THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA:
A THEMATIC EXPOSITION

EME, OKECHUKWU INNOCENT
ANTHONY ONYISHI
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

Abstract

Matters of safety and security are topical issues in today’s Nigeria. Life has always been precarious in our country. It is subject to all manners of dangers. In the first place it is often a victim of killer diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, small pox, HIV/AIDS among others. In addition to threats from diseases, are threats that are man-made. In the past, we used to fear for the security of our property from armed robbers. Today, we fear for our lives from kidnappers, political and economic related assassination and extra-judicial killings. These have rapidly become familiar features of our landscape. The impact of this massive sense of insecurity on the both psychic and overall functioning of Nigerians cannot be overestimated. The paper examines in a thematic form the concept of insecurity and its various manifestation using concrete examples. It goes to posit on the need to check the rising threats to lives and property across Nigeria and the poor living conditions of many Nigerians. The paper also identifies the implications and challenges insecurity posses for the polity and concludes by positing that Nigeria’s democracy is endangered as political intolerance, and economic frustration gather momentum in the form of assassinations, intimidations, threats and hostage taken across Nigeria.

Keywords: Insecurity, Extra-judicial and political Killings, Armed Robbery, Kidnapping and Hostage Taking and Economic Frustration

Introduction

Former Governor of old Kano State Abubarkar Rimi died last two weeks after an encounter with bandits known as kwanta kwanta. He was heading for Kano from Bauchi when he had the encounter with the men of the underworld. They dispossessed occupants of their valuables and Rimi’s brother who sat in the front seat of the car was thoroughly beaten. Rimi was not attacked. He however, took ill, after the incident, was rushed to the Aminu Kano University Teaching Hospital but he lost the struggle shortly after. The man died.
Since his death, many Nigerians have been commenting on the state of insecurity in the polity. Insecurity takes various forms in different parts of the country. In the South-West, armed robbers have taken over, while in the North, cross-border bandits operate with the ease it takes hot knives to drive through butter. In the South-South, the fear of kidnapping is beginning of wisdom. The aged, titled men, clerics, government officials, academics, professionals, women and children are not spared. It is the latest multi-million naira vocation in the regions.

Specifically, the spate of kidnapping across the country, the incessant wave of crime and armed robbery attacks even on the operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the recent use of explosives as terrorist instrument, the recent ramming of a cab under an aircraft in Calabar, all point to the fact that insecurity is fast becoming a norm in Nigeria.

The usual government response whenever there is a major case of insecurity or security lapses is to call for investigations that never lead to any substantive improvement on the security situation.

Unlike Rimi, who died not because he was attacked, many Nigerians such as former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige; Lagos politician Funsho Williams, Ogun State Governorship candidate of the Action Congress (AC) in the 2007 election, Dipo Dina among others have been killed by either suspected robbers or assassins. Till this day, their killers have not been arrested. All these people have just suffered the painful and a terminal fate that confronts many ordinary Nigerians on a daily basis.

Whether we accept it or not, Nigeria is steadily sliding into a state of lawlessness. Institutions that should respond promptly to the needs of the citizens are non-challant and inactive. The slow response of the Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital to the emergency case of the late Rimi captures the lethargic state of public institutions in the country. Countless Nigerians have met their untimely death because they never got prompt medical attention.

Additional to the threat to lives by inadequate policing and violent crime or the inert state of our health institutions is the deepening socio-economic insecurity that also poses a threat to individual wellbeing and makes living miserable for many Nigerians while a few engage in squandermania.

Put differently, there is apparent anxiety in the land; and the government knows it. Jobless youths, restive and daring ethnic militias, unrelenting desperations of hired assassins, unprecedented rise in cost of living, and security agencies, these are seasons of anomie which portends danger to the nation.

One major task that should confront and obsess the newly constituted Federal Executive Council is the need to check the rising threat to lives and property across the country and the poor living conditions of many Nigerians. Though the term of the new ministers is rather a short one, but with appropriate devotion to national priorities devoid of the usual pursuit of personal interests the months ahead could be properly used to improve the Nigerian condition. Nevertheless, this insecurity in Nigeria has led to a terrible trouble of hopelessness.
At this juncture, the crucial questions that will guide this paper are the underlisted:

1. What is insecurity?
2. What are the causes of insecurity?
3. To what extent has the Nigerian government gone in fighting the insecurity of lives and property?
4. What are the implications and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria? And
5. What are the possible ways out?

