



Covid-19, Global Crisis and the Challenges of Human Security Management in Nigeria

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Abstract: As Nigeria reels under the security challenges causes by the insurgency of the Boko Haram Islamic sect, and Islamic State West African Province, ISWAP in the North East region, as well as banditry, armed robbery, kidnappings for ransom, ritual killings, separatist movement of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB and the menace of the Fulani Herdsmen, the unprecedented killer COVID-19 pandemic and its concomitant global crisis changed the pattern of the security challenges and greatly undermined human security in the country. It is within this premise that this study made concerted effort to review the changing pattern of the Nigeria's public safety and national security challenges in the COVID-19 pandemic era which in turn undermined human security. To achieve its objectives, this study adopted the historical research design which is qualitative and explorative in nature. Thus, secondary sources of data were reliably used in gathering of materials for the study and for gleaning extant literatures in the study area. Because of its contribution to the development of a civil society which is largely in practice in recent times, the Natural State theory was adopted as its theoretical framework. The study finds out among others that in the face of the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, its accompaniment global crisis and the existing national security challenges in Nigeria are on the increase rather than in the decrease and all of which in turn threatened human security that was already in comatose state. Study concludes that the nexus between the security challenges in the pre-COVID-19 and COVID-19 pandemic eras is that both have tolled on human and material capital in Nigeria. The study therefore offers useful policy options to these national issues.

Keywords: Covid-19, Global Crisis, Human Security, Nigeria

How to cite:

Oluka, Nduka Lucas. "Covid-19, Global Crisis and the Challenges of Human Security Management in Nigeria". *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Services* 4, No. 1 (2022): 161-194. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijals.v4i1.56427>.

A. Introduction

For over two decades or more, Nigerian societies have been under the upsurge of insecurity challenges occasioned by the nefarious activities of Islamic extremists and the nihilist groups of the Boko Haram terrorist organisation, Ansaru terrorist group and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), as well as the menace of the Fulani herders, armed bandits, armed robbery, and kidnapping syndicates. There is also the security threat emanating from secessionist group of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Its security network often refers to as Eastern Security Network (ESN) has resumed violent attacks against innocent dwellers in the South Eastern part of the country in recent time. There is also the threat from piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and a threat of re-emergence or resumed attacks in the oil rich Niger Delta region from the militant groups, especially the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA).¹

However, as the Nigerian state reels under these security challenges, the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic emerged to change the pattern of the security challenges in the country as evidenced in the humanitarian crisis in the *BAY States* of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe; and by extension, other parts of the country. Despite the government efforts to ameliorate these security challenges following the activities of the insurgent groups of the Boko Haram, ISWAP and Ansaru terrorist group, as well as the emerging security threats from bandits, Fulani marauders, armed robbers, kidnappers, secessionist movements and COVID-19 pandemic, the security challenges in the country remained unabated.²

While it is no longer strange to Nigerians that COVID-19 pandemic has complicated humanitarian crisis in the country's North East, North West and other regions of the country, national security is now a big-time business as the bureaucrats, politicians and personnel of the security agencies and officials of the health sectors respectively now divert capital, security votes and expenditure meant for defence to personal gain. This has exacerbated the tenacious security challenges in the country which in turn make it very difficult for the government to respond adequately to the threats from COVID-19 pandemic and the insurgency from the North East, North Central and South East regions of the country in particular.

¹ Duerksen, M. (2017). Nigeria's Diverse Security Threats. *African Center for Strategic Studies*. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/nigeria-diverse-security-threats/>. (March 30).

² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). (2021). Nigeria: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan. <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-2021-humanitarian-response-plan-february-2021>. (16, March, 2021)

To this end, Gubak and Bulus³ argued that the impetus that threatens national security in Nigeria apart from insurgency, militancy and terrorism is corruption and bad governance and both of which is a twin evil and hydra-headed monster that has held the nation captive for several years. In other words, insecurity in the country increases because corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society to the extent that government officials, bureaucrats and politicians, personnel of the security agencies and officials of the health sectors put personal interests before national interest.⁴ COVID-19 management in the country cannot be excluded from the menace of corruption which in turn undermined human security in the states of the country.

Attah, Sambo, Sule, Bello and Saragih (2021:33) argued that “the much attention to mitigating the spread of the virus and provision of palliatives to cushion the effects of the abrupt stoppage to the formal and informal economic activities made it very easy for the armed bandits to use the COVID-19 lockdown policy to increase attacks against some of the communities in northern part of the country, especially in the BAY states and by extension increases insecurity situations across the Nigerian national borders with the states of the South West, South East and South-South not exempted”. Osah and Adewumi (2020:10) argued that “the coronavirus pandemic has affected the security architectures not only in the developed countries of the world but also in Africa in the greater part of the year 2020”.

However, one may argue that COVID-19 pandemic and the existing weak security situation in Nigeria have provided safe haven for criminality and nefarious activities. With crimes such as kidnapping, rape, armed robbery, internet fraud and Ponzi schemes (i.e. investment swindle), and inadequate health facilities, the total lockdown order imposed by the government following the outbreak of the pandemic made these forms of crimes to thrive in the country. Notably, the outbreak of the pandemic in the country has complicated the plight of the Nigerian citizens and undermined human security not only in the northern part but in other regions of the country. While this is not completely unusual from the conflict-induced displacement of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) following the activities of Boko Haram, bandits and Fulani herdsmen menace, the plights of the IDPs have been compounded amidst the wake of the pandemic.⁵

³ Gubak, H. D. & Bulus, K. (2018). National Security Challenges and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of the Niger Delta Region. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 6(4), 32-50.

⁴ Gubak & Bulus.

⁵ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD). (2020). Reappraising Conflict Trends in Nigeria amidst the COVID-19

1. The Nature of the Problem

The albatross of the Nigerian state in recent time, undeniably, is the unabated internal security challenges of the insurgent groups, criminal gangs, and terrorism. Fighting terrorism, insurgency, and other forms of conflict situations in the country has been one of the determinant factors that have shaped the country's public policy in recent time. One thing that is certain is that a country that has invested heavily on human security does not necessarily have to spend huge sum of money or capital on insecurity. Government efforts in fighting insurgency as in the case of Nigeria and in which huge capital is budgeted annually for the fight against insurgency and other forms of crimes become relevant.

Since the emergence of the Islamic Jihadist movement of the of Boko Haram in the country's North East, the successive governments from the administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari administration, so much attention and finances have been channelled towards the fight against insurgency and terrorism, and other forms of security challenges in the country such as climate change as well as the outbreak of pandemic, first was Ebola and now Coronavirus (COVID-19). In addition, a lot of focus was also on offensive counterinsurgency and counterterrorism mechanisms which in turn required huge sum of money to acquire the much needed logistics and equipment to prosecute the war against insurgent and terrorist groups in the country. As a consequence, capitals that are meant for infrastructure development and job creation for the citizenry are now channelled to the fight against these menaces which in turn undermine human security.

