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INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS

Insecurity is one of, if not the most glaring and much talked about thing in Nigeria today. Acts of insecurity occur on a daily basis throughout the country. More worrisome is the fact that the Nigerian government seems to be incapable of curtailing this menace or doesn't want to stop it for undisclosed reasons. This essay digs into the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria, its effects on the country and solutions.

Many factors have been postulated as causing unrest in Nigeria. Some writers put their blames on the government while some others pass the bulk on parents. Other writers hold the youths as being responsible while others settle on the combination of these factors.

One of the factors of insecurity in Nigeria is, Bad Governance. This fact remains the basic cause of insecurity in Nigeria from the past till now. The primary function of any government anywhere is the provision of basic amenities such as water, electricity, good road network, standard education and general infrastructure. Interestingly in Nigeria these basic things are not there and the people are generally demoralized and frustrated.

Also, The Reality of Economic Imbalance and Marginalization is a very glaring point. Despite the harsh economic situation being experienced by the majority of the populace, very few Nigerians exhibit great affluence to the chagrin of the poor. These corrupt few tactically created this economic imbalance to perpetrate poverty among the people. The people cannot endure this forever and the consequence of this is very obvious – violent unrest. In addition to this man made imbalance is the issue of marginalization where some people or parts of the country are very intentionally excluded from benefitting from their natural endowments. Again this can only be endured for a while before the logical consequences of restiveness and demand for self-determination rear their heads in non-peaceful manners.

In a multi ethnic and religious country like Nigeria, intolerance of the other's ethnic group and religious belief has been considered as one of the main causes of insecurity. The diverse nature of the Nigerian structure which should have been her greatest strength unfortunately turns out to be her greatest undoing. Ethnic bigotry and religious fanaticism have facilitated insecurity in Nigeria to the extent that it is gradually becoming the identity of the Nigerian State. The adherents of two major religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity have never especially in the northern part of the

country accepted each other cordially as being created by the same God and should live harmoniously. Violence at the least provocation is a common occurrence there. Almost all violent crises in Nigeria are rooted in this ethnic/religious intolerance factor.

Furthermore, the new face of insecurity we have Nigeria today, where villages are sacked and burnt, people killed wantonly including in worship centres, passengers on our high ways attacked and abducted and either killed or freed after payment of ransoms, women and girls raped, cattle rustled, kidnapping of all sorts are allegedly done by “Fulani Herdsmen and Bandits”. These were criminal elements that entered Nigeria illegally, sponsored by some Nigerian politicians to cause mayhems in the event of loss of election in 2015.

More so, these factors have effects on the country. Underdevelopment is a sure bait of insecurity. Development is never realized in an atmosphere of instability, fear, threats and hopelessness. For people to invest in developmental projects, they must be certain of at least relative stability and guarantee of safety. In the absence of these as a result of insecurity then the stark reality of underdevelopment takes the centre stage. In the Niger Delta region, for instance, with the exit of the oil companies and their ancillary services as a result of insecurity massive underdevelopment was recorded in that region. Indeed, insecurity and underdevelopment are like mother and child for they are inseparable.

Insecurity in the country has unfortunately led to the flight of so many of our professionals in different sectors of our life as a nation. The insecure environment in place could not guarantee the safety of these brains to function to uplift our national life and they have to leave to other climes that provide security. Nigeria is paying dearly for this exodus of our best brains.

The insecurity situation in the country has given Nigeria a very poor image abroad to the extent that investors are no longer considering the country as an investment zone. They now consider other countries around Nigeria and even some investments in the country are being relocated to nearby West African countries. Nigerians travelling abroad are now being subjected embarrassingly to extra checks because of where they are coming from.

When people out of fear, threats to life and to actual killing cannot go to their places of work both agriculturally and otherwise, what sets in is hunger and general poverty. People from the Northeast and parts of North central and Northwest are displaced from their natural and ancestral habitats and now live in the Internally Displaced Camps (IDP) across the country. They no longer go to their farms or to other places of work as a result of insecurity. Consequent upon these are massive hunger and poverty. And more to this is that this region of the country is correctly termed the ‘food basket’ of the country and as a result of nonproduction of food in this region presently, the entire country is feeling the pinch of hunger and poverty.

The issue of drug abuse has defied all security checks as some of the security agents are also involved in it. The Nigerian government has recently banned the importation of some of these highly abused drugs like tramadol and codeine and still they are everywhere in the open market. Kidnapping and armed robbery are inseparable twins that have wrecked unprecedented havoc in Nigeria today. No single day passes without at least ten cases of kidnapping or armed robbery

operations. It is so worrisome that even security agents (policemen) were abducted and ransom demanded for their release. Nigeria is so unsafe as a result of this unfortunate state of affairs that a sitting governor in the northern part of the country did not vote in the last February 2019 general elections for fear of being kidnapped.

In a situation of lawlessness and a seeming failure of the State the youth component of that particular society will engage themselves in insurgency, militancy and youth restiveness. This is the true story of Nigeria for some time now. Insurgency in the Northeast, militancy in the Niger Delta and youth restiveness in the Southeast and Southwest currently define Nigeria as one of the most unsafe places to go to in the whole world and so many countries in Europe and America are warning/advising their citizens about the danger of travelling to Nigeria.

However, tackling insecurity in Nigeria needs going back to the very concept that held the traditional society secure and serene – good value and moral system. Because of the destruction and loss of our value and moral system, we also lost our humanness, hence, the need to create a new 'humanity'. To talk of security today we must go back to our value and moral systems and revive them. Value and moral education must be put in place both formally and informally in order to rear up a generation of real human beings. Children and young adults are to be taught what our value and moral systems used to be. They must be taught how to imbibe the essence of respect for life and its dignity, honesty and fairness, hard work and its reward system, respect for constituted authority and patriotism. They must be taught to avoid antisocial behaviors like acts of criminality, violence, greed and general aggression. Therefore, moral and civic education must be brought back to our educational curriculum.

A society that respects her laws and abides by them is always a secure and stable one. Rule of law holds supreme the laws of the land which everyone must abide with irrespective of position or office. A society that flouts or mocks her laws or discriminates against them is a chaos and failed one. In Nigeria today, rule of law is a mirage – law enforcement agents disregard the laws of the land with impunity, government both States and Federal ignore court orders and rulings, some citizens display acts that are inimical to the laws of the land and go scot free and some regional groups show themselves as being above the laws, etc. All these attitudes create a state of anarchy and lawlessness which breed insecurity. Hence, a democratic society like Nigeria must be a law abiding one. Everybody must be under the law and whoever goes against the law, no matter the position must face the wrath of the law. With this in place security, serenity and stability will be guaranteed.

In conclusion, dealing decisively with insecurity is tenable and requires sincerity of purpose and undivided commitment on the part of the leadership of the country. Furthermore, the issue of security should be the concern of everybody both the leaders and the led and all are beckoned to contribute to its sustenance. Reliable and genuine information from the citizenry to the government is required and the safety of the informants should be guaranteed by the government. Again, government should as a matter of urgency listen to the people and address without delay all the contentious issues being raised which contributed to insecurity because responsible leadership brings about responsible followership.

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