

## National Security, Promotion of Democratic Tenets and the Leadership Role of Government: A Review

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### Abstract

*This paper takes a cursory look at the connecting dots between the entrenchment of national security and the promotion of democratic ethos in Nigeria whilst examining specifically what the leadership role of the Nigerian government should be and how well they have fared since the constitutional role of the Nigerian democratic government is the provision of welfare and national security. With the rising spate of insecurity despite our fledgling democracy that seems to confirm the insinuation that democratic governance is on vacation in Nigeria, this paper questions the powers, roles, performance of the leadership thrown up by the ideal democracy and how the continued sustenance of democratic tenets have reduced and altogether slowed down the effectiveness of the Nigerian government in the purposive promotion of national security. This paper finds that in spite of the growing globally tenable optimism that conceptualises democracy as a valid prerequisite for national progress, sustained national security, development and sustainability, there seems to be no conclusive indication that security would be guaranteed in a democracy, when the leadership is incompetent, dishonest or ineffective. The paper however concludes that this situation regardless, there is an integral indispensable and an invaluable relationship between the promotion of democratic tenets and the provision of national security, albeit, a remote one, but that a true and concerted promotion of democratic values and sincere political leadership would throw up a more secure nation, whilst making a set of recommendations that are geared towards promoting national security in a democratically governed nation.*

**Keywords:** National Security, Democratic Tenets, Leadership and Government

### 1.0 Introduction

This paper seeks to contextualize national security in terms of sustainable development, the safety of the nation against internal and external aggression and other security threats such as terrorism, war or espionage, and the purposive requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power. The concept developed mostly in the United States after World War II and every nation state developed the attitude to protect its people, borders and their resources as a policy architecture afterwards<sup>1</sup>. The main contextualization of national security therefore is the popular understanding of it as the capacity of a nation to mobilise military forces to guarantee and safely secure its borders<sup>2</sup> and to deter or successfully defend her against physical threats including military aggression and attacks by non-state actors, including acts of terrorism<sup>3</sup>. All other extensive conceptualisations of national security now mostly believed to entail non-military dimensions, including reduction in the prevalence of crime, the security from terrorism, security of the economy, security of the

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<sup>1</sup> National Security. ScienceDaily. <<https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/nationalsecurity.html>> Accessed 1st March, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> G.A Onuoha and E.C Adibe, Good Governance and National Security in Nigeria's Constitutional Democracy: Problems and Proposals. 2017 NALT Conference Proceedings, P. 224-229.

<sup>3</sup>B. Salawu, 'Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Casual Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies'. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(3), p. 34.

environment and energy, cyber and internet firewall security, food security, *et al* would not be considered in this paper because of the constraint of space and streamlined scope of discourse.

Nigeria is a hotbed of variegated security challenges. From Boko haram insurgency in the North to blatant guerrilla warfare. This was apart from the militancy in the Niger Delta that fought against the government, reducing national oil productive capacity in the midst of kidnaps of expatriates, oil well blow out and sabotage, nipped only recently in the bud by the Federal government's amnesty program. This insecurity problem became more discombobulated by the incessant farmer-herder crisis that reportedly sees militia attacks (mass murder, massacre and kidnapping) by Fulani herdsmen go unchecked in the nation. Apart from several communal clashes, the Nigerian civil war that unfortunately allowed arms and ammunitions delivered and manufactured by private citizens, pockets of religious violence, poverty, high rate of criminality, slow justice delivery mechanisms by the national judiciary,<sup>4</sup> monumental corruption of the security apparatus, sabotage, *et al* that have contributed in no small measure to the entrenchment of national insecurity<sup>5</sup>, the ineffectiveness of successive Nigerian governments to tackle the hydra headed monster of insecurity is a major reason for the continued national insecurity in Nigeria. It is a statement of fact that according to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 14 (2) b<sup>6</sup> precisely that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, thus reinforcing the truth that it is the fundamental obligation of the Nigerian government to provide national security for the citizenry.

Sadly, the Nigerian government has not been living up to its billing in this regard despite being a democratically elected government with presumably all the democratic tenets. The alarming spate of insecurity in Nigeria without any respite in sight translating into limitless and boundless criminality, unbridled and uncontrolled brutal terrorist attacks including suicide bombings have had tumultuous and undesired consequences on the people's liveability, the nation's economy, progress and development, lack of foreign investment and an unsafe atmosphere for businesses to thrive and for people to live peaceably<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, insecurity as one of the most potent challenges to national economic development and stability has led to poor investors' confidence in Nigeria and mass emigration of young Nigerians to more secure nations of the world. Perhaps the most noticeable though largely ineffective effort of government to tackle or reduce national insecurity was the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act 2011 by the National legislature, such that even in spite of this, the level of national insecurity remains abysmally high, making the environment unsafe for both citizens and cartels.

### 1.1 Definition of National Security

National Security is defined in this paper as the relative, rather than total and absolute freedom from harm, fear, risk, danger, aggression, susceptibility and vulnerability<sup>8</sup>. It epitomises the axiom that the instinct for human survival aptly dubbed the rule of self-preservation remains the prime law of nature. And as such, the sense of security naturally becomes and should indeed become a rule of prime consideration in the scheme of things, both to the government and the

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<sup>4</sup> C.O Ike, 'The Role of the Judiciary in Enhancing National Security', 2017 NALT Conference Proceedings, P. 173.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Section 14 (2) b, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended.

