

A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION ON THE GAME OF POLITICS AND HUMAN INSECURITY IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Human Insecurity remains a global problem and the subject matter of politics represents a significant and interesting arena among people all over the world. It has remained a part and parcel of human societies and human relations since time immemorial. We have politics everywhere we have human beings but politics has deteriorated into an instrument of war and death hence it is the greatest challenge to human insecurity in Nigeria. The implication is that people are grappling with nation bleeding as a result of the criminalization of politics. The criminalization of politics stems from the activities of political parties and politicians and the evidence of this criminalization include high spate of political assassinations, arson, maiming and killing of innocent citizens through different forms of political violence. The paper argues that, the problem of human insecurity would be solved if we come to understand politics as a holy game and not a dirty game. In order to achieve this, critical analysis and expository methods will be adopted as research methodology in the work.

Keywords: politics, Human Insecurity, security, Nigeria.

Introduction

Human insecurity is a global problem and the Nigerian society is today characterized with insecurity as lives and properties are no longer safe or secured as there is destruction of lives and properties. In the words of Adeleke A., "ordinary citizens as well as the nation's economic resources are at the receiving end of this wanton destruction". This is manifested in the series of arm robbery, bombing, communal clashes, herdsmen menace, kidnapping etc. For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Insecurity is usually associated with bad politics which has taken various shapes and face in Africa, specifically across the six regions and thirty states of Nigeria and has led to the loss of lives, jobs, properties and confidence in the state and security forces. Politics produce various social, economic and political realities (war, religious turbulence, evil, social

inequality, underdevelopment, insecurity) etc. Some politicians resort to violence because they lost elections. Others resort to kidnapping and assassination. The end product of these acts is catastrophic. They include destruction of economic activities, insecurity and disruption of social settings. The people engaged in those activities or the criminals are being sponsored by politicians. The ubiquitous patronage by our politicians is a root cause of Nigeria's political and economic crisis and has lost its monopoly on violence. The political undertone or the activities of politicians has resulted in a country with vast crude oil reserve and other natural resources condemning its people to a life of hunger, poverty, misery, hopelessness and insecurity.

A critical look at the Nigerian contemporary society shows that since the beginning of the fourth republic, citizens have been afraid of their lives due to the numerous insurgencies in Nigeria. Nigeria has been battling with transnational crimes which pose serious threat to national security, ranging from drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, smuggling of all kinds, theft, advanced fee fraud (419), kidnapping and many more.

Thus, Nigeria has become a polity which poses a constant source of insecurity for the populace. This can be seen in the porosity and vulnerability of her (Nigerian) security agencies to extremist fundamental groups, such as the Boko Haram, causing mayhem and havoc to both innocent lives and properties. Instances of human insecurity abound in Nigeria, example the kidnapping of the CHIBOK GIRLS in Borno state, the murder of Ismael Sirajo, the then Area commander in charge of Bama (ACP). Another case of challenge of insecurity situation is the Jos crisis of 2016. This came about when Alhaji Kabir Mohammed employed some youths to help him reconstruct his house and other groups came and stoned them. This crisis led to the killing of over 200 people mostly women and children in three villages near Shendu District of Jos South local government Area of Plateau state by suspected Fulani herdsmen on reprisal attack. Many blamed the Fulani herdsmen killings on President Buhari, saying that he feels less concerned about it and he is not running the country according to the dictates of the democratic principles in the Nigerian constitution of 1999 which states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government. Notably, wilful attacks on innocent citizens and public infrastructures in Nigeria, whether undertaken by known radical Islamist groups or politically hatched unknown faceless groups are fast becoming headline news on

local and international media with damaging consequences on her national image.

As regards this, Olabanji and Ese (2014) argued that the chronological reflection of security challenges in Nigeria can be traced to the early years of military rules when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military, during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hands of civilians. Soon after the civil war, these arms were used by civilians and ex -military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery, hence, armed robbery, kidnapping, Boko Haram , terrorism and hired assassins are major security challenges facing Nigeria. In the south-south kidnapping, militancy, armed robberies have taken over while in the south east, kidnapping, communal clashes and agitation for secession are on the increase. In the south western part of the country, it is mainly kidnapping, cult rivalry, arm robbery. In the North, it is the crisis of herdsmen, Boko Haram, terrorism etc.

Indeed, the observed trend in Nigeria indicated a deviation from the norm as politics and politicians have acquired definite characters over the years, such as criminalisation of politics, a pathological orientation and a penchant not to abide by the rules, all of which from all intent and purpose are antithetical to the goals and aspirations of a democratic society. Politicians and political leaders put weapons in the hands of the masses, especially young jobless men, to use and unleash mayhem on their fellow citizens and political opponents. Hence, the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria fuelled the crime rate and terrorist attacks in different parts of the country leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation's economy and its growth. However, despite the efforts by government to tackle the problem of insecurity in Nigeria, the problems still persists. The Government (federal and state) have set up and inaugurate various security outfits, peace corps, joint task force as well as engaged in series of dialogues with agitators but with little or no significant success in aggregate terms.

