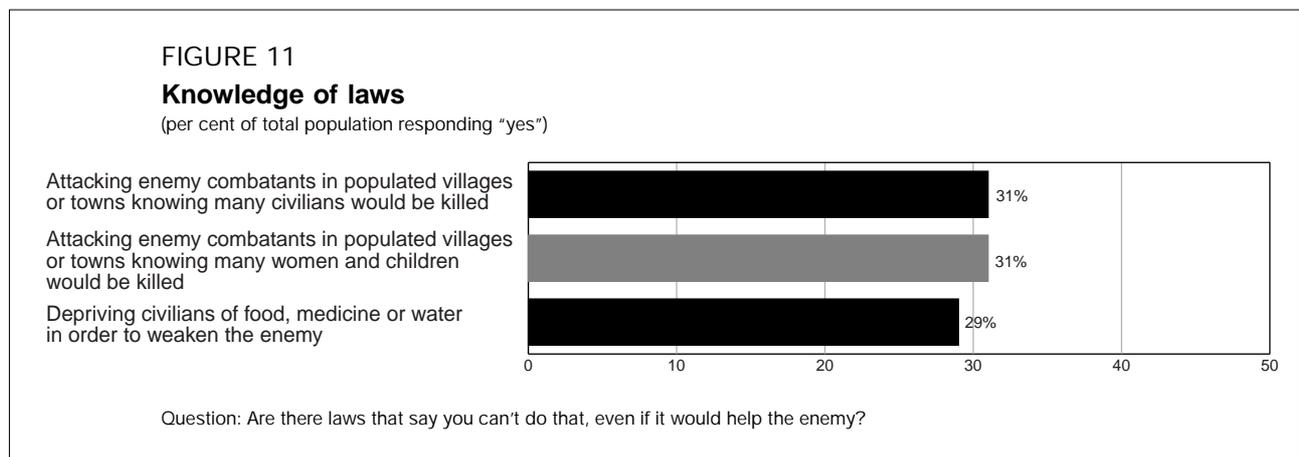
The Geneva Conventions are also viewed favourably by those who lived in the area of conflict. An identical percentage (78 per cent) of those who lived where the war took place and those who live in the south-east believe the Geneva Conventions are a mitigating factor during armed conflict. In turn, those more distant from the area of conflict are less convinced of the efficacy of the Conventions. Only two-thirds of Nigerians surveyed who live outside the south-east (67 per cent) think the Conventions prevent wars from getting worse, as do 68 per cent of those who say they did not live where the war occurred.

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[12] Regardless of their prior knowledge of the Geneva Conventions, respondents were read the following description: "The Geneva Conventions are a series of international treaties that impose limits in war by describing some rules of war. Most countries in the world have signed these treaties." Thus, all respondents in the survey answered the question portrayed in Figure 10.

When asked if they think laws exist that prohibit attacks on civilians or depriving them of basic necessities, less than one-third of Nigerians surveyed responded positively. (See Figure 11.) As might be expected, those who saw the greater part of the war fought on their soil are more inclined to think laws exist that prohibit these actions. Twenty-five per cent of those who say they lived outside the area of conflict think laws exist that prohibit depriving civilians of food, medicine or water, compared with 37 per cent of those who lived in conflict areas. Twenty-seven per cent of those who lived outside the area of conflict think laws exist that prohibit attacks on populated areas knowing civilians would be killed, compared with 37 per cent of those who lived in conflict areas. Lastly, 27 per cent of those who did not live where the war took place think that there are laws against attacking populated areas knowing many women and children would be killed, compared with 38 per cent of those who lived in the area of conflict.

While the pattern of greater sensitivity to wartime abuses holds for those who lived in war-torn areas, an examination of age differences (or generational differences) reveals few disparities. For instance, those born after the war are not any more or less likely to think the Geneva Conventions prevent wars from getting worse (71 per cent) than those alive during the war (72 per cent). Similarly, the younger group (18–39 years old) is not any more likely to think there are laws against attacking civilians in populated areas knowing many civilians would be killed (30 per cent versus 33 per cent) or depriving civilians of food, medicine or water (28 per cent versus 31 per cent).

FIGURE 11

Knowledge of laws

(per cent of total population responding "yes")

Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many civilians would be killed	31%
Attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns knowing many women and children would be killed	31%
Depriving civilians of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy	29%

Question: Are there laws that say you can't do that, even if it would help the enemy?

The relatively low level of awareness of laws governing armed conflict among the total population may be attributable to two factors. First, even though the Biafrans established an army, government and their own territory and were recognized by a number of foreign powers, the conflict is still widely seen in Nigeria as an internal war, and not subject to international law. Indeed, many participants in focus groups characterized the Biafran war as a "brotherly war", a war that had special rules and deserved special consideration. Second, given the length of time that has passed since the Biafran war, people are less likely to be discussing international law and the rules of war.

When asked if they thought a military code of conduct implemented during war would brighten the prospects for peace and speed the process of reconciliation, almost two-thirds of respondents (59 per cent) believe it would. (See Figure 12.) The groups closest to the fighting are even more supportive of rules of war as an avenue to reconciliation: 73 per cent of those who lived in the area of conflict (compared with 50 per cent of those in other areas) think a code of conduct during wartime aids reconciliation.
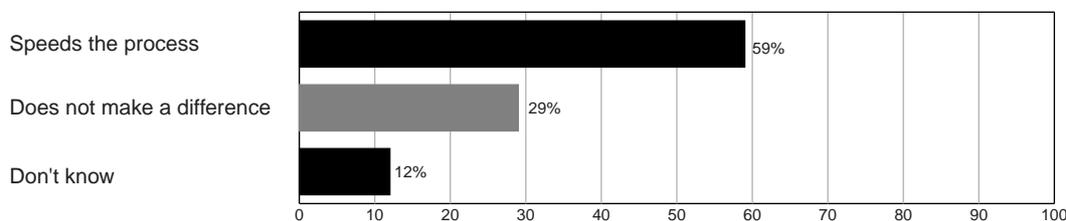
Upon further examination of this topic, a divide emerges between the various regions. South-easterners, at 71 per cent, are most likely to think that a code of conduct will speed reconciliation, while half of the rest of the country believe the same. Combatants are more likely than non-combatants to think a code aids reconciliation (67 per cent versus 59 per cent).

Those who lived through the time of actual fighting are also more likely to believe in the need for a code of conduct during war. Among Nigerians surveyed over the age of 40, 63 per cent think a code of conduct speeds reconciliation, while 56 per cent of those under 40 think the same.

