FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG
Nigeria Office

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE SHADOWS OF NIGERIA'S CORE CONFLICTS

Edited by Chidiebere Ugwu

ISBN - 978-978-795-344-0

Published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Nigeria

Edited by Chidiebere Ugwu

Contributors

Salaudeen Hashim

Bertha Eloho Ogbimi

Asmau Benz Leo

Ekene Johnpaul Ikwelle

Omotola Abidemi

Co-funded by the European Union

Acknowledgement

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Nigeria profoundly acknowledge the excellent relations and collaboration it had with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) which was very instrumental to the success of the symposium held at the Institute. The collection in this volume is a product of the presentations and robust interactions held over the cause of the two-day event. Special thanks also to the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), our principal partner during this project that was co-funded by the European Union. We are also grateful to all the authors and discussants whose presentations and incisive interventions contributed to the success of the programme. We sincerely hope that this book provides answers to some of the complex questions bordering on the core violent conflicts in the country.

Contents

Background
Civil Society in the Shadows of Nigeria's Core Conflicts
– Chidiebere Ugwu

Over the last twenty years, the Niger Delta crisis in the south-south, the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, the Farmer, and Herder Conflicts in the northwest and north central, and the intense Banditry in the Northwest have been the most pervasive conflicts that have threatened the socio-political and economic stability in Nigeria. Post-independence Nigerian governments have addressed these conflicts mainly through kinetic and non-kinetic approaches with various degrees of success and failures. Militancy, insurgency, armed banditry, and brazen criminality have rolled back developmental strides, increased insecurity and plunged a good number of the population into extreme poverty amidst wealth and plenty. Are these upward trends undermining or reaffirming the capabilities or inabilities of the Nigeria security forces to tackle or bring to a complete halt the rising tides of insecurity?

The unending conflict in these regions begs the question of the veracity of the actors. The deaths, poverty, displacements, sickness and insecurity should have made actors to pause and think. In this situation of insecurity, social inequality and injustice, Civil Society often supported through the international community saw the need to support the vulnerable communities and the victims of the conflicts. Civil Society also got involved in the management and transformation of conflicts as well as in post

conflict reconstruction. Civil Society actors have also taken up the roles of mediators, peacebuilders and even negotiators in Nigeria's core conflicts. Civil Societies has emerged and evolved as an important non-state actor in peacebuilding and conflict management and are decisively contributing to the reshaping the debate for a better understanding of security. One that considers various dimensions of security and aimed at all humans' concerns. Today, more than ever, Civil Society Organisations are critical actors in conflicts and conflict management including mitigation and transformation. They also play a huge role in peacebuilding efforts in the country.

Despite the increased interest in civil society organization's (CSOs) activities in the field of peacebuilding, little has been done to suggest a framework for effective CSOs engagement. This symposium examines the role of civil societies in Nigeria's core conflicts. It explored the contributions of CSOs and their increasing involvement in Nigeria core conflicts. Conflict-entrepreneurs continue to make gains from these conflicts making it even more difficult to resolve. What is the political economy of these conflicts, what are the roles of the media and Civil Society Engagements.

The Symposium explored the roles of Civil Society and CSOs in peacebuilding and conflict management in Nigeria's major conflicts. It also tried to examine how civil society interact with the formal security actors in the country. The symposium looked into how non-traditional security actors, Non-Governmental

Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), traditional and religious institutions, and international organisations got engaged in the conflict arena amidst the security agencies often heavy-handed, 'militarised' or lacklustre approach to handling of the country's violent conflicts. The papers are to be understood in the light of the cognisance that Peacebuilding is a product of a multiplicity of efforts and interventions, by both traditional and non-traditional security actors.

Through its gain in knowledge on civil society and security sector cooperation the symposium will contribute to the promotion of a more effective engagement between government, civil society organisations and the local communities in the conflict affected area.

Among various aims and objectives this symposium seeks to suggest a framework for effective CSOs engagements in Nigeria's core conflicts to improve cooperation between security forces and civil society in the light of democratic Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSR/G). It will also attempt to review and evaluate the efforts of CSOs in four major conflicts through an exploration of their various engagements in peacebuilding. The goal is to create lasting partnerships and effective/meaningful engagements between government, civil society organisations and the local communities on subjects of security and peacebuilding.

Civil Society in Shadows of Nigeria's Core Conflicts – A Panoramic View

Dr Bakut T. Bakut

Introduction

Nigeria got her independence in 1960, Since then the country has been grappling with various types of conflict, ranging from ethno-religious, political/electoral crisis to resource-based conflicts. Right from the advent of democratisation in 1999 Nigeria has experienced more agitations due to more freedom of expression and increased politicking. In the same vein, militancy, insurgency, intense criminality, armed banditry, farmer-herder conflict among others have become some of the major challenges impeding democratisation from yielding the dividend of democracy and development in Nigeria. These challenges have worsened insecurity, socio-economic and political development of the nation.

Several efforts have been put in place by the government and other stakeholders to mitigate conflicts and their impact on the country. In addressing the insecurity issues, the Nigerian government has deployed security forces mainly to neutralise the security threats identified. Also, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution established as a think-tank and agency of Government to strengthen Nigeria's capacity for the promotion of peace and preventing conflict has successfully implemented several peacebuilding programmes across the 6 geopolitical zones of the country.

There is no gainsaying that civil society plays a very critical role in peacebuilding. Apart from being a crucial element deployed by external interventions and missions in post-conflict periods, these organisations also serve several other critical roles as key pillars of the democratization process. Civil Society Organisations also helps in rebuilding trust in communities as well as enhancing local participation and ownership. The World Bank report (2013), pointed out that civil society has experienced a dramatic expansion in number, size, scope, and capacity, aided by a series of events such as increased interconnectivity, democratic governance, telecommunications, social media, economic integration, and globalization across the world. In most countries, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are at the core of mobilizing and channelling citizens' voices in public policymaking and governance process. The proliferation of CSOs has significant roles in global development assistance, as well as

shaping domestic and global policies through their involvement in humanitarian assistance during disasters, violent conflicts, peacebuilding, and other emergencies.

However, the visibility of CSOs in the peacebuilding process in Nigeria cannot be downplayed. They have actively participated as a key element of external interventions in post-conflict situations in Nigeria. Civil society Organisations has been at the centre of most development and governance milestones both in the developed and developing countries globally. For instance, since 1999, they have become active in core-social issues such as elections, public policy, human rights, governance, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. Furthermore, civil society has stepped into violent conflicts in the country and contributes significantly to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

To this end, The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) have organized this symposium to discuss the roles of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in Nigeria regarding how they have been engaged within Nigeria's core conflicts and their involvement with relevant stakeholders. It is in this context that this keynote address is given, and we appreciate the participation of critical stakeholders.

Civil Society

Civil society was defined by Ikelegbe, 2013, as both an organizational structure and an analytical tool for the analysis of politics and development. As a structural entity, its precise content and boundary are contested and as an analytical framework, its relevance and potency are also contested. Civil Society is the associational life of citizens characterized by common interests, civil and public purposes, and voluntary collective and autonomous actions (Ikelegbe 2013). According to the World Bank "*The term civil society refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life expressing the interest and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religions or philanthropic considerations. Civil society organisations (CSO) therefore include a wide range of organisations, community groups, (NGOs), Labour Unions, indigenous groups, advocacy groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organization, media, professional associations and foundations*" (World Bank, 2013). Court, Mendizabal, et al, highlighted the main functions of CSOs in peacebuilding and development as:

- Representation: These are organisations that aggregate citizen's voice.
- Advocacy: These are organisations that lobby on issues.
- Technical Expertise: these are organisations that provide information and advice.

- Capacity building: Those organisations that provide support to other CSOs, including funding.
- Service delivery: (organisations that implement development projects or provide services).
- Social functions: These are organisations that foster collective recreational activities (Court, Mendizabal, Osborne, and Young, 2016).

Human Security

Human security is defined primarily as an analytical tool that focuses on ensuring security for the individual, not the state. It is aimed at mitigating threats to the insecurity of individuals thus becomes a central goal of policy recommendations and actions. Concisely, the UNDP Human Development Report (1994) explicitly posited that human security not only tells us about the security from crime and violence, but it also covers seven different dimensions bothering on economic, health, food, environment personal, community and political of human beings. Human security comprises of two major components; freedom from fear and freedom from wants.

- In recent years, the state as the primary object of security has been contested and the close relationship between human security and the state has increasingly been accepted. As such, the UN Commission on Human Security contends that human security complements state security in four respects.
- The individual and the community rather than the state.

- Menaces to people's security include threats and conditions that have not always been classified as threats to state security.
- The range of actors is expanded beyond the state alone; and
- Achieving human security includes not just protecting people but also empowering people to fend for themselves.

Conflict and Violence

The concept of conflict and violence are more often than not used in the same breath even though they are quite different. Conflict means a serious disagreement between two or more parties while violent conflict involves forceful behaviour intended to harm the other party in a disagreement. It is the struggle overvalues or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the groups or individuals involved are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals (Coser, 1956:8). Also, conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Conflict results because of miscommunication between people concerning their needs, ideas, beliefs, goals, or values. (Foundation Coalition, 2003; SCA, 2003) The results of conflict are not predetermined, therefore might escalate and lead to violence which is often referred to as violent conflict.

Violence is a complex concept that is often understood as the use or threat of force that can result in injury, harm, deprivation or even death. It may be physical, verbal, or psychological. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as "intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation". WHO,2002 This definition emphasises intentionality, and broadens the concept to include acts resulting from power relationships. In violent conflicts, state and non-state actors generally embrace the different terms that confers a modicum of legitimacy. While governments tend to prefer delegitimizing terms such as insurgency or terrorism, non-state actors prefer terms such as *"Jihad or religious struggle,"* and *"civil war."* Some of the factors that cause and trigger violent conflict in Africa include elections, price hikes, extremist ideologies, poverty, marginalization, inequality, bad governance, and ethnic grievances, among others. Also, State weakness can create the conditions for violent conflict especially when political institutions are unable to manage differing group interests peacefully, to provide adequate guarantees of group protection, or to accommodate growing demands for political participation, which can fracture societies.

Peace and Peacebuilding

Peace means the absence of war. Therefore, in the military, peace is seen as an ultimate goal. However, according to Albert Einstein

peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, and government (Vesilind, 2005). While in the view of Martin Luther King, Jr., peace must include justice in society, that means peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice (Kin, 2008). Peacebuilding on the other hand is a process that involves a great number and variety of stakeholders to make it work. In his work, Johan Galtung posited the need for the creation of peacebuilding structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the "root causes" of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution (UN Peacebuilding, 2010). Peacebuilding became a familiar concept within the UN following Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, which defined peacebuilding as an action to identify and support structures which will tend to solidify peace and avoid a relapse into conflict (UN Agenda for peace report, 1994). It is a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development," (UN Peacebuilding, 2010). It is neither a purely political, security nor developmental process, but one that must bring together security, political, economic, social, and human rights elements in a coordinated and integrated way (UN Peacebuilding, 2010).

Non-Traditional Security Actors

Non-traditional security actors are non-state security actors. They are also referred to as a shift away from the state-centric, military focus of traditional security paradigms. Maria Derks (2012) explained the concept of non-state security actors by noting in fragile and (post-)conflict countries, many citizens cannot rely on the state to provide safety and public order. In many such cases, the resources, capacity, and skills for effective protection are absent and, as a result, police, military, and related security services are unable to fulfil their roles. Moreover, in some cases, the police, the military, and related security services are perceived to be part of the problem rather than the solution. In many parts of the country, there are vulnerable villages and communities where atrocious acts were committed by criminal gangs, insurgents, terrorists, etc resulting in a high rate of casualties. In such cases, there were inadequate responses by traditional and justice sector providers. They are often located far away, and their services are expensive. As a result, many people lack security and access to justice, particularly those in the poorer and more remote areas of conflict or post-conflict settings. In these situations, communities often rely on non-state, semi-formal, or local security/vigilante actors such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), to provide the services for their security and justice needs.

Security Actors

The primary responsibility of government is to guarantee security of lives and properties of its citizens. The majority of governments have continued to consider security issues in terms of protecting the state. The state's institutions, its borders, the government, laws, and citizens are protected and enforced with the use of security actors. These actors include the police, intelligence agencies, and the military at the forefront. Hussein, Gnisci, and Wanjiru, (2004) identified three key actors in the security sector as follows:

Core Security Actors

Such as armed forces; police; gendarmerie; paramilitary forces; presidential guards, military and civilian intelligence and security services; coast guards; customs authorities; reserve or local security units such as civil defence forces, national guards, militia, etc.

Security Management and Oversight Bodies

These are executive institutions of the national government; national security advisory bodies, legislature, and legislative select committees; ministries of defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs; traditional authorities and local authorities; public complaints commissions, etc.

Justice and Law Enforcement Institutions

These includes the judiciary; justice ministries; prisons; criminal investigation and prosecution services; human rights

commissions and ombudsmen; customary and traditional justice systems.

Security Sector Governance

As the umbrella of the security sector grows so has the standard of security expanded to include governance of the security sector. The concept of security sector governance is promoted generally in Western liberal democracies where the standard of citizens' rights is enshrined in the constitution of a state and the authorities are accountable towards good governance and its principles, such as freedom of information and the rule of law (UNSCR 2151). Security Sector Governance (SSG) ensures that traditional security agencies, management, and individual staff meet expected standards of performance and behaviour as defined through laws, policies, practices, and relevant social and cultural norms (Security System Reform and Governance, 2005). Thus, *security sector governance refers to the process by which accountable security institutions transparently supply security as a public good via transparent policies and practices. The accountability of security institutions is affected by democratic oversight performed by a range of stakeholders including democratic institutions, government, civil society, and the media. The overall rationale for ensuring substantive democratic governance of the security sector is to enhance citizens' safety and public security* (Security Sector Integrity, 2009). It entails the rules, structures, norms, and processes that influence how public goods are provided in any society. DCAF (2015) further

buttressed that the principles of good SSG include accountability, transparency, rule of law, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Overview of Violent Conflicts in Nigeria

Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999 ushered in hope and optimism in tackling some of the national challenges especially in the areas of socio-economic and political issues. These issues have remained at the core of the causes of violent conflicts and fostered the proliferation of armed groups engaging in lawlessness and insecurity in the country. Non-state actors like the armed herdsmen, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Boko Haram terrorist group, ISWAP, and various armed bandits are on the prowl committing acts of terrorism, killings, robbery, and kidnappings in the country.

To most security observers, analysts, and scholars, Nigeria in practice follow a state-based rather than human-based national security concept and practice, thereby falling far short of the potential for a broader approach to security. Okonkwo (2013), clearly posits that "*In Nigeria security usually assumes a militaristic approach either because the political system is inherently unstable or those in control of state continuously wish to remain in power… the conventional defence or militaristic doctrine is what guides defence thinking; whereby, a sufficiently effective modern military organisation is seen as the answer to internal and external threats in Nigeria.*"

A general overview of the most pervasive conflicts that have threatened the socio-political and economic stability in Nigeria, including the extremist Islamic insurgency in the northeast of the country called Boko Haram; banditry in ungoverned spaces in the Northwest; militant restiveness in the petroleum-rich Niger Delta and Farmer and Herder Conflicts along grazing routes in the middle belt and south of the country, will be put into context below.

The Niger Delta Crisis

Nigeria is the biggest producer of petroleum in Africa. The country is more dependent on oil petroleum products, which contributes the most to its GDP. Most of this oil is found in the Niger Delta, which covers almost 70.000 square kilometres and extends from the Benin River in the west to the Imo River in the east. The Niger Delta contains vast petroleum resources, the biggest reserves are found in the Delta and offshore in the Bight of Benin, the Gulf of Guinea, and the Bight of Bonny (Watts, 2004).

The oil found in the Niger Delta is central to the agitation and militancy in the region. Besides its large amount of oil, the Delta is also important in global energy politics. It is the highest earner of foreign exchange to the Federal Government of Nigeria. Due to the environmental degradation and chronic underdevelopment in the Niger Delta caused by the activities of some oil companies, this made several indigenous groups rise against the multinational oil companies and the Nigerian government (IPCR Strategic

Conflict Assessment, 2016). These protests started gradually but later transformed into a potent armed militant group such as the "Nigeria Delta Peoples Volunteer Force" (NDPVF), the "Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV), and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta" (MEND) (Watts, 2004). These groups usually put pressure on the Federal government and MNCs by attacking oil installations, kidnapping local and foreign oil workers, and smuggling oil through bunkering. The instability in the Niger Delta caused a significant fall in oil production. With the help from civil societies, a truce was finally negotiated between the Nigerian Federal Government and the militant youths operating from the Niger Delta creeks leading to the guaranteeing of Amnesty which significantly reduced armed attacks on oil installations in the region.

The Boko Haram Insurgency

The major incidence of conflict that has occupied the radar of reportage of conflicts from the northeast since 2009 is the conflict between the Nigerian State and the *Jamaatu Ahlil Sunna Lidawati Wal Jihad* meaning people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and jihad popularly referred to as the Boko Haram - loosely translated as "Western education is forbidden." Boko Haram has been unleashing a violent insurgency against Nigeria in its self-defined mission of establishing an Islamic state governed according to its version of Islam (IPCR Strategic Conflict Assessment, 2016). The insurgency has created a humanitarian catastrophe where thousands were killed, millions displaced and

many in the affected communities in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states are still living with fear and trauma. The state of human insecurity in the region has been worsen by allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) against the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by the belligerents as well as managers of the camps. The visible and invisible actors in the landscape of these conflict and insurgency cut across local and international spheres which have made an outright defeat of terrorism quite challenging for the government (IPCR Strategic Conflict Assessment, 2016).

The Farmer and Herder Conflicts

According to findings from the IPCR Strategic Conflict Assessment, (2016), the incessant herder-farmer' conflicts have remained dominant in several states. Land remains a scarce resource, worsened by increasing demand by both farmers and herders in the region thereby resulting in frequent clashes between these actors and the host communities most of whom are the farmers. This conflict is characterized by armed assaults, rape, kidnapping, organized attacks, and reprisals on the villages and communities. The main cause of this conflict is environmental resource scarcity induced movement of herders from the northern part of the country southward. Other identifiable causes of conflicts between the herders and the farmers are the blockage of water points leading to freshwater scarcity, burning of rangelands, cattle rustling, inadequate animal health care and disease control, overgrazing of fallow lands, defecation on roads

and streams by cattle, extensive grazing, and ethnic stereotyping. Both state and non-state actors have initiated several responses resulting in minimal successes due to the criminalities and political narratives that have become part of the conflict.

The Banditry in the Northwest

The existence of big forests that extend across the states in Northwest Nigeria, has provided cover for the proliferation of violent acts of rural banditry by criminal gangs who use the expansive and dense forests to terrorise rural areas and commuters on the highways. The situation is further compounded by the proliferation of small arms and light arms and their ammunitions, which are easily smuggled across the porous borders of the country (IPCR Strategic Conflict Assessment, 2016). Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Niger, and the Kaduna States are all under siege by a gang of bandits, armed robbers, kidnappers, and cattle rustlers. The North-west, earlier insulated from the havoc and ghastly atrocities of the decade-long Boko Haram insurgency ravaging the Northeast has become another major theatre of violence (The Northwest and Banditry, 2020). According to a policy brief from the West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP), from January to December 2019, armed bandits were responsible for more than 1,000 civilian deaths in the Northwest. This number of lives lost is reportedly greater than civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same period (though not greater than all those killed, which includes soldiers and Boko Haram members).

Engagement of Civil Society Organizations in Conflicts

The civil society in Nigeria through the non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations has had the most engagement with governments and political class in ensuring peace and conflict resolution in the communities wherein they work and, in the country, at large. This has been done on a sustained basis through workshops and forums, which serve as avenues for unrestricted interactions between the political class and the vulnerable and marginalised groups. They have also played a major role in addressing the challenges of peace and conflict in Nigeria using research, advocacy, capacity building, and dialogue. Their efforts have provided humanitarian relief for vulnerable groups; opened access to conflict-affected communities; increased the participation of women and other marginalized groups; democratized the flow of information and improved civil/military/security relations.

Generally, in recent times, the operating environment for civil society is improving in an increasing number of countries, and the number of CSOs is growing. The nature of civil society is equally changing, as is their engagement in policy processes (Mack, 2005). Many CSOs have become aware that policy engagement can lead to greater pro-poor impacts than contestation. Many more CSOs are moving beyond service delivery. For some CSOs, policy influencing is a part of their organisation's agenda. Some of the ways through which CSOs engage or try to influence policy are: networking with other organisations; providing training and

capacity building for partners; comment on draft policy documents; organise policy seminars and workshops; publications on policy issues; provide services; submit articles in the media; pilot alternative policy approaches; insider lobbying; through websites; produce newsletters to policymakers; work on projects commissioned by policymakers, among others (Kornsweig, Osborne, Hovland and Court, 2006).

Also, some other areas in which CSOs can play a part in conflict resolution and Peacebuilding include:

- Conflict Analysis: This entails gathering information, monitor developments, and provide early warning of situations that can erupt into crises, violent conflict, or war.

- Combating the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): CSOs can work at the national and international level to raise awareness of the dangers of arms production, and the ease with which arms are smuggled across porous borders.

- Conflict Resolution: CSOs have access to the parties involved in the conflict and the ability to bring parties to dialogue. They can as well induce the local population to get involved in long-term reconciliation efforts. By working directly with the local population on the ground, civil society organizations can assess the situation more

effectively than top levels of governance or external actors (Rupesinghe and Anderlini, 1998:70)

- Conflict Mediation and Negotiation: The CSOs have also been pivotal in the area of conflict mediation /peace negotiations in Nigeria.

- Enlightenment and Sensitization: Civil society organizations also play an important role in the area of providing information, enlightenment, and advocacy. Ezirim (2009) argued that civil society groups in Nigeria should be actively involved in peace negotiation processes. The reason is that they can popularize peace deals, put pressure on belligerent, and mobilize popular support for the peace process.

It is however regrettable that in Nigeria civil society engagement with security actors has not reached its full potential. This is due to the environment of suspicion that continues to surround the activities of civil society in conflicts. Civil society organizations are perceived as legitimate targets by armed non-state actors and equally viewed with suspicion by security actors. It is against this background we seek to examine the challenges that exist between the CSOs and security agencies in Nigeria.

Challenges Between CSOs and Security Agencies

There are several challenges that civil society organisations face in Nigeria, however, the gulf that exists between civil society

organisations and security agencies stands out. In Nigeria, members of the civil society, often accuse security agencies of harassment, gross violations of human rights and abuse, unlawful detention, and the denial of freedom of assembly. The security agencies in their defence have open channels of communication and coordination with several civil society organizations and so these best practices can be built upon. The media, which is an integral part of civil society, operates in fear in Nigeria, so much so that they self-censor programs and opinions to air to avoid being victimise or shot down.

On the other hand, civil society and the media are always accused of corruption and misrepresentation of security agencies in conflict. They also allege that social media platforms, like Facebook and Twitter, have been used as avenues for CSOs to promote false narrative accounts of conflict situations.

Importantly, factors that affect the government-CSO relationship can also affect CSOs-security agencies' relationship. These have been identified by Essia and Yearoo (2005) as structural, social, and institutional factors as explained below.

- Structural factors: Many governments in the developing countries of the world are yet to come to terms with the role CSOs should play. Equally, CSOs are yet to learn how well to apply themselves to government issues. Both sides need more education on the art and practice of participatory governance. In Nigeria however, the

structure of state-CSOs relations will continue to depend on the extent of division, inequality, and conflicts between the rulers and the rest of the society as well as the extent to which every member of the society has a sense of belonging. More cooperation and complementary relationships would develop between the state (Including security agencies) and CSOs when the state runs a democratic system of governance; maintains an economic system that is pro-growth, with equity and welfare of all the citizens; and observe the rule of law and separation of powers and preserves the fundamental rights of ordinary citizens.

- **Institutional factors:** There are serious institutional challenges to the partnership between the state and CSOs. The first major challenge is how to deal with administrative practices and laws that enthrone secrecy and ad-hoc practices in the affairs of government. The second institutional problem is the limited space available for CSOs' participation in the formulation of policies that affect the livelihood of citizens by agencies of government. The third challenge is that of raising the intellectual and organizational capacities of citizens-based groups for constructive engagements with government departments and agencies.

- **Social factors:** The major challenge here is that of replacing the mentality of ad-hoc practices and trial-and-error with respect for planning and organization. More people need to learn how to respect institutions and abide by their guidance.

More so, other critical challenges of CSOs include lack of moral authority, identity, legitimacy, mandate, accountability, limited national outlook, authentic legal authority, undemocratic nature, transparency, unhealthy competition for access to resources, promoting narrow agendas, fragmentation, restriction to privileged few, clientelism, lack of influence and creativity, inadequate professionalism, chronic dependence on external funding, lack of global vision of development. Also, questionable and politicization of leadership, suspicion, cleavages, disloyalties, lack of solidarity, contention between and within interest groups are some of the problems facing CSOs in Nigeria (Ikelegbe, 2003).

Conclusion

In Nigeria civil society has been at the centre of most development and governance milestones. They have also been instrumental in supporting the most vulnerable Nigerians impacted by conflicts. And yet, the increasing spate of violent conflicts in Nigeria is a clear indication of a lack of active coordination between the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and security agencies. In countries where civil society thrives, they have experienced sustained growth, expansion in democratic representation, and peace or at

the very least they are on track to achieving lasting peace. An empowered civil society, including the academia and the media, working as a check and partner alongside security agencies, would doubtless play a major role in developing a road map to stem the violence and foster peacebuilding. While there may be reasons to question the motives of some in civil society, we must ask ourselves, have the contributions of civil society organizations in these conflicts, not earned them a seat at the table?

References

Aarne Vesilind, (2005) *Peace engineering: when personal values and engineering careers converge*, (USA: Lakeshore Press), p. 43.

Coser, L (1956). The function of social conflict. New York : New York Free Press.

Court, J., E. Mendizabal, D. Osborne and J. Young (2016). Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can be More Effective. Rapid Research and Policy in Development. London: Overseas Development Institute

Essia, U. and A. Yearoo (2009). Strengthening civil society organizations/government partnership in Nigeria. *International NGO Journal* Vol. 4 (9), pp. 368-374.

Ezirim, G. (2009). The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Managementll in Peace Studies and Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader by Miriam Ikejiani-Clark, Ed, Spectrum Books Limited: Ibadan.

Foundation Coalition, (2003). Understanding Conflict and Conflict Management. Retrieved online13/08/20 http://www.foundationcoalition.org/teams

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). "Security Sector Governance", SSR Backgrounder Series (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

Hussein, K, Gnisci, D and Wanjiru, J (2004), Security and Human Security: An Overview of Concepts and Initiatives, What Implications for West Africa? Sahel and West Africa Club Issue Paper

Ikelegbe A.O., (2013). The State and Civil Society in Nigeria: Towards a partnership for sustainable development. Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) monograph series No.7. Ambik Press LTD

- (2003). "Civil Society and Alternative Approaches to Conflict Management in Nigeria",in T. A. Imobighe, *Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict Management in Nigeria,* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited pp 36-37.

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Strategic Conflict Assessment Report, 2003.

- Strategic Conflict Assessment Report, 2016.

Kin, C.S. (2008), *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, New market Press, p. 83.

Kornsweig, G., D. Osborne, I. Hovland and J. Court (2006). *CSOs,* Policy Influence, and Evidence Use: A Short Survey. London: ODI.

Mack, A. (2005) Human Security Report*, 2005.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Maria, Derks (2012), Improving security and justice through local/non-state actors: *The challenges of donor support to local/non-state security and justice providers*

North-West and Banditry, 2020. The North-West and Banditry: The security agencies must do more to contain the increasing menace. Accessed online 17/08/2020 https://www.thisdaylive.com

Okonkwo S. O (2013) Redefining National Security in the 21st century: A perspective of the contemporary Nigerian State by Oge Samuel Okonkwo. Retrieved online 13/08/20: https://medium.com/@OS_Okonkwo/redefining-national-security-in-the-21st-century-a-perspective-of-the-contemporary-nigerian-state-3c32c89e293e

Rupesinghe, K., and N. Anderlini (1998). Civil Wars, Civil Peace: An Introduction to Conflict Resolution, Pluto Press: London.

Security Sector Reform and Governance, (2005). DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. Paris: OECD DAC. ISBN 978-92-64-00786-4.

UN Agenda for Peace (1994). Report of the Secretary-General, para 21. Available at http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations//

UN Security Council Resolution 2151 (S/RES/2151) on Security sector reform: challenges and opportunities. United Nations, 2014. Archived from the original on 2017-11-21

West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP) Policy Brief, 2019. Nigeria, Addressing Armed Banditry in the North-West Region of Nigeria: Exploring the potentials of a Multi-Dimensional Conflict Management Approach.

Watts, M., (2004): *Resource curse? Governmentality, Oil and Power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.*

World Bank Report, 2013.

