



RESEARCH ARTICLE

VIOLENCE AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA’S FOURTH REPUBLIC: ITS PREVAILING STATE OF DILEMMA AND CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the phenomenon of Violence and Assassination in Nigeria and the implications they portend for National Cohesion and sustainable development. The justification for the investigation arose due to the monstrous challenge Violence and Assassination has unleashed on the Nigerian State. The entire fabric of the nation is daily tested by the numerous killings, maiming and loss of properties the citizens of Nigeria are experiencing. Needless to say that families and groups of people have been displaced from their ancestral homes causing social dislocation, homelessness and great anxiety. To successfully procure the investigation, four objectives were delineated. They include in-depth analysis of the types of Violence and Assassination in Nigeria; The major factors responsible for the Violence and Assassination in Nigeria; Implications of Insecurity on National Cohesion and Sustainable development, and its possible threats to human hood in Nigeria. Using a qualitative method of analysis, the study found that there were several types of Violence and Assassination leading to Insecurity in Nigeria. They include terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, herders-farmers conflicts, Boko Haram crisis, and secessionist agitations. Measures outlined as recommendations include good governance, massive investment in education and economy so as to create employment for the teeming youths, effective control of small arm deals and Nigeria borderlines/spaces, proper surveillance of Nigerian borders, justifiable, transparent and accountable leadership.

Keywords: Violence, Electoral violence, Insecurity, and Sustainable development.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

That the issue of insecurity and other forms of violence has assumed a monstrous dimension in Nigeria is not a fluke. The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBN) had alluded to this fact. The group President, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama in his address to the conference, catalogued the series of heinous crimes going on in Nigeria particularly the killings of Clergymen and members of various churches (Vanguard, August 15 2019).

The challenge is even more intense in the present political dispensation in the country. Granted that several policies and strategies have been put in place to resolve the crisis, they have not yielded the desired dividends. It is on record that the challenge of insecurity is not new, however, the intensity and prevalence of the crisis has escalated particularly in the last one and half decades as revealed by the 2018 version of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED). To be specific, these cases of violence include those perpetrated by Herdsmen, Kidnapping, Suicide bombing and other forms of conflict. This has led to a lot of insecurity in Nigeria with its attendant negative consequences (Nwagboso, 2012).

Political violence is another problem that has affected the nation. Arising from the high level of electoral activities and the zeal to outwit each other by the various political parties and other stakeholders in the country, the polity has been heated up continuously. Electoral irregularities, dreadful and hate speeches from political party leaders and their followers have been monumental challenges which have visibly threatened the peace, security and national cohesion in Nigeria. No doubt, traces of anarchy which are usually associated with political activities and electioneering have huge implications both for national cohesion and sustainable development. Afterall, development can only thrive where there is peace and security (Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2013).

Enthroning justice, fairness and transparency in governance can instigate political and electoral violence, and by extension, have implications for national cohesion. As depicted in the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) News, on 18th April, 2018, the unlawful invasion of the Senate Chamber by thugs sponsored and ably led by some dissatisfied and aggrieved people in the Chamber posed great threat to national security. This action was meant to disrupt the Plenary Session of the Senate Chamber and forcefully steal the mace, the symbol of authority of Parliament of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Nigeria has been bedeviled by violence, insecurity which often increased and threatened the security of lives and properties of the citizenry. In a situation of this nature, national cohesion is endangered. Under such circumstances, that is, given the general climate of fear and insecurity, both domestic and foreign investors may not likely want to take positive investment decisions, and these can have severe consequences for the nation as a whole.

2.0. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Clarifications

The section presents a brief clarification of the major concepts within the context they are to be understood in this study.

**Threat**

By threat, we mean in this study, any act or intention that has the potential of undermining peace, stability and progress of a nation such as hate speeches and inflammatory statements capable of jeopardizing National Cohesion with deliberate actions to undermine constitutional rules.

Insecurity

This is a state of lack of protection from danger in which one is not at ease with oneself. It is a situation that involves fear, anxiety, worry and apprehension. It carries with it feelings of being open to danger or risk and feelings of being unsafe.

Violence

This can be said to be any behaviour which involves the use of physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. It is same with the use of physical power, threatened or actual, against another person, group or community which can result in injuries, death, psychological harm or outright deprivation.