FIGURE 12

Code of conduct

(per cent of total population responding)

Speeds the process	59%
Does not make a difference	29%
Don't know	12%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Question: Do you think having combatants respect a military code of conduct during a war helps speed the process of reconciliation between the warring parties once the war has ended, or does having a code of conduct not make any difference?

Punishment

Support among those surveyed for punishing those who commit crimes during war is not clear. Forty-four per cent believe that there are rules so important that people who break them during war should be punished, while 24 per cent disagree and 31 per cent don't know or have no opinion. (See Figure 13.)

A majority of south-easterners (52 per cent) think such rules exist, compared with 39 per cent of those living in the rest of the country. Sixty-one per cent of combatants believe there are such rules (as opposed to 45 per cent of non-combatants), as do 56 per cent of those who lived in the area of conflict (as opposed to 38 per cent who lived somewhere else).

Nigerians also express a desire for closure once the war is over. Of those who think that there are punishable acts, 62 per cent believe that wrongdoers should be put on trial, while much smaller numbers believe that they should be given amnesty (16 per cent) or be forgiven outright (12 per cent). Yet while those who lived where the war took place are more likely to think there are laws preventing wartime abuses, those far away from the fighting tend to be even more judgmental of those whom they believe to have broken the law. Sixty-eight per cent of those living outside of the south-east (compared with 56 per cent of south-easterners) believe that wrongdoers should stand trial, as do 64 per cent of those who say the war took place elsewhere. Fifty-six per cent of those in the area of conflict opt for trials. Perhaps not surprisingly, of those who would vote for an amnesty, the highest percentage is among those who think it acceptable to attack both civilians and combatants equally (34 per cent), perhaps reflecting the attitude within this group that once war begins, to them at least, rules and laws have little meaning.
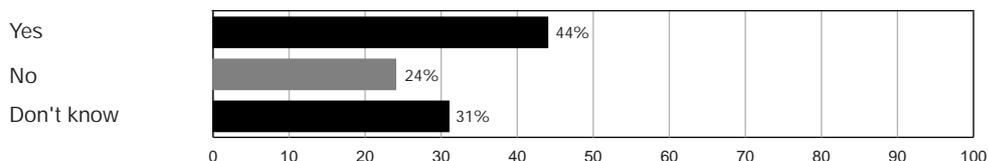
Nigerians solidly favour international involvement when it comes to the punishment of crimes and atrocities in wartime. Of the 44 per cent who think there are punishable offences, 63 per cent believe that the laws prohibiting them are based on international law, rather than Nigerian law (18 per cent). Further, a majority (52 per cent) believe that an international criminal court should be in charge of meting out punishment, compared with an aggregate of 41 per cent who believe it should be left to the Nigerian government (13 per cent), courts (9 per cent) or the military (19 per cent).

South-easterners in particular are strongly internationalist in their views. Sixty-six per cent support punishment by an international court, compared with 38 per cent of respondents in the rest of Nigeria. Similarly, Nigerians who lived through the war (those over 40) are more likely to look to an
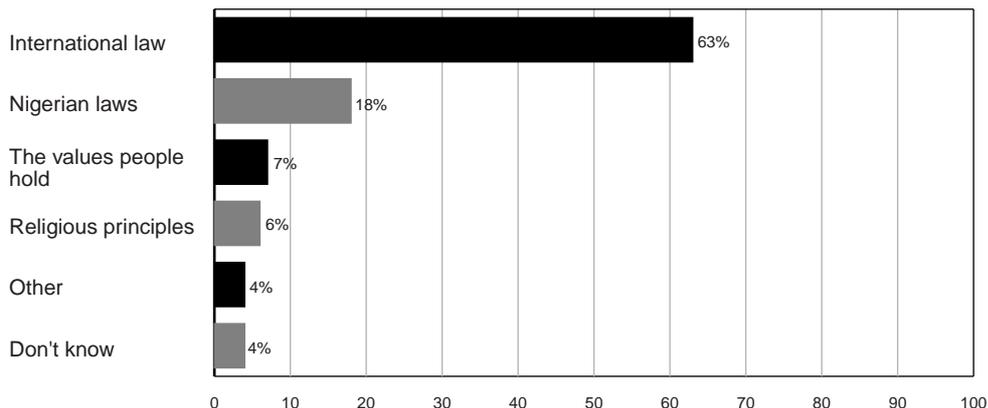
FIGURE 13
War crimes
(per cent of total population responding)

Yes		44%
No		24%
Don't know		31%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Question: Are there rules or laws that are so important that if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished?

(per cent of those responding "yes")

International law		63%
Nigerian laws		18%
The values people hold		7%
Religious principles		6%
Other		4%
Don't know		4%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Question: What are these rules based on?

international criminal court (62 per cent — the next highest percentage is the 13 per cent who look to the military), as opposed to the 47 per cent of those between 18 and 39 years of age who would do so.

The survey appears to uncover a certain amount of uneasiness among those who lived in the area of conflict when it comes to trusting in the apparatus of the Nigerian State. Older respondents are equally lukewarm about turning to the Nigerian government — in any of its forms. While about half of Nigerians under 40 would turn to the government, courts or military (46 per cent), only one-third of those over 40 would do so.

In contrast, 62 per cent of those 40 and over would look to an international court — as opposed to 47 per cent of those younger than 40. Similarly, those 40 and over are more likely to think that punishable laws are based on international law than are younger Nigerians (69 per cent versus 59 per cent). This suggests that people who were traumatized by the Biafran war, no matter where their location, are less inclined to look to their government for order and stability, but would rather look for help from the outside. This could be an echo of the vast amount of aid and assistance poured into Nigeria during and after the conflict, leaving older Nigerians with an extra reserve of faith in the efficacy of the international community. Lastly, it may also reflect simply a more internationalist world view on the part of older Nigerians — citizens who have lived through war, a massive relief effort, military coups and the rise of their country as a West African regional power.[13]

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[13] For more on Nigeria's involvement in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),

