

Religious and Political Insecurity in Nigeria: Causes and Effects

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Abstract

This paper centres on the analysis of causes and effects of religious and political insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity apart from being the fear of every Nigerian, has become a discussion topic where two or three Nigerians gather. Presence of several illegal armed groups, ethnic militia groups, religious fundamentalist and fanatics are evidence of insecurity in Nigeria. These have given birth to series of bombings, murder, arson, armed robbery, corruption, injustice in almost every part of country. It is clear that these happenings are negatively affecting Nigeria politically, economically and religiously. Religious organizations and other humanitarian agencies are losing confidence on the law enforcement agencies. On the economy, it has led to the destruction of businesses, properties and equipment; relocation and closing down of businesses. This paper adopts sociological and historical research methods. Arising from this research is the threat of political, economic, civil destabilization of Nigeria, if the trend of insecurity persists. Then paper found porous borders, proliferation of arms and ammunitions, illegal armed groups, oil bunkering, labour activists, kidnapping, militancy, fear and distrust on government, unemployment, religious fanaticism/extremism, wrong political ambition, electioneering, ethnic violence, desire to actualize ethnic agenda, jobs racketeering as the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The paper establishes that the following are the consequences of insecurity in Nigeria - the End SARS protests, terrorism, disruption of economic activities, decimation of consumer confidence, decrease in foreign direct investment (FDI), disproportionate defence spending vis-à-vis other economic sectors, the struggle for personal survival undermines innovation, increase in brain drain, perverse incentives, decline in productivity, possible national isolation and deepening corruption at all levels. This research paper recommends stiffer penalty for perpetrators of violence, good governance such as accountability, transparency and popular participation in the political process, rule of law, protection of human rights and equality of access to all citizens.

Key Word: Religious, political, terrorism, equality and insecurity.

Introduction

Various scholars across the globe have postulated differing viewpoints on the concept of security; according to the United Nations Development Programme (14), human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the daily activities, at homes, offices or communities. That is, security is the state of being safe and secure from danger, it could also be protection from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression. For the Commission on Human Security (24), human security is the protection of important aspect of human lives in a way that would enhance human freedoms and fulfilment. Human security encompasses freedom from want, harm, fear and the freedom to take appropriate actions without

any form of hindrance. It is also the assurance of future well-being and freedom from threat. Williams (18) who sees security from the socio-political perspective averred that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. That is, security is socio-political in nature as without security there can be no political stability and consequently, social activities will be in chaos. Palme argues that there is a connection between security and survival. For him, security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. Thus, security is synonymous to freedom from danger, fear and doubt among others (27).

Critically appraising Nigeria's security problems, Omoyibo and Akpomera avowed that, security in Nigeria is synonymous to an individual

who put iron bars across his or her windows which eventually prevents the individual from escaping a fire outbreak. For them, the only condition for the maintenance of peace and the guarantee of security is by upholding law and order (19). By this, state could be secured against threats which may include low-level civil disorder, crime, organised violence, or even an armed insurgency (Omoyibo and Akpomera 10)

Nigeria has long teetered on the precipice of failure. But now, unable to keep its citizens safe and secure, Nigeria has become a fully failed state of critical geopolitical concern. Its failure matters because the peace and prosperity of Africa and preventing the spread of disorder and militancy around the globe depend on a stronger Nigeria. Its economy is usually estimated to be Africa's largest or second largest, after South Africa. Nigeria played a positive role in promoting African peace and security. With state failure, it can no longer sustain that vocation, and no replacement is in sight. Its security challenges are already destabilizing the West African region in the face of resurgent jihadism, making the battles of the Sahel much more difficult to contain and spill over from Nigeria's failures ultimately affect the security of Europe and the United States.

In modern history, internal strife has burdened Africa's most populous nation - Nigeria. After independence, Nigeria experienced frequent coups and long periods of autocratic military rule from 1966 till 1999, when a democratic civilian government was established. Nigeria in the past fifty years, in particular, has witnessed numerous coups as well as regional, religious, ethnic and secessionist violence. Another reason for insecurity is the act of piracy in the Niger Delta. In the past two years, however, new forms of discord, distrust, have emerged in which religious extremists, armed militants, and ethnic militia groups threaten to bring about greater insecurity than those that preceded them. The older forms of militia groups have transformed into armed groups and have intensified their activities.

