The Political Economy of Contemporary Insecurity in Nigeria: Theoretical Issues and Explanations

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Abstract: This paper examined the nature of contemporary insecurity in Nigeria. The paper adopts a qualitative methodology, and the data were gathered using documentary sources. It anchors on political economy approach using game theoretic modeling as theoretical framework. The paper argued that Nigerian state is currently facing internal security threats from separatist demands and ethnic militias to terrorism, cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, armed banditry, and armed robbery among others. It further stressed that Nigeria's frighteningly high level of insecurity makes its citizens live in constant fear. That Nigeria's socio-economic development has been badly impacted by this insecurity, which also has an influence on the credibility of Nigeria's international image. In order to address Nigeria's worries about insecurity, this paper concluded with policy recommendations, primarily for the National Assembly that corrupt practices must be addressed in order to restore peace in Nigeria. Also, to facilitate effective governance, which is necessary for upholding peace and stability in the country, the National Assembly must use the power of the legislative power derived from the constitution to improve responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

Keywords: Nigeria, Security, Insecurity, Terrorism, Corruption, Ethno-religious Conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria has sparked a number of discussions among academics, professionals and policymakers questioning the traditional philosophy and idea that security is the state's fundamental purpose. The safety of people and their property is regarded as the core purpose of the state. This is contained in the philosophical thinking of Aristotle when he stated that the state exists for the promotion of the public good, defined as all things that enhance social harmony, friendship and cooperation among the citizens.

No state treats the issue of safety and liberty of citizens with levity and enjoys stability. The drafter of the Nigerian constitution was not oblivious of this fact. For example, section 14 (2) b of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended) stated, *inter alia*, that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Hence, for a state to maintain its sovereignty, legitimacy and monopoly of violence; citizens must be protected against any form of internal and external insurrection or threats. Thus, it is appropriate to contend that any challenge which undermines security of lives and property and the safety of the citizens implies an infringement on the state's sovereignty and legitimacy (Onoja, 2020).

Survival is paramount and must be ensured if any human needs are to be met. In this direction, Ake (1980) argued that economic satisfaction is man's most fundamental need. Man cannot live in the first place unless he is able to meet this need. Economic need is undoubtedly impossible to be met except in a secured environment. As a result of this, man must first survive before he can eat. This argument is based on the idea that while man must work to pay for food; he must first and foremost survive in order to do anything, which emphasizes the significance of citizen's security and safety (Adullahi, 2020). Because of this, the security of the state is a public good that the government must be able to provide for all of its citizens (Kinsey & Krieg, 2021).

Unfortunately, the Nigeria state in recent times has failed in its constitutional obligation to secure and protect people's lives and property and ensure unconstrained economic activities. At present, insecurity in Nigeria has adversely affected the country, wreaking havoc on social relations, politics and the economy. This unpalatable situation has posed serious challenges to socio-economic development of the state (Ozoh & Dinwobi, 2018).

Furthermore, the rise in violent conflicts across the Nigeria's six geopolitical zones has taken on a very dangerous dimension including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery to mention a few. The corporate existence of Nigeria has been severely affected by all of these, and the legitimacy of the Nigerian state has also been seriously compromised

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(Titus & Ogundiya, 2023). Added to this is the high level of poverty, unemployment, underemployment and uncontrollable inflation rate.

Consequently, many people have been made vulnerable and crime rates have been exceptionally unacceptably high. Indeed, some scholars argued that Nigeria has aptly fit into Thomas Hobbes description of the *state of nature* with life being *too short, brutish, and nasty*. At present, violent conflicts in Nigeria have brought socio - economic structure to its knees, resulting in untold human casualties and avoidable penuries.

In recent years, every region in Nigeria has faced peculiar security challenges, including violent extremism and Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, farmer-herder clashes, kidnapping for ransom and armed banditry in the North-West and North-Central, secessionist movement in the South-East and South-West and ethnic militancy, cultism and piracy and separatist agitation in the South-South. In fact, insecurity is now recognized as one of the key issues affecting the Nigerian political economy.

Similar to this, the issue of insecurity has had serious consequences for the human, economic, political, security, and psychological well-being of Nigerians as well as for Nigeria's credibility in the world community, sending a message that Nigeria is unsafe for even visits (Ogundiya & Titus, 2023). Many European countries in their travel advice warn their citizens in a very strong term to avoid traveling to Nigeria, except when it is unavoidably necessary. For instance, United States of America and Australian Embassy conspicuously displayed on their webpage the following warnings:

> You should consider your need to travel to Nigeria. The potential for terrorism, kidnapping, crime and civil unrest is high throughout Nigeria. We continue to advise do not travel to other parts of Nigeria due to the very high risk to your safety. If despite our advice you undertake travel within Nigeria, research routes and get professional security advice and support before departing.

Available data and evidences support this concern, though it may be degrading to the image of the country. For instance, Nigeria's security situation has gotten worse as seen by the country's persistently poor ranking in the Global Peace Index (GPI). For example, statistics provided by the Global Peace Index (2021) shown that there is a steady decline in peace index between 2015 and 2021, with Nigeria dropping four places to 146th out of 158 countries in the global peace ranking. Worse still, Nigeria Police ranked 127/127 making the nation's security watchdog the worst in the world according to World Internal Security and Police Index (WISPI) (Ogundiya & Titus, 2023).

Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the nature of contemporary insecurity in Nigeria. Some of the questions which this paper attempt to answer include but not limited to the following- What factors precipitates insecurity in Nigeria? What are the nature and dimension of insecurity in Nigeria? How effective are the measures put in place to address the problem of insecurity and whether the financial allocation is commensurate with the outcome? Finally, the paper interrogates the role of the legislative arm in ameliorating the daunting security challenges facing the country. To achieve this, the paper is structure as follows; the following section is the conceptual clarifications. The third part examines the theoretical debates on insecurity while part four discussed the nature and magnitude of insecurity in Nigeria. Section five examines the initiatives that have been made in addressing security problems in Nigeria, and the final section contains conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptualising Security and Insecurity

There are numerous perspectives on security and insecurity. As it is common with many social science concepts security and insecurity have been defined differently by scholars of different orientations. The concept of security had its origin from the *social contract theory* espoused by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jack Rousseau in which the citizens freely gave up their rights to the state under which every citizen security is guaranteed by the government. The theory stressed that only the state has the capacity to provide citizens' defense, security and avoid anarchy, and that only the state's power is regarded capable of providing adequate security.

