

## **Insurgencies and National Security in Nigeria: The Way Forward**

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**ABSTRACT:-** Nigeria is beset with a lot of security problems such as Boko Harm, militancy, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflicts, drug trafficking, agitation for resource control, communal riots, arms smuggling, and criminality that erode national security. No country can survive economically, socially and politically in a climate of insecurity. Data was collected from secondary sources. Frustration aggression theory propounded by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert Sears was adopted. The study explores the insurgencies prevalent in Nigeria which include Boko Harm, Fulani Herdsmen, Militancy, Kidnapping, Banditry and Cattle Rustlers. The paper also examines the ways through which government can tackle or curb the menace of insurgencies in Nigeria. It therefore recommends that government should improve and integrate its intelligence gathering technology and sharing across security agencies and other aspects of government this will be helpful in curbing crime. Also the armed forces should be trained, financially motivated, empowered and equipped them with modern and sophisticated weapons to fight and overcome insurgencies in Nigeria.

**Keywords:-** Insurgencies, National Security, Boko Haram, Militancy

### **I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Since the Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1999 after 16 years of persistent military dictatorship Peace has remained elusive in the country. It is expected that democratic governance would give rise to political stability, national cohesion and ethno-religious tolerance, but these have not been achieved. Instead of peace and national cohesion, insurgency has remained an abiding feature of state–society relations. Insurgency has posed serious security challenges for the nation as it affects foreign as well as indigenous investments, thereby hampering economic growth and leaving the country to face escalating unemployment, loss of lives and properties. This and other social maladies present a negative image on the country and undermine the national security. No country weather developed and developing can thrive economically, socially and politically in an environment of insecurity. That is why the issue of insurgencies as a threat to national security and development should be given serious attention (Okoroafor, Ukpabi 2016).

The first insurgency in Nigeria may be attributed to the movement to liberate the Niger Delta people led by Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro, who is from the Ijaw ethnic in the Niger Delta region and, at the time of his rebellion, was a student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His complaint was that both federal and regional governments exploited oil and gas resources of the Niger Delta with total negligent to the citizens of the area. So He formed the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), an armed military group made up of 150 of his kinsmen. Boro strongly believed that the citizens of the Niger Delta deserved equal share of the wealth which generated from oil. To press the point, on 23 February 1966, the NDVF declared the Niger Delta Republic.

The level of insecurity in Nigeria is becoming alarming and these have hinder national security and development in the country, this was as a result of insurgencies prevalent in Nigeria which has escalated the issues of international and national concerns which include: migration, political instability, decrease in Foreign Direct Investment inflow and underdevelopment, allowing unappealing effect on national development. Regrettably, the resolved fights by the Federal Government against the menace have not provided suppose optimistic results. Bintube (2015) accounted those socio-economic factors such as joblessness, poverty, corruption, bad governance caused by leadership deficit were the vital issues responsible for the insurgency in the North-East Nigeria. Nigeria is beset with many insecurity challenges such as Boko Harm, militancy, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflicts, drug trafficking, agitation for resource control, communal riots, arms smuggling, and other criminal acts that erode national security. Aliyu (2012) critically outline three important variables that define the nexus of the causes and problems militating against National security issues in Nigeria

which he cited as poverty, inequality and mass unemployment. Nigeria is beset with illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment, absence of basic social amenities, corruption and persistent rise in cost of living. These have incited grievances against the system and created breeding ground for insurgencies. When these factors are handled drastically, insurgencies will not be appealing to the future generation. Therefore, the study explores the insurgencies present in Nigeria and their negative impact on national security. Also proffer the ways through which government can tackle or curb the menace of insurgencies in Nigeria.

