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INSECURITY IN EDO NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE

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Abstract
Insecurity has become a monster in multifaceted manifestations like hostage, killing, rape, creation of fear, bombing, kidnapping for ransom, destruction of property e.tc. This research relied on primary and secondary sources to explain some key causes of insecurity in Edo North Senatorial District which are illiteracy, unemployment and underemployment, poverty, greedy, bad leadership, lack of government presence, land dispute, poor social amenities/infrastructure, economic factor and lack of political will, ethnic and communal conflicts, farmers/herdsmen crisis. The aim of this study is to ascertain the high level of insecurity and the resultant effect of insecurity has caused to the people Edo North Senatorial District in Edo state. The findings in this study show that there are serious insecurity challenges in Edo North Senatorial District with regards to the porous territorial border of the zone. Edo North Senatorial District also faces threats from change in climate condition, kidnapping, rape, natural disasters, killing, absence of foreign investment and industrial development in the Senatorial District resulting in high unemployment and underemployment rate. For peaceful co-existence among the various ethnic groups in the zone, use of local policing or vigilante is important. This will fine-tune a more peaceful way for the development and growth of Edo north senatorial district and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: Insecurity**,** herdsmen, farmers, Edo, Nigeria**,**

Introduction

One of the primary responsibilities of the government is to protect life and property of the citizenry and the fundamental human rights of the people or citizen of the country. The right to life, security of life and property are the primary responsibility of the Government as provided by the Constitution of a sovereign state. Therefore, since Nigeria is a sovereign state it's in the Nigeria constitution of 1999 section 14 sub-section 2b which says "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the Government".[1] This emphasis the important of security to all the three arms of government; Federal, State and Local level where we have the traditional institutions.

The major insecurity challenges to the people of Edo north senatorial district is the high level of criminality occurrences in the area in Edo State of Nigerian. The only people that are safe presently are the politicians in political offices and by extension political rulers who move about with sirens and carefully selected and effectively armed policemen.[2] We have all become walking corpses beyond the continuing wave of tension, killing, rape, kidnapping for ransom, destruction of farmland, burning of houses, the destruction of life and properties and obstruction of movement on our high ways and community roads by the activities of criminal element like bandit, kidnappers and Fulani-herdsmen in Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State and the Country in general.[3]

Thursday, 2011 attack on First bank of Nigeria facility in Sabongida-Ora, in Owan-west Senatorial District of Edo State, where three persons, including a mobile police officer were killed in a robbery attack evident in the area.[4] The raping of two women by criminals suspected to Fulani herdsmen who attacked two villages in Edo North and Edo Central Senatorial Districts, were four women raped in a community in Edo North, while two women Mrs. Maltina Omoyo and Ariyo were raped and killed in Ewu in Edo Central Senatorial District of Edo State. In the words of C. Ordia in the floor of the Nigeria Senate May, 22nd 2017 said, "the Senate notes with serious concern the heinous and criminal activities being perpetrated by herdsmen who, in the violent act of ravaging communities, deprived persons of right to life and prosperity, defiling women and destroying farm crops amongst other criminal activities across the country".[5] This was collaborated F. Alimikhena who seconded the motion, "as we speak people in my constituents cannot go to their farm due to fear of Fulani Herdsmen attack".[6]

The recent attack on the National Institute of Construction Technology, Uromi boarded by Aviele signifies a new dimension to insecurity and kidnapping in Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State. As fallout of that attack, two students and a lecturer were kidnapped. It has become recurrent for bandit,

kidnappers, and criminal gangs under various identities to work into our schools and kidnap school children, teachers and security men without any resistance from our security armed forces. Therefore, the dimensions of criminality in our communities currently call for immediate concern to all the security forces and the overhauling of the security operational system of the Nation.[7] The negative impact of having our children and teachers kidnapped at school is unimaginable, unacceptable, non tolerated and should be condemned in totality by all and sundry.