Part One

The Niger Delta Conflict

The Role of Civil Society Organizations

The Niger Delta Conflict

Obi, Ndifon Neji, PhD

The Role of Civil Society Organizations in the Niger Delta Crisis

Obi, Ndifon Neji, PhD

Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has, unfortunately, become synonymous with agitations, militancy, and vandalism that have often threatened the socio-economic development of the country. In the colonial past, slave and palm oil traders (Africa Report, 2006) colonial potentates and post-independence Nigerian governments have often deployed a blend of diplomacy, force, threats, subterfuge, and bribery to extract resources from the land, swamps, and rivers of the Niger Delta, without the discernment that their mercantile activities were creating a background for protracted unrests, agitations, and violence (Obi, 2018). These unguarded mercantilist activities have inadvertently exposed the region to sustained restiveness occasioned by a cocktail of paradoxes of incompatibilities.

A region so rich in resources yet so poor, a major contributor to the development of the Nigerian state yet, itself underdeveloped, a region classified as the world's largest wetland, yet lacks potable water (Simbine and Obi, 2018). This is further compounded by the government's attempts at security that have often resulted in insecurity in the region, a development that has created conditions conducive for underdevelopment and poverty and lack in a context of wealth and abundance. Years of neglect and

ecological devastation have left much of the Niger Delta desolate, arid, uninhabitable, and poor and given the position of crude oil as the lifeline to the Nigerian economy (Ibeanu, n.d), any dissent in the Niger Delta has often been met with the brutal force of government. This background created conditions for civil society's involvement in peacebuilding efforts in the Niger Delta. Civil society organizations (CSO) have, therefore, become the major non-state structure by which people relate to themselves and through which they relate to the state and socio-political purposes (Ikelegbe, 2013).

The functional perspective of civil society organizations (CSOs) as captured for instance, in the seminal works of Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) and Obi (2018a) argues that there is a growing tendency to characterize civil society organizations based on an organizational form such as human rights, gender, peacebuilding, etc rather than their functions and activities. A wide range of CSOs performing diverse but interrelated roles exist in the Niger Delta and have contributed to the seeming stability that pervades the region. Environmental, advocacy, voice, accountability and transparency, health and peacebuilding groups exist in the Niger Delta, and their roles, for instance, overlap. When this happens, one would not be talking about the form of the CSO but its role and activities. All CSOs in the above categories, for instance, carry out the role of advocacy; this does not in any way, make them any less a 'human rights, health, accountability, or

peacebuilding CSOs. Barnes (2005) however, identifies the roles of civil society in peacebuilding to include:

(i) Promoting Reconciliation.
(ii) Engaging in Non-Violent Forms of Conflict Management and Transformation.
(iii) Directly Preventing Violence.
(iv) Building Bridges, Trust and Interdependence Between Groups.
(v) Monitoring and Advocating in Favour of Peace, And Against Human Rights Violations and Social Injustices.

Within this context, the study examines the functional perspective of CSOs in the Niger Delta Crisis.

The general objectives of the study are:

- Examine the Role of Civil Societies in the Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria.
- Explore the Contributions of CSOs And Their Growing Involvement in Peace and Security over Time.
- Provide Suggestions for The Engagements of CSOs In the Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria

Data for the study was generated through an objective desk review of the extant literature on the subject. This includes books, journal articles, reports, newspaper publications, and materials from verifiable electronic sources. The analysis of the data is such

that highlights the political and economic implications of the crisis in Nigeria and the cathartic roles of civil society organizations in peacebuilding in the region.

Understanding the Ecology and Geopolitics of The Delineation of the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta comprised the nine states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. The ethnic nationalities that make up the region constitute minorities when consideration is given to the general ethnic structuration of Nigeria. While this geographical delineation appears easy to fathom, Petro-politics have redefined the ecology of the region. To deepen our understanding of the dynamics of delineation of the region, Ibeanu (2006) identified four typologies through which the composition of the Niger Delta can be gauged. This includes:

- Maximal Socio-Political Classification
- Minimal Socio-Political Classification
- Maximal Geographical Classification
- Minimal Geographical Classification

Maximal Socio-Political Classification

The maximal socio-politico-economic classification of the Niger Delta is as conceived by the regional interventionist agency of the federal government, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for administrative purposes and convenience. The classification 'maximally' comprised the geographical areas of the nine states of the region covering the states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom,

Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. The quest to further delineate the oil-producing states from the 'core states' of the Niger Delta culminated in the minimal socio-politico-economic classification of Niger Delta.

Minimal Socio-Political Classification

The minimalist 'minimally' limits the classification of the Niger Delta to the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria comprising of such states as Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. Within this minimalist classification, Ibeanu, (2006) noted that a distinction is often made between the "core Niger Delta" and the "peripheral Niger Delta". The "core Niger Delta States" according to him consists of Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States, while the "peripheral Niger States" are Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, and Edo. He further made the point that while the maximal socio-political definition is based on petroleum resources alone, the minimalist definition is linked to States consisting mainly of ethnic minorities that are located totally or partly in the Niger Delta Basin.

Maximal Geographical Classification

The maximal geographical classification of the Niger Delta according to Ibeanu (2006) comprises the areas of southern Nigeria with river systems linked to the River Niger as it drains into the Atlantic Ocean at the Bights of Benin and Biafra. This area is said to fall roughly between the Benin River in the Southwest and the Cross-River in the Southeast, and then northwards to River Anambra.

Minimal Geographical Classification

The minimal geographical classification of the Niger Delta, on the other hand, locates it as the 70,000 square kilometres of low-lying swampy terrain and multiple channels through which the River Niger empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Generally, the Niger Delta is said to be the World's largest wetland (World Bank, 1995: Vol.1) and Africa's largest delta of some 70,000km^2 (Ibaba, 2008:207) of marshland, creeks, tributaries, and lagoons. About one-third of this area is a fragile mangrove forest with high biodiversity. Due to the unguarded human activities, the ecology of the region has been exposed to environmental and atmospheric challenges. Scarcity of arable land and freshwater, contaminated aquatic lives, gas flare, and atmospheric impurities, as well as militancy, underdevelopment, and general criminality, is the hallmark of the region that has become the lifeline of the nation. These dynamics have, therefore, structured and sustained the crisis in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The Niger Delta Crisis: A Potpourri of Issues

A potent cocktail of militancy, underdevelopment, and poverty is at the root of the crisis in the Niger Delta. Historically, slavery, palm oil, and colonial control constitute the remote precipitants of the crisis. Africa Report (2006) notes that for more than 300 years, beginning in the late fifteenth century, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was a prominent part of Niger Delta life. Between 1650 and 1800, it is said that 24 percent of West African slaves exported to the Americas were believed to have been sent from

Delta ports (Paul, 2000). Occasional disputes over payment for slave transactions often resulted in gun battles between the Africans and the European slave traders. Accumulation of guns and weapons for self-defence by African slave traders in the Niger Delta began at this point.

With the banning of the slave trade by Britain in 1807 and attempts at suppressing international trade in slavery in 1815, the business of slavery lost traction thereby, (Martin, 1995) redirecting the attention of European slavers to other resources of the Niger Delta. Oil palm production and export for the making of soap, candles, and lubricants which was useful in literally greasing the wheels of the Industrial Revolution became a pull factor. It is noted that the area encompassing the Niger Delta and the Cameroons River produced half of Africa's palm oil, and the region became known as the Oil Rivers (Africa Report, 2006). The quest for cheaper and expanded sources of palm oil saw British commercial interest in the region collapsing to form the United African Company which later became the National African Company then, the Royal Niger Company. The highpoint of the mercantile activities of the Royal Niger Company was the buying out of its African Association competitors in 1893, a transaction that challenged the capacity of Niger Delta middlemen from engaging in the palm oil trade due to the prohibitive tax regime imposed by the company. Africa Report (2006) sadly notes that the Niger Delta businessmen who tried to circumvent the

restrictive rules through smuggling risked being shot by company officials.

The militancy in the Niger Delta in the pre-colonial era had its practical expression when in January 1895, warriors from Nembe and Brass raided Akassa, where the Royal Niger Company had its headquarters. Twenty-four people were killed and as a show of strength, their heads were taken as trophies; 68 others were taken prisoner, of whom 43 were killed and the rest released. It is further noted that most who died were company employees from Liberia. The British Navy, the Royal Niger Company's constabulary, and other "company's men" responded with an armed expedition against Nembe, a battle that left five British officers killed (National Archives, 1895).

The immediate post-colonial issues that seem to have shaped the Niger Delta crisis are Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro's twelve-day revolt of 1966 and the government retaliatory clampdown, the Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni struggle (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), August 1990, MOSOP adoption of the "Ogoni Bill of Rights", which demanded Nigeria's then-ruling military regime grant "political autonomy to the people of the region to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit" and the "right to the control and use of a fair proportion of economic resources for Ogoni development" (Human Rights Watch, 1999) and the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni activists on November 10, 1995, in what is now popularly referred to as the 'Ogoni Nine'. These pre-colonial and

immediate post-colonial issues have interacted in complex ways to lay a foundation and sustain the crisis in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Feeding on these foundational root causes are issues revolving around Petro-politics and the paradoxes of incompatibilities.

Crosscutting Issues Sustaining the Crisis in The Niger Delta

The key issues sustaining the crisis in the delta are basically, underdevelopment and general governance misadventure that has given rise to the rhetoric of rights, rights to resource control and rights to better welfare and development. In the seminal report of Ibeanu (2006) the point was made when it was noted that the downside to the debate on the rights to control resources have created conditions that have nurtured a litany of paradoxes where development leads to underdevelopment of the Niger Delta, security leads to insecurity and paucity of potable water in an environment that is surrounded by water. These paradoxes have become the lifeline of the crisis in the region. These issues have further aggravated the crisis in the Niger Delta and has exposed the region to various degrees of vulnerabilities. The activities of oil multinationals have further deepened the vulnerabilities of people of the Niger Delta region as the exploitation of crude oil has often resulted in spills thereby turning once arable land into arid land where crops hardly grow. Gas flaring has exposed the Delta people and their farm animals to various degrees of health hazards. Yet, agitations for inclusive development have always met with responses by the government

that deepens those ills that accounted for the agitations in the first place thereby, giving room for one agitation after another (Obi, 2018).

There are two dimensions of the opposing forms of the rhetoric of rights. Ibeanu (2006:10) notes that first, there is the rhetoric of resource control which advocates for a larger share of oil revenue to the Niger Delta from 13% to 50%. The position of the federal government in response to this advocacy was the proposal to withdraw revenues from offshore oil production by excluding such revenues from the calculation of the 13% derivation, a proposal that was to affect the revenue accruable to the states by as much as 80%. The rhetoric of greater ownership of the resources has been questioned by the federal government and non-Niger Delta politicians giving rise to the rhetoric of transparency and accountability which presupposes that governments of the Niger Delta have not demonstrated transparency and accountability in the management of the proceeds accruable from the 13% derivation and as a result, would hardly manage a rise in the accruable proceeds. The rhetoric of rights by both the Niger Delta States and the Federal Government of Nigeria stokes the embers of the crisis in the region.

On the other side, the issues that are identified as enablers of the Niger Delta crisis are situated within three contending paradoxes. Poverty and lack amid wealth and plenty, national security generating insecurity in the region and national development under developing the Niger Delta. The agitations by various

groups for the control of resources that have hitherto exposed the region to restiveness are done within the context of these paradoxes (Obi, 2018). The early warning signs of an impending crisis in the Niger Delta could be traced to 1966 when the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS) led by Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro called the attention of the military government in 1966 to the negative impact of the activities of the oil multinationals. This attempt was repressed by the military government thereby creating incentives for a more dedicated confrontation by environmental rights activities. The activities of the oil multinationals exposed the environment to hazards of different shades. To this, Ibeanu (2006) alleged that Niger Delta's poverty is in part, the consequence of oil production, especially its environmental consequences which have destroyed livelihoods by destroying farmland and fishing waters. Pollution arising from oil spillage destroys marine life and crops, makes water unsuitable for fishing, and renders many hectares of farmland unusable.

Lack of arable land and water for drinking and supporting aquatic lives, on the other hand, have fuelled poverty, agitations, and militancy. Closely related to the above is the downside of national security. In the Niger Delta, national security contradicts the security of nationals because of the politics of oil. This is linked to the desire of the state to ensure national security even at the expense of basic human rights. To preserve the major source of revenue to the national government, the federal government is quick in dispatching men of the armed forces especially the

Nigerian Army to quell situations in the region (Simbine & Obi, 2013). This conflict management approach often results in huge civilian casualties and creates an impetus for self-defence and deepens agitations for resource control.

The Niger Delta crisis also revolves around the paradox of development enhancing underdevelopment. Due to the terrain, it is generally complex and very expensive to initiate and sustain development efforts in the region as a result; infrastructural development is very poor in the region. To this, Ibeanu (2006) aptly declares that generally, inadequate attention has been paid to the provision of facilities like education, health, roads, electricity, and potable water by both government and oil companies. Yet, these facilities are readily available at oil installations dotting the delta, making these installations islands of affluence in a sea of deprivation. This has heightened the sense of relative deprivation in communities and made oil installations and their agents' ready targets of the militants. These paradoxes have fed the Niger Delta crisis to date. The continuous denials of the rights of the people of the Niger Delta and the repression of the agitations by people of the region have inadvertently created conditions conducive for militancy and distortion of the Petro-economy of the nation. Today, the Niger Delta has become a region of the most debilitating, protracted, deepened, and subsisting environmental disaster and development crunch in Nigeria (Ibeanu, 2006) and has involuntarily, created a context that is favourable for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

emergence, relevance, and involvement in stemming the tides of associated challenges.

Understanding Civil Society Organization's Peacebuilding Role in The Niger Delta

Civil society is a contested term, but it is, however, seen as the associational life that enables citizens to participate voluntarily, freely, and openly within the public realm, and operate and function independently of and outside the state and corporate power, though relating to them. It comprises clusters of diverse and overlapping non-governmental institutions through which collective and shared wills and interests are articulated, projected, and defended. It is the major non-state structure by which people relate to themselves and through which they relate to the state and socio-political purposes (Ikelegbe, 2013). They include trade unions, professional associations, student organizations, socio-cultural organizations, development and welfare organizations, citizen movements, cooperatives, consumer associations, and new social movements (Giner 1995:321). A wide range of CSOs exist in the Niger Delta has gained traction because of the need to address the development crunch and general acts of mis-governance in the region.

The conditions of neglect and the developmental inequality that exist between the oil-producing region of Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria inadvertently created conditions conducive for the emergence of civil society in the development crunch in the Niger Delta. Civil society organizations have, therefore, emerged as

non-state actors to facilitate the provision of social welfare and strengthen development and good governance. To this end, Ikelegbe (2013:1) makes the point when he declared that "civil society has become the popular agent for instituting accountability, transparency and good governance, restraining state abuses, resisting the untamed effects of market forces and strengthening public scrutiny".

Civil Society Organization's Role in The Niger Delta During The Military Administration

The role of civil society organizations in the Niger Delta is, therefore, determined by the character of government at the centre and dynamics of power by regional actors. An appropriate way to examine CSOs' contributions to peacebuilding in the Niger Delta would, therefore, incorporate the understanding of these undercurrents (Obi, 2018). The seminal report of Ibeanu (2006:46) provides a valuable lead in this regard by his classification of CSOs' peacebuilding role into two broad categories - the military-authoritarian era (spanning 1990 to the end of the military rule in 1999) and from the beginning of civilian rule in 1999 till date. The justification for this classificatory regime revolves around the evidence that the methods of engagements by CSOs vary significantly between the military era and civilian dispensations. While the military era narrowed the civil space and the response to civil society activism was met with brute force, the civilian dispensation to a limited extent expanded the civil space.

The military-authoritarian era represents the period of sustained military governance through Decrees, specifically, from 1990 to 1999. Military authoritarianism occasioned the narrowing of the civil space and denial of rights. The authoritarian disposition of the military era shaped the operational modalities of the civil society, a situation, which perhaps informed the qualification of CSOs as "insurgent civil society" by Ibeanu. The insurgent encounters between the military and civil society were a product of a context of repression and abuse of rights that enabled the mobilization by an assortment of civil society organizations which are identified by Ibeanu (2006:44) to generally include civil rights organizations, community rights organizations, environmental organizations, as well as workers organizations. He noted that among the well-known organizations are Environmental Rights Action (ERA), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN), Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL) and Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organization (NDHERO). The specific peacebuilding role played by these genres of CSOs centred on effective mobilization across the Niger Delta against military rule, environmental degradation arising from the petroleum industry, poor welfare conditions in the communities, and for return to the democratic government (p.44). The role of the civil society during this period in addition to advocacy for the dignity and respect of the rights of the people of the Niger Delta and end to military rule was mediating communal crises that were prevalent during the 1990s.

Civil Society Organization's Role During The Post – Military Era

The second phase of the CSOs peacebuilding role in the Niger Delta can essentially be situated within the post-military-authoritarian era, here, representing the period 1999 to date. Although the immediate post-military-authoritarian era ushered in a civil society that was torn between loyalty to the system ii created with the intent of preserving democracy and opposing what it considers untoward practices, it, however, played some useful peacebuilding roles. In a scoping study of fifteen civil society organizations in the Niger Delta, Ibeanu (2006:47), notes that the roles played by CSOs during this period centred on conflict management; peace education, training, post-conflict rehabilitation, early warning, and mediation. He further made the point (p.47) that of the listed roles, mediation stood out as the most significant peacebuilding role played by 80% of the CSOs in the sub-region. This was followed by conflict management, peace education and training carried out by 73.3% of CSOs respectively with post-conflict rehabilitation and early warning implemented by (60%) of the CSOs respectively. This indicates that CSOs in the Niger Delta are patently committed to supporting the creation and sustenance of community structures and initiatives that create necessary infrastructures for deflecting and redirecting negative conflict energies to peace resources (Obi, 2018). Generally, the exploratory framing of the functional perspective of CSOs revolves around seven broad roles.

Table 1: Seven Civil Society functions in Peacebuilding	
CSOs FUNCTION	**ACTIVITIES**
Protection	Protecting citizen life, freedom, and property against attacks from state and non-state actors.
Monitoring/Early Warning	Observing and monitoring the activities of government, state authorities, oil multinationals, and conflict actors. Monitoring can refer to various issues (human rights, corruption), particularly those relevant for drivers of conflict and early warning in the Niger Delta.
Advocacy/Public Communication	Articulation of specific interests, especially of marginalized groups, and bringing relevant issues to the public agenda. Creation of communication channels, awareness-raising, and public debate as well as participation in official peace processes.
Socialization	Formation and practice of peaceful and democratic attitudes and values among citizens, including tolerance, mutual trust, and non-violent conflict resolution.

Social Cohesion	Strengthening links among citizens, building bridging social capital across societal cleavages.
Intermediation/ Facilitation	Establishing relationships (communication, negotiation) to support collaboration between interest groups, institutions, and the state. Facilitating dialogue and interaction. Promoting attitudinal change for a culture of peace and reconciliation.
Service provision	Providing services to citizens or members can serve as entry points for peacebuilding if explicitly intended.

Source: *Paffenholz and Spurk (2006), Sustainable Development Network (2006)*

This functional perspective highlights seven main functions that CSOs can play in peacebuilding. While these functions cannot be said to be exhaustive, there, however, lay a foundation for a broader exploration of the functions of CSOs in peacebuilding. It can be gleaned from the Table that the functions of CSOs are closely related, as a result, CSOs may be active in one or more functions, providing lead role in some and supportive roles in others (Obi, 2018a). The State, for instance, is mainly responsible for the protection of lives and property and socialization does not only occur in voluntary associations but also in the family, classroom, and political parties. The Social Development Network (2006) declares that CSOs tend to have a comparative advantage

in functions related to socialization, a culture of peace, and social cohesion. Protection, monitoring and accountability, and advocacy and public communication functions tend to be complementary, and their effectiveness depends on collaboration with other actors.

Specific CSOs Role In Peacebuilding and Crisis Management in The Niger Delta

A bird's-eye view of the peacebuilding role of CSOs suggests that while CSOs have historically, been part of the struggle in the Niger Delta, they specifically, attained global recognition during the military-authoritarian era. Two prominent CSOs at the time are the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Community Rights Initiative (CORI). Established in 1990, MOSOP represents a constellation of organizations in Ogoni land that are committed to peacebuilding (Obi, 2018). Its main peacebuilding initiatives are identified by Ibeanu (2006) to revolve around the peacebuilding and conflict prevention project, which began in 2005 in parts of Ogoni land. The project is committed to raising awareness about the negative impact of conflict, especially conflicts within and among Ogoni communities. It does this through mediation and alternative (traditional) dispute resolution methodologies. The anchor agency for this project is the Ogoni Peace Action Committee (OPAC), which consists of eminent and respected Ogoni people and some outsiders (p.48). Other initiatives include the dialogue project where state and non-state actors are engaged in a dialogue to establish commonalities and

the 'mop up arms project designed to enable the voluntary submission of arms by non-state actors.

The CORI peacebuilding initiatives centres on strengthening the capacity of communities in the Niger Delta to protect their rights in their relations with government and oil multinationals. Established in 1996, CORI facilitated negotiation in Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government where oil companies, government, and communities are brought together to address issues in conflict through negotiation. One of CORI's interventions culminated in the signing of an MOU between Egi community, Elf Oil Company and government. Other peacebuilding initiatives (Ibeanu, 2006:49) include the peace education project it commissioned in 1999 in Ogbia Local Government Area in Bayelsa State, and Akpabuyo and Bakassi Local Government Areas in Cross River State respectively. It also commissioned a Conflict Research Project in Okrika, Buguma, Ekpeye, and Odi as well as a mediation project in Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

Other CSOs and their peacebuilding initiatives are identified by Ibeanu (2006:52-56) to include Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW) with peacebuilding interventions in Warri South, Delta State since 2003. Funded by the European Union, it also commissioned a study to establish patterns of insecurity across the 6 states of the Niger Delta in 2020. It is also facilitating partnering among stakeholders in Degema, Khana, and Etshe in Rivers State and Gbaran and Ekpatiama in Bayelsa State. The

Centre for Advanced Social Science (CASS) is conducting Community Peacebuilding project for women leaders in the Niger Delta region since 2003; while the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) conducted a Small Arms Research project in Port Harcourt in 2001 and trained community leaders and members on non-violent strategy. The Democratic Leadership Institute (DLI) conducted reorientation and rehabilitation for disarmed youths in Rivers State in 2005-2006. The DLI also facilitated basic leadership and civic education project for Secondary schools and Student Union in the tertiary institution on conflict resolution skills in 2005/06 as well as delivered a mediation and ceasefire project in the Niger Delta between 2005/2006.

Environmental Rights Action (ERA) facilitated a Democracy Outreach project sponsored by Ford Foundation in the Niger Delta in 2000, conducted environmental monitoring projects in1995 funded by Oxfam International. Other ERAs interventions include the Environmental litigation project in the Niger delta in 2003 and the Gas Flaring and climate change project in 2000. Ijaw Council for Human Rights (ICHR) conducted Social Justice Project, Economic Justice Project, Peace, and Good Governance Justice Project, and Environmental justice projects in the Niger Delta all in 1998. Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) mediated communal clashes in Brass local government area of Bayelsa State in 2005/2006 and facilitated mediation and ceasefire projects in the Niger Delta between 2005/2006. Niger Delta Peace and Security

Secretariat (PASS) conducted an Early Warning program on conflicts 2005/06 and facilitated Arms and Ammunitions demobilization in 2005/06. Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ) conducted a conflict transformation and leadership training programme for women in the Niger Delta from 2002-04; mobilized Egi women to intervene during the Egi conflict in 1995. In 2003, the NDWJ also delivered training on conflict transformation to communities in Akwa Ibom State and developed a radio discussion programme in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State in 2001 on conflict issues in collaboration with the Federation of African Media Women of Zambia. Our Niger Delta (OND) facilitated the design of the Niger Delta Peace and Security strategy, an IT-based early warning system, and executed a training program on peace negotiation and mediation-for traditional rulers and youth leaders as well as government officials. Sustainable Peace Initiative Nigeria (SPIN) delivered a rapid response programme in Warri, Yenogoa, and Port Harcourt in 2005 as well as the conduct of a community peace education project for community-based organization and social groups in Nembe, Yenogoa, and Eleme.

Overall, Ibeanu (2006), reports that 67% of CSOs in the Niger Delta were established before Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999. This presupposes that the military era created conditions that encourages the emergence of civil society organizations. It is not difficult to gauge especially, from the foregoing, that civil society has demonstrated to be a critical actor in peacebuilding in the Niger Delta albeit, not without challenges. Some of these

challenges are identified to include lack of funds, low capacity of civil society organizations and communities, the commitment by stakeholders and sustainability of peacebuilding interventions (Obi, 2018, Obi & Eteng, 2018).

The Relation Between Civil Societies, The State, and Security Agencies in The Niger Delta

Civil society organizations in the Niger Delta exist in a context that has been militarized to the extent that the interaction between civil societies, the state, and security agencies especially, during the military-authoritarian era was characterized by suspicion and confrontation. The Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro's 'twelve-day revolt' of 1966, the Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni struggle and the subsequent execution of the 'Ogoni Nine' in 1995, the Umuechem, Odi and Odioma protests and the brutal clampdown of civil society activists by the government through its security agencies are just a few examples of the nature of the interaction between the civil society, government, and security agencies. In the post-military-authoritarian era, the course of interaction between CSOs, government, and security agencies in the Niger Delta has remained principally unaltered. Government is wont to deploying armed security agents to protect critical installations in the Niger Delta and often when there is engagement and or protest by civil society activists against the government's highhandedness and untoward behaviour, security agents are dispatched to clampdown on civil society actors. While a cordial relationship can be said to exist between government and security

agencies, the same can hardly be said for CSOs in the Niger Delta. This is because; they are often conceived by the government as agents of destabilization. Following this conception, two perspectives are advanced in the characterization of state-civil society relations.

The first as put forward by Ibeanu (n.d) conceives of the state as reactionary and resistant to progressive change, while the civil society represents progress and development. Inherent in this perspective is the inevitability of friction between the state and civil society and this perhaps, explains why the state is often resistant to the interventions by CSOs in the region no matter how well-intentioned. The second perspective conceives of state-civil society relations as cooperative and complementary. This presupposes that the state and civil society must necessarily work together to optimize governance. The relation between the state and civil society in the Niger Delta would be better structured when consideration is given to the understanding that the peculiar challenges in the region would be more effectively addressed when the activities of the state and civil society are conceived as complementary. In the current context, security agencies are conceived, as tools of repression and coercion in the hands of the government.

Actors in The Security Landscape of The Niger Delta

The security landscape of the Niger Delta is comprised of many actors playing varied but interdependent roles. Prominent amongst these; are the state actors; government/security agents,

and non-state actors as oil multinationals, community opinion leaders, militants, and civil society organisations etc.

The government is perhaps, the most powerful in this context because decisions made by this actor have the propensity of affecting the activities of all other actors. Fundamentally, backed by the constitution, it reserves the right to intervene in the crisis in the Niger Delta militarily through the deployment of armed security agents. The government's response to the Niger Delta crisis has both been administrative and militaristic. Administratively, the government's response has often taken the form of fact-finding committees and the establishment of commissions such as the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) established in 1993 and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) established in 2000. Both commissions were created as interventionist commissions to address the development challenges of the region. The associated challenges of corruption have undermined the capacity of the commission to deliver on its mandate, notwithstanding, the point to be made here is that they were both, government's responses to the crisis of development in the region. The government's Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) commissioned by late President Musa Yar'Adua in 2009 was also a deliberate initiative to manage the Niger Delta crisis. Militaristically, the government's response to the crisis in the delta has been in the form of deployment of armed security agents to protect critical installations and to restore order to crisis flashpoints. The Isaac Boro's 'twelve-day

revolt', the Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni struggle, and the Umuechem, Odi, and Odioma protests were all militaristically responded to by the government with serious implications on the context.

Multinational Oil Companies are often construed as primary sources of the crisis in the Niger Delta. Their activities that are conceived as been environmentally insensitive are implicated as pollutants that have exposed the region to various degrees of environmental crises. The response of oil multinationals to the crisis in the Niger Delta as part of remediation has been in the form of scholarships to students of the region, delivery of community projects, and supporting interventions in the region. While this is considered appropriate, their response is yet to address the causal issue of environmental degradation as a result of their activities in the region. The community opinion leaders constitute yet, another important set of actors in the management of the crisis in the delta. These are elder statesmen and women in the likes of Chief Edwin Clarke whose opinion has shaped the narratives in the region. Their response to the crisis in the region has been in the form of advocacy.

Militants though may belong to the informal category or non – state actors in the region, their activities, however, shape political and economic dynamics. The response of the militants to the crisis in the region is the inelegant way of calling the attention of the government at the centre to the plight of the region through militancy, piracy, vandalism, and disruption of the Petro-economy.

While this may be considered an outrageous crisis management approach, it, however, fits into the framework of conflict instigation. This 'off the bar crisis management approach' by the militants has assumed criminal heights and has become a threat to the nation's petro-economy and illegitimate source of livelihood to many in the region. The more technically equipped actors in the management of the Niger Delta crisis are the civil society actors (Obi & Eteng, 2018). The response of CSOs straddles the role of protection, monitoring and early warning, advocacy, and public communication, socialization, social cohesion, intermediation and facilitation, and service provision. CSOs facilitate dialogue, mediate conflict, support capacity strengthening of every other actor as well as serve as a link between the state, oil multinationals, and the communities.