### II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The term insurgency and national security was conceptualized

**2.1.1 Insurgency:** The U.S. government defines insurgency as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region”(Ewa, 2018). The United States Department of Defence (DOD, 2007) defines insurgency as an organised movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. The threats of insurgency has intensified and assumed global dimension in recent times. According to Hayden (2007) “insurgency is best defined as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow or destruction of a constituted government through the use of subversion, espionage, terrorism and armed conflict” The term "insurgency" is used in describing a movement's unlawfulness and capacity to pose a threat to a state or seen as such by another authority, especially when viewed from the backdrop of its not being authorised, and therefore executing a cause that is illegitimate (Shafer, 1988 cited in Ukpong-Umo,2016).

**2.1.2 National Security:** The term national security has been conceptualized by different scholars but there is no consensus on the definition of national security. National security is a powerful military build-up for the protection of the nation and defence of its territorial integrity. To achieve national security, economic, energy, environmental security must be posses by a nation etc. National security is preservation of values a nation holds as it related to the defence of its territory from human as well as non-human threats that guides the pursuit of its national interest in the international system (Folarin & Oviasoge, 2014). Strategies taken to maintain national security include: building and maintaining strong military personnel; detecting threats by using intelligence service; facilitates cooperation by marshalling economic power; and using secret police to protect the country from internal and external threats (Anyadike 2013).

#### 2.2 Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on frustration aggression theory which is also known as frustration aggression displacement theory propounded by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert Sears in 1939 and was developed further by Neal Miller in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1961. The theory advocates that aggression is the outcome of frustrating or blocking an individual's attempt to acheive a goal (Friedman Schustack, 2014). Insurgency is the product of aggressive behavior which results from issues such as poverty and unemployment among others. The theory was reformulated to advocates that frustration fosters a behavior that may or may not be aggressive; any aggressive behavior is the outcome of frustration which makes frustration insufficient and also an important condition for aggression (Zillmann Dolf, 1979 cited in Okoro 2018). The theory is applicable to the study because, insurgency in the country has resulted in unemployment, injustice, abject poverty, environmental degradation, absence of infrastructure, ethnic conflicts, and militancy which ha undermine national development and security.

### III. DIFFERENT INSURGENCIES PRESENT IN NIGERIA

Insurgencies prevalent in Nigeria are the Bandity, kidnappings, Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herdsman, militancy, cattle rustlers and many others. All these are threats and challenges to national security in Nigeria

**Boko Haram insurgency:** The insurgency started in 2009, this was when the jihadist group Boko Haram began an armed rebellion against the Nigeria government. The conflict was as a result of religious violence between Nigeria's Muslim and Christian communities, and the utmost goal of the insurgents' is to set up an Islamic state in the region. The insurgents became growingly aggressive after several years of fighting and they being to grasp huge areas in northeastern Nigeria. In 2014 the violence increase rapidly which result to loss of many lives while they extremely increased its territories. The insurgency escalates the neighouring Niger, Chad and to Cameroon, which amount to a serious regional dispute. Since the inception of Boko Haram insurgencies in Nigeria, it has resulted to the death of many Nigerians and destructions of valuable properties; the circumstances has made it extremely difficult for the citizens especially the residents in some parts of northern Nigeria to carry out their businesses.

**Fulani herdsmen:** the fula origin also known as Fulani are a mass inhabitants widely dispersed in all of Africa, but most predominant in west Africa (Ajibefun, 2018). The Fulani people are descendants from North and Middle East Africa. The menace of Fulani-Herdsmen have serious implications for socio-economic development in Nigeria, where the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis is predominant a lot of lives and properties are destroyed, women are rape and people are afraid of going about their farming and socio-economic activities because of fear of being killed, these negatively affect the socio- economic development. Most of these clashes between herdsmen and farmers have resulted to humanitarian catastrophe precipitating human loss. Herdsmen – Farmers’ conflict is an impediment to food security because displacement of farmers from the affected communities has drastically reduced agricultural production. The activities of Fulani herdsmen have a serious threat on national security and government has done less to arrest the situation.

