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How Insecurity of Life Undermines Human Rights in Nigeria

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Abstract

This report delves into the profound implications of insecurity on human rights in Nigeria, a country grappling with multifaceted security challenges ranging from insurgency and communal clashes to criminal activities. It underscores the historic roots of insecurity, tracing back to military rule and subsequent proliferation of arms among civilians. The study reveals how this pervasive insecurity not only threatens the physical safety of Nigerians but also severely undermines a wide spectrum of human rights, including the rights to education, freedom of movement, and the foundational right to life. The report draws from a diverse array of sources to offer a comprehensive analysis of the interconnectedness between governance, corruption, and human rights abuses. By examining the roles of key actors such as Boko Haram, the Eastern Security Network, and Niger Delta militants, the study highlights the government's multifaceted, albeit challenged, strategy against internal conflicts and corruption. The findings point to a critical need for concerted efforts toward ensuring a more secure and rights-respecting future in Nigeria, emphasizing the role of transparency, accountability, and community engagement in fostering sustainable peace and security.

Key words

Insecurity, Human Rights, Corruption, Government Response, Insurgency, Education, Internal Conflicts.

Abbreviations

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ESN: Eastern Security Network

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CRA: Child's Rights Act

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

IPOB: Indigenous People of Biafra

NLC: Nigerian Labour Congress

ISWAP: Islamic State – West Africa Province

1. General Introduction

In recent years, Nigeria has grappled with a pressing and multifaceted challenge that extends far beyond its borders – the pervasive insecurity of life within the nation. However, the security challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule 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 hand of the civilians. These arms were notoriously used and the same notoriety was transmitted and groomed to where we are today. It is sufficient to say in Nigeria, the internal causes of insecurity pose major challenge to socio-economic development than the external causes of insecurity. Insecurity, characterized by a complex interplay of factors such as terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, abduction, communal clashes, and criminal activities, not only poses an immediate threat to the safety and well-being of its citizens but also casts a shadow over the broader landscape of human rights in the country.

Acknowledging the essence of security in any state, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria categorically affirmed that “the security and welfare of the people of Nigeria shall be the primary purpose of government.” Unfortunately, insecurity has affected virtually every aspect of the rights and the activities of individuals in Nigeria, such as rights to education as school children have been randomly abducted, freedom of movement as many areas of the country are considered as dead zones and den of bandits. Hence, there is an urgent need to embark and unveil the intricacies of this clarion concern. As a cankerworm, this insecurity permeating the nation has emerged as a formidable challenge, casting a shadow that extends far beyond immediate physical threats. Against the backdrop of this multifaceted challenge, therefore, it becomes imperative to examine the interconnectedness between the insecurity of life and the broader spectrum of human rights in Nigeria.

This exploration seeks to unravel the connections between the insecurity of life and the broader human rights landscape in Nigeria, shedding light on the critical interplay that demands urgent attention and concerted efforts for a more secure and rights-respecting future.

2. Purpose of the Report

The primary aim of this report is to provide an analysis of how issues of insecurity and safety are influencing human rights conditions in Nigeria. It seeks to shed light on the dynamics of internal conflicts, identifying the key actors involved in these disputes that often result in bloodshed and societal disruption.

Additionally, this report is meant to delve into the pervasive issue of corruption in Nigeria, evaluating its impact on the state's capacity to effectively tackle the causes and manifestations of insecurity. The objective is to highlight the extent to which corruption hinders the provision of basic human rights protections and the implementation of effective conflict resolution mechanisms. Consequently, the report aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between insecurity, governance, and human rights in Nigeria.

3. Significant and Relevance of the Topic

The relevance of this topic is to give a sure foundation to human rights in Nigeria, starting from right to life which is primary to all other human rights. The topic is significant in the sense that the right to life is said to be the most fundamental of all rights because without it, all other rights are not enforceable. Furthermore, article 2 of the UDHR provides that everyone has the right to life and security of person. The 6th article of the ICCPR states that everyone has an inherent right to life, and such shall be protected by law. Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and People's rights also acknowledges that Human rights are inviolable. Above all, section 33 of the Nigerian (1999) constitution provides that every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in the execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offense of which he has been found guilty. Consequently, the topic is significant in the sense that whenever the right to life is threatened, every other right is in danger. Since there is serious insecurity of life in Nigeria, choosing this topic is considered timely and pertinent.

4. Research questions

In addressing the multifaceted issues of insecurity and safety in Nigeria, it is imperative to understand their profound impact on the state of human rights within the country. Nigeria's complex landscape, marked by internal conflicts, poses significant challenges to peace, stability, and the safeguarding of human rights. The interplay between government responses and the pervasive issue of corruption further complicates the scenario. This report aims to delve into these critical aspects to provide a nuanced analysis of the current conditions. In pursuit of this objective, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the report:

- **What specific factors are driving the escalation of internal conflicts in Nigeria, and how are these conflicts impacting the human rights of affected populations?**
 - This question aims to dissect the causes of conflicts, such as ethnic tensions, resource disputes, or political instability, and their direct consequences on civilians' rights and safety.
- **How has the Nigerian government been responding to internal conflicts, and what strategies have been applied in restoring peace and order?**
 - This seeks to critically assess the response mechanisms, policy implementations, and their outcomes in terms of conflict resolution and peace building.
- **In what ways does corruption within Nigerian institutions exacerbate insecurity, and how does it hinder the protection and promotion of human rights?**
 - This question explores the relationship between corruption at various levels of governance and its impact on the state's ability to address insecurity and uphold human rights.