While the outbreak of COVID-19 is devastating the global economy as a whole, it also has its toll on human security in Nigeria and has deepened humanitarian needs and complicated government response to the insecurity issues ravaging the entire regions of the country. In the face of all these, the economy of the country suffers the more. This has also benefited the insurgent groups, especially the Boko Haram and ISWAP in the northern part of the country. Because of the total lockdown of the socio-economic sector of the country in an attempt to ameliorate or curb the spread and devastation of the pandemic, jobs and other means of livelihood for a number of the citizenry were lost and unemployment rate increases all over the country. This offers the insurgent groups the much-needed opportunity to indoctrinate the vulnerable groups who are finding it very difficult to survive amidst all these

Pandemic. <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trend/appraising-conflicts-in-nigeria-amidst-the-covid-19-pandemic>.

problems, in addition changed the narratives and the pattern of the security challenges in the country.

Madeira stated that the pandemic – while it is devastating the world economy as a whole, in Nigeria it has served the benefits of the Boko Haram and ISWAP by providing easy penetration, indoctrination and recruitment of the vulnerable and unemployed youths whom their sources of livelihood were distorted in the face of the total lockdown following the outbreak of the pandemic in the country.⁶ One may therefore argue that one of the consequences of the outbreak of the global pandemic is unemployment and shortage of food supply across the country making it very difficult for the government to provide to the citizenry all forms of human security needed for their socio-economic development. Rather than striking a balance between the security challenges of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, bandits, armed robbery, Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict, the COVID-19 containment policy and human security (i.e. food security, employment and infrastructure development), the government shifted its focus to ameliorating the spread of the pandemic.

This diversion of interest made the security forces including the police and the army to temporarily withdraw their forces from the more remote and vulnerable areas providing the insurgent groups the opportunity to develop state structure and expand their sophistications (Madeira, 2020). Policy-makers indecision on issues bothering on insecurity, lack of cooperation on the part of the citizenry to share useful information regarding to insecurity, and porous borders are also identified as problems associated with the increasing security threats in the country. It is on this premise that this study examines the impact of the changing pattern of the Nigeria's national security challenges including the threat from COVID-19 pandemic on human security. In addition, this study is posed to ascertain the adequacies of government responses to these security challenges.

2. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of the changing pattern of the security challenges on human security upon the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to:

⁶ Madeira, J. (2020 May, 6). Pandemics, Security, and Terrorism in Nigeria. ASP American Security Project. <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/pandemics-security-and-terrorism-in-nigeria/>

- 1) Examine the nature of the changing pattern of the Nigeria's national security challenges upon the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which in turn undermines human security in Nigeria,
- 2) Examine government responses to the changing pattern of the security challenges upon the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country, and
- 3) To offer strategic policy options to mitigate the impact of the changing pattern of the security challenges in the country.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to provide direction to this study:

- 1) What is the nature of the changing pattern of the national security challenges in Nigeria resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2) What are the government responses against the changing pattern of the security challenges in the country?
- 3) What strategies or policy options are available to government in mitigating the changing pattern of the national security challenges in the country?

B. Method

This study adopted the historical research design which is qualitative as well as explorative in nature. Historical research design is used to collect, verify, and synthesize evidence from the past in order to establish facts that define or refute issues raised in a research or study in any subject area. It implies that the study relied extensively on secondary sources of data such as textbooks, journal publications, and government official documents, as well as reports from dailies and periodicals, and internet materials. Secondary sources of data therefore are materials that are not directly from the researcher but from extant or already existing literature in a study area. In a nutshell, Secondary sources of data help a researcher to review literature relevant in his/her study area or within literature that have existed and often times, related to the topic under interrogation or investigation.

C. Review of Related Literature

1. Conceptualising National Security and Human Security

The term "National Security" has diverse scope as well as definitions in spite of its pertinence in national development. Romm argued that the term

“national security” has remained an ambiguous concept because of its emphasis on freedom from military threat and political coercion, and to non-military issues.⁷ Eke and EJOR⁸ averred that the term “national or territorial defence” often times dominates the definition of our traditional security conceptions. This implies that security on its own is the study of threat, use and control of military force. But a critical observation of the events in the contemporary society shows that the term “national security” goes beyond this narrow definition. Thus, the scope of the concept is expanded to include the provision of all that are required to ensure there is adequate security, i.e., from social, economic and to health securities.

Ewa asserts that the concept of security means more than the absence of conflict as it was conceived by some scholar who see it from a state-centric perspective.⁹ In other words, national security from a people-centred perspective encompasses areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Again, it implies that the concept of national security has been interpreted narrowly in some circumstances to only mean the security of national territory from external aggressions. In another view, Eke & EJOR argued that the concept of national security:

Is beyond protection or defence of a country’s territorial boundary, but to also protect the ordinary people from the threats of diseases, hunger, unemployment, crimes, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards.¹⁰

This perspective draws attention to the human dimension of security which is sacrosanct to human development in a sovereign and civilise nation. To achieve sustainable national security means that the two major dimensions to security of life and property which include “soft power and hard

⁷ Romm, J. J. (1993). Defining national security: the nonmilitary security aspects. Pew Project of America’s Task in a Changed World (Pew Project Series). Council on Foreign Relations, p.222. ISBN 978-0-87609-135-7. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_security.

⁸ Eke, G & EJOR, E. C. (2021). Covid-19 and Nigeria: Rethinking the Architecture of National Security. *UJAH*, 22(1), 225-241.

⁹ Ewa, I.O. (2018). Nigeria’s Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Implications, Issues and Lessons for National Security. *Review of History and Political Science*, 6(1), 33-42.

