INTERNAL SECURITY CRISES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN NIGERIA IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated internal security crises and human rights abuse in Nigeria in the fourth republic. Internal security crises are those crises generated internally that threaten the peaceful, co-existence and institutional stability of a state. Internal security crises are caused by struggles between classes, struggle for economic and political control of the states, ethno religious diversity and other factors that seek to change the political and economic status quo or to enthrone new crop of elites. In Nigeria, the management of these internal security crises have led to several crises within the state especially crises bordering on human rights abuse. The manner at which the Nigeria security forces respond to internal security crises through the use of excessive force, arbitrary arrest, extra judicial execution and other unprofessional practices have undermined human rights in Nigeria. In the theoretical framework, the theory of securitization by Ole Waever was adopted. The study concludes that the manner at which internal security is managed in Nigeria is a threat to human rights as it accounts for most human rights violation in Nigeria. The study hereby recommends for the strict adherence of the rule of engagement while managing internal crises and the use of police to maintain internal peace.

Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, faces profound challenges in maintaining internal security, which in turn have severe implications for human rights across the country. Known for its economic potential and rich cultural diversity, Nigeria is also home to multiple security crises that threaten both stability and the safety of its citizens. These crises include the violent insurgency of Boko Haram in the northeast, rampant banditry and kidnappings in the northwest, and the herdsmen-farmer conflicts in the central regions. Additionally, oil-related militancy in the Niger Delta and rising ethnic tensions across the country contribute to the complexity of Nigeria's security landscape. As these issues persist, they continue to fuel a

vicious cycle of violence, displacement, and economic hardship, worsening the humanitarian situation for millions. The maintenance of internal security is the core value of every state as Dawood and Salusi (2014:1) opined that internal security is very critical to the functions of the state.

In response to these crises, the Nigerian government has deployed significant security resources, but the results have been mixed. Rather than restoring peace, security efforts have often led to accusations of human rights abuses committed by security forces, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture, and even sexual violence. According to Egbefo (2014:4) many scholars have identified religious, political, intolerance, mismanagement of resources, subversion, sabotage, espionage, armed robbery, muting and coop d'état and so on as the main cause of internal security crisis in Nigeria. There are equally other structural problems that arises due to the failure of Nigeria government to address certain root causes of internal security crises. These incidents have eroded public trust in state institutions, leading many to question the ability of the government to protect its people without violating basic rights. Moreover, impunity for those involved in these abuses remains a significant issue, as perpetrators often go unpunished, encouraging a culture of disregard for human rights within security agencies (Egbefo, 2014).

Non-state actors, including terrorist organizations, bandits, and militias, have also contributed to the human rights crisis. Groups like Boko Haram and armed bandits often target civilians in their attacks, committing acts of violence that include kidnappings, murder, and forced displacement. Many communities, feeling abandoned by the government, have formed vigilante groups to protect themselves, though these groups sometimes resort to violence and extrajudicial measures, further complicating the human rights landscape. This cycle of violence and mistrust highlights the difficult balance Nigeria faces in addressing security needs while protecting the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

The struggle to manage the above internal security crises and maintain internal peace by the Nigeria security operatives have impugned on different rights of Nigerians. The problem lays heavily on the management method employed by the security operatives against internal peace. Moreover, Mbah and Nwangwu (2014:2) observed that the activities of the Nigeria security force in the northern region have not only eroded the spirit of Section 14 (2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which makes the security and welfare of the people the primary purpose of government but also undermined the fundamental human rights of the citizenry as enshrined in Chapter Four of the document. They have equally negated other relevant laws established under the constitution as well as several international human rights treaties which the government has, at one time or the other, ratified. It is therefore ironical that the security agents who are statutorily responsible for the protection and preservation of the fundamental rights of the nationals are increasingly indicted in the infraction of these rights.

The method of managing internal security crises by the Nigeria security operatives like the Nigeria Armed forces (soldiers, airforce, navy), the Nigeria police force (NPF), the state security service (SSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigerian Prison service, the Nigeria Immigration service and National intelligence Agencies have generated a lot of crises due to the human right violation as regard to the manner at which the security forces handles security issues in Nigeria. As Nigeria confronts these internal security challenges, it becomes clear that a holistic approach is necessary. Addressing the root causes of these conflicts, promoting accountability within security agencies, and fostering stronger ties between communities and law enforcement are essential steps in creating a safer, more just society. the paper examines the complex interplay between Nigeria's internal security crises and human rights abuses, analyzing the roles of both state and non-state actors in perpetuating violence and highlighting strategies for meaningful change.