5. Limitations

In the scope of this report, we delve into the intricate dynamics of Nigeria's internal conflicts and their implications for human rights, with a particular focus on pivotal actors such as Boko Haram and the Eastern Security Network (ESN). These entities were selected for their notable impact on the security situation and, by extension, human rights within Nigeria. Boko Haram's insurgency has led to widespread displacement and egregious human rights abuses, while the ESN's activities raise concerns about security and rights in the southeastern regions. The emphasis on these groups enables a targeted exploration of how internal conflicts are affecting human rights across the nation.

Additionally, the report scrutinizes the pervasive issue of corruption within Nigerian institutions, emphasizing how it exacerbates insecurity and impedes the protection of human rights. Corruption, especially in the security sector, not only undermines efforts to combat insurgency but also diminishes public trust in the government's commitment to safeguarding its citizens. Highlighting instances of corruption, such as the mismanagement of "security

votes" and the lack of transparency in defense spending, the report sheds light on the challenges facing Nigeria's fight against insecurity and the preservation of human rights.

Given the constraints of this study, including the reliance on online sources due to the infeasibility of extensive fieldwork, our analysis seeks to provide a well-rounded view of the current human rights situation in Nigeria. The focus on specific actors and the issue of corruption is intended to offer insights into the complex interplay between governance, security, and human rights in a context marked by multifaceted challenges.

This nuanced approach not only informs the limitations section of our report but also clarifies the rationale behind our methodological choices. Through this analysis, we aspire to contribute to a deeper comprehension of Nigeria's security challenges and their ramifications for human rights, facilitating informed discussions aimed at fostering a more secure and rights-respecting environment in Nigeria.

6. Method

In order to comprehensively address the intricate dynamics between insecurity and human rights in Nigeria, this report adopts a methodological framework that employs a wide array of materials. It incorporates primary data sources, which are essential for providing a legal and political backdrop as well as an understanding of the ground realities. In addition to these, the report significantly benefits from secondary data sources. These include not only analyses of primary data conducted by other researchers but also existing research studies and reports published by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The integration of secondary data is crucial as it enriches the report with a broad spectrum of perspectives, offering historical context, insights into ongoing developments, and the international stance on Nigeria's security and human rights issues. By drawing upon both primary and secondary data, the report aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by Nigeria in these areas.

The data collected from these varied sources undergoes a systematic analysis to identify patterns, correlations, and key insights pertinent to the research questions. Moreover, this report employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a nuanced understanding of the complex issues at hand. Thus, evaluating the underlying causes of insecurity, the efforts of the government and their achievement, and then the impact of these challenges on the

fundamental human rights of Nigerian citizens. Consequently, the report provides an examination of the challenges in addressing human rights concerns within the context of the security landscape in Nigeria, and offers a coherent narrative that encapsulates the key issues and contributing factors thereby creating a deeper understanding of the interplay between insecurity, governance, and human rights in Nigeria.

Worthy to mention is that among the four persons we have interviewed, one is An Executive Director of Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Centre, the reason for this choice is because this person has field experience and values Human Rights. Another interviewee is An Executive Chairman of one of the Local Governments in Nigeria, we chose this person because this individual stands as a representative of government. Another interviewee is a Commissioner to Ebonyi State government in Nigeria. We decided to include this person because the individual serves as an agent or intermediary between government and the people. Lastly was a member of the Peace Committee in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. We chose this interviewee considering the inseparable relation between justice, peace and Human Rights. Among others whom we have approached and have granted us interviews are victims of Nigerian insecurity and legal practitioners.

7. Overview of Human Rights in Nigeria

Nigeria, is a nation with a diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious landscape, and so is necessarily expected to promote and uphold human rights as enshrined in various national and international frameworks. The situation of human rights in the country reflects a complex interplay of progress and challenges, shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic factors. Hence, there is need to highlight a general overview of human rights in Nigeria.

On the legal framework, Nigeria is a signatory to several international human rights treaties and conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as CEDAW, ICCPR, ICESCR, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment. Also, The fourth chapter of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) contains provisions that guarantee fundamental human

rights, such as the right to life, dignity of human persons, freedom of expression as well as freedom of movement and right to fair hearing.

Regarding civil and political rights, Nigeria has made a move in establishing democratic governance, with regular elections and a multi-party system since 1999. However, the implementation and workability of this has evidently remained questionable. In addition, freedom of expression is generally acknowledged, with a vibrant media landscape, though there have been instances of restrictions and threats to journalists.

Furthermore, Nigeria ratified the ICESCR in 1993, which is an indication she is committed to ensuring that its citizens are guaranteed the rights enshrined in the pact. However, challenges persist in ensuring the full realization of economic and social rights, including access to education, healthcare, and adequate housing. Issues of poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality ravage the ability of individuals to enjoy a decent standard of living.

Gender-based violence remains a concern, and efforts are ongoing to address issues such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, and domestic violence. Initiatives have been introduced to promote gender equality and empower women in various aspects of life.

As it relates to children's rights, progress has been made in legislation protecting the rights of children, such as The Child's Rights Act (CRA) 2003, Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003, among others. Challenges persist in areas such as child labor, child trafficking, and access to quality education. The government has taken steps to address these issues through policies and awareness campaigns

Challenges exist within the rule of law and criminal justice, including issues related to prolonged pre-trial detention, arbitrary arrests, and concerns about the treatment of detainees. Reforms are underway to strengthen the rule of law and ensure fair and transparent legal processes.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) play an important role in Nigeria. There is an increasing rise of NGO in Nigeria which seem to be giving aid to Nigerian citizens. However,

many are set up to actualize some personal/political ambition, therefore undermining the fundamental essence of Human Rights.