Hence, this paper intends to appraise the nagging problem and challenge of insecurity in Nigeria.

Theorising Insecurity Question in Nigeria

There are three major contending perspectives to the understanding of insecurity question. There is the armed robbery theory, wobble economy and opposition – ruling party theses. The Armed robbery theory posits that the high wave of armed robbery in Nigeria is primarily responsible for high level of insecurity in Nigeria. It also argues that in Nigeria, politics is extremely competitive and elections are perceived as zero-sum contests. The fallout is the increasing militarized nature of politics, the use of violence as an electoral tool, and the inculcation of a culture of violence in society. Again, this thesis recognizes the existence of armed groups of varying character and intent operating in Nigeria. However, today’s armed groups are better armed and trained, and increasingly sophisticated in their actions compared to those of the past.

The armed robbery thesis concludes by arguing that as a result of zero-sumness politics combined with the prevalence of armed groups provided an easy marriage between politics and violence. Armed groups have taken advantage of the opportunities presented by being hired hands, and have now developed their own bases of economic support (armed robbery) thereby freeing themselves from their political patrons.

The major proponents of this thesis include former President Obasanjo and other government apologists. They used this theory to explain the mindless murder of Bola Ige, Alfred Rewane, Dikibo, and Marshall Harry and other party chieftains sent to their early graves between 1999 and 2008. Keen observers and analysts of the polity have inflamed this thesis. They countered by positing that in all these high profile killings, the assailants’ drove away without taking a pin further weakens this conjuncture.

The proponents of this thesis stopped short of propounding the armed banditry thesis after the attack on former governors Akume, Ibori, Nnamani, Udenwa, Tinubu and Orji among others.

Closely related to the armed banditry thesis are the wobble economy thesis and the fallout it generates on the nation. This theory posits that as a result of the growing array of qualified and unqualified youths competing in the existing saturated labour market there is a tendency for them to be recruited and exploited as hired killers. It further argues that as a result of high level of poverty among Nigerians, the youths are adversely attracted to violent crime. These youths are lured and armed by “second-term politicians” who wanted to retain
power no matter the cost arms them with guns. After these elections, none of these guns were recovered from these new merchants of death.

Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002:12) add that while the poor people in Nigeria rate insecurity as a key cause of poverty, they do not necessarily see poverty as a cause of armed conflict. While we are not necessarily disputing the linkage between poverty and violent conflict, the nature of that linkage remains to be clarified. In the first place, if poverty exists and has apparently existed as a pervasive and structural feature of the Nigerian state, why has it not produced the sort of conflict that we have witnessed in recent years?

It would appear that the thesis for the above link might well lie in relative deprivation rather than absolute poverty. So set against the inability of the government to provide basic infrastructure and basic services for its populace, new conflicts have emerged through politicized agents who have used the conditions of the poor to address the responses or non-responses of the state to the lawful yearning of the citizens. This has led some groups to engage in and try to influence the political process themselves. These conflicts in Nigeria are purposeful in intent and directed at key targets, whether economic or political. Armed violence is about more than oil, ethnicity, or politics. In essence, such actions is about access to resources, whether through committing crimes, playing communal tension, stealing oil or winning elections.

The third thesis is the ruling-opposition party thesis. According to this perspective, the ruling PDP accuses to opposition parties and other branded anti-democratic forces of engaging in violent crimes to truncate democracy in Nigeria. According to the ruling party, the only way to get even with the government is to create crisis for it. This has supposes that it is far fetched but it is not possible. The ruling party cites the bomb blast in Osun, Ekiti and Ondo clashes, Jos and Bauchi ethno-religious conflicts to support their argument. Those who are opposed to this view accuse the ruling party of masterminding the “state-sponsored terrorism”. A case index is probably the allegation of the Action Congress and, Conference of Nigerian political parties and former Governor Orji Uzor Kalu that certain forces within the PDP are behind the blood letting in the country. The former chairman of the Board of Trustee of the PDP is at the centre of the accusation. This thesis reinforces Wole Soyinka’s nest of killers’ theory residing within the PDP thesis.

