

## **Tackling Nigeria Security Challenges for Socio-Economic Development and Sustainability**

<sup>1</sup>**Moses Oladipo LIJADU**

*E-Mail: Mosesladipo@Gamil.Com Tel: +2348034058763*

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<sup>2</sup>**Amos Adekunle ADEDIRAN**

*E-Mail: Speaktoa3@Yahoomail.Com Tel: +2348060932337*

<sup>1&2</sup>*School of Arts and Social Sciences  
Department of Social Studies*

*Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta, Ogun State*

### **Abstract**

*Nigeria which is often referred to as the “Giant of Africa” and “a land flowing with milk and honey” because of her richly blessed array of human, material and natural resources is now becoming a shadow of herself because of the present predicament of plethora of contemporary security challenges ranging but not limited to inadequate security man-power, obsolete/ substandard security equipments, poor funding of security operations and diversion of funds, porous borders, diverse ethnic culture, religious intolerance among others. This paper chronicles the various lapses of security challenges in Nigeria and also gave some of the dire consequences on both the government and citizens alike. Some of these include cult-related activities, political assassination, pipeline/gas pipe vandalization, hostage takings, and kidnapping for monetary ransoms and gains, terrorism, youth restiveness, religious and ethnic riots, insurgency and militia attacks to mention but a few. All these had and still continue to affect Nigeria’s socio-economic, educational and political development and sustainability. The paper concludes that security departments in Nigeria should be well funded, be given modern and sophisticated weapons and equipments, recruitment, training and re-training of security personnel, good remuneration and other welfare packages among others. It therefore recommends the formulation and effective implementation of policies and programmes to address some of the root causes of insecurity such as inequitable distribution of resources decayed infrastructure, poverty, and unemployment. Also, good governance, access to qualitative and affordable education and religious tolerance are recommended for Nigeria’s sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Development, Sustainability, Tackling, Security*

## **Introduction**

Nigeria is richly blessed with a lot of human and material resources, hence she is referred to as the 'giant of Africa'. In fact many Nigerians at home and in the diaspora have excelled in various fields of human endeavours which had brought many accolades and honour to the nation. However, despite this, Nigeria is still faced with a catalogue of security threats and challenges in almost all facets of life-religious, socio-economic, political, education among others.

This paper examines the causes and types of various security challenges facing Nigerians in particular and Nigeria as a nation in general. It also seeks to find out the extent to which the internal security problems arising from the activities of Boko Haram, in the North East, militia insurgency in the South South, various religious and sectarian crisis in various parts, of the nation like the Jos crisis and a host of other have adversely affected on the Nigerian economy, education and political life.

Usman (2010), Asun (2007), Aghedo and Oarhe (2009), argued that despite the establishment of numerous security apparatus as well as huge budgetary allocation to security agencies, Nigeria's security management is bedeviled with misdiagnosis and very poor institution building.

This paper therefore suggests various ways of tackling the numerous security challenges confronting the nation so as to ensure, integration, stability, good governance and development. This is because the constitution of Nigeria makes it the responsibility of the government to harness, coordinate human and financial resources of the nation for the protection of lives and property of her citizens. Due to this constitutional provision, the issue of security provision cannot to treated with kid gloves and should be the concern of all and sundry.

### **The Concept of Security**

Security is defined by the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007) as things that are done to keep a person, building or country safe from danger or crime. Security as an essential concept is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherished values, especially the survival of individual, groups or objects in the near future. Thus,

security involves the ability to pursue cherished political and social ambitions (Williams, 2008).

Some experts argued that security is meaningless without a critical discourse of something pertinent to secure and that it can only be understood when situated within the context of a referent object. Some scholars of International Politics argued that states should be the important referent when talking of security but some others disagreed. To Mc Sweeney (1999), any meaningful intellectual discourse on security should give priority to human beings. In the same vein, Rothschild (1995) posited that in the big sweep of human history, the central focus of security has been people.

Despite various controversies, this paper is of the view that a state or nation cannot exist without the people, and that people live within a state, therefore, the referent object of security should be both the state and the people living in it.