8. Structure

This report explores the complexities and nuances of the insecurities and their impact on human rights in Nigeria, aiming to offer a thorough and insightful perspective on the matter. It begins with a General Introduction, setting the context by highlighting the historical and contemporary factors contributing to the pervasive insecurity within the nation and its impact on human rights. Following this, the Purpose of the Report section delineates the objectives, aiming to analyze the influence of insecurity on human rights conditions in Nigeria, with a focus on internal conflicts, corruption, and governance.

Significance and relevance of the topic discusses the importance of addressing insecurity and its fundamental threat to human rights, emphasizing the critical nature of the right to life. research questions are then presented, formulated to guide the exploration of internal conflicts, government responses, and the exacerbation of insecurity by corruption.

The Limitations section acknowledges the constraints faced during the report's preparation, including the challenges of fieldwork and the reliance on online sources due to accessibility issues. The Method section describes the methodology, including the use of primary and secondary data, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and interviews with key stakeholders to provide a multifaceted view of the situation.

Subsequent sections delve into the core analysis, starting with an overview of Human Rights in Nigeria, which provides a background on the country's legal framework, civil and political rights, and the state of economic and social. This is followed by a detailed examination of Various Actors in the Nigerian Security Crisis and their Activities, highlighting the roles and impacts of groups like Boko Haram, the Niger Delta militants, and others on security and human rights.

The report then discusses the human rights and insecurity nexus, focusing on how insecurity undermines fundamental rights like education and freedom of movement, before concluding with an analysis section that synthesizes the findings, addressing the escalation of internal conflicts, their causes, impacts on human rights, and the government's multifaceted strategy against internal conflicts.

Throughout, the report employs a systematic approach to dissect the intricate dynamics between insecurity and human rights in Nigeria, aiming to offer insightful analysis and foster a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between governance, security, and human rights in a challenging socio-political landscape.

9. Various Actors in Nigerian Security Crisis and their Activities

9.1 Who is creating, perceiving, and addressing security challenges

In Nigeria, the creators of security challenges include a range of actors like Boko Haram and the Niger Delta militants who play a significant role in destabilizing the region through their activities. Originating in the Niger Delta, a region rich in oil, these militants have engaged in kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, and attacks on oil installations, primarily driven by grievances over oil revenue distribution and environmental degradation. The complexities of Nigeria's security landscape are further compounded by inter-communal conflicts and criminal activities that contribute to the overall instability.

The Nigerian civilian population is at the forefront of perceiving these security challenges. The impacts of Boko Haram's activities have been profound, with thousands of lives lost, millions displaced, and a deep sense of insecurity instilled among communities. The group's tactics have evolved to include more brutal methods of violence, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in affected areas.

Addressing these security challenges falls largely to the Nigerian government, which has taken various steps to combat the insurgency. Efforts have included military operations to reclaim territories controlled by Boko Haram, collaborations with neighboring countries to form a multinational joint force and attempts to improve military effectiveness through reforms and international assistance. Despite these efforts, the government faces criticism over its human rights record and the efficacy of its counterinsurgency strategies. The complexities of Nigeria's security situation are compounded by other factors, such as political corruption, economic inequality, and inter-communal tensions, which provide a fertile ground for insurgent groups like Boko Haram to thrive.

The interplay between these insurgent groups creates security challenges, the civilian population bearing the brunt of these challenges, and the government attempting to address them underscores the multifaceted nature of Nigeria's security landscape. The situation is

further complicated by the involvement of external actors and the broader geopolitical dynamics.

9.2 Niger Delta Militants

The Niger Delta militants have significantly heightened security challenges and destabilized the region, particularly affecting Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta area. Groups like the Niger Delta have emerged in response to what they perceive as unfair resource allocation, especially concerning the oil wealth that the region generates but benefits little from. The militants' activities, including sabotaging oil pipelines, abducting individuals for ransom, and clashing with Nigerian security forces, have drastically hampered oil production, thereby impacting the national economy.

At the heart of the insurgency are deep-seated socio-economic and political issues. The local communities of the Niger Delta argue that their substantial contribution to Nigeria's wealth, predominantly through oil, has not been reciprocated with adequate benefits. They face environmental ruin, loss of livelihoods due to oil spillages, and a lack of essential infrastructure and services. This neglect and sense of exclusion have propelled the insurgency, with militants advocating for more significant local control over resources and fairer wealth distribution.

The Nigerian government's approach to addressing this militancy has varied, ranging from military interventions to amnesty programs designed to reintegrate militants into society. Nonetheless, these efforts have seen limited success, as evidenced by recurring violence, suggesting that the core grievances remain unaddressed.

The Niger Delta militancy underscores broader issues such as resource management, environmental justice, and the principles of federalism within Nigeria. It calls for a holistic strategy that tackles the conflict's root causes, including engaging with affected communities, undertaking environmental restoration, and ensuring just distribution of resources, to foster enduring peace and stability in the region.

9.3 Boko Haram in Nigeria

Boko Haram, also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, has significantly intensified security challenges, undermining regional stability in Nigeria and its surroundings. Originating in the early 2000s under Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, Borno State, the group

initially targeted Western education, which it viewed as detrimental to Muslim values. However, following Yusuf's demise in police custody in 2009, Boko Haram drastically increased its violent activities. This included attacks on government entities, security personnel, and innocent civilians, symbolized by the notorious 2014 abduction of over 200 schoolgirls from Chibok, which brought global attention to the group's reach and the Nigerian government's struggle to curb the insurgency.

Despite concerted military efforts and international assistance aimed at dismantling Boko Haram, the group's allegiance to ISIS has only deepened the instability in the Lake Chad Basin, making it a persistent regional menace. The repercussions of Boko Haram's actions are far-reaching, not only in terms of security but also in exacerbating socio-political and economic challenges in Nigeria and neighboring nations. The insurgency has led to thousands of deaths, massive displacement, and a dire humanitarian crisis, further aggravating existing socio-economic issues.