<sup>7</sup> B. Ogwo, 'The Impact of the Judiciary in Enhancing National Security', 2017 NALT Conference Proceedings, P. 160.

<sup>8</sup> A.J Omede, 'Nigeria: Analysing the Security Challenges of the Goodluck Jonathan Administration'. (2011) *Canadian Social Science*, Vol. 7 No. 5, p. 93.

governed. The concept of insecurity according to Beland,<sup>9</sup> signifies different meanings to different people, ranging from the absence of safety; danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection and exposure to harm. Insecurity on the other hand is therefore equally the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection<sup>10</sup>. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. Achumba, et al,<sup>11</sup> defined insecurity first as the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury and on the other hand as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is perceived as a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune and an unreal harm or illusory fear of the unknown.

In the earlier context lies the gravamen of our discourse, even though the definitions of the insecurity as given by the latter thought, underscores the fact that those affected by national insecurity are not only afraid, but are unsure of their next move or the next thing to happen to them, as they remain vulnerable to imminent threats, risks and dangers around. The major threats to national security include terrorism, espionage, cyber threats and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, many of which have huge deleterious impact on any nation's national infrastructure<sup>12</sup>, whilst providing national security typically includes using diplomacy to rally allies and isolate threats; marshalling economic power to facilitate or compel cooperation; maintaining effective armed forces; implementing civil defence and emergency preparedness measures (including anti-terrorism legislation) by the nation<sup>13</sup>. In other words, national security also entails the corporate term covering both national defence and foreign relations of a country and refers to the protection of a nation from attack or other danger by holding adequate armed forces and guarding state secrets.

National security therefore envisages that a national government should protect the state and indeed her citizens against all kinds of national threats and imminent crisis through a variety of power display and national strength in the architecture of democratic governance or otherwise. Section 14 (i) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended further reiterates national security to mean that public good that the government is duty-bound to provide for all its citizens, regardless of the amount of resources the citizens contribute to national security or otherwise. Furthermore, national security is seen in its widest sense to mean and include not just the mechanisms put in place for the preservation of the physical entity, but also the preservation of the nation's political stability, its economic and national interest and the general protection of the safety and wellness of the inhabitants and citizens of the nation<sup>14</sup>. It is on this note that the Nigerian government has a constitutional responsibility for guaranteeing the security and welfare of its people with specific obligations to be discharged to the citizens under both domestic and international laws.

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<sup>9</sup>D. Beland, 'The Political Construction of Collective Insecurity: From Moral Panic to Blame Avoidance and Organised Irresponsibility', Center for European Studies, Working Paper Series 126, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>I. C Achumba and O.S Ighomereho and M.O.M Akpan-Robaro, 'Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development' (2013) *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4(2), p. 96.

<sup>12</sup> Beland, *supra*.

<sup>13</sup> M.W Doyle, 'Ways of War and Peace', [1998] *Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*, New York, Norton 25.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

## 1.2 Conceptual Review of National Security, Democratic Tenets and the Leadership Role of Government

First, this paper argues that democracy in Nigeria should aspire towards leveraging on her potentials for sustainable national development in such a manner that guarantees enduring national sustainability, even though the reality on ground leaves much to be desired in that respect. However, there are a few conceptual theorisation of interest on national security. Nwanegbo and Odigbo<sup>15</sup> for instance conceived that security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage, espionage attacks and other violent external aggression. They further theorised that the conceptualisation of human security in the purely theoretical nature of literature can be categorized into two.<sup>16</sup> One is the neo-realist theoretical strand that conceptualizes security as the core responsibilities of the state. The other strand which is a post-modernist and pluralistic view conceives security as the responsibility of non-state actors and displaces the state as a major provider of 'national security'.

This thought paradigm embraces the fact that security is both individual and communal and as such it is the primary responsibility of a mature and responsible adult to take care of and protect himself. In a broader sense, security might also be conceived as the responsibility of everyone, rather than of government, alone. Proponents of this latter approach argue that the whole concept of security (whether national or otherwise) goes beyond a military determination of threats. They are of the contention that government should be more concerned with guaranteeing the economic security of the individual than the security of the state because the root causes of insecurity are economic in nature. These theorists are in tandem with proponents of the stomach infrastructure. They believe albeit logically that the welfare of the people like Cicero said should be the final law. Survival is therefore an individual instinct. If the government must provide anything, let it provide food for the citizens first, to keep them alive. Omede<sup>17</sup> in his own work perceives security as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values, interests and ideologies.

For the purpose of this paper, this paper aligns with another strand of theorising, which is a fusion of both the neo-realist and the post-modernist theories which is to the effect that national security is both the duty of the government and the responsibility of the citizens. According to Abubakar<sup>18</sup> however, National security is the podium of democracy and if democracy loses security imperatives, it has lost its real substance. Chai Anan, the Thai political scientist, in his analysis of the role of the state in promoting democracy opined that the most important role of the state is in essence to ensure security for itself and for the people. A review of the traditionalist conception of national security reveals that the concept was conceived within a state-centric perspective<sup>19</sup>. This perception is increasingly becoming more of an anachronism, along with growing internal opposition to the hegemonic statist perception of national security; hence, the need for a re-evaluation of its conceptualisation.

