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Security Agencies and Human Right Violations in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

It is no news that Nigeria, which is arguably the giant of Africa, is known for human rights violations. From its years of military authoritarianism which witnessed the killing of several human rights activists, and since the return to democratic rule, the country's human rights narrative has not changed. Government authorities and law enforcement agents (the police) frequently engage in various human rights violations, notably unlawful killings, torture, ill-treatment of no crime suspects, forced evictions, interference with the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association, and violence against women and children are widespread across the country. This has created worrisome threats to lives and government seems to be grappling with the situation, hence there is some measure of friction between the activities of security agencies and human right in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that pertinent questions are asked on how well security agencies could be operated without infringement on fundamental human rights and what are the probable mechanisms that could be adopted by security agencies without abuse of human rights in Nigeria. Answers to these questions instigated this research work. This study exemplified the extent of human rights abuses in Nigerian democratic governance. It equally highlighted causes and the effects of human rights abuses in Nigeria and made recommendations on how to prevent its occurrences in the future. Secondary sources of data thus become the hub of its methodology. The study adopted system theory by Gabriel Almond as its theoretical framework.

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1. Introduction

Despite more than a decade of democratic governance and endorsement of universal declaration of human rights charter, Nigerians still face a lot of human rights abuses. This is because contrary to democratic ethos, the state is still largely authoritarian in leadership and security operations. In a similar vein, McCulley (2013) observed that cases of human rights violations which is described as becoming a culture of impunity in the country includes extra-judicial killings, illegal detention, destruction of property by security forces etc. Even studies by researchers revealed that other forms of human rights abuses in Nigeria include motorists' harassment and extortion by security personnel, political assassinations, and undemocratic imposition of candidates in leadership and intimidation of political opponents (Akhaine & Chizea, 2011).

It is worthy to note that, cases of police and other security agencies brutality and abuse of powers are rarely investigated and perpetrators are hardly brought to justice. Where investigations occur, they fail to comply with international standards and officers suspected of extra-judicial executions are usually sent out on training or transferred to other states instead of undergoing prosecution. Also, reports of highly publicized state or federal panels of inquiry investigating suspicious deaths remain unpublished. In most cases, charges brought against the perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations filed by private citizens, groups and even the government suffer interminable delays in the court of law and end up being unresolved (Onwuazombe, 2017).

Generally, law enforcement agents operate with impunity in the apprehension, detention or even extra-judicial murder of criminal suspects. The authorities generally do not hold police accountable for the use of

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excessive or deadly force or for the deaths of persons in custody (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Though, research on security agencies and human right violations in Nigeria is timely and important, it is not well represented in Nigerian literature. Few studies on human right violations by security agencies were carried out some years ago, due to global changes in technology; types of government, environmental conditions and influences of COVID 19, their findings might be obsolete considering new administration and practical experiences in our modern organizations. This is an important gap created in knowledge which the research work intends to fill by establishing the extent, challenges and possible remedies of human right violations by security forces in Nigeria.

In addition, due to paucity of resources, the researchers utilized only little available information within their reach. This, we considered as great limitation encountered in this research paper. Since, there appears to be scarcity of existing literature on the subject of the study. The study is therefore a necessary attempt to fill the gap in this area.

- Putting the Problem in Perspective

The basic right and freedom that belongs to a particular person in the world, irrespective of his/her background, how they chose to live or their religious affiliation from childhood till death is known as human right. Hence it cannot be taken away but can be restricted sometimes. These rights are based on shared values like respect, dignity, equity, fairness, equality and independence. These are protected by law and defined. Based on the international protocol on human rights, no human person should be subjected to an extreme human rights abuse in extreme situation. But when the lives of the Nigerian citizens particularly in North East Nigeria are been decimated and harassed on daily bases either through suicide bombing, violent attacks, rape, gruesome murder, kidnap, denial of basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter and happiness; and other nameless acts of aggression, one cannot say that life is worth enjoying under such circumstances. But that is the daily experience of the Nigerian citizens in the country.

This study is set to address such pitfall in literature by examining challenges and prospects of security agencies and human rights and security agencies in Nigeria.

- Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

a. To determine the nature and extent of human right abuses by security agencies in Nigeria.
b. To study the causes of human rights abuses by security agencies in Nigeria.
c. To analyze the negative effect of human right abuses by security agencies in Nigeria
d. To proffer strategies on how to effectively prevent their occurrences in the future

- Research Question

The following research questions are designed to guide this study:

a. What are the nature and extent of human right abuse by security agencies in Nigeria?
b. To what extent have the security agencies' operations in Nigeria infringe on human rights?
c. What are those reformed strategies that can cushion the mechanism against human right protection in Nigeria?

2. Theory

2.1. The Concept of Security

The security services of any nation are an integral part of the society that cannot be dispensed with and their responsibilities with regard to securing lives and properties cannot be over-emphasized. This is why it is ironical that the ones who are supposed to safe-guard and protect turn around to trample upon and violate the rights of the citizenry. The security services in Nigeria include: The Nigerian Armed Forces i.e. Army, Air Force and Navy, Nigeria Police Force, State Security Services (SSS), Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian Prisons Service, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigerian Immigration Service among others (Nzarga, 2014).

According to Nweke (1999), national security means, guidance against internal and external threats, regime maintenance, achievement of an acceptable level of economic viability, in short, national security primarily means all those things that lead to the safety of lives and property of people living within a geographical location. Security agents provide security for the nation. The quest to make the environment safe and secure for every Nigerian is a desired development. Nweke (1999) observed that security agents are those officers and personnel on active duty or watch against threats to internal and external peace and unity of a country. To him, these personnel make-up of the military, para-military, police, security details, etc. To him, security is a serious business and as such, every government invests in them for security personnel to help regulate peace and stability of that society for the overall development of the nation.

Some of the functions of these security agencies as provided by law include amongst others: the preservation of law and order, detection of any crime within Nigeria, maintenance of internal security, the protection and preservation of all non-military classified matters concerned with the internal security of Nigeria National Security Agency Act. According to Aduba (2012) other functions of these security agencies are: defending the nation from external aggression, maintaining its territorial integrity and securing violations on land, sea or air, suppressing insurgency and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when they are called upon to do so by the President.

In the light of this paper, security agents mean all the personnel responsible for the prosecution and security, such as the police, military, state security service (SSS), para-military organization, etc. But whether this is the case or not is beyond the purpose of this paper, since we are more concerned with the role of security agents and human right violations in Nigeria. Human rights are the fundamental features of any true democratic setting because the essence of democracy itself is based on the idea of human rights. Human rights are mostly viewed as the inalienable rights of people (Mela, 2021). They are the legal entitlements which every citizen could enjoy without fear of the government or its fellow citizens.

2.2. The Concept of Human Right

Apart from right to life which is presumed to be supreme of all rights, the United Nations Agreements on Human Rights recognized other forms of rights such as freedom of thought; conscience and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of assembly and association; rights to privacy and protection of that privacy by law. It is on this premise that Agwunobi & Oyedolapo (2012) opine that human right is the right which stands above the ordinary law of the land and predecessor to the political society and a prime disorder to a refined existence. It is also on this background that Saqib (2015) defined human rights as those rights which a person possesses by his simple characteristics of being a human. These he said are rights which are available to a person and which protect the person's interest, freedom, dignity and other fundamental rights against the interference and excesses of state's agent coercive measures when countering terrorism.

Akinola (2013) notes that the concern of human rights in the world today stems from the perception widely shared with J. J. Rousseau that man though born free is everywhere in chains. Today, increasing awareness couple with the pre-occupation on how best to safeguard them from rampant violations have made the term human rights a song on almost everyone's lips, yet the contradiction, inconsistency, confusion, misinterpretation and absurdity that pervade the motion is quite telling

Kaluge (2013) opined that, human rights are those rights which cannot be said to have been given to man by man but are earned by man for being a human because these are necessary for his continuous happy existence with himself, his fellow man and for participation in a complex society.

On a wider perspective, basic issues involved in fundamental human rights are: freedom rights, freedom from oppression in its various forms; participation rights in the decision making processes in various spheres of life; benefits right to food, work, medical care, education, etc. (Ndifon, 2013).