Conclusion

Civil society has emerged as a central force in peacebuilding in the Niger Delta and is contributing to the reframing of discourse around the concept of development and governance in the region. The paper examined the peacebuilding role of civil society organisations and provided an analytical framework to better understand the functions of civil society and their growing involvement in peacebuilding in the region. It identified the quest for resource control, the paradoxes of incompatibility where securitization of the delta leads to insecurity in the Niger Delta, where development results in the underdevelopment of the region, where an abundance of resources results in scarcity in the

Niger Delta, and general acts of mis-governance as the issues sustaining the Niger Delta crisis. The paper identified the actors in the Niger Delta crisis to include the government/security agents, oil multinationals, community opinion leaders, militants, and civil society actors, etc. It noted that while the government is the most powerful of the actors because its decisions have implications on all other actors, the civil society is more technically equipped and has demonstrated capacity in providing leadership in peacebuilding in the region.

The paper further made the point that the relation and level of interaction that exists between the government, security agencies, and civil society are at best based on suspicion and confrontation. While the security agencies appear to enjoy a cordial relationship with the government, the same can hardly be said of civil society. The government is seen as reactionary and resistant to progressive change, while the civil society represents progress and development and the security agencies as an instrument of repression and coercion in the hands of the government. The highlight of the paper is situated in the understanding that the peacebuilding interventions in the Niger Delta would be more effective if the activities of civil society are seen by the government and its agencies as complementary. Overall, the paper identified the peacebuilding role of the civil society to revolve around the role of protection, monitoring/early warning; advocacy/public communication; socialization, social cohesion; intermediation/facilitation, and service provision.

Recommendations

To enhance the achievements of peacebuilding interventions in the Niger Delta, the following recommendations were proposed:

Government

- The government in partnership with the civil society should commission the profiling of civil society organizations working on peacebuilding in the Niger Delta to enhance networking and information sharing.
- The government should ensure a review of the current revenue derivation regime of 13% to 50% and also ensure that those found guilty of misappropriation of public funds are made to face the wrath of the law.
- The government should ensure that the rights of the people of the Niger Delta are respected and government interventions in crisis management in the region should be based on the rule of law.
- Government and security agencies should create conditions conducive to allowing the full expression of civil societies as partners complementing the efforts of the government.
- Interventionist agencies in the Niger Delta such as the NDDC should be made more transparent and accountable through quarterly publications of its allocations from the federal government and contracts awarded by the commission as well as a forensic audit of its processes done at regular intervals.

Security Agencies

- The capacity of the security agencies in interacting and dealing with civil society and peacebuilding processes in the Niger Delta has to be strengthened. There is a need for enhanced capacity in civil-military relations, communication, and human-centred security.

Civil Society

- The demands of managing peacebuilding challenges in a complex context like the Niger Delta require greater skills and capacity than most CSOs currently possess. There is, therefore, a need for enhanced capacity in research, data gathering, information, communication, monitoring, advocacy, and mobilization skills. The CSOs would have to effectively disseminate results, reports, and findings of their research, investigations, activities, and projects to governments, oil multinationals, and the citizenry
- Civil society organizations should advocate for the review of existing relevant policies or put new ones in place that will condition external actors to necessarily identify and incorporate local capacities in delivering peacebuilding initiatives.
- Collaborative efforts between government, security agencies, oil multinationals, and civil society organizations are needed to identify and strengthen local peacebuilding infrastructure and leadership.

Oil Multinationals

- The oil multinationals should be made more accountable and a general repurposing of their explorative activities and Corporate Social Responsibilities be advocated.

References

Africa Report (2006). The swamps of insurgency: Nigeria's Delta unrest. International Crisis Group Africa Report N°115 – 3 August

Barnes, C. (2005). "Weaving the Web: Civil-Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace." In: P. van Tongeren, et al., eds., People Building Peace II, Successful Stories of Civil Society, 7-24. Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 7-24.

Giner S. (1995), "Civil Society and Its Future" in John A. Hall (ed.) Civil Society: Theory, History and Comparison, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Human Rights Watch, (1999). The price oil.

Ibaba, S. Ibaba (2008) "Promoting peace in the Niger Delta: Some critical Issues". International Conference on the Nigerian State, Oil industry and the Niger Delta. Harcourt, Harey Publications Company. P. 207

Ibeanu, Oke (2006), Civil Society and Conflict Management in the Niger Delta: Scoping Gaps for Policy and Advocacy. Lagos: Monograph Series No: 2. CLEEN Foundation.

Ibeanu, O. Okechukwu (n.d). Insurgent Civil Society and democracy In Nigeria: Ogoni encounters with the State,

1990 – 1998. Research Report for ICSAG Programme of the Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD), Kano

Ikelegbe, O. Augustine O. (2013), The State and civil society in Nigeria: Towards a partnership for sustainable development. Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED). CPED Monograph Series No. 7. Benin City. Ambik Press Ltd.

Martin, Lynn (1995). "The West African palm oil trade", in Robin Law (ed.), From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce. Cambridge.

National Archives (1895). Sir J. Kirk to Marquess of Salisbury. F.O.881/6668. 30 August.

Obi, Ndifon Neji (2018). "Civil Society Organizations and Peacebuilding in the Niger Delta: Towards a Partnership for Effective Civic Engagement" In Mathias Jarikre, Nsikanabasi, U. Wilson and Abiodun, J. Oluwadare (eds) Governance, Security and Peacebuilding in the Niger Delta: Essays in Honour of Kingsley Burutu Otuaro. Ibadan, Society for Peace Studies and Practice, Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Zenith BookHouse Ltd. pp.271-287.

Obi, Ndifon Neji (2018a). "Civil Society Organizations and Peacebuilding: A Functional Perspective" *International*

Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research Vol. 4 No. 6. Pp.24-39

Obi, Ndifon Neji and Eteng Patrick Otu (2018). "Civil Society Organizations, Peacebuilding and Local Ownership: A Framework for Action" In N.D.Danjibo and Adeola Adams (Eds) Interagency Cooperation for Peace and Security in Nigeria. Ibadan, John Archers Publishers. Society for Peace Studies and Practice. Pp. 101-121

Paffenholz, Thania and Spurk, Christoph (2006). Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding. Social Development papers. Paper No. 36 / October 2006. Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction

Paul E. Lovejoy (2000). Transformations in Slavery. Cambridge. 81

Simbine, A. Taiye and Obi, N. Neji (2018)." The Niger Delta Crisis: Perspectives of Its Domino Effects on the Gulf of Guinea (GoG)". *Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research* Vol. 4 No. 2. Pp. 57-75

Social Development Department (2006). Civil society and peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors. The Sustainable Development Network, Document of the World Bank.

World Bank, (1995) Defining an environmental development strategy for the Niger Delta.Vol.1

Political Economy of the Conflict in the Niger Delta

- Dr Ndubuisi NWOKOLO

The Political Economy of the Conflict in the Niger Delta Region

- Dr Ndubuisi NWOKOLO

The Niger Delta region is critical to Nigeria's continued existence as the petroleum from that part of the country accounts for over 90 percent of Nigeria's total revenue, about 75 percent of the federal budget, and 40 percent of her Gross Domestic Product. Since the first commercial oil extraction in the region, conflicts of various forms have remained potent and vital when discussing the economy and politics of the region. It is, therefore, imperative to figure out the political economy of conflicts of the Niger Delta region with regards to the role civil society organisations play, as well as that of civil society that exists outside the state. To explain it in a better way, the politics and economic trajectories in the Niger Delta region revolves around the governance structures and the oil extractive issues or industry.

Despite Nigeria's gains from petroleum in the Niger Delta, there is little to no commensurate development outcomes for the people. Rather, the region has endured severe underdevelopment, environmental pollution, poor human development outcomes, poverty, etc. The negative impacts of oil activities will remain with the people for a long time. Various local and international reports show that remediation for environmental pollution will take decades to be achieved. This is despite the creation of many

intervention agencies, programmes, and even a federal ministry to deal with issues of underdevelopment in the region directly.

The failure of successive governments to address the development challenges in the Niger Delta despite the policies and institutions created has resulted in periods of militancy and violence. As the region's resources have created wealth and riches in other parts of Nigeria (and left the people destitute with low life expectancy), a combination of social justice advocates and criminals have found moral grounds to unleash terror in the region. Characterised by hostage-taking, oil theft, destruction of oil facilities, etc., the era of militancy was significantly impactful on the country, especially as it relates to economic revenue. With this failure of the Nigerian state in addressing development issues in the region, the nature, roles, and character of the civil society in the region and the civil society organisations were shaped in response to the failure by the Nigerian state. In many instances, there is even the moral economy of conflict and other forms of criminality as the civil society justifies their actions. In many cases, the situation has resulted in what Prof. Okey Ibeanu calls a "concentric cycle of settlement". Here, one elite or armed group rises, holds the state to ransom, they are settled by means such as appointments or contracts, they leave the scene, and another emerges.

Perceptions of neglect and exclusion are significant drivers of conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region. This situation was the conclusion of a 2006 report by the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP, 2006), and it is still true a decade and a half later. Youths in the Niger Delta region have resorted to violence to secure the government's commitment to their development needs. In response, the government of Nigeria has channelled billions of dollars to the region without any commensurate improvement in the quality of life or the standard of living in the region. According to a 2015 Nextier SPD study report, it is estimated that over N7.75 trillion (or US$39.34 billion) was channelled to the Niger Delta region between 2010 and 2014 (Nextier, 2015). These funds include the statutory allocation of 13 percent of the proceeds from crude oil sales, allocations from the Federal Budget to the Niger Delta States, allocations to the Federal Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Programme (HYPREP), Ecological Fund, etc. The N7.75 trillion is equivalent to Nigeria's national budget for 2013 and 2014. The political-economic analysis of the relationship between shows that a strong and stable state produces a vibrant civil society. In contrast, a repressive and antagonistic state has a civil society and civil society organisations who do not see the country as partners in the development of the state.

No analyst would claim that the conflict in that part of the country has been addressed. There is a severe trust deficit arising from governance challenges. Sustained development is the sure route to sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. Several factors have

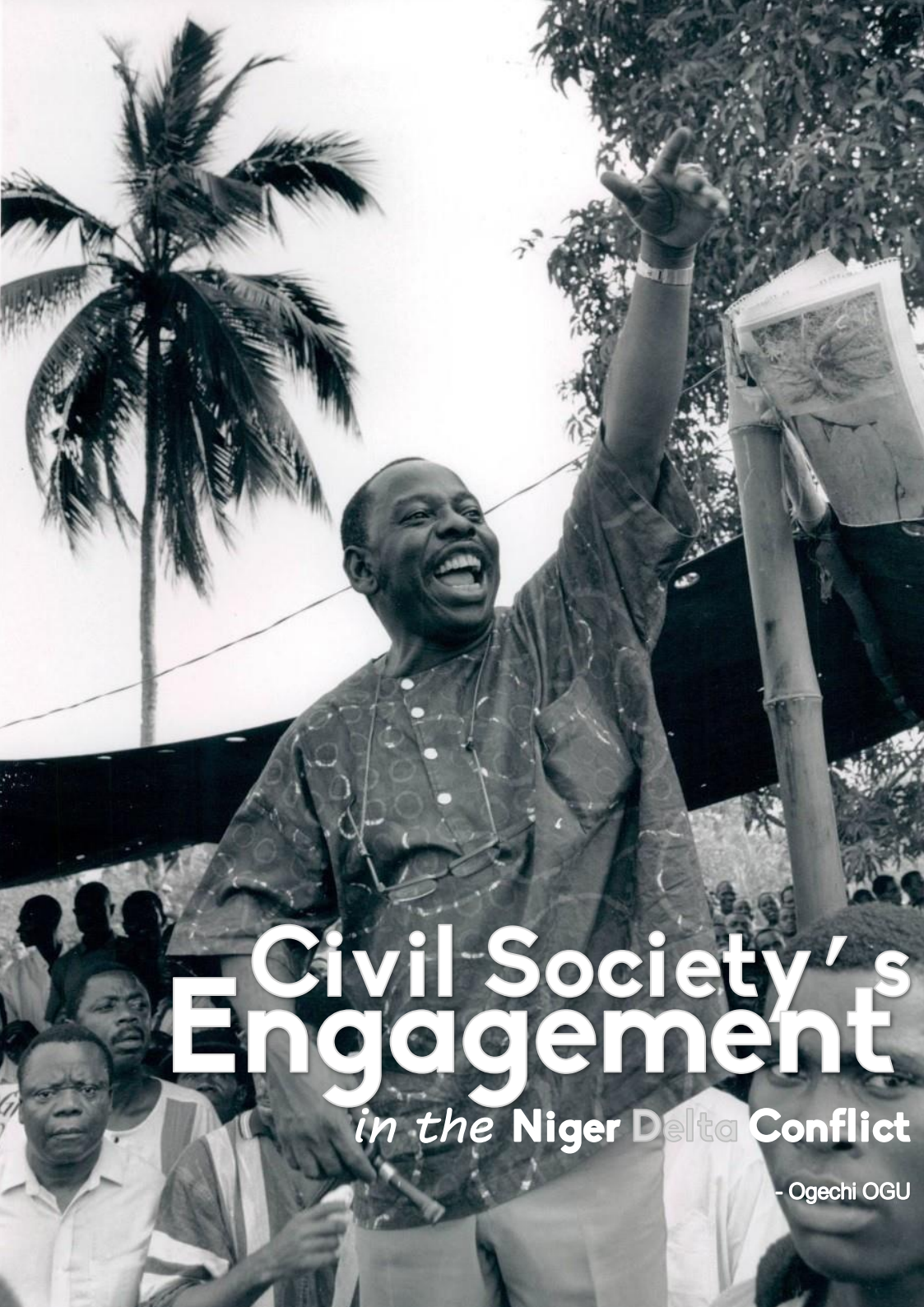
contributed to the relative stability in the region, but none (or a combination) of these factors can guarantee sustained peace. For instance, the Presidential Amnesty Programme (and the N65,000 monthly stipend) is, at best, a band-aid response to a festering sore. Oil bunkering, illegal artisan refinery, and other lower-level criminal activities have kept the criminal elements engaged. These are not sustainable solutions, nor should they be encouraged. There is a need for the government (and her partners) to take advantage of the lull in violence to drive the sustainable development of the region.

It is, therefore, imperative to figure out how to leverage this interregnum to achieve the fast-paced development of the Niger Delta region to forestall any violence that can impact Nigeria's growth and continued existence. These issues should be addressed now, especially as there is a need to prevent a resurgence of violence in the region which will pose far-reaching consequences for the country. The war economy in the region is beneficial to many criminal elements both in government and in the civil society, therefore until the structural violence in the region is solved, peace is difficult to be achieved.

References

United Nations Development Programme. 2006."Niger Delta Human Development Report" [Online] Available at http://www.bebor.org/wp- content/uploads/2012/09/UNDP-Niger-Delta-Human-Development-Report.pdf.

Nextier Advisory. 2015. "Political Economy Analysis of the Fund Flows from the Federal Government of Nigeria into the Niger Delta Region from 2010 to 2014". Available on: https://www.nextieradvisory.com/political-economy-analysis-on-the-funds-set-up-by-the-federal-government-of-nigeria-to-reduce-unrest-in-the-niger-delta-by-nextier-advisory/



Civil Society's Engagement *in the* Niger Delta Conflict

- Ogechi OGU

Civil Society's Engagement in the Niger Delta Conflict

- Ogechi OGU

Introduction

The Niger Delta crisis is characterized by gross human rights abuses of the people and the community. The recurrent conflict and crisis in the region are demonstrations of the failure of the government to deliver on Economic, Social and cultural rights of the people and a response to the use of brute force by the government to suppress genuine attempts of the people at expressing their concerns. The activities of the government in the region are connected to the desperate need to protect the vested economic interest in the region. A clear demonstration of the suppression of the people is the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni activists on November 10, 1995, in what is now popularly referred to as the 'Ogoni Nine' and such other unwarranted suppressive events before and after that. The role of Civil Society organizations in addressing conflicts in the region stands out. These organizations have been resolute in peace-building interventions in the region, though the continued conflict and crisis are indications that there is a need to do more. Obviously, Civil Society Organizations need to be strengthened both in capacity and approach in initiatives and interventions in the Niger Delta.

Analysis of the Issues

Niger Delta as a region has recorded long history of violence provoked by injustice and suppression that dates back to the period of the slave trade and characterized by the denial of rights of natives to participate in the tapping of their natural resources by the government and beneficiary international corporations in the business of oil exploitation. Several reports have connected the interplay of political, economic and social dynamics to the crisis in the Niger Delta region.

The poverty in the region aggravated by environmental and atmospheric challenges militating against the pursuit of other means of livelihood and the attendant health challenges have expectedly sustained the crisis. Admittedly the government has taken steps to address some of these issues, set up Commissions like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to address the concerns of the people, however, this has proven inadequate. Corruption has rendered some of these interventions meaningless. Poverty and underdevelopment have remained key features of the region. Paradoxically all these are happening amidst plenty.

Role of civil society organisations in the region.

- Several reports have identified the roles of civil society in peacebuilding in the Niger Delta to include.
- Promoting Reconciliation.

- Engaging in Non-Violent Forms of Conflict Management and Transformation.
- Directly Preventing Violence.
- Building Bridges, Trust and Interdependence Between Groups.
- Monitoring and Advocating in Favour of Peace, and Against Human Rights Violations and Social Injustices.
- Provision of Social Welfare and Strengthening of Development and Good Governance.
- Instituting Accountability, Transparency and Good Governance.

In terms of engagement, different CSOs focus on different but closely related areas of work. Some are active in one or more functions, providing a lead role in some and supportive roles in others. It needs to be noted that harmonization and structuring of these roles are critical to a sustainable resolution of the challenges of the Niger Delta.

Notable also is the difference in approaches of the government and CSOs to resolving the conflict in the Niger Delta. Government has been said to be reactionary and resistant to progressive change, while the civil society represents progress and development. Expectedly, this has given rise to friction between the two. There are also strong arguments that state-civil society relations should be cooperative and complementary and with a clear understanding that the peculiar challenges in the region

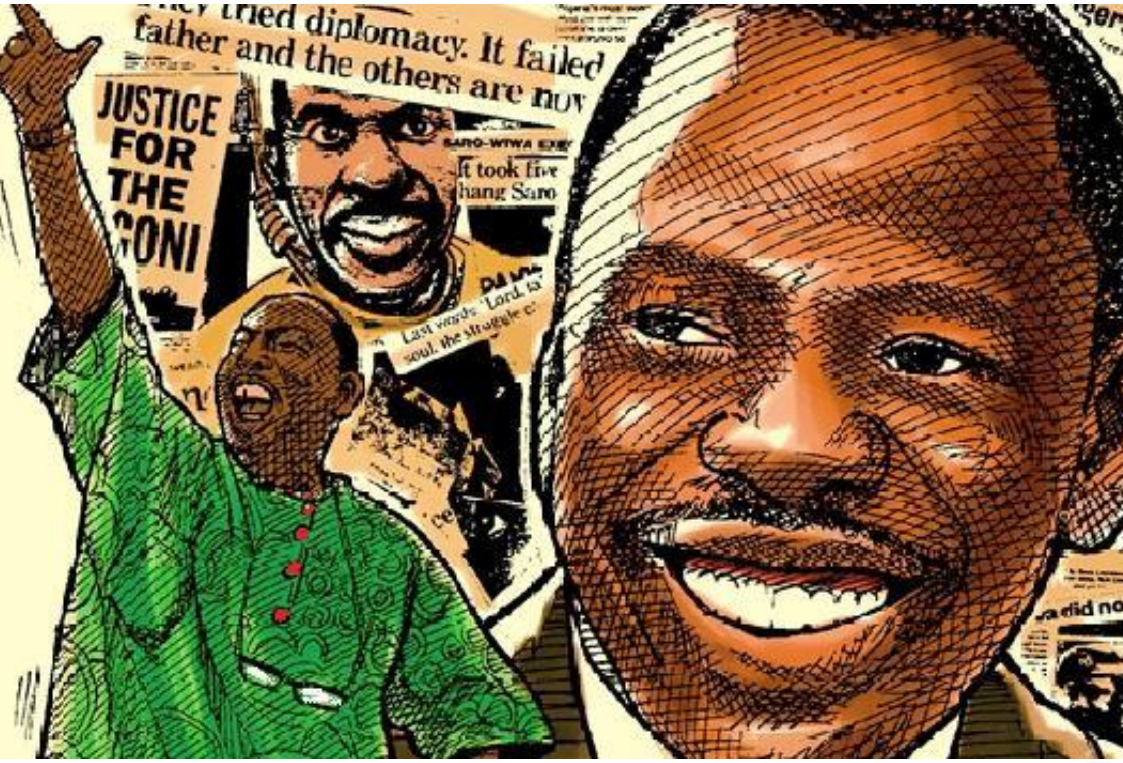
would be more effectively addressed when the activities of the state and civil society are conceived as complementary.

- These reactions are generated by the fact that in spite of all the efforts put in by CSOs, we still have conflicts in the Niger Delta. This indicates the need for a review of the strategy of engagement. CSOs must understand and acknowledge the roles of all the players in the Niger Delta crisis especially the constitutional roles of the government. It is expected that CSOs should invest more in doing the following:
- Make access to justice the foundation of peacebuilding initiatives.
- Development of strategies of positive engagement and collaboration with the state focusing on sustainable capacity building of government to engage with the people and generally be responsive to its roles and the needs of the citizens.
- CSOs should focus attention on the fundamental structural issues that are fuelling economic, social, and political crisis across the federation especially in the Niger Delta. There should be heightened Advocacy for restructuring and opening up space for participation in affairs that affect individuals in society.
- CSOs should also start interrogating the issues of non-justiciability of the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Constitution. If we collectively agree that human rights

are interrelated and indivisible then this is a discussion that must be held to address the problems of poverty, under-development, and lack of accountability of leaders on collective resources they hold in trust for the people.

- Deal with issues of corruption and leakages in the system using technological, verifiable, and sustainable means.
- Building trust and confidence among all the key players in the Niger Delta conflict for a sustainable partnership that can elicit the development and progress of the region.
- Identification of the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in collective solution to the challenges should be identified, analysed, and put into perspectives.
- CSOs should also join forces in terms of expertise in the delivery on joint interventions, this will also deal with the challenges of funding.
- Re-strategize on CSOs engagement with government. This should go beyond the analysis of failures and lapses and focus on building requisite capacities to necessitate effective and efficient governance and management of resources of the region to the benefit of the people.
- Support communities in making legitimate demands that are of benefit to all.
- Monitor implementation of several panel reports and recommendations of Niger Delta including court decisions in favour of cleaning up the oil spill in the region.

- Support Oil corporations engage in corporate social responsibility that will serve the general good of the people.
- Strengthening accountability processes of CSOs to elicit trust and confidence.
- Interventions on peacebuilding should be accompanied by Human capital development programs for the people.
- The platform of human rights defenders should be strengthened to protect CSOs working in the volatile Niger Delta.



International & Media Engagement *in the* Niger Delta Conflict

– Nneka IKELIONWU

The International and Media Engagement in the Niger Delta Conflict

— Nneka IKELIONWU

The topic of this paper is important because the Niger Delta region is strategic and important in the geo-political and economic dynamics of Nigeria. The region is conflict-prone and several civil society organizations had worked, or were at some point, working in the region. They, amongst other things have defended the rights of citizens; monitor and influence policy; as well as try to ensure government remains accountable (Ingram, 2020). It is important to assess their role in the crisis to ascertain whether or not they are operating effectively and efficiently or, whether they might be "doing harm" to the situation.

The paper attempts to analyse how extractive activity in the region has served to create a tense environment which has often escalated into agitation and violence. It will highlight "paradoxes of complexities" wherein the amply blessed, albeit severely disadvantaged Niger Delta region is situated. Furthermore, it laid out the usual role of CSOs in peacebuilding and traced the structural causes of conflict and militancy in the region. The paper also distinguished between the method of engagement of CSOs in the military and civilian regimes and concluded that in spite of the differences, the relationship between the government, CSOs and the security sector remain largely the same as in the military era. Some of the functions of the CSOs in operation in the Niger

Delta to include monitoring and early warning; advocacy/ public communications; socialisation and social cohesion.

The paper concluded by proffering detailed and practical recommendations for all the actors in the security landscape in the Niger Delta.

The Perspective of Media and International Engagements

One aspect that I found was underemphasised in the paper was the fact that CSOs could also impact negatively on the security situation in the environment in which they operate. Indeed, they have been accused of advocating causes that do not align with nationally or in some cases, internationally accepted norms. Also, it is important to point out that militant groups are often supported by CSOs. CSOs also often have its militant arms. It is also important to remember that international CSOs may also align particular countries and could also introduce another set of interests to the situation.

While the paper detailed recommendations for CSOs to improve their results, it did not highlight the lack of coordination as a challenge amongst CSOs in some cases. There is often duplication of work because CSOs do not know what other CSOs are doing in the region. Also, without going into discussions about whether the media could be classed as CSOs or not, for the purpose of this discussion, suffice it to note that the media is often employed by CSOs to transmit their views. As such, the functions

of CSOs in the Niger Delta as highlighted by the writer are usually carried out with the help of the media. That said, the media space has expanded considerably in recent times with increased access to the internet. This in itself presents prospects as well as challenges as regards any discussions or recommendations as to the role of CSOs in the Niger Delta conflict. While increased access to the global media space could minimise the danger of silencing minority and other unpopular voices, the danger here is that media is not so easily regulated anymore.

The author suggested that oil multinationals should be made more accountable. One way of ensuring that this happens is by more deliberate international engagements. To begin with, local media could reach out to their international colleagues to draw attention to the situation in the Niger Delta. The multinational oil companies that operate in Nigeria also carry-on business in other parts of the world. In many of these countries, the communities in which the oil is found are not as adversely affected as in the Niger Delta. CSOs could be useful advocates for the adoption of best practices from around the word in the Niger Delta. CSOs also often align with the articulation of agendas by international NGOs and the UN and related agencies. Thus, internationally accepted value definitions and agenda-setting could more seamlessly be brought to bear on the Niger Delta situation. International engagement in security matters is often seen by the government as a challenge to state sovereignty so it is important that such engagements are handled with sensitivity.

The insecurity in the northern parts of the country has somewhat taken the attention away from the Niger Delta especially as regards media coverage. This does not mean that the structural causes of conflict in the region have been addressed. It could mean that funding is no longer as available for CSOs working in the Niger Delta as before. It could also mean a couple of other things. Whatever it means, reduced interest in the plight of the people in the Niger Delta should not be allowed to continue. It is important for CSOs to ensure that the conversations around the security issues in the Niger Delta continue. One way to do this is by engaging with international media and continuing to draw attention to internationally accepted standards and gaps that exist in the Niger Delta region.

References

Ingram, G. (2020) "Civil Society: An Essential Ingredient of Development" Brookings Institute, Assessed from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/04/06/civil-society-an-essential-ingredient-of-development/>

Part Two

Rural Banditry

Civil Society and Nigeria's Core Conflict

Rural Banditry

Chris M. A. KWAJA, PhD

Civil Society and Nigeria's Core Conflict: Rural Banditry

Chris M. A. KWAJA, PhD

Introduction

The current security challenge in Nigeria as evident in the frequency, intensity and fatalities associated with organized crimes in the rural space of Nigeria, popularly referred to as rural banditry (Kuna & Ibrahim, 2015), has drawn the attention of academics and policymakers. One of the worse impacts of this rising and complex security challenge lies in the deaths, dispossession, displacement of people from their places of abode and sources of livelihoods. Across many of the states where the phenomenon of banditry thrives, the bandits took over forests and transformed them into highly militarized and securitized zones (Okoli & Ochim, 2016). This phenomenon of rural banditry has become a dominant feature of the Northwest region, which encompasses Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara, with the states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara been the hot beds (Okoli and Ugwu, 2019). Outside the Northwest region, communities in states such as Adamawa and Taraba in the Northeast region, as well as Benue and Plateau in the North Central region have witnessed series of deadly attacks by organized criminal groups.

No state wants to be defined as fragile in the context of state capacity to either protect or provide. The reality is that while the

managers of the institutions of the state do not often agree with the notion of fragility, the reality is that the people, particularly those on the margins of society- poor and excluded, are the primary victims of fragility due to their vulnerabilities. While other aspects of the social life of poor people are important for promoting development, providing a safe, secure and just environment, and developing effective and legitimate security remain the biggest challenge for the state.

From a governance and security standpoints, the multiple security challenges confronting the Nigerian state, coupled with the inability or weakness of the institution with the mandate to address them once more draws attention to the debate of the 1990s regarding the weak and fragile states in Africa. The categorization of states as fragile was linked to weak institutions with limited capacity to protect and provide for the people, as well as weak leadership (Rocha Menocal, 2011;). The notion of fragility in this sense represents a condition of elevated risks of the breakdown of institutions, societal collapse or violent conflict (African Development Bank, 2010). Such conditions are also characterised by the limited capacity of the state and its institutions to mitigate the negative effects of internal and external pressures or shocks (World Bank, 2019).

