

SECURITY CHALLENGES: DANGER TO PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA – A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Oyibo Goddey Onwuka

*Department of History & International Studies,
Faculty of Arts, University Of Delta, Agbor,
Delta State Nigeria*

And

John Edeki Nukueye

*Department of History & International Studies,
Faculty of Arts, University Of Delta, Agbor,
Delta State Nigeria*

Abstract

Security is desirable in all nations of the world, because it plays important roles in ensuring peace and development of a nation. The focus of this paper is to historicize the horrendous security challenges in Nigeria and the serious danger they pose to her peace and development. The paper contends that the maintenance of optimum security is one of the pivotal policies of the government of a country, whether developed or developing. Good security measures put in place by any government will enable it protect the lives and property of the citizens, as well as the territorial boundaries, sovereignty and integrity of its country. These will help the country to grow and develop economically, politically, socially and culturally. The paper notes however that in many developing countries of the world, especially in Nigeria, there has been an upsurge of security challenges in recent times. These range from acts of terrorism, banditry, notorious activities of herdsmen, armed militias or militancy, armed robbery, kidnapping, ethnic and religious conflicts, incessant activities of protesters and agitators, which are all serious threats to the security, peace, fragile unity and development of Nigeria. The spate of security challenges in the country currently is so alarming that the citizens live in perpetual fear, suspicion and the government is on edge due to want of adequate policies to curb this menace.

Key words: security challenges, peace, development, terrorism, militancy, banditry

Introduction

This paper seeks to historicize some of the serious security challenges in Nigeria and the serious danger they posed to peace and development of the nation. This has become necessary considering the alarming rate at which these challenges occur on daily basis in the country and the serious danger they pose to her citizens' lives, property, and economic development.

Before 1967 to 1970 when Nigeria fought a Civil War that really challenged its security and unity nationally, it had enjoyed relative peace until the beginning of the 21st century that various acts of security breaches started rearing their ugly heads and has held the entire nation hostage (Wikipedia, 2020). That the country and its people are currently seriously battling with various forms of security challenges in order to have mutual peace and co-existence is an understatement. The intensity of these challenges kept on menacing the Federal and State Governments and they have not been able to take any effective and proactive steps to contain its ferocity.

Some of the serious security challenges traumatizing the Nigerian state that are worth historicizing in this paper include the acts of terrorism by Boko-Haram, the harmful activities of Fulani herdsmen, armed banditry, militancy in the Niger Delta, Incessant activities of Protesters and Agitators especially the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East, Ethnic and religious conflicts, armed robbery and kidnapping. These groups and the serious danger they pose on the country and its citizens are dealt with in the paper. The paper is convinced beyond doubt that the security of this nation is synonymous with the progress and development of its citizens in all ramifications, therefore every serious action must be taken by the government and the citizens to safeguard or ensure its optimum sustenance in order to realize their full potentials in the state.

However, in order to present a comprehensive overview of the subject matter of this discourse, it is proper to attempt the conceptual meaning of "security challenges" herein.

The Conceptual Meaning of Security Challenges;

For a clear meaning of the terms "Security Challenges", it is necessary to, first and foremost, define them separately conceptually. This is done as follows:

(i) **Security:** The Collins Advanced English Dictionary (2019) defines security as an act of protection of a nation state, persons, property, organization, etc from the threat of violence or attack.

In his book National Security - Imperatives and Challenges, Paleri (2013) attempts to define security by listing a bigger number of components that

together make up its full meaning. Among them are, to name just a few, the military, economic security, resource, boarder, demographic, disaster, energy, information, food, health, ethnic, environmental, and cyber security.

Paleri did a good job of choosing these components while keeping in mind that each term needed to be fundamentally complete, universally applicable of Macro-level/Social Impact, directly affecting human life, continuously under threat right from its inception or existence even though this might only happen occasionally, and currently popular in the modern usage of national or natural security in addition to many other attributes.

This paper's major focus is on national security, which is composed of a variety of sub-themes that, when fully realized, give a country the ability to protect its people, values, interests, and freedom of action. The military, police, politics, society, the environment, energy and natural resources, and the economy are among those that are frequently included in these lists, according to different authorities. The idea of the components of national power, which, when used to their fullest and strategically, ensures the protection of people's lives, property, and companies, is closely related to that of the components of national security.