On March 4, 2023, three persons including a cleric have allegedly been killed while working on their farm and others were also injured in attacks by armed men suspected to herders at Sobe in Owan West Local Government Area, Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State. According to Mr. Goddy Ahonsi, one of the youth leaders in the community, the cleric and two of his workers, were killed by the AK-47-wielding herdsmen. It was the fifth attack on residents of the community since January this year. He said: "The people of Sobe Community in Owan West Local Government Area of Edo State suffered another attack on March 4, 2023, following the renewed hostility by Fulani herdsmen in the area, a pastor and two of his workers were killed, while they were working on their farmland on Eti Oseh Road, which links Saboginda-Ora". He continue that "efforts of personnel of Edo State Security Network to rescue the victims before they died, proved abortive, as the herdsmen numbering forty, opened fire on the rescue team, and most of them escaped with varying degrees of bullet injuries".[5]

Although the problem of insecurity is not new in Edo North Senatorial District of Edo state and Nigeria at large, right from the period Nigeria gain her independence in 1960. Since the arrival of the third democratic rule in Feb 1999 by Olusegun Obasanjo, Yaradua, Good luck Jonathan 2011 and Buhari 2019.[8] However, the level of insecurity take a new interest in Nigeria following the unfortunate death of President Yaradua and immediately the swearing in of Dr. Good luck Jonathan as the new President in February, 2010. Also, the Muhammadu Buhari as the nation's President in 2015 to 2023, Nigeria State has been experiencing unparable security challenges and even now more worrisome and difficult to belief when Tinubu is now President and Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.[9]

In Edo North Senatorial District hardly a day goes by without a report on one security challenge or the other. It is clear that the State of the country and the ordinary citizen's economic and social growth and development are in the state of wanton attack and destruction. The rate at which destruction, killing, dispute over farmland, destruction of properties, kidnapping, rape, armed robbery, political crisis, burning of houses, oil pipeline vandalism, banditry, terrorism, electrical

power vandalism, oil bunkering, land gambling, arms trafficking, insurgency, communal conflict, political thuggery and communal crisis has become a multi-hydra-headed monster to the people, Local, State, Federal government over the time.[10]

Edo North Senatorial District, Edo State and Nigeria in general insecurity has long been a threat to the livelihood of the people that resulted of loss of job, death, diseases, threat to life, loss of life and property, human right violation, loss of farm land and cold war between neighbours and among villages. This research looks at the economical and socio-cultural causes of insecurity on the people of Edo North Senatorial District, Edo State of Nigeria in general and on the possible Government ways at fostering peace in the State. (Government should know that negotiation is not always a win-win situation and not winner takes all).[11]

Literature on the Concept of Insecurity

Security concept has been postulated different scholars views on security of life and property of the citizenry. According to 1994 United Nations development Program, human security can be defined as the protection from hidden and fearful disruptions in the daily activities in the daily activities, at home, offices or communities. That is to say that security is the state of being safe and secure from danger it could also be protection from chronic threat such as hunger, disease and repression.[12]

According to, Beland, Achumba Ighomeroho and Akpor-Robaro, the state of fear or anxiety steaming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection or inadequate freedom from danger is seen as insecurity. In another argument by Achumba et.al, opined that insecurity is a state of being subjected to danger exposed to risk or anxiety.[13]

Eme and Anyadike, posed that a person is said to be secured when not being exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or deterioration.[14] While according to, UNPP sees human security to include chronic threat like hunger, diseases and repression.[15] In 2003, the Commission of Human Security is regarded as the protection of important aspect of human lives in a very way that would enhance human freedoms and fulfillment. Human security encompasses freedom from want, harm and fear, tension and the freedom to take appropriate actions without any form of hindrance. It is also the assurance of future well being and freedom from threat.[16]

According to Imobighe, human security is “freedom from danger or to a nation’s ability to protect and developed itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people”.[17] Therefore, the

need for an effective security apparatus to be put in place cannot be over-emphasized. Various segments of security which include internal security, human security, cyber security, food security, environmental security, economic security, health security, education security, global security, and housing security among others. Therefore, the researcher opined that security of a nation is absolute state of being secured, freedom from apprehension, confident of safety and freedom from danger or risk.[18] Therefore, security is a paramount condition that must be satisfied in order to guarantee a feeling of survival within the world system that is anarchical in nature. The concept of security has been defined in so many ways by scholars, security managers, government officials, security agencies and analysts depending on their intellectual predilection and or ideological orientation Akinyeye.[19]

