

Challenges of National Security in Nigeria

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Abstract: - National Security is critical for National Development and intra societal co-existence. It entails the protection of a Nation and its people from Internal and External aggression and other matters of geographical, social and economic interest. Nigeria as a nation continues to witness internal insecurity issues such as terrorism, religious conflicts, militancy, communal clashes, Fulani herdsmen/Farmers clashes, kidnappings and armed robbery. These have not only hindered the speedy development of the country but have continued to retrogress the pace of its growth and development, thereby threatening her national unity. This paper review while highlighting the various facets of insecurities ravaging the country, it examines the challenges of providing adequate security to solving these problems. Among the recommendations made is the advocacy for effective collaboration between all existing security bodies, dialogue between religious leaders, Capacity improvement in training/technology for securities and the inclusion of basic security studies in our educational curriculum as a mandatory subject for tiers of our educational system.

Key words: Crisis, Conflict, Development, Security, Terrorism.

I. INTRODUCTION

All around the world, the concern for Security, Peace and its implication for development takes the centre stage of local, national and international discourse (Eze et al, 2014). The concept of Security is therefore mostly not detached as a condition for peace and development. According to International Peace Academy (2004) the ability to provide security based on good governance are essential for sound conflict management, the effect of which provides a safe and secure environment in which to entrench other programming initiatives. In other word it provides a safe and enabling environment for other important socio-economic, religious and political development. The importance of security to national development cannot be undermined, in fact both security and development are often described as two sides of the same coin.

Correspondingly, Nigeria as a country blessed with diverse socio-cultural and religious background has great potentials for socio-economics, religious and political development but has since its independence been faced with domestic challenges that threaten the nation. In the last decade the situation has even become more damning. Sheriff and Faith (2014) maintain that in the last decade Nigeria has experienced an increase in violence and criminality, which tended to undermine hope for development and political stability. According to Buhari (2015) at no other time in our history has the issue of security been brought so urgently to the front burners like now, the very territorial integrity of our

nation has been violated...what we could only imagine some years ago has become daily realities.

In general terms these are majorly what is often referred to as internal security challenges but with great impact on the values, welfare and unity of the country. This paper therefore attempts within the context of Nigerian experience to harmonize the concept of internal security to national security. While it explores the faces of internal insecurities and its adverse effect on the nationhood and security of the country, it also examines the challenges to providing adequate security in Nigeria and as well recommend solutions to tackling the problem.

II. NATIONAL SECURITY WITHIN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

Most often distinction are been made between internal and national security however they are rarely clear cut distinctions (UN, 2010). King (2016) described security as stability and continuity of livelihood, predictability of daily life, protection from crime, and freedom from psychological harm. Similarly, Nwagboso (2012) viewed security as the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. These definitions are constituent element of the concept of human security or internal security, with fundamental difference from what is often termed as national security, where the focus is on the survival of the state against military threats posted by other state (Buzan, 2003, Stephen, 2006). They are however insecurities arising from most internal factors that have great implications and similar threat posed by external forces or other states. In fact within the Nigerian context the forms and manifestations of internal/domestic insecurities like Boko haram, militancy and ethno-religious crisis are as worse as the threats posted by other state.

More so, national security literarily connotes the security of a nation. A nation is widely accepted as a large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture or language inhabiting a particular country or territory (Nysia, 2013). Considerably the preservation of the people, history, cultures, territory and all unifying factors and values becomes the core concern for nation security. Therefore, any factor whether internal or external capable of tarnishing the values or unifying factor(s) or a country is a threat to national security. This as we will come to see is aptly related to the Nigerian experiences in the various facets of insecurities, where values of tolerance, social justice, discipline, and dignity of labour have been lost and have contributed to series

of internal security issues with great consequence for national security.

Traditionally too, Security was defined as the protection of the territorial integrity, stability, and vital interest of states through the use of political, legal, or coercive instruments at the state or international level (International Peace Academy, 2004). In the same vein Adejumo (2012) sees security as the act of keeping peace within the governing territories. Both definitions suggest the existence of a government marked with the primary responsibility of maintaining stability and protecting interest of all that is within her territorial boundaries. Connecting to this is the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 14(1) (b) which clearly states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, thus the first responsibility of a nation is the capacity to cater for the protection and defence of its citizenry, therefore the inability of the government to grantee the safety of life and property of her citizenry most especially within her territory negates the very existence of the government.

It is consequently arguable that the ability of the Nigerian government to perform her primary role is in itself the grantee of her existence - i.e failure of the government to perform her primary role, equals to failure of government existence, failure of government existence equals to failure to the continual existence of integrated nation.

