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Mass Media, Communication Policy and National Security:The Nigeria's Situation

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Abstract
The mass media serve as effective tools for national security when policymakers utilize them judiciously for the promotion of national peace. The recent surge in insecurity in Nigeria, exacerbated during the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari through the processes of Fulanization, politicization of the security system, and the biased handling of bandits and killer herders, underscores the need for Nigerian policymakers to revise the communication policy in alignment with the current national security landscape. This study, guided by the social responsibility theory of mass communication and employing descriptive analysis, highlights that major political stakeholders, who function as policymakers, should play a constructive role in fostering peace in Nigeria by addressing security issues impartially. It emphasizes the imperative need to address security challenges such as Boko Haram, banditry, infrastructural failures on highways, cybercrimes, political killings, Fulani herders' atrocities, kidnapping for ransom, unknown gunmen, and others through a robust communication policy and fearless media reporting. The research also underscores the importance of political leaders abandoning parochial agendas against Nigerian citizens. It emphasizes that ethnicity and regional sentiments should not infiltrate the country's security apparatus. Recommendations include revisiting highway maintenance policies, overhauling the machinery of national security to pave the way for peace in Nigeria, and encouraging the flourishing of investigative journalism and fearless reporting.

Keywords: Mass Media, Communication Policy, National

Security

Introduction

Nigeria's precarious security landscape casts a long shadow over its future. Insurgencies, separatist movements, and widespread criminality are not mere headlines; they are live realities demanding urgent attention. In this labyrinth of threats, one crucial force holds the potential to illuminate and navigate: the Nigerian media. Yet, this potential remains latent, obscured by challenges and demanding a renewed commitment to courage and responsible reportage.

This paper is not a mere academic exercise; it is a clarion call. It seeks to pierce the echo chamber of policy discussions and awaken both communication policymakers and media houses to the critical role they must play in confronting Nigeria's security crisis. It is, in essence, a two-pronged challenge:

Firstly, a challenge to policymakers. To enact communication policies that empower, not constrain, a responsible and fearless media. Policies that incentivize investigative journalism, prioritize public access to information, and create avenues for constructive dialogue, rather than stifle dissent and amplify the voices of fear-mongers.

Secondly, a challenge to the media itself. To rise above the limitations of ownership structures, political pressures, and ethical lapses. To embrace the mantle of watchdogs, holding power accountable and refusing to become instruments of manipulation or purveyors of misinformation. To inform citizens not just of the dangers that lurk, but also of the resilience and potential that exist within communities, fostering a sense of agency and empowering citizens to become active participants in their own security.

This undertaking demands courage. The courage to tell uncomfortable truths, to challenge the status quo, and to stand firm against threats and intimidation. It demands a media that understands its power not as a weapon, but as a torch illuminating the path towards a safer Nigeria.

This paper delves into the intricate relationship between mass media, communication policy, and national security in Nigeria. It dissects the challenges that impede media's potential and proposes policy adjustments that can foster a more responsible and engaged media landscape. Ultimately, it is a call to action, urging both policymakers and media practitioners to embrace their critical roles in shaping a narrative of resilience and hope, one investigative report, one fearless broadcast, one community conversation at a time.

By addressing the challenges and harnessing the potential of this complex interplay, we can transform the media from a passive observer to an active participant in securing Nigeria's future. This is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a matter of national urgency, demanding attention and a resolute commitment to courage in the face of adversity.

Objectives of the Paper

This paper aims to illuminate the critical roles of communication policy makers and media houses in addressing Nigeria's current security challenges. It seeks to urge policymakers to enact communication policies that empower a responsible and independent media, while challenging media organizations to embrace their watchdog function and inform citizens in ways that promote community resilience and proactive engagement in security matters.

Methodology
The study used descriptive analysis methodology by relying on secondary data from Nigerian media report, security men, personal experiences and other security sources.

What is descriptive Analysis?

Descriptive analysis, within the hallowed halls of academia, stands as the cornerstone of data exploration. It is the meticulous process of summarizing, characterizing, and presenting a dataset in a way that illuminates its key features and facilitates further investigation. Far from being a mere technical exercise, it is the foundation upon which insightful conclusions are built and informed decisions are made (Walliman, 2020).

