

# Issues of Peace and Security in Contemporary Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*The issue of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria has become a threat to both internal and international peace and security with ever-growing violence and attacks on security forces, civilians, churches, media houses as well as international bodies such as the United Nations. Consequently, we examine the complex issues that have affected the peace and security of contemporary Nigeria. This is done with the aim of finding solutions that can lead to success in fending off insurgency in contemporary Nigeria. Data used for this study was sourced from peace and security bulletin, books, newspapers and related journal articles on security issues. Using ordinary historical analysis, the result shows that the apparatus of peace and security earlier employed by the Nigerian state is inadequate. The findings of this paper identified the individuals as the centrepiece from where the household, community, the local government area, the state and the federation evolve and revolve as peace and security circles of different radii. It posited that peace and security concerns are in circles and actors within each circle are better attuned to concentrate and manage the peace and security challenge therein. This paper thus suggests the need for decentralization of the police and other state-owned agencies of internal security management in order to mitigate the upsurge in crime and violence including those emanating from armed robbers, political assassins, ransom kidnappers, oil thieves, and Islamic insurgents among others.*

**Keywords:** Peace, Security, Nigeria, Violence, and Centralized policing

## Introduction

Contemporary global events have, no doubt, drawn attention quite clearly, to the fact that peace and security of life and property are very essential. The evidence, including in Africa, has shown beyond doubt, that peace and security of life and property are better accomplished where there is democratic rule and good governance. Democracy and good governance ensure that peace and security become more inclusive and promote the rights, prosperity and welfare of all citizens of nations. (Ake, 1999; Meredith, 2006; Young, 2012; Mou, 2016, 2017). The position taken here therefore, is that no peace and security will be possible in contemporary Nigeria, without reasonable social, political and economic justice for all the citizens and social cleavages in the nation (Nnoli, 1978, Parkin, 1971, 1979 and Mou, 2015).

Since the Peace of the Westphalia in 1684, the modern state had been generally presented as a people organised for law and development in a given territory. The elements of the people, law and order, territory and development are encapsulated in sovereignty to operate. However, the state is not an end in itself because it serves some utilitarian purposes, especially by ensuring a secured people for development. Imobighe (2003) adduced that a secured state is one that is reasonably free from, or not exposed to external aggression and internal sabotage (Patrick, 2011).

In recent years, the Nigerian state has been under severe insecurity which has substantially undermined law and order as well as the protection of lives and property. In fact, since the transition to civil rule in 1999 violent insecurity has surged with different perpetrators such as militants, kidnapers, cultists, pirates and terrorists. In the Niger Delta in the South-south geo-political zone, grievance over injustice in oil wealth distribution and environmental degradation had led to militancy in much of the 1990s and 2000s (Pegg and Zabbey, 2013). Beyond the oil-producing Niger Delta, the North-central zone has been turbulent owing to incessant conflicts between 'indigenes' and 'settlers,' farmers and herders, as well as Christians and Muslims (Aghedo and Osumah, 2014). The Boko Haram terrorism represents the greatest threat to lives, investments and even the existence of the Nigerian state in recent years. The extremist group which is domiciled in the North-eastern zone rebels against the state in the hope of creating a theocracy based on Sharia law (Aghedo, 2014).

The dynamics and impact of these varying forms of insecurity especially those emanating from non-state actors have attracted enormous attention of scholars and policy-makers alike (Agbibo, 2013; Wiwa, 2009). However, the role played by the state's security architecture has not been adequately examined. The nature and configuration of the peace and security agencies have not only been a source of insecurity as shown by the several cases of arbitrary arrests, human rights violation and extra-judicial murders but they also contribute to the inability of the state to effectively mitigate pervasive insecurity in the world's most populous Black nation. This paper therefore attempts to fill the aforementioned gap by critically examining the issues of peace and security in contemporary Nigeria and why violence is ubiquitous in the country.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The concept of peace is defined differently by different scholars and policy makers. There is no universal definition of peace accepted by all. However, peace has been defined by most analysts, as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence (Francis, 2006; Igbuzor, 2011). But as Igbuzor (2011) notes correctly, this conception of peace has been criticised by many scholars, such as Ibeanu (2006); Reychler (2006); Wiberg (2006) and Bajpay (2003), for being inadequate for understanding the meaning and nature of peace. To overcome these limitations in the prevailing definitions of peace, the Norwegian peace theorist, who is certainly one of the leading experts on the issue of peace, Galtung (2006), has distinguished three types of violence that can help in understanding the concept of peace.