Accordingly, since the end of the Cold War, numerous attempts have been made to redefine security from a state-centric perspective to a more comprehensive view that prioritises on human security, which includes aspects of national security, human rights and national development, as the criterion for explaining the concept of security. This argument also

has measures to broaden the definition of security from the level of states to that of individuals and communities as well as from military to non-military matters at its core (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013; Krahmann, 2003). Security simply refers to specific techniques for preventing, reducing, or resolving violent conflict and attacks posed by external forces, non-state actors, or sociopolitical and economic factors in this context (Stan, 2004).

In this context, security refers to the entirety of policies, laws, and other practical measures used to ensure the peace, stability, and overall well-being of a country and its citizens (Shinkaiye, 2004). It implies protection from danger or damage, as well as the defense and maintenance of basic values. In a nutshell, security is about human survival and existence (Francis , 2006). When the security of a nation is threatened, jeopardized or compromised it produced insecurity.

As a result, insecurity refers to a lack of security, protection, safety and existence of threat, risk and uncertainty. Insecurity, according to Beland (2005), is a feeling of worry or tension brought on by a lack of security. Human insecurity is undoubtedly the most physical form of insecurity, and it manifests itself in a variety of other ways, including economic and social unrest.

Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpan-Robaro (2013) explained insecurity in two ways. To begin, insecurity occurs when someone is exposed to or threatened by fear which could be internally or externally driven. This threat may be real or perceived. True or real threat refers to situation when someone is at risk of harm or injury. Second, insecurity is described as the situation or state of affairs when someone is threatened or afraid, with being defined as a generalised bad emotion experienced in anticipation of a disaster. Thus, insecurity can described as disruption of peace and security whether cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic, civic, social, economic, or political, that leads to recurrent conflicts and indiscriminate damage of lives and properties.

Insecurity, it must be noted can take different forms, dimensions and character and may as well differ from one state to another. In Nigeria the forms and dimension of insecurity include the herder-farmer conflict, armed banditry and kidnapping, ethnic-militia, terrorism, cultism, religious and ethnic crisis, poverty and food crisis. Among these, arm banditry, terrorism

and kidnapping and separatist demands have posed grave challenges and have overstretched national security architecture (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpan-Robaro, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

This paper is qualitative, contextual and exploratory in design. Data were collected and analysed for this study using a qualitative methodology based on documentary sources, this includes text books, academic journals, newspapers, magazines, government reports and publications addressing the topic. Again, charts were used to illustrate the intensity and fatalities of insecurity in Nigeria. However, there is a growing body of research on insecurity in Nigeria, most of which focuses on a historical analysis of the causes and consequences of the problem. Furthermore, a number of academic studies have addressed the topic, arguing that religious sentiments, poverty, corruption, and economic crises are the key points of contention. While this study builds on these existing narratives, it also deviates from them by examining the political and economic consequences of insecurity's trajectories in the context of recent administrations, demonstrating how such factors sustain conflicts in Nigeria.

Theoretical Debates of Insecurity in Nigeria

Varieties of theoretical arguments have been advanced in an attempt to explain the phenomenon of insecurity most especially in Africa which Nigeria is no exception. The majority of these theoretical explanations are historical or political in nature, while others are psychological, sociological, or cultural in nature, and still others are economic in nature (Muro, 2017). For the purposes of this paper, the application of theoretical approaches in the field of political economy to understand insecurity in Nigeria is particularly important.

The fundamental question of what political economy analysis is all about is now brought up. From a conceptual standpoint, politics is the process by which various players attempt to affect the dynamic, structure, and decision-making processes at various levels and settings in order to further their own objectives or those of a group. Economics on the others hand, is concerned with logically required ideal conditions that must exist in order for products and services to be produced and distributed efficiently and effectively (Nzau, 2020; Ake, 1980). Political economy is a

multidisciplinary approach based on Marxist ideology. It includes not only how politics and economics interact, but also how all forms of social interaction link to one another at all dimensions, from the local to the international. The importance of the method of production and social relations as crucial element in all social formations is emphasized by political economy (Onimode, 1985). Examining Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development processes gives a useful foundation evaluating the country's security and economic crisis.

As a result, a political economics approach is an effective and useful tool for researching violent conflicts (insecurity) in Africa. Regardless of it been critical or traditional (liberal and neo-liberal) concepts (rational choice, dependency, development and underdevelopment theories). By linking political and economic issues, the concept emphasizes how resources (economy) and power (state) are contested and distributed in varied circumstances, as well as the implications for development outcomes. Karl Marx, Amin, Cox, and others for example, made significant contributions to one's understanding of state and economy, which will help us understand better African conflicts as well as Nigeria's security problem. Marx's theory is based on the idea that social interaction rise and fall as human productive power grows and then becomes hampered.

A political economics viewpoint on rational choice theorists claimed that governments and/or non-state actors, including terrorists and their sympathizers, compete with states and/or intergovernmental organizations for control over resources both within and across borders. One theoretical paradigm that makes heavy use of economic modeling is the rational choice tradition. Modern proponents of this school include, among others, Beuno De Mequita, Morrow, Zagare, and Fearon (2008). These researchers investigate the political economy of terrorism using game theoretic modeling. They see terrorists as logical actors who aim to maximize their profits. The most efficient strategy to accomplish their goals is chosen by terrorists after carefully weighing the costs and benefits of many options (Bueno & Dickson, 2007).

Being rational actors, terrorists know that their opponents in this situation, the government, and governmental authorities in general, are probably thinking likewise. As a result, they plan their attacks while taking into account their enemies' anticipated moves and options. As a result, both terrorists and the government operate in a way that makes their perceived opponents pay higher opportunity costs in the form of direct expenses, reputational costs, and audience costs, all to their advantages (Lake, 2002).

Nature, Causes and Magnitude of Insecurity in Nigeria

With a population of approximately 200 million people divided into 350 different ethnic groups and a GDP of 2,396.04 US billion as of 2021, Nigeria is the recognized Giant of Africa (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2021). According to GDP, it is both the most populated and richest country in the continent. Nigeria is undeniably endowed with a wealth of natural and mineral resources. Unfortunately, the country is not only a giant in terms of population, resources and economic prowess; it is also a giant in terms of complexities of crises, instability and negativisms. For instance, after gaining independence in 1960, the country has consistently ranked last in the world in terms of progress due to its increasing rate of instability. The country is also troubled by terrorism, political unrest, poverty, and socioeconomic inequity (Falola, 2001).

