

XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS, RE-APPRAISING THE RECIPROCITY IN NIGERIA - SOUTH AFRICA FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1960-2019

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Abstract

Reciprocity has been considered and practiced as a veritable instrument employed by states in their interactions with other states. Nigeria and South Africa as regional powers operate in an international system where reciprocity is prevalent. Nigeria-South Africa relations gained traction in 1960 when Nigeria attained her independence and South Africa was at the time ruled by a minority white racist regime. Nigeria at its outset adopted an Africa centered foreign policy even though Nigeria-South Africa relations have not been rancor free over time. Many scholarly literatures on South Africans xenophobic attacks merely captured attacks against foreigners generally and no particularly Nigeria. This paper focuses on the misconstrued reciprocity in Nigeria's foreign policy and Nigeria-South Africa relations, 1960-2019. Using secondary and tertiary sources of data collection, the data are analyzed using qualitative historical methodology. The paper interrogates the contentions in South Africa's xenophobic attacks on Nigerians despite Nigeria's Africa centered and "Big Brother" role over time. The paper argues that xenophobic attacks on Nigerians by South Africans negate the concept of reciprocity with regards to Nigeria's valued contributions to South Africa in time past. This study posits that reciprocity in Nigeria-South Africa's relations is far too compromised in the light of these xenophobic attacks on Nigerians. It concludes that unless the painful memories of the historical white racist dominated rule in South Africa are suppressed, misplaced xenophobic attacks targeted at Nigerians may remain a continuum.

Keywords: Reciprocity, Foreign Policy, Xenophobic, Nigeria, and South Africa

Introduction

Nigeria-South Africa relations clearly demonstrated very important two countries in Africa whose action and inaction could to a large extent influence the behaviours of other states in their respective regions and the continent of Africa in general. While Nigeria achieved her political independence earlier than South Africa, it is important to mention that both countries are post-colonial entities. However, the Sharpeville massacre of March 21, 1960, greatly influenced Nigeria in the exercise of its foreign policy commitment to ensure the quick end of decolonization, total eradication of racial segregation and domination in South Africa.¹

Since then, both countries have had political, economic and socio-cultural relations for more strategic partnership in different areas. It is noteworthy to emphasize that the institution of the Peer Review mechanism was initiated and projected by Nigeria and South Africa.² However, Nigeria-South Africa's relations deteriorated during the military regime under General Sani Abacha on the gross abuse of human rights and the subsequent undiplomatic act of hanging the Ogoni Nine and the environmental activist, Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995. Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth in 1996 and South Africa severed her diplomatic relations with

Nigeria.³The emergence of General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 restored normalcy between Nigeria and South Africa's frosty relations.

In recent time, relations between Nigeria and South Africa have demonstrated many worries and calls for re-examination due to South Africa's xenophobic violent attacks record as a means of protest and the targeting of foreigners (Nigerians) in particular cannot be ignored, thereby questioning the concept of reciprocity in the both countries foreign policy. The fact that there are problems in the relations between Nigerians and South Africans cannot be denied. Osita Agbu argues that:

Lack of trust in each other ... added to the wrong perception of Nigerians and Nigeria by South Africans, often arising from stereotyping have engendered xenophobic violent attacks on the former by the latter. Nigerian diplomats have often complained about negative press reports and xenophobic stereotype of Nigeria as drug traffickers and criminals in South Africa.⁴

It is, therefore, from the foregoing that this research will examine the dynamics of South African's xenophobic violent attacks on their erstwhile helper and supporter during her dark days of inhuman racial discrimination by considering the ongoing introduction, conceptualization of terms, Nigeria's goodwill and action supports to South Africa during apartheid, South Africa's xenophobic violence attacks on Nigerians in perspective, unreciprocated reciprocity: implications of the xenophobic violence attacks and conclusion.