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<sup>15</sup> C. Nwanegbo and B.N Odigbo, (2018) Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria, *Covenant University Journals*, P. 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> A.J Omede, 'Nigeria: Analysing the Security Challenges of the Goodluck Jonathan Administration'. (2011) *Canadian Social Science*, Vol. 7 No. 5, p.93.

<sup>18</sup> A. N Abubakar, (2013), Democracy and National Security in Nigeria. Semantic Scholar. <<https://www.semanticscholar.org>.DemocracyandNationalSecurityinNigeria.pdf> Accessed 25th February, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> B. Alkali, (2014) Democracy and Security: Perspectives and Purview, <<https://www.researchgate.net>> Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.

This paper argues that there is an integral relationship between democracy and national security and as such, national security has its essence in the sustenance and promotion of national security. In effect, even though military strategy still remains indispensable to national security, the crux of the contemporary national security question lies in broadening the notion of security to accommodate non-military considerations alongside more humane, equitable and socially responsible practices by the State, geared towards the promotion of national and individual security of the citizens.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.0 Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Democracy and Democratic Tenets.

Etymologically, the term 'democracy' was derived from two Greek root words namely demos (meaning people) and kratos/kratein (meaning rule)<sup>21</sup>. Democracy, (*dēmokratía*) which means literally "rule by the people" is therefore a form of government in which the people have the authority to choose their governing legislation and their leaders freely. Who the people are and how authority is shared among them are however core issues for democratic development and the constitution of the nation. Democracy is largely a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. It is self-government in its narrow sense.

Put differently, therefore, democracy means people's rule or rule by the people. Democracy is one of the abiding legacies of the ancient Greek civilization in the contemporary world.<sup>22</sup> It is often observed that the practice of democracy in its original form originated in Greece. This is not without any prejudice to the notion that comparable practices of democracy thrived in other places, even in Africa prior to Written History.<sup>23</sup> In its original form, democracy can be conceived as a system of government based on the participation of all qualified citizens in decision-making.<sup>24</sup> There is no gainsaying the fact that conceptualising democracy in terms of 'participation by all' is at best problematic. The complexities of modern society, adding to its huge population has made the practice of direct democracy unattainable. So, democracy today is understood in terms of representative government. Democracy is therefore not the rule by all, but the rule of the majority over the rest of the people including the minority.

Another contextual challenge of the term 'democracy' is the possible and imminent lack of sufficient enlightenment of the voting public. The riotousness of the crowd is indeed a raging madness. How are we sure that the one who vote and decide for the rest of us know better? There is no law to enable the enlightened voter like a professor have two votes whilst the mentally challenged or the presumably unenlightened illiterate has half or just a vote. It is indeed universal adult suffrage for everyone irrespective of their knowledge or otherwise, for everyone to groan under the yoke of the electoral decisions of the highest number of its own people. In this indirect form, democracy depicts a political system in which the individual is involved in choosing a representative; usually from competing political parties like the All-Progressives Congress, APC and the People's Democratic Party, PDP.<sup>25</sup>

Indirect/Representative democracy thrives on the principle of representation. This enables the people to choose those who will represent their interest in public decision-making. The

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<sup>20</sup> G.A Atelhe, Democracy and National Security in Nigeria: A Discursive Exploration, <<https://www.mcser.org.viewfile>> Accessed 2nd March, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Definition of Democracy. <<https://www.britannica.com>topic>> Accessed 29th January, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Okoli and M.O Gusau, (2014) Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.

<<https://www.papers.ssrn.comdelivery.cfm.html>> Accessed 29th January, 2023.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> G.A Atelhe, Democracy and National Security in Nigeria: A Discursive Exploration; Renwick and Swinburn 1980, P. 151.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

expectation is that those occupying positions of public role in a democracy do so at the instance of the people, whose delegated mandate they hold in civic trust.<sup>26</sup> According to American political scientist, Larry Diamond,<sup>27</sup> democracy consists of four key elements: a political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections; the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life; protection of the human rights of all citizens; and the rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

Having stated this, democracy does not automatically translate into good governance. Democracy simply means popular will and government of the people, by the people and presumably for the people, but the reality most times is that the government might be by the people, but might not be for the people when good governance is not assured and the provision of national security remains a mirage. That a people allegedly chose a government is therefore no conclusive proof that the government will deliver good governance to the people in reality. However, democracy should ordinarily be a great corollary of good governance for the people that emplaced it.

There appears to be more connection between the promotion of national security and the entrenchment of good governance than there is a connection between national security and the promotion of democracy. This is particularly so as will be shown that national insecurity ensues in spite of the democratisation of the Nigerian state. Constitutionally speaking, democracy is also assured in Nigeria, whether it is true democracy filled with all its tenets is however a question begging for an answer. Section 14 (2) c of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that 'participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. Equally, the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy contained in Chapter II, (Sections 13-24) are clear indices to the presumed good governance that a democratic dispensation should occasion, but they regrettably rendered non-justiciable by its section 6(6) c. Some other social and economic rights that seem to ensure national security are also contained in the African Charter of Human and People's Rights which has been luckily domesticated in Nigeria.<sup>28</sup>

Democracy as well its tenets, is therefore built on certain incontestable principles, prominent among which are:

1. Popular Sovereignty: - This means that the supreme power to rule rests with the people (the electorate). The people decide who rules them and under what party or ideological platform. They also hold the authority to change the government in case it fails to live up to expectation.<sup>29</sup> This popular sovereignty is closely concerned with the Consent of the governed. Democracy is based on the idea that governments are only legitimate i.e they only have the right to rule if they are based on the consent of the people as predicated on popular Sovereignty.

