

## **Ethnoreligious Conflicts And Nigeria's National Security**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examines the extent to which ethnoreligious crises in Nigeria impacts on national security. It focuses on the Boko Haram terrorism in the northeast, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) violence in the south-south, and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) secessionist-oriented restiveness in the southeast and how they have undermined Nigeria's national security, particularly human security. In this vein, it sought to provide answers to how threats to the survival of population, livelihood, and dignity of individuals and communities impact on national security. The study relied on the qualitative content analysis of secondary sources of data and utilized the relative deprivation theory. It argues that human security is key to Nigeria's national security, as such, ethnoreligious crises threaten the survival of population, livelihood and dignity of individuals and communities which in the long run breeds more hostilities, underdevelopment, and high mortality and displacement rates. It, therefore, recommends the introduction of socio-economic empowerment programs for job creation, and the prompt provision of humanitarian supports to victims.

**KEYWORDS: National security, human security, Boko Haram, Niger Delta Avengers, IPOB.**

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Date of Submission: 08-07-2020

Date of Acceptance: 23-07-2020

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

From independence till date, Nigeria has witnessed some drastic and frantic security challenges emerging from religious, socioeconomic, and political crises. These are a result of the nature of interactions among the various ethnic, religious and regional groups. These groups which have applied certain forms of militant approaches in pursuing their core objectives include the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Others include Boko Haram sect, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). So far, the Nigerian state has perceived these threats to its national security via basically one index – military security. This perspective allows the state to see national security only within the traditional context of the ability and capacity of a nation-state to protect and preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as its core political and cultural values from external military threat and internal insurrections through adequate preparedness of the military and other internal security systems – paramilitary, police, and intelligence apparatus (see Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015). Defining national security this way is not only restricted but it also conveys a profoundly false image of reality. This is because it does not take into account the innumerable additional and perhaps even more dangerous factors impinging on national security in today's world, with the new challenge of the 21st century such as globalization, climate change, terrorism, proliferation, migration, pandemics, cybercrimes, etc. (Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015). So, Holmes (2015) posited that are several kinds of national security exists such as human, economic, food securities, etc.

To that extent, therefore, this study aims to ascertain the extent to which ethnoreligious crises, as a threat to the survival of population, livelihood, dignity of individuals and communities, impact Nigeria's national security defined here not in terms of military security alone but terms of human security. The study, also, delves into an analysis of the activities of insurgent groups in Nigeria that have resulted to violence and insecurity, thereby impacting on national security as well as measures which have been taken by the government to curb the activities of these insurgent groups.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

From 2009 to 2017, three major challenges have engraved Nigeria which includes the incessant religious crises in the northeast, the resurgence of militant activities in the Niger Delta, and the radical clamour for secession in the southeast orchestrated by the Boko Haram, IPOB, and NDA movements, respectively. This unfortunate development has made the country to become one of the most unsafe countries to visit and invest in (Martin, 2016). For instance, according to Gov. KashimShettima of Borno state, the Boko Haram sect accounts for almost 100,000 deaths (Tukur, 2017). Thousands of people have become refugees in their own country leading to as many social problems as starvation, illiteracy, high mortality rate, and spread of diseases. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (2016), it is estimated that there are almost 2,152,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigerian as of 31 December 2015. Likewise, violent conflicts slow down national economic growth since no investor would prefer to invest in a crisis-ridden nation. According to CBN statistics as recorded in Duke, Agbaji and Etim (2016), FDI flows fell to \$4693.83 million in 2014 from \$5608.45 million in 2013, and further fell to \$3064.17 million in 2015. The bombing of pipelines by the NDA led to Nigeria's poor petroleum export rates and consequent economic recession between 2015 and 2017.

Despite the government's efforts at ending the insurgency in the nation, the insurgents have not stopped their attacks, picking up soft targets in markets, churches, mosques, and industrial and residential areas (Onuoha, 2012). So, this study aims to answer the following research questions: how does the threat to the survival of population impact on national security in Nigeria? How does the threat to livelihood impact on national security in Nigeria? How does the threat to the dignity of individuals and communities on national security in Nigeria?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

National security just like every other social science concept means so many things to so many different people at different times and places. For instance, Held and McGrew (1998) described national security as the acquisition, deployment and use of military force to achieve national goals. Accordingly, safeguarding the national security is believed to be largely dependent upon the state's military capabilities, the efficacy of its internal security system, and its ability to forge an active foreign policy designed to block threats from hostile foreign elements (Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015).