Conceptual Clarification

Internal Security

The concept of internal security revolves around the measures a state takes to maintain peace, law, and order within its borders, protecting citizens from domestic threats that can undermine stability and governance. Unlike external threats that arise from foreign adversaries, internal security concerns focus on issues that originate within the state, such as terrorism, insurgency, organized crime, ethnic conflict, and civil unrest. Effective internal security ensures that individuals and

communities can carry out their daily lives without fear of violence, theft, or other threats to their safety and wellbeing. In a country as diverse as Nigeria, with its myriad ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, maintaining internal security is particularly challenging, as security crises can arise from deep-seated social and economic grievances that create fertile ground for conflict and instability (Mbachu, 1998: 23).

Tedheke (1998:6), argues, "Security is beyond militarism. The term security goes well beyond military consideration. Security can be understanding both as a defense against external (or internal) threats as well as overall socio-economic well-being of the society". McNamara (in Tedheke, 1998:6) shares the opinion:

> *In a modernizing society, security means development. Security is not military force though it may involve it: security is not traditional military ability though it may encompass it; security is not military hardware though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security.*

McNamara (in Tedheke, 1998:7) further elucidates:

> *Any country that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, and low level of productivity, fragile infrastructural base for technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and chronic problem of unemployment has false sense of security.*

It equally implies the freedom from danger to life and property and the presence of conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate matters within the society. Also Iweze (1990:7) affirms that internal security could also be viewed as the totality of the nation's equilibrium state which must be maintained to enhance the state performance of its responsibility without unnecessary interruptions from anywhere. Internal security involves government coordination of all those actions that would guarantee that the equilibrium of state is constantly maintained or quickly brought to stability whenever it is threatened by any form of civil disturbances or distractions from students, political or religious groups. It is therefore evident from the above definitions that a nation is said to be secured to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values, life, property and liberty (Iweze 1990).

In Nigeria, the concept of internal security has also taken on a human rights dimension, as efforts to combat security threats frequently result in human rights abuses. Security forces are often accused of heavy-handed tactics, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Such actions not only violate fundamental rights but also alienate communities, creating an environment in which violence and unrest can thrive. Therefore, Nigeria's internal security crises are not merely about addressing threats to physical safety but also about ensuring that measures to restore order do not come at the expense of human rights.

Human Right Abuse

Human rights are the fundamental rights and freedoms to which every individual is entitled, regardless of nationality, race, religion, or any other characteristic. These rights are considered universal, inalienable, and indivisible, meaning they apply equally to all people, cannot be taken away, and are interconnected in supporting individual dignity and freedom. Recognized by international frameworks like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and various treaties, human rights encompass a broad range of protections, including civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, freedom from torture, and the right to a fair trial, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the right to education, healthcare, and an adequate standard of living. Together, these rights provide a foundation for individuals to live with dignity, free from discrimination and oppression, and with the ability to participate fully in society.

Human rights is defined by Donnelly (2013) who also referred to it as "the rights of man", as "literally the rights that one has because one is human." As pointed out by Bantekas and Oette (2016), many people and groups loosely use human rights to mean rights available to every person because they are human. As loosely as that understanding might be, it reflects on a basic level, the essence of the two words that came together to form the term. Human refers to everyone on earth irrespective of their age, ethnicity, nationality, ideology, orientation, sex

or creed. Rights refer to privileges that one compulsorily deserves irrespective of his or her age, ethnicity, nationality, ideology, orientation, sex or creed. Rights are usually legally enforceable in character and application. Human rights are therefore privileges and opportunities which a person is entitled to by the simple virtue of the fact that he is a human being.

According to the United Nations 'human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status." These rights include "the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education… and everyone is entitled to access to these rights, without discrimination." Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states that "Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right."