As cited in Felix, the Nigeria Constitution 1999 (as amended) has captured the various human rights which the law seeks to protect under section 33 to 46 which are: right to life. right to dignity of human person; right to personal liberty; right to fair heaving; right to private and family life; right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; right to freedom of expression and press; right to peaceful assembly and association; right to freedom of movement; right to freedom from discrimination; right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in any region and right to compensation (compulsory acquisition of property).

The above mentioned are the basic rights, which the Nigerian security agencies never attached any importance to safeguard rather constantly violate as will be analyzed in this paper. As cited in Hornby (2000), the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (6th Edition) defined abuse as unfair, cruel or violent treatment of somebody. Along the same view, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English described abuse as the act of using something in a way that it should not be used. The above definitions imply that human right abuse is a violation of human right. It also means denying a human being his fundamental human rights as it involves treating man in a cruel, unfair and violent way or less human. In the recent past, human rights violations and abuses in Nigeria had held people down and devalued the nation's cherished values (Nnochiri, 2013).

Adetoro & Omiyefa (2014) are of the view that respect for human rights is sacrosanct not because it is an intrinsic element of effective counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency, but because it is also a fundamental, constitutional and international legal obligation. Unfortunately, the government of Nigeria in most cases operates with total disregard for the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Impunity remains a widespread phenomenon within the government circle while countering insurgency. For instance, the government has only brought a few individuals to justice for abuse of human rights and corruption. The government also did not investigate majority of the alleged cases of police and other security agency's abuse of human rights or punish any perpetrator over the years especially, while fighting Boko Haram terrorists in the north-eastern region and in the country generally. This is evident in the summary execution, assault, torture, and other forms of abuse forms of abuse against the civilian population (Mohammed, 2015).

2.3. Empirical Review

Odomovo (2014) carried out a study on the theme: Insurgency, counter-insurgency and human rights violations in Nigeria. He observed that insurgents' activities and government's counter-insurgency operations have claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed many human habitations and sources of livelihood across Nigeria. Essentially, the rising wave of insurgency has overwhelmed the internal security capacity of the police and has consequently increased the involvement of the military in internal security operations. Over the years various Joint Military Task Forces (JTFs) have been established and mandated to carry out counter-insurgency operations across the country. Insurgents' activities and counter-insurgency

operations of the various JTFs have destroyed entire communities and killed hundreds of Nigerians including innocent civilians. The study examined the human rights implications of government's counter-insurgency initiatives in Nigeria, and concluded that the operations of the JTFs have actually protracted the spate of violence against the civilian populations they are meant to protect. The study proposed that the desirability of a counter-insurgency strategy should be determined by its capacity to protect civilians from human rights abuses and violent attacks.

Adetoro & Omiyefa (2014) studied The Challenges of Human Rights Abuses in Nigerian Democratic Governance. The objective of the study was to examine the challenges of human rights abuses in Nigeria. It also explored some conceptual clarifications and further examined various threats to human rights in the Nigerian society The study found out that human rights abuse has become endemic in Nigeria. This is because individuals, groups and state actors are complicit in this vicious circle. In the recent past, human rights violations and abuses have held our people down, devaluing our cherished values and constituting blight on our diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Therefore, Nigerians must come together to combat these ills by impressing upon their democratically elected government that the principles of democracy and human rights must be sacrosanct.

