

## THE RIGHT TO LIFE IN THE FACE OF GRAVE ENVIRONMENTAL INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*"Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life support system ", The environment is the social and cultural condition that affects an individual or a community. Humans inhabits the natural world as well as the "built" or technological, social and cultural world, all these constitute important parts of our environment. Right in a general form means that to which a person has just and valid claim, whether it be land, a thing or the privilege of doing something or saying something. Environmental abuse is a major issue affecting all aspect of the development of the nation, it is an aspect of human life that can no longer be ignored. The environment is the man's first right. Without a safe environment man cannot exist to claim other rights, be they political, social or economic. The capacity to protect life and property within its territorial sovereignty is generally regarded as the most significant indicia of statehood. It is therefore a negation of man's first right (Environmental Right) for there to exist pervasive insecurity of life and property. Thus we argue that in the face of militancy, terrorism, destruction of national infrastructure and indeed other crime, environmental right especially and indeed fundamental and non-fundamental rights cannot be protected.*

**Keywords:** *Right to life, Security, Environmental Insecurity*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept right to life has religious and philosophical roots and serves as the underlying principle for the modern day right to life. We see its development from a religious belief in the security of human life, the concept is not specific to any single human culture. The universally recognized value in human life when combined with a natural law philosophy cemented itself into a legally recognized human right to life.<sup>1</sup> Historically, the right to life has been expressed in a variety of ways such as the primacy of the human person, or the intrinsic dignity of human being. The modern statements of the right to life stress that it is an integral right. It does not allow distinctions between races, sexes or people of different capabilities. This notion was felt keenly at the time when the United Nations drew up its universal declaration of human rights in the wake of the second world war and the memory of the holocaust in which millions were exterminated on the pretext that they were a threat to others and that they were less than human<sup>2</sup>. All other human rights depend on being alive, so the right to life is a fundamental right, upholding the right to life is the necessary first step in protecting all other goods and right to human person. Recognizing the right to life as a universal principle challenges us personally and as a society<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, the African Commission on

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Wicks, "The Right to Life: Religious, Philosophical and Legal Origins" Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016 p22. 222

<sup>2</sup> [www.spuc.org.uk](http://www.spuc.org.uk) Christopher Hitchens-The Right to Life, Society for the Protection of Unborn Children London,2008,p2.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

Right to Life is also guaranteed under Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Human and people's Right observed in Forum of Conscience in Sierra Leone<sup>4</sup> that the right to life is the fulcrum of all other rights, it is the fountain through which other rights flow.

Section 33(1) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria which guarantees the right to life provides as follows:

Every person has a right to life and no one shall be deprived Intentionally of his life, save in execution of a sentence of a Court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been Found guilty. Article 4 of the African Charter also guarantees the right to life in the following terms: Human beings are inviolable. Every human being Shall be entitled to respect for his life and integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right<sup>5</sup>.

Environment here connotes a broad context of our surroundings, the place and condition where we live or work. The environment is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights, this implies that human rights obligation of states should include the duty to ensure the level of environmental protection necessary to allow the full exercise of protected rights. Environmental security is environmental viability for life support, it considers the abilities of individual, community or nation to cope with environmental risks changes or conflicts or limited natural resources. It is the relative public safety and welfare from environmental dangers caused by natural or human process due to ignorance, accident, mismanagement, ethnic cleansing, design and originating from within or across the national borders.

An unsecured environment is the environment of a nation that is unsafe to live or work in. such environment is bedeviled with several challenges such as pollution, degradation, communal clashes, terrorism, Fulani herdsmen, climate change among others. Unsecured environment in Nigeria initially was concentrated in the Niger Delta and north eastern areas, while the residents in Niger Delta have lost their farm lands and water meant for drinking and fishing to widespread pollution as a result of oil exploration and exploitation by multinational companies, the northern states have lost farm lands to rapidly encroaching desert. The current position is that both the northern state, the middle belt and most part of the western and eastern states have lost their farm lands and homes as a result of the terrorist attack and the activities of the Fulani herdsmen. The right to life and of course every other human right thrives in a secured environment.<sup>6</sup>

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

**Rights** The concept 'right' in the noun form means that to which a person has a just and valid claim, whether it be land, a thing or the privilege of doing something or saying something. It is an interest recognized and protected by the law, respect for which is a duty and disregard of which is a wrong. It is also a capacity residing in one man of controlling, with the assent and assistance of the state, the actions of others<sup>7</sup>. A right involves:

- A person invested with the right, or entitled;
- A person or persons on whom that right imposes a correlative duty or obligation;

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<sup>4</sup> (2000)AHRLR 293

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<sup>6</sup> O.N Ogbu, " Human Rights Law and Practice in Nigeria", Snaap press Ltd, Enugu, 2013, p.1

<sup>7</sup> R. Bird (Ed)' Osborn's Concise Law Dictionary 17<sup>th</sup> ed. Sweet and Maxwell, London, 1983,P 293.