2. Popular Representation:- As indicated above, the elected government officials hold their mandate at the instance of the people. The most powerful office in the land in this sense will no longer be the office of the President, but the office of the Citizen! They are in such position to represent the interest of their people. Popular representation entails the ability of the political representative to serve the interests of his people (constituency) properly. It entails being in touch

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<sup>26</sup> Okoli and M.O Gusau, (2014) Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.

<<https://www.papers.ssrn.comdelivery.cfm.html>> Accessed 13th March, 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Democracy: Its Meaning and Dissenting Opinions of the Political Class in Nigeria.

<<https://www.files.eric.ed.govfulltext.html>> Accessed 20th March, 2023.

<sup>28</sup> African Charter of Human and People's Rights, (Ratification and Enforcement Act) CAP A9, LFN 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Okoli and M.O Gusau, (2014) Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.

<<https://www.papers.ssrn.comdelivery.cfm.html>> Accessed 20th February, 2023.

with the people and timely consultation of one's constituency given matters affecting their interest.<sup>30</sup>

3. Popular Participation: - Without any prejudice to legally tenable limitations to franchise, the expectations in a democracy are that everybody participates in the process of governance. In effect, all citizens are equally stakeholders in the business of governance. How true that is in Nigeria remains arguable regardless. Popular participation implies being active in the political process, whether at the leadership or followership level.<sup>31</sup>

4. Rule of Law and Equality: - This means supremacy as well as the universal applicability of the law. In a democracy, the dictates of the regular law must prevail in all circumstances in such a manner that forecloses impunity, arbitrariness and abuse of power and of office.<sup>32</sup> The law should not be a respecter of individuals no matter one's social status or dignity. The 'sacred cow syndrome' and 'double standards' in the application of the law is shunned in a true democracy. In effect, no one is above the law and no one should be seen to be above the law or treated likewise. The rule of law presupposes that the state itself is subject to the law; the judiciary is a necessary agency of the law; the government at all levels should respect the right of individual citizens under the rule of law and in accordance with the law of the land and the judiciary has the responsibility under the law and the constitution for the determination of all actions and proceedings relating to matters in disputes between persons, governments or any other authority or person in Nigeria.<sup>33</sup> The popular conceptualisation of the rule of law according to A.V Dicey which is to the effect that rule of law means the supremacy of the law; equality of men irrespective of class or race and the existence of the preservation and enforcement of rights as guaranteed by the constitution is also acknowledged.

5. Civil Liberty: - Democracy guarantees basic freedoms and institutionalizes mechanisms for actualizing them. It also puts in place procedures for seeking redress in the event of any violation of these entitlements. In fact, the place of civil rights in a democracy is sacrosanct and pivotal. Some of these rights include: right to life, right to property, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, etc.<sup>34</sup>

Tenets of Democracy are sometimes referred to as the Principles of Democracy. They principally include the rule of law, freedom of the press, respect of human rights, active political processes and enlightened citizens. Each of these are so basic to the entrenchment of democracy and a true democracy cannot exist without all of them.

6. Other Relevant Principles of Democracy:- These include the following:

Equity, Justice, Civility, Accountability, Transparency, Individual rights, Checks and balances, Limited Government, Separation of Powers, Judicial Review, Federalism, etc. Democracy has therefore become so much entrenched in the modern world. Note, however, that democracy has been categorized as either liberal or radical. Liberal democracy is the essence of the present world order. It is subscribed to, by many nations, even though there have been copious variations from the orthodox model. Radical democracy is often referred to as the socialist democracy. It seeks

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<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> G.A Atelhe, Democracy and National Security in Nigeria: A Discursive Exploration; Renwick and Swinburn 1980, P. 151.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> C. Nwokeaku, (2014) 'The Rule of Law: Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria'. 2 (1) *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration* 32. P 107.

<sup>34</sup> Okoli and M.O Gusau, (2014) Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.

<<https://www.papers.ssrn.comdelivery.cfm.html>> Accessed 20th February, 2023.

to re-construct the society based on socialist ideals and principles. Cases in point include the communist Russia and China.

By way of overview, democracy presupposes a political system in which the people of a country rule through any form of government they choose to establish. In modern democracies, supreme authority is exercised for the most part by representatives elected by popular suffrage. The representatives may be supplanted by the electorate according to the legal procedures of recall and referendum, and they are, at least in principle, responsible to the electorate. In many democracies, such as the United States, both the executive head of government and the legislature are elected. In typical constitutional monarchies such as the United Kingdom and Norway, only the legislators are elected, and from their ranks, a cabinet and a prime minister.<sup>35</sup>

Although often used interchangeably, the terms democracy and republic are not synonymous. Both systems delegate the power to govern to their elected representatives. In a republic, however, these officials are expected to act on their own best judgment of the needs and interests of the country. The officials in a democracy more generally and directly reflect the known or ascertained views of their constituents, sometimes subordinating their own judgment.