¹⁰ Eke & EJOR.

military dimensions” must be realistic. To this end, Kim¹¹ argued that there must be some level or degree of exercise of power for a nation-state to maintain its national security and to achieve this, two concepts are necessary. These include diplomacy (soft power) which simply deploys negotiation and influence; and hard (largely military) which requires the use of military means to achieve sustainable peace and security. Again, Kim argued that the concept of national security means different things to different people at different times and circumstances. It includes not only the protection of a nation-state from externally and internally induced aggressions or security challenges through coercion or excessive force but through diplomacy. Emphatically, national security includes safeguarding or safekeeping of the nation as a whole with economic security, energy security, environmental security, health security, women’s security and food security as priority areas. It also includes political security, homeland security, cyber security, human security, and energy and natural resource security.¹²

For Romm national security includes citizens’ security, as well as economic and institution securities which is the function of a responsible government.¹³ Originally, the concept is conceived as protection against military attack as well as to include non-military dimension such as security from terrorism, minimising of crimes, economic security, cyber security, environmental security, among others. It implies that safeguarding a nation-state requires both military and non-military dimension to it which is the responsibility of the government of the state. The government thus need to reduce the causes of insecurity such as climate change, economic inequality, political exclusion and nuclear proliferation.¹⁴ For Osisanya¹⁵ it is the ability of a state to cater for the protection of its citizens. It deals specifically with a country’s ability to deal with all its security related matters including protections from threat of violence within and from outside the country, as well as providing for its citizenry the needed social and economic securities. The benefits of efficient security, i.e., from social, economic and environmental securities cannot be overemphasized since these forms of securities are needed in response to the complexity and interrelatedness of the security challenges or threats in Nigeria and beyond. It means that

¹¹ Kim, R. H. (2015). What is National Security? *The Heritage Foundation*. <https://www.heritage.org/military-strength-topical-essay/2015-essays/what-national-security>.

¹² Kim, 2015

¹³ Romm.

¹⁴ Romm.

¹⁵ Osisanya, S. (n.d.). National Security versus Global Security. UN Chronicle. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/national-security-versus-global-security>.

security must be all embracing and should not be defined narrowly to include the military only but also non-military dimensions.

It is on this premise that the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS, 2009) defined the concept of human security as:

That branch of security which intend to protect core areas of human freedom and fulfilments that are essential for human existence in a modern world. Again, it is that which is needed to protect people from critical and widespread threats. However, creating of political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems gives people the needed means of survival, livelihood and dignity in a civilised community (UNTFHS, 2009:6).

United Nations Development Programmes conceived human security from the perspective of safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression; and protection from hurtful disruptions of the citizenry daily life.¹⁶ In another development, UNDP conceived human security as that aspect of national security that ensures that citizens enjoy freedom from fear and want, and from safety from chronic threats such as hunger, diseases, and repression, and from protection from sudden and harmful disruptions whether in their homes, jobs or in the communities.¹⁷ Orhero argued that the pre-Cold War era conception of security differs tremendously from its post-Cold War conceptions.¹⁸ While it is very narrow in scope and conceives of the coercive apparatus of the state to uphold its national sovereignty and defence of its territorial integrity, as well as ensure stability and peace in the pre-Cold War era, it has a broader perspective in the post-Cold War era. Therefore, he conceives human security to include protection of the citizens from poverty, hunger, diseases, unemployment and national disaster.¹⁹

From the plethora of the definitions of national security above, it is obvious that the end of the Cold War in the 1990s marked a paradigm shift (or the departure) from the state-centred definition of national security to a more embracing definition of the concept. Overall, these definitions have been able to redirect the concept of national security from its *state-centric or traditional approach* to one which emphasises protection, empowerment, as

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (1994). *New Dimensions: Human Development Report*. New York, USA: Oxford.

¹⁷ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (1996). *United Nations Development Programme: Human Development Report*. Lagos, Nigeria.

¹⁸ Orhero, A. E. (2020). Human Security: The Key to Enduring National Security in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, 17(2020), 470-484.

¹⁹ Orhero.

well as promotes, protects and empowers the individual citizens. From this point of view, one may be tempted to argue that the definitions of human security must emphasise the interconnectedness of both the threats and responses to human security when addressing insecurities that undermine sustainable socio-economic development. Obi defines the concept of insecurity as “a chronic threat to human security including life, food and shelter, as well as threats to territory, states, religious beliefs, properties and institutions”.²⁰ In another view, she conceives insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection or inadequate freedom from danger. From the view of the researcher, human security encompasses personal security such as economic, food, health, environmental and political securities.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study finds it appropriate to adopt the *Natural State theory* since it explains the reasons for the origin of state, as well as the functions of government. It holds that the Leviathan (King) emerged purposely to provide protection to the individuals and the much-needed security necessary for their social and economic development. In its contemporary usage and application, it has been used to justify the reason men as natural social beings decided to interact among themselves in a well-defined social community. It was created first by Aristotle and now often refers to as Aristolian natural state theory. Yusuf conceives the state of nature as a concept used in describing the natural condition of mankind, and as a philosophical assertion regarding the condition of human beings before social factors are imposed. In another view, Yusuf described state of nature as the condition in which humans found themselves before the social contract.²¹

In its real hypothetical condition, state of nature in political theory, describes the state of human nature before now and without modern form of political association. The state of nature apart from its conception by Aristotle in his natural state theory, was also an essential element in Thomas Hobbes social contract theory (1580-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1775). Others who contributed to the development of this theory include: Jowett, 1885; Ross, 1937 and Copestone, 1946 (Orhero, 2020:481). Closely related to the natural state theory is Thomas Hobbes Social “Contract theory” of the origin of state which holds that the state evolve as a result of man’s desire to live a better

²⁰ Obi, C. K. (2015). Challenges of Insecurity for National Development. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(2), 13-18.

²¹ Yusuf, S. (2009). State of nature theories and their reflections on education policies. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 1(2009), 1936-1938.

life free from the antagonisms associated with the natural state in which life was poor, solitary, nasty, selfish, brutish and short. To achieve its desires, man decided to voluntarily surrender its rights and liberties to the Leviathan or assembly of men with the aim of transforming the state of nature to a civil society.²²

For Hobbes, Locke and J.J Rousseau, social contract was used to justify and delimit political authority which was centred on the individual self-interest and rational consent and comparing the advantages of an organised government under what conditions the government becomes useful and acceptable by all people and on a voluntary contract. The state of nature in Locke philosophy is also characterised by the notion of absence of government but not of the absence of mutual obligation. Locke thus argued that “beyond self-preservation a civil society ought to demonstrate equal and independent, no harm, liberty and equal possessions”.²³ Unlike Hobbes, Locke believed that the individuals are naturally endowed with the rights to life, liberty and property, and that the state of nature could have been relatively peaceful. The individuals agree to form a commonwealth in order to leave the state of nature for a civil society and impartial state capable to arbitrate on their disputes and redress injustices within the commonwealth. J. J. Rousseau’s idea of the state of nature was also centred in his political philosophy in which he argued that “the state of nature was a morally neutral and peaceful, and in which solitary individuals acted only according to their immediate basic needs and desire for self-preservation”. In his “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (1775)”, the individuals shifted from the state of nature because of their desires to be dependent on one another and become increasingly civilised.²⁴

The natural state theory inarguably juxtaposes the modern conception of a civil society as predicted by Aristotle and Thomas Hobbes. It means that the state (i.e. the government) emerged to perform certain functions which include protection of lives and properties of the citizens. Human security becomes desirable and the sole responsibility or obligation of the state or government to its citizens. The individuals’ highest desire as conceived by Aristotle is happiness and good life. Hobbes’ conception of the good life can be achieved only in a well organised civil society. In other worlds, human beings

²² Sikiru, L. N. (2013). *Element of Political Science*. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), School of Arts and Social Sciences.