Conceptualization of Terms

Reciprocity

The concept of reciprocity is an important tool for the conduct and management of international relations. The concept of reciprocity can have positive (good for good) and negative (ill for ill) meaning depending the way it is applied. Etymologically, it is traceable to a Latin word, 'reciprocus,' and later from French words, *réciprocité* and *réciproque*, in 1766. At the time of its coinage, the meaning ascribed to it was 'return action' or 'response', 'reaction' or 'exchange'.⁵Chuka Enuka sees reciprocity as:

a principle or practice of give and take, making mutual concessions, the granting of privileges in return to similar privileges. To him, it is a return of something done. He further observes that in international relations and treaties, the principle of reciprocity states that favours, benefits or penalties that are granted by one state to the citizens or legal entities of another, should be returned in kind. He concluded by defining reciprocity as action that are contingent on rewarding relations from others and that cease when these expected reactions are not forthcoming.⁶

Shahrad Nasrolahi argues that reciprocity relates to inter-relationship where people or states help and support each other ... with reciprocal treatment without any given restrictions or obligations, taking into consideration of balancing rights where mutual benefits are to be gained and no one should be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.⁷Adopting Ojo Maduekwe's doctrine of diplomacy of reciprocal niceness in Bola A. Akinterinwa's paper which states, "if you are nice to us, we will be nice to you. If you are hostile to us, we will also be hostile to you", should be applied to Nigeria-South Africa's relations.⁸The fact that principle of

reciprocity is a necessary attribute of sovereignty, application of it, should be on the grounds that those who require Nigeria's support must also be prepared to support Nigeria in all levels. Consequently, Reciprocity in Nigeria-South Africa's relations conceptualized in this paper is a misnomer and historical pains of misinvestment and failed reciprocity, considering unreciprocated enormous kind gestures Nigeria has shown to South Africa. Thus, Nigeria-South Africa relations in the context of this paper is unreciprocated reciprocity.

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is referred as the actions of the state towards the external environment as the conditions usually domestic under which those actions are formulated. It is the protection of territorial integrity of states and projection of nations domestic image abroad.⁹ Quoting Joseph Frankel, Hillary I, Ekemam states that Foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve to some extent relations between one state or the other.¹⁰ Chuka Euka asserts that foreign policy can be acceptably defined as decisions, actions and inactions of a state towards other states and non-state actors in pursuit for the realization of the national interest.¹¹

The definition of foreign policy aforementioned by Euka made mention of national interest as a bedrock of foreign policy. National interest according to S. O. Ayah is one of the phrases commonly associated with realists' theory of analysis and denotes demands made by state as their *raison d'être*; hence he argues that national interest may be permanent or temporary but it means object of international politics to which states' foreign policies are primarily attended to promote and protect.¹² National interest of Nigeria in Ayah summarily includes; Survival of the state, Nigeria's Security interest, Nigeria's defence interest and international obligation.¹³

However, Osita C. Eze, observing and explaining the 'concentric circle paradigm' in Nigeria's national interest agrees with Ayah but added the 'welfare of the citizens as one of the core elements' of the Nigeria's national interest.¹⁴ Welfare of the citizens as one of the core elements of Nigeria's national interest is promoted and elaborately encapsulated in Citizen Diplomacy thrust of the Nigeria's foreign policy. Hassan A. Saliu explains that:

Citizen diplomacy connotes the conscious and deliberate efforts of a nation state to cultivate support, understanding and eventual deployment of the citizen for the task of executing its foreign policy ... creation of environment in which every citizen both at home and abroad sees himself as the symbol of his country's foreign policy, ... as the framework for the defense of the rights of the citizens wherever they may be. The concept presupposes that there is a kind of bond between officials conducting the business of the state and the citizens.¹⁵

Thus, the question is, to what extent has Nigeria's foreign policy been able to pursue and protect the welfare of Nigerians abroad amidst xenophobic violent attacks in South Africa? Indeed, it is with mixed reaction. Nigeria's Foreign policy for the sake of this paper is conceptualized as constituting the total of actions, means and processes through which the national interest of the state is achieved, but, it is obviously premised within the parameter of weak action and reactionary postures.¹⁶

