

Human Rights Violation in Africa: A Critical Assessment of Rule of Law in Nigeria

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Abstract

The discourse about human rights violations has been a recurrence among scholars in Africa. This is because the lives of the African citizens particularly the Nigerians are been decimated and harassed on daily basis through nefarious acts. A bid to find out the magnitude of violation of human rights in Nigeria necessitated this study. Its central focus is to critically assess how rule of law in Nigeria has addressed human rights violations among the citizens. The study further ascertained the nature and level of violation of human rights amongst the citizens of Nigeria. The paper was anchored on both historical and analytical, as facts and figures were gathered from secondary sources using the content analysis method. Judging from the theoretical underpinning of this study, the Social Contract Theory of State stipulates that the rule of law is very important to human existence as it helps to regulate citizens' actions and make them live harmoniously with each other as without the presence of law, it will be impossible if not difficult for the citizens to get access to basic amenities of life. It was observed that the failure to strictly adhere to the principles of rule of law has resulted in human rights violations which are evident in violation of the right to life, freedom of expression among others. It was therefore concluded that the principle of rule of law if imbibed and practised irrespective of social status, religion or ethnic grouping will engender a peaceful and harmonious nation.

Keywords: Constitution, Human rights, Human rights violation, Nigeria, and Rule of Law.

Introduction

Human rights are the foundation of a functioning and functional democracy which gives hope to citizens in any given society irrespective

of their class, status, religion and ethnic groupings. According to Ikejiani-Clark (2004), human rights represent the legal expression of life. It is therefore evident that without human life; there can be no human rights. However, since life itself connotes free and dignified existence in the framework of the legal order, the purpose of recognizing and safeguarding human rights is to ensure the possibility of living fully and completely in dignified freedom. In the same vein, Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, provides for fundamental rights of citizens, including the right to life, right to dignity of the human person, right to personal liberty, right to a fair hearing, right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to freedom of movement, right to freedom from discrimination, and the right to acquire and own property anywhere in Nigeria.

The Nigerian constitution has been devoted to laying emphasis on human rights. The need for constitutional provisions for human rights cannot be over-emphasized because, it is the state, with its various institutions which are primarily responsible for guaranteeing the implementation and enforcement of these rights in respect of its citizens and all those coming under its jurisdiction. Concerns for human rights are as well expected to be granted and guaranteed by institutions and constituents of the state. This finds a lucid expression in the present intensification and universalization of liberal values, which places a high premium on human rights as a critical element in governance and constitution-making process of the modern state. The United Nations since its inception has retained compliance with international treaties as the basis of its relations with member states. Human rights discourse has not only become a huge concern in Africa but a remarkable interest aimed at protecting and promoting universal respect for, and observance of, human rights.

Over the years, Africans has witnessed sustained assaults on the lives of innocent citizens, valuables, properties, and government institutions. Despite more than a decade of democratic governance and endorsement of the universal declaration of human rights charter, Nigerians in particular and Africans in general still face a lot of human rights violations. Human right violation is the acts that contravene human rights. According to McCulley (2013), cases of human rights violations

such as extra-judicial killings, illegal detention, destruction of property by security forces etc. have become a culture of impunity in the country. Adetoro and Omiyefa (2014) are of the view that respect for human rights is sacrosanct because it is also a fundamental, constitutional and international legal obligation. The concern of human rights in the world today stems from the perception widely shared by J.J. Rousseau that man though born free is everywhere in chains. Vance (2011) noted that increasing awareness coupled with the preoccupation on how best to safeguard them from rampant violation has made the term human rights a song on almost everyone's lips, yet the contradiction, inconsistency, confusion, misinterpretation and absurdity that pervade the motion is quite alarming.

In other words, it is no longer strange to say that the world in this contemporary age including Africa has witnessed cases of violations of the right of its citizens. Unfortunately, the government of Nigeria in most cases operates with total disregard for the rule of law and respect for human rights. Impunity remains a widespread phenomenon within the government circle while countering insurgency. For instance, the government has only brought a few individuals to justice for violation of human rights. Mohammed (2015) went further to assert that the Nigerian government is a party to the major sources of International Humanitarian Laws (IHL), i.e. the Geneva conventions, their protocol and other customary international law. Yet the government and its security agencies abuse these against the provisions of the international human rights law such as prolonged pretrial detention, denial for fair public trial, infringements on citizens privacy rights; denial of freedoms of speech, denial of freedoms of press, assembly, religion, and movement; child abuse, violence against women; sexual exploitation of children; trafficking in persons, forced and child labour, and a host of others.

