

## INSECURITY CHALLENGES, BANE TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

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### **Abstract**

*Presently, the Nigeria society is suffocating from series of societal challenges of which insecurity is obviously inclusive and occupies a prime spot in the nation's structural process. The heightened rate of insecurity challenges in the history of the country is considerably alarming, with myriad effects visible in all ramifications and dimensions of the society. The Nigeria nation is grappling with the endemic realities of underdevelopment which is intricately linked to the issues of insecurity in the country. Urban and infrastructural development is among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations Member States with an actualization target in the year 2030. Despite the concerted effort in achieving this goal, insecurity has continued to pose a big threat by frustrating all the available avenues employed for the development of the country. Developmental blueprint employed by the government seems to be unattainable due to the indices of insecurity challenges evident in terrorism, kidnapping, arm robbery, banditry, vandalization and massive destruction of lives and properties which have subjected the populace to live in abject fear, tension and apprehension. Against this backdrop, it will be worthwhile to posit that for development to be achieved in Nigeria, the trend of insecurity must be arrested. This study adopts the sociological method of research and will be framed with Structural functionalism theory. The paper therefore observes that insecurity challenges are rife in Nigeria which is the rationales for underdevelopment of the country. It further observes that the reason behind insecurity challenges is based on poverty, unemployment, agitations and unsatisfactory ends among the ethnicities in Nigeria. It finally observes that if the challenges of insecurity are tackled, the development of the country will take an unprecedented acceleration. The paper concludes that Nigeria government should be alive and active in her war against insecurity in Nigeria which will give way to national development. The study therefore recommends that the government and all well-meaning Nigerians should take the insecurity situation of the country seriously. Also, the government should create a forum for dialogue among the aggrieved ethnic groups for the resolution of protest and agitations. Finally, Nigerians should endeavor to build legacies of peace for an environment devoid of hostility, tension, apprehension and fear towards achieving the sustainable development goals.*

**Keywords:** Insecurity, Challenges, Bane, National Development, Nigeria, Experience.

### **Introduction**

From the world on go, the development of any nation has been a general responsibility of every sector in the society which the role of security sector cannot be overemphasized. The presupposition is that the nation's development can be measured by the level of the security that is recorded in such a nation. When a nation is ripple of issues of insecurity, it adversary affects the development of that nation. This is not different from what is presently obtained in Nigeria. The level of insecurity as witnessed in Nigeria today has reached its crescendo which has contributed to the state of things in the nation. In the Northern part of the nation, the incessant killing of

people by Boko Haram, the herdsmen attack, the bandits and the likes. In the East, the herdsmen attack, kidnapping and other life threatening issues have always been witnessed. All these have made the attention of the government to be shifted to fighting them and thereby using resources meant for development to spend on fighting insecurity in the land. The Nigeria project as the quest for a prosperous and unified state of Nigeria is often termed “work in progress”. With over 200 million people, Nigeria is one of the largest countries in the world. In this globalized age, it is also possible to find thousands or even hundreds of thousands of Nigerians in many of the major urban centers of the world. It is right to say that most Nigerians living in other parts of the world left Nigeria to find greener pastures. However, you cannot talk about greener pastures without talking about the value of life and properties. Greener pastures include security; hence, insecurity has exported most of Nigerians out of the shore of the nation. Security is everybody's business and it is one of the fundamental human rights of the people, that is why it is stated in section 14 (2)(b) of the Nigerian 1999 constitution as amended that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government”. At a time like this when the right of a common man is violated, it becomes a challenge and a problem. In Nigeria, Insecurity took a different shape within the past twelve years. This is because for this space of time, no day goes by without a report of one insecurity challenge or the other. Unfortunately, everyone is at the receiving end. It is no longer the ordinary citizens who are only the victims but also those who may be referred to as first class citizens. It is important to note that the level of insecurity in Nigeria has become a major issue for the government since 1990 when the activities of the Niger Delta Militants started and in recent time when Boko Haram insurgency arose. National Development has witnessed unprecedented security challenge and drop down in its road to success. For Ewetan and Urhie (2014), these challenges range from kidnapping, suicide attacks, bombing, ritual killings, assassinations, armed robbery and the likes and have led to the destruction of lives and properties, hindered business activities, discouraged local and foreign investors and increases government expenditure on security. All of these stifle and retard Nigeria's socio-economic development. This study therefore aims at reviewing the insecurity challenges which kills the national development in Nigeria and as well, seeks practical ways of handling these challenges in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this work will be limited to structural functionalism which is one of the traditional theories in sociology. Its fountainhead could be traced to August Comte (1798 – 1857) while the likes of Herbert Spencer and Robert Maton pitched to its development. The theory was said to be later ameliorated by the French sociologist; Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and the American sociologist; Talcott Pason (1902-1979).