Nwafor (2020) carry out a research on the topic: Human Rights Practices and Security Agencies in North East of Nigeria. The broad objective of the study focused on an appraisal of human rights practices and security agencies in North East of Nigeria covering the period of 2010 to 2018. The specific objectives were to: examine the effect of National Action Plan (NAP) on human rights promotion and protection in Nigeria, determine how the security agencies in Nigeria have infringed on north eastern part of Nigeria and highlight the reformed strategies that can cushion human right conundrum in Nigeria. The study used ex post facto design while the analytical tools used were mean and Z-test. The study revealed that National Action plan (NAP) has significant effect on human rights promotion and protection in Nigeria. It found that the security agencies in Nigeria have significantly infringed on north eastern part of Nigeria. The reformed strategies have significantly contributed to the cushioning of human right conundrum in Nigeria. In analyzing the phenomenon of human rights practices and security agencies in North East of Nigeria, Marxists theory of the state was employed. This theory arose as a creation to the western liberal theory of the state which holds that the state is independent force and a neutral observer that caters for the main interest of every member of the society. The study recommended that the government should ensure continuous implementation of the policies embedded in National Action Plan (NAP) in order to identify areas that need improvement in the human right protection and promotion particularly in North East Nigeria. The Nigerian Police as part of the Nigerian law enforcement agencies should be properly re-oriented that respecting citizens' right is an integral part of their duties. In restoring law and order, the military should be educated to use less force whenever the need arises. Developmental reforms and policies geared towards improving economic infrastructure, human enterprise and political institutions should be adopted and strengthened to complement operations of security agencies in north east of Nigeria. The study is related to present study because both studies centered on the activities of security agencies and human right violations in Nigeria.

2.4. Theoritical Framework

The system theory by Gabriel Almond views the society as a system, where it is expected that every unit that moves up the system should be able to carry out its functions for the survival of the society. This then brings the relevance of structural functionalism theory, in which all the parts of the system carry out specific functions expected of them, through a process of inputs and outputs, as well as feedback mechanism. If any part of the system fails to carry out its functions, the system may collapse and that is not good for progress and development. Relating this theory to our situation in this paper, the society can be view as a system, if there is a breach of peace or law and order, the society cannot develop to the desired level. That is why to Easton (1959) the political system constantly needs the cooperation of every unit for the continuous survival and existence of an entity.

The indices of Nigerian security problems include unlawful killings, torture, ill-treatment of crime suspects, forced evictions, interference with the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association, and violence against women and children, among others. Threat to internal security can occur when the components units continue to be a problem in Nigeria. According to Fukuyama (1992) if the people are impoverished, the national security is thus threatened. It is in this light that we contend that the Nigeria security agencies should have all their component units working together for the overall protection of live and property in the country.

3. Research Method

The paper is a meta-analytical study, which relied on secondary data. It is also a qualitative study that is based on conceptual, situational analysis, and emic perspective to x-ray human right abuses in Nigeria.

4. Results

It is worthy to note that, cases of police and other security agencies brutality and abuse of powers are numerous, rarely investigated and perpetrators are hardly brought to justice. Where investigations occur, they fail to comply with international standards and officers suspected of extra-judicial executions are usually sent out on training or transferred to other states instead of undergoing prosecution. Few instances of human right violations in Nigeria are highlighted bellow: This human right violation is mostly found in torture and extra-judicial killings by government

security operatives. For instance, according to Umar (2019), over 20,000 civilians were massacred with other 50,000 displaced from their homes as a result of the brutal handling of the Niger Delta crises by the Joint Military Task Force (JTF). Earlier, the death of about 50 persons on 25th February, 2008 was caused by the Nigerian police in Ogaminana outskirt of Okene in Kogi State.

One of the gravest violations of human rights committed by government security forces during counter-insurgency operations is the killing of civilians. The violation of the right to life of the Nigerian people, particularly in the north-east has been a key feature of the government's onslaught against the Boko Haram insurgency. For instance, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) documents that attacks by security forces causing a high number of civilian casualties have been reported, most notably in Baga, Borno state, Nigeria, in April 2013, where civilians were reportedly shot by security forces and 642 people were displaced. Investigations into the event by reliable national sources revealed that cases of extra-judicial and summary executions, torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and rape had been committed by national security forces.

In addition, Akhaine & Chizea (2011) reported that 17 people were shot dead by security forces during a protest in Kaduna state on 17th April and another 118 killed on 27th April in the same state with several houses burnt. Abbah (2013) and Adetayo (2013) further observed that over 300 people were killed in the fulani/farmers clashes that lasted for 5 months in Nigeria. Reuters (2012) reported the brutal killing of more than 700 lives in Bauchi, Maiduguri and Damaturu as a result of the Boko Haram ruthless attack on the civilians. Human right violation is also found in kidnapping and disappearance of people which has been on the increase in Nigeria. It was revealed that security personnel like police officers are indirectly involved in these unethical activities. The situation is worst in Kaduna state due to cases of all forms of kidnapping: including kidnapping of children, women and other civilians (Kaluge, 2013).