- An act or forbearance which is the subject matter of the right;
- An object that is a person or thing to which the right has reference;
- A title or reason for the right becoming vested on the owner.<sup>8</sup>

The right to life therefore is the right of a person to live without any threat whatsoever to the person's existence. The concept of right to life is all embracing, it includes the right to live in a secured environment, the right to good healthcare, social amenities, food security among others. It is a universal moral principle that stands at the foundation of the concept of human right. It follows therefore that if the action of a person can co-exist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law, whoever obstructs the performance of that action is said to have harmed the right of that person.<sup>9</sup>

Permissible limitations on the right to life are contained in section 33(2) of the constitution which provides that a person shall not be regarded as having been deprived of his life in contravention of this section if he dies as a result of the use to such extent and in such circumstances as are permitted by law, of such force as is reasonably necessary:

- a) For the defense of any person from unlawful violence or property;
- b) hi order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained; or
- c) For the purpose of suppressing a riot, insurrection or mutiny.

In spite of the constitutionally guaranteed right to life, the wanton destruction of human life in Nigeria and other states of Africa is now the order of the day. Our concept of destruction of life here is not restricted to physical destruction as is witnessed in terrorist attacks, armed banditry and extra-judicial killings by the police and killings by the Fulani herdsmen, but extends to deprivation of basic amenities that guarantees the sanity of human life<sup>10</sup>. In a state, where citizens wallow in hunger and penury coupled with poor social infrastructure, the quality of life of such citizens would be significantly low.

In consequence, life expectancy of such state would be in an abysmal state. It is in this context that official corruption in any nation has the capacity to debase the quality of life of the ordinary citizens of such country.<sup>11</sup>

### **Environmental Insecurity**

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid* P.294

<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996 P.24

<sup>10</sup> D.I. Efevwerhan and others, *Evolving a Philosophy of National Security*, being a paper presented by the Nigerian Law School, Yenagoa campus, of The Annual National Association of Law Teachers Conference held at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka from 11-16 June 2017,p10.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

Environment connotes generally our surroundings. It is the totality of physical economic, cultural, aesthetic and social circumstances and factors which surround and affect the desirability and value of property and which also affect the quality of people's lives<sup>12</sup>. Obviously, the environment faces numerous threats either from natural disaster or from human activities.

Environmental security, refers to the integrity and the biosphere, particularly in relation to their capacity to sustain a diversity of life - forms (including human life). According to Palme, there is a connection between environmental security and survival, environmental security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. It is protecting the environment from danger, fear, threat or violence, pollution, degradation which could lead to the loss of lives and means of livelihood, diseases, e.t.c.<sup>13</sup> Environmental security is inextricably linked to the right to life, because a proper understanding of the importance of a secured environment will aid in the appreciation of and upholding the right to life. It depicts the value placed on human life if we accept the argument that right to life thrives only in an environment where the basic necessity of life can be harnessed with little or no effort or hindrance<sup>14</sup>. Environmental insecurity which is the same thing as in secured environment, in this context means insecurity that arise or challenges the natural environment. These challenges could be as a result of natural disaster or man-made disasters. Environmental insecurity involves a range of concerns that can be organized into three general categories; first, it concerns about the adverse impact of human activities on the environment, the emphasis here is on the security of the environment as a "Good" in itself, for the sake of future generations, as the context for human life. Secondly, it concerns about the direct and indirect effects of various forms of environmental change (especially scarcity and degradation) which may be natural or human generated on national and regional security. Thirdly, it concerns about the insecurity of individuals and groups experience due to environmental change such as water scarcity, air pollution, global warming and so on<sup>15</sup>. The right to life requires states not only to abstain from taking life but also to take positive steps to protect life.<sup>16</sup> The United Nations Human Rights Committee noted that the expression "Inherent right to life" requires that measures be undertaken 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 wars, acts of genocide and other acts of mass violence

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<sup>12</sup> H.C. Black, 'Black's Law Dictionary, (Bryan A. Garner ED) Thompson west Group, America, 1999,p. 388.