As a result, the term "security," as it is employed in this discourse, connotes the security of a nation-state, including its people, economy, and institutions, which is seen as the responsibility of the executive branch. For the purpose of upholding national security, governments use a variety of tools, such as political, economic, and military power as well as diplomacy.

A nation-state's or a country's security may also refer to a set of government policies that are implemented to guarantee the existence and safety of the nation-state and its population, including but not limited to the use of diplomatic, economic, and military force in both times of peace and conflict. Thus, it implies that any challenges to the nation-state's security must be dealt with decisively by the governments and their agencies.

Challenges: These are the behaviors, actions, and pursuits that, in one way or another, constitute a danger to, an assault against, and a breach of the nation-state's security, that of its people, and of its economic system. Challenges are Situations, Serious Problems, or Issues that must be resolved with a lot of mental or physical effort, which puts a person's abilities to the test. This definition is from the 2017 edition of the Collins Advanced Learners English Dictionary.

As previously said, the challenging circumstances, concerns, and problems that are the subject of this paper's investigation mostly concern the recent, violent threats to the nation-state of Nigeria, its people, and its economy. Thus, the activities previously mentioned in the preceding paragraphs are included among

the threats to the security of the Nigerian nation-state that are taken into consideration here.

In order to better comprehend the immense threat that each security concern poses to the stability and prosperity of the nation, they will now be addressed one by one.

Boko Haram, one of the most feared terrorist organizations in the world, has been roiling and overpowering Nigeria's security establishment for more than ten years. The most heinous terrorist attacks in Nigeria are known as "Boko Haram" because they defy all security measures and instill dread in both locals and visitors. It makes sense that many people feel that the first step toward wisdom is to be afraid of Boko Haram.

When summarizing the appalling security situation in Nigeria, Audu (2020) gave a harsh assessment of the country.

An increasing amount of violence, which is caused by a poisonous concoction of violent extremist groups and a cropland crisis, plagues Nigeria, a country with an estimated 200 million residents. Each of these is poorly understood and feeds into the others. Boko Haram, a renowned group that asserts to defend Islam, has played a significant role in the current bloodshed. In Africa's Lake Chad area, which includes Northern Nigeria, Southern Niger, Far Northern Cameroun, and Western Chad, Boko Haram has carried out a campaign of mass bloodshed and wreaked devastation throughout the past ten years from 2009 to 2019.

Over 18,000 individuals are estimated to have died at the hands of the Boko Haram terrorist group, and millions more are thought to have been displaced (John, 2019). Additionally, the cult is alleged to have sparked a massive humanitarian catastrophe of unfathomable proportions (Claire, 2018). The fanatical terror gang is also notorious for having damaged in Northern Nigeria incalculable property worth billions of Naira. With 6,600 fatalities in 2019, it was ranked as the worst terrorist organization in the world (Institute of Economic and Peace Report, 2019).

Boko Haram is particularly well-known for its abuse of children. In reality, the group initially caught the attention of the Western Media in April 2014 when it abducted 276 girls from their dormitory at a school in the northern Nigerian hamlet of Chibok. It is well known for using females as human bombs and domestic slaves while primarily attacking civilian targets such as marketplaces, hospitals, IDP camps, and houses of worship. Thousands of youngsters have also been enlisted into its army, where they are forced to murder in order to survive (Audu, 2019).

In a similar vein, Nathaniel (2019) contends that Boko Haram has solidified its position as a potent terrorist organization in Nigeria and that, based on the 750 security force fatalities in 2019—the greatest number since the group first started carrying out terrorist acts—it now looks to be stronger and more combat-ready than ever. It is noteworthy that despite the Federal Government's intensified efforts to terminate Boko Haram's insurgency operations in the nation, the cult is still menacingly inflicting havoc in the northern portion of the country with little sign of abating.

For instance, recently the Boko Haram insurgents in their deadly attacks killed four soldiers providing security cover for the operators of the excavators digging trenches round the town of Kukawa in Borno State. Besides, the governor of Borno State, Babagana Zulum's convey was also lately attacked by the same insurgents in Baga town, which is a few kilometers from Kuku-wa (New Telegraph, P.7, August 20, 2020).

