

# Peace and Security: A Veritable Instrument for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined peace and security as a veritable instrument for the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria using qualitative method of data analysis and content analysis. The study relied on data from extant literature to posit that sustainable development is attainable only when peace and security of the nation is assured. The study argued that tenable and sustainable development is possible. This assertion is evident in sustained growth and development of most developed and emerging economies of the world. Examples are the developed and emerging economies of America, Europe and Asia. In Nigeria, the near absence of relative peace and the consequent threat to security of lives and properties have affected every aspect of growth and development in the country. This situation has flourished in the light of the dynamics of political instability and its concomitant outcomes. The threat to peace and security of the nation have taken several dimensions of urban violence including ethno-religious violence, electoral violence, youth militancy, and civil unrest, Boko Haram, farmers-herders crisis, banditry, kidnapping etc. thus, undermining the attainment of significant achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria. A situation that leaves great negative consequences for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study concludes that the Federal Government should seriously address all security challenges in the nation. Both carrot and stick are required in addressing the various issues that threaten peace and security in the nation. Where force is seen as the best option to address a particular issue, force should be applied. However, where negotiation and ceding of necessary grounds is adjudged the best option, they should be applied.

**KEYWORDS:** Peace, Security, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

## INTRODUCTION

Blooming economies have always enjoyed palpable level of peace and security thus underscoring the importance of peace and security in the socioeconomic development of a nation. This assertion is evident in sustained growth and development of most developed and emerging economies of the world. Examples are the developed and emerging economies of America, Europe and Asia. In Nigeria, the near absence of relative peace and the consequent threat to security of lives and properties have affected every aspect of growth and development in the country. Prior to her independence and subsequently the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, there had been a number of crisis that distorted the foundation of peace and National integration in the country. Political killings and riots have occurred at certain stages, like the killings of 1945 in the north and the Kano riot of 1953. Arguably, these crisis have breed a serious distrust among the political class and leadership of various regions in the country. After the independence in 1960, the accusation of one region against the other in dominating the national government culminated into the various coups that

eventually threw the country into three years of cascading blood bathed civil war. Aremu (2017) noted that Nigeria is still far from being united forty-seven years after the end of hostilities. This is confirmed by the recent altercations between the Northern youths and their Igbo counterparts, who are calling for the exit of "alien" groups from their domains at the latest by 1 October 2017. This paper notes that the current scenario of inter-ethnic conflagrations is a replica of the events that precipitated the 1966 pogroms suffered by the people of eastern Nigeria, pogroms that originated in various northern Nigerian cities; that strife was one of the fundamental factors that led to the outbreak of war in 1967. Akinwale and Aderinto (undated) posits that the outbreaks of violence have become unprecedented across the Nigerian cities, while successive attempts at promoting peace in the country are yet to succeed significantly. The situation has flourished in the light of the dynamics of political instability and its concomitant outcomes and the threat to peace and security of the nation have taken several dimensions of urban violence including

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ethno-religious violence, electoral violence, youth militancy, and civil unrest, Boko Haram, farmers-herders crisis, banditry, kidnapping etc

Zuber (2016) noted that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. At the termination of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 and the introduction of Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs), one of the tenets of the global partnership programme is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Yet, the peace and security of Nigeria has remain endangered thus undermining the developmental strides of the country. Egugbo (2016) contended that the apparent failure on the part of political leadership that has been amassing the Nation's wealth neglecting the masses which have resulted into an ugly state of affairs, creating widening gap between the rich and the poor. According to Egugbo (2016), the political leadership instead of thinking out of the box to ensure the bridging of the gap between the rich and the poor by seeking ways of diversifying the economy to open up opportunities for job creation seems contented with the status quo. The political leadership seems to be enjoying the state of inequality in the country because it provides them ample opportunity to have the poor manipulated by giving them stipend to get their votes during elections. This high level of inequality and the exploitation inherent in it has made the poor masses to be disillusioned and disenchanted. The resultant effect of this is the springing up of terrorist groups like Boko Haram, armed robbery, kidnapping, herders men attack on communities, banditry, separatist agitators like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta. While some of these groups appear to carry out destructive acts against the state and the citizens as a way of venting their anger, others perpetrate dangerous act in order to survive the harsh economic condition foisted on them by the political leadership. All these actions have combined to bring the Nigerian economy to its knees.

