

# A Nation on the Edge: Interrogating the Political Economy of Security Challenges in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The exhilaration and euphoria that heralded Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999 have since been replaced by trepidation, disappointment and scepticism as a result of the pervasive nature of insecurity in the country. All across Nigeria, the explosion of lawlessness, chaos and destruction have entrenched a reign of anarchy. In the North, cross-border bandits and the fanatical sect (Boko Haram) have continued to operate with reckless impunity. The South-West and Eastern parts of the country continues to record gruesome incidents of mass armed robbery, kidnapping and extortion, clashes between farmers and pastoralists, while in the South-South, inter communal clashes, abduction and hostage taking, pipeline vandalization have continue to disrupt and paralyze economic activities, particularly in the oil-rich delta region. As a result of which the country is at present, gripped with deep-seated motion of indignation and resignation. Consequently, the climate of apprehension, fear and despair engendered by this situation has greatly undermined the potential for democracy, good governance and national development. The attendant implications have been exponential increase in the cost of governance, stunted economic growth and development, poverty, unemployment and refugee crisis. The need for people-centred governance, economic diversification and proactive intelligence gathering strategies were recommended as panaceas.

**Keywords:** Insecurity, Democracy, Governance, Political Economy, Nigeria.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

On May 29, 2017, Nigeria celebrated eighteen years of uninterrupted constitutional democracy, albeit, with less proms and pageantry. The glamour and significance of the occasion was over shadowed by the spate of security challenges/insecurity that has engulfed the country's socio-political landscape. Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. The wave of inter and intra communal clashes, ethnic and religious conflicts, gender-based violence, assassination, armed robbery, murder, kidnapping and extortion, have been on the increase, coupled with the proliferation and increasing radicalization of non-state armed groups, the climax has been the wanton destruction of lives and properties, and a general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the populace (Eme and Onyishi, 2011). It is estimated that Nigeria has "witnessed over 300 violent ethno-religious, communal and political conflicts of varying intensity and magnitude" (Osuji, 2013:49). For example, clashes between farmers and pastoralists have increased in frequency in recent times, with Fulani herdsmen reported to have killed more than Boko Haram in 2016 (Buari, 2016).

The exhilaration and euphoria that heralded the country's return to democratic rule in 1999 have since been replaced by trepidation, disappointment and scepticism. Back then, the general consensus both within and outside of Nigeria was that democratic governance would ensure that Africa's most populous black nation, with her enormous wealth and human resource potentials could finally begin the journey towards prosperity and development. At home, the expectation, amidst great excitement, was that democracy would offer a platform for the country's multifaceted problems to be addressed

decisively. In this regard, democracy was expected to guarantee meaningful and effective citizen participation through politics of inclusion, respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law, periodic conduct of free, fair and credible elections (Unegbu, 2003; Soola, 2009); engender transparent and accountable structural and instructional frameworks that would facilitate viable policies formulation and implementation, entrenchment of the rule of law, optimality in the management of the nation's resources, thereby situating the country on the path of consistent and sustained growth and development.

On the part of the international community, the transition from military to democratic rule was perceived as an indication or signals that positive transformation and change was underway, after the country's long period of isolation and stagnation. It was therefore envisioned that democracy would finally allow Nigeria to fulfil her manifest existence to her citizens, assume a more purposive and leading role in proffering workable solutions to the socio-political and developmental challenges bedeviling the African continent, and contribute positively towards the advancement and upliftment of the black race the world over, and humanity in general. In general terms, expectations were that democratic rule will bring a more effective human development (UNDP, 2002).

However, eighteen years on, the country still remains beset by numerous security challenges that show no sign of abating. Politics in the country still remain militarized and primitive, accumulation by both the political and bureaucratic class continues to grow in leaps and bounds, the perversion of justice still makes it the exclusive preserve of the highest bidder, while poverty, unemployment and inequality appears to have become more endemic than ever. The situation is made worse by the near total decay and collapse of infrastructures and deteriorating standard of social services, exacerbated by the economic recession currently being experienced in the country. More than anything else, the greatest challenge to democratic governance in Nigeria has undoubtedly been the pervasive nature of insecurity. According to Jega (2002), "instead of democracy yielding peace, stability and security to lives and properties, it seems to have yielded a return, full circle, to the state of ethno-religious conflicts and violent eruptions, which characterized military rule, especially under Generals Babangida and Abacha". The crisis of insecurity in Nigeria today, is both real and tangible, looming so large, such that the country, its ordered existence, safety and territorial integrity, faces the real threat of danger, both from within and without. The growing and widespread incidence of mass armed robbery, assassinations, human kidnapping and extortion in many states across the nation, coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies in curtailing criminal acts (Ojo, 2010; Onuoha, Ichite and George, 2015; Sarumi, 2015), in recent times has been unprecedented.