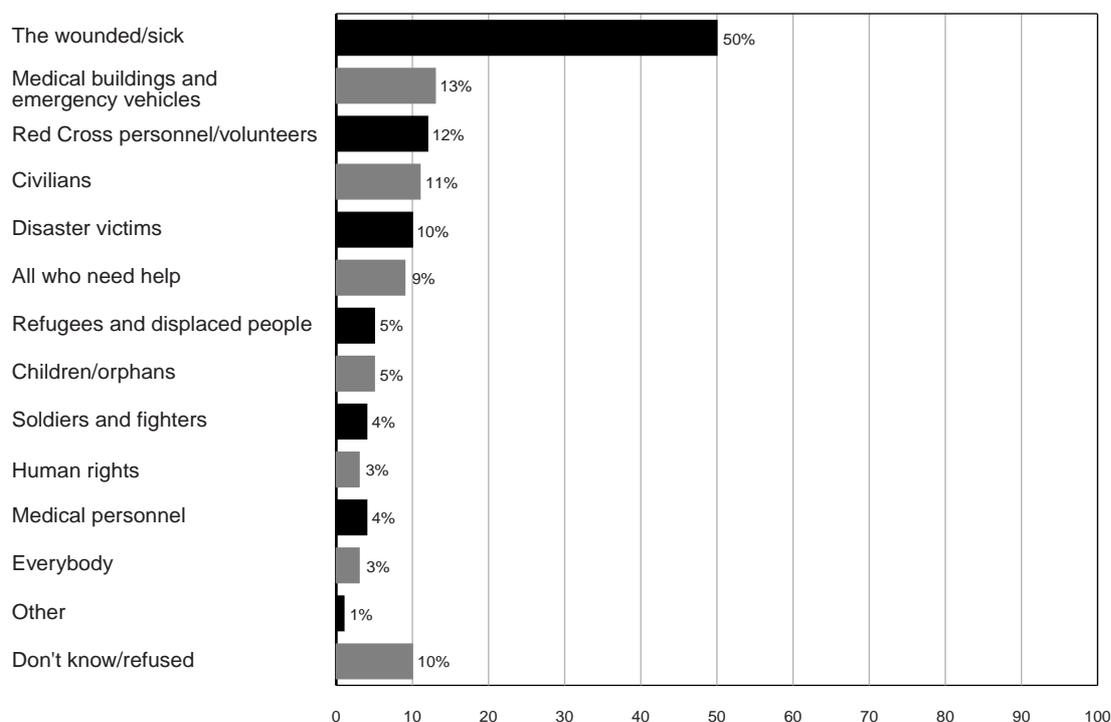## The role of the ICRC/Red Cross

A large percentage of Nigerians are familiar with the Red Cross, its emblem and its mission. When shown the emblem, 84 per cent of respondents reply that it stands for the Red Cross (2 per cent say the Red Cross and the Red Crescent), while only 8 per cent think it represents hospitals or medical facilities. Ninety-three per cent of south-easterners correctly identify the emblem, with that figure falling to 77 per cent for the rest of the country (12 per cent of those outside the south-east think it represents hospitals and medical facilities, compared with only 2 per cent of south-easterners).

Nigerians give generally accurate responses as to what the emblem protects. A total of 29 per cent mention protecting medical vehicles, facilities and personnel in times of conflict: 13 per cent think it protects medical buildings and vehicles, while 12 per cent think it protects Red Cross personnel and 4 per cent say medical personnel. An even half (50 per cent) believe the emblem protects the wounded or sick. (See Figure 14.)

FIGURE 14
Red cross and protection
(per cent of total population responding)

The wounded/sick	50%
Medical buildings and emergency vehicles	13%
Red Cross personnel/volunteers	12%
Civilians	11%
Disaster victims	10%
All who need help	9%
Refugees and displaced people	5%
Children/orphans	5%
Soldiers and fighters	4%
Human rights	3%
Medical personnel	4%
Everybody	3%
Other	1%
Don't know/refused	10%

Question: What kind of people or things does this symbol (red cross emblem) protect?

Combatants were twice as likely to accurately assess the function of the red cross emblem; a solid majority, 50 per cent, think the emblem protects medical buildings and vehicles or Red Cross personnel.
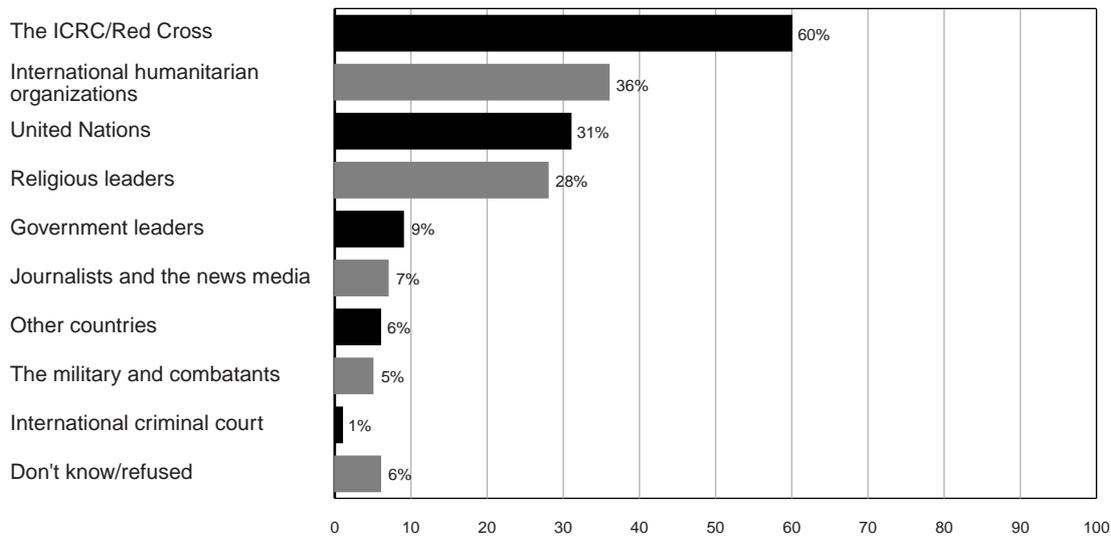
Biggest role

When asked to choose two organizations they believe played the biggest role in protecting civilians during the Biafran war, 60 per cent mention the ICRC/Red Cross. Thirty-six per cent give a less specific answer of "international humanitarian organizations", while 31 per cent mention the UN. (See Figure 15.)

FIGURE 15
Biggest role
(per cent of total population responding) (top two responses)

The ICRC/Red Cross	60%
International humanitarian organizations	36%
United Nations	31%
Religious leaders	28%
Government leaders	9%
Journalists and the news media	7%
Other countries	6%
The military and combatants	5%
International criminal court	1%
Don't know/refused	6%

Question: I'm now going to describe different kinds of people and organizations. Please tell me which two of these have played the biggest role during the war to stop civilian areas from being attacked or cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity.