Structural functionalism sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to advance solidarity and firmness or peace. This approach looks at both social structure and social function. The former includes family, religion, law, economy, and class which significantly influence larger systems such as economy, legal, political and cultural system. It could also be said to be the framework upon which a society is established. It determines the norms and patterns of relations between the various institutions of the society. The later addresses society as a whole in terms of the functions of its constituent elements namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. For this theory, all parts work together to keep the society functioning and any subsystem that is affected will affect the general system. In other words, any flux in one part of the society causes flux in another part. Historically, functionalist compares society with a living organism and as well, draws analogy between them. That is why Omonijo, Anyaegbunam, Obiorah, Uche, Shaibu and Ogunwa (2017) view it like a living organism whose parts work together for its survival, society in the same manner has various parts which enable it to meet its needs towards

survival (p.63). These systems or parts are being regarded as institutions and they perform specific roles towards maintaining the whole. The parts that work together include political, economy, technology, industry, education, religion, social control or social order. On the specific roles, it could be manifest and latent and they have continued to hold the society together (Merton, 1938).

Relating the theoretical framework to insecurity sees insecurity as a subsystem of social control of institution of human society that affects a section of the society, “functional prerequisite” for the survival of its members to prevent them from extinction. There are two ways to view the role of discrepancy and obligation of agencies created to checkmate insecurity. Firstly, violent conflicts that generate insecurity such as armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, terrorism etc. provide unofficial or illegal employment for those who indulge in them (Global Terrorism Index, 2015; Haralambos et al., 2008; Ngwama, 2014; Oputeh, 2015). These activities enable them to adjust or design an immoral means of survival (Merton, 1938). This is because the unemployment rate just like poverty rate is skyrocketing in the contemporary Nigeria. Secondly, it provides a means of occupation and career development for security personnel in their various agencies in the society. Their roles of maintaining law and order are essential for cohesion and smoothly running society (Andersen and Taylor, 2006). Therefore for Omonijo et al (2017), “the manifest roles of these agencies are evident in the system maintenance within the threshold of employment opportunity for individual members and the safety of the general society while the latent role is the implication of insecurity to the wellbeing of Nigerians and National development” (p.63). This theory was silent about the consequences and the disastrous nature of insecurity which is costly. Money meant for human capital development and natural development is being diverted to reintegrate the bereaved families and victims of insecurity, renovation of properties destroyed and ransom being demanded in most cases. This has to play with the psychological state of mind of intending investors thereby driving them away.

### **Conceptual understanding of Insecurity**

Scholars have made some efforts in contributing to the concept of insecurity. Among these scholars is Beland (2005), who posits that insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan (2013), see insecurity from two perspectives. For them, insecurity is first, the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. The second perspective happens to be the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipating of some misfortunes. Achumba et al (2013) in another way envisaged insecurity as the embracing of lack of stability and continuity of livelihood, lack of predictability of daily life, absence of protection from crime and exposure to psychological harm.

Ewetan and Urhie (2014) on their view see insecurity as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that contributes to recurring conflicts and leads to wanton destruction of lives and properties (p. 44). Insecurity which is the direct opposite of security is seen by Hornby (1995) as lack of security, state of uncertainty or the state of being subject to danger, vulnerability etc. For Ota (2012), insecurity means threat to life and property, threat to peace, security and effective social living. Otto and Ukpere (2012) view insecurity as lack of protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, office or communities. Udeh, Okoroafor and Ihezue (2013) visualize insecurity as the fear of unknown. For them, it is a feeling of trepidation and unsafe (p.96). In other words, it is a case of a person being vulnerable to damage, injury or loss from both internal and external cause.

### **A Review and Background of Insecurity challenges in Nigeria**

Nigeria has gotten to the stage whereby no day passes without reports of one insecurity challenge or the other. Nigerians wake up to news about kidnapping, armed robbery, bombings, banditry, ritual killings and in general, wanton killings. More to worry about is the fact that in spite of the huge resources being pumped into the security and defense sector, there has not been a corresponding outcome. For the last few years, the Federal government earmarked not less than N10 trillion for the defense of the territorial integrity and internal security of the nation (Falana, 2010). Yet, it still becomes a trend making Nigerians question those resources being pumped to the sector. The insecurity challenges in Nigeria have gotten to the level whereby no one wishes to be identified with it. This is a state whereby everyone is clueless on what to do. Those residing in the North-East, North Central, North-West, South-South and South-East regions hardly sleep with both eyes closed because the government that is entrusted with the security of life and properties are helpless. It is indeed a grave concern to all and sundry which makes well-meaning citizens of the nation to question how things arrived at such stage where no one is safe and everyone is a suspect.