Kidnapping

This refers to a physical action or abduction where someone is held captive. That is, for the period he is in captivity, he loses his freedom to associate, speak or move about until he is set free. Kidnapping is unlawful seizure and detention of a person or groups of persons against his/their will.

Banditry

This is a form of deviance or criminality where outlaws, acting alone or in groups, commit armed crimes, disposing people of their valuables. Terrorism, gangsterism, marauding, brigandage and armed robbery are forms of banditry.

Terrorism

This is the unlawful use of violence and intimidation against persons or properties (especially against civilians) in the pursuit of political aims. The act of terrorism usually involves the use of threat of violence and seeks to create fear not just within the victim, but among a wide range of audience.

2.2. Literature Review

Security is a very important issue in the survival of any nation. Without adequate security, lives and properties will be rife with lawlessness and chaos that may eventually lead to disintegration. This is why security is considered a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of the state to counter threats to its core values and interests. The security interest of a state is multifarious. It might be military, economic, ideological or cultural. Accordingly, the security of any state embodies a notion of order, or the conditions necessary to maintain the smooth functioning and reproduction of an



existing society. According to McGrew (1988), the security of a nation is predicted on two central pillars. On one hand, it entails the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threats. On the other hand, it entails the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimizes the threats to core values and interests, as well as domestic order.

Nwolise (2006) explained that security is an all-encompassing or holistic concept which implies that the territory must be secured by a network of armed forces; that the sovereignty of a state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, which in turn, must be protected by the military, police force and the people. The people must not only be secured from external attacks, but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals such as unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, pollution, environmental degradation. Suffice to say that these have further provoked agitations by various groups due to government policies which have aggravated deprivation, marginalization and social injustice. Added to this phenomenon are situation which have created avenues for violence of all kinds such as issues relating to legitimacy; the struggle for ascendancy between sub-national and national royalties among others.

In spite of the multifarious nature of conflict, the focus of the Federal Government along with her agents is to secure the country and its constituent's parts. During the Jonathan's administration which experienced increase in the spate of insecurity, considerable efforts were made to secure the nation. Thus, such unwholesome behaviours has not only affected economic activities in many parts of Nigeria, but have also resulted in the loss of numerous lives and destruction of properties. This pathetic situation critically needs urgent attention. The Federal Government needs to pay more than the usual attention to resolve the insecurity problems wherever they exist in the country. It should be more concerned now that insecurity has remained a perennial threat to the entire existence of Nigeria as a Country.

In the past, the Federal Government introduced some policies and measures to douse the tension in the Niger Delta, namely the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger-Delta (MND). In spite of these intervention, the conflicts and insecurity in the Niger-Delta region persisted. To arrest the challenges of insecurity in the Niger-Delta, the Federal Government applied minimal force in order to ensure that the Militants dropped their arms and end their hostilities against the government and the peoples of the Niger Delta region.

Somehow, the efforts made by the Federal Government to stem the challenge of insecurity in the Niger Delta and other parts of the country appeared to have achieved little success. This was because the level of insecurity in the Niger-Delta worsened resulting in incessant kidnappings of not only the foreign oil workers, but also the indigenes and residents of the region. Hence, in June, 2009, the Nigerian Government, under the leadership of the late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, announced the granting of Amnesty and Unconditional Pardon to the militants in the Niger-Delta region. Did these additional measures succeed in positively altering, tackling, preventing or eliminating the scourge or security? Ironically, the same issue of political violence and insecurity still persisted resulting in loss of lives, properties, displacement of human population, dislocation of ancestral and family ties.



Equally, significant is the activities of the cattle herdsman, who move constantly with their cattle from one destination to another in search of grazing lands most especially during dry season. The conflict between the Fulani herdsman and farmers came into existence as a result of encroachment of farmlands by the Fulani herders. The issue of herdsman invading farmlands and destroying crops, most especially during dry season, has been a serious concern to many Nigerians. It has posed a great threat to National cohesion in the country especially amongst the various ethnic groups. Many have lost their lives, properties and crops due to the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers conflicts. Many who narrated their ordeals or experiences with the herders include the Nigeria Cassava Growers Association (NCGA) who claimed to have lost about 97 hectares of cassava as well as many other people who also lost different crops and farmland to herders worth millions of Naira (Achumba, Agbomerelo and Akpor, 2013).