In view of the above theses, one can posit that Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. Inter and intra-communal and ethnic clashes, ethno-religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence, and bomb explosion have been on the increase leading to enormous loss of life and property and a general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the populace (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002:2). While communities and ethno-regional and religious groups fight each other, state agents and party officials have been involved in the perpetration of violence and destruction as reflected in the Odi, Benue, Jos and Rivers crises.

The state exists fundamentally for the protection of lives and property and ensuring the well-being of the citizens. As such, state-based institutions and agencies have responsibility for the security of the citizens. However, certain institutions and agencies are specifically charged with the responsibility for the security of life and property. They include the police, state security agencies, the military, immigration, and prison services.
For the purpose of this paper, insecurity refers to the breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, which Nigeria has witnessed over the years resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and property.

Manifestations of Insecurity in Nigeria

The underlisted are the various manifestations of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria:

Ethno-religious Conflict

Communal and societal conflicts according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities. In all parts of Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates. It has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively. Groups and communities who had over the years lived together in peace and harmony now take up arms against each other in gruesome “war”. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets, “Osu caste system” and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria. In these conflicts, new logics of social separation and dichotomy have evolved in many communities in Nigeria. There is the classification of the “settler” and “indigene”, “Christian” and “Moslem”, and “osu” (slave) and “Nwadiala” (free born). These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in Nigeria.

Politically Based Violence

Politics in the current civil dispensation like the previous Republics have displayed politics of anxiety which has played down on dialogue, negotiation and consensus. The anxiety is as a result of perceived or real loss of power by an elite stratum. Put different the quest for political power is among those elites that won it before, those that lost it and those who want it back.

Currently, politicians are already strategizing about the control and retention of power come 2011 elections. To this end, inter and intra-political party conflicts have become rife in which politicians are deploying large resources to out-do each other, changing the rules and legislations of the political game, distorting laws and employing violence and political assassination to settle political scores. Party meeting, campaigns and conventions have become war threats where small and light weapons like guns and cutlasses are freely displayed and used to rig elections, harass and intimidate electors. Also, a spate of politically motivated killing is rife. The most shocking of this killing is rife. The most shocking of these
killings was the murder of Chief Bola Ige, Funsho Williams, Dikibo, Ogbonna Uche, and Marshall, among others Onyemaizu (2006:10) adds:

> A resort to violence, including armed militancy, assassination, kidnap, et cetera, have somewhat suddenly become attractive to certain individuals in seeking to resolve issues that could have ordinarily been settled through due process. The end-products of such misadventures have often been catastrophic. They include the decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and destruction of properties among others.

The predilection of most of the politicians is not for election but selection. This lack of party internal democracy is already being revealed in the party primaries, and “selection” of national executive officers of the parties. Even politicians themselves are afraid of what the forthcoming general elections between 2010 and 2011 portend. An atmosphere of political insecurity is fast engulfing Nigeria’s nascent Fourth Republic.

**Economic-Based Violence**

In a popular parlance, this thesis is also known as “political economy of violence”. Recent writings in the mass media across the globe and across political divide have laid much emphasis on the role of resources in generating conflict which is a major cornerstone of economic-based violence. Cries of resource control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponents and opponents.

Although by no means limited to oil in the Niger Delta, the most prevalent campaign about the link between resources and conflict focuses on oil and the Delta region. Put differently, there is evidence to suggest that oil has given rise to vertical and horizontal conflicts between National, State and society or between dominant and subordinate geopolitical zones, classes and groups across Nigeria, given the pivotal role that oil plays in the restructuring power relations in Nigeria.

It is however true that other types of resource driven conflicts have received less attention in the debate. Assets such as grazing and farming and water resource, have tended to give rise to horizontal conflicts that involve communities across the geo-political zones.

The other thesis is that conflict in Nigeria is poverty induced. This explanation is closely related to relative deprivation, rather than absolute poverty. As a result of the above, the inability of the state to provide basic services for the populace, generate new conflict or renew old ones manifested through politicized agents who have used the conditions of the poor to address, the responses or non-responses of the state to the legitimate yearnings of the people.
Organized Violent Groups

Organized violent groups take varying dimension and forms. These include: ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institutions and political thugs. Various reasons and circumstances account for their emergence. The causes of the manifestations include the culture of militarism that has its antecedents in military rule, the failure of the state and its institutions, economic disempowerment, the structure of the state and Nigeria’s federalism, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of patriarchy and gerontocracy and ignorance and poor political consciousness (Ibrahim and Ig buzor, 2002:7).