Xenophobia

Xenophobia has attracted plethora of definitions by scholars especially when it is examined from the ways its manifestations occur. Scholars like Alaba Oguunsanwo sees xenophobia as deep-rooted irrational or unreasonable fear of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange,

that is, unreasonable fear of hatred. He further argues that xenophobic attitude is associated with migrant influx resented mainly from people at the lower and lowest levels of society who felt more threatened by the presence of migrants, perceived to have come to compete or invariably snatch their lowly paid jobs. These ill-feelings of foreigner's presence happen to the extent that even where there is no scarcity of jobs, the feelings that there are foreigner's unfair competition sways strong, thereby leading to the attribution of intentions to the migrants which ordinarily the migrant may not have.¹⁷

Literally speaking, 'xeno' and 'phobos' originated from Greek words. Phobos means 'fear', while xeno connotes stranger or foreigner.¹⁸In their definition, Oluyemi Fayomi, Felix Chidozie and Charles Ayo state that xenophobia is a dislike and fear of that which is unknown or different from one. The term is typically used to describe a fear or dislike foreigners or people significantly different from oneself, usually in the context of visibly differentiated minorities. They further emphasize that xenophobia is more broadly defined in the 'dictionary of psychology' as a fear of strangers.¹⁹Idehen Roosevelt O. and Osaghae Felix S. O. argued that:

Fear, prejudice and violence are regular causes of xenophobic disposition which is seen as social/psychological anomalies that negate the principles of accommodation and tolerance, fragmenting society into 'we' and 'them', resulting to social division upon which all forms of contestations are based. They however stated that the aggregated psychological discontents are often circulated and diffused as outburst of nationalistic expression upon which sympathy is attracted from the collectivity of the 'we' against 'them' syndrome.²⁰

Xenophobia in this paper is conceptualized as fear of domination by other nationals orchestrated by scarce economic reality, motivated within negative nationalism with the admixture of racism, insecurity and competition. It is a negative perception of a group of people by virtue of their nationality, race, religion etc. against others.²¹Xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerian by South African therefore signify the gap between indigenous discontent of co-habitation and that of immigrants' resilience to associate.

Nigeria's Good-will and Action Supports to South Africa during Apartheid

Nigeria distinguished herself among all other African states as an arrival sovereign power in Africa, starting from the day she had her independence on October 1, 1960, by the fanatical projection of its foreign policy for the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa. However, before Nigeria's independence, the quantum of havoc created by the obnoxious apartheid regime irritated and was vehemently disgusted by Nigeria. The Sharpeville shooting massacre of 21st March, 1960, where apartheid South Africa's government police shot dead 72 blacks and left 184 injured was given utter condemnation by Nigerians, and this marked the subsequent future strategies and actions adopted by Nigeria to confront the minority racist regime in South Africa.²²

Because of Sharpeville's incidence, Nigeria from the beginning of 1960 at the United Nations Assembly advocated vociferously and voted for the condemnation of apartheid as an evil against humanity.²³At home, the then leader of the opposition party in the Federal House of Representative, Chief Awolowo, encouraged Nigerian government to take immediate punitive action against apartheid South Africa and her business interest in Nigeria. Bans were placed on South Africa's importations to Nigeria and the Dutch Reform Church of South Africa was

expelled from Nigeria. Nigeria tactically utilized the opportunity of her first invitation to deliver a speech at the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London, in 1961 and presented the Sharpeville massacre incident to the house, and reactions that followed Nigeria's complaint cumulated to the suspension of South Africa from the Commonwealth of Nations.²⁴ Subsequently, Nigeria went ahead and terminated all the privileges of the Commonwealth of Nations membership which South Africa enjoyed in Nigeria in 1962, and the imposition of trade embargo under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U).²⁵