The Time Line Report published by the Vanguard on Benue Attacks, May, Thursday 18 2017 showed that on March 29, 2014, herders killed about 19 people, and 15 others abducted in Gwer-East and Gwer-West Local Government Areas of Benue State, respectively. Same day, suspected use of chemical weapons by unknown gunmen on Shengev Community in Gwer West L.G.A. of Benue was reported, leaving 15 people dead. Few days later, another 12 youths were reportedly killed in a bloody fight between TIV youths and Fulani herdsman. This security challenge is one of the most trending security problems in Nigeria and it is yet to be resolved.

As is usually the case with incidents of this nature, Federal Government set up a Commission to investigate the crisis and recommend comprehensive solutions to the crises in the Middle Belt States. This initiative was not the first. There were the Presidential Peace Initiative (PPI) in 2002, the Federal Administrative Panel of Inquiry in 2008, The Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) in 2010 and the Post Advisory Committee on Security Challenges (PACSC) in 2012 respectively, and several others. Still, they all proved abortive and none yielded satisfactory or positive results. It is clear that internal security has continued to be a major challenge for the present government. Hence, there is an urgent need to review our national security policies and strategies in order to accommodate these new dimensions of security challenges arising from farmers/herders clashes.

The security challenges currently being experienced in Nigeria are traceable in parts to Boko Haram and its operation in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. Their activities have posed a big threat to the cohesion and survival of this nation as one Nigeria. Till date, their activities have not abated. There are also the activities of Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). Jonathan branded MASSOB to be one of the three extremist groups threatening the security of Nigeria and her peoples.

The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra operates in the South-East zone of Nigeria. The Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in the Southwest has made statements which seemed to threaten the solidarity of Nigeria on several occasions (Punch 21May, 2013). Nigeria is almost witnessing a state of anarchy as it stands now. Daily Independence reports that Atiku spoke vehemently on the state of insecurity in Nigeria on Wednesday, May 2 2018, during his visit to the People's Democratic Party Secretariat (PDP) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom. He lamented that:

“those who are making Nigeria worse were not part of the struggle for democracy.
The Country is in its worse state today. I have never seen this kind since the Civil



War; Ethnic division, North against South. This is very dangerous. We have to unite together to arrest this, otherwise you would one day wake up, and find out that we do not have a country. God forbid”.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the unity and cohesion of Nigeria is visibly threatened. It is even more disturbing when considered against the background that no meaningful development can thrive in an atmosphere that is insecure and chaotic. As expected, such a nation will experience low quality of life among her citizens and untold hardship. It can lead to hunger, poverty, food insecurity, loss of lives and properties and indeed, a fall in National Income, fame and rating both locally and internationally. This is the crux of this research; principally to establish the nexus between political violence, insecurity and their attendant implications on National cohesion and sustainable development in Nigeria and to proffer effective solutions to the resolution of the crises.

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs both the qualitative and quantitative approaches in exploring violence and insecurity challenges in Nigeria. The data were generated from secondary sources such as published and unpublished documents across spectrum of years and used as indices for elucidating the trends and patterns in the phenomenon of insecurity across places in Nigeria. Drawing from diverse contents and perspectives, this study presents the identified trends in Tables and Figures for comparative analyses and makes qualitative discourses using content analyses.

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Critical Analyses and Discourses of Implications of Violence and Insecurity

There are certainly serious implications for Nigeria in terms of the security challenges arising from Political Violence specifically and other forms of security challenges like agitation from kidnapping, banditry, Boko Haram crises, ethno-religious crises, terrorism, secessionist from the Southeast Zone and Farmers-Herders crises. This study presents the implications derived from scholars and Nigerian dailies on the issue.

Loss of Lives and Properties: Insecurity leads to crises. In the case of Nigeria, so many lives have been lost and millions of properties destroyed. We present below empirical facts on the issue. According to Nextier (2022), over 6,000 lost their lives due to violent attacks under Mohammad Buhari watch perpetuated by Bandits, Secessionists, and even Security forces between January 2021 – 2022.

The same report (Nextier) noted that that its database had it that there were 354 banditry incidents in North West and North Central Nigeria Region between 2021 and 2022.