²³ Andre, M. (2021). State of Nature Political Theory. Britannica, July, 23. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/state-of-nature-political-theory>.

²⁴ Andre.

can only achieve happiness and good life in a civil society free from chronic insecurity. The present state of the Nigeria society falls short of this expectation in the face of the security challenges of the insurgencies of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, and IPOB and its security network, ESN, and by extension, armed criminal gangs including the bandits, Fulani marauders, kidnapping syndicates and armed robbers. The government therefore is expected to provide the citizenry the much-needed protection from the insurgent groups and criminal gangs in the country's northeast, northwest, north central, southeast, southwest and south-south regions in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The citizens in return are also expected to give back to the state what was expected of them. Both the state and the citizens own each other the exercise of certain constitutional obligations in order to enjoy good life without which human security is not guaranteed.

D. Result and Discussion

1. The Nature of the Changing Pattern of the Security Challenges in Nigeria

Several discourses on the Nigeria's national security challenges have classified the security threats in the country into several forms or types such as the threats from insurgent groups, ethnic and tribal conflicts, boundary disputes, post-election violence, armed robbery, climate change related conflict, terrorist groups, among others. In affirmation to this conception, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, UNTFHS (2009) argued that "with Nigeria not excluded, the security threats in most states of Africa are predominantly from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemic, and international terrorism, among others. Preceding the recent and changing pattern of security challenges in Nigeria were threats associated with regional, ethnic and youth radicalised groups, prominent among which are the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) in the South West; the Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC) in the northeast, west and central regions; the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MSOP), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) and Egbesu Boys in the Niger Delta region; and Igbo Peoples' Congress (IPC) and the Bakassi Boys in the Southeast region. There are also those from the militant groups such as the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah and coordinated by Jomo Gbomo; the Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo; Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDTV) led by Ateke Tom; the Bush Boys, among others. More recently is the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) which appeared in March 2016, Boko

Haram, Ansaru- a splinter group from Boko Haram since 2012, Kala-Kato and Ombalse group.²⁵

Most disturbing in recent time are the threats associated with the activities of Islamic extremist groups: the Boko Haram terrorist organisation and ISWAP. There are also other criminal groups such as the Fulani marauders, bandits and kidnapers. Very recently the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which is a different form of threat all together has joined the bandwagon of the threats to human security in Nigeria. These crippling trends have changed the pattern of the security challenges in the country. These security challenges inarguably are immeasurable with the socio-economic sector of the country as the most affected. Associated with the major causes of these national security challenges are, first, the inabilities of the succeeding administrations to adequately address the challenges of mass poverty and hunger, youth unemployment and under-employment, and secondly, the problems associated with climate change and environmental safety, ethnic consciousness, regional marginalisation and lopsided development, education and diseases.²⁶

Orhero argues that a country that invests heavily on human security with a focus on the vital areas of the socio-economic sector needs not to invest huge capital and effort in the fight against insecurity or crimes, insurgency, militancy, kidnapping, armed robbery, bombing, political assassination, banditry, Students' unrest, trafficking in human beings and other form of violent crimes.²⁷ However a review of extant literature on the inherent national security threats in the country shows that these challenges have

²⁵ Salawu, B. (2012). Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies. *European Journal of Social Science*, 13(3),345-353; Onuoha, F. C. (2011). The Audacity of the Boko Haram: Background Analysis and Emerging Trends. *Security Journal*, 13 (6); Duru, E. J. C. (2012). The Poverty of Crisis Management Strategies in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: A Focus on the Amnesty Programme. *African Research Review: International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, 6(2), 162-170; Afeno, S. O. (2014). Insurgency, Counter-Insurgency and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria. *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, 3(December), 46-62; Ewa, I.O. (2018). Nigeria's Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Implications, Issues and Lessons for National Security. *Review of History and Political Science*, 6(1), 33-42.

²⁶ Iregbemi, P. & Uzonwanne, C. (2015). Security Challenges and Implications to National Stability. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 6(4), 169-175; Orhero, A. E. (2020). Human Security: The Key to Enduring National Security in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, 17(2020), 470-484.

²⁷ Orhero.

several but similar accounts of their origins. ACCORD²⁸ categorised the security challenges in the country according to their domiciled locations. While the North-East States of Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano and Yobe witness the insurgency of Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP); and the North-Western States of Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara witness the menace of violent armed groups including the armed bandits that in often cases kidnap innocent travellers for ransom. There is also the menace of the Fulani marauders often domesticated in the North-Central States of Adamawa, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Taraba and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), though little has been said about such incidences in the suburbs of the FCT. In Southern Nigeria, Biafra and the Niger Delta: piracy, militancy, separatist movements, e.g., IPOB; and police violence are the dominant security challenges in the region.²⁹

While a number of these security challenges, for example, the Boko Haram and ISWAP have their sources connected with the global jihad radical Islamic group of the al-Qaeda transnational terrorist organisation and its affiliate groups, some are internally induced such as the militant groups in the Niger Delta, IPOB in the South-East, and banditry and Fulani herdsman-farmers conflict in the North-West and North Central; and now in other parts of the country including the States of Southern Nigeria generally in which Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Rivers and Ondo States are located. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro³⁰ traced the causes and sources of the insecurity situation in the country to include lack of institutional capacity; pervasive material inequalities and unfairness; ethno-religious conflicts; conflict of perceptions between the government and the public; weak security system; loss of socio-cultural and communal value system; porous borders, rural-urban drift; socio irresponsibility on the part of the Multinational Corporations (MNCs) or foreign companies; and unemployment and poverty. One may therefore infer that the resultant of the successive governments' failure to adequately address these challenges promoted some of these unrests, conflicts and insurgent groups in the country.

²⁸ See Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD). (2021). The Security Situation in Nigeria. June, 7. <https://www.ecoi.net/en/countries/nigeria/featured-topics/security-situation/>.

²⁹ See ACCORD, 2021

³⁰ Achumba, I. C., Ighomereho, O. S., & Akpor-Robaro, M. O. M. (2013). Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 4(2), 79-99.