Oyewale (2010) acknowledged the daily occurrence of domestic terrorism (brutal kidnapping) in the Niger Delta between 2006 and 2009; Azania (2013) equally reported how Edo varsity lecturers lamented daily affairs of kidnapping of their colleagues. This worrisome physical human right abuse is even preponderant all over Nigeria today. Musa & Adeniji (2010) equally acknowledged the destruction to lives and properties by frequent clashes in Abeokuta South Local Government in Ogun State between 1980 and 2007. On February 18, 2012, Sahara news reported that activists condemned the police disruption of political memorial procession for the last year's martyrs on fuel price increase. In the same vein, Aremu (2012) reported that over 20 teargas canisters were used to disperse the protesters and several leaders of the protesters were whisked away and detained for several hours in Alausa police station.

Even, in the then held and inconclusive Anambra state governorship election, the Daily Trust and This Day Newspapers of 20th and 21st November, 2013 respectively reported the continued detention of 182 election observers by the Nigerian police (Adebayo, 2013; Ezigbo, 2013). It is regrettable to note that the Nigerian government has continually failed to address this kind of human right abuses and punish the offenders. Mohammed (2015) stated that the Nigerian security agents made several arbitrary arrests, and detained several suspects without fair trial. They also use torture, killed the suspects unlawfully and harmed the very people they are supposed to protect with utmost impunity, therefore, leaving the citizens helpless and hopeless.

In short, the Nigerian military as security agents in north eastern region of the country have committed war crimes and possible crimes against humanity in the same manner the self-styled Boko Haram terrorists have done (Amnesty International, 2017). Mohammed (2015) went further to assert that Nigerian government is a party to the major sources of International Humanitarian Laws (IHL), i.e. the Geneva conventions, their protocol and other customary international law. Yet the government and its security agencies abuse these against the provisions of the international human right law such as prolonged pre-trial detention, denial for fair public trial, infringements on citizens' privacy rights; denial of freedoms of speech, denial of freedom of press, assembly, religion, and movement; child abuse, violence against women; sexual exploitation of children; trafficking in persons, forced and child labour, and a host of others. All these offences conflict with the international counter-terrorism standard or insurgency measures.

Other obvious cases that involved the security agencies was a conducted raid on militant groups and criminal suspects in north eastern states that resulted to the deaths of some of the alleged terrorists, criminals and unfortunately civilians whom they were supposed to protect **(**Abbah, 2013). While some of the victims sustained serious injuries, some were captured and extra judicially killed.

As cited in Efeanyi (2017), one of such incidents of police extra-judicial murder is the case of Mr.Victor Emmanuel. On October 16, 2011, in Bayelsa State (Niger Delta region), "following his criticism of the police for extorting money from motorists on the road to his church, Mr. Victor Emmanuel was shot dead in the presence of his mother who pleaded for his son's life to be spared to no avail. After he was killed in cold blood, the police removed the Bible he was holding in his hand and planted a pair of scissors in his hand to incriminate the deceased. The above incident is not an outlier, but a typically recurring event in the Niger Delta communities.

Extra-judicial killing/violation of human right to life is the act of arbitrarily taking someone's life, denying or violating a person's right to life without recourse to due process of the law. Generally, in Nigeria today, the sanctity and sacredness of human life have almost lost

its real meaning. In Nigeria, several thousands of the inhabitants have been deprived of their fundamental and inalienable right to life outside the prescription of the supreme law of the land and other applicable international instruments.