Recently, there have been high incidences of insecurity that have resulted in deaths and psychological trauma for individuals and families in the country. This requires the

citizens to be much more security conscious considering the threat by religious extremists to bring about greater insecurity than those that preceded them. Other security indices also include the persistent tension between the North and the South of Nigeria, growing unrest in the Niger Delta area and other parts of the country resulting in rise in violent incidents and kidnappings. Ethnic tensions, religious differences, unemployment and numerous social and political grievances are all fuelling the unrests in Nigeria and contributing to flashpoints for violence and creating insecurity in the country. This paper will place the contemporary insecurity in Nigeria in context by analysing religious and political causes and effects of insecurity in Nigeria which has pigeon-holed the Nigerian society in the recent times. It will highlight the challenges; assess its political, economic and religious implications to the nation.

Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

There is a dramatic increase in violence, terrorism and the like, in Nigeria today. Lawless sects are raising the tempo of their campaign in various parts of the country. Nigerians hear of series of bombings, shooting and killings, kidnappings, armed robbery, arson and so on almost on daily basis. Causes of insecurity in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. They range from: -

Porous borders: The free flow of migrants from other countries to Nigeria through unguarded borders allows criminals to enter the country without check.

Proliferation of Arms and Ammunitions: Several arms hauls have been ceased at the air and sea ports, some in very large quantities. This is not good for the country. These arms and ammunitions end up in the hands of criminals who apply same in their nefarious activities in the country, thereby making life apprehensive for the people of the locality.

Illegal Armed groups: Illegal importation of arms and ammunitions have made possession of arms by individuals and groups very easy. Groups like Niger Delta Militants, Oodua People's Congress, 'Bakassi Boys', MASSOB, possess arms and ammunitions.

Oil Bunkering: Nigeria being one of the

largest oil producing nation suffers from the activities of illegal oil bunkering. This activity is promoted by the spate of insecurity in the country. This is backed-up with criminals who are ready to die in Nigeria water-ways. This therefore, makes the coastal areas of the oil producing states unsafe.

Labour activists – Early in 2012, the Nigerian Labour Congress called for a nation-wide strike as a result of increase in price of fuel by government. They accused the government of insensitivity to the suffering of the people as well as ignoring the insecurity challenges in the country. Peaceful protests by Labour and other civil society groups have severally been high-jacked by miscreants and inflicted pains on people and made life in the cities unsafe.

Kidnapping – this is another visible sign of insecurity in the country. The perpetrators of this crime do not spare anyone in this new wave of crime that seems to have supplanted armed robbery and other non-contact crimes. Since this act began in Nigeria, aged, children, male and female have been kidnapped for ransom. This has made life unbearable to the citizens. People now live in fear of falling victims to these criminals.

Militancy – According to criminal law, militancy is violence, illegal force or the illegal use of unjustified force or the intimidating effect created by the threat of this act. This word became pronounced in Nigeria when the Niger Deltans took up arms against government exploitation and environmental degradation of their area due to oil exploration and exploitation. This does not only exist in the Niger Delta area. Other parts of the country have witnessed militants who commit atrocities worse than the youths of Nigeria, Delta whose area is given the 'brand name'. Until recently, the word 'insurgence' was alien to Nigerian society. The activities of the Militant Islamic sect popularly called "Boko Haram" have opened this chapter of militancy in Nigeria. Shootings, bombings, kidnappings, arson, car and suicide bombing in various parts of the country are said to be the handiwork of 'insurgence'. These activities have heightened the spate of insecurity in the nation.

Fear and Distrust on Government: What the

current trend of violence is imprinting on the psyche of Nigerians is that the government security apparatus is incapable of guaranteeing the safety and security of its people. This has, therefore, impact on the general human security of the people as the situation promotes fear, limits the peoples' ability to develop economically.