These views are largely constitutive of one element of national security – military might. It must be noted that this military conception is traditionally the earliest recognized form of national security. For Chandra and Bhonsle (2015), this narrow view of national security was popularized by the realist school of thought in the context of the East-West divide following World War II and drew upon thinkers from classical Greece and subsequent political theorists such as Hobbes, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, etc. However, this perspective is grossly inadequate, weakened by its negligence of and incompatible with, the dynamism inherent in emerging realities of the 21st century which include inter alia, climate change, terrorism, global warming, (nuclear arms) proliferation, migration, cybercrimes, drought and famine and pandemics (Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015:338). So, diverse kinds of national security exist. These include military, economic, energy and natural resource, environmental, health, food, human, cyber, demographic, and scientific and technological securities (Holmes, 2015; Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015; Adejumo & Faga, 2016).

Human security refers to a concept largely developed after the demise of the Cold War by a group of development economists, like the late Pakistani economist Mahabub ul Haq, who conceptualized the 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme. The concept challenges the state-centric notion of security by focusing on the individuals as the main referent object of security. It more precisely encompasses two main aspects: safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or communities (Nesadurai, 2005). Human security is not concerned with weapons but with human dignity. The objective of human security is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment (Acharya, 2008). Also, it is attained only when individuals are secured from, two basic kinds of threats: a life free of fear; and free of want.

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

According to Gurr (1971:23) defined relative deprivation as 'the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the 'ought' and the 'is' of collective value satisfaction, and this disposes men to violence.' Relative deprivation assumes that individuals or groups feel relatively deprived when there exists a discrepancy between their expectations and outcome. The individuals or groups can identify the discrepancy due to the existence of a reference point for comparison. Consequently, they experience cognitive dissonance and apply all the resources they can muster to remove the blockade to their expectation (Offiong, 1980). This, Duke, Agbaji

& Bassey (2017) opined, is as a result of the fact that other persons have what they are entitled to and they know getting what they want is realistic and this can only be gotten with employment or use of violence.

Relative deprivation, therefore, essentially means the feeling of being deprived of something one feels entitled to, which can be synthesized into a broad understanding of the emergence and sustenance of ethnoreligious crises in Nigeria by different radical groups who claim to fight for their entitlements. To fight for and acquire these privileges, the resource the group musters is their youthful energy and the use of dangerous weapons to perpetrate violence, robbery, kidnapping, vandalization of oil pipelines, bombing, terrorism, and so on.

### **III. TRENDS OF ETHNORELIGIOUS CRISES IN NIGERIA**

#### **3.1 *Boko Haram***

The radical Islamic sect called “Boko Haram” is the popular name of the group originally called “Jama’atulAhlus Sunnah Lidda’awati Wal Jihah” which is Arabic for “the Sunni Community committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad.” Duke, Agbaji and Bassey (2017) opined that the sect of one of the world’s dreaded terrorist groups operational in Northeastern Nigeria. It is aimed at, through the use of the most hostile acts of violence, the expulsion of all Christian communities and ‘polluting’ Western ideals and cultures from Nigeria, and the creation of an Islamic Caliphate as a means of ending poverty, individualism, and greed which are seen as consequences of a political system enveloped in corruption. For Duke, Agbaji and Etim (2016), the sect, to show its allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), named itself “Wilayat GhardAfriqiya” – translated in English as “Islamic State West Africa Province.”

According to Duke, Agbaji and Bassey (2017), the sect gained international recognition following riots that lasted from 25th July to 30th July 2009 and spread across Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno, and the kidnapping of 276 schoolchildren from their school in Chibok, Borno State, in April 2014. The former led to the demise of Yusuf who was succeeded by Abubakar Shekau – more ruthless, violent, destructive and less open to dialogue, and more open to the fundamentalists' perception of societal “development” via the adoption of the Sharia – in July 2010. The latter precipitated mass protests on an international scale by individuals and groups condemning the action and calling for a global effort to search for, rescue, and reunite the schoolchildren with their families. A non-profit was even created owing to this called the BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) campaign, and it championed many protests in Nigeria (Duke, Agbaji & Bassey, 2017).