Following the catastrophe associated with the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a conceptual clarification of the virus and the place of its origin becomes necessary. However, the evolution of the virus was traced to Wuhan, the Capital City of the Hubei Province in the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) in September 2019 often regarded as the *ground zero* of the virus (Kim, 2020). Despite the conspiratorial hypotheses surrounding its outbreak, there is a near consensus about its source and classification. Medically, the virus or disease has been classified among the existing viruses often known to cause illness associated with cold, acute and severe diseases such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Further investigation revealed that, although the virus is new, but this form of SARS-CoV was transmitted through civet cats to human beings in China in the year 2002. A similar form of the virus, the MERS-CoV was traced to have been transmitted from dromedary camels to human beings in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Symptoms common with this new strain include respiratory symptoms, fever and cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In its severe cases it can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and death of infested persons.³¹

Similarly, Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir and Siddique³² stated that that the novel virus is associated alongside similar viruses that are highly transmittable. It is also a pathogenic infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Phylogenetically, it is related to severe acute respiratory syndrome-like (SARS-like) bat viruses. This means that bats are possible transmitters of the natural virus. In addition, they traced this virus to the coronaviruridae family in the Nidovirale order. Though, its mode of transmission to man has not been clearly ascertained. The only known source of transmission medically is human to human.³³ The narratives of the global pandemic has changed in the face of its outbreak and the 27 February declaration in Lagos, Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Health, and 19 March 2020 shutdown order of public places, schools and social gatherings by the Federal government through its Ministry of Health. Since its declaration in the country things have changed and several cases and death of infected persons have been declared by the

³¹ See World Health Organization (W.H.O). (2020). COVID-19. WHO EMRO - Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office. <https://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus/questions-and-answers.html>.

³² Shereen, M. A., Khan, S., Kazmi, A., Bashir, N., & Siddique, R. (2020). COVID-19 infection: Origin, transmission, and characteristics of human coronaviruses. *Journal of Advanced Research*, 24: 91-98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jare.2020.03.005>

³³ Shereen et al., 2020.

federal government through its agencies, the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC).³⁴ Between 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, the infection as well as death rates have risen. As of Monday, 6 September, 2021 there are about 195,511 confirmed cases with 8, 430 recorded active cases, discharged cases of about 184,529 and 2552 recorded death cases.³⁵

TABLE 1. Confirmed Cases by States in Nigeria as of September 2021

States Affected	Number of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	Number of Cases (on admission)	Number of Discharged Cases	Number of Deaths
Lagos	73,906	2,643	70,618	645
FCT	20,684	491	20,017	176
Rivers	10,765	1,004	9,624	137
Kaduna	9,280	64	9,150	66
Plateau	9,214	76	9,077	61
Oyo	8,358	750	7,440	168
Edo	5,671	522	4,949	200
Ogun	5,300	100	5,122	78
Ondo	4,148	272	3,800	76
Akwa Ibom	4,135	738	3,355	42
Kano	4,101	64	3,926	111
Kwara	3,647	381	3,207	59
Delta	3,027	386	2,556	86
Osun	2,749	80	2,585	84
Enugu	2,563	3	2,531	29
Nasarawa	2,424	40	2,345	39
Gombe	2,267	32	2,191	44
Katsina	2,214	50	2,129	35
Anambra	2,108	32	2,057	19
Ebonyi	2,048	13	2,003	32
Abia	1,859	63	1771	25
Imo	1,721	33	1,650	38
Bauchi	1,568	13	1,538	17
Ekiti	1,549	268	1,260	21
Benue	1,464	41	1,399	24
Borno	1,344	0	1,306	38

³⁴ Amorighoye, T. A. (2020). COVID-19 has exposed the education divide in Nigeria: This is how we can also close it. *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.wforum.org/agenda/2020/06/education-nigeria-covid-19-digital-divide/>;

Okolie-Osemene, J. (2021). Nigeria Security Governance Dilemmas during the COVID-19 Crisis. *South African Journal of Political Studies*, 48(2), 260-277.

³⁵ See Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC). (2021 September, 7). COVID-19 Nigeria Confirmed cases by States. <https://covid-19.ncdc.gov.ng/#/>!

Adamawa	1,136	6	1,098	32
Bayelsa	1,103	115	961	27
Taraba	1,062	27	1,011	24
Niger	994	60	914	20
Sokoto	796	2	766	28
Jigawa	576	12	545	16
Cross River	516	36	459	21
Yobe	501	2	490	9
Kebbi	458	9	433	16
Zamfara	253	2	243	8
Kogi	5	0	3	2

Source: NCDC Covid-19 Nigeria (2021)

These have continued to rise on daily basis with amazing rates despite government efforts to ameliorate its spread through policy options. Worst still is the rising rate of mass killings by the terrorist and insurgent groups, the Boko Haram, ISWAP, bandits, and Fulani marauders in the face of the threat of the virus, especially in the northern part of the country. In short, there is no day that passes without a report of the infection rate of the virus and the havoc cause by targeted attacks from the nihilist groups of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, bandits and the Fulani marauders in national dailies and social media platforms. These security challenges have expanded the national security challenges, though, with huge sophistication compared to how they were at the beginning. With the emergence of the radicalised or religious extremist groups such as the Boko Haram and ISWAP, and the Fulani marauders and armed bandits, there have been new dimensions against the background of counter responses by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari.

Robert and Stuart (2021) assert that the changing nature of SARS-CoV-2, i.e., the virus that causes COVID-19, has questioned the validity of the existing vaccines for COVID-19. Since the outbreak of virus, first in Wuhan, China the SARS-CoVi2 coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has been changing resulting in different variants, from the 'delta' variant discovered to have originated from the Pongo lineage B.1.16172. As at September 2021, the new variant was regarded as the most contagious of all the forms of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus so far, making it the most the dangerous of all. In 2021, 'delta' variant SARS-CoV-2 virus was classified as the most dominant variant in USA. Different and more infectious variants including the 'beta' variant have so far emerged in England, California, and other countries of Europe. South Africa has been regarded as the ground zero of *Beta* variant. It was

however argued that these new variants may cause more severe diseases and may evade diagnostic tests and resistant to antiviral treatments. The *Aloha*, *beta*, *gamma*, and *delta* variants of the SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus have been declared to have greater transmissibility and evasion of immunity or diagnostic testing (Robert & Stuart, 2021:3). With this development, nations of the world have been subjected to catastrophe of the variants of COVID-19 pandemic which in turn threatens human security across the global system. These development alongside the now traditional security challenges of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry, armed robbery, ritual killings, kidnappings for ransom, cattle rustling and the threat from the Fulani marauders posed the greatest threats to human security in Nigeria.