Consequently, in Nigeria, there are a number of factors that are contributing to insecurity that are detrimental to socioeconomic and political development (Ali, 2013; Jega, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Ezeoba, 2011; Salawu, 2010). These factors, according to Tella (2015), include but are not limited to unemployment, inequities, poverty, corruption, inefficient government policies, and programmes. Nweze (2004), on the other hand, cited a number of issues contributing to insecurity in Nigeria, including ethnic and religious diversity, unemployment, poverty, militancy, socioeconomic inequality, trafficking in small arms and ammunition, poor governance, demographic challenges, migration, and the indigene question. He asserted that these factors, which are both internal and external, preventing Nigeria from developing socioeconomically. The root causes of insecurity in Nigeria are numerous and intertwined. In this direction the source and dimension of insecurity in the contemporary Nigerian state could be listed as follows:

i.   The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East which is spreading to North-West and North-Central;

ii.   Armed banditry in the North Central and North-West;

iii.   Religious fanaticism, inter and intra-communal and ethnic confrontations;

iv.   Conflicts between farmers and herders, commonly referred to as pastoralists, occur in the North-West and North-East Regions as well as the North-Central;

v.   Organized criminals and oil-related violence as well as resource control agitation;

vi.   Separatist and secessionist movement in the South-East and South-West;

vii.   Police brutality and the civic unrest that follows;

viii.   Cultism and fierce battle between cultist groups, especially in the South-West and South-South; and

ix.   Violent election-related crimes.

It could be stressed that Nigeria's security challenges have manifested itself in various dimensions like economic, social, political and religious since independence. In this context, the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria are terrorism, corruption, political violence and ethno-religious conflicts, unemployment and poverty, kidnapping and abduction.

Terrorism

Terrorism seems to be the most bedrock of insecurity in Nigeria today, at the most apparent and simplest debatable basis. The upsurge of terrorist activities in Nigeria is a serious security challenge as the country is noted as the worst place to live on earth. For instance, it was reported that Boko Haram (terrorism) in Nigeria has the second highest attacks and fatalities ranking globally. Figure **1** shows number of fatality rate due to terrorist attacks worldwide responsible by terrorist group which justify the above argument.

Nigeria, for instance, was ranked third in the Global Terrorism Index in 2021, behind Afghanistan and Iraq, and is currently ranked as the 14th most fragile state in the world and the ninth in Africa, both of which are nations that have recently experienced civil wars (Igwe, 2020). The Figure **2** below depicts extent to which terrorism is a source of insecurity in Nigeria.

In terms of terrorism impact, Nigeria is indisputably known to have one of the most notorious and deadliest terrorist groups in the world. In 2019, Nigeria experienced 411 terrorist attacks, killing 1,245 people and injuring 452 (Global Terrorist Index, 2021). Since 2009, Nigeria has lost incredible number of lives and incalculable properties in the Northern region due to Boko Haram attacks. From 2011 to 2021, terrorists killed a total of 58,562 people in seven northern states of Borno (34,534), Zamfara (5,155), Kaduna (4,900), Adamawa (4,086), Benue (3,636), Yobe (3,123), and Plateau (3,128) (Global Terrorist Index, 2021). The North-East states have the highest number of casualties. The targeted strikes by Boko Haram terrorists in the northern part of the country have, predictably, had dire effects for several business owners in that region, in addition to making life difficult
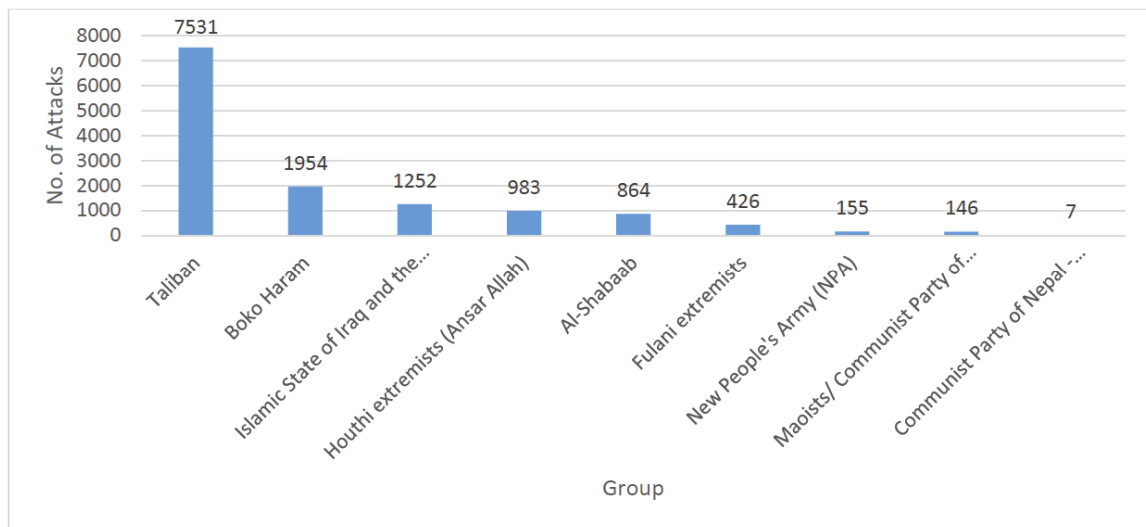

Figure 1: Number of fatality rate due to terrorist attacks worldwide responsible by terrorist group.

