

## **Governance and the Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria: A Revisitation**

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### **Abstract**

*The rising spate of insecurity in recent times with its concomitant impact on human lives and destruction of property is quite alarming. No doubt the sanctity of human lives has become worthless in our present circumstance making caricature of the primary consideration of government which is security as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution in Section 14 (1) that “the security and welfare of the people shall be a primary purpose of government”. It is against this backdrop that this paper x-rays governance and challenges of human security in Nigeria in recent times where non-state actors are holding sway and desecrating the sanctity of human lives and thereby putting our hard-earned democracy on the edge and the nation at the precipice of disintegration. The paper uses content analysis method in its discourse. It is the conclusion the paper that if the current ugly trends are allowed to fester, the resultant boomerang effect will be a complete breakdown and a reversal in the gains we have made as a democratic state and a further inexorable slide towards a state of anarchy and a total failed state like what we are currently witnessing in places like Somalia etc. The paper recommends among others the need for security architecture and apparatus to be completely overhauled and also well equipped to enhance intelligence gathering and sharing and the political will on the part of government at all levels to be committed to the ideals of good governance and the protection of lives and property.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Governance, Security, Human Security, Nation-building

### **Introduction**

Over time, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. This has threatened national security and has prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security (Achumba and Akpan 2013). The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (section 17) specifically states that the security and the welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. Unfortunately, government on his constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured, safe environment for human lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities. The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has increased criminal and terrorists’ attacks in different parts of the country, laying unpalatable consequences for the nation’s economy and business growth. In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing the anti-terrorism Act in 2011. Despite the government efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high and a confirmation of this is the ranking of Nigeria as the third most terrorized country in the world, by Global Terrorism Index (2021).

Security challenges in the country can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigeria civil war, some of which got into the hands of the civilians soon after the civil war. These arms are used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purpose such as armed robbery, (Olabanji and Ese 2014). The 1999 constitutions make provisions for the rights of citizens. The inability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities has led to resentment and disaffection among business investors. This has resulted in communal clashes, and religious violence, and crime in different parts of the country that has destroyed lives and properties disrupted businesses and economic activities and retarded economic growth and development in Nigeria. No businesses investors whether local or foreign will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and insecure environment, in globalized world, investors are not only looking for high returns on their investments but also safe environment for their investments.

Thus, the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors and has slowed down the level of business activities, and this has impacted negatively on economic growth and development. The diverse security challenges plaguing the different parts of Nigeria, as well as the attendant socio-economic developmental implications could hardly be over-emphasized. Islamist insurgency in the North-East and parts of the North-Central, the ravaging activities of bandits in the North-West, the secessionist movement and the activities of unknown gunmen in the South-East. There is also the menace of piracy and crude oil theft in the Niger Delta Region, and herders-farmers crisis as well kidnapping for ransom throughout the country. All these security issues affecting the Nigerian state also have adverse impact on effective governance in the country.

It is against this backdrop that this paper placed the current insecurity in context by defining and reviewing the causes, implications and the place of governance in tackling this menace.

### **The Concept of Insecurity**

According to Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), Olabanji and Ese (2014), the divergent approaches to the conceptualization of human society in the theoretical literature can be categorized into two major strands, one is neo-realist theoretical strand that conceptualizes security as primary responsibilities of the state. The second strands, a post-modernist or plural view, conceptualize security as the responsibility of non-state actors and displaces the state as a major provider of security. Proponents of the approach argue that the concept of security goes beyond a military determination of threats. They are of the view that government should be more concern with the economic security of individual than the security of the state because the root causes of insecurity are economic in nature. Security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, et al., 2011).

Some scholars in conceptualizing security placed emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Oche, 2001; Omede, 2012; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Olabanji and Ese 2014), sees security as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests.

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of threats to peace, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005), insecurity is “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection” it refers to lack of inadequate freedom from danger. Achumba et al. (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly

insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague and an unpleasant Emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortunes.

These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. People engage in business activity, either directly or indirectly or indirectly to satisfy unlimited human wants of human existence in particular and global world in general.

### **Causes of Insecurity**

Many scholars have identified several causes of insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic and national development (Ali, 2013; Onyishi, 2010, Ezeoba, 2011, Achumba and Akpor, 2013). These causes have been classified into internal and external causes of insecurity. In the Nigeria, the internal causes of insecurity pose major threats and challenges to socio-economic development than the external causes of insecurity. The internal causes are mainly the primary causes of insecurity which has gone a long way to affect lives negatively in the country such as raping, kidnappings, robbery, killings, rituals etc.