All across the country, the explosion of lawlessness and chaos have entrenched a reign of anarchy. In the North, cross-border bandits and the fanatical sect (Boko Haram) have continued to operate with reckless impunity. The South-West and Eastern parts of the country continues to record gruesome incidents of mass armed robbery, kidnapping and extortion, clashes between farmers and pastoralists, while in the South-South, inter communal clashes, abduction and hostage taking, pipeline vandalization have continue to disrupt and paralyze economic activities, particularly in the oil-rich delta region. As such, the country is at present, gripped with deep-seated motion of indignation and resignation. Consequently, the climate of apprehension, fear and despair engendered by this situation has greatly undermined the potential for democracy, good governance and development. With insecurity widely perceived to have reached levels unseen since the civil war, Nigeria is undoubtedly, a nation on the edge. Also, the seemingly lack of capacity of the state to productively engage the citizens in safeguarding their fundamental rights, lives and properties, is fast eroding the populace confidence in the state. Similarly, in the midst of constantly shrinking political space, limited economic opportunities, endemic social tensions, pervasive poverty, widespread unemployment, erosion of moral/ethical values, institutional decay, corruption and gross mismanagement, several unsavoury descriptions have been used to describe the Nigerian state, From an "unfinished state" (Joseph et al 1996), a "truculent African tragedy" (Ayittey, 2006), to a country in "descent into the dark", (Anosike, 2009), and in the words of Oyovbaire (2007), a "failed state".

Given the endemic and lingering nature of security challenges and the apparent inability of the security apparatus of government to bring the situation under control, it becomes pertinent to seek answers to some fundamental questions; how did the country found itself in this unenviable and precarious condition/situation? What are the implications of this condition/situation on the country's socio-political existence, and the wellbeing of the populace? To answer these questions, the paper attempts an elucidation of the gamut of security challenges in Nigeria. Utilizing the Political Economy Approach, the paper interrogates the basis of insecurity in Nigeria, as well as its implications on the socio-political existence of the country.

## 2. CONCEPTUALIZING SECURITY AND INSECURITY

The concept of security has been defined by various scholars to capture the activities of human beings, either as individuals or groups interacting within an organization, community or nation state, with the underlining interest of either preventing/protecting such individual/group from harm, preservation of values, facilitating/promoting an atmosphere of peace, stability, progress and development in the community or country (Oche, 2001; Kruhmann, 2003; Igbuzor, 2011; Nwagboso, 2012; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Sarumi, 2015 ). Flowing from the above, the Wikipedia, define security as “the degree of resistance to, or protection from, harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, nation, or organization”. In the same light, Nwagboso (2012) conceives of security as the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. Sarumi (2015), on his part, associated security with the alleviation of threats to cherished values, especially, the survival of individuals, groups or objects in the near future. This aligns with the submission of Adebakin (2012), who also viewed security as freedom from danger or threats, and the ability of a country to protect and develop itself, promote cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Commenting along similar line, **King (2016) stresses that security is about stability and continuity of livelihood, predictability of daily life, protection from crime, and freedom from psychological harm.**

**The consensus from the conceptual exposition above is that human beings are at the heart of any discourse on security. Thus, whether viewed as individuals or group, or within the context of their interaction in communities/countries, the essence of security is to facilitate and guarantee peaceful and stable peace of mind and the overall wellbeing of all humans beyond time and space. The general argument therefore, is that security is not just essentially about the absence of threats, but more importantly, about the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise.**

Insecurity on the other hand refers to the breach of peace and stability, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflict, resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and properties (Eme and Onyishi, 2011). In the words of Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor- Robaro (2013) insecurity is described as: “not knowing, a lack of control, and inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or what make them vulnerable”. It translate to danger in all its forms and manifestations, resulting in a state/sense of fear, apprehension, anxiety, lack of protection, vulnerability, uncertainty; danger; lack of safety, hazard and doubt, with severe adverse consequences, not only for the physical realm, but equally on the economic and social realms as well. Beland (2005), emphasises this physical component by stressing that insecurity is “the state of fear and anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection”. From an economic point of view, insecurity ‘arises from the exposure of individuals, communities and countries to adverse events, and from their inability to cope with and recover from the costly consequences of those events’ (World Economic and Social Survey, 2008). McMahon and Horning (2013), went on to argue that economic insecurity is particularly highest for those groups traditionally vulnerable to financial instability. However, since the global recession of 2008, insecurity has also “reaches deep into the ranks of the fully employed and the well-educated, suggesting traditional paths to security are often either unavailable or insufficient to stabilize families”. From a social standpoint, insecurity results from the existence of social problems in the society. In the views of Hamalainen and sing (2005), ‘social insecurity is met with through unemployment, poverty, criminality, lack of social care, and other social problems.’ The presupposition is that, once a society fails in its ultimate task of protection and care, certainty and assuredness is replaced with anxiousness and uncertainty, as citizens become vulnerable to the vagaries of insecurity. This perhaps informed the submission of Ewetan (2014:14) 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”.