The Nigerian government's response has been criticized for its heavy-handedness and failure to address the root causes of the insurgency, such as poverty, unemployment, and political corruption. Efforts to counter Boko Haram require a multifaceted approach, combining military action with social and economic development programs to address the grievances that fuel the insurgency.

In conclusion, Boko Haram's insurgency in Nigeria is a complex issue rooted in socio-economic, political, and ideological factors. Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond military intervention, focusing on governance, development, and the protection of human rights to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region

9.4 Eastern Security Network (ESN) vs Armed Herdsmen

Eastern Security Network (ESN), was formed by the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, to substitute the failure of Southeast governors to secure the lives and property of Igbo people, one of the said minorities in Nigeria. The IPOB leader considered this security outfit as his generation's responsibility to defend themselves and their fatherland against the external aggression of Fulani terrorists and their hegemonic tendencies. Thus, this terrorism goes with kidnapping, destruction of farmlands, rape, killings, armed robbery, illegal occupation of forests and river banks by marauding killers.

Guardian News reports that Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Kanu presents the 'Eastern Security Network' (ESN) as their last line of defence to end years of terrorism in the South-south and Southeast.

In the Journal of Advance Research in Social Science & Humanities, Okafo Okoreaffia maintains that the southeastern part of Nigeria has its peculiar forms of social disorder and criminalities that have continued to undermine everyday life, business and socio-political affairs as the region has for the past decade witnessed unprecedented security challenges occasioned by the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra's (IPOB). This has resulted to constant unknown gunmen attacks against the law enforcement agencies, including the Nigerian Army, Nigerian police and others in constant gun battles. These gun battles have turned some parts of the region into war zones, thereby increasing everyday cases of kidnappings, violent armed robbery, political assassinations, ritual killings, farmers and herdsman clashes and other criminal activities that have not only instilled fear and anxiety on the minds of inhabitants of the area, but also affects socio-economic and political aspects of the people's life to the extent of having untold implications on the productivity of the region and that of the nation.

It is reported that about 254 people were killed in 63 incidents recorded in the first five months (January to May) of 2021 within five States of Eastern Nigeria - Ebonyi, Enugu, Abia, Anambra and Imo States. Regrettably, these wanton killings stem from the consistency of unknown gunmen violence, clashes between security agencies and self-rule enthusiasts (IPOB), extra-judicial killings, banditry, and so on. Unfortunately, over the years successive governments have performed below average in dealing with the problems of insecurity in the southeast. Even, the proliferation of multiple security groups may have added to the security uncertainties in the Southeast. For instance, the opposition of the Nigerian government against the Eastern Security Network (ESN) through consistent military operations.

9.5 Overview of insecurity as regards kidnapping/abduction

Among the major current security threats in Nigeria are cases of kidnapping and abduction. Tracing the causes of kidnapping in the country, Yusuf Kamaluddeen Ibrahim and Abdullahi Ayoade Ahmad affirm that abject poverty, corruption and fraud, political influence, joblessness, terrorism, lack of capital punishment by the government, the changing value system and quick-money syndrome are the major causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. Describing the situation in Nigeria, Wilson A. Dodo maintains that Kidnapping is all over Nigeria. It is a

national problem that has eaten so deep into the tissues of the nation. It is a problem that must be tackled nationally. Kidnapping is growing daily in Nigeria.

As a matter of fact, cases related to kidnapping/abduction have formed at least 40% of headlines of daily broadcasts in Nigeria. Consequently, from the data collected from SOME NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS on matters regarding kidnapping/abduction from the 8th day of January 2024 to 7th day of February 2024 - one month review, the following were observed:

- The collected data show that within the space of thirty (30) days, Nigerian major Newspapers report about fifty (50) different cases related to kidnapping/abduction Findings also reveal that of all these total numbers of eighty-two persons were kidnapped/abducted, out of which about 6 were rescued, whereas sixty-one (61) were killed. Amidst all these evils being perpetrated, about forty-two suspects were arrested, and three (3) among the arrested suspects were police officers. Almost every group of these abductors demand huge amounts of ransom from the family members and friends of their victims.
- Consequently, tracing the cause of banditry, kidnapping and abduction in Nigeria, rational minds will acknowledge the import of economic hardship among the propelling factors of this insecurity as the perpetrators always request for ransom for the release of their victims.
- Although provision of security is the primary duty of the government, as enshrined in the Nigerian constitution. However, this has not been achieved as insecurity has eaten deep into various sectors of the country, thereby undermining Human Rights.
- It is also evident from the Newspaper review that there is a serious security threat in Nigeria, and this is not an external invasion but internally stimulated and groomed.
- It is equally observable that insecurity in Nigeria has rubbed many Nigerian citizens of their fundamental Human Rights, especially rights to education and freedom of movement as school children/students are often victimized. This has instilled serious trauma on the school children, and parents now lack the financial capacity to sponsor their studies because business activities are also affected. Pertinent to mention is the fact that the insecurity in Nigeria is not an external invasion but internally stimulated and groomed.

9.6 The government

The Nigerian government's strategy to address the security challenges presented by kidnappings involves a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening law enforcement, socio-economic initiatives, legislative measures, regional cooperation, and community engagement.

In order to bolster law enforcement and security operations, the government has deployed specialized police and military units to the most affected regions. These units are tasked with conducting targeted operations against kidnappers and armed groups, aiming to dismantle criminal networks and restore peace. The establishment of anti-kidnapping squads and an enhanced military presence in high-risk zones are part of these efforts to deter criminal activities.

Recognizing the socio-economic factors contributing to insecurity, the Nigerian government has launched youth empowerment programs, educational reforms, and poverty alleviation initiatives. These are designed to provide viable alternatives to criminal activities by improving access to education and economic opportunities, particularly for young people.