First, he considers the issues of direct violence. Direct violence is manifested by physical, emotional and psychological violence. Second, Galtung talks of structural violence. Structural violence, he says, comes in the form of deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm. Finally, he talks of cultural violence. Cultural violence involves cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering.

In addition, Galtung outlines two dimensions of peace: The first is what he calls "negative peace" – Negative peace, according to him, is the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual,

national, regional and international levels. The second “positive peace” - Positive peace depicts the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at individual levels. The obvious implications of Galtung’s findings and conclusions are that any useful conceptualisation of peace must go beyond the narrow focus on the absence of war, fear, anxiety, suffering and violence. Ibeanu (2006), has also attempted to offer a comprehensive and holistic conception of peace.

Ibeanu explains that Politically peace entails political order. That requires the institutionalisation of political structures in a way that makes justice possible. Thus, he argues that it would be wrong to classify a country experiencing pervasive structural violence as peaceful. In his books, Chris A. Garuba argues in that even though war may not be going on in a country, if there are pervasive poverty, oppression of the poor by the rich, police brutality, intimidation of ordinary citizens by those in power, oppression of women or monopolisation of resources and power by some social cleavages in the society or nation, it would still be wrong to say that there is peace in such a country or society (Garuba, 1999a, 1999b).

The concept of insecurity will be best understood by first presenting the concept of security. In the view of Akin (2008) security refers to “the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions” - It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. The definition of security, just like the one of peace, is equally contentious. Security has been defined by Igbuzor (2001), “as the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threats to those values”. However, within the context of peace and security, the concept of security, that is usually applied and therefore, more relevant for consideration here, is the concept of “national security.” This makes the state or government the key actor or stakeholder in the process of seeking actively for the peace and security of the country.

A traditional definition of the state often attributed to Max Weber, as Mou (2015, 2017) points out, requires as a necessary condition, the effective monopoly of the use of violence within a given

territory. The security of the state was, therefore, threatened by any change that might threaten that monopoly of violence, whether it was through external invasion or internal rebellion. National security was, therefore, viewed purely from the military perspective. Consequently, national security was narrowly understood and insufficiently conceptualised.

These are military centred definitions of national security. It can be seen that the above strategic definitions of national security are largely concerned with the protection of a nation-state from external aggression only. This overwhelmingly military approach to national security is based on the erroneous assumption that the principal threat to a nation's security comes from other nations. Little attention is paid to the fact that the greatest threat to the security of a nation could be internal, particularly when one is considering a transitional or developing society. It is such internal threats that make states susceptible to external attacks (Mou, 2016, 2017). Yarnor, a Russian military scholar, was thus right when he stated that "the ability of a nation to survive in conflict or even to win a war hinges not only on its military capabilities, but also on economic potential for war and the level of social mobilisation. Over-emphasising one of these elements of national security while disregarding the others may be natural in the course of a brief crisis, but it could be disastrous in the long term" (Yarnor, 1985). For the public to be mobilised to defend the nation, they must also be allowed to have access to the public interest at stake. There is no doubt that the greatest threat to a country's security could be internal. Internal threats make easier the susceptibility of a country to external attacks.

### **Challenges of Nigeria's National Security**

The statutory responsibility of national security in Nigeria is vested in the President (the executive arm of government) through all such security agencies established by law. As noted by Fayemi and Olonisakin (2008:245), Nigeria's security sector comprises the following:

- i. The armed forces (army, air force and navy of approximately 77,000 personnel);
- ii. The Nigerian police service (of about 360,000 men and women);

- iii. Paramilitary bodies including the customs services, the immigration service, intelligence services –including military intelligence and the state security services;
- iv. Judicial and state service bodies – judiciary, justice ministry, correctional service (prison);
- v. Private security outfits;
- vi. Militia groups –including, for example the Odua People’s Congress, Bakassi Boys, Hizba Corps;
- vii. Community vigilante groups.