Orifah Samson Obadun in his work entitled "The Linguistic Situation and Geography of Akoko-Edo Local Government Area" noted that the origins of the various independent communities of Akoko-Edo local government area are quite different and questionable. According to him, the word "Akoko" is generally used to reflect the different hetero generous linguistic units scattered over Edo, Ekiti, Kogi and Ondo states in modern Nigeria. There are five Akoko's in these different states. What is now Akoko Edo together with Ogori/Magongo belonged to Akoko-Gbangiri. The history of Akoko-Edo is replete with multi migrations and is as diverse, conflicting and complex as their languages, even among the homogenous ones like the Okpamaris. This historical study as it helped our explanations of insecurity in the Edo North senatorial district of Edo state.[20]

According to Clark contends thus, "Defeating terrorism is more difficult and far-reaching than we have assumed.... We may be advancing the ball down the field at will, running over our opponent's defenses, but winning the game is another matter altogether".[21] More importantly to this study, drawing from Clark's assertion, is the question of appropriate and workable strategies for countering the threat of terrorism.

In the Campbell Systematic Review, it is observed that "there is an almost complete absence of evaluation research on counter-terrorism strategies".[22] Lum, Kennedy and Sherley, argue that for the few studies available, some strategies do not appear to be effective as they "either didn't work or sometimes increased the likelihood of terrorism and terrorism-related harm".[23] However, according to Eji, this seems to reflect the Nigerian situation, as there is no existing evidence of a comprehensive review of Nigeria's responses or strategies to counter terrorism either by policy makers or researchers.[24] In the review of the literature, various topics related to the study have been reviewed. From literature, several opinions

differ to the definition of insecurity only a relative small amount of research on insecurity has been conducted, particularly in the context of its causes on national security in Edo North Senatorial District of Edo state in Nigeria. Thus, this present study is different from previous studies in that it seeks to determine the causes of insecurity as regard the protection of lives and properties and increase in national security in Edo North Senatorial District, Edo State in Nigeria.

Causes of Insecurity

There are numbers of factors that are associated with insecurity in the Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State today. This include lack of government present, illiteracy, bad leadership/corruption, poverty, greedy, fear of attack from Fulani-herds-men, farming/herdsmen crisis, land dispute, unemployment and underemployment, lack of political will and poor social infrastructures, ethnic and communal conflicts e.g. electricity, road, market, schools, water and so on.

Bad leadership/Corruption: The Edo North Senatorial District comprises of six local Government council, they are; Owan-west, Owan-east, Etsako west, Etsako east, Etsako central and Akoko-Edo.[25] The people over the time had not have the opportunity of being represented by good leaders either than the selfish, self-centered, greedy and self imposed political leaders are the ones that find their ways into political offices, where the well fare and well being of the general people are being discussed. The level of corruption in Edo North Senatorial District and the country at large has its devastating impact on the proper functioning of our institutions. This is as result of bad leadership, the poor funding of our military architecture derives from the profligacy that corruption delivers this has turn Edo North Senatorial District home of fear, tension attack and other crime vases. The emphasis continues to explain the status of Nigeria as a failed state drawing from the evident of the various intact that define statehood. Nigeria lacks the capacity to effectively address the issues that underpin the security collapse of Edo North Senatorial District and the country at large.[26]

In a number of case this bad political leaders divert the will of the people during election by buying of voters, writing of election result before the election, using of thugs and such will not allow vote to count. Sadly to say, this group of political leaders oppress the people of Edo North Senatorial District with their own federal, state and local Government allocated resources for the development of the zone, which this few bad political leaders looted to themselves and use it to oppress, train hooligans, thugs to the detriment of the Edo North Senatorial District and the people. This crops of hooligan, thus later result to criminals

activities like kidnappers, arm-robbers, bandit, and drug dealer/user and causes communities insecurity when they are dumped by the politicians after election. Thus, constituting a major challenge to the senatorial district in the state and the nation at large.[27]