### **3.0 Global Trend of Democracy and Democratization**

According to Okoli and Okpaleke,<sup>36</sup> “democracy, indeed, has become the most dominant political movement in the world today”. The popularity of this political practice has been a worldwide trend over the years. In effect, by the second half of the 20th century, most independent states in the world had a government that more or less embodied some of the tenets of democracy. Since the demise of the Cold War in the early 1990s and, of course, the advent of globalization proper thereafter, the world has witnessed radical waves of democratization whereby some notorious dictatorial regimes gave way for democratic change. And with the coming of the Arab Spring in the late 2010 and early 2000, people now decide who rules them and under what party or ideological platform. They also hold the authority to change the government in case it fails to live up to expectation.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, the sustained promotion of democratic tenets like ensured popular sovereignty, popular representation, popular political participation, entrenchment of the rule of law and promotion of equality, promotion of civil liberty, equity, justice, civility, proper accountability, transparency, protection of individual civil and fundamental rights, absence of arbitrariness, emplacement of checks and balances, an effective electoral system, the entrenchment of true separation of powers, periodic judicial review and true Federalism can bring about good governance capable of ensuring national security.

### **4.0 Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria**

1. Weak and Ineffective Security System. The security personnel assigned to address security challenges in Nigeria are largely inadequately trained, grossly biased or plain incompetent. An Ineffective Security architecture cannot guarantee adequate national security. Achumba and Akpan-Robaro<sup>38</sup> contended that the security personnel assigned to tackle security situations have a number of systemic problems that limit their efficiency ranging from corruption to lack of expertise and equipment to sentimental attachments, undue influence by ethnic, religious or

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<sup>35</sup> Okoli and M.O Gusau, (2014) Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.

<<https://www.papers.ssrn.comdelivery.cfm.html>> Accessed 29th July, 2023.

<sup>36</sup> G.A Atelhe, Democracy and National Security in Nigeria: A Discursive Exploration; Okoli and Okpaleke 1980, P. 82.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> C.O Ike, ‘The Role of the Judiciary in Enhancing National Security’, 2017 NALT Conference Proceedings, P. 173.



communal clashes and conflict of interests to sabotage. Many of the security personnel are victims of circumstance who joined the police or military service out of desperation and national job unavailability, rather than out of the genuine desire to serve the nation, passion, security competence and the fortuitous compassion to ensure the protection of national security. They are neither committed nor capable of protecting anyone including being willing to pay the ultimate price to defend the nation's security interests. Security personnel will rather protect their ethnic and religious brothers who are criminals, thus breaching national security and largely refrain from separating their personal interests from national interests. They invariably prioritise their parochial interests over and above national security interests, thereby sabotaging government effort and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information, diverting security funds for personal enrichment (Dasuki syndrome) or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire sophisticated weapons to escape justice or incarceration.

They are often guilty of criminal conspiracy and connivance, betrayal of national trust, tribalisation and security insider abuse. Security personnel reportedly lay ambush for one another to circumvent the process and frustrate the fight against insecurity. Many of them are poorly paid and grossly unmotivated. Lack of patriotism pervades their services and they will rather pursue cash than stand to protect national security in the discharge of their official responsibilities.

2. Poverty and Youth Unemployment. These two hydra-headed monsters have perpetually plagued the Nigerian state for decades with no reprieve in sight. The high level of unemployment and huge state of impecuniosity particularly amongst the teeming youth have untoward negative consequences on national security as most of the nation's productive force is engaged. An idle mind is often prone to evil machinations and the society that cannot help the many who are poor and jobless, cannot save the few who are rich and employed. The natural consequence of poverty and unemployment is increased and unbridled criminality. There is a high tendency for predisposition towards violent crime, illicit acts and brigandage capable of compromising national security when the youth force is not productively engaged. Salawu opined that the failure of the past administrations in Nigeria to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities was one of the prime causes of national insecurity<sup>39</sup>.

He that is down needs fear no fall. When people are poor and unengaged with very little to live or die for, they are more willing to kill, harm, get killed or harmed for token advantage. According to the World Bank, Nigeria has an estimated Youth population of over a hundred million (100,000,000) people, representing about 60 percent of the total population with a growth rate of 2.6 percent per annum.<sup>40</sup> The youth population is supposed to be the most active part of the nation's human capital resources with an annual entry into the labour force estimated at 1.8million people on the average since 2006. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, (2018), unemployment rate increased in the last quarter of 2018 to 23.10 percent from 21.1 percent in 2010.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the unemployment situation is getting worse and more worrisome by the years. Of a fact, 37.7 percent of Nigerian youth are aged between 15-24years, out of which 22.4 percent between the ages of 25 and 44 are willing to work, but unable to get where to work.<sup>42</sup> The implication of this statistics is that one of every tenth young citizen of Nigeria is officially unemployed. This is different from the unemployment challenge.

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<sup>39</sup>B. Salawu, 'Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Casual Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies'. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(3).

<sup>40</sup> World Bank I Nigeria: Development News, Research and Data.  
<<https://www.worldbank.org>>country> Accessed 12th February, 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Salawu, *supra*.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*.