The basic fundamental right and freedom that belongs to a particular person, irrespective of his/her background, how he/she chooses to live, religious affiliation from childhood till death is known as human rights. Hence, it cannot be taken away but can be restricted sometimes. These rights are based on shared values like respect, dignity, equity, fairness, equality and independence. Based on the international protocol on human rights, no human person should be subjected to an extreme human rights violation in an extreme situation. But when the lives of the

African citizens particularly in Nigeria are being decimated and harassed on a daily basis either through suicide bombing, violent attacks, rape, gruesome murder, kidnap, denial of necessities of life, such as food, shelter and happiness; and other nameless acts of aggression, one cannot say that life is worth enjoying under such circumstances. It is however not out of place to state that the violations of human rights have become a norm in Africa as a result of the daily experiences witnessed so far. Thus, if the principles of rule of law in Nigeria must meet up with Western Democratic standards, then it must carefully address the current problem of gross violations of human rights. It is based on these precarious situations witnessed in the country that the paper tends to critically assess how the principles of rule of law in Nigeria have addressed human rights violations among the citizens.

Theoretical Framework

Social Contract Theory of the State

This study hinges on the social contract theory of the state. The theory of the social contract presents the State as a product of the mutual agreement of men, created with a definite purpose to sever certain social needs. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) are regarded as the main exponents of the social contract theory of the origin of State. The social contract theory of the origin of the State implies that men, at a time in history, lived or would have lived without any recognized civil law (i.e. without the State). This stage or life pattern of men (when they lived without any form of organized civil law) is described as the "state of nature". The state of nature denotes how men lived or would have lived without the authority of civil law, State or political control. At this stage, there is no industry and no systemic production. Men lived not only close to nature but they had to depend on the bounty of nature for their survival. However, the social contract theorists themselves have not agreed on how the State came to be from their different analysis of life in the state of nature and what they differently perceived was the state of nature. They commonly agreed that the State was a social contract after an unsatisfactory experience in the state of nature.

For instance, Thomas Hobbes viewed the contract as being between the people and the constituted authority (State) while Locke says such a contract is “of all with all” but not a contract with government or state. Rousseau supported Locke in this way and emphasized that the contract is designed to provide “collective security”. Life in the “state of nature”, to Hobbes, is a general disposition to war “of every man against every man”, leading to perpetual fear and strife which consequently makes life in Hobbesian “state of nature” be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”. On the other hand, Lockean “state of nature” is moral and social in character, in it; men have rights and acknowledge duties. For Locke, life in the state of nature is not satisfactory as peace is constantly upset by the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men, which Locke says plagues the “state of nature” by lack of an established settled down the law, lack of known and indifferent judge, and the lack of an executive power to enforce just decisions. These, Locke argued, necessitated the formation of civil society (the State) devoid of the evils and hence the social contract.

For Rousseau too, the State is the result of a contract entered by men who originally lived in a “state of nature”. However, Rousseau emphasizes that there was only one contract called the “social pact” to which the government or the State itself was not a party. Individuals surrendered all their rights to the community and therefore, after making the contract, may have only such rights as are allowed to them by the General Will (i.e. Law). Nevertheless, the arguments of the social contract origin of the State have been criticized for being historical by not taking cognizance of history and chronology of events in human lives. The social contract theorists’ arguments of life in the state of nature are therefore criticized of being too idealistic, Utopia and hence unrealistic as history do not tell us when such a social contract itself took place in human existence as well as the epoch of the state of nature. Though the theory of the social contract origin of State tries to demonstrate that the State is the product of the will of all individuals comprising it (the State) and as an instrument of harmonizing the interests of all individuals and all sections of society, it is unfortunately not so in many societies, particularly in modern capitalist societies where some dominant sections or a chosen few are so well-organized and vocal that they become “self-styled representatives of the will of society, and seek to justify their

authority on this ground. Some criticisms levelled against the theory of social contract stated that it lacks logical explanations as to the origin of the State. It has also been described as “bad history, bad logic and bad philosophy.