**Militancy:** militancy is an aggressive and active behaviour geared towards the defence and support of a cause (mainly politically), often to the point of extremism. Therefore, a militant is an individual that fight (or a protest movement) in the defence of a cause. Understandably, there are different typologies of militancy: Intellectual Militant, Militant Mobiliser and Violent Militant. The Intellectual Militant strongly believes that the Niger Delta struggle should be based on peaceful dialogue similarly, a militant mobiliser believes in informing / educating the citizens of the area on way to react to the injustice and corruption of the Nigerian state. On the extreme, a violent militant believes in the power of the barrel of the gun; that the political structure of Nigerian is so inconsiderate and dispassionate, it is only the logic of the fire power of the gun that can make it react to the hardship of the people of the area. Niger Delta region is made up of nine oil producing states which are Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Abia, Delta, Cross-River, Rivers, Imo, Edo and Ondo. This implies that the region traverses the South-Eastern, South-South, and South-Western geopolitical zones of Nigeria. There is a state of anomie, distortion of the value system and insecurity in Nigeria as a result of Niger Delta militant, the Niger Delta militancy has led to greater spate of bloodletting, repeated hostage taking, lock-down of production facilities, and the departure of some foreign oil firms from the region,

**Kidnappings:** kidnapping occur if an individual against his or her will is seized and detained by another individual in violation of the individual’s fundamental human rights. This position supports Goldberg (2000) who argued that kidnapping is a criminal act involving confinement seizure, subjection, abduction, forcefulness. Therefore it is the crime of unlawful capture, seizure, forceful, wrong and illegal detention of a person against his or her will by abductors. Kidnapping is a illegal business which involved forceful abduction of an individual for ransom and other reasons ranging from political, economic and religious. In Nigeria and many other developing countries of Africa and Asia, many factors are attributed as causes of kidnapping these include political factors, poverty, proliferation of arms, quest to get rich quick, illiteracy, corruption and unemployment among the youths are also playing fundamental role in the rise of kidnapping. In line with the above, Tepperman (2006, as cited in Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2016) observed that in Nigeria there are large number of unemployed youth roaming the streets and making a living on the streets. This has been attributed to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks. The consequences of kidnapping in Nigeria include psychological trauma, sexual abuse, and financial effect, loss of lives, fear and lack of trust.

**Bandity:** Banditry is acts of violence and robbery in places where the rule of law is not effective or has broken down. The banditry violence began as a farmer/herder conflict in 2011 and intensified between 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings. The violence has affected about 35 out of 92 local government areas in the 4 states. Many Nigeria have lost their lives and properties, forced displacement in States like, Kaduna, Enugu, Zamfara, Plateau, Taraba, Benue and across southern Nigeria. Although banditry is reflected in criminal activities like armed robbery, drug abuse, rape, cattle rustlers, kidnapping and other forms of violence, which threaten the national security. The negative implications that may result from incessant incidents of armed banditry relate to a society’s social capital in terms of communal cohesion and family, customary institutions and gender relations, that condition social control and may undermine the prospects for human development.

**Cattle Rustlers:** Cattle rustling have become a major security challenge in Nigeria, especially in northern part of the country as the epicenter. It has political, psychological, socio-economic and cultural consequences for the entire society. At the economic level, it constitutes a major threat to the livelihood of herders and those who relies on cows for survival. At the socio-political level, rustlers’ activities have resulted in death, loss, and the destruction of lives and property, thereby disturbing peace and security (Azeez and Aliyu 2016). Kynoch & Ulicki, (2000) found that the menace has inflicted fear psychologically to the rural populace, and as well as their wellbeing. Those affected cannot sleep, some fled their communities, relationships between villages were also affected, and the nastiest part was that many lives were lost because of the livestock rusting. Olaniyan and

Yahaya (2016) cited in Abubakar, Talib, Rohana (2018) also found that livestock rustling has the following main consequences on the socio-economic, socio-political and psychological facets of the society. First, the activities of cattle rustling have established a major danger to the lives the pastoralists who rely on livestock for existence. Psychologically, a huge number of the rural populace has disposed their properties, and members of the family traumatized, because of the prevalence of kidnapping and rape in the rural communities. At the political level, the rustlers have made the government irresponsible because of the destruction of properties and the killings of innocent people that are were to be protected by the state government.