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the complex nature of Nigeria’s security challenges, require the adoption of a framework of analysis that enables us to take account of the systematic interactions of the different super-structural elements of society, especially the political, historical, social, and belief systems and their implications for the objective character of the economy (Okodudu, 2010:206). As such, the political economy approach as an analytical framework that recognizes “the intermeshing of so called political, economic and social factors of change in one on-going historical process” recommends itself (Gutkind and Wallesteing 1976:7). The approach developed in relation to the need “integrate both political and

social factors as explanatory elements in economy analysis (Aina, 1986:10). At its core, political economy is concerned with the interface between political and economic processes in a society; the distribution of power and wealth among different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time (DFID, 2009). And as Ake (1983:17), rightly submitted the political economy approach “treat social life and material existence in their relatedness”. He further argued that:

Once we understand what the material assets and constraints of a society are, how the society produces goods to meet its material needs, how the goods are distributed, and what types of social relations arise from the organization of production, we have come a long way to understanding the culture of that society, its laws, its religious system, its political system and even its modes of thought. (Ake, 1981:1-2).

In essence, the political economy approach is a conceptual framework that focuses on conflicts, that assumes there are systematic connections among productions, power, stratifications and ideas; that asserts that outcomes are neither largely structurally determined nor largely the result of individual behaviour; that regards history as dialectical and contradictory; and that presumes that both the dialectical and the contradictions can be understood (Samon,1982:8). Consequent upon the eventual integration of Nigeria into the global capitalist framework as a compradorial and dependent formation, and consolidating on the inherited colonial structure, the post-colonial state broadened the basis of capitalist accumulation to include the Nigerian political class (Nnoli, 1981; Bangura, 1991; Adedeji, 1993; Olukohi, 1995). This class, in their unbridled quest for primitive accumulation, carried out through autocratic rule that ensured the privatization of public resources, plunged the country into a national economic crisis. The manifestation of the economic crisis in the forms of poverty and increased unemployment, created an aura of apathy, cynicism and disillusionment on the part of the masses against the political class, owing to their increased vulnerability, marginalization and abandonment (Abe, 2013). In the resultant anarchy of perspective that prevails, individuals, rebel movements, ethnic groups, political parties and even pressure groups implement disparate security measures. Consequently, private security outfits, ethnic militias, political thugs and armed rebel movements emerge.

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the lives and properties of ordinary Nigerians have been terrorized by different armed groups. These groups which range from ethnic militias to state sponsored terrorists include MOSOP, MASSOB, Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, OPC, MEND, Arewa Consultative Forum, ethno-religious fanatics in Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and the Boko Haram sect. The origin and escalation of the activities of these groups are not dissociated from the government’s penchant to exclude, marginalize and discriminate against the generality of the citizenry or some parts of it. Accordingly, Nnoli (2006:9) holds that:

Political exclusion, economic marginalization, and social discrimination threaten the security of citizens to such an extent that they regard the state as the primary threat to their survival. In desperation, the victimized citizens take the laws into their own hands as a means of safeguarding their fundamental values from the threat of unacceptable government policies. People who believe that the government no longer represents their best interests seek, by all means, to overthrow it or otherwise establish an alternative state.

Acts of defiance against the state have manifested in various forms such as inter and intra communal clashes, ethnic and religious conflicts, gender-based violence, assassination, armed robbery, murder, kidnapping etc.

### **The State and Insecurity in Nigeria:**

The consensus among scholars has been that the basis of insecurity in Nigeria can be situated within the nature and character of the Nigerian state- its formation, policy orientations, and historical experiences, among others. Although, the process of state formation in Nigeria could be said to have terminated with British colonization, however, the legacies of colonial rule- enforced union, unfinished process of state formation, exploitation and authoritarianism provided fertile ground for insecurity to grow and thrive. The unholy matrimony of hitherto independent nationalities into one entity for instance, has not in any way engendered a pax Nigerian identity. Rather, these disparate nationalities have continued to aggregate their interests in the name of pre British communities in the struggle for control of the state and its resources (Onoja, 2012). The result has been incessant crises, perpetrated mostly by contending forces seeking to widen or restrict access to the instrumentality of the state which controls much of the scarce resources and privileges of the Nigerian society (Diamond, 1987). Similarly, several decades of colonial authoritarian dictatorship further bequeathed the country with a praetorian order in which social structures and values have been moulded in the fashion of authoritarianism. By

virtue of the exploitative nature of the colonial enterprise, authoritarianism became institutionalized in the process of achieving its objectives. Authoritarianism by its nature, breeds a disdain for the security and rights of the dominated, be they groups or individuals. It also encourages a neo-patrimonial perception of the definition and use of state power that thrives on a distributive perception of politics and its prerequisites (Joseph, 1987). Consequently, the country, in her well over fifty years of existence has scarcely witnessed a half decade of peace.