Consequently, it can be argued that you cannot give what you don't have. In other words you cannot sustain what you don't have. Security is an enabler of national development. There can be no sustainable development without peace and security in any nation. Building peace and adequate security involves a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national and international levels to address the root causes of violence and ensure that people have freedom from fear of humiliation, war and conflicts (Madu, Ewelum & Chieke, 2015). Aborisade and Adedayo (2018) noted that globally, the successes of millennium development goals in a number of development areas have been acknowledged, especially as regards poverty reduction. However, there is a consensus that the millennium development agenda failed in a critical target of ensuring justice and security. The submissions of Aborisade and Adedayo (2018) can be contested in the area of poverty reduction. The is because, despite the efforts of the government to reduce poverty in Nigeria, it still soars. Over half of the population of the country remain poor. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the new global

targets for improving people's lives around the world. At the United Nations Summit on 2th September, 2015, world leaders adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDGs are built on the Millennium Development Goals MDGs. Enormous progress has been made in some countries on the MDGs. Despite this success, the result in Nigeria is not very encouraging (Dansabo, 2016).

### Peace and Security in Nigeria

Nigeria is beset with numerous security problems which if not addressed will hinder the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is general insecurity in the nation. As had already been stated, development can never thrive in a nation where there is no peace and security. A brief discussion of some of the major issues that endanger the peace and security of Nigeria which in turn will affect the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the nation is undertaken here also. The most disturbing issue that is not only threatening the peace and security in Nigeria, but the corporate existence of the country is the issue of Boko Haram. The group is believed to be the foot soldiers of the Sharia brigade created by the desperate former Governors 'core north' that decided to operate Islamic Legal Code of Sharia in defiance of the Nigerian Secular Constitution. The assertive presidency of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo 1999-2007, dislodged the North from the control of power at the centre which the northern Nigeria had enjoyed since the independence of Nigeria in 1960. To rally the 'core North' together against the Obasanjo 'insurgence' and to enable the area recover its lost overbearing influence of the affairs of the country that had been in existence since independence, 'political sharia' was created. The then President Obasanjo wasted no time in applying his military experience in taming the sharia Governors and their foot soldiers. These sharia foot soldiers have now metamorphosed into Boko Haram who has now turned their guns against everybody including their former sponsors. The set had been dubbed Boko Haram by local residents, Hausa words, which literally mean "western education is forbidden". Sect members had set up a community living by strict sharia principles around its mosque in Maiduguri. Nigerian media had popularized the name Boko Haram, following trouble which began in 2009 when the sect's mosque was attacked by security forces as a result of the sect's increasing radical sermons and calling for jihad against government. One of the leaders of the sect, Abu Dujana, said members drew their ideas (ideology) from the same pool of radical thought as al-Qaeda and Somalia group al-Shabab (BBC News-12713739). On 'who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?', Farouk Chothia (BBC News Africa, 13809501) stated: 'Nigeria's militant Islamist group, Boko Haram, which said it bombed the police headquarters in the capital city, Abuja, is fighting to overthrow the government and create an Islam state. Its followers are said to be influenced by the Koranic phrase which says: 'Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors'. Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with western society, including voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving secular education. The groups official name is Jama'atu Ahlis

Sunna Lidda' await wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means 'People committed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad'.

The effect of the activities of the Boko Haram militant group is very serious insecurity which is making Nigeria and Nigerians poorer, thus affecting the goals of the Millennium Development. Boko Haram has introduced a new and the worst dimension of terror attack, suicide bombing, to enforce its agenda. The group has surpassed all other militia groups in Nigeria in unleashing terror on its objects of attack. It has claimed responsibility for high profile attacks on Army barracks, police stations, even police headquarters, which before now are no go areas for militia groups. The sudden global recognition it got cheaply due to the fear it has instilled on Nigeria-wide has turned it into a most dreaded monster like (Al- Qaeda).