2. Government Counter Responses Against the Changing Pattern of the Security Challenges in Nigeria

In the face of these intractable security challenges the succeeding administrations in the country launched several responses and counterinsurgency/ terrorism mechanisms. Whether government responses are adequate or not, there are some commendable counterinsurgencies (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT) efforts or responses launched by the various civil administrations in the country. Addressing the changing pattern of insecurity as they manifest, the federal government launched various counterterrorism mechanisms. Also addressing the age-long crisis emanating from the oil rich Niger Delta region, several policies and programmes have been launched by the federal government purposely to address the problems of the minority status and perceived marginalisation of the people of the region. Oluwale traced the reasons behind the increasing insecurity situation in Nigeria to porous borders and difficult terrains in some of the terrorist prone states; arms and weapons' trafficking through the porous borders; poor governance and poverty; overburdened security apparatus and diminishing presence of the federal government; controversial peace agreements between the government and criminal gangs; and climate change.³⁶

Gubak and Bulus (2018) stated that over the years the efforts of the federal government in combating or ameliorating the security challenges in Nigeria include: the Creation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) to cater for the development problem of the people of the Niger Delta region. Again, in 1976, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) was established to also perform same. In 1992, the Oil Mineral Producing Area

³⁶ Oluwale, O. (2021). Rising insecurity in northwest Nigeria: Terrorism thinly disguised as banditry. BROOKINGS. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2021/02/18/rising-in-northernwest-nigeria-terrorism0thinly-disguised-as-banditry>.

Development Commission (OMPADEC) was established. Following the return to civil rule, in December 2000 President Olusegun Obasanjo commissioned a new body, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) with the hope of proffering lasting solution to the increasing socio-economic problem of the people of the Niger Delta.³⁷ In 2017, the government of Nigeria launched a four-year Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017-2020 with a focus on agricultural transformation, food security, improve power and petroleum product supply, job creation, youth empowerment and sustainable industrialised economy. Furtherance to its effort in resolving national security challenges and other forms of crimes, the federal government embarked on implementation of Bank Verification Number (BVN) Programme and the Treasury Single Account Initiative (TSAI).³⁸ Also responding to the challenges of national security, the federal government enacted the Terrorism Prevention Act 2013. Also developed are the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 and the Counter Terrorism Center (CTC) to coordinate national counterterrorism efforts. In 2017, the Federal Government also adopted a policy framework known as the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAPPCVE) in 2017 to improve on human security with people-oriented approach.³⁹

In collaboration with the USA and UK governments the administration of Goodluck Jonathan in 2014 setup training programme for regular and Special Forces of Nigeria to help the in the fight against terrorism. The government also utilised the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) created in 1994 in partnership with neighbouring countries to fight insurgency of the Boko Haram.⁴⁰ In May 2015, President Buhari dismantled the existing counterinsurgency (COIN) joint military task force launched by the Goodluck administration code-name *Operation Zaman Lafiya* following its failure to successfully combat the insurgency of Boko Haram in the Northeast and launched another COIN operation code-name *Operation Lafiya Dole* under the command of Lt. General Turkur Buratai.⁴¹ There was also increased collaboration in the tripartite effort (involving Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon) under MNJTF regional counterterrorism operation to

³⁷ Gubak & Bulus, 2018

³⁸ See National Security Strategy (NSS). (2019). National Security Strategy Report. Federal Republic of Nigeria, December, 2019.

³⁹ National Security Strategy (NSS).

⁴⁰ Kinsey, C. & Krieg, A. (2021). Assembling a Force to Defeat Boko Haram: How Nigeria Integrated the Market into its Counterinsurgency Strategy. *Defense & Security Analysis*, 37(2), 232-249. DOI:10.1080/14751798.2021.1919356.

⁴¹ Ewa, I.O. (2018). Nigeria's Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Implications, Issues and Lessons for National Security. *Review of History and Political Science*, 6(1), 33-42.

intensify the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in 2015. A larger and intensified operation were also created with a code-name *Gama Aiki* which in Hausa language means *Finish Job* in 2016. In September, *Gama Aiki* was replaced with *Operation Rawan Kada (Crocodile Dance)* also referred to as *Gama Aiki II*. There was also the MNJTF bilateral operation between Nigeria and Cameroon which led to the launching of a counterterrorism operation code-name *Operation Deep Punch 2*. *Operation Thunderstorm 1* was also created in December 2016.

In late 2017, there was a regional stabilisation workshop to stabilise common framework in the fight against the Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. In May 2018, the Lake Chad Basin Governor's Forum was established to further strengthen linkages at the national fronts. In February 2018, *Operation Ruwan Wuta IV (Rain of Fire)* was launched with the mandate to organise airstrikes along the Northern edge of the Lake Chad Basin. In April 2018, *Operation Anmi Fakat* was launched to consolidate on the gains of *Rawan Kada*. Also in 2018, the Nigerian Army launched *Operation Last Hold* with the mandate to clear the Nigerian side of the Lake Chad Basin and facilitate the return of the IDPs and normal economic activities.⁴² Reconstruction effort through what was referred to as the *Bama Initiative* also code-named *Operation Safe Corridor* was initiated to deradicalized ex-militants.⁴³

In 2013, the federal government-imposed state of emergency on the states of Adamawa, Bornu and Yobe in the northeast region in its effort at combating the threats from Boko Haram terrorist group. The governments of Republic of Chad and Niger Republic jointly imposed state of emergency in the areas bordering Nigeria. Both encouraged the presence of Civilian Joint Task Force (C-JTF), a volunteer group to complement military forces in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. Because of the local knowledge of area by the members of the group the group was encouraged to carry out joint operation with the military personnel.⁴⁴ Moscow (Russia) also

⁴² Omar, S. M. & Ndubuisi, C. A. (2018). *Response to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*. ISS Institute for Security Studies Research Report, July 2018.

⁴³ International Crisis Group (ICG). (2017 October, 25). Cameroon's Far North: Reconstruction amid Ongoing Conflict. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/centrafrica/cameroon/b133-extreme-nord-du-cameroun-le-casse-tete-de-la-reconstruction-en-perode-de-conflt>. See also Omar, S. M. & Ndubuisi, C. A. (2018). *Response to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*. ISS Institute for Security Studies Research Report, July 2018.

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group (ICG). (2017 October, 25). Cameroon's Far North: Reconstruction amid Ongoing Conflict. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/centrafrica/cameroon/b133-extreme-nord-du-cameroun-le-casse-tete-de-la-reconstruction-en-perode-de-conflt>; Kapeh, K. A. K. (2017). *Vigilantes in Counterinsurgencies: Nigerian Civil*

provided military technical assistant to defeat insurgency in Nigeria in Nigeria's northeast.⁴⁵

The federal government of Nigeria in the face of the outbreak of Coronavirus in the country embarked on several programmes designed to curb the spread of the virus. According to Roth (2021) the government of Nigeria at all levels responded through policy options to control the spread of the coronavirus within the territory of Nigeria including total lockdown of public places, social activities and institutions at the early stage. A number of international actors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank also responded to the devastation of the virus in Nigeria by supporting the country's health care sector. China, USA, UK, and the European Union (EU) were also part of the response team in Nigeria.⁴⁶

Also of significance is the federal government effort to stop the spiralling Fulani herder-farmers conflict through various initiatives or consultative forum such as the 18 January 2018 National Economic Council (NEC) made up ten member representatives which was headed by the Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo. The NEC forum was given the mandate to unravel the root cause of the conflict and address the incessant impunity and killings of Nigerian citizens. The administration of President Buhari also responded to the conflict between the Fulani herders and farmers' conflict Buhari through deployment of selected government officials, administrators, police and military personnel, and selected residents of the most affected states and scheming for cattle colonies and National Livestock Transformation Plan. A lot of success has been recorded in the states of Zamfara and Kaduna, although with a number of casualties among the military personnel deployed to the fight against the insurgent groups across the country.⁴⁷

Joint Task Force in Perspective. Strategic Research Project International Fellow, United States Army War College, Class 2017.