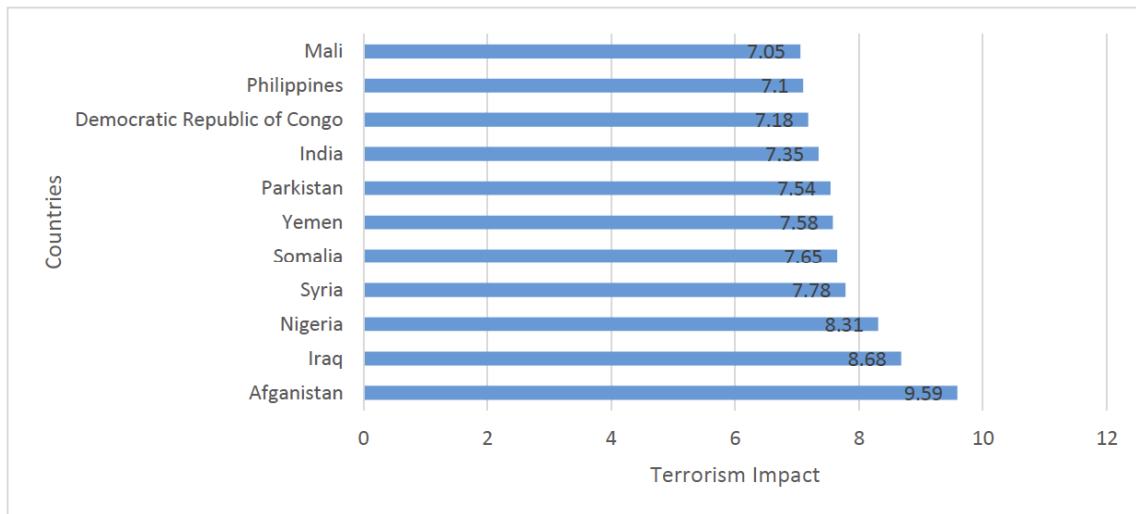Source: Authors' Computation from Global Terrorism Index, 2023.

Figure 2: Nigeria Ranking on Global Terriosim Impact.

*On a scale of 0 (no impact of terrorism) to 10, (highest impact of terrorism).

Source: Authors' Computation from Global Terrorism Index, 2023.

for Nigerians. The Boko Haram's unannounced bombings, kidnappings and attacks have increased, causing tensions and a pervasive sense of terror throughout the country. The risk of murder of civilians has been quite high in Nigeria. From 2018 through 2022, the Figure **3** below depicts the level of mass killing in Nigeria from 2018 to 2022.

Furthermore, millions have been rendered homeless and another millions of people have been displaced turning them to refugees in their own land. It is obvious that the activities of terrorists in Nigeria have had serious humanitarian effects in the region. Nigeria

is ranked as one of the highest in Africa. For instance, according to the ACAPS Report (2021) in the Northwest armed bandits' crisis have displaced over 309,000 people. Other figures show that Zamfara state has 69,000 internally displaced people (IDPs), Kaduna has 71,000, Katsina has 61,000, Sokoto has 45,000, and Niger has 3,000 (UNHCR, 2020; ACAPS, 2020). While over 60,000 people who had been forced to flee Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara had crossed the border into Maradi, Republic of Niger (ACAPS, 2021). The Figure **4** below demonstrates that Nigeria is one of the frontline nations in terms of refugees experiencing violent wars and terrorism-related insecurity.
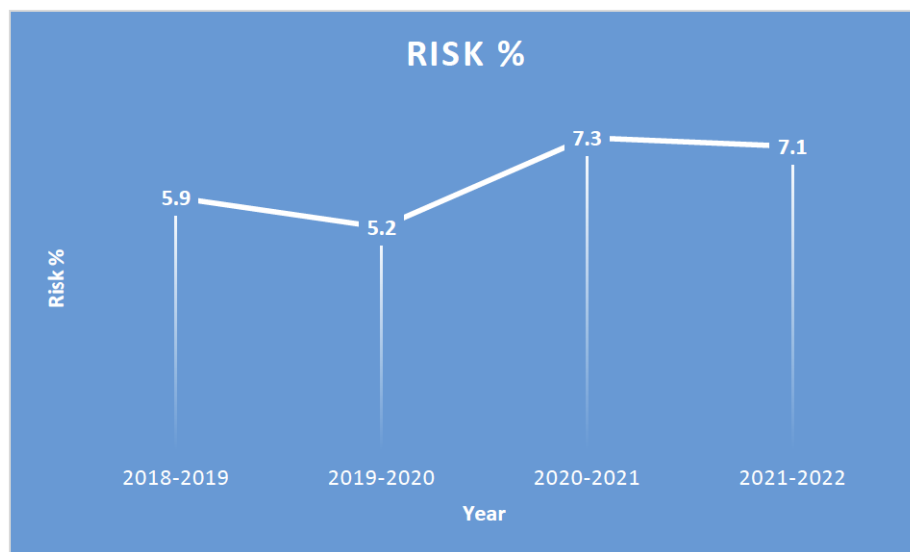

Figure 3: Risk of mass killing in Nigeria due Terrorism between 2018 and 2022.

Source: Authors' Computation from Global Terrorism Index, 2023.
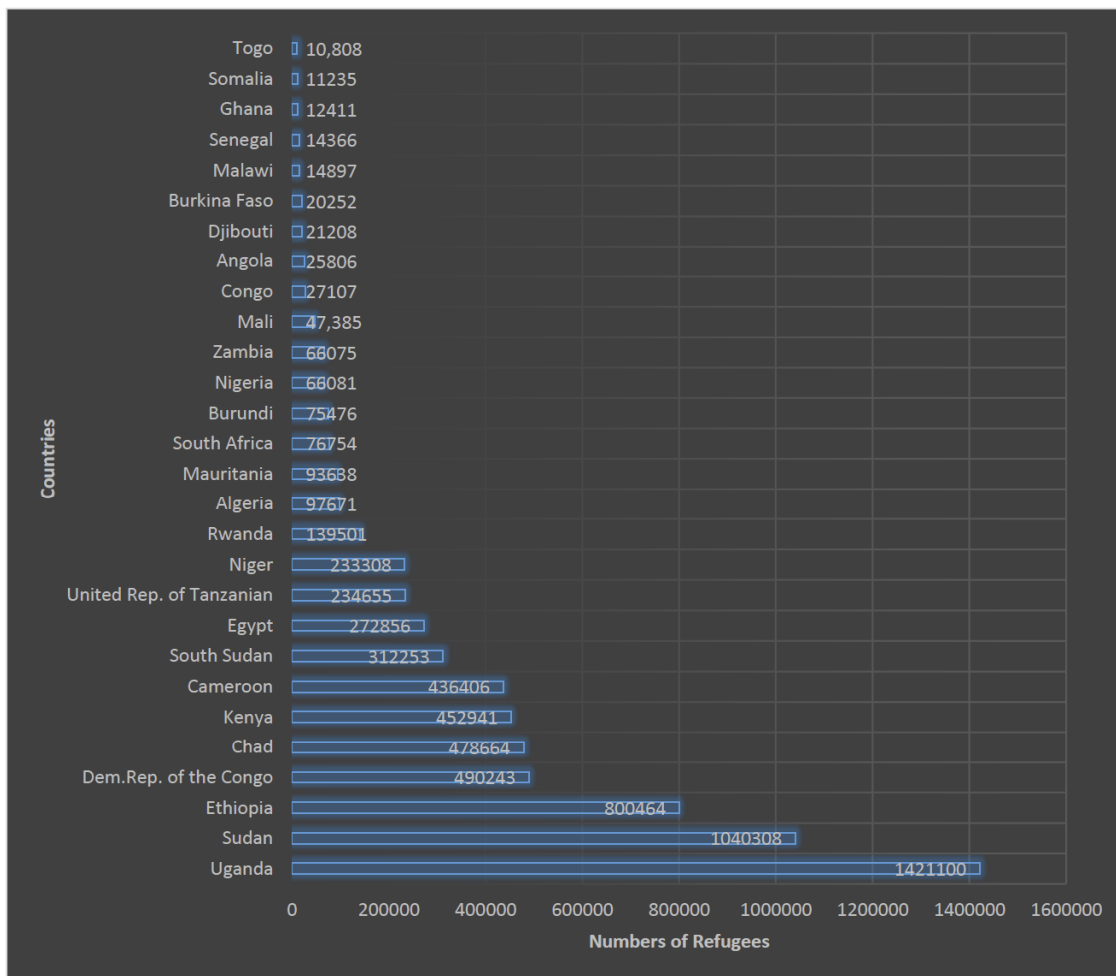
Figure 4: African countries with the most refugees as of 2020.