<sup>13</sup> M.A Palme, 'Guardians of the Gulf, in Okey Oparaku, 'Weak State Performance, Kidnapping And Human Insecurity in the South East Nigeria'. Journal of Humanities, Legal Studies and International Research Development. International scientific Research consortium, u k, 2014, p.41.

<sup>14</sup> D.I. Efevwerhan, *op cit*. p 10.

<sup>15</sup> O. Oke-Samuel & M.C. Ogwezzy, 'Legal Challenges Arising from Environmental Insecurity'. Being a paper presented by The Nigerian Law School Yenagoa campus, of The Annual National Association of Law Teachers Conference held at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, from 11-16 June 2017, p. 10

<sup>16</sup> O.N. Ogbu, *op cit*, p. 145.

causing arbitrary loss of life.<sup>17</sup> It also presupposes the existence and availability to all of certain basic facilities such as food, health, shelter, education etc.

The provisions of section 14(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State policy imposes a duty on the state to save life when it asserts that the security and the welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Rightly, Paul Sieghart observed that the state have obligation to protect human right through the instrument of Law. As was stated post ante, section 33 of the Constitution of Nigeria provides for the right to life and instances where the right may be derogated from. However, the section did not attempt to define the meaning and content of the right to life and therefore, not exhaustive. This of course is understandable as no constitutional document is expected to cover minute details of possible eventualities.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it falls within the inner recess of the judiciary to give 'flesh', 'blood' and indeed life to the bare skeleton (letters) of the document in a manner that advances the intent and purpose of the legislators. Appreciating this view point, some courts outside the jurisdiction of Nigeria have inclusively used the bare minimum right to life guaranteed in their respective constitution to highlight the implicit content of the right to life. This, they have done and positive results achieved expansively interpreting the right to include its implicit aspects which are commonly confined to the realm of unenforceable special economic, social and political rights in many national and international documents.<sup>19</sup> The right to life in the actual sense should not be viewed in isolation. The court in carrying out its responsibility of interpreting the law, should lean (lead) heavily on the positive component of the rights by reading it along with the positive duties of the state to protect human life. The courts in Nigeria and outside Nigeria have recognized some of these areas as components of the rights to life.<sup>20</sup> They are as follows:

**a) The Right to Healthy Environment**

The importance of a good, healthy and productive environment to the sustenance of the life and well being of individuals cannot be over emphasized. Unhealthy environment brings about health complications that challenges and diminishes the life span of citizens. An unhealthy, polluted and contaminated environment definitely has a direct effect on life. In the case of *M.C. Merhir v Union of India*<sup>21</sup>, the court held that the right to life includes the right to live in a clean and harmless environment. Also in *Shela Zia v Water and Power Development authority (WAPPA)*<sup>22</sup>, the supreme court of Pakistan ruled that the right to life included a right to live in a clean environment.

The decisions of the courts in the above cases were largely anchored on the fact that socio-economic and environmental right do not only ensure the attainment of an adequate standard of

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<sup>17</sup> see Draft Manual for Lower Court Judges on Human Rights and the Administration of Justice

<sup>18</sup> 18 19 in Nigeria by Civil liberties Organization, in O.N. Ogbu, *Ibid*, p. 146.

<sup>19</sup> P. Sieghart, *The International Law of Human Right*, Elarendon press, Oxford, 1983, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> V.N. Ezeuchu etal, *The Right to Life and Environmental Insecurity*, being a term paper presented in Environmental Law in the Law faculty of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, January, 2017, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> (1980) all Indian report, 207

<sup>22</sup> (1994)PLP. A16

living for the people, they also help to guarantee certain conditions that are fundamental to human existence without which fundamental rights will have no meaning<sup>23</sup>.

**b) Duty to Provide Conditions that Guarantee Dignified Life**

This emphasizes that the right to life has all its core, the essentials that would allow for dignified life. The government would be on breach of the right to life, therefore, if it does not channel the common wealth of the nation toward the common goods by pursuing policies and programs towards a society that guarantees the basic necessities. Thus, it has been postulated that, in essence, the fundamental rights to life includes not only right of every human being that he will not be prevented from having access to the conditions that guarantees a dignified existence<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, state must adopt any measure that may be necessary to create an adequate statutory framework to discourage any threat to the right to life, to establish an effective system of administration of justice able to investigate, punish and repair any deprivation of lives by state agents or by individuals...<sup>25</sup>.