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has had the misfortune of being under military rule for about 29 years. Military rule by definition is also authoritarian, having more in common with colonial rule than post-independence civilian administration. Peter Ekeh expands this argument further by submitting that:

In the three decades of military rule; the separation of power between the military and civilians has grown deep and nasty. It painfully recalls the invidious distinction between colonizers and the colonized in colonial times (Ekeh, 1998).

Incidentally, and this is ironic, while the nation appears to have survived colonial rule, the same cannot be said of military rule (Kolawole, 1998). This of course, stems from its unique and unenviable legacy of militarization and orgy of violence unleashed on the civil society. As novice in the use of either law or ideology in governing (Amuwo, 1998), the military relied on brute force and coercion, that inevitably and ultimately opened the Pandora's box of instability, chaos, crises, ethnic rivalry, abuse of human rights, apathy and cynicism in the socio-political life of the country. The assassination of Newswatch editor, Dele Giwa, the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni nine, the death of Shehu Yar Adua through a lethal injection in jail, the mysterious death Moshood Abiola and the assassination of his wife Kudirat, are incidentally, sad reminders of the military's capacity and penchant for violence. The militaristic tendency of the military equally diluted the function of civil and social institutions like the family, school, religious bodies, voluntary organizations and the workplace, whose role in the society hitherto, contributes positively to the security architecture of the country. Given this preponderance of authoritarian/militaristic legacies, it is not surprising to note that much of the broken 13 years of elected civilian rule recorded since independence (1960-1966; 1979-1983; 1989-1992), before the current civilian dispensation that began in 1999, has equally witnessed authoritarian tendencies, a disdain for democratic rules of restraint and legal opposition (Agbaje, 2003:3). For example, throughout the first republic, each of the then three (later four by 1963) regions of the Nigerian federation was effectively under one-party authoritarian rule, while the federal government from 1963 onwards increasingly lost its democratic credentials thanks to incidents of political, constitutional and extra-constitutional gerrymandering (Agbaje, 2003:3). The situation in the Second and Third Republics did not record any sign of improvement, as incidences of authoritarianism continued unabated. In the current democratic dispensation, the executive arm has remained dominant and domineering, to the exclusion of the legislature and the judiciary.

Another critical factor that has been the bane of insecurity in Nigeria is the way and manner federalism is practiced in the country. Federalism as a concept of governance or administration connotes a political system or arrangement erected on two (or more) levels of government. In principle, federalism is "concerned with the combination of self-rule and shared rule. In the broadest sense, federalism involves the linking of individuals, groups and polities in lasting but limited union in such a way as to provide for the energetic pursuit of common ends while maintaining the respective integrities of all parties" (Elazar, 1991). In Wheare's (1963) contention, "the federal principle implies a constitutionally guaranteed division of legal sovereignty between two layers of government divided territorially". While Rodee, Christol, Anderson and Greene (1983) defined federalism as "a constitutional division of governmental power between the national and the constituent units," These positions, perhaps formed the basis of Kolawole's (1986) claim that "federalism is anchored on consentient relationship". Although, Nigeria remains one of the few countries on the African continent that recognises the preservation of the internal autonomy of communities or groups within the federated units, while acknowledging the sovereignty of the Nigerian state (Oyovbaire, 2007), the Nation's experience with federalism has however, been characterised by three peculiar features. According to Daniel Bach (2004), the modus operandi of Nigeria's current federal system is characterized by: the federal character principle; the creation of new states and local governments through the segmentation of existing units; and a revenue allocation formula that emphasizes equity and demography at the expense of the derivation principle.

The transformation of federal character principle into a doctrine in Nigeria emphasises the demarcation between indigenes or natives as against non-indigenes or settlers. Although, a legal distinction between settlers and indigenous Nigerians was originally inserted in the 1979 Constitution which alternatively refers to the "indigenes from a state" or to the "populations which belong... to a state", the inability of the state to give a clear and unequivocal answer to the question of who is a

