

The Problem of Terrorism and Insecurity in Nigeria and its Consequences on National Development

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the problems of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria and its attendant consequences on national development, highlighting the aggregate effects of the activities of the Boko Haram terrorists in the Northeast, Bandits in the Northwest, Militants in the Niger Delta, and Fulani Herdsmen across the Country. The qualitative and analytical methodologies will be used in order to explain in details the problems, issues and solutions to the problem of Terrorism and Insecurity in Nigeria. This research finds that the hydra-headed monster of Terrorism and Insecurity ravaging Nigeria in recent times occasioned by indiscriminate attacks razing from vehicular bombing, suicide bombing, sporadic shootings in densely populated areas, razing of police stations, churches, kidnappings of school girls and women; the invasion of farmlands, destruction of crops; rape, armed robbery, murder, destruction of oil facilities; and killings of travelers; by Boko Haram Terrorists, Herdsmen, Militants and Bandits across Nigeria, has resulted in the loss of incalculable lives and properties with a far reaching consequence on national economy and development. This has resulted in the decline in foreign private investments and FDI, economic redundancy and wastage due to attacks on oil facilities. It further recommends that the Nigerian government should quit playing politics with terrorism and seek International supports from Countries with prior history of terrorism, whilst empowering the Nigerian military with sophisticated weapons and adequate strategic surveillance to effectively combat insurgency.

Keywords: Terrorism, Insecurity, Corruption, Bandits, Herdsmen, Boko Haram, Militants, Insurgency.

Introduction

The increasing rate of insecurity in Nigeria is becoming worrisome and scary by the day. It becomes even more worrying that the Nigerian government appears handicapped in curbing this existential threat of insecurity in Nigeria. Presently, Nigeria appears to be grappling with security problems cutting across its six regional regions with the North-East, North Central, and South-South regions being the hottest, hotter and hot zones respectively. Residents in these regions are forced to sleep

with one eye open in an environment of uncertainties while the government that has the responsibility of ensuring the protection of lives and properties appears confused and handicapped (Nwozor, 2013).

Insecurity is the state of being unsafe or insecure or a state of mind characterized by self-doubt and vulnerability (Chinedu, 2012). In modern times, the protection of lives and properties is very fundamental to the socio-economic survival of any given society. Consequently, it falls within the responsibility of government to provide adequate security of lives and properties in a particular social formation. Security is the most important element in human life. Without security, social, economic, and political achievements cannot be attained nor sustained. Every responsible government deploys every strategy in protecting and deepening its fundamental values, aimed at encouraging people to live their lives in free, secure and safe environments in line with their shared common beliefs by preserving their national interest, identity, and sovereignty (Eme, 2011).

Factors responsible for Insecurity in Nigeria

The following factors have been identified as the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria

Unemployment and Poverty: Unemployment births poverty and extreme poverty births criminality which in turn births insecurity. In Nigeria, the increase in unemployment have pushed many Nigerians into extreme poverty thereby making them desperate to survive by any means possible. These people becomes willing tools in the hands of mischief makers as they are easily vulnerable to a life of criminality and crimes.

Ethnicity and Religious Differences: The multi-ethnic composition of Nigeria have presented political and religious leaders across the nation the platform to instigate ethnic sentiments, hatred and rivalry amongst different ethnic nationalities in order to achieve their selfish ambitions. Nigeria's various ethnic groups continues to protest against neglect, racism, dominance, abuse, victimization, injustice, marginalization, nepotism, and intolerance. Consequently, the inability of government to bring to address the issues that fuel ethnic and religious differences and sentiments often results in ethnic violence and religious conflicts.

Corruption: Corruption is generally believed to be the greatest cankerworm feasting on the development of Nigeria with evidence of government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse. The present state of insecurity in Nigeria is unarguably a result of government failure, attributed to widespread corruption. This hydra-headed monster have had an enormous impact in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria as the Nigerian government allocates billions of dollars for the purchase of sophisticated weapons for the Nigerian army to effectively prosecute the war against terrorism. It is however regrettable that these huge amounts of money finds its way into the private accounts of politicians and high ranking military officers, leaving the foot soldiers weak, vulnerable and less equipped against the heavily armed Boko Haram terrorists. This have resulted in the incalculable loss of National assets in human and material resources in the North, as Nigerian soldiers are continually made to pay the supreme price for the corrupt politician and military officers. Nigeria is largely under-policed and this perhaps explains the reason why the Nigerian police force is not proactively effective in tackling the national challenges of insecurity and criminality. Many Nigerian soldiers fighting the Boko Haram terrorists in the Northeast of the country have been ambushed on several occasions and killed as a result of leaked information regarding their operations, surveillance and strategy by insiders (Eme, 2013).