In relating the social contract theory of the state to the violation of human rights, it can be said that the rule of law is very important to human existence as it helps to regulate citizens’ actions and make them live harmoniously with each other as, without the presence of law, it will be impossible if not difficult for the citizens to get access to basic amenities of life. However, in a situation whereby these laws are not followed accordingly, the resultant effect becomes human rights violation which leads to violation of the right to life, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of education and freedom to standard of living.

Literature

Human Rights

There is no generally accepted definition of human rights. This is perhaps because scholars have different opinions about the concept. It is something which is owing to every human being simply because he is human. Human rights are the freedoms and benefits enjoyed by individuals in the society in which they live. Nwosu (2016) opined that human rights are considered the constitutional and absolute rights of the people in a given country. Human rights are freedoms, immunities and benefits that, according to modern values, all human beings should be able to claim as a matter of rights in the society in which they live. In the same vein, human rights are something of which no one may be deprived, without great affront to justice. There are certain deeds, which should never be done, certain freedoms, which should never be invaded; and some supremely sacred things.

Human rights can be seen as all those rights that every citizen of a state ought to have without any deprivation. They are those inalienable rights of every individual, whether old or young, poor or rich, male or female. They are not given to human beings as gifts. This explains why Arinze (2008) argues that human rights are not gifts from men to women or other men that are open to withdrawal or cancellation at the whims and

caprices of the giver. Human rights are not subject to withdrawal or to be held at the pleasure of anybody or granted when it pleases the giver. Gasiokwu (2003) sees human rights as that which represents the demands or claims, which individuals or groups make on society, some of which are protected by law and have become part of Lex Lata while others remain aspirations to be attained in the future. Fundamental human rights may be seen as such freedoms, which are expressed in or guaranteed by basic or pre-eminent laws.

Human Rights Violation

Human rights violation is an infringement of one's fundamental human rights. It also means denying humans their fundamental human rights as it involves treating a person in a cruel, unfair and violent way or less human. In the recent past, according to Nnochiri (2013), human rights violations and abuses in Nigeria had held people down and devalued the nation's cherished values. Nwabueze (1993) asserted that human rights violation in most developing nations has become an issue of utmost concern. Human rights law has been developing in an unprecedented way and has become part of international law as a whole. International human rights law serves as a standard against which to measure national behaviour. This is found in the human rights protection system of states, international institutions, transnational professional associations, corporations, trade unions, churches, non-governmental organizations and other bodies, who respond to distress signals from abroad on the basis of these instruments. However, with the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, efforts are being made to develop a rationalized framework within which human rights should be promoted and protected.

Rule of Law

The notion of rule of law varies from place to place and is considered as old as man. Aristotle sees the "rule of law as preferable to that of any individual", while Bracton, during the 13th century adopted the theory generally held in the middle ages that the world was governed by laws, human or divine and that the king himself ought not to be subject to man, but subject to God and the law, because the law makes him king. Anthony

(1988:219) summarized the doctrine of the rule of law as “that law touching on the basic rights of citizens shall be narrowly and precisely drafted so as to constitute a clear guide to official actions and citizens’ conduct”. The rule of law simply means that law rules or reigns. Nwabueze (2007) contended that the rule of law presupposes a situation where everything is done in accordance with law thereby excluding any form of arbitrariness.

In developed societies where democracy has long been a way of life of the people and where despotism or dictatorship is no longer the other of the day. Rule of law according to Haruna and Yusuf (2017) is a substantive legal principle that refers to the prevailing of regular power rather than arbitrary power; the principle is that all citizens are subject to the judicial decision in their states and that such decisions are the result of constitutional principles. The rule of law implies that government authority may only be exercised in accordance with written laws, which were adopted through an established procedure. The principle is intended to safeguard against arbitrary rulings in individual cases. In a political system that adheres to the paramount principles of the rule of law, the law is supreme over the acts of the government and the people. Rule of law implies and equally connotes that the citizens in the relationship amongst themselves *inter se* and with the government bodies and their agencies shall be beholden unto the law which shall not be ignored by anyone except at his peril and if by the government, this will promote anarchy and executive indiscipline capable of wrecking the organic framework of the society.