Thematic Explanation of the Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

A thematic explanation of the causes of insecurity would show that improper funding of the police and other security agencies is the major cause of insecurity question in Nigeria. This cause stems from the fact that there are inadequacies in the security agencies, modern communication equipment, sophisticated arms and ammunition so that the security agencies will be able to contain these criminal gangs. Also, the allowances and salaries of these security agencies are hardly paid, their welfare is nothing to write home about.

As a result of the above, the Nigerian populace are bound to suffer the kind of scandal with its political elites running around in shame.

Monetization of the labour market is another cause. This theme posits that as a result of high unemployment, graduates without jobs have gone a lot of mental torture in the process of security jobs and in the process they have been involved in all sort of fiscal indiscipline and corruption and other social vices. These army of unemployed force themselves into the police force and other para military and military agencies. The fallout of such a situation will be trying to cover lost ground by enriching themselves illegally and colluding with criminal gangs. As Olade pupo (2005:13) posits:

It is irony of the Nigerian situation that the nation’s law enforcement agents are even more corrupt than those they are supposed to police. This has sometimes been blamed on the manner and caliber of men and women recruited in the Nigerian security outfit. Merit and good character are thrown to the winds during recruitment as men and women of questionable character including criminals, bribe their way into the force …. Little wonder therefore that many of the recruits hide under uniform to wreck havoc on the society.

Gross party indiscipline and infighting among political gladiators is another. It is worthy to be noted that a sizeable proportion of those who have suffered attacks in recent times have been members of the ruling party and leading opposition parties and their allies. Politics in Nigeria are beset with acts of gross misconduct, lack of internal democracy, blackmail, and indiscipline. Their act ranges from disobedience to the party’s constitution, to
in-fighting among party leaders and their hangers-on. Take for instance, the political wars between and among governors and their deputies, the legislature and the executive, godfathers and their god sons, political dynasties, state and Abuja politicians among others.

Aside from the bad eggs in the force, the poor welfare of the police, military and para-military personnel, with lack of adequate working tools, inadequate personnel is another factor that promotes insecurity in Nigeria. The International Institute for Strategic Studies as cited by Olonisakin (2008:20) captures this when he posited that the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450. At a minimum, citizens ought to have easy access to the police and feel safer as a result of the protection they offer. Yet Nigeria has failed to meet the standard set by the United Nations for effective policing. What are the impacts of all these shortcomings? The next part of the paper will address this.

Impact of Insecurity Question in Nigeria

The underlisted are a checklist of the impact of conflicts and insecurity in a polity:

1. Social dislocation and population displacement
2. Social tensions and new pattern of settlements which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to Muslim/Christian dominated enclaves.
3. Heightens citizenship question and encourages hostility between “indigenes” and “settlers”.
4. Dislocation and disruption of family and communal life.
5. General atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy
6. Dishumanization of women, children, and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war.
7. Deepening of hunger and poverty in the polity
8. Atmosphere of political insecurity and instability including declining confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002:13).
9. Governance deficit as a result of security agencies inefficiency and corruption.

Insecurity Challenges

Traditional rulers, vigilance groups and politicians are perpetrating heinous crimes in Nigeria. The Anambra Vigilante Service aka Bakassi Boys, for instance, has been blamed for some of the killings, although there is no evidence against them. But the theory that Bakassi and indeed the government in Anambra, may be involved in the killings evolved in the 2000. Ifeanyi, Ibegbu then an All Peoples Party Leader in the State House of Assembly was abducted and tortured. Thus action seemed to open the gate for political assassination in the
state. Edward Okeke, was next on the list. He was killed by people bearing a strong resemblance of Bakassi Boys in November 9, 2000. Others that followed include: Ikechukwu Nwagbo, Rockefeller Okeke, Sunday Uzokwe, Barrister and Mrs. Barnabas Igwe. It was the killing of the Igwes that led to a federal government clampdown on the Bakassi Boys. The operation took place in Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi, and 31 Bakassi operatives were arrested, while 46 detainees of the outfit were set free. An arsenal of fifty-eight assorted weapons was impounded during the raid. (See Akintude, K., 2002:16)

Godspower Agofure adds and believes that the insecurity of the nation is caused by politicians. According to him, life has been insecure in the country for quite some time and the politicians are directly responsible for it. He adds.

