

**DEALING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN NIGERIA:
GENERAL ABACHA ONSLAUGHT 1994-1997**

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Abstract

This paper analyses human rights abuses in Nigeria during General Sanni Abacha's regime, the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999, appraised many decades of military rule and its consequent human rights violations. The widespread demand for accountability occasioned by the rebirth of civil society organisations in Nigeria facilitated the formation of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission to demand for justice and put a check on abuse of power by those in political authority. The victims' cry for justice led to an epoch-making announcement on June 14, 1999, by President Olusegun Obasanjo who constituted the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission popularly known as the Oputa Panel. This study examined the Reconciliation and Justice panel as an antidote to impunity and abuse of power by authorities in post-independent Nigeria. The paper reveals that human rights records remained dismal during the military regime of Abacha because of extrajudicial killings, regular harassments of regime critics, use of excessive force to quell anti-government riots, and infringement on rights of citizens by agents of the state. The Oputa Panel was established to heal the wounds inflicted by military administrations and investigate all incidents of gross human rights misconducts during the Abacha regime. The paper underlines the numerous challenges of truth commission as a tool for transitional



justice with specific reflections on the Oputa Panel. The study employed primary and secondary sources to elicit information on the complexity surrounding the operation of the panel. The primary sources involved in-depth interviews and structured questionnaires. Secondary data were sourced through text books and journal articles to complement data from primary sources. Data collected were analysed using historical method.

Key words: Impunity, violation, military junta, justice. Human rights

Introduction

The dramatic upsurge of democratic revolutions that swept the globe in the late 1980s and early 1990s lionised the reputations of the human right groups, and thereafter inspired movements worldwide in the new millennium to avenge the abuse of human rights abuses. Striking pictures showing trade unionists, human rights activists, student leaders, community associations, and other civil organisations facing down communist dictatorships in Europe, military juntas in Africa, and authoritarian régimes elsewhere raised expectations among many democracy advocates regarding the roles these groups played. Frequent changes of governments through military *coups* made it difficult for regime changes to occur smoothly. Also, continuity and consistency of civilian governments as was the standard practice in other climes was a utopian dream for Nigeria because of the involvements of the military in the country's political life.

Human rights abuses were persistent and widespread in Nigeria and they included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, and other forms of ill-treatments meted by security forces on their victims. These human right abuses epitomized the military era of Abacha. These abuses affected various segments of society, including political activists, journalists, ethnic and religious leaders, including ordinary citizens from independence up to 1999. Post independent Nigeria experienced series of political upheavals, fractured community



relations, anxieties and distrust among the Nigerian peoples of different ethnicities and socio-economic statuses. The emergence of General Sanni Abacha at the head of a military regime led to deep divisions in the country. The Abacha regime's brutality had a profound impact on Nigerians, leaving deep emotional scars on the hearts and minds of many, particularly those who suffered at the hands of state agents who targeted vulnerable populations.

There were many people who felt that their rights were violated and many also yearned to have justice at any cost. In 1999, the eventual transitioning of the country back to a democratic political dispensation was seen by many as a significant turning point in the political history of Nigeria. Thereafter, many Nigerians anticipated the establishment of a commission that would investigate human rights violation with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice and heal the wounds of the victims of human rights abuses. There were high hopes among many sections of the population that the establishment of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (HRVIC) would bring about redress to their plights and finally address the longstanding and recurrent violations of human rights in the country under repressive regimes such as that of General Abacha. The HRVIC was entrusted with the crucial task of investigating all instances of human rights abuses that occurred during the period of military rule in Nigeria.

The widespread demand for accountability occasioned by the resurgence of civil societies facilitated the establishment of the Oputa Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission. The epoch-making announcement on June 14, 1999 of human rights violations investigation Commission popularly known as the Oputa Panel by ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo provided people opportunities to give accurate account of Abacha's regime reign of impunity. The establishment of the Commission was greeted with an overwhelming delight across the country irrespective of the ethnic, political and religious divide which indicated a popular endorsement of the



Commission by the population.