Fulani Herdsmen and Their Indiscriminate Killings

The Fulani Herdsmen are cattle rearers predominantly from the northern part of Nigeria who move about with their cattle from one part of the country to another for better grazing environment. By virtue of their vocation, they are mostly found in the bush of forest where they can find enough forage for their cattle. However, recently the activities of the Fulani Herdsmen have gone beyond that of tending their cattle in the bush. They have subtly indulged in various nefarious activities such as robbery, raping of women, kidnapping and killing of innocent citizens anywhere they are found. The obnoxious activities of these herdsmen have therefore brought to the fore the argument whether or not they are the same common or simple and shabby looking cattle rearers that are found everywhere in the country who are really the perpetrators of the heinous crimes in question.

It has been argued that the murderous activities of the Fulani Herdsmen implies the subtle unfolding of a hidden agenda of the Fulani elite's gradual expansionist bid and Islamization of the rest parts of the country that are largely not adherents of Islam. It is also probable that the herdsmen's activities are disguised complex schemes aimed at extending Fulani political hegemony to other parts of the country either now or in the immediate future. While these arguments range on without any consensus, the herdsmen are ingeniously masquerading in their subtle mission, raping, robbing, kidnapping and killing unsuspecting and innocent victims in their different host communities, especially in the southern parts of the country.

This author has argued extensively elsewhere that judging from the atrocious activities of the herdsmen in the country, they are in no way different from the dreaded Boko Haram Islamic terrorist sect to all intent and purposes. That they are in fact part and parcel of the dreaded insurgent Boko Haram in disguise, in order to fan out to other territories surreptitiously for the same sponsored mission of expansion of the Fulani political and Islamic hegemony (Nukueye and Emeni, 2019).

The fact must be stressed that the Fulani herdsmen are in nearly every part of the country, and they pose enormous challenge to its security, because their operations are sporadic and menacingly atrocious where and whenever they choose to operate. There is no certain statistics yet to show how many human lives have been claimed by the obnoxious activities of the Fulani herdsmen in the country, but it is on record that they have destroyed as much as more than half of the total number of human lives that the Boko Haram Insurgents have claimed since their operation in 2015-2019 (Wikipedia, 2020). For instance, in one of their recent killing sprees in Agadama community in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, one of the communities that has been so much harassed by the Fulani Herdsmen, the Chairman of the community was brutally murdered in cold blood. This has made the Urhobo Progress Union (U.P.U) under one of its prominent leaders, Chief Joe Omene, to urge the people of the area to rest to self help in order to defend themselves since the government is not doing enough to protect them (New Telegraph, August 20, 2020, Pg. 27).

It is also important to note that since the dastardly operations of the Fulani Herdsmen, many farmers in different communities across the country have abandoned their gainful farming activities in their farms in order to remain safe and alive. This has, no doubt, led to serious structural unemployment, shortage of food and other socio-economic hazards in these communities in the country.

Banditry is the act or practice of looting in gangs, which is a straightforward definition. In terms of its *modus operandi*, banditry is undeniably a heavily camouflaged kind of terrorism. Residents in Nigeria's northwest states of Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Katsina have been severely impacted by banditry violence. The banditry violence, which is unrelated to the Boko Haram terrorist operations in the northeast, began as a kind of farmer/herder conflict in 2011 and accelerated from 2017 to 2018 to the present. It now includes cattle rustling, abduction for ransom, raping, and murders (ACAPS, 2020). The discovery of gold mines and the operations of illegal miners

vying for control of gold deposits have also significantly increased the presence and activity of armed organizations in the northwest. More than 210,000 individuals have left their homes inside their own country by March 2020 (ACAPS, 2020).

Recently, education facilities have been mainly targeted by the bandits in the northwest of the country. On 17th February 2021, armed bandits attacked the Government Science College in Kagari, Niger State, abducting over 40 people, including students. And in another development, over four hundred students have also been kidnapped by armed bandits in Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara states in Nigeria from their various schools (ACAPS, 2021).

Acute food security is now more likely due to the violence committed by armed bandits, which has also resulted in human displacement and hindered agricultural activity. Fear and instability among the populace have escalated, livelihoods have been disrupted, and host communities and IDPS are vying for limited resources including water, land, and food. In the impacted communities, security, food, and shelter are clearly essential requirements, and protection concerns are particularly increased for women, children, especially students, and the elderly (ACAPS, 2021).