The Northern Nigeria is being subjected to the Boko haram which has stayed for years. The North Eastern experience with Boko Haram insurgency has left the nation with pathetic thoughts. The North Western geo-political zone is trapped in banditry, ethno religious wars and killings, illegal mining and kidnapping. In the Southern part of Nigeria, it is the same. In the South West of Nigeria, cybercrime, extra - judicial killings, ritual killings, kidnapping, armed robbery and wanton killings are being featured in their zone. South East is now a paradise for unknown gunmen, secessionist agitation, herder-farmer clash, domestic violence and commercial crimes, while South South is plagued and threatened by militancy, kidnapping and environmental agitation as well as ritual killings and cyber crimes. Surprisingly, Nigeria perceived to be the giant of Africa has been witnessing unprecedented insecurity challenges. The dilemma in which insecurity has kept Nigeria as a sovereign state is unquantifiable and unimaginable. The struggle of Nigeria being a developing state is real and yet, the nation is no place to be found among other nations. This is definitely due to the prevalent insecurity that is hindering the nation's development. Nigeria endowed with both human and natural resources has kept its citizens with the option of leaving the country. Best brains out of human development exports themselves abroad so as not to be a victim of Nations present predicament..

Since Nigeria's independence, the demand for true federalism and political restructuring by various ethnic nationalists in Nigeria has not waned. However, the 1966 coup is unbeatably the ugly startup for the insecurity experienced today in Nigeria. The coup was staged and led by Igbo Christian officers, while Northern soldiers, primarily Muslims, led the counter coup. This was done with the excuse of curbing corruption which led to the loss of lives of high-ranking personalities. With the counter coup, there was an immediate consequence which was mutual distrust between different ethnic groups; Igbo ethnic group and Hausa/Fulani ethnic group precisely. That distrust provides strong underground currents in which insecurity survives in Nigeria today. The demand for Biafra also paved way for the secessionist agitations and the militias of different tribes in Nigeria. Also, the results of the unjust killing of Niger Delta activists like Ken Saro Wiwa was the rise of the Niger Delta militia which immediately secured the consciousness of most Niger Deltans.

Insecurity challenges can also be traced to the military rule when large quantities of arms were brought into the country for the use of the military during the Nigerian civil war. Soon after the civil war, the arms were used by some civilians and ex-military men for dirty purposes such as



armed robbery. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimensions when some of these weapons got into the hands of some unemployed youths who used it for deviant purposes. While some researchers attribute youth violence to peer group influence and other psychological factors associated with growing up. Others emphasized the impact of political and economic factors such as ethnic agitation, political agitation, unemployment, Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) as triggers of violent reactions among the youth (Ubong, 2014). However, since the homecoming of democracy in 1999, the insecurity in the nation has been disturbing too and in the past twenty three years, things have sincerely worsened. Though one can understand that conventional crimes exist in a human society especially after civil wars, in Nigeria, it is much. This is because the more recent experience in violent extremeness, insurgency and other forms of militancy have made the situation much more complex (Adagba, Ugwu and Eme, 2012).

### **Examples of Insecurity challenges in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a nation where insecurity survives and grows. It gets worse as days go by and this has exposed the nation to the world on a negative reason. Some of the examples of the common day insecurity in Nigeria are Clashes between herders and farmers, Boko haram, Banditry and Kidnapping, Niger Delta militancy, Unknown Gunmen, Police brutality, Rituals and wanton killings.

a. Clashes between herders and farmers: Nigeria's farmer and herder conflicts have brought about material losses, injury and death and are likely to increase food insecurities and poverty. The farmer and herder insecurity are series of disputes over land resources across Nigeria between the Fulani herders and the non-Fulani farmers. This has been prominent especially around the middle belt since the return of democracy in 1999. More so recently, the south east region is experiencing it. From 2010 to 2022, Nigeria lost over 15,000 citizens and about 110,000 displaced from their homelands in over 1000 recorded violent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the nation. The driving force of the clashes is the competition for available resources especially grazing land. It seems that the government has abandoned the grazing reserve system created by the Northern region in 1965. Under the grazing reserve system, government provided space, water and vaccinations for the livestock while the herdsmen paid taxes to the government in return. Swiftly, gently and subsequently, the grazing reserve system was abandoned due to the neglect of the agricultural sector as the mainstay of the country's economy. Consequently, grazing resources which were under a neglected agricultural sector could not be sustained. It received less or no attention from succeeding administrations. As a fall back, herdsmen began to resort back to their traditional and sectional grazing routes which had been interrupted with industrialization, urbanization, demographic and other natural factors. This however, led to clashes and conflict with farmers and host communities. This conflict has been on the increase in recent times and now, numbered as one of the major threats to Nigeria national security.