The Oputa Reconciliation Commission was mandated to investigate gross human rights violations from 15th January 1966 to 28th May 1999 and was required to submit its report within three months from the date of the pronouncement. This paper therefore, seeks to examine Nigeria's attempt at truth investigation through the panel to correct the wounds of the Abacha regime that was pigeon-holed by gross abuse of human rights and basic injustice in the country. The Commission was also tasked to highlight the challenges that hampered effective discharge of the 1999 Oputa Panel Report. The paper additionally interrogates unresolved issues of impunity, injustice, human rights violations and other manifestations as well as social antics of the Nigerian government that the Fourth Republic grappled with. This paper is organised into five sections. The first gives an overview of human rights violations before 1999 while the second section examines the concept of impunity and human right violations with specific illustrations drawn from the Abacha regime. The third segment examines the role of security services with regards to the abuse of people's rights. The fourth part presents challenges of the Oputa Panel on national reconciliation and the fifth part puts emphasis on the post-military regimes' human right reforms.

Conceptualizing Human Rights

There is a dearth of scholarly that deals with human rights violations during military rule in Nigeria. In fact, it is only in recent years that many intellectuals have started to recognise and interrogate the nexus of human rights violation and impunity. This seemingly distinct discipline on human rights has become an important aspect of development policy and programming since the beginning of the Cold War. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit all documented development and human rights as interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The concept of human rights is based on the belief that every human being is entitled



to enjoy rights without discrimination. Human rights are distinguished from other rights in two ways (Sepulveda, *et al*, 2004). Rights are characterized by being inherent in all human beings by virtue of their humanity, inalienable and equally applicable to all. Secondly, main duties arising from human rights fall on states and their authorities or agents, not on individuals. The most important implication of these characteristics, according to these scholars, is that human rights must themselves be protected by “the rule of law” (Sepulveda, *et al*).

Human rights encompass an articulation of the need for people to be treated in a just, decent, and humane way regardless of their ethnic, religious, or racial profile. Human rights violation involves denying human beings their basic moral entitlements. Human rights violations, also called “crimes against humanity” include genocide, torture, rape, slavery, wanton starvation, and medical experimentation of a people or group at very systematic levels with impunity among others. Also, the inability to meet human needs is an important factor in exacerbating conflict and in extension the proliferation of human rights violations. Severely, constricted ability to meet needs such as food, land and water makes communities turn away from traditional negotiation strategies that do not consider non-negotiable issues. This scenario is covered by human needs approach which views conflicts as arising from non-negotiable issues that can only be resolved using win-win strategies. An example of a success strategy in conflict resolution is evident from the Kosovo conflict with the conflicting Albanian and Serb groups agreeing on protective security which benefitted both.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) defines human rights as rights that every human possesses by virtue of being born human, such as the rights to freedom, life, liberty, and security. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights includes rights to employment, medical and health care, and to share cultural life. The right to life is a substantive right and is among the most important of all the rights guaranteed and protected by modern-



day international law. It is universal and obligatory; without it, no other right would make sense. Hunter David noted that: initially, the right to life was aimed at preventing arbitrary killing by the government. In recent years, the right to life has evolved to extend to address certain environmental harms that directly or indirectly infringe on the right to life. This extension of the ambit of the right to life is because of the efforts and works of environmental and human rights advocates. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has observed that:

Inherent right to life cannot properly be understood in a restrictive manner and the protection of this right requires that measures be taken to reduce infant mortality, to increase life expectancy and to eliminate malnutrition and epidemic. The Committee also considers that the right to life includes a duty to prevent war, acts of genocide and other acts of mass violence causing arbitrary loss of life.

Nigeria was been ranked 118th out of 165 countries in the 2022 Human Freedom Index, according to a report co-authored by the Cato Institute and Fraser Institute. This marks an improvement of three places from its 121st position in 2021. Despite this marginal improvement, the report notes a decline in personal freedom across Nigeria. The index evaluates countries based on a range of indicators that measure both personal and economic freedom, and Nigeria's ascent in the rankings suggests some areas of improvement, although the overall decline in personal freedom highlights ongoing challenges in the country. More than 167 countries are guilty of violating the human rights of their citizens according to Human Right Watch in 2022, while some of these countries are unsafe to visit, others are tempting holiday destinations which are not deemed dangerous for travelers. These destinations are so far from behaving responsibly when it comes to their citizens, the environment or wildlife that they only serve to highlight just how far one must go when it comes to embracing and moving beyond sustainable travels. Human Right Watch (2020) notes that:



Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made based on the political, jurisdictional, or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Human rights abuse is the disallowance of any of these basic rights and freedoms. When human rights are not protected, or are blatantly disregarded, they are violated. Violations exist in every part of the world. For example, some leaders are stopping fair elections, meaning people in a country can only vote for one person. Legally, human rights violations differ from human rights abuses, as they are committed by different groups of people. Violations are either directly committed by the state or come about because of the state indirectly failing to prevent the violation. Human rights abuse is committed by non-state actors, such as rebel groups and individuals. Anthony (2019) uses the term “ungovernable” to describe the complex relationship between impunity and human rights. He maintains that it is impossible to plot all the ways in which these fields fall short of each other; they have infinitely productive overlapping and ungovernable openings

HUMAN RIGHT ABUSES UNDER ABACHA 1994-1998

Human rights violations by the military did not start with the General Sanni Abacha’s regime⁷. Under each of the military regimes, there were allegations against the military concerning gross human rights violations. Apart from the civil war of 1967–70, the military regime with perhaps the worst record for human rights violations was that of General Sani Abacha (1993-98). It is therefore important that this article examines this period of the country’s history with a view to enriching the country’s governance and human rights historiography.



Human rights violations of colossal proportions were witnessed under the regime of General Sanni Abacha.ⁱThe regime was tagged as “worst and most hated.”ⁱⁱOn taking power in Nigeria in 1994, General Abacha created several security organisations that reported directly to him, including the Public Safety Unit and the Director of Security Services. Abacha was the most authoritarian military man to have ever governed Nigeria. Abacha waged war against opponents of his military government and such a strategy left an eerie of silence all over the country. He dissolved state legislatures, banned political parties, and prohibited government decrees from being challenged in Nigeria's courts. He crushed labour unions and shut down nearly twenty newspapers and magazines. His security forces arrested dozens of activists, killed scores of Nigerians in demonstrations and systematically oppressed the Ogoni ethnic group that criticised his regime. All these were human rights abuses of the highest order by all standards.

More so, the human rights record of General Sanni Abacha was abysmal. The regime was notorious for its autocracy and totalitarianism. Human rights were desecrated with impunity and in an unprecedented manner. Though, on assumption of office, it purported to commit itself to protect human rights in consequence of which the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree 4 was amended by the State Security (Detention of Persons Amendment) Decree to whittle down the seemingly military powers of the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters to detain any person without trial. Public Officer (Protection against false Accusation Repeal, etc.) Decree was promulgated to repeal Decree 4 of 1997 under which two journalists and activists were convicted. They were later granted state pardon and fine of N50, 000.00. Hundreds of detainees were also released in response to public yearnings. These gestures were however a mere subterfuge because like its predecessor, human rights were desecrated in no small measure by the administration. Many cases of arbitrary detention without trial, unlawful entry, and arrest; closure and proscription of newspapers and institutions were witnessed during



the period. The Nigerian Labour Congress, the National Association of Nigerian Students and the Academic Staff of Union of Universities were at various times proscribed in the country.

Nwankwo, an acclaimed human rights activist lamented the mindless desecration of human rights under General Sanni Abacha regime. He detailed horrendous cases of extra-judicial killings, torture, assassination, and prolonged incarceration. Like its precursors, the military government of General Abacha preserved and enforced the many draconian decrees promulgated by the earlier military governments. Many of these decrees as earlier pointed out ousted the jurisdiction of the court. However, by reason of the national and international condemnation of his regime, General Sani Abacha, was constrained to establish the National Human Rights Commission in November 1996 at the height of human rights violations under his watch as Head of State.

