

EFFECTS OF POGROM ON NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF THE 4TH REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the effect of pogrom on Nigeria's economic and social development with particular mention of the 4th republic. The history of modern Nigerian State between 1960 till date is characterized by violent and bloody conflicts such as the political crisis of the First Republic, the Nigerian civil war, the ethno-religious violence of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. The Niger-Delta crisis, the Boko-Haram insurgency and the armed herdsmen menace. All these antecedents have tremendous adverse effects on the nation's social, political and economic development with attendant consequences and costs on the art of governance in the nation and on other African countries. It is against the aforementioned concerns that this article isolated and examined the consequences of the activities of Boko-Haram insurgency and armed herdsmen in Nigeria. The paper adopted a multi-disciplinary approach and analyzed the effects of the two phenomena on the Nigerian people and the government. The paper established the fact that Boko-Haram insurgency and armed herdsmen attacks in Nigeria have led to social, political and economic instability, not only on the Northern region, but Nigeria as a whole. The paper concluded that Nigeria is a failed state since Nigerians die every day like chickens. The paper, therefore, recommended a robust security network to completely neutralize the activities of non-state actors in Nigeria so as to curtail the level of massacre in the country.

Keywords: Pogrom, Boko Haram, Herdsmen, Unknown Gunmen

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has been associated with pogrom. Organized massacres with impunity had become Nigeria's identity. Since independence in 1960, the foundation of the unity and development of Nigeria has been shaken by several ethnic, religious and institutional crises of various degrees and magnitude (Gilbert, 2013). This is coupled with the politically and economically motivated crises which led to the destruction of lives and property, causing doubt about the unity of the country, as well as distrust on the competence of successive administrations by the Nigerian people. For instance, between 1960 and 1966, few years after independence, Nigeria experienced serious political crises that resulted in the first and second military coups of 1966 (Mohammed, 2014). The coups divided the Nigerian military on ethnic, regional and religious lines (Ojiako, 1979 & Ademoyega, 1981). The complications that arose from this unfortunate development led to the outbreak of a civil war in the country between 1967 and 1970 (Adejo, 2008).

Since the Second Republic to date, Nigeria has been battling with ethno-religious conflicts, which have divided the country on ethnic and religious lines (Otite & Albert, 1999; Babalola & Onapajo, 2018). Even though insurgency and other violent crises has started at the close of Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the tides changed for the worse when President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected as

Nigerian president. Since 1999, Nigeria experienced devastating security challenges in forms of crises and violent conflicts such as the Sharia crisis in the North (Angerbrandt, 2011; Alao & Mavalla, 2016), OPC Movement in the South-West (Akinyele, 2001), and Bakassi Boys in the Eastern region (Harnischfeger, 2003 & Meagher, 2007), the Niger-Delta crisis (Osagie & Samuel, 2010; Abang, 2014); the ethno/religious conflicts in the Middle-Belt region (Alubo, 2006; Otite & Albert, 1999); the Boko-Haram insurgency in North-East (Abubakar, 2012) and the armed herdsmen attacks on communities all over Nigeria (Obi, Uzochukwu & Chukwuemeka, 2018; Enor, Magor & Ekpo, 2019; Agbu, Anuye & Nyajo, 2019); there are also the issues of cattle rustling and armed-banditry attacks on communities in North-Western Nigeria (Abdullahi, 2019; Azeez & Aliyu, 2016). All these conflicts and many that are unheard of, threaten national unity integration and development of Nigeria.

The foregoing suggests that the issue of security challenge and threat to national unity is no longer new to Nigeria as a nation. Getting close to two decades now (2003-2020), Nigeria has been experiencing security challenges affecting the unity and development of, not only the northern region, but whole country in general.

Methods

The study made use of secondary source

of data for the collection of required information.

Pogrom

Generally speaking, a pogrom is an act of organized cruel behaviour or killing that is done to a large group of people because of their race or religion.