Nigeria's frantic action and strategy towards the elimination of apartheid in South Africa was demonstrated in her call to the United Nations Security Council to expel South Africa from the organization and pressure for the invocation of Article 6 of the United Nations Charter which provided for expulsion on any member who persisted to show disobedience or infringement to the Charter. Efforts were made by the Nigerian Government to have South Africa expelled from the International Labour Organisation, International Atomic Energy and Olympic Games. Not all these efforts by Nigeria happened immediately, however, they emboldened Nigeria's concerns and voice all over the world and set a pace for international moral attraction and indignation against the inhuman apartheid regime in South Africa.²⁶

The historical speech of General Murtala Mohammed at the OAU extraordinary summit in January 1976, at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, drew the sympathies of the world to the plight of South Africans as he declared:

First, we call the attention of all to the diabolical role of apartheid. The main elements of that criminal doctrine are too well known to this Assembly to necessitate any detailed analysis. Suffice it to say that the whole rationale behind this doctrine, which the United Nations had aptly condemned as a crime against humanity, is the perpetual subjugation of the African man, in order to create a paradise on earth for the whites. When I contemplate the evil of apartheid, my heart bleeds, and I am sure the heart of every true-blooded African bleeds. When we talk of this evil, we are assumed of sympathize of the Western countries, but when we call for sanctions suddenly the glitter of gold in the form of high dividends becomes more convincing in consideration than the lives, liberty and wellbeing of Africans.²⁷

Nigeria's sympathy for the excruciating pains of that black South Africans underwent from the apartheid regime could have been assumed to be what influenced her emergence as the Chairmanship of the United Nations committee on apartheid in the 1970s. The committee in exercise of its duty, profound commitment, and manifestation of Nigeria's strategy and action towards the eradication of apartheid held the World Conference for Action against Apartheid in Lagos, Nigeria 1977. Joy Ogwu captures that:

Nigeria specifically exerted pressure on prominent Third World Groups in the United Nations such as, the Non-Aligned and the Afro-Asian groups to effectively South Africa ... Nigeria supported the liberation movements in more tangible terms ... pressured great powers that sustained, transacted and supplied the minority regime with massive armaments and development capital to stop, and Obasanjo's administration employed the use of threat to warn the great powers. However, the use of threat was translated into action

when Nigeria nationalized Barclays Bank for transacting business with South Africa and the British Petroleum Company in Nigeria for selling Nigeria's oil illegally to South Africa.²⁸

Furthermore, Nigeria attacked the United States Corporation as one of the most relevant sources of strength for South Africa's prosperity, and by 1976, Nigeria-United States bilateral relations had strained to the point that United States Secretary of States, Dr. Henry Kissinger's official visit to Nigeria during his tour to Africa was denied by the military government of Obasanjo. This action by Nigeria prompted Jimmy Carter's government upon the assumption of office in January 1977, to repeal the controversial Bryd Amendment Act, and subsequently normalized relations with Nigeria which made his major foreign policy campaign on the Human Right crusade declaration brought one-man-one-vote in South Africa.²⁹

Nigeria provided a safe haven and education to many South African students and political exiles including Thabo Mbeki (who later became the President of South Africa) from 1976 to 1978. In 1976, Nigeria established the Southern African Relief Fund to aid the liberation struggle in South Africa, and millions of Dollars were donated to the fund such as 37 million US Dollars by the military regime of Obasanjo, 3 thousand US Dollars on a personal note, and Nigeria's civil servants sacrificed 2 percent of their monthly salary to support the elimination of apartheid.³⁰ Nigeria also joined the 28 countries in boycotting the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada, because the International Olympic Committee (IOC) failed to prevent New Zealand's athletes from the games after she allowed its rugby national team involvement in apartheid South Africa. Similarly, Nigeria withdrew from the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, because of New Zealand's sporting action inclusiveness with the apartheid South Africa.³¹

Nigeria's goodwill and support action to South Africa against apartheid, nevertheless, was demonstrated by the Federal Military Government's recognition of the South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYRCO), spearheaded by Khotso Seatholo which some of whose members led the 1976 Soweto uprising with moral support, military assistance, and university scholarship awards. More so, the liberation fighters in particular received Nigeria's diplomatic, economic and material support. Nigeria was a member of the Frontline States and contributed enormously to the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) by 1986 that were sent to South Africa for the diplomatic negotiations of Nelson Mandela's release from jail in February 1990.³²

It is therefore from the foregoing resilient dispositions and commitments of the successive Nigerian government to dismantle apartheid since its emergence as a sovereign independent state that the sensibility and reasonableness of South Africans' xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians will be contemplated in the next heading.