Human rights have been viewed from three main categories, namely: Civil and political rights, which protect people from the infringements of governments, organisations or other people; Socioeconomic and cultural rights, which include the right to education, housing and satisfactory living conditions; and Solidarity rights, which recognizes the importance of equality and non-discrimination. (Foster, 2006). In essence, human rights represent the basic ethical standards for human treatment, affirming that all individuals have the right to live without fear, discrimination, or oppression. Upholding these rights requires vigilance, commitment, and a balanced approach that recognizes the needs of society as a whole while respecting the dignity and freedoms of each individual.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the theory of securitization theory. The major thrust or the basic assumption of the securitization theory is that it states the sole actor in the international system that makes any issue a security issue. Also, it assumes that security is an illocutionary speech act that solely by mere pronouncement. In international politics, securitization refers to the ability of state actors to make a particular issue a security matter. It could be regarded as an extreme politicisation of issues that enables extraordinary means to be used in the name of security. The theory of securitization is the ideology of Copenhagen School of thought but the word securitization was coiled by Ole Waever in 1995. Securitization is a process-oriented conception of security, which stands in contrast to materialist approaches of classical security studies. Classical approaches of security focus on the material dispositions of the threat including distribution of power, military capabilities, and polarity, whereas securitization examines how a certain issue is transformed by an actor into a matter of security in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures.

It therefore follows that by labeling an object a matter of security, it becomes one. According to Waever (2004:13), an objective transforms into a security issue once a state actor pronounces it. By stating that a particular referent object is threatened in its existence, a securitizing actor claims a right to extraordinary measures to ensure the referent object's survival. The issue is then moved out of the sphere of normal politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with swiftly and without the normal (democratic) rules and regulations of policy-making.

From the basic tenet of securitization theory, one could decipher two core reasons why human rights abuse has been the order of the day by the Nigerian security agencies in the course of managing internal security crises in Nigeria. The Nigeria military operations against internal security crises have been geared towards the protection of the state and its sovereignty over the people, which accounts for the failure because of the unpronounced attitude of the government toward upholding human rights. The state-centric approach to security in Nigeria has made the security of the state the core issue of the Nigeria security apparatus or agencies. Issues that threaten national unity or the sovereignty of Nigeria are swiftly dealt with in Nigeria than issues bordering on human rights. To this extent, the Nigerian state and its security can move to any extent to protect the state even if it amounts to violation of the citizens' rights to live. The above assertion is correct because the government has securitized the safety of the state as an entity while other issues of core national interest like human rights receive little or no attention from the government. Going by the fiscal budget, the money allotted for defence alone is greater than the budget for other factors like education and human rights.

Secondly, the repression of social movements especially those ones which the state feels that

their existence constitutes a threat to the government of the state shows contentious politicalization of human rights in Nigeria is an abuse of rights itself. Most of the time human rights issues become subjective of whose rights were violated. And who violated it? The theory of securitization is of the assertion that objects that need attention should be securitized in order to attract extraordinary attention, but the continuous politicization of rights or the failure to secutilize human rights accounts for the increase in rights violations during internal security management.

Nigeria's Internal Security Crises

Nigeria's internal security crises are among the most complex and persistent in Africa, affecting nearly every region and creating far-reaching consequences for national stability, development, and human rights. The country faces multiple, region-specific security challenges that include terrorism, banditry, communal violence, and militancy. Each of these issues stems from a combination of historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and weak governance structures, making them difficult to address through conventional security measures alone. These crises undermine public safety, disrupt economic activities, and erode public trust in the government's ability to maintain law and order.

One of Nigeria's most high-profile internal security threats is the Boko Haram insurgency, which has ravaged the northeastern region since 2009. This militant group, and its splinter faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), seek to establish an Islamic state and have targeted both military and civilian populations through bombings, kidnappings, and large-scale assaults on towns and villages. The insurgency has led to the displacement of millions, creating a humanitarian crisis that extends beyond Nigeria's borders. Despite government efforts to counter Boko Haram, the group remains a formidable threat due to its ability to exploit economic hardship, religious ideology, and grievances among local populations to recruit and sustain its operations.

The struggle to manage this plethora of internal security crises in Nigeria led the Nigerian security forces to stage several military campaigns that were designed to take care of the internal security crises in Nigeria. In most of the country, one campaign or the other was designed by the military to respond to one threat. To this effect, the manners in which the military campaign against internal security crises, the crises itself have accounted for several human rights violations in Nigeria. Rights violations as a result of internal security crises have resulted in the course of military campaigns against these crises. Each internal security challenge that Nigeria has witnessed has varying degrees of human rights violation as a result of the activity of the actors or the purveyors of the conflicts. The Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen crises which are the leading internal security crises in Nigeria as noted by SBM INTEL (2018) have accounted for more deaths and have violated mostly the civil, political, and economic rights of the people, while so many have been displaced all over the northeastern region as a result of the conflicts.