⁴⁵ Omotuyi, S. (2018). Russo/Nigerian Relations in the Context of Counterinsurgency Operation in Nigeria. *SAGE Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, 23(1), 48-68. DOI: 10.1177/0873598418803526

⁴⁶ Roth, K. (2021). COVID-19, Abuses by Boko Haram, Restriction on Humanitarian Access in the Northeast. Human Rights Watch World Report. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/nigeria>.

⁴⁷ International Crisis Group (ICG). (2018). Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence. (26 July 2018). <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/262-stopping-nigerias-farmers-herders-violence>. See also Seun, O. (2021 July, 7). Nnamdi Kanu: IPOB makes clarification on ESN planning bombs in Southeast. Daily Post News Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2021/07/07/nnamdi-kanu-ipob-makes-clarification-on-esn-planting-bombs-in-southeast/>; Seun, O. (2021 September, 15). Yobe: NAF jet bombs 'Bahari village' over Boko Haram, ISWAP camps. Daily Post News.

Like the insurgent groups, COVID-19 pandemic has no boundaries or confined in one region. With the new variants, its threat spreads across the country with greater uncertainties surrounding it and the treatment. Ivor (2020) opines that the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in Nigeria is an additional challenge or crisis on top of the existing security challenges in the country. In the face of the outbreak there was a total lockdown of social and economic activities in Nigeria as it were in other countries of the global system but there were some obvious challenges associated with the Nigeria's case such as police violence, etc. While it was expected that there will be decrease in crime rate compared with the pre-COVID-19 period, the COVID-19 policy option in Nigeria which transited to contact tracing, social distancing, physical distancing, isolation, panic buying, emergency flights, evacuation, stock up, and total lockdown of socio-economic activities, did not deter trouble makers from engaging in violence acts or crimes such as banditry, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, and police violence and extrajudicial killings.⁴⁸

This is what informed Ookeditse⁴⁹ to describe COVID-19 outbreak as “an invisible enemy which does not require the state to mobilise security forces for combat like it is done in the cases of the threats from Boko Haram, ISWAP, bandits, armed robbery, kidnapping, and the self-styled Fulani marauders that have taken several lives and displaced many, especially in the northern part of the country, but government preventive mechanisms targeted at preventing the spread of the virus across the country”. Also, Okolie-Osemene⁵⁰ argued that outside the existing security challenges in Nigeria, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) preventive policy options initiated by the federal government was greeted by galloping inflation and rapidly increasing cost of living which have undermine human security in comparison with those cause by the criminal gangs, insurgent groups and terrorist organisations in the country. From this standpoint, one may argue that the nexus between the outbreak of COVID-19, its concomitant global crisis and the existing security crises in Nigeria is that both have undermine human security since their emergence. Consequently, as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) case rises it complicates the task of human security in several ways such

<https://dailypost.ng/2021/09/15/yobe-naf-bombs-buhari-village-boko-haram-iswap-camps/?amp=1>

⁴⁸ Okolie-Osemene, J. (2021). Nigeria Security Governance Dilemmas during the COVID-19 Crisis. *South African Journal of Political Studies*, 48(2), 260-277.

⁴⁹ Ookeditse, L. (2020). Reimagining Botswana's National Security in Light of COVID-19. *African Security Review*, 29(3), 267-279. DOI: 10.1080/10246029.1806088.

⁵⁰ Okolie-Osemene, J. (2021). Nigeria Security Governance Dilemmas during the COVID-19 Crisis. *South African Journal of Political Studies*, 48(2), 260-277.

that it causes shortages of food items and other socio-economic needs of the people. The poor state of the health care system in Nigeria also contributed to create more panic all over the country complicating the expanding threats of the criminal gangs, insurgent groups, and terrorist organisations in the country.

The deployment of security operatives and task forces along the roads and streets of Nigeria during the lockdown was greeted with lawlessness, human rights violations and fatal crimes such as extrajudicial killings by the security personnel, especially the army and men of the police force in the same manner these offences are orchestrated by the criminals, insurgent groups and terrorist organisations in the northeast, north central, and in other parts of the country. This is what Okolie-Osemene refers to as security governance dilemmas during the lockdown because the security operatives and officials of the task force rather than securing lives and properties, as well as preventing the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring compliance were rather involved in actions that abuses or violated human rights of the Nigerian citizens.⁵¹ Available goods in local markets were destroyed, and a few displayed for sale in public places were confiscated or destroyed by the security agents involved in the enforcement of lockdown policies resulting in unavailability of food items.

Ookeditse argued that efficient and effective prevention of the spread and infection rates of the virus just like counter responses against the insurgent and terrorism groups, and other sundry criminal activities requires funding,⁵² therefore it is noteworthy that the counter responses of the government against COVID-19 pandemic demanded huge changes in budgeting priority of the government and as a consequence, the Nigerian government is currently facing double challenges, first, in its fight against insurgency, terrorism and other criminal activities; and secondly, in its effort to contain COVID-19 infections rate both of which required huge budgeting that would have been channelled to developmental projects which in turn undermines human security in the country. Corrupt practices including forceful extortion or outright bribery and which in often cases resulted in extrajudicial killings and abuses of human rights greeted the enforcement of COVID-19 preventive policy during the lockdown in the streets of the states of Nigeria. This questions the reason for the deployment of security personnel in enforcing the COVID-19 preventive policy of the government. It also questions the rationale behind the deployment of the army in particular in

⁵¹ Okolie-Osemene.

⁵² Ookeditse, 2020.

enforcing the COVID-19 orders by the federal and state governments in Nigeria. The lockdown of businesses, public gathering, churches, mosques, schools and colleges by the government was greeted by petty (or minor) crimes such as stealing of pot of soups or cooked foods, domestic birds and animal, harvesting of crops in farms; and in most cases, adverse crimes such as armed robbery.

