

Nigeria's Security Challenges and the way Forward.

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Abstract

The persistence of insecurity of lives and properties in society has caused/posed fear, threat and anxiety to the citizens in our society. This paper, therefore, examined the concept of security and identified various types and classification of insecurity facing Nigerian, which includes herder-farmers conflicts, terrorism/religion extremism, ethno-religion crisis, organized violent groups, weak security system, Niger Delta crisis, and kidnapping among others. However, the paper identified the strategies required by the government to solve the secondary challenge, which includes practical and practice leadership, job creation, good and quality education, improved funding for expanded Armed forces, involvement of religious organizations and the role of civil society and the paper came out with some recommendations such as equity, fairness and justice for all the citizens; prompt actions by the government via reconciliation between herders and farmers, religious tolerance among citizen and increasing security vote of security agencies.

Keywords: Insecurity; Violent Groups; Herders; Religious Tolerance

Introduction

Different governments of the world have accorded priority attention to the security of lives and properties. The reason is that an atmosphere devoid of fear, anxiety, threat, harm etc., to citizens' lives and properties will enhance economic and political development. It is generally believed that development cannot flourish in an atmosphere of crisis, anxiety, fear and wanton destruction.

Nigeria has been passing through difficult security situations. There have been so many security challenges that have consistently threatened the cooperative existence of our society. It is argued that security may not be the absence of threats but the ability/ to rise to the challenges posed by threats with expediency and expertise (Robert-Okah,2014). Nigeria's homes have additional burglary-proofed windows and doors, high electrified barbed wire fences and much more. In contrast, in advanced countries, homes are only fitted with security cameras and door-peep holes. In contrast, some homes have pre-authentication on their telephone before connecting calls (Ndukwe,2009). This paper, therefore, explores Nigeria's security challenges and proffers solutions to them.

Concept of Security

According to Mesjasz (2004), the English word, 'security' originated from the Latin word which entered the English Language in the 16th century "securus" which means without and 'curus' means "uneasiness" that is 'security' originally meant liberation from uneasiness, or a peaceful situation without any risk or threats. In the opinion of Otto and Ukpere(2012), security relates to peace, safety, happiness, and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis.

William (2008) sees security from the socio-political perspective when he states that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. Security, therefore, means protection against or safety from future risk of severe deprivation, injury or death and rules, order and impartial adjudication and application Robert-Okay (2014) and Okwori(1995) posit that it means the state's capabilities to defend its territorial integrity from threats, actual and imagined, as well as acts of aggression from other potential enemies. However, it also embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizen and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violence (Achumba et al.,2013).

Classification and Types of Insecurity In Nigeria

Some security challenges were highlighted by Nwagboso(2010); Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim (2013).

- Fulani Herdsmen and farmers conflict: Pastoralists searching for grazing land for their cattle have often found themselves in disputes with farmers' landowners, which have turned violent.
- Terrorism/Religion Extremism insurgency in the North East: driven by the Islamic terrorist group, Boko Haram. The conflict has had a devastating impact on the regional economy(Achumba eta, at2013).
- Ethno-Religion Crisis: and The Jos Crisis: Oladoyinbo (2010) stated that the crisis in Jos Plateau state was highly complex as it had ethnic, religious, socio-political and economic undertones. Also, Nwagboso (2010) and Onifade Etal (2013) argued that the Jos crisis's root causes were some Muslims' inordinate desire to convert Christians in the area to Muslim faithful forcefully.
- Organized violent groups: Organized violent groups such as Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOS),

Vigilante Secret cults in tertiary institution and political thugs have contributed to security challenges in Nigeria.

- Niger Delta crisis: The inability of the government to address the environmental problem facing Niger Delta people, poverty, unemployment and lack of basic amenities resulted in the spawning of the Niger Delta crisis leading to the militarization of the entire region (Nwagboso,2012).
- Kidnapping: This refers to forceful abduction for ransom. It has some abducting school children, traditional rulers, foreigners and innocent citizens.

Strategies Needed by Government to Solve Security Challenges

- There is a need for effective and proactive leadership with a nationalist outlook rather than leaders that will pay lip service to security matters. Nigerians must be led by a moral leadership full of moral values and virtues that will contend and strive to secure the commitment and support of their citizens to ensure good governance (Onifade, Imhonoopi & Urim 2013).
- Unemployment reduction through job creation: High rising of unemployment among the youth catalyzes insecurity in Nigeria. Over the years, the three levels of government should look inwardly to problem-solving skills and creative opportunities as alternatives to fight against poverty and youth unemployment in Nigeria(Nweke & Nwachukwu 2014). The reason is that job creation can improve human security, security risk and criminal behaviours.
- Good and quality education: Education promotes human development in a country at individual and collective levels, enhancing better employment and reducing poverty.
- Improved funding for an expanded armed force: The staff strength of the defence sector of the Nigerian Army could be better. Also, poor accountability for current security makes it difficult to call or argue for an increase. Further, security agencies need to be modernized through capacity building through advanced training, intelligence sharing, advanced technology, motivation and change of orientation and proper funding.
- Good governance and economic development-Good governance is the pillar upon which a challenging economy and sustainable security are built. Regrettably, the idea of good governance has become an illusion in Nigeria. Nigerian people's political, economic and social well-being is often compromised mainly by the politicians who sing songs of change that end up in their pockets. Hence, there is a need for the

Nigerian state through good governance to resolve human security issues bordering on several areas, including the promotion of equitable distribution of resources, power, peace and prevention of violence.

- Religious organizations can play a very prominent role in ensuring security in the country. The role of values must be balanced since values govern behaviours. A society where social values and norms are distorted, violated, and compromised cannot survive. Indeed, Nigerian people live in an atmosphere of instability and insecurity (Clifford,2009). Therefore, the religious crisis will likely be mitigated if every religion can tolerate one another.
- The role of civil society-There is a need for civil society to advance the importance of security in Nigeria with the active involvement of civil society in security management. The groups need to play the roles of critic, catalyst and advocate of public interest by raising public awareness of the disastrous effects of insecurity in our society. They should seriously campaign against human rights abuses and social injustices.

Conclusion

Security challenge poses much serious threat to lives, properties and economic activities, as well as work against the attraction of guest to attract foreign investors. The insecurity situation in Nigeria has not only continued to rise but assumed a dangerous dimension with its attendant consequences on the country's socio-economic advancement.

Recommendations

- The government should review its security policies to meet the emerging challenges of the use of modern technologies.
- The government should take prompt action via reconciliation and compensation whenever there is a clash between herders and farmers.
- Government need to awaken the citizens on religious tolerance and the need for peaceful coexistence.
- Equity, fairness and justice should be for all citizens regardless of ethnic identity.
- An increased amount allocated for security with proper accountability to ensure adequate security management should be urgently implemented.

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