Pogroms in the Fourth Republic

Since 2003, Nigeria has continued to come face to face with security challenges, prominent among which are Boko-Haram terrorism and armed herdsmen violence in the North-Eastern region and the entire country. The activities/operations of these two groups over the years have been with impunity, leaving in their trails, blood, death, wailing and destruction. This has devastating social, political and economic effects on the progress and stability of not only their direct victims, but the entire Northern region and Nigeria at large. These incidents have transfer effects on some African countries sharing boundaries with Nigeria such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

While the violent deeds of Boko-Haram, with threatening effects on peace and national security, came to public notice in Yobe State in December 2003 (Abubakar, 2012), the turn of the first decade of the 21st century witnessed violent attacks by armed herdsmen, which have been on the increase in Nigeria (Enor, Magor & Ekpo, 2019). The activities of what came to be known

as Boko-Haram started when a group of Islamic fanatics who called themselves the Nigerian Taliban established settlements at Kanama, on the banks of the River Kumadugu-Yobe and at a forest near Gaidam (Abubakar, 2012 & Mohammed, 2014). Mohammed (2014) noted that members of this group were mostly young people in their twenties, who also included females assigned domestic chores such as cooking and fetching firewood and water. Mohammed further stated that some of the members were children of notable public figures, including a nephew of the then serving governor of Yobe State, a son of the Secretary to Borno State Government and five children of a local wealthy contractor. Thus, one could say that the group, initially, was not made up totally of poor people. This agrees with Abubakar (2012) who noted that even before GSM, the members had close contacts with other groups of like-minds found in different parts of the world through Thuraya phones.

The activities of the Boko Haram members in their immediate environment brought them into open confrontation with, not only members of the community, but security agents in places like Kanama, Gaidam, Babangida, Dapchi and Damaturu, among others. The arrest of two of their members by the police was met with violent reaction against the police during which they launched attacks not only on police stations and government

buildings, but generally wreaked havoc on Yunusari, Tarmowa, Borsari, Geidam, Kanama, Dapchi and Damaturu Local Government Areas of Yobe State between 21 December 2003 and 1 January 2004 (Abubakar, 2012 & Mohammed, 2014). Citing Cook (2011) Mohammed (2014) further noted that between January and September 2004, this tiny group resurfaced and terrorized the inhabitants of Damaturu, the Yobe State capital, and Damboa, Bama and Gwoza in neighbouring Borno State, attacking police stations and attempting prison breaks. In these attacks, police officers were killed and about 12 policemen held hostage in Kala Balge on October, 2004 and not much was heard about the captives for a long period.

The publicity that followed the attacks on the police, government buildings and the surrounding communities, spread public knowledge about the existence of the Islamic sect particularly on its capability to wreak havoc on the society. The intervention by the Yobe State government failed to make any impact as the initial victory spurred them to further action such as distributing leaflets, announcing their names and intention to set up an independent Islamic State in that part of the country. As a result of this treasonable act, the military reacting strongly, moved against the sect, flushed them out of their settlements in the bush, killed twenty-eight (28) members, arrested and jailed many (Abubakar, 2012). This opened the first phase of insurrection that

engulfed the North-Eastern region of Nigeria, leading to the flight for safety and security of most Nigerians residing in the region.

Consequent upon the 2003/2004 fracas, the Yobe and Borno States governments declared Muhammed Yusufu, the leader of the group, wanted, forcing him to flee to Umra only to return in 2004 when he was persuaded by Sheikh Jafar to send to the government a statement in writing renouncing his fatwa on boko being haram (Abubakar, 2012). Between 2004 and 2009, Muhammed Yusufu gradually built support, trained his men, established channels for acquisition of weapons and carried out pockets of attacks on government institutions such as the police and military outfits. Abubakar (2012) noted that:

After the 2004 episode, Yusuf pronounced that his sect had no interest in attacking civilians, as it had no quarrel with the public, but with the authorities. Basically the sect maintained that boko is haram and forbidden, Muslims should stop work as public servants and that the sect would continue to be an anti-establishment organization fighting against government institutions, such as the police and military. In short, the leader re-affirmed the position of the sect as a radical Islamic group opposed to western education and all institutions of public authority.