Source: Authors' Computation from ICG, 2023.

Similar to this, *unknown gunmen* and armed bandits have continued to wreak havoc across the country by carrying out countless kidnappings, abductions, and massacres. In the six Northwestern states alone, armed bandits reportedly killed about 1,100 people in 2018, 2,200 in 2019, and 1,600 in the middle of 2020. Again, it was reported that over 1,126 persons were killed by armed bandits in the region towards the end of 2020 (ICG, 2020; Amnesty International, 2020; American Security Projects, 2021). The spate of killings, assaults, abductions by terrorist and the widening ungoverned space in the country warrants the conclusion that Nigeria approximates to a failed state.

Corruption

Every corrupt ridden state is prone to insecurity of all forms and dimensions. Most high ranked corrupt states are mostly amenable to social injustices which in turn promotes, as a matter of consequence, violent response from the socially and economically deprived citizens. This is the situation Nigeria has found itself in the past three decades, precisely after the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme in (SAP) 1986. It is claimed that African leaders from post-independence privatized the state for the purposes of oppression and cruelty, clientelism, primitive accumulation, and all social inequity after independence. African leaders, rather than using state resources to promote development, used them to frighten citizens, resulting in a detachment from the public realm and personal gain (Adeola, 2007). Selfish impulses, primal parochialism, ethnic struggle and cleavages, political brigandage, clientelism, and privatized state apparatuses according to Adeola (2007), characterized Africa's ruling elites, all of which are the outcome of corruption. In both the military and democratic eras, Nigeria's ruling elites have been found to be dependent, parasitic and corrupt (Ali, 2013)**.**

It was estimated that about $582 billion US dollars was stolen from Nigeria between 1960 and 2021 (Ojo,

2019). No wonder, the former Prime Minister of United Kingdom, David Cameron aptly described Nigeria in 2016 as a fantastically corrupt country. From the power sector alone about ₦11 trillion is said to have been stolen or diverted since 1999 in addition to ₦1.1 trillion that was stolen between 2011 and 2015 (Ojo, 2019). Nigerians are ridiculed for their extreme poverty and depravity thanks to the extravagant wealth of important members of the ruling class, which is a complex and contradictory scenario for the nation (Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Nkemakolam, 1999). The illegitimate acquisition of wealth has culminated in Nigerian leaders' extraordinary and increasing wealth, as well as indebtedness and the emptying of the country's national treasury (Ewalefoh, 2021). The current state of insecurity in Nigeria is largely the outcome of poor governance, which is associated with corruption in the political and bureaucratic circles. Corruption has given violent conflicts a new dimension that has significant implications for national security. Corruption has been seen as an impediment to Nigeria's growth since it weakens the country's social fabric (Ewalefoh, 2021).

Nigeria is notable globally as one of the most corrupt nations. For instance, the 2021 Transparency International perception index indicated that Nigeria scored 24 per cent as against the 25 per cent it scored

in 2020. Its position is 154 out of 180 countries to become the second most corrupt country in the West African sub-region. The Figure **5** below shows the global ranking and index of corruption in Nigeria from1996 to 2021.

Corruption is a major source of insecurity that has which hampered every government's counter-terrorism. Recently, it was claimed that the security agencies have proven incapable of executing a counter-insurgency campaign in the country against the threat posed by terrorists due to corruption, weak policy, a lack of training, and substandard equipment. Due to the misappropriation of public funds, corruption remains one of Nigeria's prominent factors of insecurity. It is important to note that Nigeria's insecurity is linked to the nation's leader's failure to provide good governance and maintain the welfare of its citizens. Many military personnel have been alleged of benefiting themselves by diverting funding intended to fight terrorism and insecurity. Indeed, the Nigerian military budget appears to have several questionable expenditure budget items.