Security can also be defined as all actions, measures, perceptions and personnel put in place to ensure safety of lives and assets from danger of harm so that the government and people can carry out their daily activities peacefully. The State Security Service (SSS 2005) averred that security involves the protection of lives and property and the provision of a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere in which individual can go about their lawful business. Oduneye (2008) sees security as the establishment of and maintenance of protective measures which are intended to ensure a state as inviolable from hostile acts of influences.

The Institute of Security and Open Methodologies (2005), also define security as a whole set of actions by which the government guarantees the safety of lives and property of the citizens from internal and external influence. Paine, (1999) observed that there is a correlation between security and survival. Whereas survival is an essential condition, security is viewed as safety, confidence, free from danger, fear and Akpuru-Aja (1999), submitted that one of the objectives of security is that it provides enabling atmosphere for good and political order to survive.

### **Causes of Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria**

There are a myriad of factors causing security challenges in Nigeria. Some of these causes have long historical antecedents and traceable to bad governance while some are recent and even emerging. However the following are some of the root causes and types of security threats in Nigeria.

**Geo-political location and composition of Nigeria-**Nigeria's geographical location makes it to be about and at times around jealous neighbouring countries like Chad, Niger, Benin and Cameroon from where terrorist, militants, herdsmen and other radical fundamentalists infiltrate the porous Nigeria borders to cause mayhem and perpetrate other kinds of harmful behavior to Nigeria. The porous Nigerian borders also encourage the smuggling of contraband goods and the influx of illegal aliens, weapons, arms and ammunitions. Other cross-border bandits also easily come into the country to cause instability and disintegration of the nation.

Furthermore, Nigeria is composed of different tribes with varied tradition and cultures. The people have different languages and multiple religious beliefs, yet they all live together under a geo-political entity called Nigeria. The diversity of these different tribes and cultures always rear its head and manifest in forms of security and political problems when it comes to tribal, economic, geo-political and ethnic equation. The more than two hundred and fifty ethnic groups in Nigeria had different primordial and tribal sentiments leading to internal contending problems and security challenges in terms of security management, allocation of limited national resources among others.

**Inadequate security manpower funding, staffing, recruitment and training-** in Nigeria, many past administration both military and civilian had paid little or no attention to the issue of security in terms of underfunding of security departments and agencies especially the Armed Forces and the Nigeria Police Force. Ekwealor (2007) define staffing as the process by which managers select, train, promote and retire personnel. Poor and inadequate funding of security departments made it impossible to purchase modern and sophisticated equipment,

operation vans, patrol vehicles, epileptic manpower recruitment, training and retraining of security personnel. It has also led to poor motivation and low morale, substandard and obsolete security weapon to adequately combat modern criminal activities and insurgency. Even some of the existing security operational infrastructure are dilapidated and cannot be properly maintained to perform effectively to optimal capacity.

Coupled with poor funding is the diversion of available security money to private pockets by top-echelon of the security forces and their political cronies for other personal gains and uses. For example, the recently celebrated case of the discovery of 2.1 billion dollars released by the former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to the former National Security Adviser, Rtd Col. Sambo Dasuki to purchase arms and ammunition to combat the Boko-Haram insurgency in the North-Eastern zone of Nigeria was diverted to other uses and distributed to the various political associates of the former President, thus making it very difficult to suppress the Boko-Haram insurgency. In fact, in Nigeria, there are 205 policemen protecting 100, 000 citizens as against the United Nations Organization or world's acceptable standards of 222 police per 100, 000 citizens (UNO Report, 2012).

**Poor public awareness on security matter-** there is poor security awareness among many Nigerians on issues concerning them in particular and that of the nation in general. Many citizens are not security conscious due to ignorance, lackadaisical attitude, indiscipline, carelessness and lack of self control in both their private lifestyle or in official public conduct. This lack of awareness is a security challenge because it has rendered crime monitoring and security management ineffective. Even many see security management as the sole responsibility of the government and paid lip service to security matters.