South Africa's Xenophobic Violent Attacks on Nigerians in Perspective

Xenophobic violent attacks against Nigerians can be adjudged to have started after the end of apartheid when Nigerians and other nationals migrated to South Africa. Oluyemi Fayomi, Felix Chidozie and Charles Ayo assert that it is important to keep in mind that xenophobic violence attacks perpetrated against Nigerians was documented as early as 1994 in South Africa. They pointed out that Alexandra has been a center site of recent xenophobic violence.³³ However, the township of Alexandra, in Johannesburg, on May 11, 2008, displayed the highest level of xenophobic violent attacks where over 62 people had lost their lives and more than 100,000

were displaced.³⁴ Since the anti-foreigner violence broke out, xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals including Nigerians have remained unabated until date.

According to the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, Mrs. Abike Dabiri-Erewa states that Nigeria has borne the brunt of most of the xenophobic attacks and extra-judicial killings in South Africa. Between 2016 and 2018, no fewer than 117 Nigerians were extra-judicially killed in South Africa for one flimsy reason or another. The manner in which xenophobic attacks took place on Nigerians were either beaten with a club, hacked to death with a machete, stabbed with a knife, shot at close range with a loaded gun, stoned to death or set ablaze alive. Their business, home and personal efforts are not spared in the attacks. They are usually looted, destroyed/burnt to ashes and stolen respectively.³⁵

However, while facts and figure as to lives and property loss of Nigerians to xenophobic attacks are not officially well established, Evelyn Usman and Henry Ojelu categorically displayed in detail the most excruciating, appalling and demoralizing estimated figures and records of lives and property of Nigerians enmeshed in xenophobic attacks by South Africans from 2017 to 2019:

In August 16, 2017, the late Uchenna Elo, popularly known as 'Monkey' was allegedly killed by South African policemen, at about 11am, while walking out of his house toward the bus station, in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. A police van stopped to search him, suspecting that he might be in possession of illegal substance. Three policemen, one of them was identified as Williams. According to report, they held Uchenna on the neck, suspecting that he swallowed a substance, while another police officer held him by the legs. He was allegedly dragged on the ground by the policemen until he started foaming and suffocated to death. October 3, 2017, 35-years old Jelili Onmoyele, a cellular phone repairer, from Ibadan, Oyo State, was allegedly shot dead by son of a caretaker because of a parking lot, during an argument over an unpaid R300 (N11,400) rent, at Doornfontein, Gauteng Province. October 10, 2017, 25 years old Ibrahim Olalekan Badmu, an indigene of Lagos State, who was a student at Vaal University of Technology, was killed at Vaal Vreeneing, near Johannesburg.³⁶

On January 18, 2018, a 27 years old Nigerian, Ebuka Okorie, was allegedly killed by the South African Police, in Durban, South Africa. The native of Umunze in Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State, was jostled from sleep, at about 2: am, following the invasion of his apartment on Campbell Street, Durban, by two plain clothes policemen, who dragged him outside and shot him dead. On January 2018, six houses belonging to some Nigerians were burnt in Rustenburg, South Africa. April 2018, a Nigerian, Clement Nwogu, was attacked by a mob in front of some South African Policemen, in Rustenburg. Nwogu, an upholsterer, who hailed from Anambra State, was married to a South African woman and had two children; aged three and five. Eyewitnesses said the victim beckoned for help from the police to intervene but they turned a blind eye. When Nwogu could no longer persevere, he ran for safety but the mob chased and caught him, poured petrol on him and set him ablaze. July 12, 2018, Martin Ebuzoeme was killed ... in Yeoville, Johannesburg around 7:30pm, barely 24 hours after the visit of South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa, to Nigeria. August 25, 2018 another Nigerian, Okechukwu Chukwumezeriri, 39, from Imo State, was shot dead on a