But what exactly defines this fundamental analytical tool? At its core, descriptive analysis is the practice of compiling, organizing, and summarizing data in a manner that reveals its inherent patterns, trends, and underlying structures. It serves as a bridge between raw data and meaningful understanding, transforming a collection of numbers or observations into a clear and concise picture of the phenomenon under study (Moore, McCabe, & Craig, 2018).

Several key techniques underpin this process, each playing a crucial role in unveiling the data's secrets. Measures of central tendency like the mean, median, and mode provide a

snapshot of the data's "typical" value (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Measures of dispersion like variance and standard deviation reveal how spread out the data is, while measures of frequency like histograms and frequency tables showcase the distribution of values within the dataset.

Furthermore, graphical representations such as bar charts, pie charts, and scatterplots play a vital role in bringing the data to life. These visual aids allow us to readily identify patterns, trends, and outliers that might otherwise remain hidden within the raw numbers.

The importance of descriptive analysis extends far beyond its basic functionalities. It serves as the initial stage of any rigorous data analysis process. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the data's characteristics and limitations, it paves the way for more sophisticated statistical techniques and hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2010). It also enables researchers to communicate their findings effectively to a broader audience, both within and outside the academic sphere (Walliman, 2020).

Descriptive analysis is not merely a technical skill; it is an essential tool for understanding the world around us. By delving into the depths of data, it sheds light on hidden patterns and relationships, empowering us to make informed decisions and navigate the complexities of our information-rich world.

The Media and Communication Policy

In pursuit of a secure and prosperous nation, Nigeria's National Communication Policy outlines crucial roles for the media, encompassing print, broadcast, and social platforms. As defined by Nigeria Coalition 2010, these roles include:

Enhancing Public Welfare: Disseminating information vital to all aspects of life, from health and culture to security and national excellence values.

Nurturing Cultural Growth: Providing comprehensive coverage and insightful research on Nigerian culture, promoting its development and enriching citizens' lives.

Broadcasting for National Purpose: Delivering professional broadcasting aligned with national goals and aspirations, serving the people effectively.

Mobilizing for Development: Utilizing programming as a tool for mobilizing citizens towards national development, security, and improved quality of life, particularly in rural communities.

Strengthening Unity: Ensuring balanced portrayal of diverse viewpoints from across the nation, fostering national unity and integration.

Upholding Accuracy: Committing to the regular delivery of accurate information to the public.

Encouraging Informed Discussions: Providing platforms for healthy discourse on critical national issues, stimulating public engagement and mobilization.

Bridging the Gap: Serving as a communication channel between government and citizens, facilitating transparency and responsiveness.

Promoting Virtuous Values: Championing national consciousness and the pursuit of a just, humane, and self-reliant society.

Elevating Program Quality: Prioritizing excellence, upholding moral and ethical standards in programming to meet people's evolving needs and expectations.

Protecting National Interests: Ensuring media development aligns with national interests, fostering ongoing progress and stability.

Reaching Every Corner: Achieving comprehensive national coverage, ensuring all citizens have access to information and communication channels.

Embracing Indigenous Languages: Broadcasting news and programs in local languages to empower and inform rural communities.

Cultivating Youth Identity: Supporting programs that instill indigenous culture and values in young Nigerians, shaping their identity and sense of belonging.

Enhancing Education: Aligning programming with educational goals, enriching learning opportunities for all.

The policy recognizes the vital role of traditional structures in achieving these objectives, encouraging their integration into communication strategies. It further promotes direct public and private investment in community-based media outlets, particularly in rural areas, to address the specific information needs of these populations.

While these principles and regulations hold immense potential for fostering national security and development, their practical implementation often falls short of expectations. This gap between policy and reality calls for a closer examination of the challenges hindering communication tools from effectively contributing to national security and progress. Specifically, the paper will delve into the post-2015 Nigerian landscape, marked by escalating insecurity and socioeconomic anxieties. Identifying critical obstacles, such as rising insecurity, government nepotism, and infrastructural neglect, will be crucial in developing strategies to leverage the media and communication policy to address these issues and empower Nigeria to achieve its vision of peace and prosperity.

What is National Security?

National security, a concept as complex as it is vital, occupies a central stage in international relations and domestic governance. While seemingly straightforward, its precise definition remains contested, evolving across time and context (Baldwin, 2021; Baylis & Smith, 2016). Yet, at its core, national security can be understood as the safeguarding of a nation's core values, interests, and way of life from internal and external threats (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). This encompasses ensuring the physical and territorial integrity of the state, the well-being and safety of its citizens, and the stability and functioning of its institutions (Christensen, 1999; Williams, 2011).