Externally, patterns of conflicts and banditry in Nigeria are currently fuelled and sustained by trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons with a very strong buffer that created what has been referred to as a 'regional complex of interconnected

violence', which stretches from Nigeria to Chad, Sudan and the Horn of Africa (African Development Bank Group, 2012). The fragile and unstable environment of Nigeria poses unique security challenges, the most important of which include the proliferation of communal conflict, widespread violent crime and failure of state institutions (including those of security, justice and rule of law) to guarantee safety and security of livelihoods.

Though the focus of this paper is on banditry in the Northern region of Nigeria, its manifestation and the extent to which civil societies have responded to the situation, there is a sense in which it is just a symptom of some wider societal problems of poverty and neglect and inaccessible security and justice institutions that has remained intractable. These factors have not only made sustained income generation and security of livelihoods impossible in the rural areas but also resulted in the reversal of development gains. Linked to serious conditions of insecurity in rural areas is the deterioration of the general welfare and living condition of the people.

What is rural about rural banditry in Nigeria?

Before examining the ruralness of banditry as it manifests across communities in Nigeria, it is instructive to highlight the fact that rural banditry takes several forms in terms of patterns. It involves the blockage of highways and other roads by the criminals as witnessed in the series of deadly attacks against motorists along the road that stretches from Abuja-Kaduna-Kano-Katsina or Kaduna-Zamfara; It involves deadly attacks against communities

that are invaded at night with the people killed and houses destroyed; It also involves the rustling of cattle and plundering of other resources such as food by the criminal gangs, which sustains an underground economy (Kwaja, 2014).

Racked by an unending spiral of violent ethnic, communal, resource and religious conflicts in different parts of the country, as well as by steadily rising crime rate in major cities and towns, Nigeria is in dire need of the requisite conditions of stability and security. This is direr in the rural areas that have serially suffered from neglect by the state, with much of the security institutions focused on the urban areas. Linked to this condition of insecurity is the deterioration of poverty and the general welfare, particularly among the rural dwellers as the most vulnerable segments of the population.

In locations of endemic insecurity, huge personal incomes, savings, investments and entitlements of poor people and low-income earners in both the formal and informal sectors have always been lost to the destructions associated with violent conflicts (arson, mass murder, looting, etc) and to the activities of organised criminals (armed robbers, kidnappers, fraudsters, etc). Under such conditions, it is the most vulnerable segments of the population such as market women, extremely poor people and those with disabilities are usually the first and worst to suffer the loss of life and livelihood, as they usually lack sophisticated coping mechanisms in the face of organised violence.

For the rural dwellers, the menace of insecurity is exacerbated by the weakness of and failure of governance and security institutions to provide the basic enabling environment of safety and security for development. In contexts of uneven development, the shared consciousness of marginalisation and social exclusion continue to define citizens' perception of the state and how it responds to their security concerns. Given that state legitimacy is largely driven by such experiences of the citizens (Clements, 2014), the neglect of their security concerns as highlighted above created a huge vacuum that bandits use to unleash mayhem on these neglected citizens living in the rural areas, or what can best be described as the margin of society. Unfortunately, one major challenge that these crises pose for peacebuilding is the fact that because they are interpreted along the lines of identity – religion and ethnicity, they become more complex to address.

In the context of conflicts between farmers and herders in the rural areas, what was originally defined as conflicts between two production forces (producers of crops and producers of livestock), created a huge vacuum due to the inability of the state to effectively deal with the issue. This phenomenon is not peculiar to Nigeria, against the backdrop of the experiences of countries within the Sahel and Lake Chad regions (Kwaja & Smith, 2020). The key causalities of the conflict have been around issues of encroachment on farmlands, confrontations over access to water points for grazing and irrigations, as well as the adverse impact of climate change that led to the forced movement of both farming

and herding communities. Beyond the conflict, the new pattern of insecurity is linked with organized crimes that manifests in the form of systematic destruction of crops, cattle rustling, as well as the serial and deadly attacks on communities by criminal groups as witnessed in Plateau, Benue, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Zamfara, Taraba and Adamawa states.

One common feature of the Northwest region is the stretch of forests that have become havens for criminals due to the fact that they are not governed (Onwuzuigbo, 2020). These stretches of ungoverned spaces also provide a buffer for the criminals who use to counter the security agencies. The recent attack on the convoy of the governor of Borno State, Prof. Babagana Zulum despite the heavy presence of the military in the northeast, the activities of bandits in the north-west region, deadly attack on communities in the north-central region, as well as generalized acts of kidnapping and abduction, represents some of the most obvious examples of the increasing inadequacies of public safety and in the country. In the face of this security dilemma, the failure of the security agencies has created a vacuum that has been filled by non-state actors as part of individual, group or community self-help measures to protect themselves. Despite such community-led efforts, the bandits continue to use the forests as their havens for protection. It was observed that "in general, forests anywhere in the world, by nature can be a security threats where thieves, criminals, armed groups, rebels, insurgents and terrorists can use them in carrying out their activities in one way or the other.' Ladan

(2014:130), Okoli & Ochim (2016:48) also drew attention to some of the strategic calculations that define and justify the premium that the bandits attach to the forests, which include:

(i) Forests serving as a safe haven for the criminal habitation and asylum.

(ii) Forests providing bases for camping, training and guerrilla warfare.

(iii) Forests providing avenues for illicit economic activities such as logging, charcoal production, poaching, gaming, drug trafficking, and mercantile smuggling activities.

(iv) Forests providing sanctuaries for the safekeeping of prisoners of war and abductees; and

(v) Forests are difficult to police owing to their expansive and often isolated terrains.

Selected Forests Serving as Havens for Bandits in Northern Nigeria

Forest	Location
Sambisa Forest	Borno State
Kamuku Forest	Kaduna State
Kagoro Forest	Kaduna State
Balmo Forest	Bauchi and Jigawa State

Falgore Forest	Kano State
Rugu Forest	Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger States

Source: Author's Compilation

With rising crime rates that are linked to banditry and other forms of organized crimes in the country, institutional weakness and the associated oligopolies of violence represents a most pervasive and chronic feature of the Nigerian state. The resort to self-help by individuals, groups and communities highlights the dualism of the state, in which the formal structure of central authority coexists with non-formal traditional institutions of security provisioning. For many citizens, a sense of disillusionment with the state also created a sense of disengagement, which further reinforces the creation of a parallel space with alternative outlets for addressing citizens' security needs that are not met by the state. The resilience of the communities in the face of rising insecurity reflects a low level of confidence on the state and its institutions, which revolves around an "insecurity dilemma" to the extent that the communities prefer to act on their own against perceived threats, thereby creating a society of increased insecurity in the context of either state inertia, weakness, reluctance or failure. Suleiman (2019) further observed that "the allegiance of defenceless rural communities is gradually shifting toward informal, armed groups and local vigilantes. There are widespread allegations of corruption against state security

operatives, police, judges, village heads, and even some vigilante groups".

The literature on state capacity in the context of its monopoly over the instruments of coercion is one that highlights the centrality of the state as the primary provider and guarantor of security. In this sense, the primary duty of the Nigerian state lies in its ability to provide for the security and welfare of its citizens as enshrined in the constitution. Migdal (1988: 18), noted that the strength of a state is the extent to which its elites can exercise control over competing foci of authority and eliminate oligopolies of violence. The weakness associated with state capacity to effectively protect the vulnerable communities is compounded by the conditions of the security agencies that are reportedly stretched and demoralized (Campbell, 2020), largely because they are currently deployed to more than thirty states across the country with the mandate of maintaining internal security. In a recent report, Amnesty International drew attention to the fact that so far, about 1,126 villagers have been killed, with about 380 persons abducted for ransom by the bandits across the country, amidst what it described as government's failure to protect rural communities (Amnesty, 2020).

The devastating impact of Banditry in Zamfara State also underscores the strong link between natural resources and criminality that pitch illegal miners of gold against the communities, which has been well documented, coupled with the failure of regulatory agencies to effectively (Ya'u, 2012; Suleiman,

2019). The situation in Zamfara State is not different from the spate of instability and deadly conflicts that plagued countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Sudan and South Sudan. These countries have suffered from what has been termed the "resource curse" (Mulwa & Mariara, 2016), a euphemism used to describe the link between natural resource and conflicts in the African continent. In the case of Nigeria, prior to a spate of organized crime in Zamfara State that is linked to two natural resources - lead and gold, the Niger Delta region of the country is an example of "resource curse" (Gbahabo & Oduro-Afriyie, 2017), which has been the hot-bed of instability that is associated with armed confrontations between militant youths and the Nigerian State.

As neutral actors, civil society represents a key voice in Nigeria's conflict landscape due to the trust they enjoy in the eyes of the people. Despite the erosion of trust on the state by citizens, both the citizens and the state continue to see several civil society actors as bridge builders that should be engaged as strategic partners. Many of the available reports regarding the frequency and intensity of banditry emanate from the media, which in turn become veritable tools in the hands of the civil society for advocacy, peacebuilding, or humanitarian responses. Unfortunately, not much has been done by civil society in the Northwest due to the state of insecurity in the region, which is more of an act of criminality as against parties in conflict that can be brought to the table for mediation or dialogue. While it has been

easy for civil society to engage from the Kaduna State front, the situation in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara States are slightly different due to the fact that the communities suffer deadly attacks from what is often regarded as "unknown gunmen".

Patterns of Government Responses to Rural Banditry in Northern Nigeria

The deployment of the military and other security agencies against banditry represents one of the first response by the Nigerian state. Several military operations have been launched to deal with this issue. For instance, the Operation Safe Haven was launched by the Defence Headquarters to deal with the activities of criminals in Plateau and Kaduna State. The Nigerian Army also launched operation Sharan Daji (I & II) for the Northeast region (Kwaja 2019), which led to the death of the leader of one of the criminal groups, Buharin Daji (Buhari of the forest). Other types of military operations in launched in the Northwest region include a multi-agency strategy known as Operation Puff Adder, made up of the Nigeria Police as the lead agency, the armed force and Department of State Services (DSS), as well as Operation *Diran Mikiya* of the Nigerian Air Force (Suleiman, 2019). Under the Nigerian army's Operation Sahel Sanity, 150 bandits were arrested through what was christened intelligence-based aggressive clearance operations fighting and confidence-building patrols and ambushes against criminals in Zamfara and Katsina States.

No state wants to be viewed as negotiating with criminals, events in some states, particularly in Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina provide a different scenario. The state resorted to negotiating a truce with criminals as well as "purchasing peace" or "offer amnesty". According to Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna state, some aggrieved persons linked to the killings in Southern Kaduna were traced and paid to stop the killings and destruction of the communities. In the case of Katsina State, Governor Aminu Masari announced an amnesty for the bandits in exchange for the people that were abducted the bandits and held as hostages. The amnesty programme/peace deal was one in which the bandits were to lay down their arms and embrace peace in exchange for pardon by the government (Ladan, 2019). In Zamfara State, the committee set up to develop sustainable strategies for dealing with banditry in the state reported that between 2011 and 2019, the sum of N3billion was collected from relations of victims of banditry in the state, involving 3,672 victims. Also, 4,983 women were widowed; 20,050 children orphaned; 190,340 people displaced; 2,015 cattle, 141 sheep and goats, 2,600 donkeys and camels rustled; as well as the burning of 147,000 vehicles and motorcycles respectively. Despite this huge loss suffered by the state both in terms of financial and humanitarian, the state government was of the view that negotiating with the bandits was in the overall interest of the state and the people. For a civil society group such as the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), which has been reporting and documenting the situation in the Northwest region, amnesty for bandits is not the

right way to go. It is of the view that by refusing to prosecute the bandits, the state governments are only strengthening criminals, which also amounts to an abuse of power and abuse of office, thereby institutionalizing impunity and lawlessness.

Concerned by the spate of deaths and the humanitarian crisis in the Northwest and other regions of the country, Global Rights, in concert with some civil society organisations, launched the mass atrocities tracking, monitoring and documentation project. The tracker provides monthly information about the location, nature of atrocity and number of casualties associated with acts of criminality and conflicts. With access to such information Global Rights and its partners have been able to initiate and undertake advocacy to specific institutions and actors based on the role they see them capable of playing as per halting atrocities in the country. Notwithstanding the justifications provided by the state with respect to the resort to amnesty and purchase of peace from bandits, concerns by civil society such as Global Rights have been raised about how such approaches address the wider question of dealing with impunity. The reality is that as long as the state provides a space for negotiation with bandits, there is a sense in which it is contributing to the bourgeoning of a criminal economy. Hence, rather than protect the citizens, the state is incentivizing criminality, which in turn weakens the criminal justice system, as well as further erodes citizens' trust on the state to protect them from or against the criminals.

The total ban on mining activities in Zamfara State was viewed as a deliberate attempt by the federal government to restore peace and security in the affected communities.

The ban affected both local artisan and foreign miners. Such a decision by the federal government also generated strong concerns regarding against the backdrop of the fact that genuine investors that were granted mining license by the government became victims of the crossfire – between a federal government ban on one hand and their investment on another hand. For these investors, they were anxious to get profit from their investment in the state. While there is no specific data on the exact number of foreign investors and their origins, it was reported that 300 small-scale mining cooperatives that consist of thousands of employees are fully registered by the federal government.

Recent arrests of some criminals linked to acts of banditry across some of the states reveals the external dimension to the criminality. Nationals of neighbouring states such as Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. For instance, it was reported that bandits from the Niger Republic were invited to join other bandits that were responsible for a deadly attack in some communities of Katsina State (Yahaya et.al, 2018). One major problem here is the fact that bandits and other criminal gangs have a long history of using border communities as safe havens in their bid to escape arrests from the security agents (Lamptey, 2013). The external dimension to these acts of criminality is not just about the involvement of foreigners. It also has to do with the ease of

passage for them due to porosity of the country's borders and the weaknesses associated with securing them. Though Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) are not in themselves the primary causes of banditry, they help sustain it. With access to SALWs, criminals are more emboldened to withstand any form of reprisal by either communities or the state itself. The series of arrests by the security agencies also confirms the complexity of the banditry in the Northwest region of the country due to the sophisticated SALWs confiscated form the criminals at the point of arrest. These SALWs are not only sourced from within, but they are also linked to the instabilities in Libya after the fall of Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi and the Sahelian region (Gaye, 2018).

Civil Society and Community-Level Responses to Rural Banditry in Northern Nigeria

One of the earliest responses to the spate of banditry across rural communities in Northern Nigeria came from the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). In 2015, the CDD convened a high-level meeting of academics, civil society organisations and the media with the goal of systematically examining the extent and impact of banditry in the region within with specific reference to the nexus between rural banditry and conflicts (Kuna & Ibrahim, 2015). One of the key findings from the research was the fact that responses to the challenges posed by rural banditry have been largely state-centric, with limited involvement of civil society and the communities (Abdu & Kwaja, 2015. For most of the communities, while they are often left

without any form of compensation arising from attacks by bandits, they suffer double jeopardy – loss of lives and loss of livelihoods, with the provision of relief materials by the government that are only meant to address their immediate needs of food.

In response to the growing incidences of cattle rustling that has been viewed as a major sustained of rural banditry in the country, the Kano State-based civil society, the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), was supported by the MacArthur Foundation to develop an Information and Technology (IT) solution that can be deployed to track the movement of cattle in the region (Azeez & Aliyu, 2016). This initiative was one of the earliest and more scientific attempts by a civil society organization to find a sustainable solution to cattle rustling. Unfortunately, the initiative has not been utilized beyond the pilot testing, which provided some rays of opportunities to the effect that by stopping the rustling of cattle, the bandits will be put out of business.

Despite the devastating effect of banditry and other forms of criminality in the Northwest region, only Kaduna State is showing some strong sense of direct civil society engagements. This is rightly so due to the fact that the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC) that is made up of seasoned peace practitioners, religious clerics, civil society and government actors, continue to serve as a rallying point and platform for strategic engagements with civil society and international non-governmental organisations such as Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Christian Aid (CA)

British Council/Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) among others. The establishment of the Technical Reference Group (TRG) by the KSPC provides an opportunity for these actors to periodically assess the extent of responses by state and non-state actors with a view to addressing gaps.

Community-level vigilantism has been a major form of community resistance against rural banditry. By leveraging on their local intelligence, communities have been able to set up structures for early warning and early response, which they utilize on their own, or in concert with the formal security agencies of the Nigerian State. The erosion of citizens' confidence on the state accounts for the reason why communities had to look inward to protect themselves and their livelihoods from the bandits., through the use of vigilantes, popularly known as *yan banga* (Rufa'I, 2018).

Recommendations

There is no doubt that the experiences of communities as victims of banditry have had a huge impact on their perception of the security agencies as the first respondents to their security needs. For the security agencies to launch a successful country-banditry operation, it will require the strong support of the communities as key providers of intelligence. This would require restoring the fractured trust between the civilian population and the security agencies. Since the intelligence-led approach to fighting banditry in the Northwest has yielded positive results, a closer synergy between the security agencies and the civilian population is

required. The Directorates of Civil-Military Relations of the armed forces and the recently launched community-policing initiatives should be used as key pillars for the pursuit of this goal, which has to do with forging a greater partnership between the civilian population and the security agencies.

Adopting a whole of government approach to containing banditry represents one of the surest pathways to success. In this sense, greater synergy is required between and among the military, police, and other security agencies, as against the present situation where each security agency is launching separate operations and providing individual reports on the same situation as if they are not working for the same government. Since the end state for each of the security agency is the containment of banditry and the restoration of peace and security, it calls for greater efforts towards the harmonization of strategies in ways that create and encourages cooperation rather than competition. In this sense, the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) is better positioned to coordinate such efforts towards the realisation of the end state.

Border management has to do largely with controlling the movement of people and goods in and out of a country. In the context of Nigeria, beyond the strengthening of the capacity of key security agencies such as the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), there is need for stronger collaboration with their counterparts in other countries to allow for the sharing of intelligence and joint patrols along the

borders. By sharing intelligence, the security agencies will be better positioned to monitor and track the movement of bandits, as well as the movement of rustled cattle and other stolen property as they move from one country to the other.

Border communities remain major sources of intelligence that should be harnessed and utilized by security agencies. They are located in strategic positions that enable them to monitor happenings within their environments. The security agencies should develop closer synergy with the border communities by establishing a sense of common security threats and how such threats destabilise the communities if not checkmated. It is also important that the Border Communities Development Agency (BCDA) improves on government' presence through the provision of incentives to these border communities that have long been neglected in terms of the provision of infrastructure. Such an effort will no doubt give them a strong sense of belonging and bolster their commitment to contribute to the security of the country. This is one area that civil society has not given adequate attention, which they should prioritise in a bid to enhance civic consciousness among communities as a basis for improving their welfare and security.

The ability of civil society to develop a robust framework for community-level early warning and response, as well as conflict management remains an important pathway for community cohesion in Northern Nigeria. Such an effort that should be driven by civil society will no doubt complement the efforts of

governments at all levels as part of an overall community resilience programme, which should target the building of capacities for the existing social networks – traditional and community leaders, youth and women groups, as well as other socio-cultural and pressure groups. This also represents one of the easiest ways of fostering tripartite cooperation that involves the state, civil society and the communities as they adopt a joint problem-solving approach to containing rural banditry.

Conclusion

Rural banditry remains a major threat to human and national security in Nigeria. Despite efforts by the Nigerian state towards containing this threat, not much has been achieved by the security agencies that are currently stretched to effectively to provide a counterforce to the bandits that continue to hold communities of the Northwest region siege. The reality is that beyond the use of force by security agencies, there are opportunities for civil society and communities intervene, as part of measures towards putting in place structures and mechanisms for responses that are comprehensive and sustainable. Though there has been a decline in the cases of cattle rustling, the primary concern remains the protracted cases of deadly attacks against communities, which has not been effectively contained by the security agencies

References

Abdu, H and Kwaja, A.M.C (2015) Rural banditry and social conflicts in Kaduna and Plateau States, in Kuna, J.M & Ibrahim, J (eds) Rural banditry and social conflicts in Northern Nigeria, Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD).

African Development Bank (2012) Development effectiveness review 2012: Fragile States and conflict-affected countries, Tunisia: African Development Bank Group.

Azeez, O and Aliyu, Y (2016) Cows, bandits and violent conflicts: Understanding cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria, Africa Spectrum, Vol.51, No.3, Pg. 93-105.

Campbell, J (2020) Not all violent problems require violent solutions: Banditry in Nigeria's north-west, available in https://www.cfr.org/blog/not-all-violent-problems-require-violent-solutions-banditry-nigerias-north-west

Clement, K.P (2014) What is legitimacy and why does it matter for peace?, in Ramsbotham, A and Wennmann, A (eds) Legitimacy and peace processes: From coercion to consent, London: Conciliation Resources.

Gaye, S.B (2018) Connections between jihadists groups and smuggling and illegal trafficking rings in the Sahel, Dakar:

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, available in https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fes-pscc/14176.pdf

Gbahabo, P and Oduro-Afriyie, E (2017) On the dynamics of the oil resource curse in Nigeria: Theory and implications, available in https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2968893

https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/05/13/nigerian-govt-launches-massive-operations-against-bandits-kidnappers/

https://dailypost.ng/2020/08/25/army-arrests-over-150-bandits-recover-ammunitions-in-zamfara-katsina-states/

https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/12/weve-paid-fulani-stop-killings-southern-kaduna-el-rufai/

https://www.ft.com/content/4f98f926-e8d3-11e9-a240-3b065ef5fc55

https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/nwest/357149-bandits-collect-n3-billion-ransom-in-zamfara-committee.html

https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/nwest/401279-no-regrets-negotiating-with-bandits-zamfara-governor.html

http://saharareporters.com/2019/08/11/huriwa-slams-zamfara-governor-negotiating-bandits

http://saharareporters.com/2019/08/11/huriwa-slams-zamfara-governor-negotiating-bandits

https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/nigeria-government-bans-artisanal-gold-mining-activity-in-zamfara-to-curb-violence-in-the-region/

https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/nigeria-government-bans-artisanal-gold-mining-activity-in-zamfara-to-curb-violence-in-the-region/

https://nairametrics.com/2020/01/24/nigeria-to-lift-ban-on-zamfara-solid-mineral-mining-by-q1-ending/

https://allafrica.com/stories/201904290136.html

Kuna, J.M & Ibrahim, J (2015) Rural banditry and social conflicts in Northern Nigeria, Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD).

Kwaja, A.M.C (2014) Blood, cattle and cash: Cattle rustling and Nigeria's bourgeoning underground economy, *West African Insight*, Vol.4, No.3, Pg. 1-6.

Kwaja, A.M.C (2019) Monitoring and documenting mass atrocities in Nigeria: A protocol, Report Submitted to Global Rights, Abuja, Nigeria.

Kwaja, A.M.C and Smith, K (2020) Transnational dimensions of the conflict between farmers and herders in the Western Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, Policy Brief, Search for Common Ground, April, available in https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SFCG_Policy_Brief_Transnational_Dimension_to_FH_Conflicts.pdf

Ladan, S (2019) Analysis of contemporary insecurity in Katsina State, Nigeria, *Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research*, Vol.6, No.7, Pg. 95-102.

Lamptey, A.A (2013) Rethinking border management strategies in West Africa: Experience from Sahel, Policy Brief, 12, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.

Mulwa, R and mariara, J (2016) Natural resource curse in Africa: Dutch disease and institutional explanation, AGRODEP Working Paper, 0029, available at http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/130799/filename/131010.pdf

Okoli, A.C and Ochim, F.I (2016) Forests and national security in Nigeria: A threat-import analysis, *Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research*, Vol.2, No2, Pg. 43-53.

Okoli, C.A and Ugwu, C.A (2019) Of marauders and brigands: Scoping the threat of rural banditry in Nigeria's North

West, *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, Vol.4, No.8, Pg. 201-222.

Onwuzuruigbo, I (2020) Enclaves of banditry: Ungoverned forests spaces and cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria, *Africa Studies Review*, Pg. 1-24.

Rocha Menocal, A (2011) State building for peace: A new paradigm for international engagement in post-conflict fragile state? *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.32, No.10, Pg. 1715-1736.

Rufa'i, A.M (2018) Vigilante groups and rural banditry in Zamfara State: Excesses and contradictions, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol., No., Pg. 65-73, available in http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol7(6)/Version-1/I0706016573.pdf

Suleiman, S (2019) Rural banditry in Zamfara State, Northwest Nigeria, available in https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2019/06/13/rural-banditry-in-zamfara-state-northwest-nigeria/

World Bank Group (2019) World Bank Group strategy for fragility, conflict and violence (FCV) 2020-2025, Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Ya'u, Z. Y (2012) Gold and graves: Zamfara lead poisoning and the failure of regulatory oversight, Abuja: Citizens Centre for Legislative Advocacy (CISLAC).

Yahaya, J.U., Liman, A.N. & Adadu, Y (2018) An assessment of the challenges by security agencies in fighting proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Kano State, *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, Vol. 6, No.7, Pg. 47-56.

Political Economy of Nigeria's Core Conflict

Rural Banditry

– Ayuba CALEB, PhD

The Political Economy of Nigeria's Core Conflict: Rural Banditry

– Ayuba CALEB PhD

Political Economy is simply defined as the relationship between economics and politics. According to the 20th Century London School of economic Scholar, Lionel Robin, economics is the distribution of scarce resources that have alternative uses. Politics on the other hand is concerned with who governs and how these are appointed; reference is here made to aristocracy, monarchy, democracy, or republicanism.

Robin goes further to authoritatively assert that throughout the millenniums, the two recognized means by which scarce resources are distributed are (1) *Trade*: Which has to do with the exchange of goods and services and (2) *Violent means* including banditry and organized crime.

The classical thinkers of the 17th Century had a good understanding of the working of the state. They understood that except certain measures are put in place; the state cannot function in peace and public order that gives occasion for trade as a legitimate means of resource distribution to thrive. The modern nation-state model became operational after the treaty of Westphalia was signed in Osnabruck in 1648. In spite of the institution of the state as a sovereign entity with defined geographical space and distinct population, the political ruling elites recognized that except certain measures were put in place

to safeguard it, the state will end up destroying itself (Richard, 1991). Therefore, the measures to make the state function are hinged on two critical imperatives.

- The imperative of Protection and
- The imperative of Provision

Therefore, Thomas Hobbes, the renowned English thinker in his 1651 work, Leviathan, captured the spirit of these imperatives when he created a scenario where two entities (the people and the state) entered into a transactional and mutually beneficial covenant relationship. The covenant was to be oiled by the thinking that the people accepted to cede their civic rights and privileges to the state and the state in exchange, accepted to provide protection and welfare to the people. Of course, the thrust of this engagement is economic security and inclusion for the people (Richard, 1991).

In the context post-military and contemporary Nigeria, this commitment by the state is glaringly non-existent (Siollun, 2009). In the last thirty years, over 500 billion US dollars have accrued to the national treasury from the sale of crude oil alone. This is apart from accruals from the non-oil sector. This has however not resulted in any significant growth and sustainable development. The national infrastructure has become decrepit and dilapidated; the phenomenon of corruption is now more endemic; youth unemployment as at 2019 according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) had risen to 14 per cent and by 2020, the

statistic had risen to 27 per cent according to the National Bureau of Statistics (Ajeluorou, 2020). According to the Borgen's, August 2020 Magazine, about 44.6 per cent of young people have jobs. The magazine opines further that gender economic inequality is another critical key driver of socio-economic and political exclusion in the country. Nigerian women are victims of exclusion in terms of the labour force, education, and property ownership. While this category constitutes about 79 per cent of the rural labour force, they are not likely to own property. In addition, just about 6 per cent of this population has attained basic literacy in terms of numeracy and reading skills. "Inequalities in Nigeria are a result of poorly allocated resources and corruption" (Borgen Magazine, 2020: 1). With the deliberate 'overthrow' of the Middle Class, poverty has become widespread and more perpetuating apart from the more pervasive economic vulnerabilities of Nigerians.

The Nigerian state has finally joined the league of countries degenerating into the league of failed political entities with its gradual retrogression into a predatory political community. The Transparency International (TI) rating estimated that Nigeria had lost over 400 billion US dollars to corruption since independence. In 2018, Nigeria ranked 144th in the 180 countries listed in TI's ranking. The National Bureau of Statistics further affirms that 40 per cent of Nigerians are living below the poverty line of N137, 430 (381 USD) per year. This is 82.9 million people out of the country's 200 million people.

This anomaly has comfortably situated the country in the position of the 'Poverty Capital' of the world. From the bleak macroeconomic malaise, governance deficit and the total exclusion of a large horde of youths from the microeconomic value chain, it is only to be expected that the political structure will eventually collapse since it has proven incapable of meeting its economic and welfare obligation to the people. It is to be rehashed here that scarce resources must be distributed, if not through legitimate means, then through violence and banditry. This is what is unfolding in North-West Nigeria.