According to Oluwole, 2021, a number of mutually reinforcing circumstances make the Northwest of Nigeria vulnerable to violent assaults by several terrorist organizations. These mostly include;

- i. Porous Borders between Nigeria and Niger and tough terrain. The Nigeria Custom and Immigration Services do a terrible job of policing Nigeria's 1,497 KM border with Niger. The porous nature of these borders enhances the possibility that terrorist actions from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger may extend into Northwest Nigeria. The huge forest reserves in the area add to this by making effective surveillance challenging
- ii. Trafficking in Arms and weaponry - The criminal gangs ravaging Northwest Nigeria are also well known for using high-tech weaponry, which are imported into the area through the region's open borders.
- iii. Other reasons cited for the persistent violence and terrorism in the region include poor governance, poverty, and the relationship between climate change and fragility.

Ethnic/Communal and Religious Clashes

Ethnic/communal and religious crises have been common phenomenal challenges to the Nigeria's fragile security system since the beginning of the twenty first century. These crises or clashes, though are largely believed to have

been sponsored by politicians for their selfish interests, have created a lot of problems which have seriously negated the economic and political development of Nigeria. Thus the country is held hostage and prevented from becoming a mutually united great nation where its citizens are secured, prosperous and happy.

In recent years, for instance, ethnic and communal clashes have been on the increase, and have escalated to a worrisome level in both violence and loss of lives and property in the country. There is no gainsaying the fact that these crises have stressed the security initiatives of both the Federal and State Governments beyond their practical usefulness. For example, between 2012 and 2019, there were series of communal clashes between Igbide and Emede, on the one hand, and between Igbide and Ewhen on the other hand, over land disputes in Delta State (Urhobo Times, April 26, 2012, P.10). Just about the same time, there were also violent communal clashes between Aladja and Ogbe-Ijo over land disputes, which claimed large number of lives and property worth millions of Naira.

Similarly, from 2016 till the present, there have been unrelenting boundary clashes between communities in Abia State and communities in Cross River, AkwaIbom and Ebonyi states, which have defied any reasonable solutions and claimed numerous lives and property.

According to Igbeaku, (in New Telegraph, August 20, 2020, PP.3, 6, 7, 16 and 17), reviewing the precarious security situations involving the states in their boundary disputes:

For years, the Isucommunity in Abia State and its neighbours have lived peacefully, taking the river as their natural boundary, until recently, following the discovery of limestone in commercial quantity on the Isu part of the boundary. Today, the natives have fled to neighboring communities..as refugees. The Utama neighbors in Biase council of Cross River State, have made life unbearable for Isu community. Indigenes of Isu are hunted and hacked to death in their farms.

The State boundary with Ebonyi is no less restive. Several meetings have been held at local and state levels to resolve the boundary dispute between ObiaguLekwesi in Umunmeochi Local Government Area and its neighbors in Isiagu, Ebonyi State, to no avail. Incessant violent clashes have claimed lives and property running into millions of Naira.

Similarly, Abia's volatile boundary with AkwaIbom State in the Ikwuano axis became a theatre of blood and gore. It turned into a seething cauldron of wicked and heartless destruction. Over four indigenes of Osaka Ukwu were not only killed by their ObotAkara neighbors but their bodies were also taken away.

The forgoing analysis, no doubt, suggests a precipitated insecurity thoroughfare across the country, which makes the common citizens unsafe and unsettled wherever they are. This also presupposes that there is no end in sight yet to the multi-faced security challenges in the country. This is because, everyday, the citizens are faced with one form of security challenge or the other. In early and late parts of 2020, in Kaduna and other parts of Northern Nigeria, there were unabatinggruesome killings of innocent citizens mostly on religious grounds.

Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) had warned traditional rulers, religious, ethnic, and political leaders in the area to hold back on making irrational and incendiary remarks on the overall violent situation in the region in light of these senseless killings in the country's northern region. The ACF urged the State governors to act quickly to stop the security situation in the country's north from getting worse. Chief Audu Ogbeh, the present chairman of the ACF, Due to the countless violent clashes that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people and the loss of property, the North has been overcome by a pervasive sense of unease.

...Despite making up 78% of Nigeria's size, the Northern 19 States are now so insecure that people are dying there every day.