Constitutionally, the armed forces, police and prisons are answerable to the federal government because they are under the exclusive and legislative list. For example, despite the existence of police commands in the 36 states of the federation as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, the central decision-making authority over the police rests with the Inspector General of police who is answerable directly to the President (Fayemi and Olonisakin, 2008). The non-formal security organisations also respond to the security needs of communities.

Some measures taken to ensure national security include using diplomacy to rally allies and isolate threats; marshalling economic power to facilitate or compel co-operation; maintaining effective armed forces; implementing civil defence and emergency preparedness (including anti-terrorism legislation); ensuring the resilience and redundancy of critical infrastructure; using intelligence services to detect and defeat or avoid threats and espionage; and protecting classified information and using counter-intelligence services or secret police to protect the nation from internal threats (Bachmann, 2014; Osumah and Aghedo, 2010; Okeke, 2004). The national security apparatus, however, operates at two levels - the external and internal security. Ordinarily securing the state from external threats is principally the responsibility of the Nigeria Armed Forces, while the internal security responsibilities are vested mainly in the Nigeria Police and her offshoot services.

It is possible to identify two distinctive approaches as far as the management of national security is concerned namely, the military and related coercive response; and the progressive (Ekoko and Vogt, 1990; Imobighe, 1990). These two methods are equivalents and are variously described as operational and strategic, responsive and preventive, reactive and proactive respectively (Bassey, 2004; Nweke, 2002; Safir,

2003). However, Green (2006) adduced an intelligent combination of both for optimum achievement. This may constitute a third and perhaps better doctrine.

With regard to the military approach to national security, Ochoche (1998) holds that national security focuses on the amassment of military armaments, personnel and expenditure. The military approach to security is often justified on the basis that only a strong military force can deter attacks and provide the means of fighting undeterred attacks. However, it should be noted here that in the case of Nigeria, the vast size of the military has not resulted in a corresponding increase in the maintenance of its traditional functions, which Heywood (1997) rightly identifies as the maintenance of security and territorial integrity of the state and society; the maintenance of domestic and civil order; and the provision of humanitarian services. Contrary to popular and reasonable expectations, the military in Nigeria has been used for largely negative purposes including the oppression, terrorisation and repression of the citizens. Indeed, the military has been used to curtail the activities of unions, opposition groups and popular demonstrations and movements, making it more an instrument of censorship. This trend has been particularly prevalent under military regimes.

Therefore, Heywood (1997) concludes that rather than be the solution to Nigeria's national security, development and national integration problems, the military has compounded and perpetuated them. The failure of the military to fulfil its constitutional role has made the military to be distracted and has failed to distinguish itself in the political realm of life into which it has intruded (Ochoche, 1998). No doubt, national security delivery by the police and military has been confronted by different challenges for both the society and these principal security agencies themselves. For example, many security agents have been convicted of aiding and abetting such criminalities as oil theft, armed robbery, kidnapping, and even terrorism (Marenin, 1987; Osumah and Aghedo, 2010; Hills, 2012). Security in essence, has become a mirage and a culture of insecurity has evolved over the years. This has largely eroded professionalism in the agencies leading to elite privatisation. Security has become commoditised, commercialised and made ordinarily inaccessible to the masses. This in itself has resulted in the bifurcation of society into those that have security and those that have not, with the implicit tension

and crisis therein. For instance, the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ogbonna Onovo disclosed that there had been huge illegal deployments of Police personnel to private individuals by some high-ranking officers of the Nigeria Police largely for pecuniary motives. Similarly, former Rivers State Governor Peter Odili was alleged to have used members of Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) as his personal electioneering thugs. At the same time, the security personnel harass, oppress, subdue, deprive and dominate the poor and vulnerable citizenry, while the ‘big men’ or ‘grand patrons’ are insulated from such treatments.

In our view, other crucial factors led to the failure of the military to uphold the principles of truth, justice, respect for human life and compassion towards other human beings in the society. The unprofessionalism of the security agencies has resulted in the infliction of pain upon the offender through coercion. This ‘organised hurt’ becomes very clear in capital offenses where society takes the lives of offenders convicted of murder, armed robbery or treason. This implies that society is doing the wrong it forbids its citizens, though upon stated rationalisation. The approach perceives crime as inevitable and the fight against it perpetual. This application of violence embodies inherent tendencies of replicating and escalating violence. As criminals notice and encounter fire power as a veritable factor in the success or otherwise of the nefarious operations against the restraints from the law enforcement agents, the criminals endeavour to criminally acquire weapons considered superior to those in charge for routine law enforcement duties. With such weaponry criminals are emboldened to even confront law enforcement officers in gun battles to enable them commit crime. This is the situation in Nigeria where the war against criminals has escalated with sophistication and usually with fatal collateral damage. Indeed, even though the country has 37 state police commands, 106 area commands, 925 police divisions, 2,190 police stations and over 360,000 personnel, the Nigeria police service remains incapable of providing security for Nigeria’s over 170 million populations.