**c) Right to HealthCare**

This is quite encompassing, it covers everything that would adversely affect health which deprives and ultimately threaten life. Thus in *Paschain Banaa Khet v State of West Bengal*<sup>26</sup>, the Indian Supreme Court held that the right to emergence medical care was enforceable as a right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The court reasoned that the right to emergence medical care formed a core component of the right to health which in turn was recognized as forming an integral part of the right to life. The said Article 21 provides thus, "no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure of established law". This component of the right to life imposes a positive duty, on the government to channel its policies towards the provision of adequate and affordable health care as well as a duty to eliminate situations that are adverse to good health.

**d) Right to a Livelihood**

In appreciating this component of the right to life, the Indian Supreme Court in the case of *Olga Fellis v Bombay municipality Corporation*<sup>27</sup>, defined the right to life to include the right to livelihood. In *Mohin Jan v State of Karnataka*<sup>28</sup>, the court declared that a fee imposed on those who wished to gain admission into a medical school, with such fees having the effect of placing

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<sup>23</sup> V.N. Ezeuchu *et al*, *op cit*, P. 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>25</sup> The Indigenous Community of Samboy Amaxa v Paraguay , series C. No 146 (2006) I ACHR2, Para. 153.

<sup>26</sup> (1986) MSEC 37 (21)

<sup>27</sup> (1985)2SUPPSCR51

<sup>28</sup> (1992)HIR, 185.

the school beyond reach of the poor, relied on Article 21 of the nation's constitution to hold the fees unconstitutional. The court observed among others that the right to life includes the right to necessities of life such as adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter and facilities for reading, writing and expressing oneself. In *Indigenous Community of Yakye Axa v Paraguay*<sup>29</sup>, the court held that the prevention of access to the applicant's traditional means of livelihood was a violation of the right to life under Article 4 of the Inter - American Convention on human right.

**e) Right to Education**

The connection between the right to life and education becomes obvious, when viewed in the light of the fact that an uneducated individual who lacks the expertise to gain employment to sustain his livelihood, will not only be left with debased self esteem, she will also be banished to an inferior social standing. This would no doubt injure his right to life. The right to education therefore is not confined to classroom education alone, but it extends to all informal technical and other training that enable individuals acquire the needed skills for economic good<sup>30</sup>. In *Unni Krishman, J.P v State of A.P & Others*<sup>31</sup>, the court held that the right to education is implied in, and fundamental to the enjoyment of the right to life in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Apart from few cases like the case of *Jonah Gbeme v Shell*<sup>32</sup>, where the court held that the actions of the respondent in continuing to flare gas in the course of their oil exploration and production activities in the applicants community was a violation of their fundamental right to life and dignity of human person guaranteed by the constitution, the Nigeria judiciary is yet to grasp the progress already made by courts of outside jurisdiction in the realistic application of the right to life. The danger of the prevailing approach in Nigeria is that it practically renders the right to life meaningless by allowing events that overwhelm the right to life continue.

**2. MAJOR FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST SECURED ENVIRONMENT**

The capacity to protect life and property within its territorial sovereignty is generally regarded as the most significant *indicia* of statehood<sup>33</sup>. Section 14 (1) (b) of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria pertaining to the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy provides, 'the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government', consequently, the most important element of the purpose for the existence of the state is the sustained capability to maintain law and order<sup>34</sup>. Prima facie, a state will be deemed

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<sup>29</sup> Series C No 25 (2005) IACHR [www.right-to-education.org](http://www.right-to-education.org)

<sup>30</sup> (1993) H Law Report of the Commonwealth, February, p. 4

<sup>31</sup> S No FHC/B/CS/53/05, Federal High Court Benin Judicial Division 14 November (2005) AHRLR,pl57,

<sup>32</sup> A. Arewa etal, Nationality Rights Enforcement and the Promotion of Security and Development in Nigeria, being an institutional paper presented by the Nigerain Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Abuja/ lagos at...

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> J.A. Arewa, Core National Values as Determinant of National Security and Panacea for the Crime of Kidnapping and Abduction in Nigeria, in E. Azinge (Ed) Law and Security in Nigeria, NIALS, 2011 Pp 127-196.

as having failed to the extent that it has failed to guarantee safety of life and property of its citizenry. It is thus a negation of the very essence of a state for there to exist pervasive insecurity of life and property within its domain<sup>35</sup>.