In connection with poor public awareness on security matter is the uncooperative attitude of members of the public with security personnel. There is the alleged high-handedness, lack of respect, and courtesy in the discharge of security duties by the personnel. There is therefore, a bad relationship between citizens and laws enforcement agencies which always snow-balled into the reluctance or outright refusal of members of the public to divulge important and useful security information that

can assist law enforcement agents in prompt responses to emergency and critical security situations. Some people have developed the apathy to security issue because they thought whatever information given to security agents would later be released to the culprits concerned which may have negative implications or consequences on whosoever might have been involved. Law enforcement agents and public communication is not encouraging. Umanah, (1996) submitted that it is through communication that people can establish a shared awareness and understanding of a common goal purpose, and the communication is a reciprocal process of actions and behaviour.

**Overpopulation, Unemployment and Poverty-** all these are among the major causes of security threat and challenge to the corporate existence of Nigeria. The conservative estimated projected population of Nigeria is now put at 170 million people judging from the 2006 Population Census figure of 140.1 million people and the annual population growth rate of about 3%. The uncontrolled and ever-rising population without corresponding planning for infrastructural provision and development of good roads, portable water supply, electricity, good medicare, schools etc is a cause for worry. Presently, overpopulation had led to the twin plague of unemployment and poverty. Many Nigerian youths are now unemployed and poverty is staring them in the face. This has forced them to take to various forms of criminal activities such as prostitution, cultism, kidnapping, robbery among other to eke out a living.

**Corruption among the Nigeria citizens and the security/law enforcement personnel-** the World Bank (1997) specifies corruption as the abuse of public office for private gains. Apart from people in public offices, there are other activities related to corruption in form of direct theft, fraud and embezzlement.

Corruption stems from many factors. It could arise from lack of political leaders concern for things that would benefit the citizenry or when leaders fail to set good examples of transparency, probity, integrity and accountability. Corruption may also result from relatively weak social and political institutions where civil or public servants are often unpaid for moths or when the public is poorly informed, apathetic, cynical,

tolerant or so weak to be unable to protest. Corruption in Nigeria is hydra-headed and has reared its ugly head in various facets of her human endeavours. This is why it is a canker worm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigeria polity and is now difficult if not intractable to control. Igwe, (2010) submitted that much of the large-scale corruption in Nigeria has involved politicians, security agents (the armed forces, police, customs, immigration) and semi-bureaucrats who are part and parcel of the government in power.

Due to corruption, many security personnel neglect or compromise their duties for money. Some of the various forms of corruption among security agents include, bribe-taking at check-points, extortion, compromise and a host of others. Some even allow banned and sub-standard goods to be smuggled into the country through our land border, sea or airports. Also illegal aliens, terrorists and illegal fire-arms find their ways into Nigeria at the expense of national security.

**Economic dependency problems-** Nigeria has a mono-cultural economy. A larger percentage of the revenue accruing to the nation is from mining and extraction of crude oil. While little comes in from non-oil sectors. The major dependency on oil as the main revenue earner for the country without diversification into agriculture, manufacturing, mining, production etc is a great security challenge. Presently, Nigeria is witnessing economic recession due to the current world oil glut, dwindling oil price, stiffer competition among oil producing countries, and the nefarious activities of various militant groups in the Niger-Delta (oil producing) regions of the country. All these have heightened the state of insecurity in the nation.

**Politically motivated security threat and challenge-** these are security challenges resulting from elections and other political activities that had caused crisis and instabilities in Nigeria. Some of them include election riggings and malpractice, political thuggery, vandalization, assassination of perceived or real political opponents, ritual killings for election victory among others through the use of different diabolical means and illegal arms which are often left in the hands of political thugs after election to cause insecurity at the cost of peace and stability of the nation.