Unemployment – The rise in Crime wave in Nigeria since the mid-1990s was as a result of unemployment, economic decline, and social inequality, which are abetted by inefficient and corrupt police and customs forces.⁴⁵ The idle minds became devil's workshop. These people who are mostly youth are easily recruited into militant groups and trained in to rob, kill, kidnap, smuggle, highjack to mention but a few. Accurate unemployment rates are difficult to obtain and generally mean little in a society where many who work are marginally employed and where begging is a socially accepted occupation.

Religious fanaticism/extremism: Religious fanaticism and extremism have been among the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The recent incidences of attack on churches and Christians in Northern part of the country by Muslim extremists have rendered several states in the North unsafe for life and properties. The damage these extremists have caused can be seen in the following words as a true assessment of the Nigerian situation:

... religion has unleashed on mankind... it has left in its wake, a heavy toll of destroyed lives and wanton destruction of property. It has delayed workable political agreements and brutalised societies.... Religious violence has been responsible for the collapse of one political order or the other throughout history. It has given rise to assassination and tempted assassination of various Heads of State or Government in recent times.... leads to irretrievable breakup of internal harmony, and leads to foreign intervention (Agi, 112).

Wrong Political Ambition: The desire for a political office is not evil, but to nurse negative

reasons for that ambition can result to one doing anything to attain it. The current crisis which started in Bauchi and has engulfed other states in the North has elements of theocratic ambitions in it (Agi 116). The perpetrators of the violent activities in parts of the country are operating with a hidden agenda. They have the intention of enthroning their own type of government which is selfish, criminal and unpatriotic as Nigerians. With such ambition they can try to make the country ungovernable or insecure.

Electioneering - Election periods in the country seem to be the moment of serious security challenge. Shafiu S. Zurmi in Daily Sun, posits: “While the major political characters intensify their efforts at winning the support of the Nigerian public, ordinary Nigerians are daily becoming more and more apprehensive about the security implications to the country before, during and after the elections. The general anxiety over the nation’s security is germane and should be a source of concern to the government (19).

Ethnic violence - In some areas like Plateau and Benue States, reprisal attacks by ethnic militia unleashing insecurity in these areas are rampant. While security in some parts of the country, like the South-South, Southeast and the South-West has been compromised, the Northern zone that has always shown a propensity for violent conflicts did not disappoint security watchers. Starting with the usual religious/ethnic oriented conflicts to the Jos ethnic/religious/political conflicts of 2008 till date, the Northern States have shown that security of persons and properties is still far from being realized.

Desire to actualize ethnic agenda This has become a phenomenon in Nigerian society today. Because of certain unsatisfactory or unfavourable situation politically, economically, developmentally and so on, they would want to be separated from Nigeria. We hear of, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the South, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the South East, Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) in the West, BOKO HARAM in the North, BAKASI BOYS, Fulani HERDSMEN, and VIGILANTE groups all over

the country. Each one of these groups has reasons for their agitation. (Ezemoye, 32)

Job Racketeering Factor - Today in Nigeria, jobs are for sales and only for the highest bidders. Jobseekers to this extent have continued to suffer great losses, as often, a lot of money has been collected from them without getting the promised jobs. For instance, recently, “job seekers filled online application for recruitment into the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and were asked to pay certain amount of money into designated bank accounts or cash to some persons who claimed to be consultants to the Corps” (surce 10) On job racketeering also, the erstwhile Controller-General of Immigration (CGI), Mrs. Rose Uzoma, was sacked over alleged job racketeering at the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS). “This has brought to the fore the shady deals that permeate recruitment exercises in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. Reports had it that the recruitment scandal was blown open when a House of Representatives Committee probed the CGI for carrying out a recruitment exercise without advertising it in the media as was usually the practice” (Sunnewsonline 2013). The Senate Committees on Federal Character and Inter-Governmental Affairs has noted with dismay, the irregularities which pervade employment at the Nigerian Immigration Services, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Nigeria.