As a result, funds are allocated or not allocated. Much of this funding is alleged to have vanished as a consequence of bribery, payments to ghost soldiers who do not exist, and non-bid contracts that result in
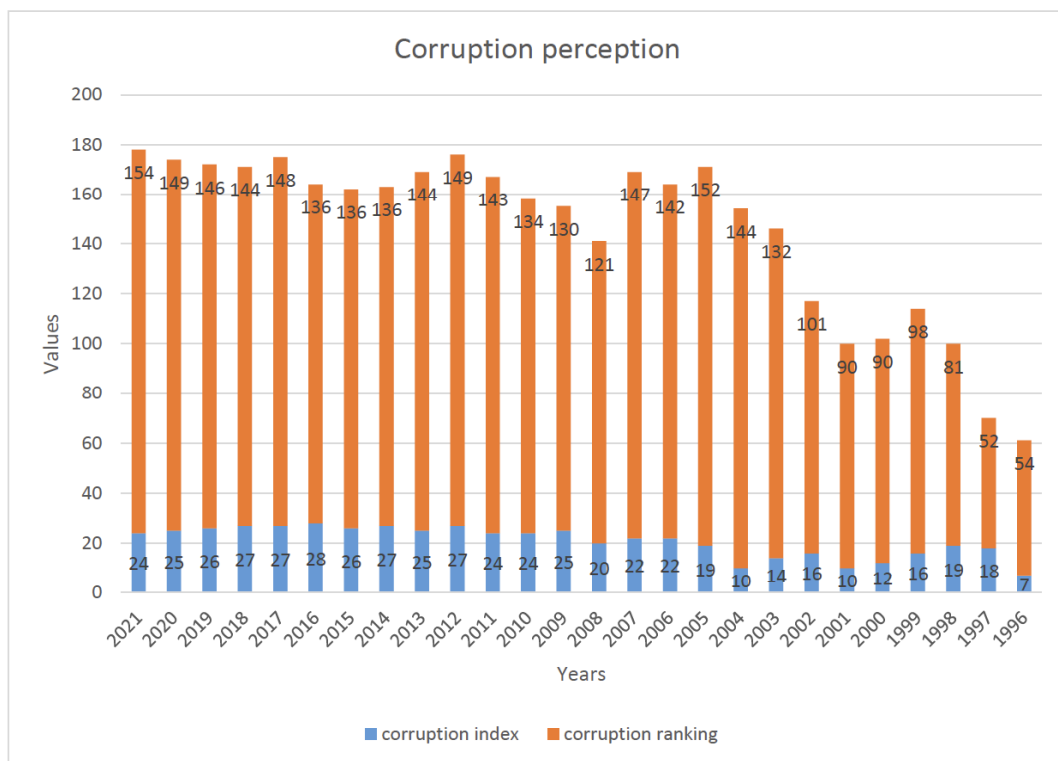

Figure 5: Showing Nigeria global ranking and index of corruption from 1996 to 2021.

Source: Authors' Computation, from Transparency International Index, 2021.

exaggerated spending that favours politically linked contractors. Similarly, budgetary allocations to security agencies are frequently overstated by employing various spending headings. In some cases, political office holders in sensitive positions have misappropriated or diverted security votes to private pockets, either alone or in collaboration with service leaders. A typical example was the *Dasukigate* scandal in which President Goodluck Jonathan's National Security Adviser, Colonel Sambo Dasuki diverted funds allocated for military guns and ammunitions purchase to a $2.1 billion USD armaments sale. During the 2015 general elections, the majority of these monies were redirected to pay party loyalists and cover the expense of political campaigns.

Civil Disobedience, Political Unrest and Ethno-Religious Conflicts

Civil disobedience prompted by socioeconomic injustice poses another threat to Nigeria's national security. Separatist groups have engaged in insurgency and violent confrontations with the state's security forces since the 1967 civil war (Falola, 2001). As a result of the proliferation of weaponry, many non-state actors gained access to weapons, worsening Nigeria's security situation. Many weapons and supplies that made it to Nigeria became an issue when they were used by criminally bent war heroes to perpetrate terrible crimes. The widespread poverty of the post-war era increased tolerance of crime and the exercise of violent power because of the accessibility of munitions that had been illegally obtained during the war. It is obvious that the end of the war resulted in several social, economic, and political problems, all of which posed risks to the security of the nation. For example, the unrestrained enormity of weapon proliferation resulted in sophisticated crime where theft was replaced by armed robbery. The most important sociopolitical problems in Nigeria when the country returned to democracy in 1999 were the insurgency in the Niger Delta, the terrorism in the North, which was later used as a springboard by Boko Haram, as well as the more recent problem of armed bandits in the Northwest region.

On the other hand, Nigeria has experienced violent confrontations, political thuggery, assassinations, and arson since the 1960s as a result of political violence engineered by electoral politics. Nigerian leaders rejected opportunities for discussion, compromise, and negotiation (Eme, 2011). Political campaigns are marked by uncertainty and a violent quest for dominance among politicians. Political gladiators' desire and determination to win elections or hold onto power at any costs is the cause of the political violence in Nigeria. These occurrences regularly result in fatalities, killing innocent people, disrupting economic activity, and destroying property, among other things.

Ethno-religious conflict develops in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria when members of one ethnic or religious group have a hostile relationship with members of the other ethnic or religious group (Eme, 2011). The country's two major religions (Islam and Christianity) and numerous ethnic groups' mistrust and hostility to one another are the main causes of conflicts and religious concerns. For example, the Zango-Kataf, Yoruba- Hausa/Fulani, Ife-Modakeke, Aguleri-Umuleri, Tiv-Junkun, Ijaw-Ilaje, Ijaw-Itsekiri, Urhobo-Itsekiri, and Ijaw-Urhobo disputes and religious riots in Kaduna state are among the ethno-religious conflicts.

Unemployment and Poverty

That Nigeria is currently the headquarters of poverty in the world is no longer news. Out of the 200 million people, it is estimated that the number of poor people in Nigeria which was 89.0 million in 2020, due to the effect of Covid-19 crisis, will rise to 95.1 million in 2022. There is little question that poverty has a direct impact on crime. Due to the high rate of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, violent crimes have risen there. One may argue that the incapacity of previous governments to handle issues like poverty, unemployment, and unfair income distribution across ethnic groups is one of the primary drivers of insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria's development is significantly hampered by unemployment because a large portion of the country's labor force is unemployed. Theoretically, this indicates that there are more people who are willing to kill for a small payoff because of poverty and unemployment (NBS, 2021).

Nigeria's unemployment rate is 35.1%, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2021), with the Northern region having the highest incidence of youth unemployment at 55.4%. 90 million young people live in the nation, making up around 60% of the total population and expanding at a rate of 3.6% annually. National demography indicates that the youth population is thriving, with an average yearly labour force of 1.9 million (NBS, 2021). Unemployment is frustrating and has the potential of degenerating into serious insecurity problems. The emergence of Boko

Haram and other criminal activities like abduction and kidnapping can be linked to the poverty and unemployment.