Traditionally, national security was primarily associated with military capabilities, focused on deterring and defending against external aggression. However, the concept has broadened significantly in recent decades. Contemporary understandings often categorize threats to national security into five core domains:

Military: Traditional threats posed by other nations' armed forces.

Political: Interference in internal affairs, subversion, and threats to the legitimacy of the government.

Economic: Disruptions to vital economic infrastructure, trade imbalances, and cyberattacks.

Social: Internal conflicts, civil unrest, and widespread societal breakdowns.

Environmental: Climate change, resource scarcity, and natural disasters.

Realist thinkers, like Hans Morgenthau, emphasize the primacy of power politics and competition between states, viewing military preparedness as the cornerstone of national security (Baldwin, 2021).

Liberal scholars, like Michael Doyle, advocate for cooperative security frameworks and international institutions as tools for mitigating conflict and promoting collective security (Baylis & Smith, 2016).

Critical security studies scholars deconstruct traditional notions of state-centric security, highlighting the role of non-state actors, social inequalities, and environmental concerns in shaping security dynamics (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998).

Understanding its diverse interpretations and the scholarly debates surrounding National security is crucial for informed citizens and policymakers in navigating the multifaceted challenges of ensuring the safety and prosperity of their nations.

The New Dimension of Insecurity

For decades, the definition of security echoed through the halls of academia, yet a truly satisfying answer has remained elusive. Even within a single community, the perception of what constitutes security has shifted like desert sands (Ejogba, 2006). Traditionally, security studies were dominated by a narrow lens, viewing it solely as a state's muscle to defend its territorial borders from imagined or real threats (Okwori, 1995). This translated to building and equipping formidable armies, the Cold War's ultimate security blanket.

But the post-Cold War era has painted a different picture. The assumption that state-sanctioned violence deters aggression now seems like a blunt instrument in a nuanced world. We're witnessing a paradigm shift, a broadening of the security concept to encompass more than just military might. Now, issues like economic development, social justice, and environmental sustainability are seen as vital threads woven into the tapestry of true security (Hettne, 2010; Booth, 2007).

This shift stems from the glaring inadequacy of the Cold War's militaristic approach. Bandits attacking military formations, Boko Haram's atrocities, the impunity of Fulani herders – these are not threats solely countered by tanks and missiles. Human development, with its focus on individual well-being, has emerged as the new cornerstone of security (Absolute Astronomy, 2011; Tedheke, 1998).

This new conception envisions security as a two-pronged shield. One side deflects external threats with all the necessary means, while the other fosters internal stability through the socio-economic well-being of its citizens (Edafejirhaye, 2021). Political, environmental, and social factors are no longer seen as peripheral concerns, but as integral components of a nation's security posture.

In essence, the "new dimension of insecurity" is not just a threat, but an opportunity. It's a call to redefine security beyond the confines of military muscle, and embrace a human-centric approach that shields not just borders, but the very well-being of its people.

For this paper, we take a broad view of security, seeing it as a state of minimized threats and simmered tensions, where the internal and external stability of a country is not on the brink of collapse. Stability here refers to the ordered, predictable, and patterned condition of a state over time.

Traditionally, national security has been synonymous with managing physical threats through military muscle. This involves mobilizing forces to safeguard borders, deter aggression, and counter physical threats like terrorism from both state and non-state actors. Countries like Nigeria, South Africa, and Sweden prioritize territorial defense through their military structures. Others, like France, Russia, the UK, and the US, invest in expeditionary capabilities to project power beyond their borders.

Political and media scholars argue that political security and a stable social order are just as crucial to national security as military might (Lynne, 1998). They emphasize the importance of a just and equitable international order, upheld by the rule of law, effective institutions, and skilled diplomacy (Rogers, 2010). Within nations, inclusive political practices and ensuring the human security of citizens contribute significantly to political stability. In Nigeria, for instance, the lack of political inclusion and leadership fueling tribal tensions has led to the rise of community defense mechanisms.

Economic security plays a vital role in national security. A nation's ability to maintain and develop its economy provides the backbone for all other security efforts. Larger countries often rely on accessing resources and markets abroad while protecting their own. Unfortunately, developing countries like Nigeria, plagued by unemployment and underpaid work, are often more vulnerable to economic threats. The ongoing food insecurity crisis due to Fulani herder activities and the government's insufficient response is a stark illustration of this interconnectedness.