Nigerian, has over the years, ensured the implementation of the federal character doctrine has continually create opportunities for discrimination and marginalization among Nigerian citizens. It is such that today, nearly all of Nigeria's constituent groups have all lamented and echoed instances of perceived marginalization at one point or the other. Such feelings of marginalization could be found in the realm of power sharing, decision-making, resource allocation and other forms of opportunities such employment and education. Cries of marginalization have significantly fuelled ethnic discontents that have often led to violent conflicts by the ethnic militia groups. The Southwest responded to the perceived marginalization in 1994 by setting up the "Oodu Peoples' Congress" (OPC) to "defend the rights of every Yoruba person on earth" (Newswatch, 2000:6). For the Igbo, their desire to stem the perceived unjust treatment meted out to them by the Nigerian state was the setting up of the "Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra" (MASSOB), for the North, the "Arewa Peoples' Congress" (APC) was formed in response to the OPC, with the objective of "safeguarding and protection of Northern interest, wherever it is" (The News, 2000:17). Regional challenges to federal authority due to feelings of marginalization have also, and most dramatically, been associated with the Niger delta region where Ijaw claims to assert control over oil resources have translated into demands for autonomy. In like manner, the "Egbesu Boys of Africa" a militant group that employed every means possible, violence inclusive, to resist the exploitation of the mineral resources in the Niger-Delta region by the Nigerian state in collaboration with multinational oil companies. An apparent observation in the foregoing is that majority of the component units in Nigeria have no sense of belonging, which makes for lack of a sense of identity. The feelings of marginalization that found expression in the emergence of militia groups are borne out of frustration with the Nigerian state's inability to promote equity among the component units, distribute commonwealth fairly, ensure equal representation of the groups in national institutions and provide for the degradation of affected communities in sourcing for the 'black gold', among sundry other issues.

Furthermore, the non-accommodationist nature of Nigerian politics is equally considered a bane for insecurity in the country. The zero-sum nature of politics in Nigeria has undoubtedly been associated with violence, alienation and annihilation. Two critical factors accounts for this. First, is the professionalization of politics, which transcends it from the realm of vocation to that of a career, and in the process creating opportunities for jobless, inexperience individuals to lay claim to professionalism, just by engaging in politics. In most developed climes, people retire into politics after a successful sojourn in their chosen endeavor, and in the process, bringing a vast reservoir of knowledge and experience to bear on politics and political outcomes. In the case of Nigeria, however, politics is taken as a full-time profession. Individuals and elements who have never work or impact positively on their own lives dabbles into politics as a means of survival. Under this circumstance, politics not only becomes a 'winner takes all', but a 'win at all cost' and 'do or die' affair. The second, it's the undue attractiveness of elective offices or positions in the country. It is both common and general knowledge today, that Nigeria runs the most expensive democratic system in the world. Salaries and emolument of Nigerian politicians (aside the ones corruptly assigned to themselves) are about the highest in the world. Another characteristic feature of Nigeria politics is the patron-client or Godfather phenomenon. Patron-client relationships take preeminence and primacy over formal aspects of politics such as rule of law, well-functioning political parties and credible elections. As such, elections in the country are always marred irregularities. The peculiar nature and character of rigging, destruction or disappearance of ballot boxes, doctoring of results, thuggery and intimidation of the masses, have occasioned public cynicism and apathy. The Nigerian government remains distant from serving the interest of its people. Politics at the federal state and local level of the Nigerian federation are dominated by the powerful mandarin who built vast patronage networks during the military days and who now use political office to expand their networks and their personal fortune. Moreover, many of these so called 'godfathers' have been alleged of cultivating personal militias to secure their positions, prompting a local arm race in some regions (Kew, 2006).

Equally worthy of mention is the porosity of Nigerian's border. The sheer size and porosity of these borders significantly add to the spate of insecurity currently experienced by the country. Nigeria has about 773 km of shared border with the Republic of Benin in the west, and 87 km with Chad to the north-east. These stretches are considered relatively short when compared with the country's borders with Niger and Cameroon that are 1,049 km and 1,690 km respectively (Vanguard, 2013). Nigeria also has 850 kilometres of maritime border in the Atlantic Ocean (Yacubu, 2005:55). As Ayissi and Sall (2005:56) rightly observed, "it would be hard to find any state in the world capable of effectively controlling such extensive borders". This position was affirmed by Martin Abeshi the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Immigration Service, who in 2016 alerted the nation to the existence of 1,400 unmanned illegal entry points into the country (Emmanuel, 2016), while the then Minister of Interior, Abba Moro, further admitted that even the approved entry routes were porous thereby posing serious security challenges to the country (Ships and Ports, 2016).

The porous nature of Nigeria's borders, coupled with easy access to weapons has been capitalized upon by arms traffickers to smuggle small and light weapons (SALW) into the country. Majority of illicit arms in circulation in Nigeria found their way into the country through borders, particularly land and sea. In a 2013 report, the Arewa Research and Development Project noted that guns were openly displayed for sale in border areas along Niger and Chad republics "just like baskets of tomatoes," adding that these "guns are still finding their way into the country in large quantities and that an AK-47 gun with 20 rounds of ammunitions goes for N10, 000 on Nigeria's borders" (Yakubu, 2015). Nigeria is presently being awash with sophisticated arms and ammunitions and other weapons of mass destruction which have been used to perpetrate violent conflicts and other nefarious crimes all across the nation. This situation has contributed greatly to the escalation of conflicts and protracted violence in the country.