The upsurge in rural banditry is a reality in post-military Nigeria, but more so, its contemporary dynamics are gradually beginning to mutate into an urban phenomenon. There is no doubt that crime and criminality draw oxygen and derives its existence from multiple factors like the nature of the political economy, the proliferation of and cheap access to small arms and light weapons. Another critical factor is the collapse in the 'Social Contract' between the state and the Nigerian people as clearly articulated earlier. Note that the general propensity and nature of man subsisting in the society of men is to operate outside the defined confines of political order and authority. This is why the moral philosophers of earlier dispensations like Thomas Hobbes (1651), John Locke, Emmanuel Kant, Jean Jaques Rosseau etc resolved to chart the discourse for the shaping of a legal framework that will lead to the political ordering of human society

and their systems as coded in the 'Social Contract' (In Ayuba, 2020).

Unfortunately, these welfare provisions that are the safety mechanism for the preservation of the state as an entity is increasingly being undermined by the authorities charged with the responsibility for its administration. It is critical to highlight the fact that it is becoming increasingly evident that the weakness of the state to provide jobs and economic opportunities to a large portion of the population is creating discontent and further widening the already entrenched socio-economic gaps resulting in the outbreak of crime, banditry and even terrorism.

Again, in another twist, because of the inability of the state to effectively activate its security architecture to secure the state as a geographical space and its population, other independent security arrangements have evolved with the intention of securing the 'homeland'. These security arrangements have begun thinking of filling the vacuum they feel the state is creating by its 'abdication and forfeiture' of its constitutional mandate of protection and provision.

All over the country, this is the scenario playing out; from the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in its war against the insurgency of the Boko Haram (Ayuba, 2014) to the Amotekun in its determination to counter the aggression of the encroaching bandits into the Southwest. In recent times too, governors of North Central States have aligned themselves with the now

popular thinking of raising help from within. This is apart from the array of community vigilantes scattered across Northwest Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- It is imperative to call on the civil society to ensure that they become the vanguard forces in advocating or better still, agitating for a constitutional review aimed at making the 'Community and state police initiative a reality.
- Another recommendation as far as this paper is concern is the call on the different tiers of governments responsible for the management of the welfare and security regimes to ensure that the gaps that criminal non-state actors exploit to perpetuate themselves in the rural and often ungoverned spaces are filled with a view to ensuring that these criminal elements do not have easy access to vulnerable people to mobilize for their heinous activities.
- The government could achieve this through a concerted drive towards the provision of infrastructural services to the people; an initiative that could take millions of unemployed people out of the labour market and out of the vulnerable-victim status that is easily recruited for crime and criminality.
- Energy provision as a catalyst for the manufacturing and industrial sector of the economy should receive the attention and priority of the government.

- In addition, an aggressive war against corruption that results in governance deficit could also play an important role towards revamping the economy and enhancing a progressive economic inclusion regime that is all-encompassing with the potential for de-escalating the phenomenon of rural banditry in the rural space.

Reference

Ayuba Caleb (2014). Ayuba Caleb (2020) Caught in the Web of Hobbes' State of Nature:

Thoughts on Central Nigeria's Violent Conflicts. In the Ubuntu Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation. Vol. 9 No 1.

Ayuba Caleb (2014). Civil Military Relations in Peacebuilding: The Case of Boko Haram. In Journal of International Affairs and Development (AJIAD) Vol 18. No 3.

Tuck, Richard (1999). Hobbe's Leviathan: A Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ajeluorou, Anote (2020). Why US Attached Conditions to Return 308 million Abacha Loot. https//saharareorters.com

Borgen's Magazine (2020). https//www. Borgen's Magazine.com

Silliun , M (2009). Oil, Politics and Violence. Nigeria's Military Coup Culture. New York: Algora Publishing

World Poverty Clock (2018). Accessed electronically at https://worldpoverty.com

Roles of International Community, the Media and Civil Society in Nigeria's Core Conflict

Rural Banditry

— Ruth Eguono OLOFIN

The Role of International Community, the Media and Civil Society Engagement in Rural Banditry

– Ruth Eguono OLOFIN

Key recommendations based on the presentation by Dr Chris Kwaja on Rural Banditry:

The Role of the International Community

- The International community should support crisis-affected countries to enable them to overcome the myriads of security challenges faced. This support can be in the areas of technical capacity and supply of sophisticated equipment to security institutions including State-of-the-Art Border intelligence and surveillance equipment.
- A sustainable framework for tracking the movement of cattle. This framework should build in an early warning system that places endemic communities on high alert when there is an invasion.
- Strategic Communication, Advocacy and Engagement with governments of the affected countries. This engagement entails reminders to their commitments to protect lives and properties and the enactment and development of protective laws and policies.
- Through donor organizations, civil society organisations can be enabled to set up sustainable networks of local

resilience, livelihood support, strengthening national capacities for the prevention of rural banditry and post-conflict recovery measures.

- Support for the prosecution of mass atrocities at the international level and the prevention of banditry induced Violence Against Women (VAW) locally.

Key recommendations - the Role of the Media

- Changing the narratives - hate speech, disinformation, misinformation: (Jibrin and Dabugat 2015) argued that by amplifying the negative conversations between aggrieved parties, the media may work to deepen existing conflicts and inciting further violence. The media should rather use their strategic role to report positive messaging of non-violence into the public. Unbiased reporting of the numbers-correctly reflecting the numbers accurately as the situations on the ground.
- Public awareness of the extensive nature of the conflict and the role of communities in combating the conflict in local languages. In a baseline study for community resilience in Northcentral Nigeria, Onuoha (2018) argued that "the more aware communities are of potential threats to their security and wellbeing, the more empowered they are to effectively counter these threats". Thus, supporting the localisation of solutions to their problems.
- Avoid religionising or profiling ethnic groups and conflicts in Nigeria. The Farmer-Herder crisis has commonly been

framed as a Fulani-Christian conflict. It is sufficient to note that these are criminal elements often having transnational linkages with a high chance of being mercenaries.

- Protecting the sensitivities of the public-The media should avoid showing very gory pictures of the maimed and dead persons. These have the potential to cause unforgettable grief and a burning quest for revenge.
- Awareness creation by the media on the connection between climate change, patterns of transhumance and their relationship with rural banditry conflicts for endemic communities in the North-West (Jibrin, 2015)

Recommendations - How CSOs Can Better Engage and Involve in Conflict Mitigation and Resolution

- CSOs can work with the security agencies to set up Periodic Civilian-Security Platforms/Local peace and security networks. These platforms will serve to discuss and raise awareness on emerging security threats, advocacy-raising platforms to formal security institutions for greater protection, control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and increased the presence of security actors in the communities. These partnerships provide entry points to build and enhance trust and intelligence sharing between the communities and the state security agencies while enabling communities to act as key actors in their security.

- CSOs should work closely with local governments and non-state security actors to enhance community policing and local intelligence gathering and sharing, capacity building and facilitating interagency collaboration, cooperation, and modelling.
- Civil society organisations by virtue of their apolitical role can play a central role to promote better effective governance principles. Civil society can assist in budget tracking of funds for community development, create platforms for community to hold their representatives accountable for funds allocated for community development. CSOs like BudgIt and CODE's Follow The-Money are leading the pack of CSO initiatives at this level while calling for more OGP initiatives in Nigeria.
- Enhance the capacity of communities to develop sustainable resilience structures within endemic communities for conflict mitigation-platforms with youths, women, men groups in close engagements with traditional and religious leaders.
- Facilitate the Development of Early Warning and Early Response Systems. These can be done by supporting communities to map risk factors and escalate these to security agencies.
- Set up CSO Observatory on monitoring events in the Northwest region as it concerns rural banditry and relevant security challenges.

- Localizing the discussions and partnership with local stakeholders in affected states and communities. There should be less of national-centric discussions but more community-focused conversations. This way, whatever recommendations or strategies proposed will take cognizance of local narratives and solutions to local problems. Higher-level policy dialogues and policy influencing should remain central at the national level in addressing the security threats confronting Nigeria.
- Set up coordination mechanism on peacebuilding and conflict resolution interventions by civil society- this will ensure proper and effective coordination of all efforts. Civil society organizations within the country need to operate from an angle of cooperation in tackling common problems. The challenge has thus far been one of donor-centric approach which seeks to ensure grant obligations are met. Several coordination platforms have been set up in the past with some of these focused on peacebuilding and conflict resolution programmes. Sadly, the sustainability of these platforms remains a challenge once donor funding stops.
- Engagement with the drivers and actors of conflicts; especially – Youth groups, peace dialogues and role models/mentors.
- CSOs can play an important role in the training of security agencies in handling civil conflicts and adherence to the core principles of respect for fundamental human rights

of the people and prioritizing the protection of civilians caught in conflict areas.

- Building partnerships with the media as a strategy for managing conflicts. This will rely heavily on peace messaging and framing of new narratives around the contentious issues. Building awareness on risk factors of conflict and ways to resolve them
- Research and Documentation: CSOs should scale up research efforts on drivers of conflict, document, track and monitor trends using local networks and information. Global Rights, CLEEN Foundation, Nextier SPD, Centre for Democracy and Development are leading various research efforts around these issues. Putting names and numbers to the conflict can spur duty bearers to greater action in finding lasting solutions to the conflict.
- CSOs need to step up engagement efforts with relevant government agencies. These will entail advocating for lasting sustainable livelihood options for the people affected by conflicts and other complex crisis. Loss of livelihood, a prevailing context of high poverty levels, marginalization in governance and the deficits on governance and responsibility to the citizens are some predisposing factors aiding rural banditry in Nigeria.

Part Three

Boko Haram Insurgency

The Role of Civil Society in Nigeria's Core Conflicts:

Boko Haram Insurgency

Dr Joseph OCHOGWU

The Role of Civil Society in Nigeria's Core Conflicts: Boko Haram Insurgency

Dr Joseph OCHOGWU

Introduction

Civil society has gained prominence in development and security discourse and practice over the past three decades. Firstly, in relations to the pressures of democratization that swept through nations in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and across Africa. Secondly, as a result of the several intra-state violent conflicts that occasioned the collapse of the Cold War. In Nigeria, the civil society held on to the struggle for civil rights and democratization despite widespread state repression by military dictators, and later facilitated the transition to civil rule in 1999. The process of democratization changed the political and institutional environment in which civil society organizations in Nigeria operate. Democratization reawakened the civil society in Nigeria and placed it at the centre of active opposition to military dictatorship. As a result, Civil society became the platform for nurturing civic norms and values of democratic engagement in Nigeria. In normative terms, civil society is widely seen as increasingly crucial for limiting authoritarian government, strengthening popular empowerment, enforcing political accountability, and improving quality and inclusiveness of governance (Manor, Robinson and White, 1999).

With over twenty years of uninterrupted democratic rule, Nigeria has witnessed increasing roles of civil society in shaping of the democratic space and has been struggling to ensure the practice of rule of law, increase participation and inclusion in the political space and delivery of the 'dividends of democracy' to the people. The last twenty years in Nigeria has equally witnessed internecine conflicts across the various geo-political zones in Nigeria. From the militancy in oil-rich Niger Delta region to ethnoreligious and farmer-herder conflicts in the North Central/Middle Belt region, as well as the separatist agitations in the Southeast to the earlier violent manifestation of the Odua People's Congress in the Southwest. Also, are the violent insurgency/terrorism in the Northeast and current violent spread of armed banditry and terrorism in the Northwest of Nigeria. No part of the country seems to be exempted from violent conflicts or violent criminality. This violent conflict development in Nigeria has further led to the participation of civil society (CS) in the management, prevention, and resolution of these conflicts alongside state conflict and security management agencies. CSOs are increasingly taking up the critical roles of peacebuilders, mediators, negotiators, precisely, CSOs are deeply involved in peacebuilding and conflict management as well as helping to frame security discourse and interventions in the country. This development has no doubt created interaction and cooperation between traditional and non-traditional security actors in conflict-affected communities and states within the Nigerian Federation. Specifically, the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe (BAY) states in the

northeast region, are embroiled in one of the most severe complex humanitarian emergencies as a result of prolonged insurgency by terrorist groups. The BAY states particularly Borno state has remained the epicentre of the insurgency affecting Nigeria in the last ten years, with the state as the worse affected.

In an attempt to improve the understanding of the complex conflict and security environment and the role of the CS in this conflict, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution commissioned this paper mainly to:

i. Examine the role of CSOs in peacebuilding and conflict management in the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.
ii. Explore the contributions of CSOs and their growing involvement on peace and security overtime.
iii. Provide suggestions for the engagement of CSOs in the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

To achieve the above objectives, this paper draws from an initial review of extant literature and field research works undertaken by the researcher in Adamawa and Borno states. While the earlier work equally focuses on the overall roles and structure of CSOs in these states, this particular research concerns itself specifically with the critical roles of CSOs in peacebuilding and conflict management in Nigeria's core-conflict with an analytical focus on the Boko Haram insurgency. The research report is extensively desk-based with analysis drawn from the researcher's earlier works in the Northeast region of Nigeria.

Conceptualizing Civil Society

Despite its wide usage by development practitioners and social scientists, the concept of civil society still lacks a universal definition. The absence of an acceptable definition of civil society dates back to the origin of the concept. As Ibeanu (2000) noted, different writers have explored the complexity of the concept, showing different dimensions of civil society such as material, organizational, and ideological all manifesting in the writings of Greek, Roman, Liberal, and Marxist scholarships, and paradigms.

By the late 18th century, liberal philosophers began to distinguish a discrete form of civil society with a quite different rationale. They define civil society as a means of defence against potential abuse of power by political leaders especially given the unprecedented concentration of power at the apex of the modern polity (Keane, 1988). Liberal philosophers assumed that the best way to counter the corrupting influences of power and wealth and to revive a sense of public spirit was to encourage the creation and strengthening of citizen associations. The most articulate exponent and proponent of civil society in the liberal tradition is Alexis de Tocqueville, whose work drew attention to new types of state despotism implicit in democratic rule. According to Alexi de Tocqueville, the state should be overseen and checked by the "independent eye of society", made up of a "plurality of interacting, self-organized and constantly vigilant civil associations" whose functions were to nurture basic rights,

advocate people claims and to educate citizens in the democratic art of tolerance and accommodation (Bratton, 1994:54).

Other scholarly traditions disputed the liberal conceptualization of civil society. For instance, G.W.F. Hegel interpreted civil society from a historicist approach, where he differentiated civil society from the state but assumes that civil society is a creation of the state whose relationship is one of superiority and inferiority as well as cooperation. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels drawing from the Hegelian method, conceived civil society as rooted in the material condition of life and is coterminous with socio-economic base, as opposed to the state, which was merely political and juridical superstructure (Keane, 1988). In the twentieth century, Antonio Gramsci using Marxist framework located civil society in the superstructure divided between two entities: the state, which rules directly through coercive and juridical instruments of domination; and the civil society, which promotes ethical values among the populace through the exercise of ideological and cultural hegemony. The state embodies force, while civil society manufactures consent (Orji, 2005).

There are several modern scholars whose works were informed by earlier interpretations of civil society. Though it is observed that the conceptualisation of civil society varies from one scholar to the other and from one organisation to the other, there are common threads of volunteerism, non-coercion, common interest, progress, etc that run through most understanding of the concept. For example, the World Bank defines CSO as "non-

governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious, or philanthropic considerations. CSOs, therefore, refer to a wide array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations".

Similarly, the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society's working definition sees, "civil society as the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors, and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy, and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions, and advocacy groups."

Some group of local CSOs in the Northeast aptly defined themselves as "non-governmental, non-political and non-profit making organizations formed for developmental and peacebuilding activities". They listed types of CSOs to include Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Networks, International Non-governmental Organisations (iNGOs), International partners / Donors, Individual

philanthropists. The group further categorized CSOs in the northeast into Women-based, Youths, Human Rights / Governance, Media / Communications, WASH, Livelihood / Empowerments, peacebuilding and conflict management, Health, and Education. On their roles as CSOs, the following were listed:

- To Provide an Alternative for Achieving Government's Policies.
- To Promote Accountability and Transparency in Governance.
- To Promote/Protect Human Rights.
- To Prevent and Manage Local Conflicts.
- To Create Awareness on Issues Affecting Society.
- To Advocate/Lobby for Policies that Empower Disadvantaged Citizens.

In the Northeast, CSOs can be categorized into International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and the National or Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with the latter having several variants. It is also important to stress that modern-day CSOs development can be traced to the outcome of the atrocities of the Boko Haram insurgency and the consequent complex humanitarian emergencies in the region which bolster the activities of INGOs in the area as well as the emergence of several local NGOs. This paper, therefore, focuses on the activities of CSOs in the peacebuilding and conflict management sector in the Northeast region, whose activities are as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency.

The Evolution and Causes of The Boko Haram Insurgency

There are several versions as to the origin of Boko Haram in Nigeria. While most writers (Virginia, 2017; Saskia, 2019; & Chitra, 2019) traced the origin to early 2000, this paper tends to agree with more restricted sources who traced the origin of Boko Haram to the activities of one Ammi Hassan (deceased), an Algerian national and his son Ali Hassan who were banished by the Algerian government because of their alleged links with Al-Qaeda terrorist group and they fled to the Niger Republic where they were expelled based on warnings from the government in Algiers. According to the source, "the duo thereafter made entry into Nigeria and were received by one Yakubu Musa Kafachan, a Nigerian Islamic Cleric who hails from Bauchi State but was based in Katsina".

Ammi Hassan and Ali Hassan were amazed at the sheer number of youngsters under the guardianship of Yakubu Musa Kafanchan as Almajiri pupils, it took no time for Ammi Hassan to realize that this was a fertile ground for extremism to thrive. The Hassans, under the cover of the Nigerian cleric only had to select and sponsor several Nigerian youths for desert training in the art of terror in Mali, with two batches of about thirty (30) young men each were trained and later became radical arrowheads. The source further stated that in on time, "the Hassans became the rallying point for both local and hitherto foreign-based Nigerians who had a stint with the Al-Qaeda terrorist group. In early 2000, these minute clique of individuals, came together to pursue a life

of radical Islam. Led by Ibrahim Haroon (aka AbulBarrah) with Mohammed Salahadeen as his deputy, the group named itself "Taliban" – an Arabic word meaning "Students"; a name they adopted in solidarity with the militant Afghanistan Taliban. The Nigerian Taliban and its followers were soon to be led from kano to Kanemma in Yobe state by Mohammed Ali, in what was termed "Hijrah", a replication of the migration of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (SAW) from Mecca to Medina. Thereafter, it launched its first attack against security agents in 2003 in response to the arrest of one of its members, leaving about thirty (30) people dead." The information retrieved from the restricted further stated that in 2004 during an armed encounter, Mohammed Ali, who was the second in the hierarchy of the group was killed. However, Ali had groomed Mohammed Yusuf (late) as his student. In 2005 on Abubakar Adam Kambar and Khalid Al-Barnawi with directives from the Algeria-based Salafia Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) anointed Mohammed Yusuf as the Amir DaulatallIslamfin Nigeria (Leader of Islamic Republic of Nigeria) and promptly changed the nomenclature of the group from "Taliban" to "Jama'atulAhlus Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad", which means "Brothers of Sunni United in the fight of Holy War".

Under Mohammed Yusuf's leadership, the group challenged Islamic scholars to contradict its teachings on Jihad and intolerance for non-Islamic values. Mohammed Yusuf was once the leader of the youth wing of the moderate Jama'atullzalatu Bidi'a Walqamatul Sunna (JIBWIS) at the popular Indimi Mosque

in Maiduguri. His sect propagated extreme Islamic doctrine which condemned democracy, western education, and culture as corruptive, immoral, and therefore objectionable before God, thus earning it the name "Boko Haram" which means "Western education is sinful/prohibited". The group engaged in aggressive mobilization and sensitization for new converts and gained large followership in both urban and rural areas of Borno state.

In 2009, the lawless activities of the sect reached its peak when the group's hierarchy pronounced a "Fatua", (a call to war) on Maiduguri, leading to the first major uprising. Amid the crisis, Mohammed Yusuf was killed along with several civilians and police personnel as well as some police formations destroyed. The group was effectively outlawed by the Borno State Government in 2010, rather served as deterrence, the runaway remnants of the sect members who went hiding in states like Bauchi, Taraba, Yobe, Kaduna, Adamawa and Kano gradually regrouped under a new leader, Abubakar Shakau, with a resolve to avenge the deaths of their "Martyred" leader (Yusuf) and perpetuate the sect's missions. Under Shekau's leadership, the sect has become more violent creating one of the worst complex humanitarian emergencies with millions of persons displaced affecting mainly three states (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe) in Nigeria and neighbouring nations of Cameroun, Chad and the Niger Republic. Though the group have since separated into three different terrorist sects/Jihadi groups, their atrocious activities are still recurring despite deep-hit military onslaughts against the groups.

The groups adopt an irregular and non-conventional method of warfare killing and displacing civilians, attacking state's civil, security and military institutions and authorities, kidnapping and killing humanitarian workers, and using women and children for suicide attacks, inter alia.

Causative Factors

It is important to stress that the Northeast region has before the insurgency and to date the worst human development indices in terms of education, health, poverty, housing, malnutrition, internal comparative to other regions in Nigeria. The region is distinctly remote from other parts of the country but has good contiguity to bordering nations of Cameroun, Chad and Cameroun. Majority of the population are farmers depending largely on crop farming and fishing along the Lake Chad basin and other smaller rivers. The population are mainly illiterates dependent on solely self-sustaining agriculture with a heavy disease burden. Weak governance is a root cause of poor development outcomes, a driver of conflict, and a constraint on effective responses to both conflict and displacement. Corruption undermines the effectiveness of policy and programmes implementation and deprives citizens of access to essential services. Political power is effectively centralized in the hands of the governors, with weak accountability and very low capacity and autonomy at the local government areas level. Traditional institutions and local associations have been fractured by the politicisation of the institutions creating a seeming vacuous authority that bred

alternatives like radical extremist ideology and the popularity which the Boko Haram sect garnered in the region.

The violent activities of hitherto a religious CSO have no doubt profound implications on military interactions with the society. The military counter-insurgency operations in the affected states particularly in Borno reached a defining moment in civil-military relations within the country. The transition of Nigeria's praetorian military to professional military suffered several challenges particularly with its multiple internal security operations (ISops) including the counterinsurgency/counter-terrorism war against Boko Haram.

CSOs Roles and Initiatives in Peacebuilding and Conflict Management in the Insurgency-Affected States

CSOs development in insurgency-affected states peaked as military recovered lost territories from the insurgents in 2015. The complex humanitarian emergencies in the region allowed for several international interventions. International humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA, World Food Programme, International Organisation of Migration (IOM), UN Women, USAID, DFID, and several other international non-government organisations (INGOs) working alongside local non-government organisations (NGOs) became practically visible in the Northeast. According to the UNHCR (2016: 15), at least 2,144,807 persons of concerns were internally displaced, with over 155,000 refugees of Nigerian descent taken refuge in Cameroon, Chad and Niger due to the Boko Haram atrocities

against civilian population. UNICEF (2016) reported that more than one million children were forced out of school by Boko Haram related violence in Nigeria and crisis-affected areas of Cameroon, Chad and Niger as children make up a significant percentage of the refugee and internally displaced population. It was clear that the national government could not do it alone in addressing the humanitarian challenges, neither was it a military-only intervention. This opened up the space for CSOs (both international and national) to operate alongside the military and other security agencies.

Peacebuilding particularly its soft components must go hand in hand with reconstruction, rehabilitation, and resettlement to allow for reconciliation, healing of wounds, confidence and trust-building, and community resilience within the internally displaced person camps and in the host, communities to avert any other likely conflict or relapse to new forms of violence in regained territories (Ochogwu, 2016). As earlier noted, there are several states, national and international humanitarian actors, governmental and non-governmental organisations operating in the northeast working to provide post-insurgency recovery succour to the affected people and communities in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States. There is the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) working in collaboration with the respective State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to provide camp services, both food and non-food items to IDPs. The erstwhile Presidential Initiative on the Northeast (PINE) under the

Office of the National Security Adviser now subsumed with the establishment of the North-East Development Commission (NEDC), and the Victim Support Fund – National Intervention Agencies. It is instructive to point out that the majority of these organizations were not involved in direct conflict management and both some aspects of peacebuilding. As found from the field shows that the humanitarian and military interventions taking place in the northeast do not create conditions under which the deep cleavages that produced the insurgency can be automatically surmounted.

Soft component of peacebuilding which entails consensus building and conflict resolution help to shape interactions among parties and between affected parties and the government both state and federal. At the highest level, some level of third-party intervention in terms of mediation was facilitated between the insurgents which led to the release of some of the abducted Chibok Girls. The same approach played out in the release of the kidnapped Dapchi girls but for the non-release of Leah Sharibu. Several shadow CSOs and individuals played backdoor diplomatic roles particularly as interlocutors between the insurgents and the Nigerian authorities in securing or procuring the release of the abducted/kidnapped girls.

Before the violent manifestation of Boko Haram group in Borno state, the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), a British Department for International Development (DFID) intervention implemented by the British Council was working in

the conflict prevention, community peacebuilding and state-CSOs conflict management systems. Alongside this intervention, since 2015/2016, Borno state like other insurgency-affected states has witnessed an upsurge in the entrance of external CSOs and the formations of local CSOs to meet the challenges posed by the insurgency. The major goal is mainly to strengthen the conflict management capacities of local NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in the state with relevant skills in local conflict mediation, negotiation, and resolution to improve community cohesion and resilience. Before the programme closed, the DFID flagged off another programme with Mercy Corps known as the Northeast Conflict Management and Stabilization Programme which worked with select local communities in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council to mitigate ethnoreligious conflicts and empowered youths for community works. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) was working specifically on the Gwoza Dialogue to strengthen common understanding by Christian and Muslim populations from Gwoza to build peace and harmony.

Specifically, Civilian in Conflict (CIVIC) targets its intervention on the interactions and relationships between the military forces and civilian population with the overall goal for civilian protection during military operations as well as support for military operations by the civilian. The programme targeted trust and confidence-building between military operatives and CSOs through joint problem-solving workshops in both Borno and Adamawa states.

The Northeast Reconciliation Initiative (NERI) is a USAID peacebuilding programme creating community platforms for community participation and inclusion in peace and development works. It is a multi-stakeholder engagement platform to mitigate community violence and promote peace in the Northeast. It worked through several partners including the Adamawa Peace Initiative domiciled at the American University of Nigeria (AUN) in Yola. The British Council is implementing the EU-funded Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) in the northeast states of Adamawa and Borno with the target of further capacitating local CSO stakeholders with peacebuilding and conflict management skills. The programme tends to be a successor to the DFID-NSRP in Borno state.

There are national NGOs like NEEM Foundation, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), CISLAC, amongst several others and Northeast states-based NGOs working in the peacebuilding and conflict management sector. Faith-based organisations (like CAN, JNI and FOMWAN) and community-based organisations (like Herwa Community Development Initiative) are being trained on conflict management and peacebuilding skills to deliver on local community solutions to community problems. The opportunities created by the insurgency led to the upsurge in the emergence of several NGOs and CBOs in the states which has continued to create lack of cohesion and absence of the sense of community cooperation amongst the NGOs in the states. Therefore, the Network of Civil

Society in Borno State (NECSOB) with over 200 registered members was created. In Adamawa state, there is NANGO (Network of Adamawa Non-Governmental organisations) created to bring together NGOs and provide the necessary platform for coordination and peer-reviewing. However, both NECSOB and NANGO are still teething and suffers from suspicion amongst NGOs practitioners.

Role of Traditional / Religious Institutions

The Northeast region is conservative in nature and posture with the dominance of religious and cultural norms in practice despite modern development and education. Both traditional and religious institutions are very powerful in the region with extensive grassroots structures and networks. They are often the first line of contact with the people and not the government structures like the police, local government authority, etc. These institutions are directly involved with the people and to a very large extent control their daily socio-cultural and religious interactions and engagements especially the grassroots-based, unlike the urban/city dwellers. Therefore, in most communities, these institutions serve as gatekeepers.

In a stakeholder analysis conducted by Portia Roelofs (2017), he observed that Traditional rulers are deeply involved in the everyday life of communities and are gatekeepers. They are the primary channel through which communities are connected to the government, through a structured hierarchy based on traditional units: the smallest being the ward, then the village, then the

district. The system of traditional rulers in Borno is first ethnic and geographical, then religious. For example, the Shehu is in the first instance leader of the Kanuri people, which is then given geographical jurisdiction across specific LGAs. Kanuri leadership is situated within an understanding of political leadership as necessarily Islamic. This means that traditional leadership, therefore, combines ethnic, geographic and religious elements.

Both CSOs and security forces cannot work in isolation of these critical stakeholders in the community. Achieving peacebuilding and conflict management objectives in the Northeast by CSOs must recognize the prominent position and roles of traditional and religious leaders.