4.1 Obstacle/Challenges to the Realization of Human Rights in Nigeria

As cited in Felix (2014), there are many factors responsible for the aggravation of human rights violations in Nigeria. Some of these include:

- Illiteracy/Lack of Adequate Training: Most Nigerians are largely uneducated and consequently unaware of their fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution. They therefore do not know when such rights are infringed upon or violated not to talk of seeking redress. On the part of the security agents, we have issues ranging from lack of proper orientation to lack of adequate training. We know the type of tough training usually given to the military for instance, such training can never place them in a good position to manage civil crisis hence, and there is violation of human rights and heavy casualties whenever they are involved.
- Access to Justice: Access to justice which connotes the availability of accessible, affordable, comprehensible justice system and the dispensation of justice fairly, speedily and without discrimination, fear or favour is crucial to human rights implementation. The issue of access to justice is a significant constraint to the effectiveness of human rights in Nigeria.
- Distrust and Dishonesty in Human Rights NGOs Community: Beginning from the early 1990, there has been an exponential growth of human rights NGOs in Nigeria. Hence, the proliferation of human rights NGOs in Nigeria does not correlate with government respect for human rights in the country. It is tempting to equate the proliferation of human rights NGOs across the globe with improvement in human rights practices. However, a critical evaluation of the activities of human rights NGOs will reveal that the growth in the number of NGOs has marginal impact on human rights protection. This is partly because many human rights NGOs activists are not truly committed to the cause of human rights but merely use their NGOs as umbrella to make money from donor agencies for themselves.
- Lack of Diligent Prosecution of Violators: This factor also contributes to exacerbate human right violations when security officers are not taken to court and even when they are taken to court; the matter is not prosecuted to the end. The extent of violation by these security officers is often down-played, Sometimes, when such cases are prosecuted to the end; the authorities flaunt the orders of the court with unimaginable impunity.
- Poverty: This is another reason why violations of human rights thrive in our society. As a result of the high level of poverty, many people whose rights are violated hardly seek redress when they consider the cost of legal representation. Some even keep quiet to avoid who they regard as stigmatization especially when such violation like rape is involved.
- Ethnic/Religious Sentiments: Sometimes, if the violator is from the same religious or ethnic group with the superior officers who is handling the case, justice is often not served.
- Attitude of Concerned Authorities: Government most of the time lacks the political will to take issues of human rights seriously, The National Human Rights Commission charged with the mandate of protection and promotion of the rights of the citizenry has not done enough primarily because the organization is handicapped by the non-gazette of the National Human Rights Act passed into law since 2010. Thus, lawyers in the Commission are unable to take up cases of violations of human rights especially those violations perpetrated by security agents as such cases could even be taken up at the risk of their own lives. Suffice it also to say that inefficiency of government at all levels does not only violate the socio-economic and cultural rights of citizens, but, triggers other violations like extra-judicial killings, rape, torture, etc. It is also worthy of note that it is the violation of rights that brings about insecurity and not the other way round.
- Espirit de Corps: In the forces is pronounced encouragement of violation of human rights. For instance, where an officer commits an offence that constitutes a violation of human rights and is brought before his superior, such an offending officer is shielded or when any action at all is taken, the officer involved in such violation is only dismissed and not prosecuted to serve as a deterrent to others.
- Lack of Sufficient Legal Aid: As we mentioned earlier, most of the people violated do not know their rights and even if they know, the financial implications of litigation and the rigorous court processes discourage them.
- Lack of Accountabi;ity for Ammunition: Officers who are given ammunition especially the Nigerian Mobile Police use ammunition indiscriminately and do not account for such ammunition, thereby promoting the violation of citizens' right to life.

4.2 Negative Effects of Human Rights Abuse in Nigeria

- Human rights abuse in Nigeria often leads to poverty which is so prevalent due to massive abuse of public fund. This is as a result of high rate of unemployment which has resulted in youth's involvement in crimes such as armed robbery, internet scams and kidnapping for survival.
- Secondly, human right abuse has obvious hindrance to national development.
- Thirdly, it also breeds high insecurity rate as a state of anarchy had given room to lack of protection of lives and properties as witnessed under conflicts in

the Niger Delta region and the various ethno religious violence.