Based in Borno state, the North Eastern tip of Nigeria, with the assistance of Nigerian porous borders, it regularly enlist recruits from Niger, Chad, Sudan and even from Somalia, a notorious war torn country where sea pirates threaten the world's maritime trade. Some of the headlines on some Nigerian newspapers depict the horror and violence unleashed on Nigeria by these fundamentalists. A few of them will suffice: "Police Storm Boko Haram Hideout, kill 3, arrest many others ...", "Sect kills 2 cops, customs officer, 3 others in mid morning attack in Borno" (Daily Sun, Wednesday July 6, 2011), "Boko Haram gives conditions ... says FG must withdraw soldiers" (Daily Sun, Thursday July 14, 2011) "5 fleeing Borno residents die in auto crash" (Daily Sun, 14/7/2011). Even BBC News Africa (15 March, 2011) depicted the horror Boko Haram is associated with, "Maiduguri: Nigeria's city of fear". Here, Andrew Walker in Maiduguri reported that 'No one knows who to be afraid of most, a group of Islamist militant known as Boko Haram or Police', stating that for past five months that the militants had been fighting a guerrilla war, killing policemen and people they believe helped the security services in the fight against them. The effects of the activities of the Boko Haram militants are very serious insecurity, loss of human lives, and dislodgement of people from their settlements among other. These are in turn making Nigerians and Nigeria poorer, thus affecting in turn some of the goals of Millennium Development.

Apart from Boko Haram menace, another contentious issue that is affecting the peace and coordinate efforts of Nigeria that may bring about the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the introduction of noninterest banking model, of which Islamic banking is one of the variants by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The heat generated by this model of banking - that experts say relies heavily on Islamic jurisprudence, is much that it has already polarized the country into two opposing camps - Christians and Moslems. The fear of Christians centres mainly on their belief that the introduction of Islamic banking system is nothing but surreptitious move towards 'Islamization' of the country. Christian clerics saw it as part of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) agenda, which the country was smuggled in as a member under the then military leadership of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida in spite of stiff opposition then by Christians. Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, the then Chief of General staff (Gen. Babangida's second) in command lost his position and job because of his stiff opposition to Nigeria

membership of OIC. The mere fact that the Islamic banking project is coming at a time the nation's apex bank is headed by a "devout Muslim" seems to compound the situation. To make matters worse, the CBN Governor, Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, adopted a combative approach when attempting to explain the rationale for the Bank's action. Even the Muslims who will form the majority beneficiaries of the new banking system do not help matters by the way they line up in defence of the CBN Governor. The President of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor has stated that Islamic Banking policy is very capable of causing dangerous disaffection between Christians and Muslims. In criticizing the Islamic banking, Pastor Oritsejafor mixed up the issue with the activities of the Boko Haram sect in Borno state and thus sought to justify the assertion that Islamic banking is synonymous with fundamentalism. The leader of the South East arm of the Christian Council of Nigeria and the Anglican Bishop of Enugu Diocese, the most Reverend Emmanuel Chukwuma had associated the Islamic Banking with sharia law and Al-Qaeda. He argued that it would be dangerous to introduce "religious banking" in Nigeria, and warned that "Nigeria will be sitting on a keg of gunpowder because Islamic banking will be used to fuel terrorism", to a grand design by certain Muslims to "make the country ungovernable because they do not want a Christian President" (This Day, July 29, 2011). The leader of the Christian Welfare Initiative, Archbishop Magnus Adeyemi Atilade on his own described the Islamic bank (intended) as "part of a hidden agenda to Islamize Nigeria, which must not be allowed to happen" (This Day July 29, 2011). Joining issues with opponents of Islamic banking, the Sultan of Sokoto and President General of the Jamatul Nasril Islam (JNI), Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III said, "so many people have said so many things about Islamic banking. Why is it that whenever anything Islamic is mentioned, those who are not Muslim kick against it?" going further he asked, "What is there to be afraid of in Islam? If Muslims want a particular way of life as Muslims, why should anybody try to stop them? But if it is the other way round (Christians) it is good, but if it is for Muslims, it is bad ... we are on our way and non-interest banking has come to stay ..." (This Day July 29, 2011).