They bought the weapons and armed the boys to help them secure electoral victory. And when they have used them to get where they are going, they dump. When these no longer have access to them and they no longer measure up to the life they were living when they were getting money from the politicians, they start to threaten innocent people. It is not that one should be grateful to God this time around that a senior citizen of Rimi’s caliber is a victim. But it is ironical in the sense that Rimi was in position to empower the masses (talakawas) in Kano by giving them education and means of livelihood. If he had done that in his time, the supreme price that he paid would have been perhaps averted. This has been the trend for quite some time now (Aliu, et al, 2010:22).

Another major challenge is the urbanization process. This is because there is a strong and huge connection between security, environment and urbanization. General Secretary of friend of Environment, Mr. Choke Chikwendu explains:

Our society has witnessed considerable urbanization but without commiserate security strength. We need to improve the security situation through a holistic approach. First, we need to provide jobs because when people are unemployed, they still survive somehow, devising dubious means and involving selves in nefarious activities like armed robbery, pick pocketing, car snatching among others; Secondly, the need to make our school system functional. Anyone that has spent four years in a school should be able to do something to help himself. Also, you will observe that the policemen are currently not doing much. They set up static checkpoints that even common thieves can elude. They need to be mobile so that they can rapidly respond to distress calls (Aliu, et al, 2010:23).

While I join concerned Nigerians to call for an overhaul of the country’s security agencies, it is significant to stress that merely overhauling the police and other security agencies or equipping them cannot guarantee the security of lives and property of socio-
economic insecurity is allowed to loom large, forcing many to seek existence even through fraudulent and violent means that endangers the wellbeing of others.

Related to the above is the challenge posed by poverty level in Nigeria. Governments at all levels are unable to address this because there is no realistic social security programme in Nigeria to meet the people’s basic needs. As a result, the fear for the future and that of their children often provides the basis for the desperation exhibited in the pursuit of ill-gotten wealth.

Furthermore, the military has been under severe pressure from the opposition parties and the Civil Society to overthrow the government of Yar’Adua just like they did unlike former Obasanjo, which they feel is not accommodating the feelings, yearnings and all the interest of the stakeholders. Issues of electoral reforms, insecurity, high cost of living, unemployment, and infrastructural decay are part of the areas they feel the government has not been able to address.

Exactly ten years after the return of Nigeria to Civil rule, most Nigerians, especially the pro-democracy groups are disillusioned over the prospects of democracy, which they have fought and laboured to enthrone.

According to Chief Supo Shonibare, an Afenifere Chieftain, rather than peace, stability and unity, the last five years have only bred poverty, joblessness, political strife, insecurity and economic woes. The conclusion he said is that the country has gone back to exactly where it was six years ago (Thamas, 2004:10).

And that has necessitated the regrouping of the pro-democracy activists, which are ready to battle this government to a stand still. Though the associations differ from Arewa Consultative Forum, Citizen Forum, Committee of Nigerian Political Parties and Coalition of Democrats for Electoral Reform (CODER), among others, the time around tends to be the same – convene a sovereign national conference or quit. This is an option which the presidency has vowed not to yield to.

Electoral fraud poses a challenge to democracy in Nigeria and by implication threatens the security fabrics of the polity. Sham elections desecrate the sanctity of democracy and weaken its capacity as an instrument for social mobilization of natural and human resources for the development of the polity. In an environment where development of the populace is security and security is development, the consequences of such acts catch up very quickly with the system. Electoral fraud undermines the credibility and integrity of the democratic process and makes governance much more difficult. Concerned citizens, laden with anger and frustration can resort to violence. Thus, Nigeria has eroded her democracy and the mind of the people cannot be considered during elections.

The poor management of the national economy can not be excluded as far as insecurity of lives and property of Nigerians is concerned. Our avaricious leaders have virtually converted our national coffers into private establishments. Former governors and sacked bank executives are living examples. Nigeria is rich in black gold but suffers scarcity.
But the criminals are not the only ones causing havoc to Nigerians. The state of the country’s roads, especially the highways, where potholes have remained a common feature, is adding to the every increasing insecurity across the land. About a month ago, the nation woke up to the horrible incident of road accident that claimed the lives of 42 pupils on excursion.