Nature of Violations of Human Rights among Nigerians

Nigeria is among the countries in Africa where human rights violations are recorded daily and virtually in all human endeavours. Nigerian citizens had their political rights violated through intimidation, the undemocratic imposition of candidates for political offices, assassination and the huge finances in the prebendal political environment. Below are some of the routinely violated human rights in Nigeria irrespective of the presence of the constitution:

1. **Violation of Right to Life:** This human rights violation is mostly found in torture and extra-judicial killings by government security

operatives. Ero (2009) reported that over 20,000 civilians were massacred with other 50,000 displaced from their homes as a result of the brutal handling of the Niger – Delta crises by the Joint Military Task Force (JTF). Earlier, the death of about 50 persons on 25th February 2008 was caused by the Nigerian police in Ogaminana outskirt of Okene in Kogi State. Akhaine and Chizea (2011) reported that 17 people were shot dead by security forces during a protest in Kaduna state on 17th April and another 118 killed on 27th April in the same state with several houses burnt. Abbah (2013) further observed that over 300 people were killed in the Fulani/Farmers clashes that lasted for 5 months in Nigeria. Reuters (2012) noted the brutal killing of more than 700 lives in Bauchi, Maiduguri and Damaturu as a result of the Boko Haram rootless attack on the civilians. Furthermore, in the latest report on Boko Haram activities, Osun Defender (2014) submitted that civilians in Nigeria are paying heavy prices as the cycle of human rights violations and reprisals gather momentum because according to the 2014 Amnesty International report, “more than 1,500 deaths in three months indicate an alarming deterioration in the face of extrajudicial executions, attacks on civilians and other crimes committed on a mass scale. Even though, the Amnesty report observed the rising number of Boko Haram attacks as “truly shocking” but it also noted the reaction of Nigerian security forces as “brutal” with both serving as acts that may constitute “war crimes and crimes against humanity” calling for immediate investigation and prosecutions (Amnesty, 2014).

2. **Violation of Right to Freedom of Expression:** It has already been shown that the right to freedom of expression is not absolute. The recently passed bill on Hate Speech is a clear cut example of a harsh bill relating to freedom of expression online, including one which proposes the death penalty for ‘hate speech.’ These bills, supported by the Nigerian government, represent an alarming escalation in the authorities’ attempts to censor and punish social media users for freely expressing their opinions. This bill in all its totality is an infringement on human rights and it is, therefore, not concomitant to the Nigerian Constitution.

3. **Violation of Right to Freedom of Movement:** This human rights violation is found in kidnapping and disappearance which has been on the increase in Nigeria. The situation is worst in places like the oil-producing community due to cases of all forms of kidnapping: including the kidnapping of children, women and other civilians. Oyewale (2010) acknowledged the daily occurrence of domestic terrorism (brutal kidnapping) in the Niger Delta between 2006 and 2009, Azania (2013) equally reported how Edo varsity lecturers lamented the daily affairs kidnapping of their colleagues. This worrisome physical human rights abuse is even preponderant all over Nigeria today.
4. **Violation of Right to Freedom of Religion:** Contrary to the provision of secularity in Nigeria's constitution, Adeniji (2008) reported frequent human rights abuses among cleric fundamentalists. According to Adeniji (2008), over 1,000 reported cases of clashes between the Christian and the Muslim adherents were recorded in Nigeria between 2001 and 2008. Musa and Adeniji (2010) equally acknowledged the destruction of lives and properties by frequent clashes in Abeokuta South Local Government in Ogun State between 1980 and 2007.
5. **Violation of Right to Freedom of Assembly:** The Nigerian government is known to oppose anti-government protests and demonstrations. For instance, on 3rd January 2009, police in Okeagbe, Ondo State allegedly killed and wounded some youths who demonstrated against local police extortion. Equally, political killings were reported by Ariyibi (2013) in Ekiti following clashes between rival political parties. Indeed, Akhaine and Chizea (2011) reported that some politicians in Nigeria maintain a retinue of thugs that often perpetrate acts of violence against their opponents. On February 18, 2012, *Sahara News* reported that activists condemned the police disruption of political memorial procession for the last year's martyrs on the fuel price increase. Indeed, Aremu (2012) reported that over 20 tear-gas canisters were used to disperse the protesters and several leaders of the protesters were whisked away and detained for several hours in Alausa police station. It is regrettable to note that the Nigerian government has continually

failed to address this kind of human rights abuse and punish the offenders.