Nigeria has become ravaged by environmental insecurity, food, shelter, socio-economic, political and health insecurity has become the order of the day, so many have lost their lives and loved ones and cannot be sure of ever having a stable environment again. Pollutions and degradation of all kind has taken over our environment. Every day in Nigeria, the news seems to get from bad to worse as the security situation of the environment in particular and the nation in general deteriorates further and further. The state of environmental insecurity in Nigeria has become a national emergency.

Whenever there is a problem there is always the cause but the case becomes a bigger problem when the cause is not just one or two but an accumulation of national problems. What then are the remote and immediate causes of environmental insecurity in Nigeria and how can the challenge be addressed? Some of the causes of environmental insecurity in Nigeria are:

### **I. Environmental Pollution/ Degradation**

This refers to all the ways by which man pollutes his surroundings. This means that there is environmental pollution once there is introduced into the environ any substance or thing which results in a change or adulteration of the physical, chemical or biological composition of the particular environment. For the realization of effective secured environment, environmental pollution must be put under serious check. This is because effective and appreciative secured environment must entail removal or control of the elements which may adversely affect the environment. Industrial progress was meant to make our lives better and in some ways it has. However it is this very "progress" that aggravates the earth's environmental problem.

Wherever we live and whoever we are, the environment affects our life. At times, the environment delights us at other times it disappoints us. Love it or hate it, revile or ignore it, the environment is always there, influencing our lives from the day we are born until the day we die<sup>36</sup>

### **2. Corruption**

Corruption is the state of being corrupt and is also explained to mean to make or become evil or morally bad<sup>37</sup>. The Corrupt Practice and Other Related Offences Act, listed offences of corruption to include bribery, fraud, influence, peddling and other related offences. Corruption has been a major impediment to the rapid development of the nation despite its abundant human and natural resources. Since the nation's independent, the fight against corruption has been a recurring rhetoric of each successive government. Corruption has polluted the national psyche of the country and consequently impeded the country's ability to maximize its national potentials<sup>38</sup>. Corruption is the root from where grows out the trunk, the stem, the branches and the leaves that

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<sup>35</sup> Awake, Child Labour: Its End in Sight? Watch tower Bible and Lract Society, New York, November 1999, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> E.M. Kirk Patrick, "Chambers Universal Learner's Dictionary," (ed) Edinburgh: Spectrum Books, 2007 p. 145.

<sup>38</sup> S.G Ogbodo & I.O Garuba, Nigeria's International Responsibility to Fight Corruption- The Applicability of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Port Harcourt Journal of Business Law, Faculty of Law, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, 2016, P. 178.



makes environmental protection legislation ineffective and at times impossible to implement or enforce. It is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the society. With the level of corruption in the country, the hope of having a secured environment is like making the camel to pass through the eye of a needle.

### **3. Poverty**

Poverty generally connotes the inability to command basic necessity of life or lack of income to satisfy the essentials of life. A 1998 statistics shows that 48.3% of Nigeria total population lived below the poverty line and estimated that poverty rate today is about 70%, or that 90 million people are in the poverty level<sup>39</sup>. The common language of the people is survival first, thus environmental safety right or concern do not mean much or even anything to them. In the circumstances, the quest for survival will obviously not include the choice of enforcing environmental rights because the means to right environmental wrongs is not available. As a result, the citizenry lives and contends with all forms of environmental abuses.

### **4. Weak Judicial System**

The judiciary is an arm of the government and by the provision of section 6 of the 1999 constitution as amended, it has the power to exercise judicial functions vested on the courts of records. While the truth that the judiciary is the last hope of the masses cannot be totally challenged, the fact remains that accessibility to court and the attitude of the court to an aggrieved person seeking redress remains a mirage<sup>40</sup>. The reasons mostly attributed to this attitude of the court is that most of the judges have no requisite training in environmental issues and therefore do not appreciate the problems posed to man by environmental abuses.

### **5. Nonchalance on the part of the citizens**

An average Nigerian is relaxed careless and does not feel any anxiety about his environment or his right to clean environment. It is unfortunate that Nigerians are waiting to be dragged before they imbibe the culture of maintaining the environment and the right of inhabiting in an unpolluted and contaminated environment. The general feeling is that maintaining the environment is not their business. This nonchalant attitude cuts across all, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate, the good looking and the ugly. The situation demands a collective will from all concerned to save our environment and lives.