football field at Rietondale Park in Pretoria. The following day, August 26, 2018, a 42-year-old Olushola Ayanleye, from Ondo State, was shot dead at Essellen Street, Sunnyside in Pretoria.³⁷

Furthermore, Chief Uzoma Kenneth Oluchukwu who lived in South Africa over Fifteen years accounts that xenophobic violent attacks in South Africa against foreigners, especially, on Nigerians arose out of jealousy from South Africans on how Nigerians have been able to progress and succeed in their country with or without popular support from the government. He regrettably explains that on February 3, 2019, 2019 xenophobic killings in South Africa started with the picture of an unknown Nigerian in his mid-20s who was killed. An eye-witness, who gave more information about the killings said that the deceased (Nigerian) came to South Africa on January 14, 2019 and was killed on February 3, 2019. He therefore pleaded with the Federal Government to assist and stop the killings of innocent Nigerians in South Africa.³⁸

On April 5, 2019, Goziem Akpenyi was stabbed to death at Bellville Stadium parking lot in Cape Town at about 1 pm. He was stabbed by three unidentified coloured South African men after an argument and died on the spot. April 6, 2019, Bonny Iwuoha, 48, from Ihitte/Uboma in Imo State, was also stabbed to death at about 11:45pm in Johannesburg. It was gathered that he was trailed from 152 Hay Street Turffontein, and thereafter, stabbed and killed in front of his gate at Turf Road, Turffontein. On April 27, 2019, 34-year-old Nigerian, Samuel Nkennaya, was killed by some South Africans. His attackers claimed to have thought he kidnapped a six-year-old girl he was holding. Nkennaya was mobbed together with his friend Chinonso Nwudo, when they came out of a supermarket. Nkennaya died at the scene of the mob while Nwudo was left in critical condition.³⁹

Agreeing with Evelyn Usman and Henry Ojelu records, Modestus Njoku, an international businessman who resided in South Africa for more than Thirty years narrated his account. He argues that xenophobia has come to stay in South Africa and its occurrence is almost on a daily basis. He said on April 28 2019, Ebuka Udugbo was allegedly killed by South African Police. Udugbo was said to have had a quarrel with his girlfriend on the morning of April 28. His girlfriend reportedly called the police after he had left the house but the police went after him and arrested him. On May 3, 2019, Okechukwu Henry from Imo State, Nigeria, was stabbed to death by unidentified robbers in Mpumalanga. Henry, a car dealer who specialized in used cars, lived in Middleburg Mpumalanga Province. Earlier before his death, two local guys had indicated interest in buying his car – a white VW Polo. After negotiation, they requested to take the car for a test ride. Henry accepted and drove along with them. As they drove out, he suddenly realized that they were robbers as they demanded the key to the car. They stabbed him several times and took the keys but could not manage to drive away from the car. Their action attracted the attention of people around and they ran away with the keys without the car.⁴⁰

On June 13, 2019, Obianuju Ndubuisi-Chukwu, a Nigerian insurance chief, was killed in her hotel room. She was found dead in her room at Emperor Palace Hotel after attending a meeting of the African Insurance Organization in the South African commercial capital. Her death sparked outrage both in Nigeria and South Africa with the Nigerian senate urging President Muhammadu Buhari to issue a travel alert on South Africa. On June 14, 2019, Maxwell Ikechukwu Okoye was reportedly killed by South African policemen at about 1: a.m. The police invaded his house in Ladysmith in Kwazulu Natal Province. By morning, the police reported him dead claiming he was foaming when they broke into his house. July 20, 2019, the latest of the killings of Nigerians in South Africa was the death of 17-year-old Chinonso Obiaju,

who was killed in Johannesburg. It was reported that he went to buy an item from a shop with his friend when someone chased and opened fire on them, and he was killed.⁴¹