6. **Violation of Right to Education:** Although education is an instrument per excellence for effecting national development, it is regrettable to note that corruption, bribery and nepotism are ill vices in the Nigerian educational system. Equally, some state-owned universities do not give equal admission opportunities to all Nigerians while the university council considered some states in Nigeria as education less privileged. Indeed, Nigerian citizens are supposed to have free education as contained in the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, but in practice, in some states and federal schools where this has been implemented students still pay fees. As a fallout of denial of the right to education, Olubodun (2008) noted that 41 per cent of the Nigerian children totalling 7.5 million were out of school in 1997 and by 2005. Consequently, the figure of children that are out of school had risen to 19.8 million children in 2010. Although, it appears the figure had dropped to about 8 million in 2011 but the situation is that a sizeable number of eligible Nigerian children are still out of Basic Education amounting to the existence of denial of education rights.
7. **Violations of Right to Standard of Living:** It is regrettable to note that this violation is been caused by the quantum of corruption in public services. Corruption has generally eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. It is an abuse of the citizens' rights to have corrupt leaders in public services. According to Adetoro (2012), Nigeria as a "cesspool of corruption" still suffers denial to cheaper availability of fuel products arising from the fuel subsidy scandal that led to over-invoicing of imported petroleum products. This happened in a country where over 70 per cent of the populace lives below 1 dollar per day (UNDP, 2011). This represents a flagrant violation of peoples' right to an improved standard of living.

Assessment of Rule of Law in Addressing Human Rights Violation in Nigeria

Rule of law is a way of preventing the abuse of discretionary power. It accords with the dictates of reason that the court should use its awesome

power to make the government of the day rule by principles recognized in civilized societies and bound by the pronouncements of the courts. The rule of law according to Igwe (2002:387) relates to the supremacy of the laws and their equal application to every person and institution of society, regardless of status, class or circumstance, and to the extent that such laws are fair, just and promotion of personal liberties, which are fundamental requirements for a truly democratic and civilized, life and formidable check upon tyranny and arbitrary rule. According to Dicey, the rule of law means the absolute supremacy of regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power and excludes the existence of arbitrariness, or prerogative or even of wide discretionary authority on the part of the government. This conception perceives the rule of law as a principle that seeks to curb governmental powers by insisting that governance should be in accordance with the laws of the land and not according to the arbitrary whims and caprices of those in authority. It also implies that no man can be punished except for a proven breach of the law. Nwosu (2016:67-68) highlighted that the method of protecting individual rights by rule of law which includes amongst:

1. That the rule of law gives all citizens equal protection before the law. The law is supreme and does not offer special protection to anybody;
2. That the rule of law ensures that no one is punished or made to suffer a breach of law unless established by a court of law. This provision helps to protect individual rights;
3. That the rule of law ensures equality of every citizen before the law and that judges should dispense justice without fear or favour; and
4. That the rule of law ensures democratic principles, separation of powers and checks and balances. All these contributed to the protection of individual liberty in a society.

The rule of law presupposes the supremacy of law in the state. This means that law, and nothing else, counts in society, as everything, everybody is subject to the same law. Both the ruler and the ruled, or the ruler and the subjects, are not only subject to the rule of law but are also equal before the law. Acknowledging this fact, Nwosu (2016) opined that under the rule of law, all men are subject to the same law. In this sense,

nobody or the citizen is either fully or partially free from any offence he or she may commit. The rule of law promotes and protects the liberty, freedom and the gamut of the fundamental human rights of the citizens. Writing on individual freedom, Rousseau notes that though the social contract gives the body politic absolute power over all its citizens, the sovereign cannot impose on its subjects any fetters that are useless to the community. According to Nwosu (2016), the term rule of law is a negation of arbitrary power and the whims and caprices of those in power. Rule of law is an ideology that emphasizes not only that every citizen shall be equally bound by known fair laws enforced by known and impartial judges, thus protecting each individual's rights against those of other individuals, but also that government herself shall equally be bound by these laws so that the relationship between the government and every individual shall be controlled in the same manner as those of individuals with each other. It is only in such a medium that the rights of the individual citizen can be protected and ascertained against tyranny on the part of the ruler (government).