In the northwest, banditry has emerged as a significant security challenge, with armed groups conducting kidnappings, extortions, and attacks on rural communities. Originally driven by disputes over resources, banditry has evolved into a highly organized form of crime, with groups holding entire villages hostage for ransom. The impact of these activities is profound: families are forced to pay hefty ransoms, farming activities are disrupted, and communities live in constant fear. These groups often exploit weak governance and a lack of adequate security presence, which allows them to operate with minimal resistance. Their actions further impoverish already vulnerable communities, exacerbating social and economic inequalities and driving disillusionment with the government.

Communal violence, particularly between farmers and herders, adds another layer to Nigeria's internal security crises. This conflict, concentrated in the North Central and Middle Belt regions, is often rooted in competition for land and resources, which are increasingly scarce due to population growth and climate change. These clashes are frequently cast in ethnic and religious terms, as most herders are Fulani Muslims, while the farming communities are largely Christian. This framing intensifies the violence and widens societal divides, making the conflict even harder to resolve. Many communities feel unprotected and, in response, have formed their self-defense groups, which often leads to further violence and a breakdown of social cohesion. For instance, the Ijo (Ijaw) Itshekiri and Urhobo with several other conflicts have become a perennial problem for the

national government yet to be resolved. (Otite 2000).

In the oil-rich Niger Delta, the legacy of environmental degradation, poverty, and unemployment has fueled militancy and occasional attacks on oil installations. Militants in this region, driven by the perception that local communities do not benefit equitably from Nigeria's oil wealth, have targeted pipelines and other infrastructure, disrupting the economy and contributing to national instability. While the government's amnesty program in 2009 helped to reduce hostilities, grievances over environmental damage and lack of economic opportunity continue to simmer, leaving the region vulnerable to renewed violence (Ake, 1967, Akindele, 1998, Dudleg 1973, Takaya 1995).

Human Rights Abuses by Security Forces

Consequently, to determine, the extent of human rights violations as a result of military campaigns against this crisis, the following military campaigns; Operation Hakuri 11, Operation Boyona, and JTF operations will be analyzed to determine how they account for violations of the following rights; social rights violation, civil rights violation, political violation, economic rights violation, right association violation.

Operation Boyona and Human Rights Abuse in North East

The word BOYONA is an acronym that originates from the keywords of the states in Nigeria where the operation was meant to cover; that is the Bornu (BO) state, the Yobe (YO) state and the Adamawa (A) State. The preceding security situation in the country that necessitated the operation was the rising wave of insurgence as a result of the Boko Haram activities, Nigeria Army (2013) The operation BOYONA was launched in May 2013 with a total number of 10,000 troops. It kicked off when the state of emergency was declared in those three states and was meant to tackle insurgency in the northeast. During this operation, the major human rights violated were the economic, cultural, and civil rights while the major violators were the two parties in the conflicts; the Nigeria security forces and the Boko haram terrorist organization.

Among all the rights violated by the military during this operation, the most abused rights were civil rights. This is because both actors in the conflict played an enormous role in the violation of these rights especially towards non-combatants. As regards the violation of civil rights by the Nigerian security forces during the operation BOYONA, the breakdown of civil rights violated are; extrajudicial or summary execution/ death in custody due to denial of life-saving treatment to detainees, unlawful detention, torture, and forced disappearance.

For the sake of clarity, the researcher quantified and put into a chart to depict the extent of the violation of the component of the civil rights of the citizens in the three states where Operation Boyona was conducted. The figures used in constructing this histogram were extracted from the Amnesty International report "Stars on their shoulders, blood on their hands".



***Source**: compiled by author from the amnesty international report Stars On Their Shoulders. Blood on their hands. War crimes committed by the Nigerian military (2014)*

Amnesty International report titled Stars on Their Shoulders. Blood on their hands. War crimes allegedly committed by the Nigerian military (2014) and Hagler (2018) noted that death has occurred in the custody of the Nigerian security forces, there are torture, unlawful detention, mass arrest, forced disappearance, and summarized execution.