Those in the area of conflict felt the impact of the ICRC/Red Cross to an even greater degree. Almost three-quarters of south-easterners (73 per cent) — as opposed to about half of the rest of the country (51 per cent) — say the ICRC/Red Cross played the biggest role in helping civilians. Similarly, those able to remember the war (Nigerians over 40) are also more likely to cite the ICRC/Red Cross as playing the biggest role — 64 per cent mention the ICRC/Red Cross, while a distant 39 per cent cite international humanitarian organizations in general.

Participants in the focus groups and in-depth interviews also saw the ICRC/Red Cross as protecting civilians, although its specific mission was sometimes lost on those who lumped it in with other NGOs and aid organizations.

[Moderator: Why should combatants not do what you have just told me?]
It is against the rules. Everything has rules…
[Who gives those rules?]
Red Cross.
It was the convention of 1949, the Geneva Convention. (FG, journalists, Lagos)

In short, all the villages, they gave Red Cross office. If they entered there, soldiers can't shoot inside Red Cross office and they can't harm Red Cross people because they are peace maker of the war. So, if you run to Red Cross office or you and your family or as many as you can or if there is a place for them to keep you, there must be a place they use to keep people if they run to Red Cross office, they will be saved. (FG, medical workers, Port Harcourt)

The combatant should respect the Red Cross as much as possible once they're in uniform moving about to salvage the victims. (IDI, community leader, Ikoyi)
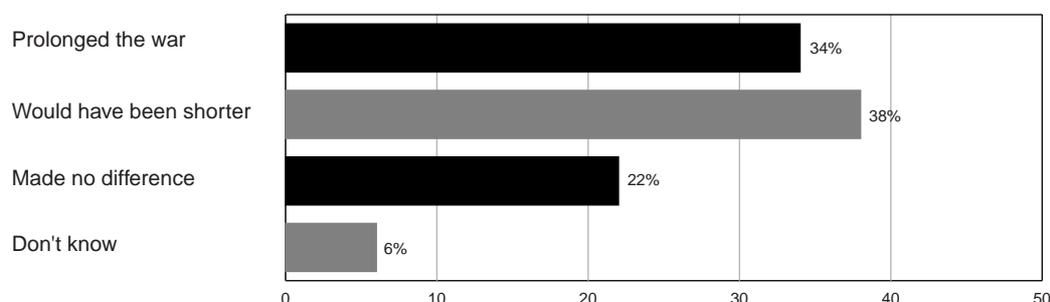
Because in [a] war situation, everybody is looking for [a] strategy to overcome his enemy and UN allows it anyway, that is why the International Red Cross is there, other voluntary organizations are there to assist as much as possible… (IDI, former journalist, Lagos)

Even though Nigerians had generally positive things to say about international aid and assistance, it appears they are ambivalent as to its efficacy in stemming a conflict. Respondents in the former Federal commander focus group in Kaduna expressed the widely held belief that during the Biafran conflict certain aid organizations, in addition to flying in food and medical supplies, were also smuggling material for the embattled Biafran army. This ambivalence is also evident in their views on whether humanitarian aid shortened or prolonged the war. Scepticism regarding the effectiveness of aid organizations is also evident in the survey. While 38 per cent of those surveyed think that receiving no humanitarian assistance would have helped make the war shorter, a similar number, 34 per cent, say they think humanitarian assistance prolonged the war. (See Figure 16.)

FIGURE 16
Humanitarian assistance
(per cent of total population responding)

Prolonged the war	34%
Would have been shorter	38%
Made no difference	22%
Don't know	6%

Question: Did humanitarian assistance provided during the war prolong it, or would the war have been shorter if no humanitarian assistance had been given?

Those who lived through the war itself and its aftermath are more positive about the effects of humanitarian assistance. Forty-four per cent of south-easterners think no humanitarian assistance would have made the war shorter; 34 per cent of those in the rest of the country agree. The converse of this question reveals an even larger gap. While only 25 per cent of south-easterners think humanitarian assistance made the war longer, 40 per cent of those surveyed in the rest of Nigeria think the same. Similarly, younger Nigerians are more likely to think humanitarian assistance lengthened the Biafran conflict. Those under 40 are almost one-third more likely (37 per cent versus 29 per cent) to say that humanitarian assistance prolonged the Biafran war than are those over 40. In fact, an equal number of those under 40 think humanitarian assistance prolonged the war rather than shortened it.

Echoing their preference for international institutions to judge those who have broken the rules of war, the vast majority of Nigerians — 82 per cent — would like to see more intervention on the part of the international community when it comes to the issue of protecting civilians during wartime (only 13 per cent would like to see less intervention or none at all). All Nigerians are of the same mind in this regard — about eight in ten from every group (84 per cent of those who lived in the area of conflict, as opposed to 82 per cent outside it; 81 per cent of south-easterners and 84 per cent in the rest of the country) would like to see more intervention of this kind. Although older Nigerians are more internationalist when it comes to the source of laws and the bodies that enforce laws, they are not so when addressing the topic of intervention. While 81 per cent of Nigerians over 40 want more intervention, an almost identical number of those between 18 and 40 (83 per cent) agree.

This kind of widespread consensus, rare in other parts of the survey, may be due to the fact that international interaction has been woven into Nigerian political discourse in a different manner from that in most developing nations. Instead of seeing itself as a nation subject to the whims of other countries and international forces, Nigeria views itself as a power — militarily and economically — and as a leader in the arts, science and sport. As Nigeria is one of the primary members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and its attendant peacekeeping organization, ECOMOG, Nigerians are used to seeing their country take a proactive role in foreign affairs. Focus group and in-depth interview participants repeatedly mentioned ECOMOG and its activities throughout the region, both in reference to the notion of rules and laws and as an international organization, and it is likely that Nigeria's proactive approach to international relations — evidenced by its role in ECOMOG — in essence serves as a model for Nigerians' opinions on international intervention in general.