It is auspicious to acknowledge the fact the gross violations of this freedom became rife in Nigeria during Obasanjo's government as the civilian President after the military dictatorship of several years by the Sanni Ahmed led Zamfara State government in October 1999 signing into law the introduction of the Sharia effective January 2000. This was promptly emulated by some northern states. The forceful applications of the Sharia law on 'non-faithful' generated disaffection, suspicion, hostility, frustration and outright conflict and violence. This had resulted in wanton destruction of lives and properties as well as pose a potential threat to the continued unity and stability of Nigeria. Such truly speaking is symptomatic of non-adherence to rule of law. It has to be said that the abuse of the Nigerian people and the gross violations of their fundamental and essential rights under the despotic Obasanjo presidency can be meaningfully examined if some form of historical excursion is undertaken. This would bring to the fore the fact that all the post-colonial regimes in Nigeria have always violated the basic rights of the Nigerian people. The importance of history in social analysis cannot be overemphasized. Toyo (2007) lucidly highlighted the significance of history in social discourses when he reminded Nigerian that ahistorical student of society is easily fooled by the 'commonsense' of surreptitious

vested interests, and that “any student of society whose epistemology is fundamentally ahistorical is myopic. This assertion reinforces the contention that; the disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from which alone men see the town in which they live or the age in which they are living (Garba, 2003).

Violation of human rights in Nigeria often results in extreme poverty which is so prevalent due to massive abuse of public funds. This is a result of a high rate of unemployment which has resulted in youths’ restiveness orchestrated by armed robbery, internet scams and kidnapping for the sake of survival. Human rights violation has obvious hindrance to national development. It also breeds a high insecurity rate as a state of anarchy had given room to a lack of protection of lives and properties as witnessed under conflicts in the Niger Delta region and the various ethno-religious violence. Equally, the poor health care facilities and diseases are a result of government nonchalant attitude to the well-being of the citizens. Human rights violation has created unlawful detention and lawlessness with gross violation of the rule of law. Furthermore, human rights abuse makes people unpatriotic as most Nigerians are not proud of calling Nigeria their fatherland. Today, the resultant effect is the migration of citizens to other countries in search of safety and prosperity.

It is impossible to speak of fundamental human rights – the right to human dignity, right to education, right to decent living, right to contest for public offices, etc in an environment where the people are daily contending with several asphyxiating challenges like crippling poverty and immiserization engendered by inept and bad governance, and fuelled by pyramidal corruption. The point has been made that beyond the direct human casualties of the institutional evil represented by bad and autocratic rulers, comparable numbers of people, if not more, have died in Nigeria due to the actions and inactions of the consolidated incompetence that has imposed itself on us in the guise of leadership since independence. Adebani (2009), contended that it is not so much the evil that has produced and reproduced the Nigerian rulers and the dominant elite that can account for the indirect mass murder that has been unrecorded in our history; rather it is a basic incapacity of the rulers

Nigerians have had to run modern administrative machinery that transforms the social conditions of life.

Conclusion

Human rights violation has become a recurring decimal in Nigeria. This is because individuals, groups and state actors are complicit in this vicious circle. Over time, human rights violations have held the Nigerians down, devaluing their cherished values and constituting blight on the country's diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Therefore, Nigerians must come together to combat these ills by impressing upon their democratically elected government that the principles of democracy and human rights must be sacrosanct. The challenges facing Nigeria are not limited to North or South, Christian or Muslim, Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa – Fulani. Rule of law as identified earlier is characterized by definite principles. These include respect for fundamental human rights and the protection of lives and properties. For a peaceful and harmonious nation to be realized, the true principles of the rule must be imbibed and practicable irrespective of social status, religion or ethnic grouping.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were made based on the results of the study:

1. **Total Eradication of Corrupt Practices:** The Nigerian government should take a more proactive campaign against corruption and strengthen the country's anti-corruption institutions. This is because corruption serves to promote criminal and extremist activity by creating barriers to legitimate socio-political and economic endeavours. By attacking corruption, Nigeria will send a clear signal that the country is indeed committed to good governance, to the security of its citizens and its rightful place as a significant actor on the global stage.
2. **Reorientation of Security Agencies:** The Nigerian law enforcement agencies most importantly the Nigerian police needs reorientation because they need to understand their duties as they have to learn that respecting the rights of the citizens are part of their duties.

3. **Zero Tolerance to Military Rule:** Military rule/coup should not be allowed or tolerated. The military has been known to be the worst in abusing the human rights of citizens. Efforts must be put in place to checkmate their encroachment into politics. Their duty is to protect the integrity and sovereignty of the nation not to rule.
4. **Organizing Public Awareness/Sensitization Programme:** Government at all levels with the active support of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to embark on intensive programmes aimed at enlightening the citizens, not only on their fundamental rights, which include the right to freedom of expression but also on their right to the protection of reputation. An enlightened society where people know their rights and respect the rights of others would certainly be more conducive for social, political and economic development.

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