Ecological security, also known as environmental security, stands guard over the well-being of our planet's ecosystems and the incredible tapestry of life they support, including our own. When this vital layer starts to fray, the consequences can ripple far beyond mere wildlife decline. Think topsoil erosion, deforestation, shrinking biodiversity, and the ominous shadow of climate change – all of them can undermine economic stability, trigger mass migrations, and put immense pressure on resources elsewhere.

The debate over how environmental threats impact national security is complex, but Romm (1993) identifies three key areas of concern:

1. **The Big Ones**: Global environmental problems like climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss cast a long shadow. Consider Nigeria's infrastructural struggles – they're not just an internal issue; they're part of a larger network of vulnerabilities caused by environmental decline.

2. **Scarcity's Grip**: When resources run thin, tensions often rise. Water scarcity in the Middle East is a stark example, while Nigeria's own struggles with unemployment and insufficient agricultural yields, exacerbated by Fulani herder attacks and erosion, lead many to seek a better life elsewhere, putting pressure on other nations. Environmental insecurity in Rwanda, fueled by population growth and shrinking farmland, is even linked to the tragic events of the Rwandan genocide.

3. **War's Toxic Legacy**: Warfare doesn't just claim lives; it scars the planet. From the Romans razing Carthage's fields to Boko Haram's destructive rampage in northern Nigeria, from

herdsmen laying waste to farmland in the south to Saddam Hussein's oil fires in the Gulf War, and even the lingering environmental impact of Agent Orange in Vietnam, war leaves a trail of ecological devastation that can haunt entire nations for generations.

Security of energy and natural resources

In today's world, security extends far beyond borders and battlefields. It now encompasses a vital network of interconnected elements, like energy, natural resources, and the very infrastructure that keeps our lives running. Recognizing this critical link, the United Nations has included resource security among its Sustainable Development Goals, and nations like Spain are integrating it into their security strategies (Spanish Govt 2013; Rogers 2010).

But for many Nigerians, this remains a distant ideal. Epileptic power outages continue to cripple industries, forcing them to migrate to neighboring countries where basic infrastructure isn't a daily struggle. This is just one example of how the vulnerability of our core systems:

- **Cybersecurity**: From financial frauds by "yahoo boys" to potential attacks on critical infrastructure, cyberspace has become a new battleground. The increasing reliance on computer systems makes robust cyber defenses vital (Hettne, 2010; Rohuke, 2005).

- **Infrastructure Security**: Crumbling highways like the Makurdi-Enugu route and pothole-filled expressways like Lagos-Ibadan are stark reminders of the dire state of our infrastructure. The consequences are not just economic, but potentially deadly (Abisoye, 2012).

- **Terrorism and Sabotage**: From Boko Haram's attacks on government buildings to attacks on oil pipelines, these acts aim to destabilize and inflict maximum damage.

- **Information Warfare**: Whether it's cybercrime for personal gain or state-sponsored hacking, the potential for disruption and espionage in the digital world is immense.

- **Natural Disasters**: Hurricanes and other natural events can cripple critical infrastructure like power grids and water systems, highlighting the need for disaster preparedness.

This interwoven web of threats underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to security. It's not just about soldiers and guns; it's about ensuring the resilience of our critical infrastructure, protecting our cyberspace, and investing in sustainable resource management. Only then can we truly build a safe and secure future for all.

Theoretical Framework

Exploring the connection between communication policy and national security demands a sturdy theoretical framework. A theory, in essence, is a map - a set of interlocking ideas that illuminate, rather than obscure, the relationships between concepts (De Fleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). It helps us understand why things happen the way they do, providing clarity and order amidst chaos (Griffin, 1991).

For this analysis of escalating insecurity in Nigeria and the potential role of communication policy in addressing it, the social responsibility theory of the press serves as a valuable guide. This theory encourages media outlets to act as responsible members of society, balancing freedom of expression with a commitment to truth, accuracy, and public welfare (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956).

Why choose this particular theory? Because in a climate of insecurity, information can be a double-edged sword. Misinformation and hate speech can exacerbate tensions, while responsible reporting and open dialogue can foster understanding and collaboration. The social responsibility theory equips us to navigate this complex landscape, highlighting the media's potential to either fuel or mitigate insecurity.