Reconciliation and the future

Reconciliation

The ICRC consultation reveals a tremendous legacy of bitterness about the Biafran conflict. The violence perpetrated against the south-easterners in other parts of the country prior to the war and the partisan nature of the war itself has made many south-easterners feel they were the targets of genocide. Some focus group participants compared their experiences to examples of genocide in the 1990s. One woman compared her experiences in Biafra to watching the Kosovo conflict on CNN. (FG, female students, Enugu) A prominent Nigerian sportsman summed up the experience of ethnic violence preceding the war:

> Shortly before the war, there was a pogrom where people from the south-east were displaced from most parts of the north and they have to leave the north and come back to the south-east. It was some kind of ethnic cleansing from the north. (IDI, soccer player, Lagos)

As a result, when asked if they thought wartime conduct made it easier or harder for opponents to reconcile after the fighting stopped, many of those interviewed felt that the excessively brutal conflict hampered reconciliation.

> [Moderator: Did things that happened during the war make it more difficult or easier to reconcile the parties afterward?]

> More difficult, absolutely more difficult. There are so many things we didn't know before the war that the war brought into focus, there were so many values that are being cherished that were eroded after the war. (IDI, soccer player, Lagos)

> Such people, talking about reconciliation is a nightmare, it's just [an] ordinary story because there is no reconciliation that will bring back to life their children... (IDI, disabled veteran, Lagos)

> I didn't witness the war, many things I am saying now are what I was told, but up till today they [the Ibo] are being marginalized politically and in other ways. If I have my way, I will surround myself with only Ibos... (FG, female students, Enugu)

Yet many respondents also refuse to envisage the possibility that Nigeria would not or could not move into the future as a unified nation. There is a decided feeling that the main lesson Nigeria learned from the war and its aftermath is that war is not an acceptable alternative in the future. As a retired journalist commented, war "makes Nigeria to be more vibrant as a nation. It makes Nigeria to now realize that war is not in the nature of any country." (IDI, former journalist, Lagos)

Optimism

Nigerians generally feel positive about the future of their country, even in the midst of economic recession and political upheaval. When asked if they think peace will last in the future, 82 per cent say they do, while only 8 per cent think there will be more war, perhaps not surprising for a nation that has not seen a general war for the past three decades.

The arrival of the ICRC team in Nigeria coincided with the restoration of the first freely elected civilian ruler in 15 years. Many respondents see the inauguration of a new President and the installation of a new constitution as a positive step for the future.

Let me start by saying one of the good things that has happened to us in this country was on Saturday, May 29 and since then there have been changes in the government... Everybody is involved. This is the beginning of good things that will happen to the new Nigeria. (FG, journalists, Lagos)

I have to support in that idea just said because it's a new government we started. I can see that we have started moving somewhere and by the grace of God if they will not interrupt and hold on and allow civilians to carry on, I think things will get better for us. (FG, former Biafran captured combatants, Port Harcourt)

I have every reason to believe that Nigeria is about its bearings, and that the future cannot be underestimated. (FG, former Federal Army commanders, Kaduna)

Annex 1: General methodology

The ICRC's worldwide consultation on the rules of war, which is the cornerstone of the People on War project, was carried out in 12 countries that have been ravaged by war over the past decades. In each case, the ICRC conducted a public opinion survey with a representative sample of the country's population and organized in-depth interviews and focus groups with those involved in or directly affected by the conflict.

For comparative purposes, the views of people were also sought in France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States on the basis of the opinion survey only.

The consultation was based on three principal research methods:

· A survey of 1,000 (in some cases 1,500) respondents representative of the country's general population;

· Focus groups (between 8 and 12 depending on the country) allowing a professionally moderated and intensive discussion in small groups;

· In-depth, face-to-face interviews (about 20 in each country) with individuals with specific war experiences.

In almost every case, the ICRC and local Red Cross or Red Crescent staff conducted the interviews, organized the focus groups, including recruitment of participants, and helped with translation/interpreting. Greenberg Research, with a local partner company, developed the sample design for the survey, processed data in electronic form, provided moderators and prepared transcripts.

Opinion survey

Questionnaire. The opinion survey questioned people on their war experiences and views on international humanitarian law. The survey was mainly standardized for all countries, though the wording was modified to reflect each context and to achieve consistent meaning. About 10 per cent of the questions were contextual and in many cases unique to the country. In an additional five countries, the questionnaire was designed to elicit people's perceptions on war and humanitarian law.

The questionnaires were developed by Greenberg Research, in consultation with the ICRC, on the basis of interviews with humanitarian law experts in the United States and Europe. The survey and questions were pre-tested in Mozambique and Colombia.

Sample design. In each country, interviews were held with 1,000 to 1,500 respondents, selected by a stratified, multistage cluster sampling method. The sample was stratified to ensure representation (500 interviews) from each of the principal conflict-affected geographic areas or ethnic/religious groups. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, this meant some 1,500 interviews (500 from Republika Srpska and 500 each from the Bosniac and Croat areas of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina); in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, this meant 1,000 interviews (500 in Israel and 500 in the occupied territories and the autonomous territories). These areas were divided into urban and rural geographic units (strata), to ensure representation of urban and rural populations.

The local partner randomly selected small geographic units within these strata. These units – 100 to 200 in each country – constituted the sampling points for the survey. In each geographic unit, 10 households (though fewer in some countries) were selected using a random route method appropriate to

the country. In some cases, interviewers were provided with a map and a route; in others, interviewers were simply given a route and selection instructions.

Within households, respondents were selected using a Kish grid (a respondent selection key that employs a combination of random numbers, alphabet codes and the number of available members in a household to identify the appropriate respondent) or the birthday criterion (a respondent selection process that employs dates of birth to determine the appropriate respondent). Interviewers were to make three attempts to achieve a completed interview, including locating the respondent elsewhere. In nearly every country, non-response was below 10 per cent.

The demographic distribution of the surveyed respondents was compared with the best available census data on education, age, household type and occupation. Where the sample survey was sharply askew (e.g., too many college-educated or too many young respondents), statistical weights were applied to eliminate the bias.

Interviews carried out by phone reached 755 adults in France, 1,000 in Switzerland, 750 in the United Kingdom and 1,000 in the United States, and 1,000 face-to-face interviews were carried out in the Russian Federation.

Survey administration. In nearly all the countries, the survey was administered by the ICRC, with the assistance of Greenberg Research and a local research partner. Interviews were conducted by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff. Greenberg Research provided training, which typically took two days.