Sequel to the xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians in 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa and the senior official of his government made it known to President Buhari's envoy that, the widespread attacks were not xenophobic but accepted that between December 2017 and September 2019, 89 Nigerians were killed by compatriots due to drugs related disputes. Some South African officials nevertheless admitted that 19 of the deaths arose from police brutality while the rest were due to other causes ... The authority reportedly told the envoy three categories of Nigerians in South Africa which include; professionals who are in the field of medicine and the academic, businessmen (genuine traders) and those into drugs – the drug people sadly are the ones seen as the faces of Nigeria in South Africa.⁴²

Confirming xenophobic violent attacks against Nigerians, a special envoy J. Radebe, from South Africa presented an apology to Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari which expressed the South Africans sincerest apology at a meeting in Nigeria's capital, Abuja. He said, "the incident does not represent what we stand for and promised that police would never hesitate to bring those involved to justice". Radebe further told President Buhari that the South African government condemned the violence and was taking decisive action about it. Responding to the South African envoy, President Buhari assured him that the relationship between the two countries would be solidified. However, South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa felt so bad and asserted, we are very concerned and of course, as a nation we are ashamed because this goes against the ethos of what South Africa stands for ...⁴³

Unreciprocated Reciprocity: Implications of the Xenophobic Violence Attacks

Threats, attacks, and killings of Nigerians more than in any other place but in South Africa speak volumes against what many people of the world may find very difficult to rationalize considering both countries' history. Since 2008, what has become prevalent in the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa is "unreciprocated reciprocity" in the context of xenophobic violence attacks against Nigerians by South Africans. Xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians by South Africans have resulted in strained relationships between the two countries. It made Nigeria went above and beyond by recalling her diplomats from South Africa, as Nigerian government felt that the South African government was not doing enough to secure her natives in South Africa, whom she felt were the primary target of the attacks.⁴⁴

Believing in the South African government's "unreciprocated reciprocity" and having not really displayed the political will to curb the menace of xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians. The Special Advisor to Nigeria's President on Diaspora matters, Abike Dabiri, argues that the frequency of xenophobic attacks in South Africa could be ascribed to hate speeches and misinformation emanating from the political class in South Africa. In a similar vein, different stakeholders in Nigeria ranging from members of the legislative assembly, members of labour unions, the academia, and other interest groups supported for diplomatic severance with South Africa. With bitterness, one of the members of Nigeria's National Assembly, Senator Gbenga Ashafa, Senate committee member on Foreign Affairs says "I don't see us doing anything tangible by way of arresting these attacks without this government standing up and having some diplomatic reprisal"⁴⁵

In September 2019, the issue of xenophobia arose again, and it was reported in some sections of the media that the South African government and police were giving support to the locals attacking non-nationals, especially Nigerians. Nigeria's government with disgusting feelings

immediately summoned the South African Ambassador over the xenophobic violent attack on her citizens in South Africa and also made a move to send a special envoy. Meanwhile, several calls were made by some Nigerians all over the world demanding Nigeria's government as a matter of urgency to ban South African companies such as MTN, DSTV, and retailer Shoprite. Nigeria, therefore, demonstrated her displeasure against the South African government and boycotted the September 2019 World Economic Forum held in South Africa.⁴⁶

Following the report from the special envoy that was sent to South Africa, Nigeria on September 2, 2019, ordered the immediate evacuation of Nigerians who were ready to come back home aftermath of the current xenophobic attack on Nigerians and other nationals. Consequently, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Peace Airline, Onyema, made available its airline to bring back as many Nigerians ready to come back home, and about 500 Nigerians were brought back home. Also, the National Association of Nigerian Students expressed their indignation after the attacks on Nigerians on September 5, 2019 and gave seven days ultimatum to those South African companies and businesses should leave Nigeria.⁴⁷