Here, we are not all about applying abstract concepts. It's about using a well-defined framework to illuminate the intricate links between communication, information, and national security. By understanding the "why" behind events, we can move beyond mere description and towards meaningful solutions.

Social responsibility theory of the Press.

The year 1956 saw the birth of a crucial concept: the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press. Proposed by Siebert, Paterson, and Schramm, it challenged the notion of absolute media freedom, arguing that with great freedom comes great responsibility. The press, they argued, enjoys a unique position in society, and therefore, an obligation to act as a responsible steward of information.

At its core, the theory rests on several key principles:
o Media are not neutral observers, but active participants in shaping public discourse. They have a duty to society to inform, educate, and warn against threats, including insecurity.
o Media ownership is not a private privilege, but a public trust. Owners and editors must act with integrity and transparency, prioritizing the public good over personal gain.
o Truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, and objectivity are the cornerstones of responsible journalism. Facts, not opinions, should guide reporting, promoting understanding rather than division.
o Self-regulation is essential, but not sufficient. While media should strive for internal ethical standards, external safeguards like laws and professional codes of conduct are also crucial.
o Media should be diverse and pluralistic, reflecting the richness and complexity of society. Different voices and perspectives must be heard to ensure a healthy and informed public sphere.
o Society has a right to expect high standards from its media. When failures occur, interventions to ensure public good are justified.
o Journalists are not just employees, but public servants. They answer to the people they serve, not just their employers or the market.

In today's Nigeria, where insecurity casts a long shadow, the media's role has become even more critical. The public expects prompt, accurate, and objective reporting on security issues, without fear or favor. Investigative reports that expose the roots of insecurity, coupled with responsible commentary that fosters dialogue and understanding, are crucial tools in the fight for a safer nation. However, the question of who journalists are ultimately responsible to remains a complex one. Are they beholden to media owners, editors, or the people? The rise of commercial media empires raises concerns about potential monopolies and control over information. This highlights the importance of a robust system of checks and balances, ensuring that the media's responsibility to society remains paramount. By embracing the principles of the Social Responsibility Theory, the Nigerian media can play a vital role in promoting security and fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry. It's a delicate balancing act, but one that is essential for building a future where freedom and security go hand in hand.

Factors that escalate Nigeria insecurity

Some of the major factors that heightened the insecurity situation in Nigeria since 2015 could be traced to the following. They are: the Boko Haram insurgent, fulanization of Nigeria by the Buhari administration, politicization of Nigeria security system and Fulani herdsmen atrocity.

Fulanization Agendum of Buhari Administration
The Fulanization agenda of the Buhari administration refers to its concerted effort to strategically position Fulani individuals across all 774 local government areas in Nigeria, particularly in key federal positions, such as the military, police, and other paramilitary forces. The objective is to establish Fulani dominance in Nigeria. This controversial agenda became evident through the appointment of Buhari's fellow Fulani tribal members to crucial federal political roles, as reported by Nigerian media outlets, including the Guardian Newspaper on November 26, 2018, Cable News in February 2020, and Sahara reporters on June 11, 2020.

The term "fulanization" describes the exploitative and oppressive tactics employed by the Buhari government to acquire territories traditionally occupied by other ethnic groups, primarily to promote dominance and create opportunities for Fulani herders. It also involves forceful actions to subdue and subject the original inhabitants of these territories after the failure of the Ruga settlement policy initiated by the Buhari government. Buhari initiated the Fulanization project by strategically appointing individuals and restructuring the leadership of the Nigerian security forces. Subsequently, Fulani guerrillas, already restless, began executing their plan B operations, which involved activities such as kidnapping, rape, and the displacement of communities. These guerrillas are positioned in the forests of the middle belt and southern Nigeria, ready to act upon their signal to attack the inhabitants of those areas.

Many Nigerians are convinced that a significant conflict loomed during the previous administration, fueled by Buhari's actions. The Vanguard in 2019 observed that a majority of Nigerians actively believe that President Buhari has an agenda beyond a nationalist one for Nigeria. This agenda involves opening the northern borders and discreetly allowing the influx of wandering and unsettled Fulani from West Africa to be permanently resettled in a new Nigerian homeland, achieved through the strategic displacement of indigenous communities long settled in present-day Nigeria. Buhari's ultimate goal is perceived as the Islamization of Nigeria.