So far so good, lives have been lost. In June 2012, at Chakaruma village in Jos, two people were killed. In July of that same year in Maseh, Tse and Shong villages in Jos, one hundred and ninety two people were killed and the communities razed down. In August 2012, Ojankale and Ijegwu communities in Benue state were attacked leaving twelve people dead amidst properties. Same happened in September of that same year at Ubiaja, Edo state. In October 2012, Dallyam, Rargho and Lotton villages in Jos and Yogbo in Benue state were attacked with thirty four people killed. In 2013 January, five hundred and seventy people were killed with twenty houses razed down at Wadaton Gerba village in Jos, Amla village in Benue and more deaths occurrences.

b. Boko Haram: The emergence of Boko Haram insurgency has introduced a terrorist dimension into the criminal space in Nigeria. Series of bombing have been carried out by the sect as well as

taking hostage of innocent citizens. Unfortunately, the United Nations building in Abuja was not spared in the spree. Over the years, this example of insecurity has created widespread insecurity across Northern Nigeria, increased tensions between various ethnic communities, interrupted development activities, frightened off investors and generated concerns among Nigeria's Northern neighbours (Adebayo, 2014). They have been responsible for the bombings in Borno and Yobe states and also are behind the January 20th attack in Kano that led to the death of over two hundred people and three major attacks in Abuja including the UN Headquarter bombing in August 2012. It is important to note that Boko Haram's attack is also targeted at Churches and Mosques. Attacks on Churches and Mosques are particularly disturbing because they are intended to inflame religious tensions and upset the nation's social cohesion (Eme et al, 2012).

The sect was founded in 2002 in Maidugri with the aim of establishing a Shari'a government in Borno State under Governor Ah Modu Sheriff. The recruitment into the sect were unemployed youths, whose situation has made them dissatisfied with the irresponsible leadership of all levels of government, unemployment, poverty, corruption and insecurity. Various scholars have seen this as a major concern to know the origin and ideology of this sect. For Eme and Ibietan (2012), Jama'atu Ahlia Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad better known as Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group that has a strong operational base in the Northeast of Nigeria. According to Lister (2012), the foot soldiers of the sect are disgruntled youths who have been paid by unscrupulous Northern politician to cause mayhem in the country because of their selfish reasons and ambition. Cook (2011); Awojobi (2014); Onuoha (2014) were of the opinion that they (youths) are enlisted into the Boko Haram because of the prevalence of poverty in the North. Aside the killings, kidnapping and bombing of the sect, their activities impede national development of not only North East region but Nigeria at large.

c. **Banditry and Kidnapping:** Banditry according to Dami (2021) refers to armed violence driven principally by the criminal intent to steal and plunder (p. 301). For him, it is motivated by the quest for economic accumulation. The victims of banditry are individuals who they seem valuable and necessary to breed out funds or any valuable item. It can come in form of raids. Banditry has reached some alarming heights in recent years. Continued insecurity, desertification and possible jihadist influence have allowed for such alarming height. The origin of this banditry can be traced back to herder-farmer conflicts that plagued Nigeria. There are the likes of Ali Kchalla, Dogo Gide, Kachalla Halilu Sububu Seno, Kachalla Turji, Dan Karami, Adamu Aliero Yankuzo, Ansaru, Bello Turji and many others leading one bandit gang or the other. The violence unleashed typically involves scores of gunmen on motorbikes sweeping into villages, shooting sporadically and carting away valuable things. Zamfara and Kaduna are some of the States affected majorly in this banditry saga. In March 2022, a train heading for Kaduna from Abuja was attacked by bandits and dozens of people were abducted by suspected bandits who bombed the rail tracks. This incident happened couple of days after unidentified gunmen had stormed the Kaduna airport.