Still on death or loss of lives, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data ACLED (2018) chronicled the number of deaths in the various Geopolitical zones in Nigeria resulting from four heinous crimes namely; Violence against Civilians, herdsmen clashes, kidnapping and suicide bombing; Data in respect of these security challenges are presented in Table 1.



Table 1: Some Insecurity Problems in Nigeria (2008-2018)

Year	Violence against civilians	Herdsman clashes	Kidnapping	Suicide Bombing
2008	276	26	15	0
2009	381	32	25	0
2010	527	51	63	13
2011	832	36	72	52
2012	631	79	105	83
2013	1298	93	235	261
2014	1591	138	482	281
2015	1723	194	638	482
2016	1928	217	575	93
2017	1672	285	703	72
2018	1874	254	503	43

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data. ACLED, 2018 Version

Visual Presentation of the above table in respect of specific causes of death and the number of casualties are summarized in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

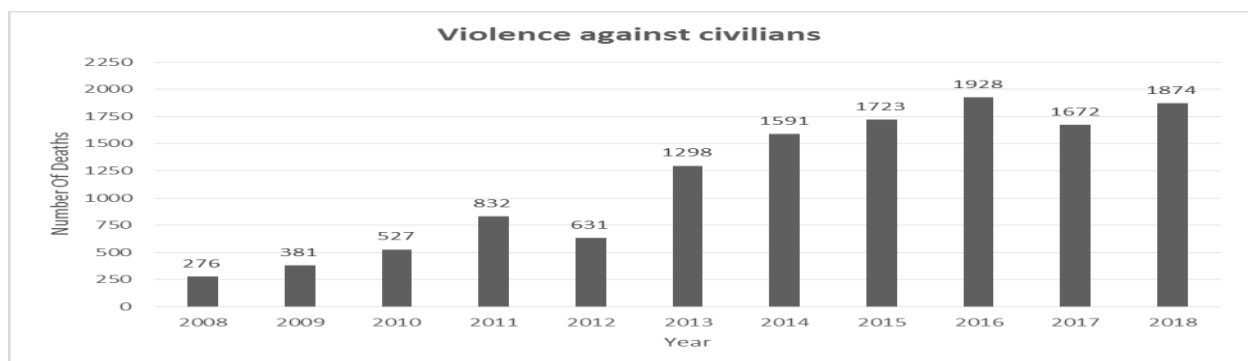


Figure 1: Column graph representing the trend in the number of deaths caused by violence against civilians from 2008 to 2018

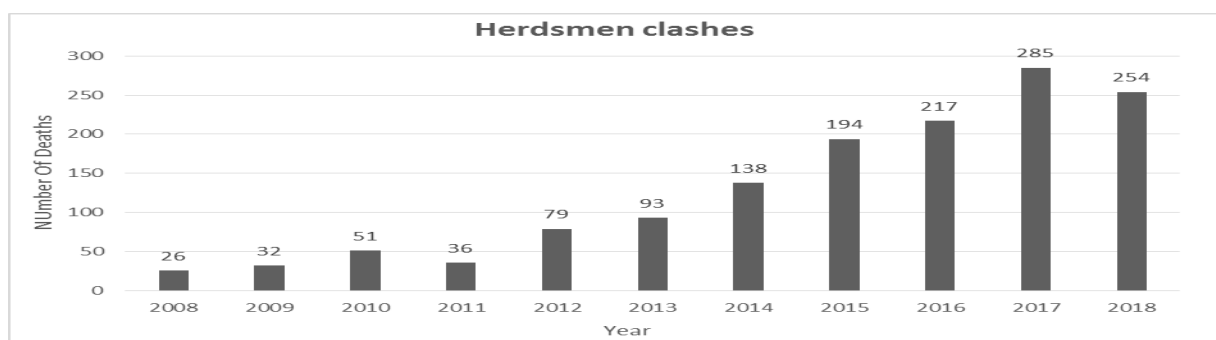


Figure 2: Column graph representing the trend in the number of deaths caused by herdsman clashes from 2008 to 2018.