Legislatively, the government has enacted laws prescribing severe penalties for those convicted of kidnapping, to serve as a deterrent. However, the effectiveness of these laws is sometimes hindered by certain challenges in the judicial process. The need for efficient law enforcement is coupled with the push for a robust legal framework that punishes offenders and deters potential criminals.

On the international front, Nigeria is working to strengthen regional cooperation with neighboring countries to improve border security and facilitate intelligence sharing. This collaboration is vital for addressing cross-border crimes and dismantling criminal syndicates that operate across national boundaries.

Furthermore, community involvement in security efforts is also a key component of the government's strategy, with initiatives like community policing aimed at fostering a collaborative relationship between security forces and local communities. This approach leverages local knowledge and support to enhance security operations and build trust among the populace.

Despite these outlined efforts, Nigeria continues to face significant security challenges. Criticisms include the persistence of corruption within security forces, allegations of human

rights abuses, and the inadequacy of socio-economic reforms. However, experts suggest that a more holistic approach, addressing both immediate security concerns and underlying socio-economic and political issues, is essential for sustainable peace and security.

The Nigerian government's multifaceted strategy underscores the complexity of the issue and the need for a balanced approach that combines effective law enforcement, socio-economic development, legislative support, regional cooperation, and community engagement to achieve lasting peace and security.

10. Data from Interview

10.1 Interview from Rev. Fr. Marcel Ezenwa, A Member of Ebonyi State Peace Committee (on 7th March, 2024; 09:30 am)

Insecurity the first interviewee is the most pressing human right is in Nigeria because there cannot be human rights when people are defenseless. Providing an insightful overview of the current state of insecurity he noted that every citizen is filled with anxieties and fears of ending each day without being a victim of insecurity as being inflicted by bandits, Boko Harams, Kidnappers and Fulani terrorists. Describing the interconnection between the insecurity of life and the broader human rights issues in Nigeria, he observes that those in power who are meant to uphold human rights are invariably the causes of insecurity by oppressing the masses, they benefit from it; hence, human rights are not respected: no personal liberty, no freedom of expression. He cited #ENDSARS protest and the barbaric consequences that accrued from it.

Speaking on how insecurity of life infringes upon basic human rights of families and individuals, he affirms that individuals' as well as family' fundamental rights are jeopardized, recalling situations where parents are killed, leaving the children as orphans, parents are raped before their children, or children being raped before their parents. Situations like this has placed many families and individuals in perpetual trauma.

He further recalls that insecurity of life affects economic activities and livelihoods of Nigerians because those terrorists who patch their tents in different farms victimize farmers; hence, there is very low agricultural products within the country. Sometimes they invade and set markets and factories ablaze. This does not affect only the farmers, but the citizens at large since they do not freely go about their respective businesses.

The interviewee opines that the Nigerian government has taken no significant measures to address the insecurity of life and its impact on human rights. According to him, the tensions and anxieties accruing from insecurity of life distracts the attention of the general public from the supposed check and balances since 'life and its immediate sustenance' are priced above all else. Differently put, the government that is supposed to guarantee the security of lives and properties and promote human rights indirectly benefits from the nation's insecurity; "they only increase the security budget and squander it in return.

Regarding 'International Involvement', the Peace Committee Member described them as "birds of the same feather that flock together"; thus, the involvement of the international community in addressing insecurity and the promotion of human rights in Nigeria is of 'double standard', irrespective of the many conventions already rectified.

He acknowledged the existence of civil society in Nigeria like Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Ohaneze Ndi Igbo, Ariwa People's Congress, and PanNiger/Delta Forum, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger-Delta, Red Cross Society, etc; however, they have been bent to compromise, according to him. An instance is given where a governor of a State ordered security personnel to mercilessly beat the chairman of Nigerian Labour Congress to the extent that he was hospitalized. This action was carried out and both the governor and the security personnel went scot free, neither did the Labour Union which he Chairs go on strike. Speaking on the relation between such organizations and the Nigerian government, he reiterates the high level of compromise whereby the government decides who becomes the chairman of such organizations, and even when to remove and replace the person.

He proposed revolution as the key long-term solutions necessary to address the insecurity of life and promote human rights in Nigeria, whereby the current political class will be filtered out, ostracized, exiled or at least be removed from our political picture. Ordinary change of government cannot salvage the situation because this cannot make substantial impact, just like changing jessy in a soccer team whereby the players remain the same people.

10.2 Interview from George Atomizer, Executive Director of Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Center in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. (on 8th March, 2024; 07:30 am)

George Atomizer, serving as the Executive Director of the Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Center in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, delves into the pressing issue of human rights within Nigeria. He emphasizes the inherent nature of human rights, which belong to every individual simply by virtue of being human. Through his insightful commentary, Atomizer

sheds light on the complex landscape of human rights in Nigeria, marked by its distinct challenges and nuances.

In an environment where the concept of human rights is often contested and violated, Atomizer provides a critical overview of the situation. He points out the discrepancy between the theoretical recognition of human rights and their practical application on the ground. Despite Nigeria's commitment to various international human rights treaties, the reality, as Atomizer describes, is a far cry from these ideals. The pervasive climate of insecurity, exemplified by acts of violence and terrorism, poses a significant threat to the fundamental freedoms and rights of the Nigerian populace.

Atomizer articulates the dire consequences of such insecurity on the fabric of Nigerian society. Families are torn apart, economic activities are stifled, and the very essence of freedom and safety is undermined. He criticizes the Nigerian government's failure to effectively address these issues, highlighting a lack of accountability and the misuse of resources meant to combat insecurity and uphold human rights. Moreover, Atomizer casts a critical eye on the international community's role, pointing out the inconsistencies and shortcomings in their efforts to support human rights in Nigeria. He underscores the need for genuine and concerted action, free from geopolitical interests and double standards.