Parallel research. In three of the countries – Colombia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Philippines – Greenberg Research commissioned a parallel quantitative survey, administered by a local research company using professional interviewers, in order to identify patterns of bias. The results of the parallel studies were then compared with the results of the ICRC-administered surveys. The exercise found only a few areas of systematic bias. Those interviewed by the ICRC and Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, for example, were consistently more supportive of the ICRC's role and more aware of the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war. However, the parallel research found few systematic differences in opinions on international humanitarian law. The ICRC results closely resemble the parallel survey results on most other questions. (A technical report assessing the parallel research and Red Cross bias is available separately.)

In-depth research
Focus groups. The focus groups provided a relatively unstructured environment for people to discuss their war experiences freely, express their views on the appropriate limits to war and consider possible actions against those who exceed them. To be effective, the groups had to be as homogeneous as possible, that is, the participants all had to have similar characteristics. Thus, in general, the participants in a group came from the same area, were all male or all female and shared an important experience (e.g., families of missing persons, ex-soldiers, ex-fighters, prisoners, teachers or journalists). The discussions were frequently intense and emotional and provide a rich commentary on how the public approaches these issues.

In each country, 8 to 12 focus groups were organized – four in each of the principal conflict areas. The participants were recruited by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, based on guidelines provided by Greenberg Research. The local research company provided a professional moderator, who facilitated the discussions using guidelines prepared by Greenberg Research.

The discussions were held in focus-group facilities, school classrooms, hotel rooms and even in the open air, if, for example, they involved guerrilla fighters. ICRC, Red Cross/Red Crescent and

Greenberg Research staff observed and listened to the discussions from an adjoining location, with simultaneous translation in English. The focus group discussions were recorded and later transcribed in English.

In-depth interviews. To help interpret the full meaning of the survey responses, about 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who had had specific war experiences. The in-depth interview guidelines repeated questions from the public opinion survey, although they allowed for open-ended, rather than categorized responses. Interviewers were encouraged to probe and follow up on responses.

The in-depth interviews involved a broad range of people – officers, medical personnel, students (secondary school and university), journalists, former combatants, refugees, displaced persons, family members of missing persons, war invalids and others.

The interviews were recorded on tape, transcribed and translated into English by the local partner.

Annex 2: Questionnaire*

Introduction

We are doing a series of interviews on **[NAME OF COUNTRY]** and would like your help with that. Would it be possible to ask a few questions to the person who is 18 years or older and whose birthday is **[FIRST AFTER TODAY]**? **[IF NECESSARY:** The interview will take about 30 minutes.] The questions are about your experiences and opinions on the [war/armed conflict] in **[NAME OF COUNTRY OR REGION]**. Your identity will remain absolutely confidential.

Let me begin by asking you some questions about yourself to make sure we are talking to all kinds of people. If you don't want to answer, feel free to tell me so and we will move on to the next question.

1. What is your age? _____
   ☐ [Don't know/refused]

2. How many years of school have you had? ____ years
   ☐ [Don't know/refused]

3. What is your current family situation?

   ☐ Married (have a husband or wife)
   ☐ Single
   ☐ Live together with someone (in a permanent relationship)
   ☐ Divorced (or separated)
   ☐ Spouse of missing person
   ☐ Widow(er)
   ☐ [Don't know/refused]

4. Do you have children? **[FOLLOW UP IF "YES"]** How many?

   ☐ No children
   ☐ Yes ___ children

5. What is your job now or are you not working?

   ☐ Farmer
   ☐ Manual worker
   ☐ Skilled worker
   ☐ Self-employed
   ☐ Housewife/home care
   ☐ Soldier (combatant)
   ☐ Government employee
   ☐ Private sector employee
   ☐ Teacher/professor/intellectual
   ☐ Pensioner/retired
   ☐ Unemployed (but looking for work)
   ☐ Unemployed (not looking for work)
   ☐ Student
   ☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
   ☐ [Don't know/refused]

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* This questionnaire is the standard one used in the 12 countries affected by conflict in the last decades. Some contextual questions were added for specific countries. These do not figure here, but are reflected in the findings presented in each Country Report.

6. Let me ask about the war in **[COUNTRY NAME]**. Did the war take place in the area where you were living or did the war take place mainly somewhere else?

☐ Area where you were living   ➜ **GO TO Q7**
☐ Somewhere else?   ➜ **GO TO Q8**
☐ Both [Volunteered response]   ➜ **GO TO Q8**
☐ [Don't know/refused]?   ➜ **GO TO Q8**

7. **[IF "AREA WHERE YOU WERE LIVING" IN PREVIOUS QUESTION]** Did you live in that area before the [war/armed conflict], move voluntarily, or were you forced to move? **[PROBE IF RESPONDENT SAYS "THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ARMED CONFLICT"]**

☐ Live in same area
☐ Moved voluntarily
☐ Forced to move
☐ [Don't know/refused]

8. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** During the [war/armed conflict], did you ever find yourself in a situation of being a combatant and carrying a weapon?

☐ Yes — combatant, carried weapon
☐ No — not a combatant
☐ [Don't know/refused]

9. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

    [IF NO RESPONSE, GO TO Q11]

10. **[IF RESPONDENT GIVES ANY RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS QUESTION]** Could you tell me the main reason why they should not do that? Is that because...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ It's wrong   ➜ **GO TO Q10a**
☐ It just causes too many problems   ➜ **GO TO Q10b**
☐ [Don't know/refused]   ➜ **GO TO Q11**

    [FOLLOW UP IF MORE THAN ONE REASON SELECTED] Which would be the main reason?

10a. **[IF "IT'S WRONG"]** When you say, it's wrong, is it primarily wrong because it is...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]**

☐ Against your religion
☐ Against your personal code
☐ Against the law
☐ Against what most people here believe
☐ Against your culture
☐ Against human rights
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

10b. **[IF "IT JUST CAUSES TOO MANY PROBLEMS"]** When you say, it just causes too many problems, are you thinking it...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]**

☐ Produces too much hate and division
☐ Causes too much psychological damage
☐ Produces too much destruction
☐ Causes too much physical suffering
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

11. Which two of these words best describe the war for you personally? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ Horrible
☐ Disruptive
☐ Humiliating
☐ Exciting
☐ Hateful
☐ Challenging
☐ Hopeful
☐ Confusing
☐ Uncertainty
☐ Powerless
☐ Remote
☐ [Don't know/refused]

Note: Version used in countries where there are no clear sides for most of the population; for countries where there are sides, half the surveys will be asked Version A (without sided wording) and half Version B (with sided wording).

12. Now I would like to ask you some *general* questions about how, in your view, combatants should behave in times of war.