On death in custody, Amnesty International (2014) noted that more than 1400 deaths have been reported at detention facilities of Giwa and Mai Malari barracks in Maiduguri, and in the Multinational JTF facility in Mile 4, Baga, in sector Alpha ("Guantanamo"), Presidential Lodge in Damaturu and the JTF base ("Rest House") in Potiskum (Yobe State) and 23 Brigade Barracks in Yola (Adamawa State). It is therefore paramount to note that most of the deaths that occur in the detention facilities have been masterminded by the Nigerian security forces either directly or indirectly. A report from the same human rights organization has it that some detainees were left to either die of hunger or ailments, while some were executed. To buttress and give more clarity to this point; The Nigeria Right Watch (2014) observed that some are suffered to die. The major causes of deaths in detention facilities were starvation, thirst, severe overcrowding that led to the spread of disease, torture and lack of medical attention, and the use of fumigation chemicals in unventilated cells.

According to Hagler (2018), the Nigerian Security Forces have been alleged to be responsible for various deaths of detainees in detention facilities scattered in the North East. Hagler (2018) attested that in March 2011, more than 7, 000 men and boys have died in detention facilities. Amnesty International (2014) reported that the highest death rate was recorded in Giwa Barracks in May, June, and July 2013 when about 180 deaths were reported. Even though the problem of the Amnesty International report lies in the fact of difficult verification of data presented about the actual number of deaths that have occurred under the watch of the Nigeria security forces but United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2015) noted that detainees in the above detention facilities were deprived of food and water and kept in overcrowded conditions which resulted in death. It has been noted of the numerous condemnable and atrocious incidents of extrajudicial killing and executions carried out by the security forces of government in the Northeast. At least about 27 of those incidents are recorded that were committed between 2012 and 2014. Amnesty

International. At least 1, 200 men and boys were killed in these incidents. These individuals were killed by Nigerian Security Forces after capture and when they presented no danger, in gross violation of international humanitarian law (IHL).

One such horrific mass extrajudicial execution occurred on 14 March 2014 in Maiduguri, Borno State. This happened after the attack by Boko Haram on the military detention facility at Giwa Barracks during which detainees were released. Nigerian Security Forces were alleged to have slaughtered about 649 men and boys who ran away from the Boko Haram attack and were recaptured. On many occasions, most of these executions are carried out by the military in collaboration with the civilian JTF members. Again, in Bama, after the security forces took over in March 2015, shot and killed everyone who was not cleared by the Civilian JTF as a resident and who had no link or sympathy to Boko Haram. Extrajudicial executions of members of Boko Haram suspects and sympathizers were routine practice for the Nigerian Military. This is for persons who were captured and who presented no more danger. Others were shot dead inside detention facilities, while others were either shot or had their throats cut right after being captured during cordon and search operations (Amnesty International, 2014).

Furthermore, another instance of civil rights violation during Operation BOYONA is the torture of those in detention facilities. Torture is routinely and systematically used by the Nigerian Security Forces to extract confessions or as a form of punishment. Torture in detention facilities of the Nigerian security forces always takes the form of driving a broom into a man's genitals, beating, and tying the bicep and triceps muscles of the hand with the rope until blood seizes to circulate the veins and arteries. According to Amnesty International (2014), victims of torture are always suspended from metal poles and shocked with electric batons by soldiers among other methods. Victims of torture or other ill-treatment rarely have access to medical assistance and many die as a result of their injuries. Amnesty International has previously documented a widespread pattern of torture and ill-treatment in both police and military custody across Nigeria. A detailed report, 'Welcome to hell fire': torture and other ill-treatment in Nigeria, published in September 2014, found that torture and other ill-treatment in the northeast of Nigeria increased as the conflict escalated.

Amnesty International has also documented arrests during house-to-house raids and at checkpoints, as well as targeted arrests of suspected Boko Haram members' relatives. Most of those arrested are young men, although Amnesty International has recorded arrests and detention of boys as young as nine years old. Amnesty International has also documented the arrest and detention of 30 women and girls. The number of arrests increased significantly following the imposition of a state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.

Operation Hakurri 11 and Human Rights Violation in South-South

The word "HAKURRI" is a Hausa language which stands for "SORRY" in English. Operation Hakurri 11 was the first joint task force operation in Nigeria. The operation's special mandate was to Protect lives and property; particularly oil platforms, flow stations, operating rig terminals and pipelines, refineries, and power installations in the Niger Delta (Tom, 2000). Basically, 'Operation HAKURI II' was a punitive military operation that resulted in massive destruction of lives and property after two days of continuous bombardment of Odi community in the Niger Delta (Human Rights Watch 1999). Interestingly the core motive of any JTF operations is intended to protect civilians from violence and their presence often creates the expectation among host communities that they will be protected from violence and human rights abuses.