Except for during the Civil War, the problem of homicides we confront now is worse than it has ever been (New Telegraph, August 2020, P.3)

In another development, there was a serious clash between Christians and some Muslim fundamentalists in Kwara State on the 17th March, 2021. According to Rev. Victor Dada, the President of Kwara Baptist Conference, over 20 people, including four pastors were wounded and three hospitalized when Muslim fundamentalists attacked the First Baptist Church Surulere, Illorin, Kwara State on the 17th of March, 2021. The conflict between Christians and Muslims in the state erupted after a dispute involving Muslim pupils wearing the headscarf at Christian schools, which the Christian schools rejected (Daily post @Daily Po..... March 17, 2021).

The North just like other parts of the country have become theatres of escalating insecurity in recent years as have been shown in the preceding analysis

Militancy in the Niger Delta Region

The Niger Delta region has long become a very volatile theatre of War because of lack of adequate attention given to the area by government and corporate bodies operating in it. The region, though very rich in oil mineral resources, has seen cruel age-long marginalization in the hands of both Federal,

State Governments and corporate organizations, which has made it a core zone noted for constant agitations, restiveness, insurrection, hostage taking, and acts of sabotage, borne out of bitterness, frustration, anger, and abject poverty. As a result of the negative impact of the exploitation of oil on the physical environment of the region, and the diabolical neglect of its people by successive governments and cooperate bodies, the youths of the region have increasingly turned to militancy to draw the attention of governments not only to their plight but also to the ugly state of affairs in the entire area.

After decades of abysmal neglect by the government and cooperate bodies, the anger and bitterness of the people of the region have taken different violent dimensions resulting into conflicts between communities, between ethnic groups, between local groups on the one hand, and between bodies or multinational companies on the other. Perhaps the most worrisome of these incidents have been the aggressive conflicts and violent confrontations resulting in general insecurity in the region, and a colossal loss of revenue to the government (Ikelegbe, 2013).

To say that the Niger Delta region is a Potential Crisis Prone area is to state the obvious. This is mainly as a result of the accumulated deprivations, decay, abject penury, squalor and environmental degradation created in the region by government, corporate organizations and some proxy political leaders over the years. The injustice done to the region is so great in terms of underdevelopment of the area, lack of infrastructural facilities and economic blueprints or strategies to give its indigenes a better permanent living condition. This is one of the main reasons why the region will continue to be so volatile and a continuous challenge to the peace and security of the Nigeria nation state for a long time to come (Marsha, 2017).

Protest and Agitations/Threats of Secession:

Violent protests and agitations have become recurrent decimal in the Nigeria's political space in recent times. Different groups of protesters and agitators in the country hold various grievances arising from the background of ethnic, economic and socio-political cleavages.

Some of the main reasons canvassed by these protesters and agitators include the following:

- i. Restructuring the faulty structure of the Nigeria Federalism;
- ii. Fiscal federalism;
- iii. Equitable revenue allocation
- iv. Resource control

- v. Devolution of powers;
- vi. Fear of political domination
- vii. Lack of infrastructural developments; and
- viii. End to police oppression and brutality, and total reorganization and overhaul of the force (ENDSARS).

Nevertheless, the main object of some protests and agitations has been clearly focused on the disintegration of the country and the breakdown of mutual co-existence of its diverse ethnic groups.

Mordi, (Nukueye and Emeni, 2018), has argued that the threats to Nigeria's existence as a cooperate entity date back to the amalgamation era of 1914. That the amalgamation had been secretly and unilaterally imposed on Nigerians by the British to further their economic goals. And so, it was unpopular, and produced the first occasion for threats of secession, and since then there have been quite a lot of such agitations from different ethnic nationalities which make up the country.

The existence of numerous radical ethnic groups or associations, many of which agitate for the dissolution of the nation or protest one form or another of perceived injustice, must be emphasized emphatically as posing a serious threat to Nigeria's peace and security today. The Ijo Youth Council, the Odua People's Congress, the Arewa People's Congress, the Arewa Youth's Forum, the Igbo Youth's Congress, the Isoko National Youth's Movement, the Urhobo Youth's Forum, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are a few of these ethnic associations.