Consequences of Insecurity

The End SARS Protests :

Shortly after Nigeria’s 60th Independence Anniversary celebration on October 1, 2020, nationwide protests fuelled by demands to reform a dreaded unit of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), broke out in several major cities across the country. “Largely staged by the youth, and trending on social media, the End SARS protests started on October 5, 2020 following the killing of a young man in Ughelli, Delta State by operatives of SARS. By October 10, 2020, the street protests had spread across the country. The protests have also gone global with solidarity protests held in Accra, Frankfurt, London, Toronto, and Washington DC” (bbcnews 2020), attracting

Nigerians in the diaspora and persons of note, including music and sports stars like Wizkid, Drake, Kanye West, Mesut Özil, and Alexander Iwobi (19) among others, demanding an end to police brutality in Nigeria. These protests – have necessitated revisiting these three principles – (access to information, participation in decision making and access to justice) as a lens through which to review the state of Nigeria’s democracy. The response to the protests pointed to violations of the three principles.

Terrorism : At the most proximate and least disputable level, terrorism is the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria today, and its primary bases and sources of support have generally been located in religious fanaticism and intolerance particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria. Terrorism which is a global phenomenon where no one is safe was defined by Sampson and Onuoha as, “the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts”(42). Terrorism in Nigeria is an Islamic insurgency with a political undertone by a faceless group based in the Northern region of the country, which called itself Boko Haram, which takes into account the legitimate political, social and economic grievances of the Northern population. Nigeria has lost up to 1000 lives in the North since 2009 to the insurgency of this infamous Islamic sect- Boko Haram

Disruption of Economic Activities: With pervasive insecurity comes internal displacement of people and the crippling of economic activities in the worst-affected areas. We have witnessed the virtual death of economic activities in the North-Eastern states of Nigeria over the last decade due to the violent Boko Haram insurgency. We have also seen how agricultural produce in Benue and a number of other north-central states of Nigeria have been badly affected by the herdsmen-farmers’ clashes. Insecurity in these states has also created internal refugees within the country. As a result, people in the refugee camps are not able to

contribute to economic activities.

Decimation of Consumer Confidence:

Protracted insecurity, as it has been the case in recent years in Nigeria, can depress consumer confidence, which in turn reduces consumer spending. Not only does insecurity affect individual spending; it also affects businesses who, due to the uncertainty insecurity creates, put off investment decisions. This certainly affects economic output and could be a major factor in the slow-growth environment in Nigeria.

Decrease in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):

The amplification of news coverage on insecurity in a nation can make things look worse to outsiders than they really are. This can reduce the confidence of foreign investors in such a nation that has massive security challenges. Investor confidence can worsen, particularly where there is weak and ineffective government response to the security challenges. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), FDI flows to Nigeria averaged \$5.3 billion annually from 2005-2007. However, UNCTAD data shows FDI to Nigeria averaged \$3.3 billion from 2015-2019, a period that has been marked by heightened and widespread insecurity in the country.

Insecurity is one of the major reasons for Nigeria’s unattractiveness for inward foreign investment in the last five years, amongst other factors such as policy dysfunctions, including multiple exchange rates of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Poor transport infrastructure, unreliable grid-electricity supply (which exacerbates high operating costs), inefficient judicial system, and unreliable alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are some of the other factors accounting for the decline in FDI flows into the country.

According to UNCTAD, the 71 percent surge in FDI last year was due to “resource seeking inflows in the oil and gas sector”(33). With the drastic reduction in the spate of attacks against oil installations in the Niger Delta region of the country, it is unsurprising that the oil and gas sector buoyed FDI inflows, while general insecurity in the country continued to dampen investment.

Disproportionate Defence Spending Vis-à-vis

Other Economic Sectors: In responding to the increasing insecurity in Nigeria, the government has been allocating hundreds of billions of naira to defence and security-related expenditure. These are large sums of money that should have been going elsewhere in the economy, especially in the education and health sectors.

The domestic economic impact of this exorbitant defence expenditure is further devalued as long as it is mostly foreign procurement-based. This is not helpful to the growth of the economy.

The Struggle for Personal Survival Undermines Innovation: Nigerians are creative people. Nigerians in diaspora are among the leaders in innovation and change in many sectors. But back home, survival has become the overriding consideration for many people. Heightened insecurity has made a lot of people become more risk-averse in terms of the places they go to and the people they interact with. Travelling from one city to another in Nigeria has become a game of chance and death-dodging for many people.