Version A: When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

Version B: When combatants from your side attack to weaken the enemy, should they... ? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

☐ Attack enemy combatants and civilians
☐ Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible
OR
☐ Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone
☐ [Don't know/refused]

[FOLLOW-UP IF CONFUSION ABOUT YOUR/OTHER SIDE] Just imagine that there is a side in the conflict that you support more than any other side.

Note: in the next set of questions we will be randomly splitting the sample in two. Version 1 will be asked of one half and version 2 will be asked of the other half. If there are clear sides to the war, Version 1 coincides with Version A and Version 2 coincides with Version B. (This means there will always be two and exactly two versions of the questionnaire.)

Let me ask you about some things that combatants may do to weaken the enemy they are fighting against. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it, to weaken the enemy.

13. **Version 1:** Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

    Version 2: Attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

    ☐ Okay
    ☐ Not okay
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

14. **Version 1:** Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for enemy combatants defending their town. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them to weaken the enemy?

    Version 2: Attacking civilians who were forced to transport ammunition for enemy combatants defending their town. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them to weaken the enemy?

    ☐ Okay
    ☐ Not okay
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

15. I will now describe some situations that may happen during a [war/armed conflict]. For each situation, I would like you to imagine that you are part of that situation. Tell me how you think you would behave if the decisions were completely up to you. Here comes the first imaginary situation.

    Version 1: Would you save the life of a surrendering enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

    ☐ Would save
    ☐ Would not save
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

    Version 2: Would you help a wounded enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

    ☐ Would help
    ☐ Would not help
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

    Now I'm going to ask your opinion on some of the things combatants might do in times of [war/armed conflict].

16a. **Version A:** What about depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy?

    Version B: What about depriving the civilian population on the other side of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy?

    Is that wrong or just part of war?

- [ ] Wrong
- [ ] Part of war
- [ ] Both [Volunteered response]
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

16b. **Version A:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

Version B: Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help your side weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

- [ ] Laws — can't do that
- [ ] No laws
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

17a. **Version 1:** What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed?

Version 2: What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many women and children would be killed?

Is that wrong or just part of war?

- [ ] Wrong
- [ ] Part of war
- [ ] Both [Volunteered response]
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

17b. **Version A:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

Version B: Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help your side weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

- [ ] Laws — can't do that
- [ ] No laws
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

18. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** What about attacking religious and historical monuments, in order to weaken the enemy. Is that wrong or just part of war?

- [ ] Wrong
- [ ] Part of war
- [ ] Both [Volunteered response]
- [ ] [Don't know/refused]

19. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** What about taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange? Is that wrong or just part of war?

☐ Wrong
☐ Part of war
☐ Both [Volunteered response]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

20. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** Now a question about the "protected areas". Do you think that these "protected areas" are a good or a bad idea?

☐ Good idea
☐ Bad idea
☐ [Don't know/refused]

21. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** Did the "protected areas" make it better or worse for civilians during the war, or did they make no difference?

☐ Better
☐ Worse
☐ No difference
☐ [Don't know/refused]

22. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE] Version 1:** Did the "Peace support operation" make it better or worse for civilians during the war, or didn't it make any difference?

Version 2: Did the "Peace support operation" make it better or worse for you personally during the war, or didn't it make any difference?

☐ Better
☐ Worse
☐ No difference
☐ [Don't know/refused]

Version A: Let me ask you about some other things that might happen during war to weaken the enemy. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it in order to weaken the enemy.

Version B: Let me ask you about some other things that your side might do to weaken the enemy during war. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it in order to weaken the enemy.

23. First, are there types of weapons that should just never be used during war? **[FOLLOW UP IF YES]** What types of weapons would you think of? **[CHECK RESPONSE BELOW] [DO NOT READ CHOICES] [MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED]**

☐ Landmines
☐ Laser weapons
☐ Napalm
☐ Nuclear weapons
☐ Chemical weapons
☐ Cluster bombs

◻ Other **[SPECIFY]**
◻ No types of weapons allowed
◻ [Don't know/refused]

24. **Version A:** Combatants planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

    Version B: Combatants on your side planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

◻ Okay, if necessary
◻ Not okay
◻ [Don't know/refused]

25. In war, combatants sometimes attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay and maybe against the law. So please tell me why you think combatants attack civilians anyway. **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

26. Which *two* of the following reasons best explain why combatants attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay or maybe against the law. Is it because they...? [**READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [FOLLOW-UP IF MORE THAN TWO REASONS SELECTED]** Which would be the two main reasons?

◻ Don't care about the laws
◻ Hate the other side so much
◻ Are determined to win at any cost
◻ Lose all sense during war
◻ Are too young to make judgements
◻ Don't know the laws
◻ Are often under the influence of alcohol or drugs
◻ Are scared
◻ Are told to do so
◻ Know the other side is doing the same thing
◻ [Don't know/refused]

27a. Now let me ask you how *captured combatants* should be treated.

    Version A: Must a captured enemy combatant be allowed to contact relatives, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

    Version B: Must your side allow a captured enemy combatant to contact relatives, or don't you have to allow that?

◻ Must allow
◻ Don't have to allow
◻ [Don't know/refused]

27b. **Version A:** Is it true that a captured enemy combatant cannot be subjected to torture to obtain important military information, or can captured combatants be subjected to torture?

Version B: Is it true that your side cannot subject a captured enemy combatant to torture to obtain important military information, or can you subject captured combatants to torture?

☐ Cannot subject
☐ Can subject
☐ [Don't know/refused]

27c. **Version A:** Must a captured enemy combatant be allowed a visit by a representative from an independent organization outside the prison or camp, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

Version B: Must your side allow a captured enemy combatant to be visited by a representative from an independent organization from outside the prison or camp, or don't you have to allow that?

☐ Must allow   ➜ **GO TO Q27d**
☐ Don't have to allow   ➜ **GO TO Q28**
☐ [Don't know/refused]   ➜ **GO TO Q28**

27d. **[IF "MUST ALLOW"]** Which of the following people should be allowed to visit captured enemy combatants...? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

☐ International Committee of the Red Cross representatives
☐ UN representatives
☐ Human rights group representatives
☐ Journalists
☐ Religious clerics/ministers
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

Once again, I want you to *imagine* yourself in the following situations and tell me what you think you would do if the decisions were completely up to you.

28. **Version A:** If one side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by the other side or would you not approve it?

Version B: If the other side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by your side or would you not approve it?