He gave a "bad name" to all the national questions besetting Nigeria since independence: ethnic chauvinism, purposeless leadership, electoral fraud, lack of integrity, corruption, mediocrity, violation of human rights etc. Abacha and his collaborators were simply in office to advance their personal interests which included looting the Nigerian treasury. What was recovered from the family of General Abacha when he died was officially put at \$628,263,187.19; Pounds 75, 396, 884.93 and DM 80 million (The Punch, March 5, 1999]. But the Abubakar administration "forgot" to tell us how many billions of Naira was found in the dictator's local accounts. None of his over 100 buildings in different parts of Nigeria were seized. Nigerians know that Abacha, like other Nigerian military leaders, stole more than the figures reported by the government. What Abacha stole was enough to make life better for the teeming Nigerian populace that are living in abject poverty. It was observed that the main security apparatus that committed such violations was a brigade of guards (personal security guards of the president), the military police, and most importantly, a strike force. This



unit was set up and used by Abacha's chief security officer (CSO), Major Hamza Al Mustapha, to assassinate enemies and sponsor covert terrorist activities, including the bombings and arrest of pro-democracy activists. The secret agents of the Abacha's regime murdered people across the country. On the first anniversary of the annulment of June 12, 1993, election, Chief M.K.O. Abiola declared himself President, and was consequently thrown into detention by the Abacha administration.

Majority of people were killed largely because of their relationship or being a member of NADECO and these nationalists include people such as Pa Alfred Rewane, Alhaji Kudiat Abiola (the wife of Chief M.K.O. Abiola and AlhajaSuliat Adedeji, Mrs. BisoyeTejuosho, Dr. Shola Omosola to mention just a few. These dreadful events led to the mass exile of Nigerians to Europe and America for fear of being killed and some of them were Chief Anthony Enahoro, General Alani Akinrinade; Sen. Bola Tinubu the current President of Nigeria, Chief Dan Sulaiman and Professor Wole Soyinka. There was an aborted attempt to kill Chief Abraham Adesanya who was the national leader of Afenifere. Other members of NADECO who chose to remain in the country were detained on flimsy grounds and subjected to different kinds of physical and psychological torture. These include late Chief Bola Ige, late Alhaji Lam Adesina, Late Gani Fawehinmi, Chief Olu Falae, and late Chief Frederick Faseun to mention a new. The detainees were subjected to different degrees of physical and mental torture. Several of them were kept in dark or solitary cells. The military ought to have killed approximately 1000 in Abacha's first twenty-four months and many more Nigerians fell prey to Abacha's henchmen.

Several Ogoni indigenes were also killed by Abacha's boys between 1994 and 1998. At the height of the attack against the Ogoni people, Ken Saro Wiwa, the leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and eight other Ogoni leaders were murdered in cold blood by the Abacha regime. The hanging of the eight Ogoni activists despite pleas from different quarters across the globe set Nigeria on the



path of isolation in the comity of nations. Nigeria was consequently suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations, and other world powers slammed her with different sanctions. Following the Ogoni example, youths from different parts of the Niger Delta took up arms against the multinational oil companies in their communities. In the counter attacks launched on them by the Nigerian police and army, thousands of these young men were killed. In 1998, Abacha died in a mysterious way, and General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over. Many prominent Nigerians lost their lives during Abacha's regime. The death of the Head of state, Gen. Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998, brought to an abrupt end the discredited transition program that had apparently been designed for his self-succession as a civilian president, and brought the first hopes for several years of a genuinely elected government in Nigeria to an end. His successor General Abubakar progressively released most civilian political prisoners and announced that treason charges against some of those in exile (including Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka) would be withdrawn. Decrees allowing detention without trial, suspending constitutional guarantees of human rights, and barring the courts from reviewing executive acts, remained in force.

The Impunity of the Security Forces

The military regimes resorted to high-handedness and repression to maintain its stand and suppress public protests. During this time, decrees were rolled out to contain dissent. Examples include Decree No. 2 of 1984, which facilitated detention without trial for up to six months for “acts prejudicial to state security”; the Student Union Activities (Control and Regulation) Decree No. 47 of 1989, which made national student unions illegal, membership of student unions voluntary, and the unions in individual universities subject to proscription if found to act contrary to national interests, security, public safety, morality, and health. Violators of the decree were subject to prosecution by the Special Miscellaneous Offences Tribunal. Also, under Section 3(1) of this decree, the Minister is empowered, whenever he is of the opinion



that public interest or safety so demands. For Abacha to bolster his powers, the state used security agencies as its instruments of suppression. Security forces were usually dispatched in droves to the urban centres once there are protests. They frequently overreact, and sometimes used live ammunitions in dispersing protesters against the government at the time. Even when they killed demonstrators, justice was never delivered and the perpetrators got away with various atrocities with impunity. In fact, demonstrators were sometimes referred to as “scapegoats” after crises.