**Existence of various rival cult groups in some Nigerian communities and institutions of learning-** many cult groups exist in various communities across Nigeria. These groups see one another as rival and usually compete for power, recognition, supremacy, revenge and a host of others. Some of the Nigeria's institutions of learning (primary, secondary and tertiary) have these rival-cult groups existing on their campuses. Such cult group include "pirate confraternity: "Aye", "Buckaneer" "Eye", "Pink-Ladies", "Black-bra' among others. These various rival cult groups and confraternities are causes of insecurity to the nation especially during cult-related clashes, membership initiation, supremacy battle etc which often led to disruption of normal activities, killing or rival cult members, and innocent people, destruction of lives and property among others.

#### **Effects of Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Nigeria had and is still witnessing a lot of negative consequences of her security threats and challenges. Such effects are too numerous to mention, but this paper will mention just a few of them. They include but not limited to the following:

**Ethnic, tribal, sectarian and religious riots and violence-** the geo-political and diverse ethnic composition of Nigeria had and is still leading to many ethnic clashes, sectarian and religious riots. For example, the Jos sectarian violence of 2007 is worthy of mention. Some of the root causes of the crises are culture, land dispute and inordinate ambition of the Muslims to forcefully convert Christians in the area to Moslems. The crisis led to several attacks of Christians by the Moslems and many Christians were slaughtered, lives and properties worth millions of naira destroyed, and many house burnt, the crisis led to unimaginable agitations confrontations and riots between 2007-2010.

Another effect of related nature on religious and sectarian violence is the dreaded activities of the "Boko-Haram" group. Boko-Haram is derived from the Hausa word meaning "book is evil" or "western education is a sin". The Boko-Haram group is a controversial Islamic militants that seek to impose Sharia law in the northern states of Nigeria.



Ideologically, the group opposes not only western education, but western culture and modern science (Duma, 2010). The group was founded by Utaz Mohammad Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri which later spread to Yobe, Adamawa, Niger, Kano, Abuja and other North Eastern State between 2004 and 2009. Boko-Haram dastardly acts range from killing innocent people, raping women, bombing of major cities, public place, police station etc, setting communities on fire, carting away property and other valuables, such as goats, cow, sheep and rams, kidnapping and hostage taking. In the North Eastern region of Nigeria especially Bornu, Yobe, Adamawa States, the spate of killings, maiming, destruction of lives/ property and forceful displacement of people from their homes through the activities of the dreaded Boko-Haram religious insurgents is very unimaginable. The abduction of over 270 Chibok school girls in a state government secondary school in Bornu State in April, 2014 is worthy of mention.

**Lack of adequate funding of security operatives and personnel-** due to poor funding, many security outfits in Nigeria are operating below capacity. The effect of this is poor staffing, recruitment, training and promotion. Many security agencies have sub-standard and obsolete security equipment's and communication gadgets which cannot be effectively used to combat modern criminal activities and insurgency. As such crimes and many other socio-culture vices continue unabated in the country. These include criminal activities arising from prostitution, drug abuse, hostage taking, for ransome, cultism, human trafficking, and ritual killing among others, leading to loss of lives and wanton destruction of property. All these would otherwise have been properly checked or eradicated if there were enough funds and equipment for security personnel to operate.

**Corruption among the security and law enforcement agencies-** these security agencies include the National Security Agency (NSA), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), State Security Service (SSS), Nigeria Policy Force (NPF), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS, Nigerian Customs Service (NSC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). The corruption in some of these agencies had rendered them ineffective

to monitor and combat crime in Nigeria. Corruption had led to the diversion of fund for procurement of weapons, equipment and other facilities that could make security service effective such that despite the existence of so many security agencies in Nigeria insecurity still persist.

**Economic dependency problem of insecurity also has negative effect-** since Nigeria depended mainly on crude oil for her revenue, many crisis have erupted from this. The Niger-Delta crisis is a very good reference point. The crisis arose in the 1990s due to tension between the foreign oil corporations and some Niger-Delta minority ethnic groups especially the Ijaws and Ogonis who felt they were being exploited (Osungade, 2008). Agitations and violence emerged because of competition for oil wealth. This lead to the extra judicial killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and 9 Ogoni leaders by the Abacha regime. (Ogbodo, 2000)

Some other root causes of agitations in the Niger-Delta are environmental problems, lack of basic amenities, poverty, unemployment among others. This led to the development of many ethnic militia groups like Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for Emancipation of Niger-Delta (MEND), Niger-Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo, Niger-Delta Vigilante led by Ateke Tom, Niger-Delta Avengers (NDA), Niger-Delta Green Mandate Justice and a host of others. These groups comprised mostly different young men from Warri Port-harcourt, Yenagoa and their sub-urban areas (Aderoju, 2008).