**Ethno-Religious Conflicts:** These conflicts have arisen as a result of destruct among various ethnic groups and among the major religious in the country. Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Homer (2001), Salawu (2010) and Igbuzor (2011,) identified ethno-religions conflict as the major causes of insecurity in the country. These conflicts have contributed to the increased tension all over the country as has affected many lives and properties.

Ethno-religious conflict was defined as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious, group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society are characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Achumba et al., 2013, Salawu 2010). The frequent and persistent ethnic conflict and religious (Islam and Christianity), present the country with a major security challenge. All parts of Nigeria are characterized with ethno-religious conflicts and these according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have emerged as results of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethnic-religious identity. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government council, control of markets and Sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence around groups in Nigeria, (Adagba et al 2012). In all parts of Nigeria, ethnic conflicts have assumed alarming rating as it has occurred in places like Shagamu places like Shagamu (Achumba et al., 2013). This is in addition to attitudinal and behavioural disposition of security personnel. In many cases, many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment which has led to various problems of insecurity in Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu respectively, and in particular in Igbo-Eze North local of government. These ethnic-religion crises have become disintegrative and destructive social element threatening peace and stability in Nigeria (Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

**Weak Security System:** This result from inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training (Achumba et al 2013). This is in addition to both in weaponry and behavioural disposition of security personnel. In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurrence.

And even when these exist; some personnel get influenced by ethnic religious or communal sentiment and are easily allowed by their personal interests to serve their people, rather than the nation. Thus, instead of being national watch dogs and defending national interests and values, and protecting people from harm by criminals, they soon become saboteurs of government

effort; by supporting insecurity and fueling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law (Achumba and Akpor 2013).

**Unemployment/Poverty:** As a result of high level of unemployment in Nigeria among the youths, they are adversely attracted to violent crimes (Adagba et al 2012). Nwagbosa (2012) argued that the failure of successful administration in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one of the major causes of insecurity in the country. Unemployment has a negative implication on national development in Nigeria as most of its productive force is development productive force is employed. What this theoretically means is that poverty and employment increase the number of people who are prepared to “or be killed for a given course or a token benefit. It could predispose one to engage in illicit activities that would undermine security of the environment. According to the national Bureau of percent in 20 compared with 21.1 percent in 2010 and 19.7 statistics, Nigerians unemployment rate has increase to 23.9 statistics, percent in 2009. The country has a youth population. With a growth rate youth population of 80 million representing about 60% of the total population with a growth rate of 2.6 percent per year and the national demography suggest that the youth population remains Vibrant with an average annual entrant to the labour force at 1.8 million between 2006 and 2011. It is also notable that about 1.2 million youths graduates every year from the universities and Polytechnics respectively and there is a relative limited number of Jobs for these set of the population and has led to unemployment as many youths now engage in all sort of crimes to thrive in Nigerian governments. Most of this youth in Igbo-Eze North local government has become desperate in other to live a normal and healthy life in the country. Most cases, the religious crises healthy 1 life in In most cases, the religious crises the Islamic group and Christianity group has contributed between the Islamic group and Christianity group has contributed to unemployment in the sense that if you are not among any particular group that holds most political office, employment is just a mere pipe dream.

However, systematic and political corruption has been described as cancer militating against Nigerian’s development, because corruption deeply threatens the fabric of the Nigeria society particular in most Nigeria local government (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013).

### **The Effect of Security Challenges on Good Governance in Nigeria**

Insecurity in an economy is very devastating and always disastrous. The effect according to Babangida, (2012) includes the followings:

**Close Down and Low Operation of Existing Companies:** Some of the companies operating in Nigeria especially the foreign companies have closed down and moved to other West African countries. While the existing ones in the country as well as in various local government areas are operating at low-capacity rate thereby leading to retrenchment of employed youth under their pay roll. This according to Babangida, (2012) has further compounded the problem of unemployment among the youth in the country which may gloomy to further violence. This scenario has not only deepened the existing unemployment rate in the country, but has increased the rate of poverty among rural dwellers.