Under such atmosphere; creativity is diminished and innovation takes a back seat. Whereas, innovation is a vital engine needed to drive change and growth in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Security is what can give citizens the space to reflect and be creative and innovative.

Increase in Brain Drain: Nigeria is losing its best brains on a daily basis through mass emigration to Western countries. Canada seems to be the country of preference for most Nigerians at the moment, due to its open-door policy for qualified migrants.

A recent poll conducted by NOI Polls, found that: "Almost 9 in 10 respondents (88%) disclosed they are seeking work opportunities abroad." It also found that: "83% of doctors who filled the survey and are based abroad are licensed in Nigeria, indicating that they had completed their medical education in Nigeria before departing beyond the shores of Nigeria. The search for a better quality of life is the main reason for the mass emigration of Nigerian doctors and other professionals. The prospect for the good life is being jeopardised in the country by insecurity and by its negative impact on economic opportunities.

Perverse Incentives: There are lots of people in

high places that financially benefit from the insecurity. For such people, it becomes their goal to maintain the status quo rather than encourage an improvement. There is now a massive industry around insecurity in Nigeria and it is not in the interest of those benefiting from it to support efforts to provide more security.

As exemplification, hostage negotiation is a new and booming career for some Nigerians. When a member of a family is kidnapped, the security agencies put the family in contact with hostage negotiators who are paid not only to negotiate downward the massive ransom demanded by the hostage takers, but also help deliver the ransom. Many people in the official security agencies also corruptly enrich themselves through security-related procurements. Although all these powerful people are few in number, they are influential enough to perpetuate insecurity as that is more profitable for them than tranquillity.

Decline in Productivity: Continued insecurity and government's inability to bring an end to it can lead to a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, especially in the areas that are vulnerable and amongst victims and their families. This state of agitation can affect productivity. For instance, with rampant kidnappings on major highways in some part of the country, many roads have become no-go areas. Inability to travel freely on its own can reduce productivity of those affected. The vicious circle of insecurity in Nigeria has diminished public confidence in the government. This feeds the helplessness even further. And as people are afraid to move around freely in the country, many opportunities in business are being lost.

Possible National Isolation: Tourists do not visit unsafe places. Insecurity in Nigeria has led to many countries advising their citizens not to travel to many parts of Nigeria. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), for instance, advises British nationals against travelling to sixteen states of Nigeria. Extreme caution is also advised when travelling in the rest of the country. With such dire warning, fewer foreigners will make Nigeria a destination of choice.

The moment a national government advises citizens against travel to another country, or parts of it; all travel and other insurance covers,

automatically become invalid for those who go against the travel advice. Only specialist insurance will be available at very high cost if you travel to such places against the travel advice. Hence, continued insecurity can lead to an isolation of the country by default.

Deepening Corruption at All Levels: The chaos and uncertainties created by insecurity can provide the breeding ground for corruption. On the one hand, insecurity can provide an environment for some government officials to corruptly enrich themselves as stated earlier; on the other hand, fighting insecurity can spread the government too thin, limiting its ability to fight corruption effectively.

From the foregoing, it is clear that any effort to grow the Nigerian economy by the Buhari administration would most likely fail if insecurity is not dealt with. Insecurity is no longer just a problem that affects our security sector; the entire economy is at stake if something is not done to fix this menace. As we adapt to the challenges of a changing world and reposition our economy for growth and increased employment, security must be sorted as a matter of economic priority. A strong and stable economy fosters long-term national security, whereas insecurity is a hindrance to long-term economic prosperity. Therefore, efforts should not be spared in bringing under control the spate of general insecurity that currently afflicts most parts of the country.

Implications of insecurity in Nigeria

Political Implications of Insecurity in Nigeria:

The current security situation in Nigeria has forced the political leaders to a 'rethinking national security' as Ibrahim Bashir of the Daily Sun puts it. "This situation demands Nigeria security agencies to rethink and refocus the national security resources on the unique character of security threats in Nigeria." (cnnworldnews, 19) Nigerians are daily becoming more and more apprehensive about the security implications to the country before, during and after the elections. I agree with Shafiu S. Zurmi that the general anxiety over the nation's security is germane and should be a source of concern to the government."(19) The weakness of Nigeria's Criminal Justice System

has been exposed greatly. This has posed a challenge and showed the ineffectiveness and delay in the implementation of the policy.