The issue of xenophobic violence attacks on Nigerians by South Africans poses a threat not only to their economic ties but also to the sustainability of peace and security. Adeleke Olumide Ogunnoiki and Adefisayo Adeyemi therefore observe that:

... spate of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians living in South Africa and the looting of their shops and stores led to somewhat a reprisal attack on some South African-owned companies in Nigeria. On February 23, 2017, the telecommunications giant, MTN, head office in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, was not only looted ... but, office equipment vandalized ... there were over 100 South African companies (prior to 1999 there were only 4) operating in Nigeria's telecommunications, manufacturing, aviation, construction, banking, hospitality, entertainment and, oil and gas industry – Power Giant, Eskom Nigeria, South African Airways, South African Breweries (SAB miller), Stanbic IBTC Bank, MultiChoice Africa (operating DStv/GOtv), Umgeni Water and Shoprite to mention a few, which can become easy targets of reprisal attacks in the future if xenophobic violence against Nigerians in South Africa continues.⁴⁸

Xenophobic attacks in South Africa have over the years caused wrong perception and psychological trauma to the victims. South African citizens have more enemies than the apartheid era. Nigeria who came to their rescue in their dark days in good coins, decided to hit her nationals (Nigerians) below the belt. The sympathy and goodwill gestures that South Africa got from Nigeria as a result of their apartheid experience are recently reciprocated with fear in the minds of Nigerians.⁴⁹ A number of Nigerians in South Africa no longer socialize freely with the locals as fellow African brothers and sisters with a shared history, values, norms, etc., due to fear of being attacked if not killed. As for the living Nigerian victims of xenophobic violence attacks, it would not come as a surprise to discover that some of them are now suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Back home in Nigeria, many Nigerians are having a rethink of travelling down to South Africa for tourism, shopping, business, educational studies etc. after listening/reading on print and electronic media the horrendous news on the killings of Nigerians residing in South.⁵⁰

Xenophobic violence attacks in South Africa have affected Nigerians socio-culturally. Xenophobia as “deep-rooted fear, hatred, or intolerance of strangers and foreigners is often accompanied by violence looting, destruction of property, assault, displacement and murder on Nigerians. Cases of xenophobia have not been criminalized in South Africa, hence, many Nigerians like every other person or persons living in South Africa in the course of xenophobia have suffered the violation of the right to human dignity.⁵¹

Conclusion

It is on record that Nigeria the most populous country with enormous natural resources in Africa provided financial, material, moral etc. support to South Africa. Xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians living in South Africa since 2008 continued unabated. But, the paradox of it all remains that South Africa is still attractive to Nigerians. The simple reason(s) has been argued that corruption in Nigeria is overwhelming, and with the economy dwindling fast into recession, Nigerians are therefore bent traveling to South Africa for opportunities irrespective of how xenophobic South Africa might be, they believed that it is more endurable in the quest for a better life than the failure of Nigeria’s government. Unless this mentality by Nigerians toward their government is changed, and on the other hand, Nigerian leaders endeavour to overhaul and revive the country’s political, economic, and social system to be attractive and conducive to its citizens, xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians in South Africa will persist in as much as Nigerians migrate to stay in South Africa.

However, it has been alleged that xenophobia in South Africa is rooted in the nature and character of apartheid and its discriminatory policies against the black majority which incidentally denied them of political, economic, and social opportunities, ultimately fueling the attitude of suspicion and hate for foreigners. Xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians by South Africans unarguably disregarded the very concept of reciprocity in Nigeria-South Africa’s relations against the backdrop of the enormous sacrifice displayed to South Africa by Nigeria during the difficult days of apartheid regime. Therefore, South Africa’s non-remembrance of Nigeria’s efforts in the fight to eliminate the historical white racist domination on her shows that xenophobic violent attacks on Nigerians will persist unabated.

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