However, internal security operations of JTFs have become notorious for bombing insurgents in civilian populated areas thereby killing innocent people and destroying human habitations and sources of livelihood (Lawan, 2013; Amnesty International, 2012). The failure of such operations to protect the civilian population was demonstrated in the 20 November 1999 bombardment of the Odi community in Bayelsa state by operatives of 'Operation HAKURI II'. After two days of intense bombardment with heavy artillery, aircraft, grenade launchers, mortar bombs, and other sophisticated and deadly weapons, about 2,483 persons mainly women and children were killed and numerous buildings destroyed (Courson 2006:3). The atrocious spectacle of Odi was replayed on 22 and 24 October 2001, when a detachment of the Nigerian Army invaded Zaki Biam and neighbouring communities in North-Central Nigeria, in a reprisal attack that resulted in the extra-judicial executions of many unarmed civilians and the destruction of numerous

property (Human Rights Watch, 2002). The killings in Odi and Zaki Biam are arbitrary and thus a violation of the human rights of the inhabitants of those communities because those who were killed were neither insurgents nor organized armed groups. Organised armed groups, according to the 'Interpretive Guidance' of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are those that recruit their members mainly from the civilian population and possess the capacity and military organization to either 'take a direct part in hostilities' or conduct hostilities 'on behalf of a party to the conflict' (Melzer, 2009, p.69-72). These attacks were generally condemned as a violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law (Human Rights Watch, 1999; 2002).

Also, in May 2009 the JTF code named 'Operation Restore Hope' allegedly destroyed seven communities suspected of harboring militant camps in Delta state. Subsequent hostilities between MEND and men of 'Operation Restore Hope' in Gbaramatu kingdom in Delta state claimed more than 500 lives and displaced about 5,000 people (Francis et al. 2011:200). This particular operation was very atrocious because it was a coordinated land, water and aerial bombardment, involving a combine force of the Army, Air Force and Navy personnel. The bombardment which lasted for two weeks from 13 to 27 May 2009 caused the violent death of many people, mostly women, children and the aged, and endangered the lives of many others who were forced out of their communities into forests and swamps (Francis et al, 2011). Ironically, the use of excessive force by operatives of 'Operation Restore Hope' actually intensified the level of organized violence in the Niger Delta as it triggered a cycle of attacks and counter-attacks that eventually resulted in high civilian fatalities (Chiluwa, 2011).

Social Movements and Human Rights Violations

Social movements have long played a vital role in advocating for human rights and social justice, often emerging as powerful forces that challenge oppression, inequality, and government abuses. These movements are typically driven by ordinary citizens who unite to demand change, highlighting injustices and pushing for accountability. Social movements can be local, national, or global, and they often use a combination of protests, online activism, legal actions, and public awareness campaigns to amplify their voices. In countries with limited democratic space or where state institutions are weak, social movements become crucial advocates for human rights, mobilizing citizens to demand reforms that the state may be unwilling to undertake. They have become particularly influential in the digital age, as social media platforms allow movements to grow rapidly, transcend geographical boundaries, and gain international solidarity. According to Snow, Soule and Kries (2004) collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part.

One notable example is Nigeria's #EndSARS movement, which was launched to protest police brutality, specifically against the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). What began as a call to end police abuses evolved into a broader movement demanding systemic reforms and accountability. The movement brought widespread attention to issues of police violence, corruption, and human rights violations. However, it was met with a violent response from the state, culminating in the tragic Lekki Toll Gate incident where security forces opened fire on unarmed protesters. This violent crackdown exposed the lengths to which governments may go to suppress social movements, even when they seek to address legitimate grievances. The events surrounding #EndSARS highlighted how government responses to social movements can exacerbate human rights violations rather than address the underlying issues that gave rise to the protests.

The social movements that have suffered directly or indirectly from the government actions in Nigeria are the press or the journalist, secessionist groups or ethic based groups like (Oduduwa people congress, Ohanaeze, IPOB) religious movements like the Islamic movements of Nigeria, resource control, environmental groups like the MEND. Even though these lists are not mutually exclusive or collectively exhaustive, the government tends to control these groups through suppression and use of security forces against their members and against their activities (Soule and Kries, 2004).