Interaction between the Security Sector and Civil Society in the Northeast

In complex humanitarian emergencies, the operational environment is in itself complex with difficulties both for security actors and civil society actors. With the violent activities of insurgent groups and the consequent humanitarian emergencies the military-security counter-insurgency operations dominate the environment in these areas. The activities of both the insurgents and military/security forces impact significantly on the operations of CSOs. In the northern part of the state, for example, CSOs require special clearance permit from the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to operate in those areas. There are often frictions between NGOs and military operatives particularly as it pertains to the movement of NGOs to deliver humanitarian

relief or undertake development/peacebuilding works within the state. The military hardly understands the workings of NGOs particularly INGOs, as a result, they tend to suspect NGOs and perceive CSOs practitioners as spies. Equally, NGOs are oblivious of the nature of military-security operations in countering insurgencies. This seeming lack of understanding has led to a series of arrests of a few NGO actors and the shut-down of some offices in the state. Though NGOs like Civilians in Armed Conflict (CIVIC) and others have been organizing workshops for both NGOs and Military operatives on Civil-Military relations to ease the relationship tensions and allow for conducive CSOs operations in the state. As it is, the military operations define and informs the direct interventions of CSOs particularly in areas where insurgency operations are on-going.

The military high command has established the Directorate of Civil-Military relations and they are engaging in several activities aimed at winning the cooperation of civilians and CSOs in the Northeast. These activities have hardly impacted on the target groups as mutual suspicion persists. The social media utilized by CSOs has also played a significant role in providing frontline information on insurgency and counter-insurgency operations in affected areas. The uncoordinated flow of operational information has often created strain relations between security forces and civil society actors. The International NGOs operating in the Northeast have their independent safety and standard operational procedures distinct from those of the security forces. Though they

work in cooperation, there are instances of occasional disagreements, repeated and incessant clashes or skirmishes between CSOs and the security actors., Most often than not clearance and permission are often sought before CSOs undertake most of their activities in insurgency troubled areas. With the on-going security challenges in the Northeast especially in Borno state, military-security forces are required to escort INGOs and NGOs delivering humanitarian or development/peacebuilding services in areas outside of the state capital.

The insurgency tends to have obfuscated the conflict fault lines in the Northeast, as it has become the dominant conflict narrative, there are several latent conflicts which if left unaddressed are likely to manifest and will put to question the several efforts at recovery. This explains the critical roles CSOs are struggling to play in peacebuilding and conflict management in the region. With the level of devastation, destruction, displacement and disruption in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe due to the violent activities of Boko Haram and splinter insurgent groups, mutual distrust and tension are evident among the population. These tensions are evident between host communities and IDPs, Christians and Muslims, returnees and those who stayed behind, families' members of Boko Haram operatives and victims, repentant/reintegrated insurgents by the Operation Safe Corridor DDR/RR programme and local communities, unaccompanied or orphaned children/widow, non-state security actors and state government,

security forces and CSOs, the people and the government, etc. Peacebuilding and reconciliation interventions are critical in addressing the underlying structural and proximate causes of the conflict, restoring relationship, strengthening peace, preventing further relapse to violence and transforming conflicts into peaceful actions. Creative and innovative peacebuilding and conflict management approaches that will bring different parties together to create a forum for understanding, trust and healing is required. The CSOs both INGOs and NGOs have the potentials to initiate and partner with state and security actors to make this happen.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Peacebuilding and conflict management is not an optional extra or an idealistic aspiration separate from the more pragmatic intervention areas of military/security, reconstruction and resettlement, and economic rehabilitation which has been given primacy. While the survival of IDPs is primary, the camps equally should have served as an opportunity to expose IDPs to several issues around psychosocial support, conflict resolution, human rights, and community peace and development. The task of healing the psychosocial scars of insurgency and trust-building is central to working for recovery in the Northeast. It is an integral aspect of the entire intervention spectrum; this is lacking in the current interventions by state actors which CSOs are emplacing. As difficult as trust, acceptance and legitimacy may seem, they are integral to the functioning of the other interventions.

The danger of the socialisation of local CSOs into violence movements must be prevented. Boko Haram started as a religious civil society organization and transmuted into an armed non-state actor. CJTF is a CS para-military organisation working side-by-side with the military in the fight against BH insurgency in the northeast. The militarization of civil society groups due to the insurgency war must be limited and stopped in order not to distort the sanctity of civil society.

Recommendations

- Deriving from the study recommendations are made as follows:

- Prioritization of the protection of civilians in the counter-insurgency operations by the security forces. The military will need to fast-track changes in concepts, policies, operations, training/doctrine, and accountability in its war against insurgents.

- Prioritization of Civil-Military relations in improving trust and confidence-building between civil society and the military, and between the military and society.

- Prioritization of security and security-first approach to CSOs programming in insurgency-affected areas. The security situation remains very fluid and fragile with high-level military-security operations in countering the insurgency. This has constraining effects on the activities

of INGOs, NGOs and CBOs delivering humanitarian, peacebuilding and development services to victims and affected communities. CSOs should adequately understand the counter-insurgency operational context of security forces to evolve synergistic relations for the promotion of human security in such difficult operational circumstances.

- The security forces upon recovering communities from insurgents should secure such communities for civil authority and civil society to promote soft Peacebuilding and conflict management in these communities. Holding on to recover territory by the military has made the war endless.

- Peacebuilding and conflict management by CSOs should be among the critical components for interventions in the recovery efforts. The state authorities and security forces should work in tandem with CSOs in ensuring the comparative advantage of CSOs in promoting peaceful coexistence and human development thrives in recovered territories.

- Religious and cultural norms are dominant values in the insurgency affected states. CSOs and security forces should consider the prominent roles of traditional and religious institutions and leaders in interventions. The CSOs should navigate the complex labyrinths of religious

and cultural norms that make changes difficult through partnerships with the custodian of these norms to bring incremental change.

- CSOs accountability particularly to the citizens is an area of importance. The CSOs should see any reason why accountability especially to the end-users (citizens) is important as they are not to feel obligated only to funders. There should be accountability mechanism and frameworks for CSOs in the delivery of peacebuilding and conflict management programmes and the accountability should be both horizontally and vertically. Accountability is not only required from security forces, it has to be both ways for human security to thrive.

References

Bratton, M. (1994). "Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa", in J.W. Harbeson, D. Rothchild, and N. Chazan (eds.), Civil Society and State in Africa, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Chitra, N. (2017). "Integrating Civilian Protection into Nigeria Military Policy and Practice". Accessed from: www.odihpn.org/magazine/integrating-civilian-protection-into-nigeria-military-policy-and-practice/

Ibeanu, O. (2000). "Civil Society and Political Theory" Nigeria Journal of International Affairs, 26(2).

Keane, J. (ed.) (1988). Civil Society and the State, London: Verso.

Orji, N. (2005) "Civil Society and Elections in Nigeria: Reflections on the 2003 General Elections", in Onu, G. and Momoh, A. (eds.) Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. Proceedings of 23rd Annual Conference of Nigerian Political Science Association.

Portia, R. (2017). Civil Society, Religion and the State: Mapping of Borno and Adamawa- A Stakeholder Analysis. Abuja: Deutsche Gasellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Samuel, F. (2008). Armed Forces, Civil Society and Democratic Control: Concepts and Challenges. Geneva: International Peace Bureau.

Saskia, B. (2019). Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram. Working Paper. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Virginia, C. (2017). "The Evolution and Impact of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin". Accessed from: https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-evolution-and-impact-of-boko-haram-in-the-lake-chad-basin/

World Bank. Accessed from: http://go.worldbank.org/4CE7W046ko

Primary Sources:

Author's recent field interviewers in Borno and Adamawa states, January 2020 and October 2019 respectively.

International & Media Engagement in the Boko Haram Insurgency

– Bosede AWODOLA, PhD

International and Media Engagement in the Boko Haram Insurgency

— Bosede AWODOLA, PhD

The paper titled 'The Role of Civil society in Nigeria's Core Conflicts: Boko Haram Insurgency' is well written, and the objectives are clearly set out. It is organized in six (6) sections: the introduction, conceptualizing civil society, the evolution and causes of the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in peacebuilding and conflict management in the insurgency-affected states, interactions between the security sector and civil society, and the conclusion and recommendations. Much of the paper's strength is derived from the methodology, which combines primary and secondary data.

The paper offers important insights that makes a good contribution to the vast literature on the insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria. First, its historicization of BH insurgency is novel, especially the suggestion of internationalization of the conflict from the beginning. The paper gives due attention to the role of Ammi Hassan, an Algerian and his son, Ali Hassan who were banished by Algerian government due to alleged connection with Al-Qaeda, got expelled from Niger but subsequently made entry into Nigeria. This historic turn touches on an important aspect of internal security, which is the porosity of the national borders and the disdainful disregard for early warning. The arrival of the duo in Nigeria may not have gone unnoticed by the security agencies.

This reflects the gaps between early warning and early response. Whereas warnings are usually apparent, the inability to respond adequately has always been the problem, which is a case illustrated in this paper.

Furthermore, the roles of CSOs, their participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts alongside state's conflict and security management agencies are well articulated as captured in the background of the paper. The paper highlighted how CSOs take up critical roles as peacebuilders, mediators, negotiators and by so doing help to frame security discourse and interventions in the country. In conceptualizing CSOs, the paper cites relevant scholarly works. Although conceptualization may differ from one scholar to the other, there are common threads of volunteerism, non-coercion, common interest, progress, that runs through most understandings of the CSO concept, and these are well enunciated in the paper.

Expectedly, the paper addresses itself to issues of who is doing what, where, as well as the relationships between some International NGOs and Local NGOs. While emphasizing on traditional/religious institutions as powerful in the region with extensive grassroots structures and network, the author opines that CSOs, and Security agencies cannot work in isolation of these critical stakeholders in the community. This submission resonates with Diamond and MacDonald's work on Multi-Track Diplomacy, which looks at the web of interconnected activities of

individuals, institutions and communities that operate together for the common goal of peace and follows from the realization that conflict management can no longer be addressed from a state-centric perspective, but rather including engagement of wider stakeholders. The paper also gives attention to the suspicion and mistrust which fraught the interaction between the security sector and civil society working in a complex environment. In its conclusion, the paper argues for demilitarization of civil society groups, which flows from the insurgency war, so as not to distort the sanctity of the civil society. It then makes some practical and actionable recommendations.

However, there are some areas of the paper that is considered as an oversight, which if given attention could further have enrich the paper. First, there are bodies of works that the author could have consulted to buttress the argument on the influence of traditional/religious institutions in restoring peace and relationships. The report of Kukah Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on stabilization and peacebuilding in the Lake Chad Basin, and works by Awodola (2019), UNDP (2018), Golwa (2013), Abubakar (2010), Adefarasin (2004) and Choudree (1999) among others have all advanced the argument about religious and traditional leaders, local communities and local peace committees being a veritable resource for reconciliation and peacebuilding. Second, the author also fails to engage with the ways in which military/security forces and insurgencies activities impact on the work of the CSOs vice

versa in the region. Aside from that, CSOs require special clearance permit from the office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to operate. This regulation sometimes creates friction between CSOs and military operatives, particularly as it pertains to the ability of NGOs to deliver humanitarian relief or undertake development/peacebuilding works within the affected states. The CSOs have been alleged by the military/security forces for spying for Boko Haram and supporting the terrorists. Also, the military apparently uncomfortable with the relation between media and the CSOs, sometimes seen as bias against the security forces. Unfortunately, it seems the author has a limited understanding of the relationship between CSOs and the military in conflict situations.

The paper presents little evidence of the role of the international community and media in this conflict. The Boko Haram conflict implicates some four countries: Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. This makes it a conflict of international magnitude. It is obvious that the Nigerian government could not be left alone to address the humanitarian challenges, and neither has it been a military-only intervention. The efforts to provide post-insurgency recovery succour to the affected people and communities in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states have, therefore, attracted international communities. They supported some of the laudable initiatives of post-conflict recoveries, such as Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA) that set the pace for the recovery process. Many international organizations and civil

society are currently providing humanitarian support to victims, while some are engaged in conflict prevention activities, community peacebuilding and state-CSOs management systems. International humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA, World Food Programme, Organization of Migration (IOM) UN Women, USAID, DFID, Red Cross and several other international NGOs are working alongside local NGOs to provide humanitarian supports. There is also the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which is a combine effort to defeat the insurgency by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Some of these interventions have led to the release of the abducted Chibok girls. In addition, on several occasions, some countries have shared intelligence on possible attacks. Another dimension to the conflict is the Al-Qaeda and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) connections that have further exacerbated the conflict.

The media, print and electronic, international, and local, have substantially and actively engaged in the reportage of the conflict/insurgency in northeast Nigeria. What they report, and how they report have implications for peacebuilding efforts. There are arguments on how media activities have aided the actions of insurgencies and also how media constitutes a tool for stemming the BH insurgency. More importantly, there are views on the effective use of the media as a tool for counterterrorism. The basic challenge in the case of both international and local media outlets is the issue of interest of gatekeepers and the dynamics of local

and international politics. For instance, media may choose to focus on the Bring Back Our Girls protests and ignore a major success recorded by the military in an air raid launched against insurgents. Interestingly, there have been accusations against a section of the Nigerian media bothering on the deliberate blackout of the successes that the Nigerian military recorded against insurgents. Unfortunately, too, government-owned media outlets are lacking in believability content. These are important issues that require deep investigations.

Also, reporting conflict/insurgence is a daunting task, which may put journalist lives at risk. Nonetheless, they are still expected to be actively involved in post-conflict recovery activities, through education. This is in consideration of the centrality of integrative education to restoration practices. Restorative practices thinking here, is the one that is developed for trust-building, repairing relationships, dialogue, communication and integrating multiple partied and point of view, as well as acknowledges the value and conditions that are meant to effect changes in conflict areas. These values are within the purview of what the media should project in their works. However, it is important that the capacity of the media is built, and deliberate action ought to be taken to incorporate them into the reintegration process. It is when the media are capacitated in peacebuilding reportage are mainstreamed into the reintegration programmes of the government that the northeast may witness a successful post-insurgent environment.

Finally, CSOs must actively engage in post-conflict recovery to stem the possible rejection of the BH members by their communities, while taking into consideration the value and conditions that are meant to effect changes in the conflict areas, through relationships and trust-building programmes. More so, collaboration with other stakeholders such as the military/security, traditional/ religious institutions in the region, as well as the media will greatly help the CSOs in peacebuilding activities, including mitigating and resolving conflicts.

Unpacking The Political Economy of the Boko Haram Insurgency

– Dr Freedom. C. *ONUOHA*

The Political Economy of the Boko Haram Insurgency

– Dr Freedom. C. *ONUOHA*

Introduction

I have read the paper with great pleasure. The central objective of the paper is to interrogate the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in peacebuilding and conflict management in the Boko Haram insurgency-affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. As outlined in paper, the study was guided by the following specific objectives, (a) examine the role of CSOs in peacebuilding and conflict management in the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria; (b) explore the contributions of CSOs and their growing involvement in peace and security over time, and (c) provide suggestions for the engagement of CSOs in the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

Key Strength and Contributions of The Paper

One of the major strengths of the paper is that it re-echoed the roles CSOs have continued to play in political development, peacebuilding, and conflict management the world over. The study conceptualised civil society and CSOs, identifying the various typologies of CSOs. The paper identified some of the areas the roles of CSOs have been very visible to include the struggle for democratisation in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa. As with the case in Nigeria where civil society played a leading role in the struggle for civil rights and democratisation, notwithstanding the pervasive state repression by military dictators. Secondly, the paper observes that the role of CSOs has

been further accentuated following an episodic rise in internecine conflicts across the various geo-political zones in Nigeria. It is equally refreshing that the paper highlights the tense and often acrimonious relationship between Nigeria's security forces (Army) and CSOs in the northeast, including its implications for humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, I also consider the paper's attempt at providing an alternative account of the origin and escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria interesting.

Oversights In the Political Economy of The Conflict

Despite the supposed merits of the paper, there are fundamental oversights that should be addressed in order to improve its overall quality. First, the introduction should have clearly articulated the focus of the study, highlighting possibly the research gap or problem emanating from the literature. This gap would then inform the main aim and objectives of the study. Second, there is no clearly stated methodological framework for this study. Apart from the passing reference to desk review of literature and "field research works undertaken by the researcher in Adamawa and Borno states, there was no clear definition of how the field research was carried out. Who were the interviewees or respondents? How were they selected? What did you ask them to talk about? How relevant were their responses in addressing the objectives of the study? All these and more should be discussed under the methodology. Also, there was no clear evidence that the study benefitted from field research. In addition, the portion on the 'Causative Factor' of the insurgency was not well developed.

The work is bereft of reputable and established literature, especially on the Boko Haram insurgency. Although the study provided an alternative account of the evolution of the Boko Haram insurgency, the section is grossly under-sourced in terms of context and relevance. The account which is traceable to the activities of two Algerian nationals, Ammi Hassan and his son, Ali Hassan, is novel in the literature but not properly substantiated with credible sources to authenticate the claims. Lastly, there is no indication that the study ever contemplated on the political economy of the Boko Haram insurgency.

Unpacking the Political Economy of Boko Haram Insurgency

Since July 2009, insurgency by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) and its splinter faction, the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) as well as military efforts to dislodge them has led to over 30,000 deaths and displacement of more than 2.3 million people in Nigeria's Northeast region (Oriola, Onuoha and Oyewole, 2021). The insurgency continues to pose significant threats to peace, security, and stability in the Lake Chad region.

Responses by the State and Civil Society

The Nigerian government has relied on the military as the pre-eminent kinetic tool alongside other paramilitaries, security, and law enforcement institutions to counter the evolving threat. Besides the formation of Multinational Joint Task Force by countries of the Lake Chad region, the military-led Counter-Insurgency (COIN) operations are augmented by voluntary

policing outfits such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), among others. Also, a host of civil society actors have responded to the lingering security crisis. In principle, the activities of these actors are expected to be complementary to contribute to ending the insurgency. In reality, however, their interventions and interaction have been fraught with challenges and tensions within the conflict management spectrum (Onuoha and Okafor, 2019). The plethora of actors with different interests, motives and powers have underpinned concern on the political economy of the insurgency.

Until recently, copious media, policy and scholarly commentaries on the evolving insurgency did not take a political economy approach in appreciating either its causative factors or consequential effects. To be sure, political economy takes a materialistic interpretation of reality (the primacy of material condition of society) by understanding the influence of social, economic, political and cultural norms, values and ideas, including political ideologies, and religious and cultural beliefs, in shaping human relations and interaction, and the consequent influence on development (Marx, 1970). In this wise, a political economy analysis of insurgency is first and foremost about the interests, incentives and power of different groups in society, and how these generate particular outcomes that impinge on political stability (Meon and Eriksen, 2010).

Explanation on the Political Economy of the Boko Haram Crisis

The tendency to treat the conflict as a *security crisis* has eclipsed the origin and nature of the crisis. From a political economy prism, the Boko Haram insurgency is fundamentally a crisis of the Nigerian state, its policies, and politics. The permissive and causative factors of the insurgency are a function of the character of Nigeria's political economy. In terms of formative and causative factors, the emergence of the Boko Haram is a product of the deprivation and consequent contradictions in the material conditions of the masses relative to the political elite. The elite's appropriation of political or state power for primitive accumulation of wealth created the objective material condition of privation, marginalisation and deprivation suffered by a majority of the masses, especially the youth. This objective material condition heightened the exploitation of the youth by the elite to access political power, evidenced in the way the agency of young men belonging to ECOMOG and Yusufiyya movement were employed during the 2003 election in Borno State (Onuoha, 2014). The prevailing situation of widespread poverty, unemployment, inequality, social exclusion, and growing discontent with the Nigerian state was, in turn, exploited by Boko Haram ideologues to expand their religio-political influence. It is against this backdrop that the contradictions arising from the greed of the political class and the grievances of the masses underpin in Nigeria the cyclical growth of criminal violence in general and Boko Haram insurgency in particular.

Political Economy of the Resultant Conflict Economy

In terms of consequences, the outbreak and persistence of the insurgency remain a disaster for the northeast geopolitical zone in particular and the Lake Chad region in general. It has led to destruction and dislocation of economic activities and livelihood systems. Aside from the huge loss of lives, the insurgency has destroyed N1.9 trillion ($5.2 billion) worth of properties, including one million houses and 5,000 classrooms in Nigerian most affected Borno State. Over 600 teachers have been killed and 72% of pre-existing health facilities have been damaged or destroyed in Yobe and 60% in Borno (Vanguard, 2015).

Both the insurgency and associated countermeasures have resulted in dire humanitarian situations, creating a political economy of vested and nested interests that are making an end to the insurgency very unlikely in the near future. The result is the emergency of conflict economy with conflict entrepreneurs. The insurgents, for instance, have fashioned an economic stream based on control of the international trade on smoked fish as well as red pepper in Lake Chad (Salkida, 2020). They benefit through the imposition of a regime of levies and secure routes for fish traders to reach designated markets. Also, the insurgents are directly involved in the lucrative businesses, as fish supply from the region is known to account for over 70 per cent of fish products traded in large urban markets of southern Nigeria. This has partly enhanced their power in several ways. First, the criminal economy provides an additional source of fund to entice

and recruit from vulnerable youth who they pay wages. Second, it has enabled them to procure more weapons, thereby increasing their firepower. Together, these benefits confer on the group battlespace advantages, that enhance their overall power and resolve to sustain the insurgency.

The insurgents are not the only ones benefiting from the conflict economy. In 2018 and 2020, credible sources revealed that security forces in the region also benefit from the criminal economy by engaging in illicit fishing activities and extortion at checkpoints, including collecting illegal tariffs from fish merchants in Doro-Baga, before allowing them into Maiduguri (Haruna, 2018; Solomon 2017). Sabotage has been used by security forces to protect and preserve this illicit economic stream. As with state security forces, the conflict economy is now a goldmine for some humanitarian actors. The services humanitarian actors provide includes the provision of food, drinking water, and healthcare to save millions of lives. However, some within the humanitarian relief sector have turned it into profits industry as they appropriate huge remunerations for themselves while delivering services at a cost estimated by government officials to be far above the true value of such services. The vested interests that have emerged from the humanitarian aid industry add to the obstacles against genuine attempts to shut down IDP camps. In addition, surge and proliferation of NGOs had a perverse effect on the local economy, such as astronomical rise in house rent in Maiduguri which impoverished locals can hardly afford. Thus, this

feeds into the interests and greed of shylock landlords, who benefit from the conflict economy.

Due to weak transparency, monitoring and accountability mechanisms, government relief agencies benefit as well through the diversion of some of the materials meant for the poor and IDPs. Politicians benefit through securing contracts for themselves just as defence contractors benefit through the supply of defence articles, often provided at inflated costs. In this way, those who benefit from the insurgency leverage their influence to shape the conflict environment to their advantages. The benefit they derive, in turn, enhance their power base. It is obviously with situations such as this in mind that Pabst and Scazzieri (2012, p.337) conclude that "the dichotomy between intended and unintended outcomes of individual and collective action is central to political economy".

Recommendations

In other to end the insurgency, CSOs have critical roles to play. The following recommendations, among others, would help CSOs get more effectively engaged and involved in conflict management.

- Enhance Screening Mechanism: Demand for the institutionalisation of robust and enhanced screening of humanitarian actors, involving security agents, credible CSOs and local community leaders in order to reduce

potentials for mistrusts and suspicion among actors responding to different aspects of the insurgency.

- Establish Confidential Hotlines: Partner with donor agencies to establish confidential hotlines through which local people can report illicit activities of security forces, humanitarian actors, CSOs and government officials regarding service delivery in the region.
- Create a Co-ordinating Mechanism: Leverage their convening power to initiate the establishment of a multi-stakeholder coordinating mechanism (MCM) for better communication, coordination and confidence-building among diverse actors operating in the region.
- Capacitate local influencers: There is the need for CSOs to identify and build the capacity of local influencers – women groups, youth associations and livelihood groups – to mobilise locals in defining priority areas of need to inform humanitarian interventions and conflict management. This will reduce the tendency for government and humanitarian supports going in the directions and sectors that are not in sync with local priorities.
- Constantly Map Political Economy of Interests: Collaborate with donor agencies to set up and transparently administer a special peace grant to encourage investigative journalism and multidisciplinary empirical research to continually and thoroughly map and reveal the political economy of interests at play in the

region in ways that inform policy and programming in conflict management and stabilisation interventions in the region.

References

Haruna, A. (2018, January 29). Boko Haram: Lake Chad fish traders lament high tariffs. Premium Times, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/256966-boko-haram-lake-chad-fish-traders-lament-high-tariffs.html

Marx, (1970). A contribution to the critique of political economy. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Moen, E. & Eriksen S. S., (2010). Political economy analysis with a legitimacy twist: What is it and why does it matter? Oslo: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Onuoha F.C (2014). Boko Haram and the evolving salafi jihadist threat in Nigeria. In Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (ed.) Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria. Leiden: African Studies Centre, pp. 158 - 191.

Onuoha, F. C & Okafor, J. C, (2019). Deepening civil military relations in counterinsurgency operations in north east Nigeria. In Abdullahi, D. E and Olofin, R. E (eds.) Deepening civil military relations for effective peace-building and democratic governance in Nigeria. Abuja: CLEEN Foundation

Oriola, T.B., Onuoha F.C. & Oyewole, S (eds.) (2021). Boko Haram's terrorist campaign in Nigeria: Contexts, dimensions and emerging trajectories. London: Routledge

Pabst, A. & Scazzieri, R. (2012). The political economy of civil society. Constitutional Political Economy, 23 (4). pp. 337-356

Salkida, A. (2020). How Boko Haram sustains operations through international trade in smoked fish. HumAngle,

https://humanglemedia.com/how-boko-haram-sustains-operations-through-international-trade-in-smoked-fish/

Solomon, S. (2017. May 19). Report: Corruption in Nigerian military benefits Boko Haram. VOA, https://www.voanews.com/a/corruption-nigeria-military-boko-haram-report/3862196.html

Vanguard, (2015, October 5). How Boko Haram killed 600 teachers, displaced 19,000 in 7 states. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/10/how-boko-haram-killed-600-teachers-displaced-19000-in-7-states/

Part Four

Farmer-Herder Conflict

The Role of Civil Society in Nigeria' s Core Conflicts:

Farmer-Herder Conflict

Paul Andrew GWAZA, PhD

The Role of Civil Society in Nigeria's Core Conflicts: Farmer-Herder Conflict

Paul Andrew GWAZA, PhD

Introduction

The transformation of the Farmer-Herder conflict seats at the heart of the fast-changing dynamics of the threats to peace, security, and development in Nigeria. Indeed, farming and cattle rearing have been the two main occupational activities that are being engaged by a majority of citizens, and the practitioners have enjoyed harmonious inter-reliant relationships. However, the complex processes of state-building have been influenced by both internal and global dynamics, which in turn impacted on the nature of the relationship and provides the context for the appreciation of conflict and security typology in the country. Farmers and herders have witnessed rapid changes in their interactions from a peaceful and complementary one to its current combustible state owing to socio-economic challenges, climate change-related demographic alterations, state weaknesses, rising cases of drug abuses, the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, militarization of the civil society, propagation of divisive narrative in social and traditional media, rising moral decadence. Within the global space, the advancement in information and Communication Technology (ICT) has facilitated the dissemination of narratives that have further widened sociocultural fragmentation and securitised identity-based discussions in the public square, whereas the complex climate

change-related security problem in the Sahel has weaponised the farmer-herder conflict.

Within the specific context of Nigeria, the conflict has mutated from a mere interpersonal disagreement over the destruction of farmland or farm produce by strayed cattle, which was a perennial occurrence, to an organised criminal operation. This mutation occurs as a result of the blurring of the colouration of the farmer-herder conflict as exacerbated by the existing volatile relationship among religious and ethnic groups. The first stage, which is at the interpersonal conflict stage, the destruction of farmland and farm produce are resolved through negotiation because parties to the conflict are conscious of the mutual beneficial imperative of the relations, and compensations were paid. The conflict then moved to the second stage, which is an inter-group disagreement that was beyond the individual actors as it involves the farming and cattle herding communities, which are either sedentary or nomadic. At this stage, the conflict can be resolved through negotiation or in some cases mediation by either state authority or superior traditional ruler in charge of the conflict environment, and compensations were paid with reprimanding of defaulting community. At the third stage, the disagreement became lethal with the deployment of locally fabricated weapons resulting in injuries and deaths in rare instances. The conflict management approach consisted of law enforcement by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), who settled at that level or charged the alleged offender to the Area or Magistrate Court. The conflict has

graduated to the fourth stage which is characterised by an escalation of violence affecting the herding communities as the raging ethnoreligious and political conflicts owing to their perceived religious or political affiliation and their efforts to revenge attacks on them through the invitation of other herding communities beyond the shores of the country. At the fifth stage, intractable violent conflicts in the country directly affected itinerant herding communities that move across the continent resulting in the killings of both people and cattle. At the sixth stage, the conflict took a criminal dimension with rising incidents of cattle rustling and with the involvement of criminal gangs cashing in on complex conflict situation to carry out other criminal activities. At the seventh stage, the conflict became hijacked by other extraneous interests that are economically driven by criminals, political manipulators, terrorists, and even international players as evidenced from the seized weapons and arrested assailants. The conflict at this stage has seen an escalation of divisive rhetoric along primordial fault-lines of religion, ethnicity, sectionalism, and partisan politics that further complicated the nature of the farmer-herder conflict, and taken up the form of banditry, insurgency or terrorism, activities of the unknown gunmen, and criminality, such as kidnapping, armed robbery (Animasawun, 2019).