- Equally, the poor healthcare facilities and diseases are as a result of government non-challant attitude to the wellbeing of the citizens. Human right abuse has created unlawful detention and lawlessness with gross violation of the rule of law.
- Furthermore, human right abuse makes people unpatriotic as most Nigerians are not proud of calling Nigeria their fatherland. This is why many citizens of Nigeria seek ways of leaving the country in search of safety and prosperity abroad.
- The outbreak of book haram attack on security agencies, innocent citizens and properties worth millions of Naira came as a reaction against the violation of human right in Nigeria.
- Destruction of government properties worth millions of Naira in Lagos and some areas in Abuja by hoodlums during end-SARS protest was significantly unconnected with violation of human right abuses in Nigeria.

4.3 Need for Multifarious Strategies and Approaches

As stated by Jacob (2013), it is widely recognized that in order to ensure effective implementation of human rights, wide-ranging strategies and approaches are required. Indeed there is no enforcement mechanism, which can exclusively and adequately ensure optimal human rights protection. In a similar vein, the need for multifarious strategies was trenchantly articulated by Trindade thus "*There is a great need to conceive new forms of protection for human beings facing the present diversification of sources of violations of their rights. Virtually all existing mechanisms of protection were conceived as responses to human rights violations. New responses are now needed. The current paradigm of protection for the individual vis-à-vis public power runs the risk of becoming insufficient and anachronistic, as inadequately equipped to confront those violations. New responses should be conceived on the understanding that the state remains responsible for those violations that it fails to prevent".*

Bhagwatti cited in Jacob (2013) observed that, it must be recognized that the enforcement of human rights cannot just be the pleasure of lawyers, judges and courts nor is adjudication by the courts the only method by which human rights can be enforced. A wide range of alternatives has to be explored in order to change some old ways of thinking. Thus, in addition to judicial and other governmental protection agencies, human rights NGOs are a veritable tool to drive the goal of human rights (Jacob, 2013).

From the above, it becomes clear that the role of NGOs in the promotion and protection of human rights violation in Nigeria is not only extensive but very important and crucial. To demonstrate the importance and near indispensability of human rights NGOs in the implementation of human rights, the role characteristically played by them may now be highlighted as follows:

- Investigative Role: This essentially entails conducting inquiry in order to unearth and expose human rights abuses for possible remedial action.
- Advocacy Role: This is a promotional and educational role by which human rights NGOs undertake systematic sensitization of the populace on human rights issues. Victims of human rights abuses are enlightened on appropriate steps to take to secure redress. This role includes collecting, producing and disseminating information materials and organizing promotional events to draw attention to human rights.
- Legal Assistance: By this role, legal aid is given to indigent victims of human rights violations in order to secure for such persons, appropriate redress.
- Research Role: This role obligates human rights NGOs to undertake research into human rights issues which can aid policy formulation.
- Networking: This implied establishing contacts with national, regional, international bodies and agencies involved in human rights issues for co-operation, support and necessary synergy in the advancement of human right.
- Monitoring Role: This role essentially involves observing the level of compliance with human rights especially by government and non-governmental agencies.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The findings revealed among other things that the state security agents, (police, army, state security officers) in collaboration with the foreign nationals, abuse and violate the rights of the people in Nigeria with impunity. These are widely implicated in cases of rape, torture and degrading and inhuman punishment, suppression of peaceful protests with excessive or lethal force in many states especially, oil-producing communities in violation of the right to the dignity of the human person. Also, security forces employed overt and immoderate forces to implement their orders without following due processes.

The military and police are constitutionally vested with the authority to protect lives and property but have mostly discharged this responsibility in the breach of the primary purpose of their establishment. Hence, these institutions have been extensively complicit or implicated in violation of rights, extrajudicial killings and wanton destruction of property than protecting and safeguarding them.

Multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta have been severally indicted in human rights violations in course of their exploration and exploitation of crude oil. Weak and ineffective environmental laws and regulations encourage massive oil pollution, reckless despoliation as well as the on-going environmental destruction and degradation in the region.

Despite the laudable and inspiring constitutional provisions for their protection, there are varying degrees of human right violations in the nation, and governance is characterized by acute disregard for, and sadistic undermining of these basic rights and fundamental freedoms. Even with the laws in place for the promotion and protection of human rights, human rights violations have been on the increase. The security agents that perpetrate crimes like extra-judicial murder, rape, torture or degrading punishment, and human rights violation are not held accountable as they are neither investigated nor brought to justice by the state.