The Commission was not allowed to probe roles played by the police and the army during the period of Abacha regime. The rationale for the failure was that the terms of reference set by the government did not cover any investigation of police and army conduct, the latter was to be investigated separately by the government itself under the secrecy of national security considerations. To date, there is no record to indicate that the security forces’ role in the crisis was ever investigated. The failure to punish those responsible for killings and other acts of brutality against unarmed Nigerians reinforced a culture of impunity and excesses by the security forces in handling civil unrest. It has also been argued that the police lacked adequate understanding of the significance of protests in crisis management. The protesters have an inalienable right to peacefully protest and express their grievances to the government. It is a way of expressing their grievances to the appropriate authorities. It is regarded as a potent vehicle through which their feelings, perception, and gripes can be expressed and felt. In contrast, the police regard protest as contravening law and order, and it is an unacceptable way of challenging the right of security agents. In defense of their high-handedness against demonstrations, the police cited the Law Proclamation, which enables them to disperse demonstrators and all persons who have unlawfully assembled for demonstrations by using force. Their action in curbing demonstrations was, therefore, according to the Abacha government in defense of the rule of law. The Police had not been held to account for unjustified killings and assaults had long



been hushed up. Often, it was not just the original crimes but the cover-ups that raised questions about the institutions of the state and these implicated the political leadership of the country during the governance period under Abacha.

Oputa Panel and Truth Commission

The Oputa Panel Truth Commission was inaugurated on June 14, 1999, by the Statutory Instrument No. 8. Of June 1999, pursuant to the Section 1 of the Tribunals of Inquiry Act of 1990 which gave the President the powers to constitute a tribunal. Statutory Instrument No.13 of October 4, 1999, amended the terms of the Commission to extend to 1966. President Obasanjo charged the panel to review past absolute regimes and the human rights abuses “for the purpose of enhancing reconciliation, national cohesion, and entrenching the national democracy.” The panel had the authority to work towards the reconciliation of many communal conflicts during the Abacha led military regime. The panel was headed by a former Justice of the Supreme Court, the late Justice Chukwudifu Oputa and was tasked by President Olusegun Obasanjo to investigate allegations of gross violations of human rights by the military, assassinations, unlawful arrests, detentions, physical and mental tortures, desertions, and communal conflicts between 1966-1999.

Cohen [1998:491] in an essay on "Human rights and crimes of the state" asked a question that is germane to the focus of this paper: "what happens to state criminals such as torturers after democratization or a change in regime? The ways the "radicals" and the "conservatives" would answer the question cannot be the same. While the radicals would call for punishment and retributive justice, the conservatives would be busy asking that "bygones should be bygones". This paints the picture of Abacha reign of terror in Nigeria.

The panel received over 10,000 petitions which included cases of (i) physical and mental torture; (ii)unlawful arrest and detention; (iii)



communal violence; (iv) disappearances; (v) intimidation and harassment vi) assault and battery; vii) victimisation in the workplace; and (viii) murder and assassination. More than 200 cases from those petitions were heard at publicly broadcast hearings across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, and public hearings lasted for more than a year. Some of the most prominent hearings of the Panel included the petitions about the death of Dele Giwa, the death of MKO Abiola, the purported coup to overthrow late Sani Abacha in 1997, and the burning of Kalakuta Republic.

During the public hearings, the Oputa Panel found the Police to be in the habit of killing people unlawfully and in the bid to cover up, they usually alleged that such victims were armed robbers. Hundreds of Nigerians were killed yearly extra-judicially. The Nigerian Forces engaged in violations of citizens' rights ranging from illegal arrests, detention without trial, various forms of torture during investigations to elicit 'confessions.' Extra-judicial killings of suspects in custody, hapless motorists, passengers, and pedestrians on the roads, were also common. Prisons were severely filled to the brim and most of these prisons lacked basic medical facilities to cater for the inmates. The prison officials need to seek for leave or permission from the military authorities before they could attend to the medical needs of inmates. On many occasions, inmates died before such clearances were obtained. Female detainees were sexually abused.