Boko Haram is driven by a constellation of factors like the proclivity in religious convictions, political aspirations and socioeconomic development – all within the tenets of Islam and a Caliphate system. The sect aims to establish a Sharia government in Nigeria. The sect believes the establishment of Islamic government would address the ills of society including corruption, and bad governance. The sect has launched attacks on places of social and religious gathering, markets, state institutions such as military barracks, police stations (including the Nigerian Police Force Headquarters in Abuja), the United Nations Building, educational institutions at all levels, government establishments, and other terrorist actions like kidnapping, assassination, suicide-bombing, bombing with IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices), and killing of statesmen, political figures and religious leaders that oppose their philosophy and innocent citizens of the country both Christians and Muslims, adults and children, and men and women.

#### **3.2 *The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)***

This refers to one of the numerous militia groups in Nigeria fighting for the emancipation of the Niger Delta because of decades of neglect by successive administrations in Nigeria and underdevelopment of the region. According to the Niger Delta Avengers (Onukwugha, 2016), it defines itself as a group of Niger Deltans voted to start a “revolution to free Nigeria from wicked administration.” It came into being in February 2016 and proclaimed that it was a group of educated and well-travelled individuals that were ready to heighten the Niger Delta struggle to a point never seen in the annals of the country. They claimed to possess both the equipment and human resources to accomplish this goal because they have support from the northern, eastern and western parts of the country (Agbinibo, 2016). The emergence of the group has been linked to the present administration cancellation of the juicy pipeline security contracts awarded to the ex-warlords by the previous administration. For instance, a pipeline security protection contract worth \$103 million a year was awarded to Global West Vessels Specialist Ltd owned by Government Ekpemupolo alias Tompolo. Also, the cut in the budget of the Amnesty Program from N60 billion to N20 billion which resulted in the reduction in stipend paid to the ex-militants (Babatunde, Norafidah&Zengeni, 2016).

As regards the sponsors of the group, Babatunde et al (2016) purported that a break-away faction of the group called the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers through its spokesperson Cynthia Whyte listed the following as sponsors of the group: Goodluck E. Jonathan; Nyesom Wike; Seriaki Dickson; Godswill Akpabio; Government Ekpemupolo alias Tompolo; Raymond Dokpesi; Patrick Akpobolokemi; Kingsley Kuku; Kimi Angozi; and the Indigenous People of Biafra. Others named as sympathizers of the group include Chief Edwin

Clark; Daniel Alabrah; Tony UrantaOlisaMetuh; and Annkio Briggs (The Herald, 2016 in Babatunde et al, 2016). It is worth noting that all the aforementioned people named by the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers have denied their association with the Niger Delta Avengers.

Some of the reasons for the formation of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) as recorded by Durden (2016) include cleaning up of Ogoni land and other oil-polluted areas in the Niger Delta as well as payment of compensation to them, and ownership of oil blocks and revised revenue sharing formula must be in ratio 60:40. Sixty percent for the oil-producing states, and forty percent for others (non-oil producing states). Other reasons are funding, non-reduction of budgetary allocations for, and continuation of the Amnesty Program and the adherence of multinational corporations and other large oil consortia as well as foreign investors in the Niger Delta region to the ultimatum of the militia, as their business interest in the country must be the first target (Durden, 2016).

In their view, Nwogwugwu, Alao and Egwuonwu (2012) assert that aside the basic problems outlined above, other causes of militancy in the region included marginalization, abject poverty, massive unemployment, destruction of the aquatic ecosystem, and the alteration of the soil quality, air pollution, and socioeconomic disorganization. The activities of the group in the Niger Delta manifested in diverse ways such as militancy, kidnapping, killings, bombing, hostage-taking, demolition of oil and gas facilities, pipeline vandalization, illegal oil bunkering (Duru&Ogbonnaya, 2012). The militants launched attacks on the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), Chevron and Total Final Elf (TFE) staff and facilities as well as attacks on the military. For instance, Chevron Valve Platform located at Abiteye, Warri South (serving as a connecting point where all of Chevron's other Niger Delta platforms link-up) was attacked and heavily damaged; NDA militants were forced to retreat from the villages of Gulobokri and Eweleso, Brass following a series of clashes with Nigerian soldiers, resulting in the deaths of approximately 20 civilians, 2 police officers, and an unknown number of militants/Nigerian soldiers; the group's militants blew up a crude oil pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in OrukAnam LGA, Akwa Ibom State; etc. (Babatunde et al, 2016).