Politics

The term politics originated from the Greek word *polis* which refers to a political community or city. The Greek concept of politics refers to a process by which human beings debate matters concerning the polis (the political community) and take actions in an attempt to realize the public interest or the common good. Ordinarily, politics is about the management and allocation of resources for the benefit of the greatest number of people in any given society. It has also become part and parcel

of life and it has been adopted as a vehicle for development and integration.

But today the word politics means so many things to different people. For Chikendu (2002) it has acquired various connotations and denotations. To the ordinary man in the street "politics is a byword for crafty behaviour, bargaining, angling, scheming and manoeuvring for advantage". According to David Easton (1971), politics is the authoritative allocation of values for society. Harold Lasswell (1930) on the other hand conceptualise politics "as who gets what, when and how". Robert Dahl (1976) viewed politics as any persistent pattern of human relationship that involves to a significant extent, control, influence, power and authority. For Okoli and Okoli (1990), "To most Nigerians, the word politics or political holds no charm, no special appeal. If anything, it connotes deceit, graft, double talk and all that is evil. It is a term devoid of honour and respectability. In short, politics is regarded as a dirty game to most people in Nigeria. However, to some others, it is a good and interesting game". Politics is all about attempt by man to dominate or overshadow his fellow men in order to achieve some predetermined objectives. Hence, the unifying factor in all these perceptions is the fact that they all stress out the role of power and authority in decision making and human relationship in every political system.

Insecurity

Human insecurity as a concept was first propounded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in her human development report 1994. The UNDP developed the concept of human security to encompass not just the achievement of minimal levels of material needs but also the absence of severe threats to them of an economic or political kind. The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection and lack of safety. According to free dictionary.com (2012) insecurity is a state of being subject to danger or injury, a condition of being susceptible to harm or injury, the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. According to Galtung, human insecurity is caused by violence, which can be direct or indirect. Here violence is "..... harm done to human beings as a process, working slowly as the way misery in general and hunger in particular erode and finally kill human beings. Human insecurity according to Sen (1999) is concerned with reducing and when possible removing the insecurity that plague human life. According to Beland (2005) insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba et

al (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives, firstly, insecurity is 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. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. Insecurity implies 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 property. It could be anything that portends fear, uncertainty, and which constitutes danger to the ability of an individual, group or state to ensure adequate protection of lives and property.

On the other hand, security means freedom from danger to life and property, freedom from threats to a state's capacity to protect and develop itself, absence of certain tendencies which could undermine the internal cohesion and co-operate existence of a state. In the understanding of Nwagboso (2012), security is seen as the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection or preservation of values and the absence of threats to acquired values. Security is about survival and condition of human existence. Security also exists when people live together in a certain environment without disturbance or violence.

By way of grammatical construction, insecurity could conversely be seen as the antithesis of security and has attracted such common descriptions as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty,, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe and others. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. When insecurities overlap, they can grow exponentially spilling to all aspects of people's lives, destroying entire communities and crossing national borders.

Causes of insecurity

The causes/source of insecurity in the country are numerous and cannot be blamed on one part of the system alone. They vary from the government to the security agents down to the people in the society. The causes of insecurity as identified by Umaru, Pate and Haruna (2015) and Olusegun (2016) includes: ethno religious conflicts, politically based violence, systematic and political corruption, economic-based violence,

inequalities, unemployment, poverty, organised violent groups, weak security system, porous borders and terrorism. Also, Uhie and Ewetan (2014) opines that one of the major causes of insecurity in the country is the failure of successive administration to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities. Sometimes the causes of human insecurity are directly incited by the globalisation of western values. Hence, the pressures unleashed by global forces in the form of liberalisation, privatisation, debt and globalisation undermine Africa's development in general and insecurity in particular. Robinson M.(2015), in her analysis of human insecurity ,notes that the twin concept of disempowerment and marginalisation are at the heart of the problem. She contends that the underlying causes of practically all human insecurity are absence of the capacity to influence changes at a personal or community level, exclusion from voting or participating in local or national decision making and economic or social marginalisation. Edem (2000) also made a supporting statement when he opined that a constant source of insecurity in Nigeria amidst the incessant bombings and terrorist acts of Boko Haram is influenced by military, economic, political, and social factors. Other factors include:

(a) Leadership Style: The current leadership of President Mohammed Buhari has displayed a kind of leadership that is politically violence prone. Political leadership when abused can lead to violence and insecurity. The winner take it all pattern of leadership in Nigeria is already a source of worry. As a result, lives and properties have been lost due to misunderstanding between politicians who struggle to control each other. Party conventions have turned into theatre of war where heavy and light weapons are already in use because of political ambitions.