Kidnapping and Abduction

Various criminal gangs, including suspected armed bandits, militants, pirates, and terrorist groups (Boko Haram and ISWAP), among others, continue to pose a serious threat to national security through kidnappings for political and economic purposes. In reality, every succeeding administration has made a lot of attempts. The Nigerian Senate and States Houses of Assembly, for instance, reviewed and approved the Kidnapping Prohibition Law and the Nigerian Terrorism Act (2011), both of which criminalise kidnapping and impose highly variable forms of punishment, including life imprisonment and the death penalty for offenders. Despite this, kidnappings occur more frequently than ever before. Over 3,312 people, including 373 women and 574 children, were abducted between January and December 2020 in all 36 states of the nation, including Abuja-FCT, according to the National Early Warning System of WANEP (2022).

Similarly, the kidnapping of students from Government Secondary Schools in Kagara, Niger State, and Jangebe, Zamfara State, respectively, on February 17 and February 26, 2021, by alleged armed bandits, has raised discussion over how well the nation's security system combats crime (Olowolagba, 2021; Punch, 2021). Students were kidnapped Kankara, Katsina State, and Mahuta, Katsina on December 11 and 19, 2020 (Jobarteh & Olere, 2022). Between December 11, 2020 and February 26, 2021, 730 secondary school students in Katsina, Niger, and Zamfara States according to WANEP NEWS (Jobarteh & Olere, 2022).

Additionally, the National Early Warning System (NEWS) of the WANEP recorded 120 kidnapping incidents between January and February 2021, totaling 1,181 abducted persons (including 362 children and 103 females) (Jobarteh & Olere, 2022). In 2021, there were more kidnappings than in the 90 occurrences between January and February of 2020, when 467 people (including 51 women and 38 children) were kidnapped (Jobarteh & Olere, 2022). This indicates that kidnapping has become more common in the impacted areas. This has even more catastrophic socioeconomic consequences for the unemployed youths, making them easy target for numerous criminal groups. As a result, rising youth unemployment continues to

motivate young people to consider abduction ransom as potential business opportunity. Between 2011 and 2020 an estimated $18.34 million in ransom was paid to kidnappers according to SB Morgen Intelligence.

The educational chances for young people in the affected area are significantly affected by kidnapping. Many communities have been compelled to keep their children home from school due to insecurity. As a result, in the impacted states, there is an increase in teacher turnover and the number of students who miss class. By exposing kids to radicalization, recruiting, and sexual exploitation, such as early marriage, defilement, and rape- all of which increase the risk of unplanned pregnancies and diseases- kidnapping also violates a child's right to an education. As a result, it is plausible to claim that ongoing talks with terrorists and the alleged payment of a ransom by the Federal and State Governments in exchange for the release of hostages have paradoxical effects on human security because communities are dissatisfied with the stake's capacity and its security operatives' ability to defend and protect them from criminal attacks.

Measures taken to Forestall Insecurity in Nigeria: Political and Military Solution

Every successive administration has put measures in place to stem the tide of insecurity in the country including kinetic and non-kinetic, political and regulatory and diplomatic measures like sharing of intelligence and wooing international support and collaboration. The major measure among these is the kinetic approach. For instance, Odi community in Bayelsa State was decimated by the military under the instruction of President Olusegun Obasanjo. During Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration there were so many military campaigns against Boko Haram. This has continued under the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. Military actions in the South East and South West have both targeted the Oodua and IPOB movements, respectively. Additionally, a sizable army deployment has been made to the most unstable areas, particularly in the North. For instance, President Buhari requested that the military's Command and Control Center (CCC) be relocated to Maiduguri after assuming office in 2015 (allAfrica, 2015).

Other measures taken by the government include allocating funds for the purchase of equipment, training, and welfare of the armed forces, reviewing the National Defence Policy approved in 2017, reforming

the Ministry of Defence after it was discovered that there were some concerning gaps in the organisation and operation of the synergy between the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces, and encouraging synergy between civilian and military components, among the services (allAfrica, 2020a).

In order to combat terrorism (Boko Haram) in the North-east, all security outfits were given code names to help them fight terrorism (Boko Haram) in the northeast, such as Operation Lafiya Dole, which was started in 2015, against Boko Haram in the northeast; the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which was started by the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) States (Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun, Niger, and Benin Republics); and Operation Hadarin Daji, with headquarters. Additional operations included Operation Safe Haven, which was launched in January 2010 to address security issues in Plateau State, which included Kaduna and Bauchi State, Operation Whirl Stroke, which was launched in June 2018 to protect oil and gas infrastructure in the Niger Delta, Operation Awatse, which was launched in June 2015 to control and secure NNPC pipeline infrastructure, which included Lagos and Ogun States, Operation Safe Corridor, and Operation Safe Haven were additional operations. The operations Operation Harbin Kunama III and IV, Operation Puff Adder in the North West, Operation Python Dance in the South East, and others are further designated as special operations (allAfrica, 2020b).

Similarly, the federal government also made massive investments in security through extra budgetary allocations like the purchasing of no less than 60 fighter jets (fighter helicopters, FJ-17s, Super-tucanos, M346 Italian jets) along with battle tanks, MWRAPS, TAVORS, Armored navy vessels, and sophisticated surveillance systems. Bases have been positioned throughout the length and breadth of the war theatre. There are more boots on the ground than ever, most definitely more than the civil war. All of the air assets have been deployed in the North to fight terrorism.

Under regulatory approach, the Senate and the House of Representatives have passed several bills and motions and have sometimes through oversight function have called to questioning the heads of the security agencies. Several committees of investigation have been set up. For instance, on January 29th, 2020, the Senate established an adhoc committee to engage security forces in evaluating the nation's security situation. In a similar vein, the Senate agreed to create

the National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons after acknowledging that the proliferation of illegal weapons and ammunition in the hands of criminals is one of the main causes of conflicts and social instability in Nigeria.

However, the outcome of these measures has produced mixed results but at the general level, it could be said that little has been achieved due to corruption and mismanagement, politicization of security, absence and /or poor political will, poor motivation of the security agencies, collaboration and frustration of the efforts of the military by the various communities who sees members of these criminals groups as their relations.

Another issue is the existence of sabotage among some security forces, particularly the rank and file. The earlier arrest of Hamisu, alias Wadume, a mastermind of abduction, whose escape was made easier when the security officers who had been holding him were killed by military commanders in Taraba State (allAfrica, 2020a). The country's ongoing terrorist activities enrich a lot of unscrupulous politicians. The polity cannot be governed by such individuals. In addition to stealing cash intended to combat terrorism, they occasionally utilize these funds to oppress the populace by funding these terrorists, as is widely known. This kind of person makes the nation unruly. They not only steal money intended to fight terrorism, but they also use it to pay terrorists and oppress the populace.