The resilience and determination of civil society organizations in advocating for human rights are acknowledged by Atomizer, despite the challenges they face from government interference and intimidation. He calls attention to instances of repression against activists and organizations that strive to hold the government accountable and champion the rights of the Nigerian people.

Concluding his analysis, Atomizer advocates for a transformative approach to addressing the human rights crisis in Nigeria. He argues for a comprehensive overhaul of the political and social systems, emphasizing the need for leadership that prioritizes the welfare and rights of its citizens over personal gain or political agendas.

10.3 Interview (anonymous)

In addressing the challenges facing Aguata Local Government Area, the interviewee highlights insecurity as the most critical human rights issue, asserting that the very concept of human rights falls apart when individuals are left vulnerable. In a comprehensive analysis of the prevailing insecurity, the interviewee points out that the residents of Aguata live in

constant fear and anxiety, dreading becoming victims of violence perpetrated by various criminal elements. The interviewee draws a direct line between the insecurity plaguing the community and broader issues of human rights violations in Nigeria, noting the irony of those in power, who should be protectors of the people's rights, often being the perpetrators of oppression. This cycle of violence and oppression not only undermines personal freedoms and expression but also fuels a climate of fear and repression.

The interviewee speaks poignantly on the profound impact of insecurity on the basic human rights of families and individuals in Aguata. The interviewee recounts harrowing tales of families torn apart by violence, with parents killed or assaulted in front of their children, leading to a pervasive state of trauma within the community. This violence extends beyond personal loss, affecting the economic fabric of Aguata, as agricultural and commercial activities are severely hampered by the fear and disruption caused by criminal activities. The interviewee criticizes the Nigerian government's lackluster response to the crisis of insecurity and its implications for human rights. The interviewee argues that government officials, preoccupied with their interests, neglect their duty to protect their citizens, thereby exacerbating the problem. The community's pleas for help and reform are ignored, leaving the populace disillusioned and mistrustful of those in power.

On the international stage, the interviewee expresses skepticism about the involvement of foreign entities, describing their efforts as half-hearted and often tainted by double standards, despite Nigeria's participation in numerous international human rights conventions.

Furthermore, the interviewee sheds light on the compromised positions of various civil society organizations within Nigeria, including the Nigerian Labour Congress and others. These groups, which should serve as bastions of resistance and advocacy for the people's rights, have been undermined by governmental interference and intimidation, exemplified by instances of violence against their leaders.

In conclusion, the interviewee advocates for a revolutionary overhaul of the current political system as the only viable solution to the deep-rooted issues of insecurity and human rights abuses in Aguata and Nigeria at large. The interviewee dismisses superficial changes in governance as inadequate, calling for a fundamental shift that would see the current political class replaced with leaders genuinely committed to the welfare and rights of the Nigerian people.

10.4 Interview (anonymous)

Speaking on the application of human rights in Nigeria, the Commissioner opines that the Human Right activities are yet to gain the right place of application in Nigeria. The political space does not allow the implementation and growth of human rights as supposed. Speaking on insecurity which is a major threat to human rights in Nigeria, the interviewee affirms that it is as result of poor implementation of Government policies which is suffocating the poor in the society. The insecurity of the gap in modernization by the lead actors of the society is an issue that contributes immensely to the societal imbalance. The interviewee further states that insecurity of life and human rights issues in Nigeria are interrelated, the space of applying a true human right will enhance social security of life and property. Thus, if one is assured of his rights, he/she will trust the system and allow it to work, knowing that considerable compensation shall be given if the system affects him.

The interviewee describes corruption as a key damaging element to all the institutions of the country which evidently manifest in the security sector of the nation. The interviewee recommends institution overhauling and a paradigm shift from the political system of insecurity to a 'trusted and focused political structure' as both immediate and long-term approaches towards giving human rights a safeguard. Regarding the Economic Implications of insecurity in Nigeria, the interviewee notes that security is the key aspect for every human existence. No human being, or even animal, is comfortable to inhabit in an unsecured environment for his or her livelihood.

Commenting on government's response and accountability, the interviewee acknowledges the government is doing their so called 'best', however, the best is not capable of ensuring security of life and property. This is to the extent that some of the government's activities also impact negatively on human rights in Nigeria and on its citizens. The interviewee further states that a lot of areas need improvement including security of life and property, as well as environmental security.

The interviewee maintains that no impact of international community involvement is being felt, although the western model of radio and television analysis may be on-going. In other words, there may be international community involvement in principle, but not in practice. In the same line of thought, the interviewee recognizes the existence of Nigerian civil societies,

however, the fact remains that they are not addressing the high level of insecurity in Nigeria and let alone fixing the abysmal human rights abuses that are prevailing.

Conclusively, the interviewee succinctly recommends decentralizing the nation to regional structures with adequate powers to keep security of lives and properties as a long-term solution, which will in turn promote, preserve and respect human rights in Nigeria.

11. Human Rights and Insecurity

11.1 How Insecurity Affects the Fundamental Human Rights to Education in Nigeria

Among the fundamental Human Rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other Human Rights Conventions is the right to Education. This notwithstanding, the right has been violated in so many ways and in different circumstances in the Nigerian setting. Consequently, there is a need to highlight how this aforementioned right has been violated by insecurity in the Nigerian context.

In 2021, Osai Ojigho, Director of Amnesty International Nigeria, rightly reports that Nigerian authorities are failing children as at least 61 children in northern Nigeria remain in captivity, months after their abduction during mass attacks on schools which also terminated the education of thousands of children while putting children in captivity through horrific and degrading treatment in the hands of the bandits. The Director further cries out that no child should go through what children are going through now in Nigeria. Education should not be a matter of life and death for anyone. Hence, Nigeria is failing children once again in a horrifying manner.