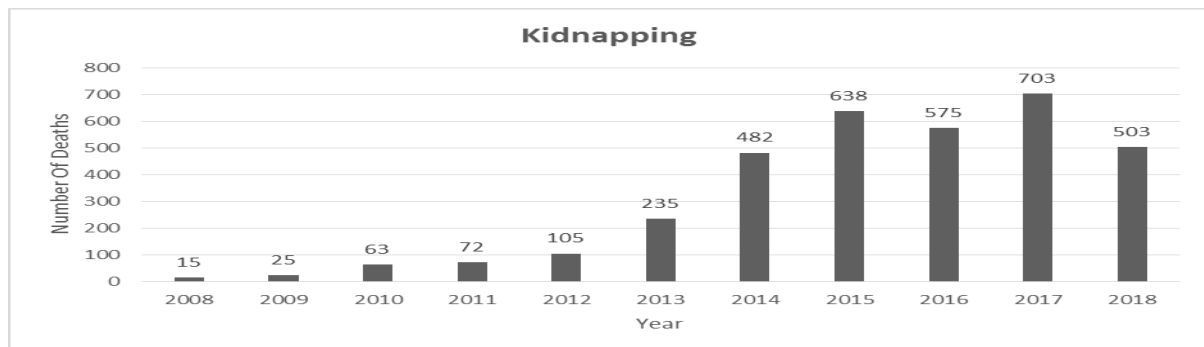


Figure 3: Column graph representing the trend in the number of deaths caused by kidnapping from 2008 to 2018

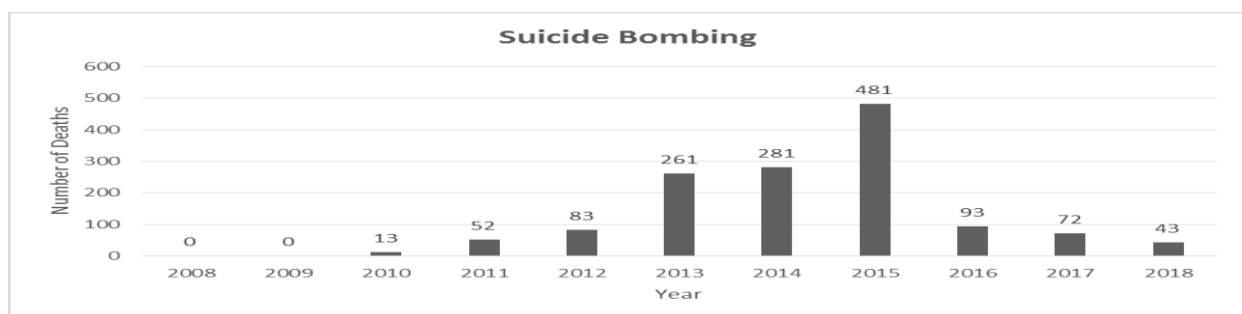


Figure 4: Column graph representing the trend in the number of deaths caused by suicide bombing from 2008 to 2018

Though update of the statistics was not sourced, we presented the anecdotal records of cases of insecurity and fatality in what follow:

“In South East, 692 persons were killed in secessionist-related incidents between 2015 and 2019. In 2021 alone, 235 deaths were recorded and during the First-half of 2022, 259 deaths were incidented” (Nextier, 2022).

The successionist incident took place in the Southeast Nigeria. However there is also a report by Nextier (2022) that “Within the First-half of 2022, 181 persons were killed due to Farmers-Herders conflicts”. For the whole country, 451 deaths were recorded. According to Yusuf and Mahd (2022), the implications of insecurity and related cases of conflict are monumental. In their study, they reported the following as implications of insecurity on the Nigerian economy.

Closure of Businesses: Some had to relocate. For example PZ, Nigeria Brewery, Seven Up, Uniliver Plc left Aba for Enugu due to constant kidnaps (Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2012).

- (i) Slow economic growth and development, reduced business cycles negatively affect profit, lower return on investment and ultimately affect economic growth and development.
- (ii) Reduced returns on investment.
- (iii) Waste of huge expenditure by government in an attempt to curb insecurity. The validity of this claim is empirically supported from the table on Nigeria’s Military Spending / Defence budget for the period 2014 – 2021, which is reproduced below:



Table 2: Nigeria Military Expenditure / Defence Budget (2014 - 2021)

Year	Billion % of (US Dollar)	GDP
2021	4.47	0.97
2020	2.57	0.63
2019	1.86	0.46
2018	2.04	0.51
2017	1.62	0.43
2016	1.72	0.43
2015	2.07	0.42
2014	2.36	0.41

Source: World Bank

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From Table 3, there has been a consistent increase in Nigeria's defence budget since 2018. Since 2014, Defence budget/Military spending as a percentage of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product, has consistently been on the increase climaxing 0.97 in 2021.