Since independence and more specifically since 2009 that saw the emergence of Boko Haram, the Nigerian state has allocated trillions of Naira into security sector without commensurate outcome. This includes budgetary allocations, extra budgetary allocations and the illegal and unconstitutional security votes for State Governors and Local Government Chairmen. In 2022, ₦2.41 trillion naira constituting a total of 15% of the annual federal budget was allocated to defense and security. This is more than the entire budgets of the Federal Ministries of Education and Health combined. Only 5% amounting to ₦811.2 billion of the budget and ₦1.290 trillion constituting 7% goes to health and education sectors respectively. Since inception of President Buhari's administration the entire budget for defence and security has continued to grow astronomically. For instance, in 2016 the total budget for security was ₦1 trillion and rose to ₦1.053 trillion in 2017, increased to ₦1.305 in 2018 and ₦1.76 trillion in 2019.The budget further rose to ₦1.78 trillion in 2020, ₦1.97 in 2021 and ₦2.41 trillion in 2022.
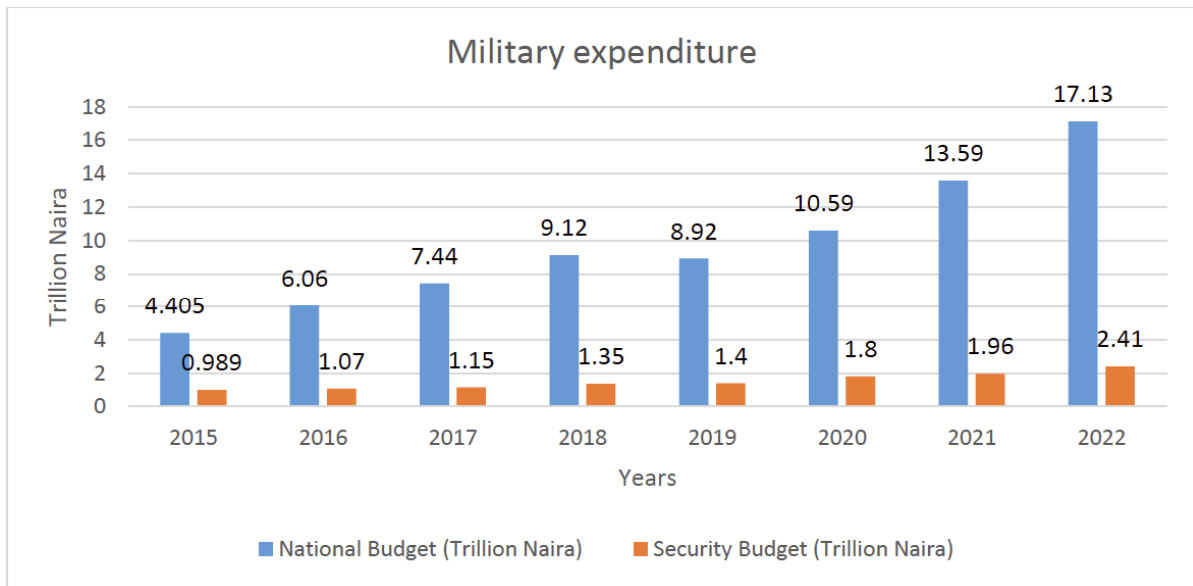
Figure 6: Budgets Allocation for Security in Nigeria from 2015 to 2022.

Source: Authors' Computation, from the National Bureau of Statistics, 2023.

In summary, President Buhari's administration, the nation's security sector has gulped a total of ₦12 trillion. This is apart from the supplementary and extra budgetary spending. For example, a sum total of ₦802 billion was allocated to security agencies in the country to buff up their revenue while a sum of $1 billion USD was approved for military hardware in 2018. Also, the international support to Nigeria to fight insecurity has been enormous. For instance, from 2016 to 2020, the United States financial support to Nigeria stood at $68.6 million USD while the UK security assistance in counterterrorism was £40 million ($53.5 million). The quantum of the money committed to solve insecurity problem may be justifiable because of the enormity of the challenges and the complexities of the crises in the sector but it is pitiable that despite the huge and humongous allocation terrorist activities, banditry, kidnapping and other vices has continued unabatedly, suggesting that the huge spending on security are of no effects. Thus, insecurity worsens as budgetary, extra budgetary and allocations into the security sector increases. The Figure **6** above shows the massive budgets allocation for security in Nigeria from 2015 to 2022.

The security votes to state governors, considered to be unconstitutional, amounting to trillions of naira have been wasted in the name of insecurity since inception of President Buhari in 2015. From the estimate given by Transparency International, Nigeria allocates about ₦241.2 billion ($670 million) annually to security votes. It is an illicit vote which has become a source of

contention among Nigerians. It is important to note that there is no accurate or reliable figure about the amount that has been spent through security votes. In an investigation conducted by the Business Day, a Nigerian Weekly Business newspaper, it was found that each of the 36 states Governors spent an average of 200-300 billion naira as security votes every month.

Additionally, because the state's nepotistic connections are frequently more focused on advancing vested interests than on serving the public, the state's security architecture has become less effective in ensuring the security of the general populace. The general population does, in fact, regularly perceive the military and the police as corrupt institutions due to the prevalence of extrajudicial executions and detentions of suspected criminals without charge (Onuoha, 2010).

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria is insecurity. It has assumed a great proportion and a debilitating dimension. Indeed, it is not improper to state that the insecurity situation in Nigeria has reached a troubling crescendo and demands urgent attention from the federal, state and local governments. It is discovered that the security spending is increasing without a corresponding increase in safety and peace across the country. This suggests that the level of security is disproportional to the amount of money that has been committed to it. A number of factors have been responsible for this including the absence of the

will power by the military to dislodge the criminals, poor political will on the part of the executive to decisively eliminate or ameliorate insecurity, grandiose corruption among the military, politicians and bureaucrats. Thus, bad governance, poses a serious threat to peace and security. Adequate security will inevitably become a mirage if only lip service is paid to combating corruption. To this end, as part of policy recommendations for the National Assembly to mitigate the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. Corruption must be frontally confronted to return peace to Nigeria. In order to achieve effective governance, which is a sine qua non for national peace and stability, the legislative branch must use the power of the legislative insight to promote responsiveness, transparency, and accountability.

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