The Press and Human Rights Violation

Despite the freedom of information acts and other legislation that protects the rights of the press, the Nigerian journalist and pressmen have face some many plethora of rights violation from the government. The freedom of information acts (FOA) which provides for; make public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from adverse consequences of disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization and establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and; for related matters (Freedom of Information Act, 2011) is supposed to be the safe haven for all pressmen in Nigeria offers little or no protection to the press as Nigeria government and her security forces turn blind eyes to the provision while dealing with the press.

All over the world and especially in Africa, the press is always the victim of direct violence and at the mercy of repressive dictatorial government. According to the committee on the protection of journalist report (2018) the group reported at the event of 28 september2018 general assembly of the United Nations (UN) that journalist is regularly threatened, attacked, imprisoned and killed around the world. According the group, at the end of 2017, around 262 journalists were jailed all over the world; 70 in turkey, 40 china, 20 Egypt, 2 killed in Nigeria while 12 were assaulted and 52% were behind bars for reporting human rights violation in their countries or divulging what native laws or government called official secret. Moreover, in 2015, the total number of journalist killed on the course of carrying out their duty was put to the figure of 110 by the International Press Centre (IPC) Lagos. Similarly, in a May 2018 report of the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lamented of arbitrary imprisonment of journalist which foster self-sensor ship and impinges on the public rights to access of information is on continual rise.

In Nigeria, the press is not spared as both state and federal government in one way or the other clamp on the rights of the press to exist and operate freely like every other organization whose rights are protected. In most cases the police or other security agencies engages on illegal detention, arrest and or even kill journalist especially when the report against the government, government officials or even some protected individuals.

Chronicles of Killed Nigerian Journalist

S/N	Name	Media House	Date	Events
1	Jerry Edoho		January 6, 2018	He was picked up in Uyo by police personnel from the Force headquarters in Abuja
2	Nsebiet John	The Ink, Akwa-Ibom State	January 6, 2018	He was detained for a night in police cell, arraigned and granted bail to the sum of N250,000
3	Dapo Olorunyomi	PREMIUM TIMES	January 19.	arrested by armed police officers

4	Evelyn Okakwu	PREMIUM TIMES	January 19.	arrested by armed police officers
	Godwin Aliuna	National Mirror, Ebonyi State:	February 22.	He was attacked by alleged armed robbers in his residence
5	Famous Giobaro	Bayelsa State-owned radio station, Glory FM	April 16.	He was shot dead by suspected hired assassins
6	Samuel Nweze:	Publisher of the People's Leader	June 2.	He was shot by gunmen in front of his office in Abakaliki
7	Charles Otu of the:	Conscience Newspaper	June 2.	He was beaten to stupor with dangerous weapons and later abducted by suspected political thugs in Abakaliki
8	Lawrence Okojie	Nigerian Television Authority, Benin	July 8.	: He was shot dead by gunmen at 8 p.m. while returning from work
9	Amadin Uyi	Silverbird Television, Abuja	August 8.	He was brutalized by police officers during the protest by Ourmumudondo group at Unity Fountain in Abuja
10	Segun Salami	Channels Television, Kogi	August 28.	: He was battered at the state house detention centre by security personnel attached to Kogi State government house
11	Wale Odunsi,	an editor with Daily Post (online publication)	October 11	He was reportedly attacked by security officials at the Kogi State government house

12	Ikechukwu Ibe	Daily Trust Newspapers	October 26.	He was allegedly brutally assaulted by an Army captain at Jabi area of Abuja

Note: compiled from welcome address presented by the Chairman of International Press Centre, Lagos Mr. Arogundade on November 2 2018 (https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/248117-two-nigerian-journalists-killed-12-assaulted-2017-full-list-ipc.html).

From the ongoing, the data above shows the level of the security forces clamp down on the press even in the government houses especially that of Kogi states and the Ebonyi state. While attack of press houses especially on that of the premium times and the (Nigeria Union of Journalist) NUJ secretariat in south east which was invaded by soldiers on Python dance assaulting 12 journalists during the raid. It is evident from these, even not mentioning prominent case like that of Dele Giwa that the relationship between the press and the Nigeria security forces could be likened to that of hammer and anvil and this amount to several human rights violation towards the group by the government.