Away from the daggers drawn by the Christians and Muslims over Islamic banking, proponents of Islamic banking have stated that it will not discriminate against Christian who would apply for facilities, if they meet the stipulated conditions. They argued that Islamic banking is aimed at providing credit to over 70 million Nigerians (majority of them Muslims) who presently cannot access credits because they do not patronize conventional banks. If this is so, introduction of Islamic banking will go a long way in helping Nigeria to achieve the first goal of the MDGs and therefore should be encouraged. The federal government should, however, intervene in the matter and urgently to avert the looming religious war between Christians and Muslim, which will in turn further impoverish the already poor Nigerians, thus negating some of the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This the federal government can do by helping to explain the benefits of the Islamic banking on the one hand and ensuring that the fears of Christians are taken care of on the other hand.

Another security challenge that has affected the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria is



the mayhem that took place in May 2011, following the declaration of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as the President consequent upon the 2011 presidential election. In Kaduna and Bauchi states of Nigeria, thousands of people were slaughtered and many others rendered homeless while markets where the commodities upon which many people depend for livelihood were set ablaze. Many vehicles, which, were sources of income of many people were also set ablaze. Jos crisis is yet another security challenge which has adversely affected the achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Hardly do six months pass without occurrence of crisis in the Nigerian central Plateau state. For want of space, this issue cannot be discussed in details as the first two issues discussed.

Finally, another security challenge in Nigeria that has affected the achievement of Millennium Development Goals is the Niger Delta crisis. Before the Boko Haram militants changed the face of militancy in Nigeria by introducing suicide bombing, the most daring militant groups in Nigeria were the Niger Delta militants. Crying of long years of neglect, peculiar problems of poverty, lack of infrastructure, unemployment and environmental despoliation, the Niger Delta zone (South-South zone) which produces large chunk of oil upon which the national economy is sustained started clamouring for resource control. The federal government refused to yield to the demand. Consequently, unemployed youths from the zone took up arms against the federal government, oil companies operating in their region, personnels of the oil companies, in fact any person they decided to attack or kidnap. With time, what initially looked like children's play became very serious national security challenge. Innocent people were attacked. People were indiscriminately kidnapped. Some people closed their thriving business ventures within the zone and relocated. Some became impoverished consequent upon the activities of the militant groups. On October 1, 2010, when the nation was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary, bombs planted in vehicles by Niger Delta militants exploded at Abuja killing number of people. Thus, following the activities of Niger Delta militants, the goals of Millennium Development were hampered in a number of ways.

#### RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Aborisade and Adedayo (2018) examined security and the 2063 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa: Whither Nigeria? the paper examined Nigeria's bid to meet with the goal of attaining sustainable peace and security as part of the 2063 Agenda for sustainable development in Africa. The study drew on literature on security and development as well as secondary data on security situation in Nigeria to make projections into Nigeria's strategic positioning to realise the Agenda. The study posits that the insecurity challenges in Nigeria has becomes a drain on local and national resources at the expense of development and peoples' wellbeing thereby, having adverse consequences on economic growth and development. Abbas (2018) examined peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria as an imperative tool for countering violent extremism using content analysis of extant literature. The study argues that there is a missing gap on the relevance of peace and conflict resolution as a discipline and subject of study which creates a debate on the relevance of the discipline to the current security challenges in Nigeria. The study posits that the perceived gap has deepened the frustration that despite several decades of

teaching and researching in the area of peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria, the country still remains one of the conflict ridden areas around the globe. Yisa, Yusuf and Yemisi (2018) examined conflict peace and security: The Nigeria experience using content analysis of extant literature. The study argued that conflict, peace and security issues today have become a matter of global concern. The study also posits that the crisis of Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes, cattle rustling, militant group crisis, political crisis, corruption and a host of others have caused a lot of challenges that has threaten the cooperate existence of the country.