This perception has led to a surge in self-defense initiatives and movements for the national actualization of Indigenous people, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kanu and the Oduduwa Republic spearheaded by Sunday Igboho. Other nationalities in Nigeria are covertly preparing for self-defense, potential conflict, or even secession, as they no longer trust the Buhari government with the security of life and property.

Politicization of Nigerian security system
The term 'politicization' originates from 'politics.' Nnoli (2003:12) defines politics as encompassing "all activities that are directly or indirectly associated with the emergence, consolidation, and use of state power." In this context, politicization is employed critically to denote the distortion of a phenomenon originally intended to serve an altruistic and populist objective. Instead, it is manipulated for the personal and self-serving interests of specific individuals, groups, classes, and political parties. Specifically, the politicization of national security here refers to using the activities of Boko Haram, bandits, and killer herdsmen as a

basis for advancing the selfish political agenda of certain politicians and political parties (Nwangwu, Olihe, and Okoye, 2016).

The Nigerian federal government has politicized the security system by diverting attention away from addressing the Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, and killer herdsmen activities that contribute to the worsening insecurity in the country. Instead, the focus has shifted to citizens who attempt to defend themselves against the pervasive insecurity. This approach prompted Governor Wike of Rivers State to call for collective action, urging Nigerians to unite in combating insecurity. He emphasized the need to cease the politicization of security issues, as it poses a threat to national development.

Wike expressed the need for collaborative efforts to combat insecurity, emphasizing that political affiliations should not matter. He urged everyone, regardless of party allegiance, to unite and work together to safeguard the country (The Guardian, March 7, 2020). He questioned the rationale behind playing politics with people's lives, asserting that one's political affiliation should not determine their protection.

Undoubtedly, the Boko Haram insurgency has been sustained, in part, by the impulsive and unpatriotic statements made by certain ethno-religious extremists and unscrupulous politicians. A statement linked to the escalation of Islamic militancy and insurgency in Nigeria is ascribed to the late Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, dated October 12, 1960. As reported in the Parrot Newspaper and referenced in Oritsejafor (2014:21), Bello proclaimed that the newly formed nation called Nigeria should be regarded as an estate of our great grandfather Othman Dan Fodio. He emphasized the need to ruthlessly prevent a change of power, employing the minorities in the North as compliant instruments and considering the south as a conquered territory, with the directive never to allow them control over their own future (Parrot Newspaper, Oct 12, 1960).

The commitment by members of the Northern Political Leadership Forum, led by Mallam Adamu Ciroma, to make Nigeria ungovernable if the presidency did not return to the northern region after the 2011 General Election, intensified the insurgency. Quoting from Frantz Fanon's 'The Wretched of the Earth,' former Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar asserted that those who hinder peaceful change inevitably pave the way for violent change. However, retired General Muhammadu Buhari's recent statement, suggesting that military actions against Boko Haram are perceived as anti-north, has further inflamed the Boko Haram insurgency (The Nation, June 2, 2013; Guardian, Nov. 26, 2018).

In a related incident, 356 Nigerian soldiers resigned, citing the alleged insincerity of the federal government in combating the insurgency (The Punch, July 12, 2020). These incidents collectively indicate the potential for ongoing crises in Nigeria. The soldiers submitted their resignation letters to the army chief on July 3, 2020, referencing the Harmonised Terms and Conditions of Service for soldiers/rating/airmen (Revised) 2017. The approval for the voluntary disengagement of the 356 soldiers was outlined in a 17-page circular from Buratai, AHQ DOAA/G1/300/92, signed by Brig Gen T.E. Gagariga on behalf of the army chief. This information was obtained by our correspondent on Saturday and was also distributed to various army divisions and formations (The Punch, July 12, 2020, p.14).

Reflecting on the gross misconduct of policymakers who play politics with human lives in Nigeria's security system raises concerns about the prospect of peace in Nigeria at present.