General Owoye Andrew Azazi has given some imperative, one of which is:

... the need for a more robust legislation on Anti-Terrorism. An effective and enabling Anti-Terrorism Act must provide the institutional and co-ordination framework for combating and eliminating the acts of terrorism in and against the Federal Republic of Nigeria...provide for additional judicial guidelines to the Criminal Justice System for the effective and speedy prosecution of terrorists and must clearly enable NSO to conduct their anti-terrorism measures and activities across many of our national ethnic-centric, religious, political and social biases(56)

Very important is whether the government will be willing to take the bold steps necessary to clearly articulate, communicate and implement whatever policy that is in place. Political instability sometimes results from uncontrollable state of insecurity in a nation.

"The growing insecurity challenges in Nigeria are signs of the growing popular discontent with the national political system and indications that past elections were not free and fair. Many years ago John Calvin condemned any practice that could harm or oppress the poorest element in society as spiritually and politically illegitimate"(Samsom & Omoha, 22)

If the government is unable to control and solve the problem of insecurity, it means that government for the common has failed. This is because the basic goals of any civilized are the survival and security of life and property. This is true in that when a nation is not secure, it can destabilize the economy, agriculture, governance and increases criminality in the society. It can also destroy the structures put in place by the government for political stability.

Economic Implications of Insecurity in Nigeria:

The productive aspect of most manufacturing business depends largely on the availability and regular supply of raw materials for production. Insecurity has cut off the supply of such raw

materials, hence, jeopardizing production activities. Besides this, insecurity affects marketing of finished product as there is a continuous exodus from areas of insecurity. There is also an increase in security spending as most business organisations operating in Nigeria spend a lot in maintaining private security outfits. The destruction of their business building, properties and equipment is tantamount to loss of capital which has ruined not a few businesses in Nigeria.

For Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor, “security is critical for the nation’s development and its absence means that economic growth and development cannot be achieved. Insecurity is a risk factor which business owners and managers dread and avoid by relocating their businesses elsewhere” (18). In the case of Nigeria, there is also evidence of some businessmen and manufacturing companies having to relocate particularly from the North in recent times to other peaceful parts of the country.” (Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor, 16)

According to Suleiman, “many of the Igbos and Yorubas from Southern Nigeria who are engaged in various businesses in Northern Nigeria have had to return to their home states to avoid the violence orchestrated by the terrorist group Boko Haram. Thus, the Boko Haram insurgency which begun in Maiduguri, Borno State, in 2009, has badly affected the economy of the North as major consumer goods and the companies which produce these consumer goods have withdrawn from the region” (122). A good example are the telecommunication companies which have been forced to close down as their telecommunication apparatuses were repeatedly destroyed; media houses were equally attacked as well as having some of their staff killed; banks too were not spared from the destruction as some branches of the banks were attacked and robbed. Thus, “the resources which could have been used in strengthening the infrastructural amenities are increasingly being diverted to fund the security system, therefore constituting a drain on the nation resources.” (Suleiman 82)

Omoyibo and Akpomera (77) citing The Puncj Newspaper of May 2011 notes that “oil production per day has also drastically declined as a result of kidnappings of oil workers in the region. Nigeria is therefore estimated to be losing about

600,000 barrels of crude oil on daily basis to illegal bunkers which amounts to about N3.7 trillion yearly.” Besides, the wave of kidnapping in some parts of Nigeria has forced investors, businessmen and manufacturing companies to relocate to other peaceful cities in Nigeria or even to leave the country entirely. “In Aba for example, the Nigeria Breweries Limited (NBL), Seven- Up PLC, UNILEVER PLC, Paterson Zochonis (PZ) PLC relocated to Enugu largely due to constant kidnapping of their expatriate staff” (Nwagboso, 14). Thus, “the decline in foreign investment in Nigeria as a result of insecurity when combined with the effects of global economic showdown has caused the closing down of tens of thousands of factories in Nigeria.” (Omoyibo and Akpomera 51)