According to Walter Rodney in his Book, how Europe undeveloped Africa argued that "the masses and not to the leaders and one hopes that it would be instrumental in arousing some mass action by the people. In absence of committed leadership, many African countries has fallen prey to military exploitation to the extent that today the generals constitute the majority at African submit. This is not how it should be because when political leadership loses the sense of internal direction, when it bewilderment, it gives up its efforts to find solutions to people's problem and begins to accumulate wealth for its own individual use, political leadership tends to get increasingly "commandant" in its state operations." Logic rationale becomes subversive. And when politicians become "commandants", they too become redundant, because who is better filled to giving command than the army".[28]

Ethnic and Communal Conflicts:

Another major cause of insecurity in Edo North Senatorial District is the facts arising from distrust among various ethnic groups and religious or communal conflict in Edo North Senatorial District and the country at large. This is as result of poor attitudinal and behavioural disposition of leaders and security personnel. In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurring. According to Achumba and Akpor, some personnel get influenced by ethnic, religious or communal sentiment and are easily swallowed by their personal interest to serve their people, rather than the nation. Thus, instead of being national watch dogs and defending national interest and values, and protecting people from harm by criminals, they soon become saboteurs of government effort, by supporting and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law.[29]

Ibrahim and Igbuzor, Hazen and Horner, Salawu and Igbuzor, identified ethno-religious conflict as one major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflict was defined as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation Achumba et al.

and Salawu.[30] According to Adegba, et al, the claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria Adegba, et al.[31]

Unemployment and under-employment:

Another major factor of insecurity in Edo North Senatorial District is unemployment and underemployment, unemployment is defined as the condition of one who is capable of working, actively seeking work, but unable to find any work. While underemployment is situation when someone is employed only on part-time, when one needs full-time employment or not making full use of his/her skills in a particular work place or in an organization. Unemployment and underemployment lead to economic disparity, while disparity causes terrorism, criminality which resulted to insecurity. Unemployment and underemployment confront the youth with devastating psychological and socio-economic effects.

Ahead 2020 of the Governorship election in Edo State, the People Democratic Party's candidate Godwin Obaseki during the Governor debate on Channel Television programme review that the unemployment rate in Edo State has reduced from 25 percent to 19 percent. According to Godwin Obaseki, "the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) is clear , when we came in it was 25 percent and we have been able to reduce it to about 19 percent so that tells you much jobs have been created".[32] However, this unemployment rate in Edo State is high and this show that Edo North Senatorial District is not in any way left out and such unemployment create great security threat to the socio-political development of the communities as they now engage themselves in illegal activities such as banditry, robbery, kidnapping, oil bunkering, land gambling, rape and killing.

This unemployment and underemployment has resulted to insecurity in Edo North Senatorial District, Edo State and Nigeria at large. A lot of youth had been scammed and some died in the process of seeking for job. Job seekers have continued to suffer great losses, because of a lot of their hard earn money has been collected from them under the promise of providing them with jobs. A good example is the Job seekers filled online application for recruitment into the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSDC) were ask to pay certain amount of money into designated bank accounts or pay cash to some individuals who claimed to be consultants to the corps (vanguard, 2013) and in the same van Mrs. Rose Uzoma, the comptroller-general of immigration (CGI) was removed or sacked from office over allegation of job racketeering at the Nigeria immigration service (NIS) in 2013.[33]

This has equally take us to the limelight of shady deals that take place during recruitment exercises in government establishment, ministries, ministries, department and agencies (MDAs) in the country. For example in The senate committees on Federal character and inter-governmental Affairs has noted with displeasure irregularities which pervade employment at the Nigeria Immigration services, Nigerian custom service, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and other Ministries, Department and Agencies in Nigeria. The central bank of Nigeria (CBN) issues on job racketeering to the highest bidders and to who is who in Nigeria in 2019 is still very fresh in our memory.[34]

Land dispute:

This is another major cause of threat to insecurity in Edo North Sensational District of Edo State in Nigeria. According the land use Act of 1978 which stated that "this Act vest all land comprised in the territory of each state (except land vested in the Federal Government or its agencies) in the Federation solely in the Governor of that state, who would hold such land in for the people and would henceforth be responsible for allocation of land in all urban areas to individuals resident in the state and to organizations for residential, agricultural, commercial and other purposes while similar powers with respect to non-urban areas are conferred on Local Governments and requires that such land shall be held in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigeria in accordance with the provision of the Act".[35]

According to Charles, land is intrinsic part of people's lives and belief system, a source of social power and self-worth. The nature of environment usually contributed to the pattern of conflict in the society. But the important of land cannot be over emphasized in relative term, although land is a free gift of nature, its functions are critical to human existence and the formation of society or state. Land support human survival, particularly in agricultural production, for both local and mechanised farming system, construction proposes and other developmental project in line with human existence, thus this made it an issue of life and death.[36]The Benin homeland is located in the forest zone of Nigeria. The zone has a lot of resources to offer which also paves the way for economic buoyancy and population outburst, to the degree that has not quite long, fragmented the land.