The gatherings of the Oputa Panel were held in public between 24 October, 2000 and 9 November, 2001. Its work, however, lasted three years, three weeks and six days. The general hearings centered on individual complaints. The institutional hearings were organised for civil society, human rights groups, and specialised professional organizations. The latter received testimonies and submissions from the Armed Forces, the Police, State Security Services, the Nigeria Prison, human rights institutions and some individuals. One of the ways the Oputa Panel sought to deal with the large number of violations that



occurred during the period of authoritarian rule, was to commission research reports by experts. The rationale for the research reports was the limitations of public hearings as a forum to express the scale of the gross abuses of human rights that had taken place in the country in a period covering over three decades.

Nigeria's security forces arrested hundreds of opponents, including prominent human rights activists and politicians, holding them from several days to as long as a year in detention. Most prominent among those that the Abacha boys confessed at the panel to have murdered were Alfred Rewane who was accused of financing the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), Alhaji Kudirat Abioila, the wife of late Chief M.K.O. Abiola and Alhaja Suliyat Adedeji was among other prominent politicians killed during the period. The Police had earlier claimed that these people and several others were killed by armed robbers and during the attack on Chief Abraham Adesanya. Abacha's guillotine boys included Major Mustapha, the dreaded Strike Force and Sergeant Serbila Roger. They were charged with gun running, illegal possession of ammunition, subversion, inciting officers, and possession of explosive documents capable of riddling certain senior members of the Abubakar regime. They were later arraigned before a Special Investigation Panel headed by Army's Provost Marshal, Brigadier Yusuff Abubakar and later sent to prison for the reign of impunity during the regime of Sani Abacha. The hidden activities of the ignominious years of Abacha's regime was uncovered by the Oputa Panel but the outcome of the truth commission enquiry was thrown away into the dustbin of history and was never implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The Oputa Panel would have been more successful owing to the huge revelations on the gross human right violations it exhumed and accordingly reported. However, the lack of implementation of the panel's report failed to give the needed lifeline to instill restorative and retributive justice for the victims as well as the perpetrators due to a high level of political interference. Although the essence of the Oputa



Panel was not fully achieved, the demand for justice will continue to linger in Nigeria. This is evident by the subsequent convocation of two national conferences: National Political Reform Conference, (NPRC) by President Obasanjo in 2005 and President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014. These conferences were preoccupied with the same issues raised by the Oputa Panel, a clear indication of the incomplete mission of the panel on June 2002, the Oputa Panel presented an eight-volume report of 15,000 pages to the President, containing details of human right abuses during Nigeria's military eras. However, the government failed to release the report to the public and six months later, Obasanjo annulled the Panel on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. That decision was reportedly based on a Supreme Court case of 2003.

Conclusion

The quest for truth and reconciliation in Nigeria through the Oputa Panel suffered a fundamental set back in its lack of appropriate legislation. Significantly, the Nigerian society continued to pay a heavy price for the failure of transitional justice in the country, more than a decade after the military left power. The obligation to address the past has simply refused to go away. The violations were allegedly perpetrated by the army, the security agencies, and the police. There were some instances of corporate or individual violations of rights too. In some cases, unpopular economic policies precipitated the deprivation of the right to life. This was manifested in the shooting and killing of demonstrators at public protests, a common incidence in the 1990s, when military rule was at its most atrocious in the country.

The Panel's findings were not without controversy. Some critics of the Oputa Panel argued that it was not an accurate representation of Nigeria's widespread national challenges (national question). This position was an understandable reaction because of the multiplicity of ethnic interest. The report of the Commission reaffirmed that Nigeria was a militarized society and as a result of the prolonged military rule, human rights abuses became imminent and some of the perpetrators are



yet to face justice for their alleged crimes against innocent people. Whether justice will be served or not, remains an enigmatic subject that the Nigerian population yearns for determination by the government.

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