Kidnapping on its own works hand in globe with banditry and is also a security concern which spreads like wildfire. Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), see kidnapping as the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for a ransom. It involves taking a person from their family forcefully without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their family or the Nation (p.14). Kidnapping has so far become a lucrative business for many jobless youths. Recently, old men patronize the business too after seeing how the jobless youths do cash out. Aside the banditry and kidnapping experienced in the North, South East and South West have patronized it too and it is worse in these later regions. Hardly a day passes by in Nigeria without a report of a

case of kidnap. It is therefore no longer news that kidnapping is a heinous but lucrative business which has hampered National Development.

d. Niger Delta Militants: Following years of neglect and marginalization by the federal government, corruption at all levels of the Nigeria State and ecological devastation by oil companies, the Niger Delta is extremely poor despite oil wealth. This neglect reality has provided a very much fertile ground for conflicts to erupt which has resulted to the Niger Delta militancy. In that way, they assume protests and agitations as well as demand for adequate share of oil wealth and environmental protection. This militancy is also as a result of the petroleum industry's pollution of the environment, which has affected the way the indigenes earned their living (farming and fishing). Generally, there is a great resentment that the region does not benefit enough from the oil wealth. Under the principle of federal character, oil revenue is shared out by the federal government to the States and local government. The federal government retains for its use, about half of the revenue. There is a bonus paid to the oil producing states that is contentious; the recipients see it as too small, while most of the rest of the country see it as too large. Under these circumstances, discontent is endemic among people in the Delta and periodically erupts into insurrection. Presently, the Nigeria government made the insurrection to run a relatively low level by paying off or settling the militants and their leaders: with that, Niger Delta militancy reduced to its minimal level.

e. Unknown Gunmen: Unknown gunmen saga has been prevalent in the South Eastern part of the Country. This issue of unknown gunmen started in the early months of 2021 and has actually kept the region in cold shivers running down everyone's spine. It is assumed that it all started due to the agitation for the republic of Biafra. It is also assumed that the trend got worst when the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra was arrested. The first occurrence was a compulsory sit at home every Mondays. Those stepping out of their houses for work or business were doing that at their own risk. Subsequently, due to the fact that these gunmen were unknown, people started to hide under the mask of unknown gunmen to commit crimes. Finding shows that the unknown gunmen saga has more hold in Anambra followed by Imo state then Enugu state. It is not much heard in Abia and Ebonyi state in the South East region.

### **Governments' Response to Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria**

No government survives in a challenged society especially when it is the issue of insecurity. Most administrations have been contributing their quota in the fight against insecurity. The government seems determined and robust in ensuring that they enhance security of lives and properties. The government believes that in spite of all the insecurity challenges, the nation is unshaken and unbuttered. For them, the nation's resolve and will to take the nation to a secured height remains strong. Nigeria enacted the anti-terrorism legislation after the United States blacklisted her and her citizens for terrorism in January, 2010. This terrorism prevention act was signed into law in June 2011. To help the fight against terrorism and insecurity, the government pin pointed that insecurity cannot survive without sponsoring its stands which brought about the money laundering probation act in 2011 which is aimed at cutting off financial support for insecurity. The federal government also established the joint task force in Maiduguri in 2011 when the issue of Boko Haram activities was at its peak. This joint task force included the army, navy, air force, Nigeria police force and the DSS. It allowed for co-ordinate intelligence gathering and sharing among the security formations. The country as well, closed the borders between Northern Nigeria and the neighbouring states of Chad, Niger and Cameroon after it was established that the insurgents causing insecurity were using porous borders. This particular move was meant to curtail the activities of Boko Haram, preventing them from escaping into neighbouring States and cutting off their supplies from foreign terrorist networks. Lovers of the

Nation outside Africa had to provide training, technical and intelligence support so as to assist in the fight against insecurity. These have been some of the responses when it comes to Boko Haram and banditry. In the Southern region of Nigeria, the government responses or ways of curtailing insecurities has always been deploying of joint task forces and enforcing curfews so as to curb the rate at which crime happens.

During the Yar'Adua's administration in July 2009, it marked the first response of Nigeria government to combating insecurity menace following the arrest and extrajudicial killings of the then Boko Haram leader; Muhammed Yusuf. In order to improve Nigeria's international security profile, the Yar'Adua's government and administration established a strong hard military power which Solomon (2013) refers to as kinetic operations. This response was considered by many Nigerians as a total end to insecurity especially Boko Haram without knowing that there is more to it. Late Yar'Adua's death hindered the government effort in improving her security profile. During the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, the administration established the Terrorism Preventive Act (TPA) and an office of national counter terrorism co-coordinator. His administration also declared six month state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Plateau state on the 1st of January, 2012 as these areas were considered as the transit roads for movement. On 13th May, 2012, another state of emergency was imposed but this time, Adamawa was included. There was also an establishment of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) which was also an effort or response to improve Nigeria's security system. It was considered for implementation in April 2014 as a policy framework for counter terrorism (Eji, 2016). As a security measure, it was systematized into five roles. The first is forestall; that is to prevent people from becoming terrorists, the second is secure which aims at increasing safeguard against terrorist groups; the third is identifying aims at preemption through discovery, the fourth was aimed at reducing the impact of attacks from terrorism and lastly is implement which serves as a framework for mobilizing a coordinated cross-governmental counter terrorism effort (Eji, 2016).