Unguarded and Porous Borders: The country's unguarded borders, where human movements are left unchecked, have led to Nigeria's level of insecurity with the arrival of Fulani militias from Mali parading themselves as herdsmen, raping, maiming and destroying farms across the country. There is an unregulated inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country as a result of the porous borders which has fueled militancy and crime in Nigeria. Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8million illegal weapons that have been used to create a security crisis. Furthermore, the porous condition of the Nigerian borders has contributed the unrestricted influx of migrants, mostly young people, from neighboring countries such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and the Republic of Benin accountable for some of the insecurity skyrocketing criminal activities in Nigeria (Achumba et al., 2013).

Marginalization and Inequalities: Nigeria's current government has been strongly accused with ethnic disparity, and the marginalization of some sections of the country in the provision of basic infrastructure and appointments into strategic public offices, and this has further worsened Nigeria's insecurity crisis. Fulani Northerners are given strategic political positions while the South-East was left in the cold. Consequently, the agitation for Biafran Republic has gathered momentum in the last decade. Vast majorities of the public have a sense of deprivation, oppression, marginalization, and this has resulted in dissatisfaction and loss of hope, particularly among the youth. Such young people are now expressing their disillusionment with the state of affairs by any means possible, whether legal or illegal (Eme et al., 2015).

Bad Governance and Poor Leadership: Any government anywhere has the core responsibility of providing basic services such as water, electricity, good road network, quality education, and general infrastructure. However, these basic infrastructures are scarcely available in Nigeria and the people, in general, are frustrated and demoralized. Demoralization and anger logically provide a strong fertile ground for aggression and general insecurity (Muhammed Et al, 2010). The scarcity of these basic amenities in the midst of extreme corruption continues to fuel people's resentment against the government, hence an increase in insecurity.

Methodology/Theoretical Framework

The objective of this study is to assess the rate of insecurity in Nigeria; understand the factors responsible for Insecurity in Nigeria; as well as proffer lasting solutions to the menace of Insecurity in Nigeria. In order to achieve the set objective, the paper used qualitative and analytical technique in order to explain in details the problems, issues and solutions to the problem of Terrorism and Insecurity in Nigeria. The researcher sourced and analyzed data from journals and books relevant to the subject.

The main theory guiding this study is the Democratic Peace Theory propounded by (Doyle, 1998). The theory aptly captures the Security challenges in Nigerian. It argues that the issue of security largely depends on promoting democratic institutions to discharge their responsibilities efficiently; and a security policy must be aligned with the long-term spread of democracy. Therefore, the approach to guaranteed security is to encourage democratic system. The democratic peace theory asserts that democratic states do not fight wars against other democratic entities. Doyle argued that there was a difference in democratic practice towards democratic societies and democratic practice towards undemocratic societies.

The Socio-economic Implications of Terrorism and Insecurity in Nigeria

Over the last decade, North Eastern Nigeria has been under constant terrorist attack from an extremely violent sect known as Boko Haram. However, the activities of Boko Haram appears to be financed by both local and foreign sources, resulting to the deaths of thousands of people, while tens of thousands had been rendered homeless and properties worth billions of Naira destroyed (Zumve et al., 2013). The terrorism has negatively impacted Nigeria's economy over the years.

Increased social insecurity in Nigeria has encourage an increase in crime rate, leaving bitter consequences for the nation's economy and its growth. The increase in terrorist bombings, kidnappings, armed robbery attacks on banks as well as other violent crimes, have led to a constant loss of the nation's human capital. This negative trend poses a huge threat to the future of the nation's agricultural productivity and real sector levels, private sector investment volume, petroleum sector growth rate, labor and general economic development. In 2013, the National Population Commission gave the estimate that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria increased from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% in 2011. The NPC reported that the nation's economic growth had not translated into job creation (Adagba et al., 2012).

It was further estimated that terrorism cost the Nigerian economy US\$28.48 billion—a number that has drastically increased in the face of the escalation of the ferocity of attacks in since 2013. While the origins of terrorism are clearly complex, economic factors are often cited as an important determining factor in the spread of terrorist organizations. The tourism sector which generates approximately N80 billion annually has been held stand still. The popular Argungu fishing festival, Yankari Games Reserves, the Mambila Plateau, the tomb of Othman Dan-Fodio, all of which attracts tourists from within and outside the country have been grounded alongside the various economic activities within value chain (Edeko, 2011). The infrastructural sub-sector of the northern economy has been negatively impacted. This is because a good number of international and local contractors across the various northern states engaged in the construction of roads, bridges, housing estate development, the dams, National Integrated Power projects and railway track rehabilitation have either neglected sites or relocated to other states. About 73.3% of business has suspended operations in northern Nigeria because of this insecurity. This reveals the huge capital flight from northern economy in both human and financial terms. The most affected states includes: Borno, Yobe, Kano and Sokoto (Tella, 2015). In the core service sector, schools, hospitals, hotels, parks and recreational outfits are packing up. Non-indigenous students are relocating down to the south; many doctors have transferred to other peaceful states, hotels and parks now records low turn-out of visitors. All these portend losses to northern economy in particular, and the Nigerian economy in general. The health, banking and insurance, and Education sector have collapsed (Emmanuel, 2019).