Religious Implications of Insecurity in Nigeria:

The tendency to hijack any form of violence and branding it religious is possible. Based on this, the ‘outsider’ of religion will give it a bad name in order to hang it. Religious worship places are being desecrated through blood shedding resulting from indiscriminate bombing of religious worship centres. It scares members away from regular religious worship and fellowship. Insecurity in a nation can help spread or promote fake religious faith and practice. Violent or an insecure situation drives people into various religious groups not by reason of believing but for security purposes. In an environment where a particular religion commands majority, the residents would like to align with the popular religion there for the sake of securing their lives and that of their relations and possibly their business investments. Nothing thrives in an insecure environment. Economic, religious activities, as well as governance can be frustrating in such an atmosphere. Religion can play a positive roll of preaching peace and living out same in an environment that is prone to violence. Dialogue could be initiated amongst warring groups.

Cultural Implications of Insecurity in Nigeria

It is expected that the continuous growth and development of ethnic communities into an integrated society based on Islamic solidarity cemented by increased inter-dependence and harmonization of shared values and goals will bring about transformation of the relationship

between the various ethnic groups. But in a situation where there is insecurity, this desire cannot materialize. T. A. Imobighe commenting on Warri experience said, “rather than the expected evolutionary change towards ethnic integration and peaceful co-existence, what has taken place in Warri is a heightened awareness of ethnic identity, extreme communal disharmony and a more intense rivalry and hostility ” (68). The incessant taking of life through bombing, shooting and other forms of violence renders the sanctity of life which many African cultures uphold to be baseless. The problem of suicide bombing which has become a very prominent way of destroying lives in the country is an act or practice which is condemned culturally in Nigeria. Writing on the abominable practices in the Igbo culture, Cyril Okorochoa pointed out, “four of such practices – homicide (including poisoning with intent to maim or kill); suicide; killing a totem animal or an animal dedicated to a spirit; and stealing or destroying yams, especially when already planted; incest. Most of these abominations have to do with life” (19). According to him, “if life is the *summum bonum*, then anyone who destroys it is committing a most hideous crime indeed ” (21). Life is valued in all cultures. In most cultures, suicide is abhorred because of the value placed on life. Insecurity that arises from ethnic or tribal setting generates and leaves scars of ethnic prejudice, suspicion, distrust, hatred and discrimination. And culture consisting of learned modes of behaviour that are socially transmitted from one generation to the next, from one society or individual to another will be affected negatively by the wave of insecurity. The learned mode of behaviour will be overwhelmed with negative vices. In Nigeria, most parents, due to unsafe learning environment preferred their children studying overseas. This trend is tantamount to cultural breakdown. These children are bound to imbibe new cultures which are alien to their ethnic group. The foreign and the local will basically be incompatible.

Recommendations

The danger of insecurity cannot be over emphasized. When a nation is saddled with the

problem of insecurity, every other plan is stalled. Nigeria, a country with a population of over one hundred and fifty million people cannot allow insecurity to derail her political and economic development plans. The country’s young democracy is being threatened. Recently, we have experienced increase in violent activities in Nigeria which has claimed several lives and properties. There is therefore urgent need to tackle it before it makes Nigeria ungovernable or as it has been classified as a failed state.

Job Creation: As this phenomenon rises, so also is the increase in violence and crime, making the country insecure. This has been identified by scholars and leaders alike. Also, an insecure environment will definitely result in job lose. Government should therefore tackle and arrest youth restiveness by investing on job creation.

Provision of Proper Legal Framework: The editorial in the Punch newspaper of Wednesday 13th of July 2011 gave the following summary that addresses this fact and stands as a suitable recommendation: Security chiefs who met with senators at a closed Session on 5th July 2011 claimed that efforts to rein in the sect had often been thwarted by the judiciary through generous granting of bail... (they) were unanimous on the need to have the Judiciary effectively integrated into action plans instituted by the security agencies. This will encourage the security operatives in their work and hasten the process of bringing to justice the perpetrators of criminal activities in the country

Justice Dispensation: The Punch Editorial of July 13, 2011 made a very frantic opinion on the idea of fighting insecurity in Nigeria. In the fight against corruption in the public service and against cultism in tertiary institutions, the anti-craft agencies and university authorities have often been up against a brick wall in the courts. The courts have been repeatedly blamed for frustrating justice delivery through all manners of injunctions, ex parte orders, and in some cases, outright acquittals. On this problem, I strongly recommend that the government should, through the justice ministry, check these excesses and discipline any judge found to collaborate with criminals to stall justice dispensation.