During President Muhammed Buhari's administration, he replaced the heads of Nigeria's security institutions and as well, purchased military and security technologies. One of the key statements Muhammad Buhari made during his campaign towards the 2015 presidential election was to strengthen Nigeria security system thereby putting an end to insecurity especially Boko Haram and banditry which had been a major threat. As a result of that, he replaced the heads of security. This was few weeks after he was sworn in. More so, in the first year of his administration, PMB spent a lot on military and security technologies which includes drone, closed circuit television (CCTV) among others in the North East Nigeria (Moss, 2018). Furthermore, in a bid to fight insecurity, his government response to the challenge was seen with the approval and establishments of regional security outfits such as Amotekun and Ebube Agu. Kidnapping on its own has received response from the government. This is due to the fact that it poses serious security threat and the aftermath of the crime which is ransom is very outrageous. In most cases when the ransom is not met, murder becomes the available option. Also, most kidnapers are targeted at getting ransoms and still murder the victim. Kidnapping by bandits and insurgents is among the biggest organized or gang crime in Nigeria and a serious security challenge. On the government response, the Nigeria Senate has passed a bill imposing jail terms of at least fifteen years for paying a ransom to free someone who has been kidnapped and made the crime of abduction punishable by death in cases where victims die. On the kidnapping that comes with banditry which has put the nation's security in the frontiers of terrorism, the government has not been sleeping about it. Government has responded with a dialogue, settlement and peace missions. This response was at the early stage of banditry in 2016 when some State governments leaned heavily on negotiation and settlement to end it. The State



governments paid away as compensation to identified leaders of bandits in return for peace. States like Sokoto, Zamfara and Kastina further offered an amnesty hinged on renouncing banditry and kidnapping and the surrender of weapons. In the same stem, a famous Islamic cleric; Sherik Ahmad Gumi initiated a peace mission aimed at reaching a consensus between the government and the bandits leaders. In 2018, Government efforts turned to military aerial bombardment of occupied forest used by bandit strongholds. The effort was strengthened by the seizure of telecommunication services in path of the region for several weeks in the last quarter of 2021. This was to undermine the ability of the groups to communicate and receive information about military activities. There is also another government response in regards to insecurity which could be seen with a federal high court proscribing bandits as terrorist organizations. This was intended to ensure that the appropriate level of force, tactical and operational assets and resources were deployed and used against the bandit groups; in other words, tougher sanctions for the bandits.

Furthermore, in the Niger Delta, government has granted amnesty to the erstwhile militants as well as setting up rehabilitation program for them. Government has also setup several extra ministerial bodies such as the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), technical committees, Ministry of the Niger Delta and the National Council of Niger Delta (Adegbami, 2013).

### **Insecurity Challenges: Bane to National Development**

Insecurity challenges have proven to be bane to national development over time. No country can survive or flow with insecurities roaming everywhere. The atrocities of insecurities hamper on the successful thriving of the nation's progress. By so, a country cannot achieve development unless it seeks first ways to achieve security and as well, control her territory. Here in, security of human lives and properties are ultimate because human deposit resources and therefore, human resources are necessary and integral for growth, progress and development. In other words, the beauty of development in a nation lies in the contribution of diverse human resources. However, the increasing state of insecurity in the nation as a result of Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapers, herdsmen, unknown gunmen, Niger Delta militancy and several other wanton killing going on have made the nation's development to be hindered. Nigeria as a matter of fact is still referred to as a developing country. Some nations that got their independence after Nigeria have place in the world when it comes to development but a country which is known as the giant of Africa seems to be stricken and crippled with insecurity.