On 27 July 2009, an uprising took place in Maiduguri between the members of the Sect and the Police. The Violence spread to Biu where a bomb exploded and killed a senior member of the Sect. In Bauchi State, sixty members of the movement, armed with guns and grenades attacked a Police station at Dutsen Tanshi on 26 July and fifty (50) lives were lost. On 27 July, the violence spread from Bauchi to Borno, Yobe and Kano States. Hundreds of people, including very senior police officers, died. Abubakar (2012) again stated that in Maiduguri, for example, members of the sect directed their attentions to three important government institutions - the State headquarters of the police, the Nigeria Prison Service and Lamisula, Gomboru and Damasak police stations. In the course of these confrontations, members of the sect were killed, police stations and quarters were set ablaze, police men and prison service men were killed, and about three hundred and fifty (350) inmates were freed. Similarly, Wudil Police station in Kano State was attacked by about fifty sect members, killing two men and they carted away sophisticated rifles. In Potiskum, Yobe State, fifty youths in support of the sect attacked and burnt public buildings such as offices of Federal Road Safety Commission, National Population Commission and Divisional Police Headquarters, leaving the entire town in confusion. The aim of the uprising was to take over government in the Northern States and Southern Nigeria and then establish an Islamic government in

Nigeria (Abubakar, 2012).

The Federal Government, considering the inability of the Borno State Government to nip the uprising on the bud, intervened by directing the military to move in and crush the rebellion on 30 July, 2009. In the events that unfolded, Muhammed Yusuf was captured and handed over to the Police, who did not respect due process and rule of law, but shot him dead. Others summarily killed by the police included Alhaji Buji Foi, one of the financiers of the Movement. Others include Alhaji Ba'a Fugu, one of the father-in-laws of Muhammed Yusuf, killed on 5th August 2009. As the military crackdown on the Movement intensified, members of the group became desperate and more militant. They resorted to more desperate measures, which they had despised in the past such as burning of school buildings, attacks on telecommunication base stations, killing and kidnapping of foreigners, slaughtering as opposed to shooting of opponents, and killing of health officials at routine vaccination clinics, as well as random shooting of pupils and teachers at schools (Mohammed, 2014). Consequently, between 2010 and 2020, Boko Haram unleashed fear and terror in the minds of the people of Nigeria, particularly in the North-Eastern region of the country. This development affected every aspect of the peoples' social, economic and political life.

Following the very inhuman violent

nature the movement assumed, in November 2012 the group was designated as Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the United States Security Department. Similarly, in May 2014, the United Nations Committee on Amnesty International blacklisted the group (Shuaibu, Salleh & Shehu, 2015).

Conclusion

It is clear that the fourth republic has recorded various pogroms raging from Boko-Haram massacre by herders as well as ethno-religious massacres. When the group which later came to be called Boko Haram started unleashing terror on North-Eastern part of Nigeria and later spread to other parts of the North: through 2013 to 2019 when the Fulani extremists upgraded their terror on farming communities in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria (Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Southern Kaduna and Nasarawa States), and extended the terror to South-Eastern and South-Western Nigeria, Nigeria's unity, integration and national development remained defied. The various perspectives the Nigerian people see the phenomena have placed the stability of the country under question mark. Apart from the death of thousands of people and destruction of communities and property the phenomena affected food production in the fertile regions of Northern Nigeria thus impacting negatively on the economy of not only the farmers, but the entire nation. Protests and counter-protests, calls and

counter-calls from all over the nation for either state or regional security structure or even division of the country along regional lines have become very serious issues of concern due to the foregoing development.

Recommendations

1. There is need to boost the morale of the security personnel in the field such as the Military, the Police and other para-military agents through the provision of modern holistic and sophisticated weapons that could enable them match the superior weapons of currents and terrorists, particularly Boko-Haram insurgents and the Fulani armed the herdsmen terrorists.
2. In addition to the provision of sophisticated weapons, the welfare of the security personnel must be handled with all seriousness. Confidence must be restored in the Police and Para-military personnel through proper arrangement for their incentives in order to maintain their fighting spirits.
3. Nigerian leaders should stop nepotism in giving appointments to people of the same religion and ethnic groups.
4. In order to address the infrastructural imbalance in Nigeria, which is part of the agitations, the National Assembly should ensure that each region will have a

development commission.

5. There should be government policy to integrate all stages of Nigeria, the scheme of things in order to reduce the feeling of marginalization, exclusion and victimization.
6. Let there be total unbiased and non-sentimental restructuring of security architecture of the military to meet up the country's security challenges on insurgency, terrorism, herdsmen attacks, kidnapping banditry, robbery, etc.
7. The welfare of the security personnel should be made a priority by providing them with modern sophisticated weapons that will enable them match the superior weapons of the insurgents and terrorist. Funds should be made available and adequately paid to them especially those in the fields without why politics in order to maintain their fighting spirit.
8. As a matter of fact and urgency, Nigeria needs state police in order to solve permanently this security problem.

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