Provision of Basic Needs of the Citizens: The

basic goals of any civilized society are the survival and security of life and property. These basic goals are not negotiable, no matter who wins or loses in election. Therefore, the ordinary Nigerians must be given protection at all cost through appropriate information, education, mobilization, job opportunity, pressure-group formation and legal requirements in our democratic politics.

Lack of or non-use of Intelligence Network:

The failure of the security clusters in Nigeria to make use of its intelligence network to decode the security challenge the militant groups and all such sects pose to the peace and security of the nation, leaves much to be desired. The country's Early Warning System Mechanism to preventing such deadly conflicts from erupting should be developed. The intelligence sector and the conflict prevention mechanism of the country failed in many instances to pick up the tell-tale signs and this is indicative of failure of the state structure. What the government should do is to develop the Conflict Prevention Mechanism in the country, including the establishment of an Early Warning System at all levels of government. Through the early detection of impending conflicts and its prevention, the government will be providing a safe and enabling environment for the civilian population, and for political and economic development to thrive.

Need to Strengthen the Nations' Economic

Base: A weakened economy increases the public's sense of insecurity. It is reported in Collier Year Book 1997 about People's Republic of Congo that "visitors reported an upsurge of activities of quasi-official militia that circulated in the street of the capital city of Brazzaville extorting money. To avoid similar situation in Nigeria, the government must initiate projects/programmes that will strengthen the economic base of the country.

Precaution in the use of Force: The Nigerian Government has to take precaution in the use of force to tackle the root cause of insecurity because Government force seems to galvanize greater retaliation by the 'criminals' and the masses end up bearing the brunt - with more violence, deaths and destruction of innocent people, the poor and the rich.

Provide Good Governance: Taofeeq Abdul Azeez, the Chief Imam of the University of Abuja maintained that, "good governance is a panacea for insecurity in Nigeria" (7). If the government will focus on the welfare of the people by providing jobs for our teeming youth, infrastructure like good roads, water, electricity and housing and tackle the problem of falling standard of education and medical care, then insecurity would have been reduced to minimum if not eradicated.

Need for Collaboration: There is the need for a collaborative effort in solving the insecurity problem in Nigeria. The government definitely cannot tackle the problem alone. The Religious Leaders and traditional rulers, civil society groups, Labour Unions must team up with government to find solution to this monster that is threatening the fabric of the nation's peaceful co-existence.

Conclusion

From the discussion, it is now clear that there is a link between political, economic insecurity and development in Nigeria. Nigeria is currently experiencing problems such as Islamic religious extremism in the North, terrorism military, banditry, kidnapping, outbreak of strange diseases, police brutality, separatist agitations herder-farmer clashes, ethnic bigotry, demonstration, insecurity and near collapse of the political and economic systems. These crises have fuelled the senseless loss of lives, destruction of public and private properties, destruction of farmlands, unlawful detentions, abuse of human right, collapse of the health system, forced migration, hunger, starvation, emergence of unknown gunmen, and collapse of socio-economic and sustainable development. All these are attributed to recklessness of political leadership, failure of the ruling class and these undermined the process of development, and as such Nigeria could be termed as a failed state. Political and economic security is crucial for creating an enabling environment for development in Nigeria. The elimination of all these obstacles should be the number one target of governments at all levels as development cannot be achieved amidst of insecurity and violence. Therefore, the paper recommends that, the problem of political

insecurity can be addressed through the tenets of good governance such as accountability, transparency and popular participation in the political process, rule of law, protection of human rights and equality of access to all citizens and

groups to state power and resources, and constitutionalism that have to be strictly observed by the elected or appointed political leaders in government in decision making.

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