It was a moment of horror for the Aricent Nursery and Primary School Ore, in Odigbo Local Government Area of Ondo State, as its little souls met their death about 8.15 pm while returning from Idanre Hill tourist site when the crash occurred. As if to confirm the fears of Nigerians on the insecurity on the country’s roads, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) source put a disturbing statistics out recently. It said that auto crashes claimed 128 lives in first three weeks in various highways (Madike, 2010:16).

However, the oil-rich Niger Delta, which incubated some militants due to prolonged neglect, is also not helping matters. Though, there is a concerted effort by the authorities to address the issue, not much, according to opinions is expected because of unnecessary politics and government’s bureaucratic bottlenecks.

With a long unbroken history of underperformance, the law enforcement and criminal justice systems in the polity are gradually receding from public reckoning as viable mechanism for social control. In helplessness, citizens have watched human lives brutally terminated and laws of the land violated without relevant institutions ever able to initiate the appropriate investigative and prosecutorial processes as to secure a conviction.

The fallouts, according to government critics, is the criminal-minded individuals now view the weakness in the said mechanisms as incentives for further anti-social behaviours that rob the society of public order and security significant for socio-economic and political stability and productive living.

The Boko Haram and Jos Crises added to the already ugly dimension of insecurity in Nigeria. The criminal activities of these crises left countless numbers of lives in ruins and destroyed property worth billions of naira and death roll running into hundreds of thousands.

Finally, there is another dimension of insecurity induced by those larded with the responsibility of securing lives. Just recently, happy trigger happy policemen shot and killed harmless traders and youths in Onitsha and Ajegunle. Many of such incidents litter the country’s scenery.

**Insecurity Challenges: The Way Forward**

The cost of insecurity is quite high both for individual Nigerians as well as the nation. For the former, it stunts personal development and interfere with his or her ability to develop his or her full potentials. The mind and energy of the average Nigerian is consumed with issues of safety and security that he or she has little energy left to contribute to Nigerian’s development. The message should be clear to our government. Nigerians need a polity that is stable, peaceful, and safe enough from criminal assaults, murder, chaos, tyranny and breakdown of authority so that the populace can face issues of development with vigor and courage. To attain such a polity, the under listed recommendations are suggested:
Governments at all levels should ensure that rising poverty indices be reversed and a realistic social security programme be pursued and systematically implemented to ensure that the populace meet their basic needs.

Though there is a statutory limitation to what state government can do in the area of security, the states have something to contribute. The constitution places security on the exclusive federal list. The police and the Armed forces are all federal institutions, not legally accountable to state governments. However, I am suggesting that there should be partnership between the state and federal government in the area of security agencies with needed logistics for optimal performance. Secondly, as a complement to the services of the conventional security agencies, states should sponsor community-based vigilantes.

Related to the above is economic empowerment. I think it is even more significant to ameliorate the sense of want that sometimes induces crimes; so economic empowerment of the citizenship is another way of addressing the security question. Various micro credit schemes should be put in place in pursuit of this objective. Local contractors should equally be used to execute government projects. The aim is to boost the local economy, create jobs and ultimately, social harmony.

Again, re-organization of the security agencies to take them through a new re-orientation via re-training of security agents. People should be more security conscious, share information with the police and other security agencies. The populace should not leave security matters to security personnel only. All should be involved in security information and data gathering. Moreover, efforts should be put in crime prevention than control.

Furthermore, the government should increase the size of Nigeria’s security agencies, empower and motivate them very well and strengthen neighborhood watch. Governments should equally fix social infrastructures – roads, street lights, schools and skill acquisition centers.

Apart from the above, there is no gain saying that lack of youth empowerment programmes contribute immensely to social insecurity in the polity. The government should create programmes that would empower our youths technically. This will enable them to be self-reliant and avert their minds from criminal tendencies.

Finally, the practice of the rule of law, constitutionalism, avoidance of undue retrenchment of workers, payment of salary and allowances as and when due and payment of compensation for property destroyed are other means by which the question of insecurity could be avoided.

Conclusion

Any environment inundated with crime and insecurity is always accompanied with tensions and anxiety. The elimination of these threats and enemies of man should be the number one programme of the governments in Nigeria. This will give rise to human development and a habitable environment for us all. Apart from the governments’ own role, all hands should also be on deck to eliminate this monster of insecurity in Nigeria.
References