**Close Down and Reduction of Admission to Educational Institutions in Some Parts of the Country:** Education institutions which are seen as pivot to national development has turn out to be a place of fears and threats in many parts of the country, most especially those situated in areas where security agencies are incompetent. Most education institutions especially in the Northern part of the country have been closed down for fear of Boko Haram, while some universities like the University of Maiduguri have reduced its admission policy because of the fear of insurgency (Bello 2012). Tertiary education which is said to be a catalyst for human

development has depreciated in value in many parts of the country as a result of insecurity, thereby reducing the production of human resources needed for structural Development in the Country.

**Reduction of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Members to some Part of the Country:**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme meant to familiarize fresh graduates to service in the nation and as an act of Socialization in different part of the country has turned out to be a thing of fear and threat. A lot of students according to Adebakin (2012) have vowed never to participate in the compulsory one year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme if posted to the Northern part of the country, thus, the number of National Youth Service corps members being posted to the North as a result of the rate of insecurity in such area this action has negative effect as regards the aim and objectives of Nation Youth Service corps in the country and hence, national development.

**The Reduction of Direct Foreign Investment in Tourism:** The growth of foreign direct investment in tourism sector which use to be one of the major source of revenue to the government has drastically reduced. Some immigration department of countries in Europe and America have issued Warning to their citizens who wish to visit Nigeria to be aware of the security problem in the country (Adejumo 2011). The issue does not only affect foreign direct investment, but also have negative effect on business confidence as many foreign and domestic companies especially those located in most rural areas are no longer in existence thereby discouraging direct foreign investment.

**It Discourages Entrepreneur Development in many parts of the Country:** So many entrepreneurs especially the non-indigenes of the North have practically vacated their business in for of insurgency in some Northern parts of the country to different cities and towns in Nigeria. Likewise, it has been reported that many business men and women have equally left the area with fear of the threat and violence to their places of abode as this type of mass movement has negative implications on entrepreneurial development in the country.

**Loss of the Respect of Nigeria in the Eyes of the International Community:** Due to insecurity and violence in the country, the respect and prestige of Nigerians in the International Community's may have certainly been dampened. This is because many countries may look at Nigerians as rebellious criminals and may disassociate themselves from them in terms of bilateral relations and business partner in fear of duping them. For instance, the recent internet fraud act popularly known as "YAHOO YAHOO" has drastically reduced the respect of Nigeria in the eyes of international communities. As they are the major targets or preys that are likely to fall for the tricks of these scammers. As a result of this menace in the country, most of this international community sees Nigerian as a country embedded. With Scammers as this has strenuous effect on the development of the country at large.

Having identified the causes of insecurity in national transformation, government should embark on transformation structural changes which can only be achieved by promoting peace and abiding to laws on the parts of the citizens. There should also be peace and harmony on the part of the judiciary, legislative and executive (three arms of government) as well as efficiency on the parts of security agencies in other to enhance national transformation.

However, some of the strong and good administrative structure that needs to be put in place for effective transformation which has to be to be institutionalized in the economy according to Nwadiakor (2011) includes the following:

**Strong and Good Governance:** National transformation is possible in Nigeria when individuals and human leaders are transformed from their wrong culture of doing things. This can be achieved when individual and group are branded and are decisive in tackling the development challenges in the economy. Such development challenges include poverty, unemployment and

mis-management of public funds, insecurity and deplorable state of infrastructure. Strong and good governance will be able to make amends and bring the economy into the apex of development. Usually, good and strong administration occurs when all the administrative organs of the government are focus on the policies and programmes of government and making sure that all their regularities in the economy are tackle with prejudices. To attain this, goal, the Nigerian economy is expected to be peaceful and lawful since this will bring happiness and fulfillment to the citizens.

**Justice and Judiciary:** The judiciary is a powerful organ of government is supposed oversee prosecution and improves the professionals in legal practice for better service delivery. This can be achieved if there is strong and good governance. The judiciary is meant to achieve greater independence in terms of efficient service delivery by eliminating all forms of prejudice and corrupt practices in administering the justice. This will be made possible where there is collaborative effort between the judiciary and law enforcement agencies in making sure that there are peace and harmonious existence of people and property in the country.

**The Legislature:** The legislature is to be proactive in its legislative duties and positive interdependent relationship with the judiciary and executive arms of government, its function is to create a dynamic and constitutionally effective public responsive legislations that will enhance and promote greater transparency and accountability in the management of public funds, promotion of greater public interest in the security of legislative actions, and informal public debate on any crucial issues that affect the citizens.