3. Porous Borders and Ineffective Customs and Immigration Service. The porous frontiers of the nation where individual and chattel movements are largely uncontrolled remains one of the major contributors to the high level of national insecurity in Nigeria.<sup>43</sup> A mere paltry bribe to customs and immigration officers is often the needed incentive to allow all forms of dangerous weapons and foreign combatants, felons and war mongers into the country through the borders. The Koko incident which saw dangerous and toxic substances dumped in our shores in 1988 is a regrettable pointer to how lax our security protection is. A nation where anything goes and weapons cannot be transported unchecked with no resistance of the security forces will combat national insecurity for a long time. According to Hazen and Horner, there remains an uncontrolled and largely unchecked inflow of small arms and light weapons into the country which is aiding and assisting militancy, insurgency and unrestrained criminality.<sup>44</sup> Nigeria equally reportedly plays hosts to over 70 percent of about 8million illegal weapons in West Africa.<sup>45</sup> It is in this light that many researchers have noted that the uncontrolled ingress and egress of itinerant migrants mostly young men from neighbouring countries like Mali, Niger Republic, Chad, Benin Republic and Togo aided by lack of data, ineffective census numbers and systemic failure, allegedly responsible for some of the criminal acts constituting national insecurity like mass murder, kidnapping for ransom and militia killings.

4. Lack of Political Will of Successive Political Administrations to stamp out Criminality and National Insecurity. Many Politicians benefit from crime. They allegedly give out arms and ammunitions to political thugs prior to elections to rig and maim their political opponents in a bid for undue political advantage. These thugs refrain from and refuse to return these illicit weapons after the elections, when many of them are no longer useful to the Politicians owing to uselessness and political disuse atrophy syndrome. (Use and Dump). Many of them cannot be compensated with juicy political offices or sufficient financial reward, they thus reward themselves by using the arms to wreak havoc, rob, kidnap for ransom, assassinate and carry out other heinous acts that endanger human lives, properties and breach national security. Many of them are left off the hook cheaply or granted either unmerited *nolle prosequi* by 'political' Attorneys General or otherwise granted cheeky Amnesty and Pardon to return to their lives of crime as another election cycle returns and the dangerous cycle of insecurity continues. The political class is thus guilty of national insecurity as they lack the moral fortitude to emplace safety measures when they unwittingly benefit from crime and insecurity. Some of the insecurity is also attributable to the incompetence of political leaders who are incapable of firing inefficient security service chiefs.

This is apart from the insinuation in some quarters that national insecurity in most cases is artificially engineered with the connivance of some political actors and security chiefs to justify the huge budgetary allocation set aside for fighting insecurity. That It is all business as usual. Thus, if insecurity is fought successfully, there would be no opportunity to steal arms funds, pad the security budget or demand for a raise in the allocation for security votes.

5. Corruption. Systemic and political corruption remain at the root of national insecurity in Nigeria. There is a robust history of corruption in Nigeria by both the military and civilian administrations. Till date, Nigeria is yet to fully recover the infamous Abacha loot from far-flung corners of the world. Almost every leader of government has been indicted for corrupt practices

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<sup>43</sup> G.A Atelhe, Democracy and National Security in Nigeria: A Discursive Exploration; Okoli and Okpaleke 1980, P. 82.

<sup>44</sup>J.M Hazen, J. Horner 2007, 'Small Arms, Armed Violence and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta Perspective'. *Switzerland Small Arms Survey*, p 23.

<sup>45</sup>G.L Adeola and F. Oluyemi, The Political and Security Implications of Cross Border Immigration between Nigeria and Her Francophone Neighbours'. 2012 *International Journal of Social Sciences Tomorrow*, 1(3) pp 1-9.

since Independence. Corruption involves the dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery, embezzlement, selfish aggrandisement and gross abuse of office for material gain. In fact, the first military coup in Nigeria was reportedly predicated on the need to stop political corruption and this has remained the major rationale for military take over- stopping impunity, only for a more brazen impunity to be emplaced by the successive military administration. Col. Dasuki is still remanded in prison custody over allegations that whilst serving as the National Security Adviser, he allegedly diverted billions of dollars ostensibly budgeted for the procurement of arms to combat terrorism and stamp out insecurity in conjunction with some other politically exposed persons into private coffers and to bankroll an election campaign. This act reportedly led to a massive displacement of millions of people especially in the North East of Nigeria. Add this to the alleged corruption of the bench where justice was allegedly for sale to the highest bidder. Some bad eggs in the Judiciary take huge bribes in exchange for injustice. They free political criminals so far, the pay is right and handsome, thus contributing to national insecurity.

Throw in the sordid revelations suggesting that there is indeed corruption in the Judiciary as various chunks of hard currencies far above the legitimate earnings of Judges were allegedly discovered in the homes of Judges handling high profile cases of corruption involving politically exposed persons when the officers of the Directorate of Secret Services raided their homes in October 2016. They were mostly accused of perverting the cause of justice and largely sabotaging the criminal justice system, thus contributing to national insecurity. Court Clerks and Registrars have equally been accused of hiding case files and conniving with judicial officers to transfer high profile cases to allegedly corrupt judges in exchange for unwholesome gratification.<sup>46</sup>

6. Lack of Intelligence gathering and information in the community. Most residents in these insecure and war-torn communities know the perpetrators of crime, but are not motivated enough to report to security agencies, either due to sabotage, distrust or malice. The Nigerian Federal government needs to ask help from residents of affected areas to patrol the borders together and ensure an effective community policing to reduce incidences of violent crimes and insecurity.

7. Absence of Data and Registration of National Citizens. With the problem of poorly guarded coastal and land borders. Insurgents from other countries can infiltrate Nigeria with no problem. This situation is especially dangerous in the North East. A nation that does not know the number of its citizens per time is incapable of protecting the citizens from infiltration. The Federal Government of Nigeria cannot provide enough troops to secure the borders.