The consequences of the existence of these militia groups include hostage taking, kidnapping, bombing of oil and gas pipe line facilities, killings, etc to the extent that the economy of Nigeria is now paralyzed daily and a lot of accrued revenue to the government wasted.

Overpopulation, poverty and unemployment have dire consequences as a security challenges in Nigeria because many Nigeria youths who are now unemployed have taken to cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, prostitution and other forms of vices as a way of life in order to survive. For instance, the history of kidnapping started in the south east zone of Nigeria especially in Abia and Imo States. And it became very rampant shortly after the 2007 General Elections in those states when youth that were used by politicians during the elections later

engaged in kidnapping as a means of livelihood. Kidnapping since then has turned to be a profitable business among youths in Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, and other states of the federation. Kidnapping has forced many companies to fold up or relocated, forced many foreigners to flee the country, causes untold hardship to those kidnapped and their families, gave Nigeria a bad image to the outside world etc.

### **Conclusion**

Many of the security threats and challenges arose from the inability of the government to address to root causes of disaffection, agitation and anger among various groups making up Nigeria. These challenges have led to various riots and violence among the different ethnic groups and its people. There have been internal security threats due to the activities of the Boko-Haram Islamic extremists and Fulani herdsman in the North East, kidnapping in the South East, militia insurgency in the Niger-Delta and other religious and sectarian riots in different states of Nigeria.

All these catalogue of violence had negatively affected Nigeria image abroad, stifled economy, lowered oil production, decrease revenue generation, shortened the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), increase inflation and external borrowing. The Nigerian economy is now in recession and a greater percentage of her revenue is being lost to pipe and gas line vandalization which has led to the problems of unemployment, infrastructural decay, poor investment opportunities, wanton destruction of lives and properties. Even now, many states of the Federation cannot pay workers salaries for months and the federal government itself has resorted to external borrowing to pay workers salaries and finance the implementation of the budget.

### **Recommendations**

To tackle the various security challenges and its negative consequences facing Nigeria, this paper recommends the following:

- Formulation and effective implementation of police and programmes to address the causes of insecurity such as: corruption, poverty, unemployment, insurgency etc.

- Total overhaul of security operations and re-training of security forces in modern technologies and equipment handling for combating crime and criminality.
- Government should ensure adequate funding, proper recruitment and prompt payment of salaries of security agencies, so as to enhance security management strategy and improve efficiency.
- The Federal Government should proactively implement the Amnesty Programme of the Late Yar' Adua administration for the Nigeria-Delta militants and improve on it to include other infrastructural facilities and other welfare packages for the Niger-Delta people to enable them stop the incessant attacks on oil and gas line facility.
- There is the urgent need to diversify the economy of the country from the mono-culture of oil production to other source of non-oil sector such as agriculture, manufacturing etc so as to reduce inflation, provide job opportunities, increase revenue and bring about other forms of development.
- Federal Government should enhance the quality and standard of education at all levels so as to eradicate illiteracy, and ignorance. Peace studies and security management education should be introduced into the school curriculum so as to make youths and other citizens be security conscious and desist from act such as thuggery, terrorism, vandalization etc that could endanger the individual and the society at large.
- There should be good governance, justice, equity and tolerance among the various ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. Leaders should lead by good example.
- The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should ensure and conduct free, fair and credible election to prevent security violence and riots emanating from poor election conduct and result. This will make it possible for credible leaders to be elected into public office.
- States should legislate and make laws on kidnapping and hostage taking. There should be stiffer penalties for anybody caught engaging in them. In fact, other states of the federation should follow Kano,

Lagos and some states who have now made death penalty or life imprisonment a punishment for either of the offences.

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