☐ Would approve
☐ Would not approve
☐ [Don't know/refused]

[FOLLOW UP IF RESPONDENT PROTESTS] Just imagine you happen to find yourself in this situation.

29. In general, do you ever think that captured enemy combatants deserve to die?

☐ Think deserve to die
☐ No
☐ [Don't know/refused]

30. Now I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the war. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the [war/ armed conflict] in **[COUNTRY NAME]. [READ AND ROTATE ORDER]**

	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know/ refused
Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere	☐	☐	☐
Imprisoned	☐	☐	☐
Kidnapped or taken hostage	☐	☐	☐
Tortured	☐	☐	☐
Felt humiliated	☐	☐	☐
Lost contact with a close relative	☐	☐	☐
A member of your immediate family killed during the armed conflict (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild)	☐	☐	☐
Serious damage to your property	☐	☐	☐
Wounded by the fighting	☐	☐	☐
Combatants took food away	☐	☐	☐
Had your house looted	☐	☐	☐
Somebody you knew well was sexually assaulted by combatants	☐	☐	☐
[READ LAST] Somebody you knew well was raped by combatants	☐	☐	☐

31. **[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]** Were you imprisoned by enemy combatants or were you living in an area that came under enemy control?

Imprisoned by enemy combatants	➜ **GO TO Q32**
Living in area under enemy control	➜ **GO TO Q32**
Both [Volunteered response]	➜ **GO TO Q32**
[Don't know/refused]	➜ **GO TO Q34**
No response	➜ **GO TO Q34**

32. **[ASK IF "IMPRISONED", "LIVED UNDER ENEMY CONTROL", OR BOTH]** Please tell me whether any of the following happened while you were under enemy control. **[READ AND ROTATE]** Did that happen or not?

	Happened	Did not happen	Don't know/ refused
You were personally mistreated	☐	☐	☐
You were physically injured	☐	☐	☐
You were treated correctly	☐	☐	☐
[READ LAST] You had a contact with a representative from an independent organization to check on your well-being	☐	☐	☐

33. **[ASK ONLY IF CONTACT HAPPENED, OTHERWISE GO TO Q33]** Which of the following people did you have contact with to check on your well-being? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

☐ ICRC representatives
☐ UN representatives
☐ Human rights group representatives
☐ Journalists
☐ Religious clerics/ministers
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Don't know/refused]

34. Now let me ask you for your opinion about something else, about young people being combatants. At what age is a young person mature enough to be a combatant? **[READ LIST UNTIL RESPONDENT CHOOSES AN ANSWER]**

☐ 14 or under
☐ 15
☐ 16
☐ 17
☐ 18
☐ 19
☐ 20
☐ 21
☐ Above 21
☐ [Don't know/refused]

35. During the war, did you support [have you supported] one of the sides or did you not support any side?

☐ Supported a side
☐ Did not support a side
☐ [Don't know/refused]

36. Let me ask you something very different. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?

☐ Yes — heard
☐ No — not heard   ➜ **GO TO Q38**
☐ [Don't know/refused]   ➜ **GO TO Q38**

37. **[IF HEARD OF GENEVA CONVENTIONS]** Could you tell me what the Geneva Conventions are about? **[WRITE DOWN ANSWER AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE] [MARK APPROPRIATE RESPONSE]**

☐ Accurate **[ANY REFERENCE TO LIMITS IN WAR]**
☐ Not accurate **[NO REFERENCE TO LIMITS IN WAR]**

38. Let me read you a statement about the Geneva Conventions:

    The Geneva Conventions is a series of international treaties that impose limits in war by describing some rules of war. Most countries in the world have signed these treaties.

    Do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions prevents wars from getting worse or does it make no real difference?

    ☐ Prevents wars from getting worse
    ☐ No real difference
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

39. Are you familiar with this? **[SHOW RED CROSS OR RED CRESCENT]** What does it stand for? **[DO NOT READ RESPONSES]**

    ☐ Red Cross
    ☐ Red Crescent
    ☐ Red Cross and Red Crescent
    ☐ Medical/Hospital
    ☐ United Nations
    ☐ Army
    ☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

40. What kind of people or things does this symbol protect? **[WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

41. Are there rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished?

    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No   ➜ **GO TO Q46**
    ☐ [Don't know/Refused]   ➜ **GO TO Q46**

42. **[IF YES]** So what kind of rules or laws are you thinking about? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

43. **[IF RESPONDS TO PRIOR QUESTION, OTHERWISE GO TO Q46]** What are these rules based on? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

    ☐ [Country name]'s laws
    ☐ International law
    ☐ Religious principles
    ☐ The values people hold
    ☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
    ☐ [Don't know/refused]

44. If these rules are broken in war, who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

☐ The government of [country name]
☐ The [country name]'s courts
☐ International criminal court
☐ The military itself
☐ The civilian population
☐ Your own political leaders
☐ Other **[SPECIFY]**
☐ [Does not apply, rules are not broken]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

45. When the war is over, should people who have broken these rules...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

☐ Be put on trial
☐ Be exposed to the public but not be put on trial
☐ Be forgotten when the war is over
☐ Be forgiven after the war
☐ Granted amnesty
☐ [Don't know/refused]

46. **[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]** Let me ask what can be done *if* during the war civilian areas are attacked, towns or villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity. To whom would you turn to get help or to be protected? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

☐ [Can't turn to anybody]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

47. I'm now going to describe different kinds of people and organizations. Please tell me which *two* of these have played the biggest role *during* the war to stop this. Here are the people and organizations: **[READ AND ROTATE] [RECORD THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSES] [FOLLOW UP WITH:** Which two have played the biggest role?**]**

☐ The military and combatants on your side **[Version B]**
☐ The military and combatants of the other side **[Version B]**
☐ The military and combatants **[Version A]**
☐ Religious leaders
☐ International humanitarian organizations
☐ Journalists and the news media
☐ The United Nations
☐ The ICRC or Red Cross (or Red Crescent)
☐ Government leaders
☐ International criminal court
☐ Other countries
☐ [Nobody did anything]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

48. In the future, would you like to see more or less intervention from the international community to deal with these kinds of issues?

☐ More intervention
☐ Less intervention
☐ [No intervention]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

49. Do you think the peace will last or do you think there will be more war in the future?

☐ Peace will last
☐ More war in future
☐ [Both]
☐ [Don't know/refused]

50. One last question, what did you learn from the war that you think others should know? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

The ICRC's mission

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.