### **The Political Economy is Security Challenges in Nigeria:**

Nigeria's security challenges greatly undermine the capacity of the government to proactively and productively discharge its constitutional responsibilities. With this incapacitation, comes the vulnerability of a failing or fragile state status. It was therefore, not accidental that the country has consistently featured in the Failed/Fragile State Index ranking since 2007. The Failed/Fragile State Index is published by the United States think-tank and an independent research organization, the Fund for Peace, and the magazine Foreign Policy. The index ranks are based on twelve indicators of state vulnerability – three cohesion, three social, three economic and three political. The indicators are designed for assessing the vulnerability of states to collapse or conflict (Fund for Peace, 2017). In 2007 when Nigeria first appeared in the Failed/Fragile States list, the country was ranked the 17<sup>th</sup> most failed nation in the world. By 2009, the country had moved up to 15<sup>th</sup> position and up to 14<sup>th</sup> position in 2010. Between 2011 and 2012, Nigeria remained in the 14<sup>th</sup> position, climbing up to 13<sup>th</sup> position in 2015, and maintaining same in 2016 and 2017. State fragility/failure aside eroding the populace confidence in the state; also make it prone to political instability and economic dislocation. Alozieuwa (2012:2), quoting Rotberg (cited in Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012) elucidated on the characteristics of a failed state in political and economic terms. He noted that the political sphere is characterized by some leaders and their allies readily work to subvert prevailing democratic norms by coercing legislatures and bureaucracies into subservice, compromising judicial independence, stifling the emergence of civil society or space, and abusing security and defense forces for parochial ends. The economic sphere on the other hand is characterized by deteriorated standards of living, a lack of public goods and services, the flourishing of corruption and rent-seeking, and a pervasive economic stagnation. He further argues that:

Once the state's capacity to secure itself or to perform in an expected manner recedes, there is every reason to expect disloyalty to the state on the part of the disenchanted and aggrieved citizens. Logically, many transfer their allegiances to their clan and group leaders, some of whom gravitate towards terrorism as they strive to secure communal mandate. Mobilizing support from both external and local supporters, the terrorists seek out havens in the more remote and marginalized corners of failed states where they blend in, more comfortably in the prevailing chaos associated with state failure (Rotberg 2002: 96-97).

The existence of several movements/organizations such as The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), The Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), The Arewa People's Congress (APC) among others, formed along ethnic lines validates the above submission. The activities of these groups have continuously and consistently undermine the security of the Nigerian state. Similarly, the activities of Boko Haram since stepping up its operations in 2009 have resulted in the injuries, displacement and deaths of several thousand across the country. Boko Haram have continued to carry out kidnappings, killings, and attacks on civilian and military despite of government's massive offensive against it. Boko Haram in 2015 became the world's most deadly terrorist gang overtaking the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), based on the report of the Global terrorism index for 2015 which states that Boko Haram succeeded in killing 6,644 between 2014 and 2015, surpassing ISIS which killed a total of 6,073 (Muhammed, 2015). The activities of Boko Haram have also led to the displacement of thousands from their homes and communities. Available reports indicate that there are over 3.3 million Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, which is Africa's largest, ranking behind Syria and Columbia on a global scale (Opejobi, 2016). The recent attack carried out by the group was the kidnapping of officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and members of staff of UNIMAID undertaking a research project concerning oil exploration in a village called Jibi in Gubio local government area of Borno State (Bolashodun, 2017).

Furthermore, the pervasive security challenges in the country have increased the cost of governance exponentially particularly, the security sector. Year after year, the security sector continues to gulp the highest chunk of the country's expenditures. For instance, between 2011 and 2015, it was estimated that Nigeria spends the sum of 4.62 trillion Naira on 'National Security' amid widespread insecurity across the country. The figure for 2011 was 920 billion Naira. That of 2012 was 924 billion Naira, while 2013 and 2014 both recorded the same amount of 923 billion Naira. In 2015, the sum of 934 billion Naira was allocated to the security sector, which was the highest budgetary allocation to any sector for that year (Olufemi, 2015). A further breakdown revealed that the sum of 546 billion Naira was allocated to NSA, DSS, intelligence and security adviser in the period under review. Police formations across the country were allocated the sum of 1.55 trillion Naira, while the Army, Air Force and Navy were allocated the sum of 1.7 trillion Naira. Immigration, Civil Defence and others were allocated the sum of 778.75 billion Naira in the period under review. Equally interesting is the fact that out of the 4.62 trillion Naira expended in the five-year period, the sum of 4.1 trillion Naira, representing 88% was expended on recurrent expenditure, while capital expenditure was a mere 556 billion Naira, which is just 12% of the entire expenditure for the period under review (Olufemi, 2015). Similarly, this lopsidedness in favour of recurrent expenditure was again evident in the 2016 and 2017 budgetary allocations to the security sector. In 2016 for instance, out of a total sum of 563 billion Naira allocated to the sector, recurrent expenditure gulped the highest chunk of 429 billion Naira, while a paltry 134 billion Naira went to capital expenditure (Nubari, 2016). For 2017, the total was 465 billion Naira, out of which 325 billion Naira went to recurrent expenditure, while capital expenditure was left with just 140 billion Naira (Nubari, 2017).