Dada observed that, "even though Nigeria as a nation has subscribed to major international human rights instruments in addition to her local rights instruments, abuse and violations of rights continues to occur with disturbing frequency and regularity".

Lack of equity, freedom, and equality are apparent in the nation's landscape as it is reflected in the distribution of oil wealth and basic amenities. This imbalance has subjected the minority groups to hardship, domination, neglect, economic and political marginalization and denial of rights. Ultimately, the defective legal and institutional frameworks in the country aid, encourage, and help to sustain gross human rights violation in the country and particularly in the oil-producing communities for decades.

The international community, allies, and key benefactors of the Nigerian crude oil have deliberately shied away from calling the nation out on the deplorable environmental and human rights violations. Example, Nigeria's role as a regional power, Africa's leading oil exporter and a major contributor of troops to the UN peacekeeping mission; foreign governments including the United States and the United Kingdom have generally been reluctant to publicly criticize Nigeria over its poor human rights record.

The declarations of fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution were discriminatory against minorities and vulnerable groups in Nigeria. Human right abuses have become endemic in Nigeria. This is because individuals, groups and state actors are complicit in this vicious circle. In the recent past, human right violations and abuses have held our people down, devaluing our cherished values and constituting blight on our diplomatic relations with the rest of the world.

Emphatically, the rule of law guarantees human rights protection. Rule of law (that is, the law is supreme, nobody is above the law), is what is lacking in the Nigerian form of democracy. The democratic Nigerian government is fond of disobeying court rulings, abuses court processes, arrests and detains both real and imagined enemies without trial and releases some of them unconditionally (as a result of innocence) without compensations and apologies.

- Recommendations

  a. This paper, having highlighted some cases of human rights violations by security agencies, advocates faithfulness to statutory and constitutional responsibilities by all and sundry.

  b. Nigerians should know their rights and insist on them being respected without fear of intimidation, victimization and contradictions.

  c. The mass media, both electronic and print should mobilize the people to live up to their obligations in order to rightly ask government questions and demand respect for human rights and reparation when abused.

  d. Nigeria with all her resources both natural and human should be a model for liberal democracy and rule of law that safe guards human rights.

  e. Nigeria's national security policy must take full cognizance of the yearnings of minority groups whose continuous clamour have led to political tension in the country.

  f. Legal aid should be made accessible to the poor who are being violated.

  g. More Human rights Organizations (e.g. NGOs) should come up and volunteer to assist the poor in fighting for their rights especially in the North where there are no many NGOs.

  h. Sensitization campaigns should be held more often to educate or enlighten the masses on the existence of their rights. Religious and traditional rulers should be encouraged to enlighten their subjects on their rights and how to seek redress when such rights are violated.

  i. Make full use of diplomatic pressure and sanctions to deter the security agents from actions that constitute violations of human rights. Such pressure includes targeted sanctions, diplomatic isolation, etc. For instance, the United States of America usually supports the Nigerian military and security agencies with capacity building, intelligence and weapons. However, this support was recently withdrawn by the Donald Trump's government due to the gross destruction of lives and properties carried out in the north eastern town which constitutes a violation of right to life and property.

  j. Educate and enlighten law enforcement officers, prosecutors and others charged with the duty of protection and promotion of human rights on what constitutes the human rights. In this regard, training and reorientation of officers should cut across all cadres and not restricted to the senior officers.

  k. Also there should be an upgrade in the yardstick of recruitment of security officers particularly the Nigerian Police. e.g. a degree or its equivalent should be considered. Furthermore, officers should be employed based on merit.

  l. Violators should be diligently prosecuted to act as a deterrent to others. Modalities should be put

in place to enforce all laws that ensure the protection and promotion of human rights e.g. National Human Rights Act, 2010.

m. Strict measures should be put in place to ensure that ammunition is accounted for, as this may deter the officers from using such ammunition indiscriminately.

n. There should be an improvement in the welfare packages of the security agents as this will go a long way in combating corruption. The Inspector General of Police recently said that a new salary structure is being worked out for the Nigerian Police Force to compare with their counterparts abroad.

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