In fact, the country’s police-citizens ratio of 1:1,000 is one of the lowest in the world and falls grossly below the United Nations stipulation of 1:400. Added to personnel shortage, the police institution grapples with the challenges of “inadequate accommodation and transportation, poor communication networks, poorly funded training institutions and



insufficient criminal intelligence gathering capacity” (Fayemi and Olonisakin, 2008:252). These challenges confronting security personnel have bred pervasive corruption among them. For example, the Nigeria Police has a global “reputation for brutality, corruption and arbitrariness” (Fayemi and Olonisakin, 2008:258). This has led to entrenched militarism in social relations which undermines peaceful, amicable and consensual resolution of problems, thereby encouraging frequent recourse to arms and culture of violence. This scenario is already evident in Nigeria with the country’s sizeable importation of arms compared with other African states.

### **Causes of Insecurity in Contemporary Nigeria**

To tackle insecurity, a key starting point should be to understand the causes of insecurity as well as to investigate the sources of social disorder and instability. As Andrew and Kennedy (2003) pointed out, it is necessary to distinguish between different causes as each may require different remedy. There are several causes of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria.

#### ***Elite Manipulation of Ethnicity and Religious Differences***

Ethnic and religious conflicts arise from mutual suspicion and distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. The different ethnic groups across Nigeria often allege neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimisation, discrimination, marginalisation, nepotism and bigotry. This often brings about ethnic clashes and religious conflicts.

#### ***‘Do or Die’ Politics***

Politicians in Nigerian do not accommodate dialogue, negotiation and consensus. Consequently, political contests are marked by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. This brings about conflict and insecurity.

#### ***Widespread Systemic and Political Corruption***

Corruption is responsible for governance failure in Nigeria; and insecurity in Nigeria is mainly a function of government’s failure. Corruption has created massive unemployment in the country, which has

in turn worsened the insecurity situation in Nigeria. Mismanagement of resources has brought about massive poverty and lack which is also a factor in the insecurity challenge facing the country.

### ***Struggle for Resources***

The Niger-Delta crisis in Nigeria as well as the herdsman-farmers conflicts is classic examples of violent resource struggle in Nigeria.

### ***Pervasive Material Inequalities***

A major factor that contributes to insecurity in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities in life chances leading to violent reactions by a large number of people.

### ***Unemployment and Poverty***

Unemployment and consequent poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths are a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. Youth's unemployment has contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. Without job creation, how does the government address poverty, and inequitable distribution of wealth among citizens?

### ***Weak Security System***

This is a major factor responsible for the level of insecurity in Nigeria, and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel.

### ***Porous Borders***

The porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria. The porous nature of our borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly young men, from neighbouring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin who are responsible for some of the criminal acts.

### ***Terrorism***

One of the most fundamental sources of insecurity in Nigeria today is terrorism. In Nigeria, terrorism is traceable to religious fanaticism particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria. Terrorism in Nigeria started with the notorious Islamic sect in the Northern part of Nigeria called Mataisine during Shagari's civilian regime which was aborted by a military coup in December 1983 led by General Muhammadu Buhari. In recent times terrorism has assumed a political undertone and is been spearheaded by a faceless Islamic insurgent based in the Northern region of Nigeria called Boko Haram. Although terrorism has its root in Islamic fanaticism, it is now driven by factors such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy (Oluwasanmi, Afolabi, Nuhu, 2016).

### **Analyses of Security Approach and Models**

This approach consists of a combination of two models, namely: the two-way approach model, and the composite approach model. The two-way approach model aims at combating the creators and perpetrators of situations of insecurity, and simultaneously addressing and removing the causes or sources of dissatisfaction or discontentment which cause security breaches. The composite approach model aims at involving all stakeholders, both in public and private capacity - government, communities, business organisations, civil society, religious groups and individuals – to supply resources, expertise and information that are required to ensure a safe environment.