The climate of insecurity has equally added to the poor performance of the Nigerian economy. The downward spiral of the Nigerian economic growth began with the contraction of the economy from 5.94% in last quarter of year 2014 to 0.36 percent in the first quarter of 2016, its lowest point in nearly 30 years. According to World Bank data, the last time Nigeria had this magnitude of economic decline was under the regime of Ibrahim Babangida, when the economy recorded consecutive decline of 0.51 percent and 0.82 percent in first and second quarters of 1987. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016; Jimoh, 2016). Similarly, the country's industrial production capacity also recorded a declining growth pattern since first quarter of 2015 with a negative growth rate of -2.53% to -5.49% in first quarter of 2016. In the area of trade, the country's imports recorded a 7.8% quarter on quarter decline and a 15.8% year on year decline, while exports recorded 34.6% quarter on quarter decline and a 52.36% year on year decline from the last quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016 (Akube, 2016).

Nigeria has equally remained rooted in the lower strata of the World Bank's annual Doing Business ranking. The country's performance in Global Competitive Index witnessed a setback. As such Nigeria plunged from 99th position of 133 countries surveyed in 2009, to 127th of 144 countries assessed in 2014. The country currently ranks 169th out of 190 countries, reflecting the level of difficulty in performing basic business tasks such as starting a business, getting electricity, enforcing contracts, getting credit, registering property, paying taxes, etc (Oguh, 2016). This has added further pressure to businesses who continue to grapple with acutely inadequate infrastructure and rising security concerns. The attendant implication is the dramatic drop in the flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), up until 2014, Nigeria consistently ranked among the top three destinations for FDI in Africa, with total FDI inflows ranged between \$5 and \$7 billion per year, as investors targeted the oil and gas, real estate, communications, and consumer goods sectors of Africa's largest economy. However, Nigeria's FDI inflows fell 34 percent from \$4.7 billion in 2014 to \$3.1 billion in 2015, dwindling to a woeful state of zero inflow in the third quarter of 2016. This is a dramatic fall from grace for a country that has been a major recipient of FDI in Africa. Similarly, inflation has also been on the upswing. Inflation, which had been in single digit since November 2014, rose to 18.3 percent on October 2016 (Oguh, 2016).

The abysmal performance of the economy has contributed in no small measure to rising unemployment in the country. About 23 per cent of adults and 60 per cent of youths in Nigeria are unemployed (The Punch, 2015). Unemployment rate in Nigeria increased from 12.3 per cent in 2006 to 23.9 per cent in 2011 (Onuoha, 2014). By 2013, the number of unemployed was put at 13.9 percent and by 2014, the rate of unemployment had jumped to 14.2 percent. The unemployment rate in Nigeria increased from 10.4 percent in 2015 to 13.9 percent in the third quarter of 2016, jumping to 14.2 percent in the last quarter of 2016. It is the highest jobless rate since 2009 as the number of unemployed went up by 3.5 million to 11.549 million. The unemployment rate was higher for persons between 15-24 years old. Between 2014 and the fourth quarter of 2016, youth unemployment rate in the country increased from 17.51 percent in 2014 to 21.50 percent



in the first quarter of 2016, by the second quarter it had jumped to 24 percent, climbing to 25.2 percent in the third quarter and eventually peaking at 42 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 (Vanguard, 2016; National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Each year, 200,000 students graduate from universities, but many fail to find a job, and some will seek out less-than-honorable means of supporting themselves. The 2014 Nigeria Immigration Recruitment tragedy capture the deplorable and unenviable plight and conditions of youths in Nigeria. On Saturday March 15, 2014, 16 people were killed and several scores of people were injured in stampedes when about 6.5 million desperate job-seekers in all 37 states of Nigeria (including the FCT) stormed various recruitment centres in the country to apply for the 4556 vacant positions in the Nigeria Immigration Service (Jimoh, 2016; Ajijah, 2014; Ojeme, Onoyume, Mosadomi, Johnson, Ebegbulem and Umou, 2014). Incidents like this further exacerbate an already precarious situation, creating in the youths a state of helplessness, despair that makes them susceptible and easy target for crime, terrorism and other clandestine activities.