For instance, Nnamdi Kanu, the head of IPOB, was cited in one of the national dailies in 2017 as having made certain separatist remarks laced with violent threats. The head of IPOB claims that certain individuals discuss restructuring; are we already restructuring Nigeria? Is fiscal federalism being practiced? Do we practice devolution? Biafra is what we desire! We're going to abstain from the Anambra State election. There won't be any elections in Biafra country after Anambra 2017 until they give us a date for the referendum (New Telegraph, August 28, 2017, P. 4)

It was no surprise that Nnamdi Kanu took practical actions to actualize his objectives by ordering the members of his IPOB to barricade major roads in the South East, and boycott the election in Anambra State. If not for the quick, though rash, intervention of the Federal Government through the instrumentality of the Nigeria Army, the secessionist attempt of IPOB would have prevailed. No

doubt, the clash between the army, the Police Force and IPOB members has always left a lot of casualties in terms of loss of lives and property. Though Nnamdi Kanu is presently under detention by the Federal Government, there have been renewed calls by IPOB members and occasionally from MASSOB for the actualization of the secession of Biafra from the rest of Nigeria, backed up by series of violent drastic measures.

It is important to note also that apart from the Igbo (MASSOB, IPOB), the Yoruba (OPC) and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) have equally agitated for the separate countries of their own, Oduduwa and Niger Delta Republics respectively in recent times (Wikipedia.org, 2021).

Armed Robbery and Kidnapping:

In Nigeria of today, incessant killing and widespread armed robbery and kidnapping incidents are also among the serious security challenges confronting the citizens. These are caused by unemployment, poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, lack of access to capital, lack of conducive environment among others for the actualization of the citizens' potentials and aspirations for greatness and self fulfillment. These and others already discussed in the preceding analysis are capable of causing breakdown of law and order, insecurity and lack of peace in the country. Osakwe (2009) has noted that,

For any population to prosper, live in peace, and experience real development, security is a crucial concern. Insecurity of life and property is one of Nigeria's main issues that appears to have eluded security services' efforts.....

Potential investors are scared by insecurity, which is a significant hindrance to the growth of a country.

It is also imperative to emphasize that Nigeria is yet to experience peace as various incidents of insecurity continue to ravage different parts of the country daily in recent years. Lately in Ekiti State, Policemen arrested 18 criminals for various offenses ranging from robbery, cultism, rape and kidnapping. And in another similar development, rival cult groups clashed violently for weeks in Asaba, the capital of Delta State, which claimed several lives and created serious fear, panic, confusion and chaos among the people of the area. Yet in Oyo State, angry youths attacked the Oyo State Police Command Headquarters, Eleyele, Ibadan, because of the escape of a serial killer (New Telegraph, August 20, 2020, PP.6&7).

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that security challenges are widespread and dangerous threats to the peace and development of the country. These challenges, as already stated, include acts of terrorism by Boko Haram, the nefarious activities of Fulani Herdsmen, Bandits, persistent militancy, violent protests and agitations, ethnic and religious crises, armed robbery and kidnapping in different parts of the country. The analysis has also attempted to highlight the serious implications which the security challenges have for the safety of the citizens of the country, the mutual unity or co-existence of its diverse elements, and the state of economic and political development.

The preceding discussion has equally abundantly shown that the country is on the brink of disintegration due to the enormous weight, capacity and large – scale persistence of the security crises across its geo-political zones. There is every reason to believe that the tenacity and seriousness of these challenges have greatly overwhelmed the security apparatus of government. The Boko Haram Islamic sect, the Fulani Herdsmen and Bandits, for instance, as has been shown, are still menacingly wreaking havoc in different parts of the country. This largely underscores the fact that the government has failed to find proactive and permanent solutions to some, if not all of these challenges. This is why they still rear their ugly heads everywhere now and then to truncate the peace and development of the country to no end.

It is in the light of the afore-stated fact that some recommendations have been made herein for the attention of the government, its agencies and other stakeholders for the urgent and permanent resolution of the security crises in the country.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the attention of both the government and the public:

i. Good Governance:

Good and effective representative governance in Nigeria can help in a great way to put the country on good track and ease the present menacing security crises which portend serious danger for her citizens, unity, peace and progress. The necessity for good governance in the country is to make government responsible to the people's yearnings through the initiation and implementation of policies and projects which will meet their daily needs for a comfortable standard of living.

ii. Creation of Jobs:

The creation of jobs to employ large number of unemployed youths by the government and other stakeholders in the country will go a major way in reducing the escalating rate of insecurity. To achieve this, the government and private entrepreneurs will have to establish industries, companies and other ventures in the country where the unemployed youths will be gainfully employed. This is why the government urgently needs to diversify the economy to include other sectors like agriculture and mining besides the oil and gas, in order to create more jobs for the teeming youth

iii. Industrialization and Diversification of the Economy:

The industrial base of this country is, no doubt, very weak, thus there is the serious and urgent need for the government and private sectors to build more viable industries and companies, revamp or refurbish those that are moribund like the Ajakuta Steel Rolling Mill, the Delta Steel Company at Ovwian/Aladja, the Nigerian Coal Corporation, Enugu, Asaba Textile Mill and others to make the country a better place economically. The politicians and the high profile public office holders who embezzle the country's funds and stash them away to develop foreign countries, should better have a rethink, and divert such monies towards the development of industries and other productive economic ventures where the teeming youths and other people will be gainfully employed.

iv. Proactive Approach to Security Challenges:

The various sources through which arms enter into the country must be properly investigated and blocked, to prevent terrorists, militants and other criminals easy access to sophisticated arms. All illegal arms carriers in the country should be arrested and prosecuted within 24 hours of arrest including their dealers and sponsors. Also very crucial is the fact that all law enforcement agencies must always be in sight and at alert to check the activities of criminals in the country.

v. The Need for a Sovereign National Conference and National Consensus:

The agitation for a Sovereign National Conference has been on in this country for some time now by many well meaning Nigerians. From the way the country is drifting currently, it is important to have a conference of this type where representatives of all the diverse ethnic nationalities will congregate to resolve all lingering issues relating to their peaceful and mutual co-existence for a robust development to thrive in all ramifications within this geopolitical entity called Nigeria. The important issues to be addressed in such conference include: political and economic restructuring of the country; critical review of the faulty

foundation of the federal structure and system of government in the country; the issue of equity, justice and fairness relating to the aspirations and agitations of different nationalities.

References

- ACAPS (2020) www.acaps.org/country/Nigeria/crisis/northwest-banditry
- ACAPS (2021) www.acaps.org/country/Nigeria/crisis/northwest-banditry.
- Audu, B. (2020) The Origins of Boko Haram and why it Matters.
www.hudson.org/research/15608
- Audu, B. (2019) “Nigeria’s Child Veterans Are Still Living a Nightmare,”
“Foreign Policy, August 25. <https://foreignpolicy.com>
- Cambridge Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (2015)
- Claire, F. (2018) “Nigeria’s Battle With Boko Haram,” Council on Foreign
Relations,
August 8.
- Collins Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (2017)
- Daily Post (2021) Muslim and Christian Clashes in Kwara, March 17,
Daily Post@Daily Post.....Phx@gmail.com
- Ikelegbe A, (2013) Women Groupings, Resource, Conflict and Peace Building
in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Benin City. University of Benin.
- Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015, <https://economicandpeace.org/wp-content/---Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.Pdf>
- John C. (2019) “Nigeria Security Tracker, “Africa Programme and Nigeria on the
Brink, June 1.
- Marsha, E. (2017) “Militants demand return of Oil Wells to Niger Delta”, In
New Telegraph, August 28, P.7.

- Mordi, E (2005) “The Return of Democracy and Escalating Violence in Nigeria, 1979. The challenge of Democracy in the 21st Century, Orubu, O.C et al (eds). Benin City. Ethiope Pub .Corporation.
- Nathaniel, A. (2019) “How Boko Haram has Regained the Initiative and What Nigeria Should do to Stop it.” (War on the Rocks)
<https://warontherocks.com>
- New Telegraph, August 20, 2020, PP.3,6,7,16 and 27.
- New Telegraph, August 228, 2020, P.4
- Nukueye, J. and Emeni, F. (2018) “Addressing Identity Politics-Ethnicity, Intergroup Relations and Religion-As a Means of Tackling the Challenges of Peace and Security in Nigeria for National Development-A Historical Analysis.” In A Multi-Disciplinary Journal Vol. 26, No. 1.
- Oluwole, O. (2021) www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2021/02/18/rising-insecurity-in-northwest-nigeria-terrorism-thinlydisguised-as-banditry/
- Osakwe, E. (2009) Navigating The Nation Through Today’s Shame To Tomorrow’s Fame: Social Studies As Pilot. 17thInaugural Lectures of Delsu. Abraka, Nigeria.
- Paleri, P. (2013) National Security: Imperatives and Challenges. New Delhi.Tata McGraw-Hill. Urhobo Times, August 26, 2012. P.10 Wikipedia.Org. (2021).