8. Ethno-Religious Conflicts and Terrorism. Ethnic crisis arising from huge distrust among the various ethnic groups and the major religions in Nigeria is a major cause of national insecurity. Muslims detest Christians and Hausas hate Igbos and will not hesitate to kill them. Ibrahim and Igbuzor,<sup>47</sup> identified ethno-religious conflict as a major insecurity challenge in Nigeria. It was described as a situation where the relationship between members or one ethnic or religious group and another in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is filled with lack of cordiality, fear, suspicion, distrust and propensity towards confrontation. The consistent clamour and claim over land, resources, power, food, pasture, chieftaincy, elections, control of markets, sharia, militia headship, religion, et al have led to large scale killings and violence amongst several sectional groups in Nigeria, thereby becoming a disintegrative and destructive social element threatening the peace, security and stability of Nigeria. Terrorism in Nigeria is equally not a new problem in Nigeria. Boko Haram, Niger Delta Avengers and Fulani herdsmen are three of the main terrorist

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<sup>46</sup>Yinka Odumakin, 'Corrupt Judges and DSS Overzealousness' Vanguard, Tuesday, October 11, 2016, p. 17.

<sup>47</sup>J. Ibrahim and O. Igbuzor, Memorandum Submitted to the Presidential Committee on National Security in Nigeria, P.38.

organizations that cause the most damage to Nigeria.

9. Structural Imbalance fuelling feelings of distrust amongst the citizens. Different parts of Nigeria have different spate of development. Due to this, the oil-rich regions of the country feel disturbed when the Federal Government use their oil and do not develop their society. This is why there was no oil in the North, yet there is a refinery in Kaduna. Niger Delta funds are being used to develop the FCT. People of these regions feel cheated and marginalised because of the imbalance and injustice. They want to take justice into their hands. That's why they vandalize oil pipelines. Politicians have promised them that the dividends of democracy are in the pipelines, militants have only assisted them to get them from the pipelines by bursting them. The 'I am right, you are dead' syndrome is fuelling the insurgency and crimes in the North.

10. Illicit use of drugs, drug and human trafficking. Narcotic trafficking is one of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Criminal groups are involved in smuggling of illegal substances to Europe, Asia, South Africa and North America. Nigerian gangs are one of the largest distributors of the opium in the world and the presence of the drugs in the system of criminals enable them to carry out violent crimes leading to national insecurity. Women are trafficked into prostitution in the guise of seeking greener pastures abroad and in other regions. They hope to find good jobs, but, instead of promised jobs, they are forced to sell their bodies for money. Some of them can be even sold to foreign brothels as sex slaves where they are used, maimed or even killed. The situation with human trafficking and forced labour in Nigeria is horrible. It is one of the causes of insecurity.

### **5.0 The Challenge of Effectively Fighting Insecurity in a Democratic Dispensation.**

1. Due to the fact that a democratic regime is a reign of order, rule of law and decorum as guaranteed by the law of the land, not a rule of force where might be right and the voice of the leader is law by fiat, it is extremely difficult to fight national insecurity. There continues the conflict between national interest and the rule of law as fundamental rights of persons are abused and court orders flagrantly disobeyed in order to ensure that justice is served against powerful, politically exposed suspects. Unlike under the military regime when offenders can be held behind bars without protest, same is not possible without public outcry in a democracy that seems to guarantee fundamental freedoms. The courts can frustrate the quest to fight insecurity by delaying justice, granting bail to notorious criminals or frustrating the prosecution of offenders.

2. The legislature if uncooperative can equally frustrate the fight against national insecurity by delaying the passage of security protection laws and amendments and refusal to timeously pass security budgets.

3. Fighting insecurity is a very dicey one. When you fight insecurity, it fights back. A situation where most of the alleged criminals causing national insecurity are from a particular tribe which might be the same with that of the ruling political class can reduce the effectiveness of security personnel as many of the caught offenders would be left off the hook as soon as they are caught and other members of their tribe might accuse the security forces of undue discrimination and victimisation.

4. The debate surrounding whether or not private citizens should be allowed to own and carry rifles in a democracy. The United States of America is a free nation as well as a dangerous one. One third of the private ammunitions in the world is reportedly in the hands of private citizens in America. It remains debatable whether a replication of such freedom to carry arms will help in improving national security or further damage the already escalated insecurity situation in the country.

## 6.0 Conclusion

The task of ensuring national security rests on both the government and the people, but largely on the government. Incompetence, Insincerity, sabotage and leadership effectiveness remain at the core of the incapacity of the political class to sincerely address national security concerns. Political considerations and nepotism contribute in no small measure to further destroying the fabric of our national security. The Judiciary is allegedly complicit in allowing itself to be used by indicted terrorists and brigands in escaping the long arm of the law for pecuniary advantage. The fact that we are in a democratic dispensation is capable of slowing down the pace of frontally combatting those breaching our national security getting justice for terrorist victims and internally displaced persons. The wheel of justice appears to be abysmally slow and stringent, swift and effective administrative decisions cannot be taken timeously without them being unduly hampered by political correctness, ethnic colouration, puerile sentiments, sensitivities, bureaucratic bottlenecks and legislative machinations. All in all, national security cannot be achieved and attained without the political will of the political leaders to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation and a true and concerted promotion of democratic values and sincere political leadership would throw up a safer and a more secure nation.