Akinloye (2018) carried out a study on the implementation of sustainable development goals in Nigeria: Maximizing the influence of religious leaders. The study relied on extensive literature review of extant literature. The study argued that the limited scope of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the failure of the programme to achieve its developmental objectives at its expiry in 2015 led to the development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) programme commencing 2016. The study posits that the SDGs programme has been widely accepted as laudable for its wider approach to global development and sustainability. The study also, through literature review and analysis of surveys and reports, examines the influence religious leaders have on their followers in Africa with Nigeria as a case study. It posits that religious leaders have a strong influence on their followers, as Nigerians and most Africans place more trust in, and respect the opinions of their religious leaders than their political counterparts. The study contends that if the global agenda of the SDGs is to be realised by getting a wider Nigerians to accept and involve in the implementation of the sustainable goals, then, the potential influence of religious leaders should be harnessed. Gubak and Bulus (2018) examined national security challenges and sustainable development in Nigeria: A critical analysis of the Niger Delta Region using qualitative and descriptive methods of data analysis also content analysis of extant literature. Findings from the study reveal among others that, the security challenges in Nigeria have long historical antecedence and the crises and conflicts in the Niger Delta region are the consequences of several years of exploitation, neglect and deliberate abandonment of the region which is the economic base of the nation, by successive governments and oil multinationals. Balami, Ahmed & Yusuf (2016) examined the imperative of peace and security for the attainment of inclusive growth in Nigeria using content analysis from extant literature. The study argued that despite several past reforms and policies dictated by the IMF and World Bank, African countries are still experiencing economic instability. Absence of security and exclusive growth process are some of the underlying obstacles of physical and human capital accretion in developing economies. Egugbo (2016) examined governance and sustainable peace in Nigeria using content analysis of extant literature. The study posits that the political leadership enjoys the state of inequality in the country because it provides them ample opportunity to have the poor manipulated by giving them stipend to get their votes during elections. This high level of inequality and the exploitation inherent in it has made the poor masses to be disillusioned and disenchanted. The resultant effect of this is the springing up of terrorist groups like Boko Haram, armed robbery, kidnapping, separatist agitators like the Indigenous

People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta. While some of these groups appear to carry out destructive acts against the state and the citizens as a way of venting their anger, others perpetrate dangerous act in order to survive the harsh economic condition foisted on them by the political leadership. All these actions have combined to bring the Nigerian economy to its knees.

Madu, Ewelum and Chieke (2015) examined peace and security as necessities for sustaining national transformation in Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data from extant literature. It argued that high level of crime and anti-social behaviour has been on the increase among developed, as well as developing nations like Nigeria. The resultant effect has led to a downward trend of the economy and failure in achieving sustainable national transformation. Peace and security are the basic instruments for a nation's success.

Enu and Ugwu (2011) examined the interface between human security and peace building and brought to focus the challenges to human security and sustainable peace building in the Niger Delta region. The study relied on extensive literature review from extant literature. The study established the fact that human security in the region is predicated upon sustainable peace building and consolidation. Igbuzor (2011) investigated peace and security education as a critical factor for sustainable peace and national development in Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data from extant literature. The paper argued that the three key problems capable of compromising the peace and security of Nigeria are ethno-religious conflicts, Niger delta crisis and electoral violence. The study also posits that there are many dimensions of peace including negative peace (absence of direct violence) and positive peace (absence of predisposing factors to violence) as well as philosophical, sociological and political dimensions.

## CONCLUSION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the new global targets for improving people's lives around the world. At the United Nations Summit on 2th September, 2015, world leaders adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change by 2030 (Dansabo, 2016). The various issues challenging peace and security in Nigeria have adversely affected the achievement of many of the goals of MDGs thus creating a serious problem for sustainability agenda. As have been indicated in this paper, all the effects of the issues discussed were negative on the MDGs. Rather than eradicating poverty as required by Goal 1, all of them further impoverished the already poor people. The dangerous nature of all the issues discussed also affected the achievement of universal primary education. Again, people can only talk of their rights and privileges in a peaceful and secured environment, thus goal 3, promotion of gender equality and empowering women cannot be gotten in a nation where even human lives and existence are not assured. Conscious efforts are, however, being made to promote gender equality and empower women but in a nation where one militant group or the other can take laws into their hands and go as far as challenging the constituted authority, assertion of one's right may be counterproductive.

Thus, in one way or the other, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are negatively affected when there is no peace or insecurity within a nation. The Federal Government should seriously address all security challenges in the nation. Both carrot and stick are required in addressing the various issues that threaten peace and security in the nation. Where force is seen as the best option to address a particular issue, force should be applied. However, where negotiation and ceding of necessary grounds is adjudged the best option, they should be applied.

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