Land matters rank high among the Edo North Senatorial District, dispute related to land often resulted when a member of a family chooses to occupy or sell family land without consulting other members of the family. Trouble starts as soon as the family hears the illegal occupation or selling of the land. The family

land could be a farmland, the family members or their representatives would approach the illegal occupant or seller of the piece of land, asking for compensation or demanding that the occupant should stop trespassing in the family land. Failure to do so would result in conflict. In this case land is important because agriculture was the principal means of making livelihood (feudalism), but land which was the most important for that was in the hands of a few individual who always took the biggest share.[37]

According to Achumba, Ighomeroho and Akpor-Robaro, identified two major sources of insecurity in Edo north senatorial district namely; remote factors and immediate and proximate factors. The remote factors include: Lack of institutional capacity resulting in government failure, pervasive material inequalities and unfairness, ethnic religious conflicts, conflicts of perceptions between the public and government, weak security system loss of socio-cultural and communal value system, porous borders, rural/urban drift, and social irresponsibility of government, unemployment/poverty, and terrorism/banditry.[38]

Other notable causes of insecurity in Edo North Senatorial District as posed by S. O. Imanah, include high illiteracy level, the breakdown of societal values, the lack of proper traditional structures, growing poverty, poor infrastructural facilities, greedy, political factor/lack of trust of political office holders, fear of attack from Fulani-herdsmen, farmers/herdsmen crisis, ineffective and inefficient security agents to tackled criminal activities, lack of inter-security agency cooperation, collaboration and synergy, poor road network and a fall from our traditional-cultural value system. Insecurity is regarded as a chronic threat to human life, property, territories, instructions, state, culture and religious beliefs to mention but few.[39]

Conclusion

Insecurity has been on high in Edo North Senatorial District and has been a major challenge to the Edo State Government and Nigeria government at large. The activities of the criminal element have led to loss of lives and properties, fear, tension, militancy, cultism among the people of the senatorial district, some of this negative activities include; destruction of properties, killing, kidnapping, destruction of farm land, rape, armed robbery, political crisis, burning of houses, oil pipeline vandalism, banditry, terrorism, electrical power vandalism, oil bunkering, land gambling, arms trafficking, insurgency, communal conflict, political thuggery, many had been rendered homes, children become orphans with no hope of the future, many lives and properties have been lost, many women rendered widows.

Oral Interview

1. Interview with Mr. Collins Amoni, Farmer 66 years old, at Capital Road, Sabongida-Ora, Owan-west local government Area, Edo State, 8th April, 2023.

2. Interview with Mr. Goddy Ahonsi,. Contactor 42 years old, at *Oke* New Saboginda-Ora, Owan-west Local Government Area, Edo State 8th April, 2023.

3. Interview with Chief S. Imanah. Contactor 63 years old, at *Ivbihere* Village *Ozalla*, Owan-west Local Government Area, Edo State 8th April, 2023.

4. Interview with Chief Samuel Ogba. Farmer /Clan head 63 years old, at *Ivbihere* Village *Ozalla*, Owan-west Local Government Area, Edo State 8th April, 2023.

5. Interview with Senator Clifford Odia, Former Senator 57 years old, at Benin City, Edo State, 11thJune, 2023.

6. Interview with Senator Francis Alimikhena, Former Senator 61 years old, at Auchi Etsako Central Local Government Area, Edo State 7th April, 2023.

7. Interview with Mr. Femi Oyakhirome Retired Civil Servant/Farmer 66 years old, at *Avbiosi*, Owan-west Local Government Area, Edo State 7th April, 2021.

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