Firstly, Nigeria has been blacklisted among the top terrorized nations in the world. This blacklisting has deprived the Sovereign State from many good tidings and as well, affects the nation's GDP. There is a great decline in foreign investments and partnership, a decline in the nation's forex. National development is simply facing a serious backdrop. While several factors could have contributed to insecurity and low level of national development in the nation; in the case of Nigeria, there is no doubt that bad governance and leaders in power are the major causes because bad governance and leadership breed poverty and unemployment which causes the insecurities trending in Nigeria. Conventional wisdom subscribes that insecurity rises with poverty and unemployment. The common line that holds both Boko Haram, herdsmen-farmers clash, banditry and kidnapping, unknown gunmen and Niger Delta militancy is poverty and unemployment. This trend of insecurities has affected the economic, social, and psychology of the citizens. The economic, social and psychological costs of the insurgency cannot be quantified. Commercial activities in the North East and Southeast have been reduced because of the unprecedented attacks of the Boko Haram, unknown gunmen and bandits. Banks, markets, schools and shops do not open regularly due to the fear of the coordinated attacks from Boko

Haram. This, on a general note hinders growth in a society because everywhere is in chaos and the run for life is the utmost. Africans believe in the sacredness of life that is why there is an Igbo mantra “Onye oku na agba beya anaghi achu oke” supports the importance and sacredness of life. Also, insecurity impinges on the political stability of the nation. This is so when there is an unstable political system due to crisis. The government in power however, becomes distracted and carried away from pursuing the goal of transforming the country so as to be a developed nation. In this situation, instead of funding the different sectors comfortably, the government channels all her energy and resources to security either by buying more weapons or by settling the insurgents. For example, the 2012 security budget took N921.91 billion when compared to other sectors like health, agriculture, information and education. In the last five years, about 12 trillion naira has been budgeted for security and defense to tackle the myriads of security challenges.

Thirdly, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria has dropped to the minimal. This is not new to any nation that suffers insecurity. When there are insecurity challenges in the country, foreign investors are scared away from coming to invest their capital and contribute towards the nation's development; in other words, jeopardize foreign investment in the country. There is no investor whether local or foreign that will be motivated to invest in an insecure and unsafe environment. In civilized world, investors are not only looking for high returns on their investments but also safe paradise for their investments. Thus, the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to the economic thereby, tampering with national development. The conscious awareness of the Igbo philosophy of *Aku-ruo-ulo* becomes weak because insecurity is not good for investment. There are cases of some businessmen and manufacturing companies having to relocate particularly from the North in recent times to peaceful parts of the Country (Nwagboso, 2012). Many of the Igbos and Yorubas from Southern Nigeria who were engaged in various business in Northern Nigeria had to return to their home States to avoid the violence orchestrated by the terrorist group; Boko Haram (Suleiman, 2012). There is also a heavy negative impact that affects the development of the Nation which happens to be absence of the dividend of Democracy. For Udekigbo (2022), there are benefits enjoyed by the masses who vote in the government in power. These benefits are referred to as the dividend of democracy. Insecurities rob the masses of these benefits. The government will find it difficult to take up any project in a community or state that is being ravaged by insecurity. Oil production has also drastically been on a decline as a result of the Niger Delta militancy and kidnapping of oil workers in the South South region. In 2011, Nigeria was estimated to have lost about 600,000 barrels of crude oil on the daily basis to illegal bunkers which amount to about 3.7 trillion naira yearly (The Punch, 2011). Between January 2021 and February 2022, Nigeria lost about 3.2 billion dollars. Beside, the wave of kidnapping in some parts of Nigeria has forced investors, businessmen and companies to relocate to peaceful environments. Thus the decline in foreign investment in Nigeria as a result of insecurity when combined with effects of global economic slowdown has caused the closing down of thousands of factories in Nigeria (Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2012).

Other ways that insecurity has retarded the nation's development according to Ewetan and Ubah (2014) include

- i. Social dislocation and population displacement.
- ii. Social tensions and new pattern of settlement which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to Muslim/Christian dominated enclaves.
- iii. Heightens citizenship question which encourages hostility between indigenes and settlers.
- iv. Dislocation and disruption of family and communal life.

- v. General atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy.
- vi. Dehumanization of women, children and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war.
- vii. Deepening of hunger and poverty in the polity.
- viii. Discourages local and foreign investment as it makes investments unattractive to business people.
- ix. Halts business operations during period of violence and outright closure of many enterprises in the areas or zones where incidence of insecurity is rife and are on daily occurrences.
- x. Increases security spending by business organizations and government.
- xi. Migration of people from area or region where there is prevalence of insecurity.

However, the ability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for a successful growth in the development of the nation has led to resentment and stagnation of the National development hence, for Ewetan and Urhie (2014), the bane of Nigeria's development is insecurity (p.59).