The National Bureau of Statistics further noted that as the number of unemployed people in the economy is growing, the number of underemployed people is also rising. According to the report, the underemployed rate rose to 21.0 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2016 from 19.7 per cent recorded in the third quarter of the same year. The report also revealed that the unemployment and under-employment rates were higher for women than men in the fourth quarter of 2016. The number of women in the labour force that were unemployed was 16.3 percent, and a further 24.2 percent were under-employed. On the other hand only 12.3 percent of men were unemployed, while 17.9 percent were under-employed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Furthermore, insecurity has led to the increased incidence of poverty in Nigeria. Poverty in the country has maintained a steady rise from 60 per cent in 2015 to 72 per cent in the second quarter of 2016 (Eke, 2016). According to a United Nations report titled 'UN, report on Nigeria's Common Country Analysis,' the country was described as one of the poorest and unequal country in the world. The report noted that:

Nigeria is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the world, with over 80 million or 64% of her population living below poverty line. The situation has not changed over the decades, but is increasing. Poverty and hunger have remained high in rural areas, remote communities and among female-headed households and these cut across the six geo-political zones, with prevalence ranging from approximately 46.9 percent in the South West to 74.3 percent in North West and North East (Opejobi, 2016).

Even more worrisome is the fact infants and children are not immune from the circle of poverty that is ravaging the country. It is estimated that only 10% of children aged 6-23 months are fed appropriately based on recommended infant and young children feeding practices. Similarly, 37 percent of children under five years old were stunted, 29% underweight and 18 percent wasted. Also, over 10 million children of school age are out of schools with no knowledge and skills.

Equally worthy of mention is the increasing incidence of clashes between farmers and herdsmen. Over the years Nigeria has increasingly witnessed violent conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, with devastating consequences for the socio-political and economic life of the country. For instance, between 1998 and 2014 it was estimated that clashes between farmers and pastoralists resulted in about 3, 732 deaths and about 61, 314 fatalities (Olayoku, 2014; Onuoha, 2015). However, since 2015, the frequency, intensity and fatality of these clashes have assumed a worrisome dimension and magnitude. Since 2015, the estimated death toll from pastoral/herdsmen clashes stands at nearly 5,000 annually (Nwanze, 2016). It is estimated that Nigeria loses about 14 billion dollars annually to clashes between farmers and pastoralists. This is predicated on the fact that these clashes "impeded market development and economic growth by destroying productive assets, preventing trade, deterring investment, and eroding trust between market actors" (Mercy Corps, 2015).

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria security challenges have created a general atmosphere of siege, social tension, despondence and cynicism in the populace since the return to democratic governance in 1999. All across the country, the explosion of violent conflicts, lawlessness and chaos have continued unabated with dire consequences for the very existence and survival of the country. Addressing Nigeria's security challenges requires fundamental policies and proactive reform initiatives aimed at tackling salient developmental issues besetting the country. **The formulation and effective implementation of policies and programmes capable of addressing underlying causes and dynamics of the insecurity in the country are crucial, especially with regard to governance, economic diversification, poverty reduction and employment generation.**

**The ideal place to start would be the entrenchment of people centred governance. According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), governance is defined as “the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that a citizen has the right to expect from his or her state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens” (Joseph, 2014). Effective governance ensures the judicious utilization of a country’s resources in a manner that is transparent and accountable. The essence is to facilitate avenues for active citizens’ engagement in the process of service delivery through functional and efficient institutions and structures. Translating the goals of governance to tangible realities requires visionary and credible political leadership motivated by the desire and drive for equity, justice and fairness in the formulation and implementation of government policies and actions.**

Equally important is the need for government to be proactive in dealing with security challenges and threats in the country through modern methods of intelligence gathering and sharing, logistics, and the acquisition and deployment of advanced technology in the management of security issues. **The government must aside continually engaging the security agencies, also recognize the need for capacity building, motivation and change of orientation to meet the global best practice standard.** It therefore, become necessary to better equip the military, police and security forces through a transparent and centralized procurement process to enhance their capacity to deal with the security challenges. **This will in no small measure enhance the operational capabilities of the Nigeria security agencies by providing opportunities for identifying and perfecting strategies that would enable them respond appropriately to internal security challenges and other threats.**

**Tackling Nigeria’s security challenges also requires the stimulation of sustainable economic growth that would accelerate the pace of development. Development in this context consists of diversifying the economy in a manner that enhances its capability to create jobs and reduce poverty. To achieve this, governments at all level must as a matter of utmost priority** articulate and implement economic blueprints for diversification, while leveraging on key sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, hospitality, tourism and information technology to boost productive activities and revenue generation. Similarly, the provision of social and physical infrastructure that enables small businesses to grow and thrive is equally important. The provision of power supply is particularly germane in this direction. Innovations and reforms aimed at tapping into the vast potentials of renewable energy sources like wind and solar will further boost productivity, as well as the living standard of the people.

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