### **6. Lack of Genuine interest on the part of the Government**

The task of halting degradation and reversing pollution trends hinges on the enactment of Action Enforcing policy<sup>41</sup>. In Nigeria environmental legislation are products of the colonial masters

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<sup>39</sup> Khalid, The Policies of Poverty in Nigeria, 2014 p3. [www.gamsi.com/article/6000/news](http://www.gamsi.com/article/6000/news)

<sup>40</sup> [6Q36.htm.accessed](#) 07-06-2016. C.I.N Emelie, Environmental Law and Practice in Nigeria, Rhyce Kerex Publishers, Enugu , 2016, p. 314.

<sup>41</sup> F. Dimowo, 'Enforcement of Environmental Law in Nigeria' Contemporary Law Journal vol. 2 University of Benin, 2005, p. 103.

which are principally dominated by political and economic gain. A genuine quest for a secured environment must initiate policies aimed at ensuring sound and environmentally friendly practices. Such policies must be 'holistic in approach, meaning, comprehension and integrated'. It may not suffice for government to merely impress it upon individuals and corporate developers to be environmentally conscious while on its own, it remains passive.

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### **7. Violence / Terrorism / Insurgency**

Today it is news of a bomb blast, yesterday, it was a suicide bombing, tomorrow; it may be attack by the Fulani herdsmen, Boko haram among others. Every day in Nigeria, the news seem to get from bad to worse, as the security situation deteriorates further and further. The nation's security and environment have been truncated by the on -going mayhem and destruction of lives and properties in different parts of the country. Over and over, violence has threatened Nigeria's peace, stability and unity. It is an incontrovertible fact that that security apparatus of Nigeria today is not healthy, non active, malfunction, unpatriotic and unprofessional. It is natural in this situation that there will be a breakdown of the nation's security system. The security of the environment and the nation in general is to say the least hinged on the effectiveness and efficiency of its security agencies. The total neglect of human security by political leaders in especially Nigeria, aggravated insecurity of lives and properties.<sup>42</sup>

### **3. THE WAY FORWARD**

Against the backdrop of the challenges highlighted above together with the current economic recession reputed to be the worst in the past twenty-five years of our nationhood, the following suggestions are proffered for achieving environmental security in Nigeria.

A. Pollution of whatever form is an evil wind that blows no one good. Although it is almost impossible to stop pollution, our quest, is that pollution be reduced to the barest minimum in the interest of human life.

B. Environmental rights and protection should be incorporated into the Nigeria Constitution as a fundamental right.

C. The government on its part, should empower environmental institutions financially as this will enable them to adequately carry out their function. Environmental policies should be pursued with the honesty it deserves. Truthfulness and transparency should be the watch word of the government in dealing with environmental issues.

D. There is need for urgent improved and continuous sensitization of the citizens about specific environmental responsibility.

E. The federal Government is called upon to rise up to its responsibility of resolving conflict situations. The perceived ethnic cleansing tacitly supported by the federal government is not accepted.

F. The government should create, enhance, improve and maintain the ability and capacity of the poor to engage in income earning activities generated by the sustained economic growth, as this will bring about improved living condition and wellbeing of the people as well as safeguard the environment.

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<sup>42</sup> O.A. Amakiri, 'National Insecurity, The bane of Political Instability in Nigeria', Journal of Social Science. Vol.14, Faculty of Social Science, IAUE, Port Harcourt,2017 p. 168.

G. There is need for proper self-discipline starting from the federal government to the least stakeholder in environmental matter. Proper self-discipline will go a long way in stamping out corruption in the nation.

H. The judiciary is called upon to rise up to the occasion when environmental issues come before them. Taking into cognizance that rights are human rights.

I. Above all, the government should crave, pursue and maintain peace and stability in the country by all means. As no development will be sustained in the faces of religious, Political, ethnic and corruption induced crisis that the country is facing presently. In all, it is only truth that will heal the nation.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The right to life is the umbrella that houses every other component that is believe to impact on sustenance of life. It is the foundation upon which every other right rest upon. The principle of right to life should be used as the measuring stick for promoting good government and for failure to create a society conducive to the sustenance of life.<sup>43</sup>

Discussion concerning environmental security most often focuses on the role government legislation, and law enforcement. Environmental safety should be the responsibility of all the people and not simply that of the government. Decisions that impact the environment should involve all environmental stakeholders. However, the government and it agencies must take the centre stage in establishing and maintain basic standards that protect both the environment and the people interacting with it<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> V. N. Ezeuchu, *op.cit*, p.23.

<sup>44</sup> V. N. Ezeuchu, *op.cit*, p.23.