### **Practical ways of handling Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria**

According to Sanusi (2014), there is need for more proactive measures to curb insurgency in the country and the government owes it as a duty to provide means of livelihood for the citizens. Sanusi further maintains that, no matter how much the government spends on security forces, there will not be security until these people have food on their table. Poverty and hunger need to be dealt with as the first measure to handling insecurity. Poverty, hunger and unemployment make people vulnerable to radicalization and drive conflict. What is required is sincere policy implementation to lift Nigerians out of these circumstances. One cannot separate poverty from insecurity and terrorism. Nigeria being among the top countries terrorized, also ranks top among the poverty stricken country. Efforts should be made towards reducing poverty and generating employment for the unemployed. This will not only reduce the rate of insecurities but will also increase the productivity of the nation hence, the development become progressive. This can be achieved by ensuring that policies are tailored towards the poor and unemployed. By so doing, the government will restructure and redesign approaches that will permanently reduce insecurity.

The government should come out clear too when dealing with insurgents. One cannot be sponsoring evil and fight the same evil he or she is sponsoring. In government, due to political crises, some top officials have been mentioned to be great sponsors of these insurgents. Nigeria and the citizens become a playground for their play. These government officials and authorities in some cases command the security men to go and fight the insurgents they are sponsoring which if the insurgents are caught, a means of safety for them will be made. Those that suffer to this cause are the security men who risk their lives in fighting insecurity. They are the ones at the frontline of insecurity engaging the insurgents. Also, the rule of law guaranteed with quality leadership should not be farfetched from practically tackling insecurity. The rule of law holds supreme the laws of the land which everyone must abide with irrespective of position or office. A society that does not uphold the law is baptized with chaos. This is why Ozigbo (2019) sees rule of law in Nigeria as a mirage (p.278). There is actually, no respect for the law because everyone wants to show how much power he/she wields and all these create a state of disorderliness coupled with anarchy and lawlessness. A democratic sovereign state like Nigeria must be law abiding and as well, be under the law. All these come with a quality leadership which also guarantees security in any given society. Plato in his right understanding considered quality leaders as those who must have the capacity for abstract thinking and altruistic consideration of events and issues especially in performance. Hence, quality leadership has nothing to do with

religion, ethnicity, region or social status and strata. It is a leadership that “would not be limited to championing the cause to their home state, tribe or religious groups, but rather focused on deeds and pronouncements which convincingly and positively impact on the entire citizenry of the federal republic” (Kufor, 2012). Nigerians have seen what bad leadership which brings about the nonchalance attitudes towards security has kept Nigeria and its development. Over the years, it has been obvious that the bane to national development is in the failure of leadership because with good leadership, it could resolve its inherent problems such as tribalism, lack of patriotism, social injustice and cult of mediocrity, indiscipline and corruption (Achebe, 1983). It is truly the time for Nigerians to start yearning for good leaders so that the locust may not rise another time. Yearning for good leaders is only possible by voting wisely. Having the rule of law and quality leadership will definitely ensure stability, serenity, development and security.

Government should fund the security group well enough to the extent that they have every resource in their finger tips. Securing weapons and funding their trainings is highly recommended so that they can withstand and engage the insurgents causing insecurity in the nation. By so doing, security issues and threats through modern method of intelligence and advanced technology will help reduce the issues which the nation is facing. Ewetan and Urhie (2014) suggest that the real panacea for solving insecurity challenge in Nigeria is for government to accelerate the pace of development (p.60). With development, Ewetan and Urhie were referring to creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for business operation and industrial growth to provide gainful employment, high level of educational facilities and medical care for the people.

### **Conclusion**

The presence of security in any Nation boosts the morale of the citizens and attracts investors around the world. It gives an assurance and guarantee that the Nation is ready to partner with other Nations in doing business. This is because there is an absence of threat to lives and properties. The presence of security also removes the Nation from being one of the top terrorized countries in the world. In Nigeria, there is an uprising in insecurity which has as much, attracted attentions of scholars. The insecurity alone is a threat to the existence of the Nation. The security of everyone should at this time be the number one goal and determination of the government. The elimination of insecurity is however not an easy task but the government should wake up from their slumbers and get things right. A time will come in Nigeria when nothing can be done and the nation will keep borrowing to sustain her Nation. However, if insecurity keeps trending and keeps skyrocketing, then the dream of a sustainable continuous growth of the Nation and national stability will only be a fairy tale and mirage. Meanwhile, security is every ones business and the development of the nation is everyone's business too, so curbing insecurity is in everyone's hands. More so, the government should try and listen up to public opinions on ways of curbing insecurity. Most citizens have vital information that may help as well as security strategy to get rid of the criminals. It is only when the security issues in Nigeria is arrested that she can attend to her expectation and be regarded as a serious Nation in the commit of Nations.

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