From the foregoing, we therefore conceptualize National security as the ability of the government to curtail any form of internal or external threat capable of undermining her primary responsibilities of protecting her citizenry and property. It includes all attempts to safeguard the unity, values and all legitimate and culturally prescribed norms of citizens to perform their societal obligation as well as meet basic needs for survival.

III. FACETS OF INSECURITIES IN NIGERIA

The experiences of insecurity in Nigeria which threatens her national security cuts across many social, religious, economic and political arenas, here we focus our attention on 6 which we considered are the most devastating on Nigeria's national security.

1. *Ethno-religious Conflict*: Ethnicity and religious crises have since the end of the cold war become one of the major threats to global peace (Osabiya, 2015). Ethno-religious conflicts are conflicts arising from groups defined along ethno-religious lines, ethnic identities which create distinctions between conflicting groups and religious beliefs/teaching which reinforces actions or inactions of adherence. While ethnicity is generally regarded as the most potent and politically salient identity in Nigeria (Abubakar, 2011), Religion in sociological terms functions as an integrative and unifying force capable of creating moral values. It has also been

used to rationalize the exercise of power or claims (Durkheim, 1881 as cited by Puja, 2014).

Equivocally, Nigeria made up by numerous ethnic groups drawn along different religious groups have since it independence experienced violent clashes connected ostensibly, or actually with religion cum the realities of ethnic differences. The combination of ethnic interest and religious popularity is often the fueling force for resource control and superiority complex between indigenes vs. non-indigenes/immigrant or Christians vs Muslims. It is in this sense that Yusufu (1987) was right to argue that series of violent demonstrations, riots and civil uprisings have forcefully made many Nigerians come face-to-face with the harsh reality that religion is being systematically manipulated, by some forces, for specific purposes which are clearly opposed to the unity of the people of this country. Thus, according to Idike and Innocent (2015), Nigeria is undoubtedly one very tense country, insofar as ethno-religious relationships are concerned, with combination of interrelated crises which has stretched the bonds of unity, the fabrics of nationhood, as well as the ingredients of citizenship identity, very thin, to a potentially snapping point.

Some of the devastating ethno-religious conflict experienced by Nigeria in the last decade includes among others; 2008, 2010, 20011 and 2017 Clashes in Jos, Plateau State, 2008 Yelwa massacre, 2009 Boko Haram upraising, 2013 Baga massacre, 2015-2016 killings of Biafran Protesters, 2016- 2017 Southern Kaduna killings.

2. *Militancy*: Militancy is often associated with a group active determination to reach a course with the willingness to use extreme force. The history of Nigeria is one shrouded with the activities of militants around the Niger delta agitating against perceive injustice by the Nigerian government and multinational companies. These groups mostly engage in different forms of violence and criminal activities ranging from hostage taking, vandalization of oil pipes lines and installations, illegal oil bunkering, sea piracy and disruption of business activities (Ikein, 2009; Ojieh, 2010; Nwogwugwu et al, 2012). Most popular among these militant groups are; Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVP) Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Tombolo Boys (TTB), Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), Matyrs Brigade (MB) and Icelanders Coalition for Military Action (ICMA) (Ogege, 2011, Nwogwugwu etal, 2012). It will be recalled that on the 1st of October 2010 during Nigeria's 50th Independence anniversary celebrations in Abuja, at least eight people were killed by suspects sponsored by MEND,

with an unprecedented series of car bomb attacks (The guardian newspaper 2010, Alumona 2016)

3. *Terrorism:*

In recent time the London-based institute for economics and peace ranked Nigeria fourth on the Global Terrorism index (GTI) also noting that in 2013 more than 80 per cent of lives lost to terrorism occurred in only five countries namely, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria. (Institute of Economics and Peace, 2014). According to the report this index is reached having considered three criteria; 1. The incident must be intentional – the result of a conscious calculation on the part of a perpetrator. 2. The incident must entail some level of violence or threat of violence — including property violence, as well as violence against people. 3. The perpetrators of the incidents must be sub-national actors. Also considered as a baseline is that these three criteria must reflect violence act aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious or social goal. The violence act must include evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a large audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims (Institute of Economics and Peace, 2014). This ranking did not only reveal the extent of damage done to Nigeria social development but also reveals Nigeria's contribution to global threats and terrorism. Preceding this ranking and the listing of Boko Haram as a terrorist group, Nigeria had been faced with decades of violent crisis and insecurities since the 60s that tend to reflect some of the aforementioned baseline. Isyaku (2013) noted that the level on which domestic terrorism thrive and operated in Nigeria relates to acts by persons or groups that are external to the affected state and whose objective is to advance a cause, either the struggle for political leadership, mobilization for resource control, uneven distribution of national wealth, sentiment across religious believe, ethnic marginalization calming or fighting over outright superiority of others.