These observations take us back to one of the most bitter memories of the night of 14–15 April 2014 when Chibok girls were abducted. Thus, in April 2014, 276 schoolgirls were kidnapped from a government secondary school in Chibok, a town in Borno State. Of those initially abducted, however, 98 girls remain in captivity, while children have been abducted in subsequent attacks.

Furthermore, it was reported that the two girls and a boy abducted from Federal Government College, Birnin Yauri, Kebbi state on 17 June 2021, were found dead, days after their abduction. Therefore, it can be rightly ascertained that in Nigeria, students are emotionally

traumatized by the high rate of security threats and attacks against different schools. It is not only the victims that are affected, but also those who get the news.

On 29th July 2022, Charles Ogwo reported that Insecurity is crippling education, fueling migration in Nigeria; hence, a growing number of schools are being forced to shut down and many citizens are moving from one place to another and out of the country. Invariably, those whose families are not financially capable of sponsoring their children to study abroad are deprived of their right to education. He observes that schools, especially in parts of northern Nigeria, have been shutting down in recent years as safety could not be guaranteed by school managements. This was to the extent that some schools were ordered to be closed in Abuja – the country’s seat of government – over a threat of attack by terrorists, and then followed by neighboring Nasarawa State.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) had in April 2022 said insecurity had caused the closure of 11,536 schools in Nigeria since December 2020. According to UNICEF, the security challenges in Nigeria have affected the education of 1.3 million children in less than two years. In addition, it was reported on 23rd September 2021, that IPOB’s disruptions of SSCE Examinations in Southeast put students’ academic future in jeopardy.

In the south, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) distorted learning in the south-east to a point that students were not allowed to write some of their papers in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination recently. Highlighting this scenario, Obinna Aligwekwe rightly notes, “sequel to Nnamdi Kanu’s extradition from Kenya, the Indigenous People of Biafra ordered a sit-at-home protest on Mondays until Kanu is released. This protest has heavily impacted the south-east economy and, indeed, the broader Nigerian economy.” This has not only prevented students from studying on Mondays, but has had a serious negative impact on the livelihood of families from which their studies are sponsored.

11.2 Right to freedom of movement

Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right that allows individuals to travel freely within their country and to leave and return to their country at will. This right is enshrined in various international agreements, including Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states that “everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state” and “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” Similarly, the International Covenant on Civil

and Political Rights (ICCPR), in Article 12 affirms the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose one's residence, along with the right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's country.

In Nigeria, the freedom of movement is constitutionally guaranteed under Section 41 of the 1999 constitution, which stipulates that every citizen is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereto or exit therefrom.

However, the reality of this freedom is significantly impacted by insecurity across various parts of Nigeria. The activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP in the northeast have led to widespread fear and displacement, severely restricting the ability of individuals to move freely and safely within these areas. These groups have been responsible for numerous attacks on civilians, abductions, and destruction of property, which not only directly harm individuals but also create an environment of fear and instability that constrains movement.

Intercommunal violence, particularly in the northwest and middle belt regions, further complicates the security landscape. Disputes over land, water resources, and other communal issues often escalate into violence, displacing communities and limiting access to areas affected by such conflicts.

The situation is exacerbated by the activities of criminal gangs involved in kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, and other forms of banditry, particularly in the northwest. These criminal activities not only pose direct threats to individuals' safety but also instill a scenario of fear that restricts movement and impacts daily life and economic activities.

The cumulative effect of these security challenges is a significant restriction on the freedom of movement, affecting various aspects of life including access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The fear of violence and abduction deters people from traveling, relocating, or conducting business in certain regions, thereby affecting the overall socio-economic development of the country.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes enhancing security measures, promoting dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties, and ensuring justice and accountability for acts of violence and human rights abuses. Ensuring the safety

and security of all citizens is paramount to uphold the constitutional and internationally recognized right to freedom of movement in Nigeria.

11.3 Right to Life and safety

The right to life is a fundamental human right that is protected under various international human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 3), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 6), and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 2), among others. This right encompasses protections against extrajudicial killings, the death penalty, and enforced disappearances. It not only obligates states to refrain from unlawful deprivation of life but also requires them to take proactive measures to protect life, including through legislation, investigation, and punishment of wrongful acts leading to death.

However, in Nigeria, the right to life and safety is significantly undermined by various forms of insecurity, including armed conflict, terrorism, and criminal activities, which have led to widespread human rights abuses. The Boko Haram insurgency, particularly in the northeastern part of the country, has been a major source of violence, the insurgents have been accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. The situation has led to the displacement of millions and the closure of internally displaced persons' camps in areas like Borno State, further exacerbating the vulnerability of affected populations.

Arbitrary arrests, detentions, and the use of excessive force by security forces are prevalent, alongside restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. For instance, during the commemoration of the #EndSARS protest, police used tear gas against protesters, leading to arrests and detentions. Moreover, the Nigerian security forces have been implicated in extrajudicial killings, particularly in response to violence in southeastern Nigeria, further endangering the right to life.

The capital region has experienced kidnappings and attacks, instilling fear and insecurity among the population, with incidents like the attack on a military checkpoint and threats from armed groups contributing to a climate of fear. The educational sector has also been severely affected, with attacks on schools and abductions of children for ransom, leading to school closures and a significant impact on children's right to education and safety.

From a legal point of view, Nigeria retains the death penalty for various capital offenses, which has sparked debate on its compatibility with the right to life. While juvenile offenders,

pregnant women, and the mentally ill are **exempted** from the death penalty, the practice remains contentinues in Nigeria with the arguments both for its deterrent effect and against its potential for irreversible miscarriages of justice.