The Agricultural sector is another critical sector of the Nigerian economy that has been hit by the problem of insecurity. This is because the activities of boko haram terrorists and Fulani herdsmen have discouraged farmers. Most northerners are known to be engaged in this sector. Agricultural output is drastically reducing as farmers in Kaduna, Plateau, and Sokoto no longer feel safe enough to go to the farm for fear of possible attacks. This have reduced Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product. People no longer invest in productive ventures in the north as a result of fear; while businesses that would have impact on the GDP of the country are being destroyed with bomb attacks in various locations up north (Hazen, 2007). Foreign investors who are willing to invest in Nigeria are

scared to establish their businesses here due to fear of the activities of the Boko Haram sect that have earned Nigeria a place in the list of terrorist countries. Foreign investors rather prefer to invest in neighboring countries like Ghana, instead of Nigeria which have also affected the economy negatively.

Recommendations

The Presidential Committee on security charged with the responsibility of assessing the challenges in the North East Zone had identified various security failures, inter-service conflict and lack synergy as factors that have encouraged the proliferation of security crises in the Northern part of the country. It also attributed the issue of insecurity on high level of poverty, unemployment and other social ills (Nwadiakor, 2011). This study shares the opinion that serious security synergy and intelligence sharing must be urgently enhanced in order to solve the problem of insecurity in Nigeria with some sort of international assistance. The federal government must promote interagency cooperation and synergy through diplomatic methods, and foreign intelligence to make sure that every form of criminality is stopped.

The ongoing Lake Chad Basin countries' collaborations should be encouraged. Furthermore, it is imperative to promptly move to demilitarize the Nigerian society and prevent or restrict the heavy influx of small and light arms and ammunition in the country which have increased the rate of crimes in recent times. Consequently, the Customs and Immigration Services and the Ministry of Interior should work in synergy to protect and police the porous Nigerian borders (Nwagboso, 2012). The government at all levels, should implement reforms in the security sub-sector to remove inertia created by inter-agency rivalry and react decisively to security threats with swift dispatch.

The citizens must cooperate with the security agencies by providing them with prompt, useful and relevant information on security threats. A well-coordinated and efficient biometric database of Nigerians and non-Nigerians should be developed indicating where people live, their nature of jobs and background. This will help the security officials in their core duties of guaranteeing the security of lives and properties. Finally, crucial steps should be taken to defeat the Boko Haram Sect and cut their funding, if the government will successfully quell their terrorist operations in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011).

Furthermore, the government should explore the following recommendations in proffering lasting solutions to the menace of insecurity in Nigeria:

- a. The government should adopt Community Policing within each divisional police headquarters for effective management of insecurity.
- b. The government should improve the Nigerian economy through the provision of basic social, economic, and physical infrastructure for business and industrial developments
- c. They should totally overhaul the security structure and apparatus through the improvement of the training of security officers, sufficient training in modern security methodologies, the provision of modern equipment and increased remuneration, good service conditions, and convenient after-service arrangements, etc.
- d. The government should increase people's living standards by building more centers of entrepreneurship across the nation.

e. The government should create more job opportunities for the teaming unemployed youths, as a strategy to gainfully engage them and prevent a situation where they are made willing instruments in the hands of mischief makers.

f. The governments should promote good governance, transparency and accountability as a strategy to reassure the citizens that the government is doing enough to improve the living conditions as well as the security situations in the country.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that terrorism is an archaic and barbaric political weapon. Insecurity in Nigeria poses a huge threat to life and property, frustrates business activity, and discourages local and foreign investors, which generally undermines the social and economic growth and development of the country. Since 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence, the country have been experiencing rising insecurity in Nigeria. Recently, the rising insecurity has taken a dangerous dimension that threatens all aspects of Nigeria's existence. Therefore, addressing such challenges should be Nigeria's priority at all levels because the nation cannot attain any significant development in the face of rising insecurity and terrorism (Onifade et al., 2013). Governments at all levels need to be proactive in proffering lasting solutions to security issues and threats using modern methods of intelligence gathering and sharing intelligence, preparation, logistics, surveillance, and use of advanced technology to fight insecurity in the country.

This study finds that the Nigerian government have not done enough to arrest the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. It concludes with the advice that the Nigerian government should re-strategize and become more proactive in the fight against insurgency, terrorism, banditry, herdsmen activities, kidnapping, militancy and every form of criminality in the country.

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