**3.2 The way forward:** The ways through which government can tackle or curb the menace of insurgencies in Nigeria are discussed below. The regularity and enormity of the terror unleashed by insurgents in various parts of the country make it expedient for strategies and solutions to be formulated.

**Setting up strong Intelligence Gathering Infrastructure.** The Nigeria government in 2012 had announce the plan to establish new intelligence gathering centre that will be encumber with the responsibility of improving and coordinating intelligence gathering, sharing across security agencies and different aspects of government; this will help to curb crime and other illegal activities. Sustainable infrastructure such as ICT, modern and sophisticated weapons, military hardware and effective power supply are to be provided. Once it is provided, military and other security personnel should be educated on how to use them to fight insurgencies in the country.

**Eliminating corruption:** Corruption is a monumental endemic that had eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigeria society which is an obstacle to national security and development. Corruption is display in form of abuse of authority, extortion, bribery, favouritism, fraud, theft, deceit, malfeasance and illegality (Nkwede and Abah, 2016). It has been established that corruption is one of the major factors that induced insurgencies and insecurity in Nigeria. Boko Haram insurgency, political instability as a result of Niger Delta militancy, experienced in Nigeria was as a result of corruption. Therefore government should put in place effective measures to curb corruption in Nigeria, promote rule of law, good governance and socio-economic and political development. This will go a long way in reducing insurgencies prevalent in the country.

**Provision of adequate employment opportunities:** it has been argued that unemployment is one of the factors that cause insurgencies in Nigeria. Most people who are unemployed especially youth are always involved in crimes and illegal activities in order to care for themselves and family. Varin, (2018) advocated that unemployment, increases poverty, lack of opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills. Many Nigeria especially the vibrant men in the society due to frustration and socio-economic difficulties join militants and terrorist group; this hinders the country development because the challenges have great negative impact on the economic and national security. Provision of adequate employment to qualified unemployed citizens will eliminate armed robbery, kidnapping and other criminal activities.

**Alleviating Poverty:** Poverty has be viewed in four different angles which are the Lack of or impaired access to productive resources; inefficient of common resources, Lack of access to basic need/goods; and a result of exclusion mechanism (Olayemi, 2012 Cited in Anekwe, 2018). The rate of poverty in Nigeria is quite alarming and the result of this is an increase in armed robbery, Kidnapping and other social vices that add to the problem of internal security in the state. Ikejiaku (2009) argues that poverty is a multidimensional problem that goes beyond economics to include other things, political, cultural and social issues. The determinants of poverty in Nigeria can be traced to the following indices which are corruption, income inequalities, unemployment, declining level of economic growth, bad governance, diversion of funds into non-developmental projects, embezzlement of fund and many others. Government can make lives easier by providing the basic necessitates of lives to citizens, this w

Can improve their standard of living and reduce robbery, kidnapping and other terrorist activities which are traced to the poor trying to survive.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Insurgency has result to the shout down of a lot of businesses in Nigeria especially the North-Eastern region which dealt a dirty blow to the Nigerian economy. Foreign investors have moved to other parts of the country, where their lives, properties and capital are well protected and secured. Most domestic and foreign investors that operate in the country face tremendous losses yearly. Nigeria should endeavour to improve and integrate its intelligence gathering technology and sharing across security agencies and other aspects of government this will be helpful in curbing crime. The armed forces should be trained, financially motivated, empowered and equipped them with modern and sophisticated weapons to fight and overcome insurgencies in Nigeria. Nigeria is battling with unemployment, corruption, poverty, underdevelopment, illiteracy, lack of basic



social amenities, increased cost of living, high population growth and the incapacity of government to deal effectively with non-state actors/groups, therefore government at all levels should do the needful by waking up to its socio-economic responsibilities in order to reduce the level of insecurity and insurgencies in Nigeria. Government should urge both public and media support to supply intelligence regarding terrorist groups or their activities.

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