These issues highlight the complex challenges facing Nigeria in ensuring the right to life and safety for its citizens amidst ongoing insecurity and conflict. The government's efforts to address these challenges are critical in upholding human rights and providing a safe environment for all Nigerians.

12. Analyze

12.1 The Impact of Corruption on Security and Human Rights in Nigeria

Corruption within Nigerian institutions exacerbates insecurity and significantly hampers the protection and promotion of human rights, creating a complex web of challenges for governance and security. Corruption weakens Nigeria's security forces, making them less trusted by the populace and less effective in their operations against terror organizations and criminal gangs. This inefficiency provides a fertile ground for these groups to flourish, directly impacting the safety and security of citizens.

Moreover, corruption undermines the country's efforts to combat high-profile corruption and economic crimes, such as oil theft, which has severe implications for Nigeria's economy and, by extension, its security landscape. Despite efforts, including the passage of key legislations aimed at addressing these issues, challenges such as the pardoning of convicted high-profile individuals and the prevalence of high-profile corruption cases, continue to pose significant setbacks. These actions not only weaken the morale of anti-graft agencies but also damage the confidence of the public and international partners in Nigeria's commitment to fighting corruption.

The lack of transparency in security sector spending, coupled with the lack of accountability for atrocities committed by violent non-state actors, further complicates the landscape. The scandalous misappropriation of "security votes" allows politicians to siphon off significant funds under the guise of national security, depriving the military of necessary resources and leaving institutions unfit for purpose.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive and transparent approach that includes ensuring free and fair elections, consulting widely before granting presidential pardons, pursuing high-profile corruption cases to their logical conclusion, increasing transparency in Nigeria's security sector and in the implementation of constituency projects. Strengthening participatory democracy and transparency in government leads to stronger institutions better equipped to respond to insurgencies and uphold human rights. Transparency about the corruption challenges and tackling them head-on will strengthen public trust in the Nigerian government and its security forces, enhancing their ability to address the country's security risks.

12.2 The Escalation of Internal Conflicts in Nigeria: Causes and Impacts on Human Rights

The escalation of internal conflicts in Nigeria has been significantly shaped by actions from armed Islamist groups in the northeast, with ISWAP fighters attacking United Nations bases and humanitarian hubs, leading to the destruction of facilities and abductions of humanitarian workers. These actions have not only exacerbated the humanitarian crisis but have also led to the displacement of thousands, further impacting the human rights situation in the region. Moreover, Boko Haram's conflict, particularly after the reported death of its leader Abubakar Shekau, has continued, with ISWAP claiming responsibility for several attacks, including a notable assault on a prison that resulted in the freeing of numerous inmates, including Boko Haram members.

The Nigerian security forces and vigilantes have been implicated in human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, particularly in the southeast, with over 287 people reported killed between January and May 2022. Amnesty International has detailed numerous human rights violations by security forces, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment, especially in the context of military operations against Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. Such operations have reportedly involved secret forced abortion programs, ending thousands of pregnancies without consent, potentially amounting to war crimes.

Furthermore, the freedom of expression, association, and assembly has been under significant threat. The government has been criticized for its clampdown on protests and the media, with several instances of suspensions and fines imposed on media outlets for broadcasting material

deemed unfavorable to the government or security forces. Notably, there have been reports of police using excessive force to disperse protesters, including those commemorating the #EndSARS protests, which have led to arrests and detentions.

In addressing these issues, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has highlighted the need for Nigeria to undertake domestic proceedings to address war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by both Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces. The ICC's involvement underscores the international concern over Nigeria's ability to ensure accountability and uphold human rights standards.

In conclusion, the internal conflicts in Nigeria, driven by armed groups' activities, government security operations, and the ensuing human rights abuses, present a complex challenge to the country's stability and the protection of its citizens' rights. The interplay of these factors underscores the urgent need for comprehensive approaches to conflict resolution, accountability for abuses, and measures to safeguard human rights in Nigeria.

12.3 Nigeria's Multifaceted Strategy Against Internal Conflicts

The Nigerian government has employed a comprehensive strategy to tackle the multifaceted internal conflicts within the country, combining military force, socio-economic initiatives, peacebuilding agencies, and legislative reforms with regional cooperation and community engagement. Efforts to combat insurgent groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP in the North East have involved not only military operations but also a growing reliance on local militias, despite their contentious role and impact on human rights and local governance.

Recognizing the limitations of a purely military approach, Nigeria has innovated through the establishment of state-level peacebuilding agencies in Plateau, Kaduna, and Adamawa. These agencies are tasked with developing community-level interventions, promoting peace education, and implementing systems for early warning and conflict prevention. They represent a localized approach to addressing the root causes of violence and have facilitated community dialogues, peace education, and the development of mediation and restorative justice mechanisms.

However, the persistent nature of violent conflicts and the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria have highlighted the need for a different approach to effectively ensure peace and security. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has emphasized the

importance of prevention and a proactive stance towards conflict resolution, aligning with global calls for peace and the sustenance of a secure environment.

International support and regional cooperation are deemed crucial in augmenting Nigeria's capacity to address its internal security challenges. The localized model of peacebuilding agencies, offering bespoke solutions to the roots of violence, has shown enough promise to merit global attention and support. This strategy underlines the potential of government-led units acting as neutral entities in mediating local conflicts and engaging civil society in peace efforts.

In summary, Nigeria's multi-pronged strategy to restore peace and order showcases the blending of direct security measures with innovative peacebuilding initiatives and socio-economic reforms. These efforts are supported by a framework of regional cooperation and underscored by the international community's recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria.

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