- Increased cost of doing business occasioned by high wages, insurance premium and security expenditure.
- Slow economic growth due to Decrease/Redirection in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Low Risk Countries (Chukwu, Abang and Ima-Abasi).
- Negative impact of farming communities leading to low yield, impoverishment food insecurity and unemployment.
- Growing trends of Out-of-School children. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the number of Out-of-School Children in Nigeria in 2021 was 13.2 million.
- By disrupting Private and Public investment, violent conflicts have reduced the generation of government revenue.

On the impact of Insecurity on National Cohesion, we rely here on data generated through literature search and the views of three respondents during our interview session. Olusegun Obasanjo (Vanguard Tuesday, July 16th 2019) warned that Nigeria stands a chance of disintegrating if necessary steps were not taken immediately to forestall crises. According to him: "a very onerous cloud is gathering and rain of destruction, violence, disaster and disunity can only be the outcome".

According to Olusegun Obasanjo, the critical or likely areas where 'danger' may arise include abandoning Nigeria to criminals and terrorist groups, likely cases of reprisal attacks which may inadvertently mushroom into pogrom leading to genocide like the case of Rwanda. Others include inter-ethnic or inter-tribal rivalries or wars due to rumors, fear, intimidation and fear and violent uprising beginning from one section of the country and spreading quickly to other areas and gradually resulting in dismemberment of the country like the case in Yugoslavia. These incidents can have serious implication on National Cohesion, unity and even the future of Nigeria as a sovereign state

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, the implications of violence and insecurity were examined. The study found that the implications of violence and insecurity has deep effect on national cohesion and sustainable development include depopulation of the country due to incessant killings running into tens of



thousands since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. There is also the challenge of loss of revenue, destruction of properties, loss of investment potentials due to refusal of investors to stake their funds in a country considered highly unstable. There is also the issue of closure of businesses, many of which slow economic growth, loss of profit, lower returns to investment, huge expenditure outlay arising from efforts to apprehend the challenge. For example military expenditure or Defence Budget has been on the increase in Nigeria since 2014. The study revealed that, whereas Military Budget/Defence Spending was 0.41 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014, it rose astronomically to 0.97 in 2021.

Food insecurity in Nigeria has been demonstrated to be one of the implications of insecurity in the country, as farmers are dialed adopted and or killed in their farms by herders. This has led to massive abandonment of farming activities. Many have been displaced from their homes as a result of insecurity. Many found respite in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) Camps. A natural consequence of this is the dislocation of family and ancestral ties. There is also the issue of out-of-school children now running into several millions especially in the Northern part of the country.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of the findings reach in the course of this study, we recommend the following strategies as measures to stem the tide of violence and insecurity in Nigeria.

1. There is urgent need for sustainable new strategies to control the influx of small arms and indeed other categories of arms into the country. It is clear that, as it stands now, there are so much arms outside of the legitimate and official quarters. This is what these miscreants use to perpetrate their nefarious activities. Surveillance must be stepped up in and around our borders and ports. Illegal routes must be closed down and culprits dealt with seriously.
2. Our judiciary must be strengthened to be able to perform at their best. As it stands presently, they seem not to be able to dispense justice efficaciously. The appointment of judicial officers must be revisited to ensure that the most qualified, efficient, competent and outstanding are chosen. This will strengthen the judicial system and reposition the country to deal more decisively with criminal elements.
3. Beyond the official security arm of the Federal Government; the initiative of developing community policing which some states have taken now should be strengthened. Such groups should be adequately funded and trained to deal with security issues in their domain. They should be motivated so as to remain committed to the job and strive for excellent performance.

The work is of great contribution to knowledge because it Provide information to policy makers, researchers, stakeholders and other persons concerned with the understanding and solving Nigeria's security challenge.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exist in this manuscript



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