## 7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There is an urgent need by the Federal and State governments of Nigeria in collaboration with other non-state actors to fashion out workable strategies, philosophies and policies to address its weak security systems. Security agents should be trained in the act of sophisticated surveillance, technological advancement and intelligence gathering, sharing, logistics and psychology to effectively manage our peculiar security challenges.
- ii. Adequate training and retraining of security operatives on artificial intelligence, robotics, and use of sophisticated firearms, psychological warfare and creative ingenuity that is capable of outsmarting terrorists who daily fashion out new ways of circumventing conventional crime control measures.
- iii. An upward review of their emoluments, hazard allowances, casualty cash out, pension and gratuities must be ensured to enhance their competence and motivate them to desired commitment levels is hereby advocated.
- iv. The only way out of national insecurity is to balance the development of all regions of the country. Boko Haram is an ideology that won't end even if all the insurgents are killed, if there is no real development of the society including the provision of compulsory education in the North.
- v. The Federal Government should increase the number of troops that guard our road and coastal borders. More guards should equally be trained to protect border regions from the infiltration of insurgents and militia men. Our national borders need to be secured to prevent the infiltration of the country from untoward invasion and external aggression.
- vi. There is an urgent need to restructure the nation to address the ethnic differences, imbalance, conflict and distrust. For it is better to discuss a problem without solving it than to claim to have solved a problem, without discussing it. If Nigeria must continue as one in-dissolvable entity, everyone comprised in the nation must have a say or we would be back to square one.
- vii. Provision of jobs for the Youth and reduction of poverty. Until the youth is actively engaged in productive and lucrative ventures, there would be willing youth to commit crime and make the nation insecure. It must be made a compulsory policy thrust of the government to take the youth out of joblessness and poverty. The economy must be improved upon as a matter of priority. Nigeria must improve investors' confidence in the nation and create the enabling environment for businesses to thrive. When there is

- reduced unemployment rate, criminality will dwindle and national security will not be compromised.
- viii. The electorate must be deliberately enlightened to only vote in honest and competent leaders with track record of integrity, competence, results and service delivery. They must be made to know the major difference between honesty and competence as a political leader might be genuinely ignorant and honestly mistaken. Nigeria does not just need honest leaders to tackle its security challenges headlong, it needs competent and knowledgeable leaders with the requisite wherewithal to address the problems. Nigeria needs leaders who have the political will to fire errant and incompetent security service chiefs. Nigeria needs transparent leaders who can differentiate between the public till and their private wallets.
- ix. Corruption must be drastically reduced if not totally eradicated. From official to unofficial corruption at all levels of government, corruption needs to be killed before it kills us. It must be wiped out as it is the antithesis of progress and development. It causes insecurity, impedes development, entrenches criminality, creates political instability and societal disintegration, social unrest and avarice, thus affecting all facets of human endeavour. It must be fought to a standstill in order to reduce insecurity in a democratic nation. More sanctions must be introduced for political corruption. Corrupt Judges must be shown the way out of the bench. Appointment of Judicial officers must be based on incontrovertible integrity, boldness, incorruptibility and administrative competence and responsibility. Judicial activism must be strengthened and encouraged. The Judicial officers and political office holders should equally be taken for periodic training on ethics, anti-corruption, public accountability, security issues management, procurement ethos and values reorientation.
- x. Entrenching an Effective and Efficient Good Governance Mechanism. Good governance is an effective panacea to the persistent insecurity challenge Nigeria is currently facing. Governments at all levels must consciously cultivate the culture of good governance where the government is responsible and accountable to the people it governs. A worthwhile security engagement cannot be divorced from good governance and leadership competence as good governance is equally a function of an effective, visionary, transparent, trustworthy and credible political leadership, whose driving force is the desire to improve the collective well-being of the citizens through an orchestrated, well-thought out plan of action, carefully implemented socio-economic policies and human capacity development programs that are people-focused and capable of ultimately delivering the dividends of democracy to the general public, rather than a privileged few.
- xi. A constant review of security prevention and protection laws like the Criminal and Penal Codes, the ICPC Act, the EFCC Act, the Anti-Terrorism Act 2011 is hereby advocated to give room for novel adjustments that can address peculiar national security challenges. 12. There is an urgent need to carry out a functional data capturing and citizens' identification project if Nigeria is ready to nip her insecurity crisis in the bud. The BVN registration presented a unique and wonderful opportunity to capture and register every Nigeria and assign them a unique identification number to make them traceable in case of committed crimes. This will make it easier to find uncaptured elements causing mayhem and panic in the communities. Proper DNA and Forensic techniques should be deployed by security agents to fish out criminals and terrorists. Vigilante groups and community policing must be encouraged to address the security situation in local communities. The Whistle Blower's Act should be passed to provide incentives for crime and terrorist reporters.
- xii. Religious Tolerance and Political Harmony should be preached and entrenched to reduce the incidences of ethnic and religious crisis. The Nigerian Inter-religious council should be further strengthened to preach religious tolerance between the two major religions.

- xiii. An amendment of the Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution on Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy to make it justiciable and consequently ensuring that national security by government becomes a fundamental right of Nigerian citizens is hereby advocated.
- xiv. The proliferation of illicit drugs and narcotics must be stopped as a matter of policy urgency. This is to reduce the stimulation and propensity to crime by drug users who rely on them to carry out their heinous crimes and violent acts of terrorism.

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