4. *Herdsmen/farmer conflicts:* In recent time the conflict between Herdsmen and the farming communities has become a major national crisis. According to Malcom and Adeleke (2016) The combination of a growing cattle population, the effects of climate change on the availability of water and forage crops, as well as the lack of access to North Eastern foraging grounds due to the Boko Haram crisis are the proximate causes of the increasing tensions between farming communities and Fulani herdsmen. The conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers mostly begin when the former invade community farmland with their cattle and let them graze unhindered on cultivated

and uncultivated lands, destroying valuable food and cash crops of the host communities (Daily Independent Newspaper, 2014). The situation is also aptly described by Tolu (2014) who expressed that the attacks have taken a dangerous dimension as the herdsmen spare no one including women and children when they visit terror on these communities. Communities in North Central states of Plateau, Nasarawa, Taraba and Benue have paid heavy tolls in human lives and property. More are the menace been reported in the South East and South West as the herders extend their search for grazing fields southwards (The Authority newspaper, 20 Nov 2015). Some Fulani herdsmen attacks as observed by Omawumi (2016) includes; 2014 attack on Galadima village where at least 200 people were killed. February, March, 2016 siege on communities in agatu Local Government Area of Benue State where about 500 persons were reportedly killed. These communities include; Aila, Akwu, Adagbo, Okokolo, Ugboju, Odugbeho, Ogbaulu, Egba and Obagaji. April, 2016 Fulani herdsmen attacked on two villages in Gashaka Local Government Area 15 people were killed. April, 2016 alleged attack on Farmers in Lagun, Iyana Offa, Offa, Atagba, Lapata and their surrounding communities in Lagelu Local Council Area of Ibadan, Oyo State, by Fulani armed men. April, 2016 Fulani herdsmen attack on seven villages in Nimbo in Uzo- Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. About 40 persons were reportedly killed. More attacks have been reported in Benue State this year.

5. *Kidnapping and Abduction:* Kidnapping and abduction is another insecurity challenge that has also continued unabated within Nigeria. The act of kidnapping is described in Section 364, Chapter 77 of the Nigerian Criminal Code Act of 1990 as “unlawfully imprisons of any person in such a manner as to prevent him [or her] from applying to a court for his [or her] release or from disclosing to any other person the place where he [or she] is imprisoned, or in such a manner as to prevent any person entitled to have access to him [or her] from discovering the place where he [or she] is imprisoned. According to Oyewole (2016) Nigeria is one of the leading hotspots of kidnapping in the world, it accounts for about half of the kidnapping incidents in Africa with thousands of incidents recorded annually in the last decade. This heinous crime is also one used by militants, terror gangs and ritualist in Nigeria. In 2014, over 200 girls were abducted in chibok by the deadly terror group boko haram. Between 2004 and 2009, over 600 expatriate workers were kidnapped within the Niger delta region by militants (Ikein, 2009). About 886 reported cases of kidnapping was recorded by the Nigeria

police in 2015(Sunday punch newspaper 28, August 2016). Kidnapping for ransom has not only become a variant of armed robbery but also for criminals thriving along Kaduna express way, Abuja-lokoja-okene express, Lagos Ibadan express road and within major cities. In June 2017, the Nigeria police arrested and paraded one of the most wanted kidnap suspects in Nigeria, Chukwudi Onuamadike Aka Evans, who made millions of dollars ransom collected from his kidnapped victims (Premium times, June 11,2017).

6. *Ritual Killings.* In recent time ritual killings in Nigeria has become more terrifying across the nation. It is closely linked with kidnapping and deeply rooted in belief system and practices of killing and using human body parts as a means to bring good fortune i.e. promotion at work, increase congregational patronage, business acumen etc. There are thoughts that the problem of ritual killing cannot be disconnected from indigenous traditional faiths however largely patronized by Christians and Muslims alike. The reason why this has become prominent in Nigeria may not be far from Oyewole's (2016) observation that Nigeria is deeply religious society; where life and death, good and bad, success and failure are largely accepted as destiny and supernaturally determined. Hence the need for ritual sacrifices and appeasement. The discoveries of ritual killing shrines are evidence of the unquantifiable damage to Nigeria's national security. Instances are; in 2004, shrines for ritual killing were discovered in hamlets around Abakaliki with 83 corpses, 63 headless bodies and 20 skulls (Newswatch, October 11, 2004). In March, 2014, a ritual killer's den was discovered in Soka forest, Ibadan oyo state with over twenty decomposed human bodies and hundreds of human skulls (BBC news March 24, 2004). In June 2014, a shrine where ritual killing takes place was discovered in Ishiagu community in Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. It is believed that a handful number of persons have been abducted and killed for sacrifices (Kaycee, 2014). In recent times, the police also reported discovering another shrine in Ikorodu, Lagos state owned by the dreaded Badoo ritual gang (Punch Newspaper 1, August 2017).