Following the above discussions, it is important to note that nothing is wrong with Nigeria as a nation, but the problem is Nigerians and its culture of governance. However, if people and its culture of governance are rebranded and reformed it will imbibe in them the spirit of sportsmanship and become decisive in taking action in tackling security challenges for effective national transformation and development.

### **Role of Governance in tackling the Security challenges in Nigeria**

Addressing the menace of insecurity must go beyond rhetorics of our leaders and putting in place some practicable measures to address this anomaly like the followings;

**Elimination of corruption and entrenchment of justice:** Corruption is the antithesis of progress and development as it creates political instability, social unrest and crime infested environment, it breeds inefficiency, mediocrity, incompetency unethical values and other bias instinct in man such as avarice, rapacity, and greed. Corruption and injustice in Nigeria must be totally eliminated. Also, the Nepotism and culture of impunity also need to be eschewed from our national psyche of life in other to have a transformed nation.

**Creating employment to unemployed youth:** Some of the effects of unemployment include personal hardship, depression, decayed and acquired but unused skills, involvement in crime (mostly among youth) as well as dispute among married people, delayed marriages among singles and sometimes broken homes. Joblessness of a husband can lead to infidelity of a wife; unemployment increases government expenditure to transfer payments where welfare programmes are implemented in favor of the unemployed. The effect of corruption is that it led to reduction in economic growth and development by lowering incentives to invest, it also leads to divestment in such economy. Government should embark on building many companies both in the cities and rural areas in other to reduce rural urban migration since most of these youths defaulting laws in the country are agents of rural urban migration. Also, to encourage foreign investment in all forms, provides youths with skills to learn so as to enhance their intellectual capacity. Despite the fact that government has empowered the citizens through providing N Power Scheme, it is germane to note that this program is only obtained by about 20% of the unemployment ratio thereby leaving the 80% of the unemployed in the country in dilemma.

**Equipment of security agencies:** Effectives training and retaining of officers must be carried out on a regular basis with special focus on human-rights, weapon handling, communication skills, new interrogative techniques (torture is out dated), exposure to new equipment and technology. Training in Information Technology should be made compulsory and the entire recruitment requirement should be raised in order to attract the best in the country. A highly disciplined and well-trained force is essential to deliver self-targets and goals of providing security for lives and properties and also discipline must be instilled at all level of the work force. Re-organization of the security agencies to take them through a new orientation via re-training of security agents. People should be more security conscious, share information with the police and security other security agencies. The populace should not leave security matters to security personnel alone. Everyone should be involved in security information and data gathering. Moreover, emphasis should be put on crime prevention than control, security Phone lines should be readily accessible so that people get access to them when there is so that emergency and should be available at all time. Furthermore, the government should increase the size of Nigeria's security agencies, empower and motivate them very well and strengthen neighborhood watch.

**Good Governance:** It is no doubt that good governance is the panacea and antidote for insecurity challenges in Nigeria. Ouwarotimi (2012) states that the war against insecurity would be won by only raising governance standards. That is, cultivating the culture of good governance where the Government is responsible and accountable to the people. In review, security engagement cannot be separated from good Governance. Many others have also linked security to good governance System, also linked However, as Oluwa (2012) has pointed out good governance as a function of effective, trustworthy, visionary and credible political leadership whose driving force is an improvement in the collective wellbeing of the citizens through well-conceived, effectively implemented economic policies and human and development programmes. The underlying principle of good governance is the focus on people as the ultimate objectives of governance.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The presence of insecurity in any society or environment would invariably constitute a problem and even hinders business development and operations; discourages local and foreign investors which will stifles and retarded political, political, economic, democratic and human development at all levels in a country. The rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria has assumed a dangerous dimension and is even threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation. Adequate measures to avert this ugly trend of insecurity and incessant violence should be the focal point of Nigerian government and the political leadership at all levels as it will be difficult for the country to achieve its basic developmental objectives in the face of serious security challenges.

No doubt, recent occurrences in across the country clearly show that the state of insecurity in the polity has assumed a frightening and alarming dimension, thus the government at all levels should re-organise their security intelligence system and build a capable and more proactive security apparatus and architecture based on intelligence gathering. This would add more values in checking the incessant bombings, robbery, kidnapping and violence crimes/crises by hoodlums in almost all regions of the Nigerian State.

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