As a major national and regional security threat, the farmer-herder conflict has resulted in the wanton destruction of lives and property, massive displacements of people both within and outside the country, disruption of commercial, farming, and

pastoral activities, and increased insecurity and criminality. Significantly also, the conflict has disrupted family and communal lives, escalated social tension and emergence of new settlement pattern, created the atmosphere of mistrust and apprehension along religious, regional and ethnic lines, deepened poverty, hunger, and destitution, increase human rights abuses, especially the dehumanization of women and children, and the loss of confidence in the government and leadership.

To manage the conflict and restore law and order in the affected communities, stakeholders at governmental, non-governmental and international levels have designed and implemented programmes and activities. It is important to note that the volatility of the conflict environment, especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) have seen a greater involvement of security and law enforcement agencies. The involvement of the organised civil society has been peripheral and largely at the levels of peace advocacy and sensitisation, humanitarian assistance, and research. This is largely due to the arrogance of post-colonial state that treats the civil society with levity and perceived CSOs as a liability rather than asset and partners in the task of nation-building and the creation of modern society.

The paper aims to examine the roles of civil society in Nigeria's core conflict with specific reference to the farmer-herder conflict by analysing the trend and dynamics of the conflict. This is against the backdrop of the dominance of the state-centred and a top-

bottom conflict management approach which is reactionary, repressive, and militaristic in nature. It involves the fire-brigade tactic of immediate suppression of violence by relevant security and law enforcement agencies, provision, and distribution of relief materials, setting up of panel/commission of inquiry and the ceremonial submission of the report of the panel/commission of inquiry (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2003; Onah & Olajide, 2020: 22-23). The paper relies on author's data collected and analysed from field research (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017, 2018A, 2018B, 2018C; Golwa, et al, 2019; Nawok & Gsell, 2018) and secondary sources (International Crisis Group, 2017, 2018, 2020; Onah & Olajide, 2020; Conflict Armed Research, 2020; and Brottem & McDonnell, 2020) to highlight the transformation that occurred in the farmer-herder conflict. It further argues that the state-centred responses have created new frontals in the acceleration of the conflict, partly because they are conceived and implemented without deference to peace and conflict impact assessment of the conflict. In that regard, the inputs, contributions, and support of the civil society are hardly elicited, incorporated, required, or integrated into the conception and implementation of response strategies. Importantly, this paper highlights the immense contribution of civil society towards mitigation and prevention of the escalation of the farmer-herder conflict and makes recommendations for their inclusion in the conception and implementation of conflict management and peacebuilding engagements.

The Political Economy of the Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

The exploitation of land and land resources for the economic interests of few and against those of the majority has occupied the political history of Nigeria since the commencement of colonial administration to the present Petro-state contraption. To be sure, the colonialists were driven by the demand for "cheap and secured raw materials for their industries; a market for their manufactured goods; a source for generating capital resources for investing in Britain and strengthening the sterling against other currencies; a manpower reserve for economic and military purposes; port, waterways, roads, railways, airports and airspaces for their transport and imperial communication system" (Usman, 1994: 39). Thus, public amenities and infrastructures were designed and structured to serve the purpose of harnessing and channelling the explored resources for the benefit of the home government, while meagre resources were committed to the administration of the complex colonial territorial. Significantly, the cheapness of the colonial government informed the development of the British policy of Indirect Rule to facilitate reliance on existing traditional institutions, the creation of traditional structures where they were absent, and forcefully bringing communities under existing indigenous structures, where they were equally absent. Without doubt, this arrangement altered the political and economic relationships that existed within those traditional societies, and subsequently influence the nature and character of political competitiveness among the people (Ake, 1993).

Interestingly, the present Nigerian state has manifested the attributes bequeathed to her by the colonial state in her dealing with the civil society as demonstrated by the rentier mentality of the post-independence elites, both during military and civilian administrations. Alarmingly, the rising socio-economic challenges that have dotted the landscape are not unconnected with the corrupt attitude of the ruling elites that are *"steeped in unproductive activities, speculation, wasteful spending of public resources on prestige projects, mediocrity, the divorce of reward from hard work, or merit, a lack of accountability of rulers to the ruled…"* (Obi, 2008: 6). Lamentably, this has intensified the fierce resource competition that surpasses those between farmers and herders, especially by the state, urban population, and other international stakeholders (Ake, 1981). This struggle over land and land resources has exacerbated the challenges of land scarcity and enhanced the consistent plummeting of citizens into poverty, while a minority few continue to control the large proportion of the country's wealth.

Within the specific context of the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria, the society is witnessing a complex web of struggle, by traditional and internationalised actors to the conflict, over the control of land, which has increased the susceptibility of communities to conflict and violence. Thus, as an instrument, violence has been used to create the opportunity for looting and facilitation of illicit activities such as illegal mining, smuggling, trafficking, etc. Sadly, the deployment of violence is also being used for resistance and

expression of grievances by actors who are marginalised or excluded by the dominant political order. Within the specific context of the farmer-herder conflict, insurgents, bandits, terrorists and other criminals have hidden behind the intractable conflict environment to facilitate and sustain a conflict economy that escapes state and public scrutiny. This is occasioned by the mercantile disposition of the ruling class who tacitly enabled actors (both local and foreign) with commercial interests to flood the conflict landscape and in the process they "partner and take sides with state or the non-state actors to have favoured access to participate in formal or informal trading and legal or illegal exploration" (Ikelegbe, 2005).

Thus, the internationalisation of the struggle over land and land resources, as they play out in Nigeria, has resulted in the securitisation of the competition beyond the farmers and herders to a more lethal competitor(s) at the global arena. These competitors are looking for greater control of the land and land resources, which sometimes manifest beyond the current capacity of the country to bear or meet. Recently, foreign illegal miners were arrested in Zamfara and Osun States with sophisticated weapons pointing to their readiness to pursue their economic interest at all cost (Wahab, 2019). While the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development called for the prosecution of the accused, it noted that Nigerian precious stones, such as Gold are mostly taken to the United Arab Emirate (Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, 2020; Ogunmade, 2020). The Conflict Armed

Research (2020) further observed increased involvement of foreign firearms in the farmer-herder conflict environment indicates that foreigners are involved in the prosecution of violence within communities where the farmer-herder conflicts are prevalent.

Recently, the Executive Governor of Zamfara State expressed concerns over the growing involvement of foreigners in muddling up the conflict environment, especially that illegal mining/trading in gold has witnessed the involvement of foreign traders who sometimes trade the gold with arms (Ogunmade, 2020). It is important to note that the internationalisation of resource competition tends to accentuate the farmer-herder conflict because a majority of the population are excluded and frustrated out of the resource competition, especially by reasons of their existing socio-economic conditions. This would infuriate and expose them to illicit activities, insurgent violence, criminality and increasingly become targets of recruitment by terrorists, bandits, and other conflict entrepreneurs (Gwaza, 2016; Brotten & McDonnell, 2020).

It is instructive to highlight that the intractable nature of the resource competition has resulted in the proliferation of warlords who are interested in controlling territories and routes for the exploration of natural resources. Sadly, the proliferation of warlords informs the proliferation of firearms and the infiltration of the ranks of parties to the conflict by organised terror and criminal groups such as the Boko Haram to finance their operations (Okoli,

2019). Indeed, the conflict environment has been organised and wired, through sustained criminal activities and protracted conflict, to facilitate a conflict economy that profits on inciting and provoking crimes such as smuggling, arms, human and drug trafficking, illicit trading in natural resources and counterfeit product and pharmaceuticals, illegal mining and logging, etc. Instructively, these endure because of the inability or failure of the state to checkmate illegality, maintain law and order, and usher in a harmonious society. Most worrisome by the economic complexities of the conflict and its dangerous ethno-religious dimension (International Crisis Group, 2018), which raises a fundamental challenge for the identification of conflict and violence typology, to design and implement a scientific response strategy.

The deliberate introduction of primordial sentiments into a merely resource-based disagreement between farmers and herders must be seen from the angle that it is a continuation of the instrumentation of identity as a potent mechanism for economic advancement for class domination and personal accumulation. Thus, ethnic, and religious narratives have been deployed in the struggle to control public office as a mean for gaining access over the public resource, which in the case of the Land Use Act 1979, vested in the state the authority to hold land in trust for the citizens.

Panoramic Survey of the Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

Without doubt, the farmer-herder conflict has seen changes, as noted above, but the changes did not obliterate the different features that it assumes at every stage within existing conflict environment and indeed in each of the expansive new environment that the phenomenon is infecting in recent time. The main challenge to sustainable peace, security and development lies in the fact that the intractability of the conflict is compounded in its capacity to transform and still maintain its original character and indeed all the other ones that it manifested in the course of the transformation. Significantly, some communities have sustained the pristine symbiotic relationship that had existed between farmers and herders amidst the conflagratory interactions that currently exist.

Traditional methods of cattle herding, and crop farming still subsist in Nigeria where cattle herders, who are mostly of the northern Muslim-Fulani ethnic group, graze their herds in the open field, while the farmers, employ old-style of subsistence farming. Between the months of October and December, herding normally takes place within the north, but thereafter, the cattle are then moved southward in search of greener pasture and sufficient water. It is in the process of this movement that they stray into farmland and where they destroy crops, then conflicts would ensue, or they pay compensation for the damage. However, cattle herders had complaints about the alleged exorbitant charge on the grounds that farmers connive with the law enforcement to

extort them. Over time, the government created grazing routes and reserves to manage the disagreement, but since the actions were not implemented in consultation with the communities, there were contestations over them. Thus, the growing population and urbanisation have resulted in the blocking of some of the grazing routes and trespassing of the grazing reserves. It is important to note that the gradual integration of the farming and herding communities led to the switching and fusion of occupational roles with farmers performing herding or both herding and farming, and vice versa. Equally important is that citizens have developed the practice of acquiring herds of cattle and leaving them in the custody of a Fulani herder and also employing farmers to provide services on farmland. However, the rising cases of violent conflicts have introduced new dimensions into the farmer-herder conflict, especially the phenomenon of cattle rustling, violent attacks and revenge attacks, the infiltration of the communities by criminal groups, recruitment by insurgent organisations, drug abuses, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, etc.

Despite the foregoing, resource competition especially land, water and pasture remain the main cause of the conflict because while the farmers are aggrieved with the policy for the creation of grazing routes and reserves (Fayemi, 2019), the herders view the encroachment of the grazing routes and reserves as offensive. This is because of the scarcity of these resources and the immense competition that is currently going on among the users

and the entrance of international competitors, especially foreign miners, traders, and multinational corporations.

In the course of carrying out the occupation, however, herders have cut down trees within farmland to feed their cattle and in the process, the cattle destroy the farm produce. In the fit of rage, farmers sometimes attack the cattle or the herders which result in attacks and counter-attacks. The Farmer-Herder conflict has seen the ugly side of violence where alleged herdsmen lay siege on farming communities and engaged in violent attacks, random killings, maiming, raping of women, and destructions of farmlands. The pressure over land usage has resulted in over-grazing and unsustainable use of cultivable land, hardening of soils and rendering them difficult to till for cultivation, pollution of drinkable water, destruction of reservoirs and sources of drinking water and damaging of irrigation facilities. The main worries of the herders revolve around the rustling of the animals allegedly by the farming communities, blocking of established grazing routes, trespassing of grazing reserves, revenge killing of cattle, the burning of forests which affects the pasture, the herders' tents/houses (Onah & Olajide, 2020: 21).

Incidentally, these are aggravated by the devastating impact of climate change that has intensified the struggle over scarce resources, especially water, land, and pasture. While it is true that climate change is not a standalone cause of the conflict, it has heightened the competition among stakeholders over these resources. It is important to highlight the fact that cattle rustling

has become an all-comers enterprise where members of all the ethnic and religious groups are involved in the well organised commercial venture. The ready availability of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons that are circulated within conflict zones, or locally fabricated, or smuggled into the country from neighbouring war-torn countries (Amnesty International, 2018), enabled the conflict and facilitate the crime aspects. Furthermore, the farmer-herder conflict has been infiltrated by other criminal and insurgent activities especially by the north-west bandits and the Boko Haram for financing (Okoli, 2019), while foreign criminal networks are taking advantage of conflict for illegal mining and logging. The massive trafficking of illicit drugs such as tramadol and the fact that drug abuses enhance violence is linked to the protraction of the conflict. It is to highlight the fact that ungoverned space within and outside the country have provided a haven, operational base, training grounds and hideouts that aggravate the protraction of the conflict.

Within the specific context of the farmer-herder conflict, actors are employing different strategies to perpetrate violence on each other, and with implications on the state and innocent citizens. The point, however, must be made that the conflict is a product of existing structural violence that largely occur as a result of the entrenched structure of political and economic repressive regimes in form of exclusionary and discriminatory policies against certain groups (Gwaza, 2019). However, all the parties are resorting to violence whether for aggression or self-defence

against the aggressor. It is public knowledge that the weaponry that is being deployed in the prosecution of the conflict are comparable to those being used by an advanced country because governors have said severally that the weapons of the military cannot match those of the assailants. Suffice to add that both the farmers and herders are employing advanced strategies of warfare to invade, lay siege, and confront the enemy, including but not limited to scorched earth tactics, guerrilla tactics and mercenary warfare (Onah & Olajide, 2020: 25).

Responsibility of the Nigerian State

The cardinal responsibility of the Nigerian state as enshrined in the 1999 constitution (as amended) is the provision of security and welfare of the citizens, which within this context involves the efforts of the government at the federal, state, and local levels, and their functionaries. Thus, the government has repeatedly affirmed her determination to guarantee the rights, freedom, and liberty of every citizen to life, human dignity, movement, and to own property. However, citizens have real meaning to the actions and inactions of each administration in gauging whether the state has demonstrated enough political will, sensitivity, or paid attention to protect the people from the assailants and respond to underlying challenges nudging the protraction of the violence (International Crisis Group, 2018). This disposition should be read from the rent-seeking mentality of the Nigerian state, which thinks in terms of revenue accruable to the government coffers for sharing. This is done without consciously working towards

creating the conducive and peaceful environment for farmers and herders to harmoniously coexist and practice their vocation for the benefit of the country. Thus, citizens' perception of the disposition of the state towards the conflict is informed by the character of government functionaries, at the federal and state levels and who have taken a side in the conflict and biases. Perceivably, the non-removal of the service chiefs despite the raging farmer-herder violence, is a case in point. Similarly, the rhetoric of the governors of Benue and Kaduna States towards the conflict in their states suggest that they are either siding one of the parties because of their reactions or inactions to the violence (KII, 2019). Unfortunately, the zero-sum strategy for dealing with the conflict by both the federal and state governments has been the use of the military and police to suppress the violence without addressing the underlying structural challenges. This militaristic strategy views the civil society with disdain and as meddlesome interlopers and not as partners in the task of conflict management and peacebuilding, whose end users are civil society.

An Analysis of The Farmer/Herder Conflict

As noted above, the intractable conflict environment has provided the ambience for the involvement and infiltration of different categories of parties at national and international spheres. Indeed, the interactions of parties are largely driven by their interests in the aggressive competition over access to land, water, and pasture. As the name of the conflict implies, the main parties are (1) Crop Farmers, (2) Cattle Herders (3) Nigerian Government,

(4) International stakeholders, (5) bandit, insurgent and criminal groups.

Crop Farmers (Farming Communities)

Farming is one of the earliest occupations that is being practised in the Nigerian area from time immemorial to the present day with significant population practising subsistence farming and most of the communities are built around farming settlement. They are key actors in the prevailing conflict with most of them belonging to the non-Fulani ethnic groups and predominantly of the non-Muslim faith in the north-central and southern parts of the country. The changing dynamics of the conflict in the northwest geopolitical zone, however, challenge this perception as the farmers are mostly of the Hausa ethnic stock and belong to the Islamic faith as the Fulanis that are predominantly Muslims and herders. Interestingly, there is a fusion and switching of occupation with the Fulanis taking up farming alongside cattle breeding. Similarly, the farmers are combining crop farming with cattle breeding as it is common among the Tarok ethnic group of southern Plateau State. The sedentary nature of farming occupation placed them in the position to lay claims over the ownership of land, water, and pasture, and right for undisturbed enjoyment of the ownership from perceived intruders such as nomadic cattle herders. In asserting their rights over the ownership of land, farmers have complained that the decision for the establishment of grazing routes and reserves were done arbitrarily without recourse to traditional claims. Thus, the Kachia grazing reserve has

trespassed because it was established without consultation with the traditional farming communities, and Fulani cattle herders cannot be allowed to settle on their land, especially that the Fulanis are also now engaging in crop farming, which is not the original purpose of the grazing reserve.

The foregoing is seating in the face of the assertion that compensation is paid to the farming communities before those lands are taken for the public interest. In the case of the conflict on the Mambilla Plateau (Taraba State), the transaction took place between the indigenous farming communities and the Fulani cattle breeding communities. The competition over land has been complicated by the impression that the citizens have the disposition of state functionaries in the management of land that is acquired for the public interest. The farmers always complain of the situation where lands are acquired for public use, but they are later converted for private purposes which gives the farmers the impression that public resource is deployed to further ethnic or sectional interests (KII, 2018, 2019, Taraba, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Plateau, Benue, FCT).

Cattle Herders (Cattle Herding Communities) - The cattle herders are predominantly of the Fulani ethnic stock and largely of the Muslim religion, as they are mainly found across communities in northern Nigeria but move across the country from the pre-colonial period to date. The cattle herders are of two demographic construct – sedentary and nomadic cattle breeders. On the Mambilla-Plateau in Taraba State, the Fulani cattle breeders have

over the years improved their breeding into a form of a ranching mechanism that minimised open grazing of cattle. The nomadic grazers are of two categories – Nigerian and foreign grazers that move across communities within and outside Nigeria in search of fodder for the animal, which is determined by seasonal changes in climate during the dry season. Suffice to say that southward movement of herdsmen and their cattle is hazardous because of Tsetse fly and hash topography such as thickly forested and riverine landscape, and heavy rain.

They are key parties in the conflict because in the course of open grazing of cattle, the herders have occasionally come in contact with farmers and whether because cattle strayed and destroyed farmland or the cattle are stolen within farming communities, violent clashes ensued. Indeed, the claim of herders over land, water and pasture is as strong as the claim by the farmers because they also have been practising their vocation from time immemorial. It must be noted that competition over the scarce land resource is not of recent origin but the existing contestations within post-independence Nigeria have complicated the situation. The volatility in the relationship has recently been heightened by the criminal acts of cattle rustling and the infiltration of the ranks of the herders by organisations with vested interests such as the Boko Haram insurgents, bandits and other criminal groups. Sadly, the nomadic cattle herders have been neglected by the government, like other sections of the country, but the level of negligence is manifest in the abandonment of the grazing routes

and reserves by successive administrations. Relevant agencies that were established to address some of the concerns of herders are either underfunded, closed down, understaffed or ill-equipped. A case in point is the National Commission for Nomadic Education.

Sadly, the herding population are manifesting the negative implications of global advancement and the growing changes in economic activities with minimal dependence on traditional sources of income. Since little or nothing has been done to improve on the education, skills and wellbeing of the herders to meet the demand of modern society, the country will then have to face the consequences of their vulnerability to instances of manipulations. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) has been speaking on behalf of the plight of the cattle herders, including explaining to the public instances where they are wrongly accused of attacks on communities. The MACBAN has suggested that they would establish vigilante groups to curtail criminal attacks on communities and dealing with cattle rustling which they alleged are largely committed by a criminal syndicate consisting of both farming and herding communities across the country. They have argued that Nigerian cattle herders are not violent but that most of the violent clashes involved foreign herders and indigenous farmers. However, state governments, especially the government of Benue State have opposed the establishment of a MACBAN-driven vigilante group because it will heighten the already volatile situation.

The Fulani cattle herders have established a well-organised protectionist network that spread across the continent and the network has risen to the defence of members in the event of a violent clash in any part of communities across Africa (KII in Benue State, 2018). This perception provides the basis for citizens' interpretation of the government's conflict management style, especially where the leader belongs to the Fulani ethnic stock. The implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan has been controversial because it is interpreted as a furtherance of the perceived land grabbing tactics of the cattle herders. For instance, the governor of Benue State has argued against the passage of the National Water Resources Bill "as another version of Ruga policy to grab land for pastoralist" (Duru, 2020). This view is shared by the Afenifere, Middle Belt Forum and the Ohaneze, which are the socio-cultural association of the Yoruba, numerous non-Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups of the north, and Igbos, respectively.

Nigerian Government - The 1999 constitution (as amended) recognised three tiers of government – federal, state and local governments. The federal government makes law for the good governance of the country through the National Assembly including the establishment of relevant agencies and the enforcement of the enacted laws. The constitution created the legislation, executive and judicial arms of government, and also Nigerian Military consisting of the Army, Air Force and Navy. The National Assembly created other relevant agencies such as the

National Emergency Management Agency, National Orientation Agency, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the Nigeria Police Force, among others. Specifically, the Nigeria Police Force is vested with the task of crime prevention and regulation and enforcement of law and order. Over the years the strategy for the management of conflict by the federal government has been to deploy the military and police to suppress the violence, distribute relief material, constitute panel/commission of inquiries, engage in advocacy/sensitisation. This approach has been top bottom as led by the government without incorporating the perspectives of community and the civil society stakeholders (Animasawun, 2019).

The second tier of government supposedly inherited the powers of the defunct regions especially in the management of grazing routes and reserve, and land tenure under the Land Use Act. Unlike the monolithic northern and southern regions, the thirty-six states and FCT have shown incapacity in the management of the diverse ethnic, sectional, religious and pecuniary interests within their territory. The rent-seeking mentality of the state governments as demonstrated in their dependence on the monthly allocation Federal Allocation Accounts Committee (FAAC), makes them not to innovatively design an effective mechanism for harnessing the inherent benefits in crop farming and pastoralism. Despite the signing of the Kafanchan Peace Accord as facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Kaduna State; the several meetings between farming and herding

communities in Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States; the amnesty and peace accord in Katsina and Zamfara state, the governments have not translated the platforms for sustainable peace.

The third tier of government has been rendered moribund by the other two tiers – federal and state. The local government councils have been conduit pipes for the siphoning of public resources through the state and local joint account. The LGCs are in a better position to usher in the desired transformation, but they have failed even within the mandate areas.

International Actors - There has been the involvement of international stakeholders in the farmer-herder conflict theatres especially as they join in the competition over the scarce resources, including mineral resources, pasture, water and land. The activities of transnational cattle herders that are moving from central and western Africa increasingly adds to the already volatile resource-based challenge. However, it is the problem of unregulated mining activities in the country that invites the involvement of the brutal network of global natural resource speculators into the picture. As noted earlier, the Nigerian gold has been illegally traded by international traders behind the farmer-herder conflict theatre and in some cases, arms are exchanged for gold (Ogunmade, 2020). The illegal logging activities in Taraba, Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau and Adamawa States have placed a new demand on the land by international

stakeholders who scantly respect the country's law and regulations.

Bandit, Insurgent and Criminal Groups - As noted above, the farmer-herder conflict theatre has been infiltrated by bandits, the members of the Boko Haram insurgency, the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), and other criminal groups. The conflict environment provides the atmosphere for huge sources of funding to these categories of parties, for terror financing. Some of the main sources include the viable cattle rustling enterprise, trafficking in drugs and arms, smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, and illicit mineral exploration and logging. Already the Mauritania slave market provides a viable source of funding for the insurgents as they sustain their onslaughts through the raiding of communities and abduction of women. Research has also shown that there is a thriving arm transfer network between the Boko Haram and the roving herders, which may be facilitated by the sustain cattle rustling enterprise across communities that are infested by the protracted farmer-herder conflict (Okoli, 2019; Brotten & Mcdonell, 2020: 33).

Evaluation of Interaction Between Security Sector and Civil Society

The farmer-herder conflict provides the opportunity for the state to harness the peacebuilding potentials of the civil society in facilitating human rights' protection, monitoring (data gathering and reporting), advocacy, socialization, social cohesion, intermediation (facilitation), and service delivery. Recently, the

security and law enforcement agencies have established desks (such as the civil-military relations desk, human rights desk, gender desk and community policing desk) that would facilitate some level of engagements with the civil society, but with little or no success. This is largely because of the state-centric temperament of security agencies that caught the civil society in the complex clientelist web of predatory relationship which is at the expense of the impoverished public. The approach has traumatised and alienated the people from participating in the processes of development, peace and security which ultimately affects them. Interestingly, this disposition determines the interactions with the civil society at all levels of the conception and implementation of peacebuilding, conflict management and security measures. Despite the global shift towards people-centred security discourse, the Nigerian security agencies have carried on with the conventional approach of security that is repressive, opaque, allusive, and scantly collaborative and integrative of civil society. In spite of this attitude, the civil society working on the farmer-herder conflict has carried on without necessary deference to any collaboration with the security agencies. For instance, the Situation Room protested a situation where the security agencies exhibit "unparalleled incapacity and incompetence to deal with the problem" while urging the President to hold the service chiefs accountable for the raging farmer-herder violence (International Crisis Group, 2018). Again, some of the civil society organizations project the interest of a party to the conflict. For instance, the Jonde Jam Fulani Youth

Association of Nigeria (JAFUYAN), Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and Miyetti Allah KautalHore (MAKH) mostly advocate the interest of the Fulani cattle herders, while the Movement Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO), the Middle Belt Forum, Ohanaeze and Afenifere have risen in defence of the sufferings of the indigenous farming communities. Interestingly, the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) has stayed committed to the projection of the occupational interest of the members, unlike the MACBAN, JAFUYAN and MAKH that have mixed theirs with ethnic sentiments.

However, civil society organizations such as Centre for Democracy and Development, Global Right Nigeria, Global Peace Foundation, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Search for Common Ground, Mercy Corp, among others have engaged the security agencies as the strategic level of research, norm enhancement, rights protection, and improvement in operations. At this non-confrontational engagement has allowed the CSOs to appeal to the conscious of the individual security agent and not necessarily influencing the entire operational hierarchy. This limitation is largely informed by the high moral standpoint of the security in the relationship.

This superior standing of the security agencies limits their capacity to appreciate the underlying human security concerns aggravating the protraction of the violent conflict situation. Responding to human security concerns requires the integration of both state-centric and people-centric approaches to security,

which would drive the implementation of community policing and civil-military relations in facilitating cooperation towards the successful promotion of human security. The implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan envisioned the facilitation of cooperation that would engender the synergistic promotion of human security among critical stakeholders, especially crop farmers and cattle herder, but the initiative has remained a controversial policy document (Fayemi, 2019).

Despite the commitment of the civil society to the prevention, mitigation and transformation of the farmer-herder conflict, divisive narratives, the instrumentation of identity, and the state-centric approach have ingrained suspicion and distrust in the interactions. However, the widespread atrocities that characterised the farmer-herder conflict have encouraged stakeholders to collaboratively work towards ending the brutality and to create platforms for trust and confidence building, especially between the communities and the state agencies.

Incidentally, there is a growing involvement of the civil society working to draw the attention of national and international stakeholders to the plights of victims of the conflict and working to mitigate the sufferings of the vulnerable and marginalised groups. There is growing condemnation of plights of the victims of the violence which has been widespread among the members of the CSOs, including the mainstream, Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), women-oriented, professional-based, trade union-based, etc. Worthy of note are the activities of the Christian Association

of Nigeria (CAN), Jamatul Nasril Islam (JNI), the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Nigeria Interreligious Council (NIREC), the Macedonia Initiative, Search for Common Ground, Mercy Corps, Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria, the Muslim Sisters, the Global Peace Foundation-Nigeria, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Global Rights-Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development, the Federation of Women Lawyers, etc. These organisations have facilitated mediation, dialogue and reconciliation processes, carried out advocacy visits, provided humanitarian assistance, conducted research, and written policy briefs, urging relevant stakeholders to live in peace and eschew violence.

Recommendations

There is a need for a comprehensive pathway to chart the course of conflict management and sustainable peacebuilding by strategic governmental actors and the civil society to end the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria.

- The Primacy of Building on The Community: There is a need for an innovative and paradigmatic shift toward a community-driven peace, security and development engagement that is civil society-driven. This is fundamental in responding to the coercive and authoritarian attitude of existing conflict management approach and in meeting the aspirations, needs and values of people. Essentially, there is a need for strategic institutions to facilitate the process of reorientation from a state-centric to a people-centric conflict management

approach. This will help in addressing the underlying socio-economic deficits associated with the conflict, enhance confidence among the relevant stakeholders, facilitate robust synergy, and broaden the platform for community self-reliant peace process. The civil society is in a better position to engage the processes for engendering community purpose peace, security and development initiative in responding to the underlying dynamics of human security. Indeed, community-sensitive engagement is conflict-sensitive in the sense that it incorporates the interest, aspirations, and values of the people to determine the content, strategies, and modalities for designing and implementing sustainable Peacebuilding policies and programmes. This would be achieved through sustained advocacy and lobby at the strategic level to achieve the desired orientational change among public policy stakeholders, especially within and with the security apparatchik.