IV. CHALLENGES OF PROVIDING ADEQUATE SECURITY IN NIGERIA

The main goal of security has always remained the same; the effective protection of people and property. To our understanding the challenges of providing adequate security in Nigeria entails any factor(s) that causes or hinders the achievement of the effective protection of the people, property and unity of the country. We highlight some of the major challenges as follows:

1. *Government failure to address the basic necessities of the people:* The failure of the Nigerian government to address the basic necessities of the people and the disparities in the allocations of resources breeds the thought of marginalization, inequalities and unfairness among Nigerians. This consistently stimulates grievances by the frustrated people and propels the emergence of militancy and other violence. In such situations the security of lives and properties are rarely guaranteed.
2. *Loss of Societal Values and Morality.* According to the new world encyclopedia, morality in its everyday sense refers to a code of conduct, by which human beings regulates their lives. The dictionary defines values as the "things that have an intrinsic worth in usefulness or importance to the possessor," or "principles, standards, or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable." Namara (2012) posit that moral values such as truth, freedom, charity etc when functioning correctly, are life protecting or life enhancing for all. Regrettably in Nigeria today, our societal values for truth, good character, handwork, diligence, dignity in labour, commitment and discipline have gradually been exchanged for greed, laziness, quick money syndrome, and other unholy activities. The effects are reflected in the high incidences of armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, ritual killings and even the unholy activities of some security operative to receiving bribe and in negligence of their duties.
3. *Corruption and mismanagement of Security funds:* Corruption has become a persistent phenomenon and probably the root cause of many socio-political and economic problems in Nigeria and has contributed immensely to our present insecurity situation. The corrupt practices of political leaders and Security bosses are not only reflected in the mismanagement of funds that should ordinarily be used to provide social amenities but also in providing adequate security needs such as modern security hardware's and technologies, continuous training of security personnel etc. most alarming among others is the misappropriation of about \$2.1 billion security funds by Col Dasuki (former National Security Adviser to the president) and other security generals (Premium times,2016, Fummanya 2015). Collaborating with this Obiamaka etal (2012) emphasized that, the practice of misappropriating and stealing huge sums of public money under the guise of enhancing national security has come under

increasing scrutiny in Nigeria. The ambiguity and secrecy associated with the concept of national security has helped institutionalize unaccountable governance at all levels of government.

4. *Faulty recruitment process and poor training of government security agents:* The selection, recruitment and training of security personnel should normally include interviews to ascertain motives, background checks, psychological checks and other standards that accurately measure the qualities required for adequate security. Thorough Training is also necessary to ensure that security personnel have core body of knowledge (community relations, culture sensitivity and importance of diversity) and certain skills to create a safe and orderly society. Unfortunately, the situation is not completely true in the recruitment and training of security personnel in Nigeria. They are a lot of deficiencies in the syllabi and inadequacies in the initial and on-the job training of security personnel (Cleen foundation sector reform study, 2009), recruitment has been commercialized or is determined by the strength of god fatherism, and Training facilities are overcrowded and downgraded (Olly, 2014). At the end most security personnel lack the professionalism to function well.
5. *Negligence or lack of patriotism among Security personnel:* connected to faulty recruitment process into government instituted security agencies is the problem of negligence and lack of patriotism. Like many other job or professions in Nigeria, most persons join the security forces in search for daily bread rather than for the sack of protecting lives and properties hence they are very quick to abandon their security duties at the slightest sense of trouble. Ntayi (2013) recounting lack of patriotism as one of the failures of security in Nigeria expressed that patriotism is lacking when a man lackadaisically does what he has undertaken to do for his nation, and allows self deference to take precedence over and above national interest and allegiance. He further explains that such persons are perhaps they are the ones with the temerity to air the despondency, hopelessness, and inability of the security force to contend with the forces that seek to destroy our lives.
6. *Low level of cooperation among security agencies.* In a paper titled 'Achieving Synergy Between National Security And The Economy:

The Place Of Effective Public Relations' the former Nigerian Director of Defence Information (DDI), Maj-Gen. Chris Olukolade (rtd), declared that low level of cooperation among security agencies in the country was having serious negative impact not just on their operations but on the nation's collective interest such as on national security and economy (Daily post, 2017). Similarly Odoma (2014) noted that the prolonged case of Boko Haram insurgent may not be unconnected to the lack of synergy between security operatives and also between civil population and security agencies. He explains further that due to frequent frictions between security agencies, they hardly enjoy the confidence of the civil population and by extension, lack the necessary co-operation and support from them.