(b) Porous borders: The issue of porous borders has been a serious form of insecurity in the country. The security operatives who are deployed to areas for the sole purpose of maintenance of law and order are bereft of the goings on around their assigned areas thereby exerting porosity on security details, as such timely interventions and interception of criminality is highly elusive thus giving the criminals field day in their activities. In Nigeria, there are a lot of illegal immigrants (Boko Haram) in the country who are involved in criminal activities. Some are of the view that members of the Boko Haram sect are non Nigerians, they are immigrants from neighbouring border countries like Niger etc

(c) Youth unemployment: insecurity arises with unemployment and poverty because unemployment leads to loss of income which affects the people's ability to pay their bills and provide basic necessities for their households and other relatives. It is because of the insecurity posed by unemployment that advanced countries make social security payments to the unemployed to keep them off the streets until they get jobs.

(d) Poor condition of service: internally cumulated factors usually experienced by the security agents, like lack of resources, poor government support, poor condition of service, lack of appropriate and adequate training and ill-equipped workforce makes them to succumb to the whims and caprices of the politicians who act as their godfathers.

Politics and Human Insecurity in Nigeria

The political structure and governance in Nigeria have been distorted since political independence in 1960, first by colonialists, second by the ethnicised political class and thirdly by military politicians. The political institution has been characterised by political violence, corruption, human right abuses and other forms of social and political misdemeanour which are clear attestation of immorality and injustice in our political culture. The implication is that politics which was supposed to be a vehicle for ascent to power, has caused far more destruction than perhaps any other institution in Africa. The usual experience in Nigeria is called "garrison politics" in which force, intimidation and manipulation of results are used to impose unpopular individuals on the people. Edem (2010) captured it well when he said that the Nigerian state is a confluence of nationalities made up of unreasonable people (politicians) associating involuntarily in the pursuit of uncommon interests. Nigeria's failure presents us with one of the most ignoble manifestations of this dance of death called politics whose corrosive effect is shattering our communities. Furthermore, the flawed elections, non-transparent party primaries, corruption, intimidation, impunity, violence, assassinations, disenfranchisement and helplessness of the electorate were all possible because the rentier Nigerian state had been hijacked or captured by an unrepentant political class and state elite bent on satisfying their interests and not that of the people. Political crises in Nigeria has assumed a volatile dimension leading in some cases to clashes between the rival political groups, killing and maiming, destruction of properties and assassinations in the name of politics as a do or die orientation. The political class see politics as access to power and their involvement in politics as an investment which must yield some material benefits; hence, it is nothing but pathology for realisation of individual self interest. The

political centre has been captured by entrepreneurs of the state corporate interests and the accountancy firms and political gangsterism has become the predominant practice in such a framework.

Today in Nigeria, money politics, vote buying, godfatherism and share the cake formula has become regular household phrases and slogans portraying moral decadence of politicians. The Nigerian politics and the conduct of elections in more recent times in Nigeria has been characterized by impunity, violence, thuggery, rigging, witch-hunting and this increased the rate of political assassination in Nigeria.

Hence, Adamu and Rasheed (2016), noted that the 2011 post-election violence in the northern part of the country which rendered many Nigerians homeless and properties worth millions of naira destroyed, points to the many cases of insecurity challenges caused by electoral violence. The quest for power has blindfolded politicians that they have adopted the Machiavellian principle of *the end justifies the means*.

Unfortunately, the Nigerian state is where political power is seen as a means to primitive accumulation, in which the ruling class see political power as a means of economic breakthrough, and also the best avenue to amass wealth for generations unborn, not minding the prevailing conditions of the people they are governing. The absence of justice and morality in Nigerian politics is the reason for the absence of good governance and the presence of bad governance. Mao Zedong declared that politics is war without bloodshed but unfortunately he did not live long enough to see that in Nigeria, politics is real war with bloodshed and destruction. In fact, all the left-handed tendencies in the Nigerian society have political undertone. That is to say that politics is the greatest threat to human insecurity.

Solution

To overcome the issue of human insecurity:

- (a) there is a need to re-orientate and re-socialise the people especially public office holders.
- (b) There should be a total revamp of all the paraphernalia of the Nigerian security sectors and there should be border community mechanism to strengthen border and interstate collaboration among security intelligence agencies.
- (c) Emphasis should be placed more on monitoring illegal migration, small arms and light weapons interdiction and greater exchange of information.

(d) Job creation and skill acquisition will reduce insecurity, it is therefore recommended that policies that will ensure the immediate creation of jobs, acquisition of specialized skills, infrastructure and industrial growth be put in place so as to complement the short term security measures.

(e) The national orientation Agency should partner with civil society organisations and the media to mount enlargement and value reorientation programmes to help dilute extremist orientations and entrench the culture of peaceful coexistence in our politicians.

(f) There is need for regional intelligence gathering and community dialogue so as to develop appropriate strategy relevant to each community and region in order to tackle conflicts and security challenges effectively.

Conclusion

It will be novel and beautiful for modern military equipment suitable for counter terrorism to be provided for the brave and gallant Nigerian security officers to save the country from further embarrassment. Again, there is an urgent need to reform the political framework. This will reduce the level of insecurity imposed by politics and also the basic structure of our state will benefit positively.

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