### **The Two-Way Approach Model**

This model is in two parts. The first part aims at removing the factors which cause people to engage in acts of insecurity, and the other part targets combating the perpetrators of insecurity. The first considers and entrenches all of the solutions methods to insecurity in contemporary Nigeria. The second part is to combat the criminals both with the long arm of the law and the force of arms. This is meant to stop or prevent criminals from creating and perpetuating insecurity. It involves being prepared at all times and being proactive, and pursuing them wherever they are. The objective is to protect innocent citizens from harm. A major strategy in this regard is to identify and map out black spots on physical

insecurity. This requires vigilance on our environment on the part of security agencies, particularly with terrorist attacks of the Boko Haram

It refers to black spots as such locations and areas where the sect can take advantage of political and economic vulnerabilities to safeguard their operations and attract recruits. They include those areas which are politically volatile, and with a large mass of uneducated and abjectly poor population that can easily be recruited as terrorist operatives; areas in which people have high level of attachment to opinion leaders, and the leaders-followers ties are very strong; towns and states on border lines with other countries, and which have cultural and language links with other societies outside the country, which allow for a network of transnational criminals and terrorists. Such black spots facilitate smuggling of illicit weapons and personnel through the borders without being detected. Black spots help terrorists and criminals in their insecurity flows, that is, movements of assets, people, services or strategic/sensitive know-how. Security agencies, therefore, should develop and adopt a scientific means to detect, map, and analyse such black spots in the country, and firmly understand their modus operandi in exporting insecurity into Nigeria. Being able to scan, pinpoint and monitor black spots on a continuous basis offers the possibility of tracking the movement of criminals and terrorists, their financial assets and illegal weapons, and their skills and expertise. Such a capability is critical to intelligence gathering and necessary precondition for threat interception and the prevention of the escalation of insecurity.

### **The Composite Approach Model**

This model contrasts with the traditional assumption that national security is solely the responsibility of government. While we agree with the view that security of lives and property is a primary responsibility of government (Ogbeche, 2012), we hold the view however, that the insecurity challenge in Nigeria is too enormous to be left for government alone. There is need for other stakeholders to be actively involved in ameliorating insecurity in the country.

The security organization model points out all the stakeholders needed to fight against insecurity in order to achieve enduring security in the country. When these stakeholders collaborate to tackle the insecurity challenge in Nigeria, the business environment will be safe for business

investment and operation. As it is known, factors in the business environment enhance or hinder a firm's ability to operate effectively and efficiently (Dionco-Adetayo and Adetayo, 2003). When the business environment is safe, the businesses will be sustained and sustainable development which is the desire of every nation will be sure. It is important to point out that insecurity is not a problem that is unique to Nigeria. The United States of America, the United Kingdom and many other countries, face the challenges of insecurity within their borders on a daily basis. The difference between them and our country is how they manage the threats, how knowledgeable and prepared they are, how they deploy resources against the threats, how effective they are, and how patriotic and united the people are against threats of insecurity.

For effective implementation to stop attacks, measures are put in place to ensure the accountability of the strategies and progress monitoring. The security, intelligence agencies and the police are adequately equipped to disrupt crime related activities. CONTEST (2011) stated that the police, security and intelligence agencies work tirelessly to keep Britain safe. They also recognised that, the growing use of inexpensive but sophisticated communications technology has made the planning of attacks easier and more secure and that it allows for instant communication between geographically disparate groups via email, web fora, and social networking sites or by using the internet to make voice calls. Therefore, steps have been taken to keep pace with technological changes by making the internet a more intimidating environment for criminals. They have tried to identify, investigate and disrupt criminal use of the internet; make it more difficult for them to exploit the internet for radicalisation and recruitment as well as counter-terrorist propaganda. They have also put in place enhanced communications and information sharing for criminal attacks. These are organized by coordinators, supported by Prevent Engagement Officers (PEOs) who connect the police, community police and neighbourhood police. They are instrumental in developing community contacts and an understanding of community issues. Their work helps to identify potential threats in the communities and generates prevention projects and information sharing with prevention partners to support strategic objectives. There is the challenge therefore to rethink and improve on the policies and institutional means of dealing with security concerns arising

in the country. The roles of the stakeholders in the security organization model are discussed below:

### ***The Role of the Government***

To overcome insecurity there is need for intelligence gathering and surveillance so that law enforcement agents can be proactive and reasonably predict potential crime with near perfect accuracy rather than being reactive. As noted by Adagba, *et al* (2012) the menace of insecurity no doubt calls for a new approach that will be founded on credible intelligence gathering. Government must not only continue to engage the security personnel, it must, more than ever before, recognise the need to devote more attention to security intelligence, capacity building to meet the global best practices and acquisition of modern technology. Although, the Nigerian government has resolved to adopt the use of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television cameras in public places especially in Abuja to monitor and record events that take place in a particular location, Ogunleye, *et al*, (2011) have argued that for it to be effective, government must ensure that the scheme is well managed, the cameras should be recording, with good quality images, and any incident caught on camera should be followed up by the police or other appropriate authority. Computer-based Closed-Circuit Television cameras are cameras used to monitor and record images of what takes place in specific locations in real time. The images collected are sent to a monitor and recorded on video tape or as digital information. It is a surveillance technique that aims to prevent crime by increasing the perceived risks of potential offenders in engaging in criminal acts. There is also the need to modernise the security agencies with training, intelligence sharing, advanced technology, logistics, motivation and change of orientation.

### ***The Role of Civil Society***

Civil society is the arena outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests. It is the aggregate of non-governmental organisations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens or individuals and organisations in a society which are independent of the government. As a result of the inability of government to provide adequate security, Ebohon, and Ifeadi, (2012) are

of the opinion that Nigeria should move from a state-centric to a human security paradigm. This will involve moving from an elite centred to a people centred security organization approach and involve civil society in the state security project.

One of the roles of civil society is to convince other stakeholders that action is better than inaction and that insecurity does not have to be accepted as unavoidable. They have to play the roles of critic, catalyst and advocate of those interests. It is also essential to raise public awareness, to awaken society to the disastrous effects of insecurity and to get across the message that fighting it is possible.

### ***The Role of Religious Groups***

The two main religious groups in Nigeria have a major role to play in ensuring security in the country. The teachings of religious groups are one of the bases of value development in the contemporary world. The role of values in human security cannot be over emphasised. It is a known fact that values govern behaviour. Where social values and norms concerning fundamental human right in both public and private places have been distorted and violated, the people and government tend to live in an atmosphere of instability and insecurity (Clifford, 2009). If every religious group can tolerate the other, then religious crisis which has been a problem in this country will be abated. In addition, worship centres should not be used as avenue for instigating members to be violent or to engage in activities that can affect the peace of the country.

### ***The Role of Communities***

It is important to note that security management can be significantly aided by the cooperation of local communities. In relation to collective responsibilities towards lasting peace in contemporary Nigeria, communities should strive to live peacefully with other communities. They should also be vigilant of strangers in their localities to ensure that criminals do not have easy access to their communities.

### ***The Role of Individuals***

Security should be seen as everybody's business. As individuals we need to cultivate the habit of being security-conscious and to report any

security situation to the appropriate authority (not only the police) immediately. Every individual must evince a high level of security awareness and alertness. This is because individuals understand their communities better and any report of suspicious behaviour or activity could lead to actionable intelligence leading to disruption of attacks.

### **Conclusion**

It is therefore imperative to institutionalise a dominantly proactive national security strategy founded on human security. There is a strong scepticism that if the level of insecurity in our country is not scaled down, our vision to be among the best countries of the world may be aborted. The approach towards curbing this menace has been to respond when the crime has been committed and the harm has been done. This paper emphasizes a change in attitude and approach by being proactive. We must strive to get to a level where crimes will be nipped in the bud before they are perpetuated. Therefore, the government, civil society groups, business organization and individuals must fight insecurity so as to create an enabling environment where citizens will feel free and secured to achieve their full potentials and the country will itself be safe to achieve sustainable development.

To this end, it is also recommended that there is the need for decentralisation of the police and other state-owned agencies of internal security organization in order to mitigate the upsurge in crime and violence including those emanating from armed robbers, political assassins, ransom kidnapers, oil thieves, and Islamic insurgents among others.



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