7. *Ignorance and Religious extremism.* Ignorance and religious extremism is an irrefutable factor that hinders adequate security measures in Nigeria. Faith (2013) observed that Nigeria is still a superstitious society submerged in an abyss of ignorance. It is an underlying factor which aids and provides a fertile ground for all other ills of society including corruption. The challenges posed by ignorance ranges from citizens ignorance of their rights, ignorance of security risk and security measures, ignorance of true religious teachings, and ignorance of many sustainable knowledge. These levels of ignorance consequently creates an enabling environment for the propagations of erroneous and destructive interpretations and teachings which give birth to hate crimes and extremisms as evident in ethno-religious crisis and communal conflicts.
8. *Godfatherism:* Godfatherism is another challenging factor causing insecurities and hindering the provision of adequate security in Nigeria. Security personnel and even public officers who owe their positions to the efforts of godfather dance to the dictates and tunes of their godfathers, thereby failing to carry out their functions appropriately. Godfathers also while using their influences to protect criminals and societal hoodlums also use them to deploy violence, robbery, kidnapping and political unrest within society. Oluwafemi (2011) highlighted some of the perils associated to godfatherisms as: (1) the willful destructions of lives and properties (2) hooliganism and thuggery (3) proliferation of arms and ammunitions (4) increase in crime rate and (5)

other chaotic situations generated by political unrest.

9. *Porous Borders.* In recent time Nigeria has witnesses a lot of security problems caused and aggravated by the porous nature of her borders. The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has disclosed that there over 1,400 illegal border routes into the country (Chuwang, 2016). The porosity of our boarders allows smuggling of arms, trafficking of kidnapped persons and infiltration of terrorist and herdsmen. Vincent (2013) opined that the nature of our porous borders especially in the north-east formed the epicenter of insurgency, terror attacks, and raids by guerrillas and herdsmen who hit targets and easily escape outside the country.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has highlighted some of the major internal insecurities that threaten the National security of Nigeria. These internal insecurities which cuts across social, religious, economic and political arenas, includes; ethno-religious conflicts, militancy and terrorism, Fulani herdsmen/farmer clashes, kidnapping and ritual killings. The paper also identify some of the challenges of providing adequate security in Nigeria as, government failure to address the basic necessities of the citizens, loss of societal values and morals, corruption and mismanagement of security funds, faulty recruitment process of security agents, among others.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that:

The Federal, State and Local Government must always be ready to initiate community dialogue and address the particular needs of the people as at when due so as to avoid the thoughts and feeling of marginalization and unfair treatment by them.

Good governance and an incorruptible justice system is a requisite for rule of law which enhances the stability of society and the confidence of the people in the government. The Nigerian government must continue its fight against corruption at all levels, establishing and enhancing institutions to encourage the true practices with the view to regain the people's confidence and loyalty to the nation.

Security collaboration should be encouraged not only between government own security agencies but also with private security firms, local vigilantes and even gatemen, with the view to understand appropriate security networking, measures and actions at the instance of any security disturbance.

Government must review to enhance the process of recruitment, training and equipping all the security agencies to meet world standard practices in appropriately combating insecurities within the country.

To eradicate the problems associated with ignorance and illiteracy, the Nigerian government must provide free and compulsory basic education to all. It should also include basic security studies in our educational curriculum as a mandatory subject in all tiers of our educational system to enhance security consciousness, to be abreast with appropriate security measures and to avert the chances of being ignorantly manipulated to perpetuate any destructive act.

A joint collaborative effort by the family, schools, religious groups, and mass media is also necessary to revive emphasis and sustain moral values for the eradication of moral ills such as corruption, ritual killings and other unholy activities capably of undermining the safety and survival of fellow citizens.

Religious and community leaders must encourage tolerance and dialogue as means of addressing differences. They should also advance new ways of engaging members in activities that will enhance peaceful coexistence within and between of religion and communities.

Concerning the Fulani herdsmen/farmer clashes, cross boarders or interstate grazing should be discouraged to avoid encroachment into farm land. Cattle rearing should be made sedentary or at least limited to ranches or confined within cattle rearing states.

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