Addressing Human Rights and Security Challenges

Addressing human rights and security challenges in Nigeria requires a multifaceted and balanced approach that combines effective security measures with a strong commitment to human rights. Security interventions, particularly in regions afflicted by terrorism, banditry, and communal violence, must prioritize the safety of citizens without infringing on their basic rights. This delicate balance is essential because, historically, heavy-handed security measures have often exacerbated violence, fueled resentment, and led to human rights abuses. Instances of arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings by security forces have eroded public trust in the state, alienating communities and sometimes even driving support for non-state actors. To be effective, security operations must be coupled with accountability mechanisms that prevent abuses, protect vulnerable populations, and foster community cooperation with authorities.

One of the most pressing steps in addressing these dual challenges is to reform and strengthen Nigeria's security institutions. This includes investing in the training and equipment of police and military forces, ensuring that they are equipped not only with tactical skills but also with a strong understanding of human rights principles. Specialized training on crowd control, conflict resolution, and community engagement can help security personnel interact more constructively with the public and reduce incidents of abuse. Additionally, improving the welfare of security personnel by providing fair wages and support can help to curb corruption within the ranks, which is often a major factor in public mistrust. Transparent accountability structures, such as independent oversight bodies, should be established to investigate and prosecute cases of abuse, ensuring that violations are addressed and not tolerated within the security sector (Ali 1993).

Beyond security reform, addressing the socio-economic root causes of conflict is essential for achieving long-term peace. Many of Nigeria's security crises are deeply intertwined with poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which create conditions that can breed violence. For instance, regions affected by insurgency and banditry often suffer from limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Young people, lacking viable pathways for social mobility, may be drawn into criminal or insurgent activities. Government-led initiatives to improve social services, create jobs, and develop infrastructure can help mitigate these underlying grievances, providing communities with alternatives to violence and reducing the appeal of extremist and criminal groups. Investments in education, vocational training, and small business development can empower citizens and enhance their resilience against manipulation by violent groups.

Fostering stronger ties between the government and local communities is also crucial in addressing human rights and security challenges. Community engagement initiatives that involve local leaders, civil society, and religious organizations can help to build trust and ensure that security measures align with

community needs. In many cases, community-led security initiatives, such as neighborhood watch programs and dialogue platforms, have proven effective in reducing crime and managing tensions. By partnering with communities, the government can develop culturally and contextually appropriate solutions, reducing reliance on force and creating a sense of shared responsibility for security. Mediation, intervention, dialog, government enquires, intercession by government delegates and traditional rules and other Nigerians of substance should always be used to settle internal security threats rather than raw and brutal application of military might been experience any time there is any eruptions of security crisis in the country. (Ali 1993, Alubo 2006, Otite 2000, Fleiner 2002, Imobighe 1990).

International partnerships can further support Nigeria's efforts to address human rights and security challenges. Collaborations with organizations such as the United Nations, African Union, and regional bodies can provide technical assistance, funding, and training resources for both human rights and security reform. International agencies can also play a role in monitoring human rights compliance and providing support for transitional justice initiatives in conflict-affected areas. Such partnerships bring expertise and global perspectives that can aid Nigeria in implementing best practices and adapting successful approaches used in other regions.

Ultimately, addressing human rights and security challenges in Nigeria is not a short-term endeavor; it requires sustained political will, community participation, and a commitment to justice and fairness. By balancing effective security strategies with respect for human rights, Nigeria can foster an environment of trust and collaboration, laying the foundation for lasting peace and stability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Nigeria's internal security crises and human rights abuses represent complex and intertwined challenges that require both immediate and long-term solutions. The persistent issues of terrorism, banditry, ethnic conflicts, and militancy are exacerbated by economic hardship, lack of education, and insufficient government accountability. These conditions create an environment where violence can thrive, undermining stability and citizen trust in the government's ability to protect its people. Efforts to address these security concerns have often been met with reports of human rights abuses by security forces, which further strain relations between the government and the communities it serves. Moreover, the rise of social movements, like #EndSARS, underscores the population's desire for justice and accountability, as well as the urgent need to reform security practices that infringe upon human rights. Achieving lasting peace and security in Nigeria, therefore, requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes not only safety but also respect for human rights.

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