Again, the distribution of palliatives in the face of the outbreak of the pandemic by the government both at the federal, states and local government levels in Nigeria was questioned because most people were exposed to the danger of being infected or even got infected in the process of the struggle for a share of the government palliatives. Jobs and businesses were lost which made it very difficult for some family heads or breadwinners to provide for their family members. All of these have provided the nexus between the outbreak of COVID-19, its concomitant global crisis and the existing security crisis which in turn undermine human security in Nigeria. The new variant of Coronavirus (COVID-19), Omicron has emerged with its divergent threat to lives, and the conspiratorial hypotheses have also questioned its originality.

E. Conclusion

From the findings above one may conclude that the nexus between the pre-COVID-19 or traditional security issues and the outbreak of the Coronavirus in Nigeria lies in threats to human security in the country. Undeniably, the changing pattern of the existing security issues and the virus are taking lives, although, not on equal levels compared to those cause by the killer Fulani herders, armed bandits, Boko Haram and ISWAP but all have undermined human security, particularly in northern Nigeria. This assertion may look provoking, but the truth remains that both are taking lives cum efforts and capitals meant for developing infrastructures that would have in turn benefited the people. Compared to the actual war situation both have left Nigerians on the receiving end hence impacting negatively on human security much more that could have better imagined than experienced. Government responses to the security challenges of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry, Fulani herdsmen, kidnappers, armed robbers, IPOB and ESN, and by extension COVID-19 have been enamours. Although without some challenges, government efforts and responses to these security challenges have been commendable. In recent time, there are greater impacts following the changing pattern and purposeful techniques adopted by the armed forces of Nigeria in the fight against insurgencies in the country. The federal

government has also heightened its effort in the fight against the threat posed by COVID-19 and its Omicron variant through the provision of vaccines and its administrations across the states of the federation, although more efforts are required to ensure the government achieve its desire objective of eradicating the spread of the virus in the country. Notable also, the government at all levels have taken some commendable steps to ameliorate the excruciating pains and other forms of discomforts caused by insecurity on the larger population across the country but much have to be done to provide the citizenry the much-needed human security. Following the seemingly global conspiracy theory or propaganda or campaign against the administration of COVID-19 vaccines, most Nigerian citizens are reluctant to take the vaccines which would have protected them from being infected by the killer virus. Despite the huge amount of capital invested in providing the vaccine, it has been greeted with resistance from some Nigerians for the fear of the alleged consequences after a short while.

F. Recommendations

Following the findings in the cause of this discourse, the following recommendations are found necessary:

- 1) There is no doubt that government at all levels (the federal, state and local government) have taken steps to ameliorate the insecurity challenges posed by the Herders-Farmers conflict in the country but the government seems not to have lasting solution to this problem. This study therefore recommends that the federal and state governments should jointly revitalise the federal government National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) to manage cattle production and peaceful coexistence between the local farming communities and the Fulani herders. In addition, establishing cattle ranches and grazing reserve areas of various sizes and in different locations should be encouraged. This will not only confine Fulani herders to grazing areas but stop them from having clashes with their host communities and farmers. When this is achieved and the conflict persists then the government should declare any of the erring group terrorists and hold them responsible for going against the laws of the state and punished them accordingly. Addressing this challenge requires addressing the problem of corruption because some of the personnel of these services have corruptly enriched themselves through arms trafficking rackets and collection of bribes from illegal traffickers across the national borders.

- 2) Preventing conflicts requires maximum cooperation between the government and the populace which is, though, not completely absent in the case of the Nigerian state but not strong enough to ameliorate the challenges of insecurity in the country. In other words, what is needed or required is optimum cooperation and supports of the citizens of government policies and programmes aimed at curbing the menaces of the security challenges in the country. It means that the security of lives and properties, although, is the constitution responsibility of the government and its security agencies but the people also have roles to play in securing their lives and properties by providing assistance such as information at their disposals and reporting crimes or suspects within their localities to the security agencies. This will go a long way to assist the police in preventing crimes and reduces it in local communities. Also, sincerity of purpose is needed in the fight against the insecurity in the country which requires that anyone found culpable of breach of peace and security irrespective of status, ethnic and religious affiliation should be arrested and charged by the government according to his or her crimes.
- 3) Since porous border has been linked to the contributing factors to the increasing insecurity in the country following intelligence reports that some of the members of the terrorist groups, bandits and Fulani marauders are foreigners, the federal government should find it very necessary to heighten its collaboration and efforts with the state government, especially those of the northeast and northwest to address the immediate challenge of border porosity. This can be achieved by mass recruitment, constant retraining programmes, workshops and seminars for officers in the Customs and Immigration Services. Provision of modern security gadgets and other forms of sophistications are also pertinent. All those factors that are limited in numbers and have limited the efforts of the personnel of the Custom and Immigration Services in the fight against the infiltration of the country's borders by foreign fighter of the Boko Haram, ISWAP, bandits and Fulani marauders should be immediately addressed by the federal government. Most importantly, equipping men of the services deployed to the national borders with modern sophistications will enable them stem the easy flow of migrants, terrorists and arms into the country.
- 4) The government should also heighten its campaign against the insurgent groups by improving in its introduction of drone surveillance and intensify its bombardment of the forests across the national border serving as hideouts for the criminal gangs and terrorists. The countermeasures or responses should not be politicised because

politicising the counterinsurgency responses or the fight against the insurgents across the country is likely to disrupt government efforts and successes it has achieved in recent time.

- 5) Government should also step-up in its efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the country through intensified campaigns in the mass media and recruitment of local campaigners in towns and villages across the country. This can be achieved through the local government council areas, traditional rulers and their palace chiefs, community leaders, market men and women groups, youth forums; and inscriptions in public places, schools and colleges on the needs to comply with government directives on COVID-19, as well as taking of vaccines provided by the government. Most importantly, the vaccines should be made available in towns and villages especially in rural health care facilities such as community health centres located in the Local Government Council areas across the country.
- 6) Health workers should also be deployed to schools, colleges and institution across the states and local government areas to educate pupils, students and teachers on the need for taking the vaccines. It implies that private individual trained in medical related areas including doctors, nurses and other health worker should be trained and engaged as ad hoc staffs in the remote areas across the country. This no doubt will enable Nigerians of all ages and economic status to be vaccinated within the shortest period and reduces the rate of the threats from the novel virus. Although, this cannot be achieved without sincerity of purpose from the government and its medical personnel as well as the NCDC officials.
- 7) By and large, the government should address the problem of corruption that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. It practices should be discouraged completely for all of these responses to curb the changing patterns of the national security challenges including COVID-19 preventive policy measures of the government to be effective and efficient.

G. Acknowledgments

None

H. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) states that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

I. Funding

None

J. References

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