- The Primacy of Building on Human Rights: The underlying structural issues associated with the conflict needs to be addressed sustainably to usher in sustainable peace, security, and development. Instructively, human rights framework has continued to serve as a viable preventive, ameliorative, and curative weapon that the civil society deploys to respond to problems of structural, physical, sexual and psychological violence in a conflict environment. There is need for broad-based engagement by civil society

for the promotion and protection of human rights including the rights to own property, rights to development, rights to education, rights to adequate food, freedom of movement, expression, conscience and religion, and the right to a peaceful, healthy, and clean environment, right to health, among others. The right to development has two dimensions which are to be met at national and the international levels. At the national dimension, national governments are required to promote the development, peace and security of its citizens and its different peoples and sub-units. The international dimension requires the developed world to work towards the promotion of development, peace and security in the developing societies.

- The Primacy of Building on Multilateral Platforms: Given the international dimension of the conflict, civil society should facilitate a broad-based engagement to harness credible multilateral platforms in responding to the challenge, especially at United Nations, African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) levels. Civil society should take advantage of all the resources, energies and goodwill of these platforms address the peace, security and development challenges of the farmer-herder conflict. Doubtlessly, multilateralism is not a zero-sum answer as some of the challenges could be addressed through bilateral or unilateral engagement, but multilateralism trump within the context of the contemporary international system.

- The Primacy of Building on Good Governance and Democratic Accountability: In spite of the predisposition of the existing state towards openness, accountability, and transparency, there is need for the civil society to rise to the occasion in the promotion of good governance and democratic accountability. This is necessary for balancing the generating and utilizing power of the state by limiting and constraining the exercise of discretionary powers of the state. To have a modern state without democratic accountability would portend the sustenance of coercive and authoritarian regime to peace, security and development. It is democratic accountability that constricts corruption because of the presence of a viable civil society monitoring mechanism.

Conclusion

The paper analysed the possible entry points for civil society in the ravaging farmer-herder conflict, bearing in mind its animative and transformative character. It also highlighted the fact that the conflict has become intractable and widespread due to infiltration by insurgent, banditry and criminal groups, and affects communities in the thirty-six states and the FCT. Although the conflict is caused by resource competition between the farming and cattle herding communities, the involvement of foreign actors, especially illegal miners and other organised criminal groups further complicated the conflict trends and dynamics. Unfortunately, the clientelist and predatory disposition of the state

has facilitated a state-centric predominant conflict management approach that tends to limit and blur the required collaboration and synergy. Undeterred by this community insensitive style, the civil society has continued to facilitate the process of sustainable peacebuilding and conflict management including the facilitation of human rights' protection, monitoring (data gathering and reporting), advocacy, socialization, social cohesion, intermediation (facilitation), and service delivery. The paper further argues that the existing response framework is not community-driven and cognisant of an available community resource to enable legitimacy, ownership, and sustainability. To this end, it is recommended that the civil society should help in galvanising a framework that gives primacy to the community, the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and democratic accountability, and leverage on existing multilateral platforms.

References

Ake, C. (1981). *A Political Economy of Africa.* New York: Longman Inc.

Ake, C. (1993). "What is the Problem of Ethnicity in Africa". *Transformation*, 22.

Amnesty International (2018). *Harvest of Death Three Years of Bloody Clashes Between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria.* Abuja: Amnesty International Ltd.

Animasawun, G.A. (2019). "Farmer-Herder Crisis in Nigeria: A Basis for Sustaining Peace Approach". In Ikelegbe, A., et al (eds.) *Transhumance and International Migration: Challenges for Governance, Peace and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Abuja: National Institute for Security Studies: 235-250.

Brottem, L. & McDonnell, A. (July 2020). *Pastoralism and Conflict in the Sudano-Sahel: A Review of the Literature*, 1st ed. Washington DC: Search for Common Ground.

Conflict Armed Research (2020). *Nigeria's Herder–Farmer Conflict: Domestic, Regional,and Transcontinental Weapon Sources.* London: Conflict Armed Research Ltd.

Duru, P. (29 August 2020). "Ortom to NASS: Reject National Water Resources Bill, it's another Ruga". *Vanguard* Newspaper (Nigeria).

Fayemi, K. (2019). "Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Nigeria: Implications for National Security". In Ikelegbe, A. et al (eds.) *Transhumance and International Migration: Challenges for Governance, Peace and Sustainable Development in Sub- Saharan Africa.* Abuja: National Institute for Security Studies: 343-350.

Golwa, J., Okafor, G., Gwaza, P.A., &Ayuba, C. (2019). "Report of the Study on Farmer-Herder Violence and Criminality in Nigeria". Idris, I.K. (ed) *Farmer-Herder Violence and Criminality in Nigeria: Strategies for Sustainable Peace and Development.* Abuja: African Center for Peace and Human Dignity: 185-228.

Gwaza, P.A. (2016). "Transhumance in a Pluralistic Society: Is Human Rights Praxis on Trial in Nigeria?". Paper delivered at a Zonal Sensitisation Workshop organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Thursday, 6th October, Minna, Niger State).

Gwaza, P.A. (2019). "Voices of Suffering and the Transformative Potential of National Infrastructure for Peace". Bakut, T.B. &Ochogwu, J.P. (eds.) *Implementing the*

Infrastructure for Peace in Nigeria and Advancing the Frontiers of Peace. Abuja: Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Ikelegbe, A. (2005). "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria". *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 14 (2): 208–234.

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2017). *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on Farmer-Herder Conflict on the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba State.* Abuja: Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (unpublished).

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2018A). *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on the Recent Violent Attacks on Communities in Plateau State.* Abuja: Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (unpublished).

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2018B). *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on Farmer-Herder Conflict on the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba State.* Abuja: Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (unpublished).

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2018C). *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on Violence Attacks on Communities in Zamfara State.* Abuja: Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (unpublished).

International Crisis Group (2017). *Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict* (Africa Report N°252 | 19 September). Brussel: International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group (2018). *Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence* (Africa Report N°262 | 26 July). Brussel: International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group (2020). *Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem* (Africa Report N°288 | 18 May). Brussel: International Crisis Group.

Ministry of Mines and Steel Development (2020). "Illegal Mining: FG Commends Osun, Zamfara, says Prosecution will serve as Deterrent". Electronic copy available at: https://www.minesandsteel.gov.ng (Accessed on 20th August 2020)

Nawok, M. & Gsell, A. (July 2018). *Handmade and Deadly Craft Production of Small arms in Nigeria*. Geneva: Small Arms Survey

Obi, C.I. (2008). Is petroleum 'oiling' or obstructing democratic struggles in Nigeria? Dakar: CODESRIA.

Ogunmade, O. (2020). "Foreigners Exchange Arms for Gold in Zamfara, Says Governor". *This Day* Newspaper (Nigeria, 26 August).

Okoli, A.C. (2019). "Cows, Cash and Terror: How Cattle Rustling Proceeds Fuel Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria". *Africa Development,* 44 (2).

Onah, E.I. & Olajide, B.E. (2020)."Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria". *African Journal on Conflict Resolution,* 20 (1): 8-34.

Usman, Y.B. (1994). "The Formation of the Nigerian Economy and Polity". Mahadi, A. et al(eds.) *Nigeria: The State of the Nation and the Way Forward.* Kaduna: Arewa House.

Wahab, B. (April 24, 2019). "Minister of Information says Illegal miners provide arms for bandits in Zamfara". Electronic copy available at: https://www.pulse.ng (Accessed on 20th August 2020).

Political Economy of the Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

– Gerald OKAFOR, PhD

The Political Economy of Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

– Gerald OKAFOR, PhD

The symposium has dealt comprehensively with so many issues such as the reneged or botched social contract between the state and the people; attempts to contract peace in various theatres of conflict; the seeming neglect of dealing with issues of structural violence when attempting to construct peace; the character of the state; the moral economy of conflict; the interplay of the political structures and the economy of the conflict, how politics affects or structures resource use, the discussion around the eco-violence theory which posits that competition over scare ecological resources engenders violent conflict, among many others. Based on these rich contextual and conceptual discussions, therefore, I will go straight to my task of discussing the political economy of farmer-herder in Nigeria.

- The fundamental issue is to underscore the obvious fact that this particular conflict is resource-based and is being sustained by issues of competition over land and land resources; environmental changes; population growth; migration; increasing demand for land for other essential needs in nation-building, and urbanization.
- It is critical to also reiterate the obvious fact about the rentier mentality of the political elites in the Nigerian state,

which has further accentuated the predatory nature of the state in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

- Understanding this rentier mentality therefore defines the extent to which different stakeholders within the state benefits from the conflict, and the forms that these benefits assume. It also throws up another very important question of how the conflict between farmers and herders is constructed, framed and represented as (in)security within the Nigerian context. This is linked to the fact the farmer-herder conflict is not specifically a Nigerian problem; it is equally an issue affecting other African countries.
- Sadly, in Nigeria, the perception about farmer-herder conflict varies from state to state including among state and non-state actors. The different perceptions are dependent on the divide one belongs to State Actors (federal and state), Economic Associations (Miyetti Allah, Farmers Association), religious groups; (CAN, JNI), ethnocultural groups; (Arewa Consultative Forum, Middle-belt Forum, Ohanaeze Ndi Ibo, Afenifere), CSO-local and international including the media, farming communities, herding communities.
- This differences in perception of the conflict underscore the inability of all the actors to distinguish between the issues of criminality that require the State to deal with in terms of investigations, prosecution, justice, and

restoring law and order while dealing with the real conflict involving farmers and herders.

- Again, it further fosters the wrong profiling and labelling that has characterized the conflict in terms of all herders being Fulanis and Muslims, and farmers being non-Fulanis and Christians. This has blurred the understanding of the real owners of the herds of the cattle and sedentary nature of farming in Nigeria.
- It also r underscores the significant contextual aspects of Nigeria's federal structure, which facilitates and fosters the competition between the federal and state governments as well as inter-state competition for access to resources and power to influence national policies, among others.
- The failure of the federal state to "securitize the conflict" provides the grounds for the state governments, interest groups and civil society organizations to question the responsiveness of the federal according to E.E. Osaghae. This further aligns with the views raised by the President of Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo and other pan-cultural associations on the issues of labelling The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) a terrorist organization while militia-herdsmen have not been labelled as such despite the 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI's) indication of the group's ranking among the deadliest global terrorist groups.

- The involvement of international actors in the struggle for land and land resources complicates the conflict situation and is beyond the farmer-herder communities. Violence, therefore, is a tool to facilitate the perpetration of other criminal activities such as natural resource theft, trafficking activities, illicit SALW, illicit drugs,
- It has also created warlords who are basically interested in controlling territories and routes for the exploitation of natural resources. Also, the emergence of a culture of criminal brigandage and opportunism among the youths of both sides of the conflicts.
- The exploitation of the conflict by the political elites to foster their political fortunes as evidenced in the 2019 election in the states where the farmer-herder conflict was pervasive is critical. The conflict has further provided an avenue for allocation of public resources that is so difficult to be tracked in terms of security votes,
- The politicization of the indigene-ship question and heightening the fault-lines of religion, ethnicity
- We equally need to relate the conflict within the praxis of the international treaties and convention, which Nigeria is a state party especially the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services, and the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance. This brings to the front burners these pertinent questions: Why is Nigeria the preferred destination for foreign herders? What are the challenges in the implementation of these

international instruments in Nigeria, how will the Nigeria state engage ECOWAS on issues associated or arising from the implementation of these instruments? Some scholars have posited that the prevalence of a favourable political climate in a country is among the determinants of the destination choices of the foreign herders. These are some of the pertinent issues that need further interrogation.

Finally, in all these, the people (rural dwellers, farmers, herders, women, aged, children) are the most affected in terms of fatality, injuries, permanent disabilities, trauma, displacement, loss of sources of livelihood, depreciation in the community capacity for resilience, widening the gap of groups trust, I will like to categorically state that further studies need to be carried out so as to enrich the interventions and strategies for dealing with the issues associated with the farmer-herder conflict. It is an area in which research institutes, think tanks, university, CSOs need to increase their presence. Search for Common ground, CISLAC, IPCR, Mercy Corps have done well in this direction. The works on the Economic Costs of Conflicts and the Benefits of Peace: Effects on household and the impact on the revenues is a pointer and a tool for advocacy. One very important outcome of the study on the effects on households is the validation of the psychological theory of Optimism bias, which has convincingly shown to cause people living in conflict setting to downplay the risks of losses.

Impact of CSO Engagement in the Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

– Mr Oseloka H. OBAZE

The Impact of CSO Engagement in the Farmers/Herders Conflict

— Mr Oseloka H. OBAZE

Introduction

Certainly, the Farmers/Herders Conflict (FHC) continues to dominate our political landscape. I wish to also thank Dr Paul Andrew Gwaza, for doing the heavy lifting by presenting an illuminating paper. I wish to preface my comments with the observation that the platform, modalities and terms of reference by which Nigerian CSOs operate are consistent and in tandem with international best practices. What is problematic and perhaps not-so-consistent, is the attitude of the national authorities to CSOs and the stultifying environment in which CSOs operate. This is perhaps why there was an attempt to muzzle CSOs by introducing unprecedented legislative fiats. However, the role of the CSOs in addressing Nigerian conflicts reminds me of an old cliché: *"It's better to have it and not need it; than to need it and not have it."* I am glad we have CSOs operating in Nigeria, regardless of what is perceived as their collective shortcomings.

Synoptically, Gwaza's paper "analysed the possible entry points for civil society in the ravaging farmer-herder conflict, bearing in mind its animative and transformative character." The paper also highlighted how the conflict has become intractable and widespread due to infiltration by insurgents, bandits and criminal groups, and its impact in communities across Nigeria. The paper

concludes rightly, that despite the best of intentions and efforts, the role of CSOs continues to be hampered by the "predatory disposition and overbearing state-centric approach to conflict management that limit and blur the much-needed collaboration and synergy." Furthermore, the paper contends that the prevalent response framework is not community-based or community-driven and therefore, not "cognisant of an available community resource to enable legitimacy, ownership, and sustainability." It thus recommends inter-alia, "That the civil society should help in galvanising a framework that gives primacy to the community, the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and democratic accountability, and leverage on existing multilateral platforms." We are gathered here to add fillip to that effort.

Factors at Play - Internal and global dynamics, which impacts on the nature of the Protagonists-CSOs relationship, provides the context for the appreciation of Farmer/Herders Conflict and security typology in the country. A multiplicity of factors including the compartmentalization of security responses, continue to impact on the efficacious tackling of Farmer/Herders Conflict. There are Factors identified as contributing to strained Farmer/Herders relations include, "socio-economic challenges; climate change-and related demographic alterations; state weaknesses, rising cases of drug abuses; the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons; militarisation of the civil society;

propagation of divisive narratives in traditional and social media; and rising moral decadence."

- **Evolution of Conflict:** As the Farmer/Herders conflict evolves, the conflict has mutated into four identifiable stages: interpersonal conflict stage; intergroup disagreement involving the farming and cattle herding communities; weaponization of the conflict, which included police action; attacks and reprisal assumed sectarian character drawing in outside sympathetic supporters; the conflict has become visceral leading to killings of both people and cattle; conflict exacerbates and is hijacked by criminals, political manipulators, terrorists, and international players and those with political agenda. Presently the Farmer/Herders Conflict has defaulted along "primordial fault-lines of religion, ethnicity, sectionalism, and assumed the forms of banditry, insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, and armed robbery."

- **CSO's Role and Limitations:** Whereas CSOs remain engaged and have contributed towards mitigation and prevention of the escalation of the HFCs, CSOs have regrettably exhibited discernible limitations. The role of CSOs has been peripheral and mostly focussed on peace advocacy and sensitisation, humanitarian assistance, and research. This limited role is not by choice; but a factor of Government Authorities treating CSOs s with

levity and perceiving them as a liability, rather than asset and partners in the task of nation-building. In analysing the trends and dynamics of the Farmer/Herders conflict, evidence abound that the state-centred and a top-bottom conflict management approach which is reactionary, repressive, and militaristic is quite unhelpful. Hence the proposal is made to include CSOs in the conception and implementation of conflict management and peacebuilding engagements.

- **Factors Inhibiting CSOs Role in Conflict Resolution:** Attitude of the ruling elites (the so-called hollow, narrow and unaccountable elite) that are "steeped in unproductive activities, speculation, wasteful spending of public resources and are unaccountable to the ruled. Elite conflict of interest as owners of cattle herds and farms have created a conflict of interest that impact negatively on the formulation of robust policy options. While resource competition for land, water and pasture the main causes of the conflicts, evidence exist of linkages between land-water-mineral resources, and competition for their control and the internationalization of the conflict, criminal warlords, arms, violence and the rise in arms, human and drug trafficking.

Furthermore, the deleterious impact of climate change, which has intensified the struggle over scarce resources, especially water, land, and pasture, has been further exacerbated by the ready

availability of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons that are circulated within conflict zones, or locally fabricated, or smuggled into the country from neighbouring war-torn countries. Weapons have enabled the conflict and facilitated criminality. Farmer-herder conflicts have also been infiltrated by other criminal and insurgent activities especially by the north-west bandits and the Boko Haram, while foreign criminal networks are taking advantage of conflict for illegal mining and logging. The massive trafficking of illicit drugs such as *Tramadol* and the attendant violence is linked to the protraction of the conflict. Ungoverned spaces within and outside the country have provided a haven, operational base, training grounds and hideouts for bandits.

Two-way violence: A discernible two-fold characteristic of Herders – Farmers Conflict is that aggression elicits reprisals even if in the name of self-defence. The main parties are (1) Crop Farmers, (2) Cattle Herders (3) Nigerian Government, (4) International stakeholders, (5) bandits, insurgents, and criminal groups. Government's zero-sum strategy for dealing with the conflict has resulted in the use of the military and police to suppress the violence without addressing the underlying structural challenges. This Top-bottom strategy for the management of conflict mainly resorts to deploying the military and police to suppress violence, distribute relief material, constitute panel/commission of inquiries, engage in advocacy/sensitisation, quite often does not incorporate the perspectives of community and the civil society stakeholders. The

nature of conflict and FGN's approach limits the proactive role of CSOs.

- **Arbitrary public policies not helpful:** the establishment of grazing routes and reserves were done arbitrarily without recourse to traditional claims. Relevant agencies that were established to address some of the concerns of herders are either underfunded, closed down; understaffed or ill-equipped. A case in point is the National Commission for Nomadic Education. Land use and abuses mean that farmers always complain of the situation where lands are acquired for public use, but they are later converted for private purposes, which give the farmers the impression that public resources are being deployed to further ethnic or sectional interests. State adoption of amnesty is overly ad hoc; despite extant Kafanchan Peace Accord, the amnesty and peace accord in Katsina and Zamfara state and several meetings between farming and herding communities in Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States, the governments have not translated or domesticated the platforms for sustainable peace.
- **The dichotomy in military-civilian relations remains an impediment:** Despite the global shift towards people-centred security discourse, the Nigerian security agencies have carried on with the conventional approach

of security that is repressive, opaque, allusive, and scantly collaborative and integrative of civil society.

- **Some CSOs have inbuilt limitations:** Some CSOs have become advocates for the parties in conflict, thus lacking neutrality. Yet, some like Centre for Democracy and Development, Global Right Nigeria, Global Peace Foundation, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Search for Common Ground, Mercy Corp, have successfully engaged security agencies at the strategic level of research, norm enhancement, rights protection, and improvement in operations, and thus were able to appeal to the conscious of the individual security agents but not necessarily influencing the entire operational hierarchy. Some CSOs have facilitated mediation, dialogue and reconciliation processes, carried out advocacy visits, provided humanitarian assistance, conducted research, and written policy briefs, urging relevant stakeholders to live in peace and eschew violence. Despite these accomplishments, and commitment to the prevention, mitigation and transformation of the farmer-herder conflict, divisive narratives, the instrumentation of identity, and the state-centric approach have ingrained suspicion and distrust in the interactions.

Conclusion

The paper rightly suggests, and I agree completely that the existing response framework is not community-driven and cognisant of an available community resource to enable legitimacy, ownership, and sustainability. To this end, it is recommended that the CSOs should help in galvanising a framework that gives primacy to the community, the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and democratic accountability, and leverage on existing multilateral platforms.

In a recent book I co-authored with a colleague, we agreed with Prof. Attahiru Jega, that "Pastoralism is not sustainable in Nigeria over the long term due to high population growth rate, expansion of farming and loss of pasture and cattle routes… but the traditional form of pastoralism should continue for a period to be agreed upon." We also shared the view that a "programme for the country's transition to modern forms of animal husbandry must be accelerated" and the "need for a permanent settlement of the pastoralists with commercial ranches established in the sparsely populated zones in the Northeast (Sambisa Game Reserve in Borno State) and Northwest (Gidan Jaja Grazing Reserve in Zamfara State)." These measures, if promoted by CSOs, will be complementary to the FGN's policy choice, the National Livestock Transformation Plan, which until now, has not doused lingering suspicions and pushback on the matter.

Recommendations

- There is a need for a comprehensive pathway to chart the course of conflict management and sustainable peacebuilding by strategic governmental actors and the civil society to end the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. The civil society is in a better position to engage in the processes for engendering community purpose peace, security, and development initiative in responding to the underlying dynamics of human security. Indeed, community-sensitive engagement is conflict-sensitive in the sense that it incorporates the interest, aspirations, and values of the people to determine the content, strategies, and modalities for designing and implementing sustainable Peacebuilding policies and programmes. This would be achieved through sustained advocacy and lobby at the strategic level to achieve the desired orientational change in security sector reform and governance, among public policy stakeholders, especially within with the security apparatus
- While cessation of hostilities/violence and amnesty is important, achieving holistic conflict resolution requires broad-based engagement by civil society for the promotion and protection of human rights including the rights to own property, rights to development, rights to education, rights to adequate food, freedom of movement, expression, conscience and religion, and the

right to a peaceful, healthy, and clean environment, right to health, among others.

- Civil society should also pursue broad-based engagement aimed at leveraging and harnessing the role of credible multilateral conflict resolution platforms within United Nations, African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in responding to the challenges. Civil society should take advantage of all the resources, energies and goodwill of these platforms address the peace, security, and development challenges of the farmer-herder conflict.
- The primacy of building on good governance and democratic accountability will continue to rest on the presence of a viable civil society monitoring mechanism, dedicated to the promotion of good governance and democratic accountability which constricts corruption as well as checking other state excesses.
- CSOs should go beyond farmers and herders by engaging other parties to the conflict; the governments; international stakeholders; and the bandits, insurgents, and criminal groups as difficult as engaging the latter group might be. CSOs' involvement in drafting amnesty accords has become imperative.
- From experience, it difficult to engage serving military/security personnel to dialogue with CSOs; however, engaging out of service and retired superiors, tend to pull serving personnel in and elicits better

response and engagement. So, there is a need to identify and invite retired senior military/security personnel to speak at CSO events.

Abbreviations

ACRONYM	MEANING
AFAN	All Farmers Association of Nigeria
AUN	American University of Nigeria
BAY States	Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States
BCDA	Border Communities Development Agency
BH	Boko Haram
CA	Christian Aid
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CASS	Centre for Advanced Social Science
CBCN	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CEHRD	Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development
CHD	The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
CISLAC	Citizens Centre for Legislative Advocacy
CITAD	Centre for Information Technology and Development
CIVIC	Civilian in Conflict
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CODE	Connected Development
COIN	Counter Insurgency
CORI	Community Rights Initiative
CPED	Centre for Population and Environmental Development
CS	Civil Society
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DCAF	Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDRRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reintegration And Resettlement
DFID	Department for International Development
DLI	Democratic Leadership Institute
ECOMOG	The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERA	Environmental Rights Action
EU	European Union
FAAC	Federal Allocation Accounts Committee
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FHC	Farmers/Herders Conflict
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gasellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSPC	Salafia Group for Preaching and Combat
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
HD	Humanitarian Dialogue
HURIWA	Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria
HYPREP	Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Programme
ICHR	Ijaw Council for Human Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IHRHL	Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMC	Interfaith Mediation Centre
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
IPCR	Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution
IPOB	The Indigenous People of Biafra
ISWAP	Islamic State (or State's) West African Province
IT	Information and Technology
IYC	Ijaw Youth Council
JAFUYAN	Jonde Jam Fulani Youth Association of Nigeria
JIBWIS	Jama'atullzalatu Bidi'a Walqamatul Sunna
JNI	Jama'atu Nasril Islam
KSPC	Kaduna State Peace Commission
LTD	Limited Company
MACBAN	Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria
MAFO	Movement Against Fulani Occupation
MAKH	Miyetti Allah KautalHore
MCM	Multi-stakeholder Coordinating Mechanism
MCN	Managing Conflict in Nigeria
MCN	Managing Conflict in Nigeria
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MNDA	Federal Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MOSIEN	Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NANGO	Network of Adamawa Non-Governmental Organisations
NCS	Nigerian Customs Service
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission

NDHERO	Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organization
NDPVF	Nigeria Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilantes
NDVS	Niger Delta Volunteer Service
NDWJ	Niger Delta Women for Justice
NECSOB	Network of Civil Society in Borno State
NEDC	North-East Development Commission
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NERI	Northeast Reconciliation Initiative
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIREC	Nigeria Interreligious Council
NIS	Nigerian Immigration Service
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NSRP	Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme
OCHA	The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OMPADEC	Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission
OND	Our Niger Delta
ONSA	Office of the National Security Adviser
ONSA	Office of the National Security Adviser
OPAC	Ogoni Peace Action Committee
PAP	Presidential Amnesty Programme
PASS	Niger Delta Peace and Security Secretariat
PINE	Presidential Initiative on the Northeast
RPBA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
SALWs	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SPIN	Sustainable Peace Initiative Nigeria
SSG	Security Sector Governance
SSR/G	Security Sector Reform and Governance
TI	Transparency International
TRG	Technical Reference Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VAW	Violence Against Women
WANEP	West Africa Network of Peacebuilding
WASH	Water, Sanitation And Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Photo Credits

1. https://cdn1.iconfinder.com/data/icons/country-maps-1/512/Nigeriamaps__world_map__country_-512.png
2. https://africanarguments.org/2018/12/boko-biafra-nigeria-insecurity-2019-elections/
3. https://www.insideover.com/terrorism/nigerias-controversial-boko-haram-amnesty.html
4. https://i.huffpost.com/gen/2468284/images/o-BOKO-HARAM-facebook.jpg
5. https://i1.wp.com/topnaija.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Niger-Delta-Avengers-topnaija.ng_.jpg?resize=1024%2C683&ssl=1
6. https://assets.rebelmouse.io/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJpbWFnZSI6Imh0dHBzOi8vYXNzZXRzLnJibC5tcy8yMzQwNjkxMi9vcmlnaW4uanBnIiwiZXhwaXJlc19hdCI6MTY3MTQ3NjM4Nn0.E9jjmg1NBH2uAKDnS2CxTOQyhWkU_U_denRYVvI9uzA/img.jpg?width=1245&quality=85&coordinates=0%2C0%2C0%2C0&height=700
7. https://guardian.ng/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Ken-Saro-640x360.jpg
8. https://eurweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/OUR-ROOTS-Saro-Wiwa1-EURWEB.jpg
9. https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-80sfba4O5tY/XXZhAl3NiVI/AAAAAAAAAhM/2--VZXbFENIUA3T_7qcr-8FBvzGacCAygCEwYBhgL/s1600/Submission1.jpg
10. https://global.unitednations.entermediadb.net/assets/mediadb/services/module/asset/downloads/preset/assets/2018/07/05-07-2018-Chad-Lake-Chad-fishing-02.jpg/image1170x530cropped.jpg
11. https://thelawexpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Untitled-design-3.jpg
12. https://s.yimg.com/uu/api/res/1.2/e6qVLloe_gI9ducrwVJaZg--~B/aD0xMTI3O3c9MTY5NzthcHBpZD15dGFjaHlvbg--/http://media.zenfs.com/en_us/News/afp.com/ed796fac814c2b789a01956092d4d6491d2afc2c.jpg
13. https://www.emergenza24.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/boko_haram-gpatlas.png
14. https://cdn-live.foreignaffairs.com/sites/default/files/styles/x_large_1x/public/public-assets/legacy/images/Coleman_BeatingBokoHaram.jpg?itok=Zwij88x5
15. https://cbsnews1.cbsistatic.com/hub/i/2014/08/15/edbd9a78-fc3b-4ce7-999a-ebeccab273fa/2014-08-12t195553z1606117432gm1ea8d0aiw01rtrmadp3nigeria-violence.jpg
16. https://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Zainab_Murtala-2.jpg
17. https://guardian.ng/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Herdsmen.jpg
18. https://www.africanliberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Photo-by-AMISOM-via-Iwaria-1-1-1024x682.jpeg

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

Nigeria Office

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

Co-funded by the European Union