Fulani herdsmen Atrocity

Edafejirhaye (2021) identified another factor contributing to the worsening insecurity in Nigeria. This involves the harmful actions of herdsmen, such as destroying crops, engaging in kidnappings, assaulting women in farms, and killing innocent Nigerians. According to reports from Nigerian media investigations, these activities are allegedly politically motivated, aiming to instill fear and acquire land for the Islamization of Nigeria. In the North Central region, former Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom, in a widely circulated video on social media, accused the Federal Government of shielding the interests of armed herders, aggravating the security situation in Nigeria. The governor asserted that insecurity is fueled by armed herdsmen from various regions, calling for the arrest and prosecution of Miyetti Allah leaders. Ortom emphasized the government's need to openly criticize, arrest, and prosecute Fulani herdsmen wielding AK47s, accusing the federal government of displaying bias in handling the herders' crisis.

To counter the aggression of Fulani herders in the South West, Sunday Adeniyi Adeyemo, also known as Sunday Igboho, took action by leading an attack against a Fulani community leader in Oyo. Igboho accused the leader of harboring Fulani herders involved in criminal activities. After numerous assaults in the Ibarapa region of Oyo State by suspected Fulani herdsmen, Igboho issued a deadline for them to vacate the area (The Cable, Feb. 8, 2021). Likewise, in the South East on December 12, 2020, Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, declared the establishment of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Eastern Security Network (ESN). Kanu asserted that the primary objective of the ESN is to safeguard Igbos from Fulani raiders.

Reacting to the emergence of an unauthorized paramilitary group within its borders, the Nigerian government allegedly dispatched the army to identify ESN camps and capture Nnamdi Kanu. The government's biased approach in addressing security concerns, showing preference for cases like Kanu and Igboho while neglecting the leaders and backers of violent herders, indicates an ongoing state of insecurity in Nigeria.

Is Peace on the Horizon in Nigeria?

Presently, a state of insecurity pervades schools, farms, highways, byways, waterways, marketplaces, and even military barracks across Nigeria. The prospect of achieving peace in the country appears remote, primarily due to the Buhari government's unwavering pursuit of its narrow agenda of Fulanization and Islamization, utilizing the apparatus of the Nigerian government. The security system is likely to remain ineffective unless Bandits and the perpetrators associated with Fulani herders are officially labeled as terrorists and dealt with in accordance with the law. Unaddressed issues related to the infrastructure of Nigerian highways will persist, turning them into safe havens for armed robbers, kidnappers, and hazardous zones for all road users. The destruction of crops by Fulani herders not only indicates a potential slide into widespread anarchy but also extends a clear invitation to food insecurity and economic devastation. Consequently, there are currently no promising signs of peace emerging in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The paper contends that communication policymakers and the media need to collaborate in promptly addressing issues that contribute to national security concerns before they escalate beyond manageable proportions. Those in political positions in Nigeria must cease supporting insecurity as a means to cling to power. Media organizations should maintain their courage in

exposing political figures who exploit the nation's security challenges for personal gain. The media should persist in educating the Nigerian masses on effective ways to counter insurgency, killer herders, and kidnappers by refining local defensive mechanisms. Dangerous road conditions and crime-prone areas should be daily reported through radio, television, newspapers, and social media to reduce the loss of lives and minimize accidents and robberies. This recommendation is applicable to other developing countries, especially in Africa, grappling with challenges such as insecurity, economic growth, development, political reforms, and democratization. While this paper primarily focuses on Nigeria, it acknowledges the similarities in the challenges faced by most African countries today. Issues like institutionalized nepotism, social inequality, hyperinflation, stagnant economic growth, and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region, which is crucial to the nation's sustenance, along with the biased politicization of the security system and oppressive leadership, persist as prominent contributors to national insecurity in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Addressing the escalating death and destruction caused by Bandits, herders, poor road maintenance, Boko Haram, and other insecurity challenges in Nigeria is crucial given the extensive reports by Nigerian media, Amnesty International, and other international human rights agencies. Edafejirhaye (2021) notes that the ceasefire agreement with the radical sect seems like a deceptive move, and the only viable solution is the use of force. This approach must be executed impartially, without nepotism or the promotion of insecurity through state power, as seen in the case of Buharism. The inconsistent treatment of Fulani herders and bandits by the Buhari administration is a significant factor contributing to the persistent insecurity.

A comprehensive review of the national communication policy is essential, along with an enhancement of intelligent information gathering. Equipping law enforcement with modern tools is imperative for effective crime fighting and prevention. Additionally, inter-agency collaboration among security and intelligence agencies should be led by non-partisan Nigerians. Agencies such as the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), State Security Services (SSS), Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), and others need comprehensive support to effectively address contemporary security challenges.

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