### **3.3 Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)**

According to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) (2016) and International Crisis Group (ICG) (2015), IPOB was founded by Nnamdi Kanu – who fell out with the former leaders of MASSOB in 2009 and emerged as the leader of IPOB in 2012. The movement has Ikechukwu Enyiagu as the Principal Administrator of the Executive Council of Indigenous People of Biafra, and Emmanuel Okafor as its Secretary (Executive Council of Indigenous People of Biafra, 2013). Other leaders include Anayo Chukwu-Okpara, spokesman; Mr Emma Powerful, Media and Publicity Secretary; and Emma Nmezu and Clifford Iroanya (IRBC, 2016). For Thompson, Ojukwu and Nwaorgu (2016), the IPOB is a splinter group from the MASSOB, taking on a more propagandist approach for the actualization of Biafra. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has been described as a "separatist" organization (ICG, 2015) or as a "secessionist" group (BBC, 2015).

BBC (2015) reports that the young people who belong to the IPOB, are mainly ethnic Igbos who "feel they have been discriminated against by those in power". Thompson et al. (2016) wrote that the recent claims are that the present administration has hounded and shortchanged the Igbos in the scheme of things causing disharmony, hence, the call for a divided Nigeria. This is informed by the incessant hardship, lack of holistic development in the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria, lack of youth employment, corruption in high offices and economic regression.

In the report entitled "Expiration of Nigeria's Amalgamation Proclamation and Restoration of the Sovereign State of Biafra" by the Executive Council of Indigenous People of Biafra submitted to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights Heads of State of All Countries on 19th December 2013, the reasons for the secessionist call were spelt out. The report reads:

*For the past 100 years, the indigenous people of Biafra who are part of the constituents of Nigeria have suffered untold hardship, threats to their culture, tradition and their way of life combined with political and economic emasculation, and annihilation of her citizens by the Hausa/Fulani-Yoruba dominated Nigerian government. The attached chronology is only a microcosm of the constant blood-letting being visited regularly on the Indigenous People of Biafra by the rest of Nigeria under a lawless society driven by intense hatred and desire to annihilate the remnants of the Indigenous People of Biafra. The number of Biafrans murdered by the people of Nigeria, the Nigerian government and their agents are now nearing 5 million. There are no perpetrators brought to justice for all these crimes against humanity. The Judeo-Christian values of the people are today being eroded by combined forces of Islam and Arabia. All efforts made to ensure the implementation of genuine national reconciliation and forgiveness after the cessation of the Biafra-Nigeria war through the convening of Oputa panel were rebuffed. Many perpetrators including present-day politicians and even flag bearers of major political parties refused to attend the panel. Their choice instead, which they have carried out, was to empower their people and agents to continue with the systematic killings and destruction of the places of worship and the businesses of our people at with increasingly alarming intensity. What used to be a secular*

country is today implementing sharia legal code in 19 northern states under official adoption of Islam as a state religion. Corruption and carting of state funds is now the order of the day. The Treasury and Justice departments are no longer independent. These and more have rendered Nigeria into nothing but a lawless society. Nigeria since 1970 has retrogressed. The claim that the Nigeria-Biafra war was only an economic war has been rendered bare for all to see the emptiness of the falsehood (Executive Council of Indigenous People of Biafra, 2013).

Little wonder it is believed that the recent unbridled invasion, killing and destruction of properties of communities across some southeastern states in Nigeria by some armed Fulani herdsmen may have reinforced the Igbo agitation and predicaments as the Federal Government reacted to these acts a bit late.

#### **IV. IMPACTS OF ETHNORELIGIOUS CONFLICTS ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF NIGERIA**

##### **4.1 *The Impacts of Threats to Survival of Population on National Security in Nigeria***

To get the attention of the government and the international community, soft targets such as human settlements, churches, mosques, markets, schools, and so on, are preyed by insurgents with violence and usually fatal attacks being meted on them. Also, because people are easily psycho-conditioned to be anxious and afraid owing to reports of violence and mass onslaughts, denizens evacuate their communities in search of safe havens. This is the situation in crisis-ridden places like Syria, Yemen, and particularly, Nigeria. The figure for the number of persons that have lost their lives and are displaced as a resultant impact of crises in Nigeria is frightening. Hundreds of thousands of people have become refugees in their own country. In Northeastern Nigeria, death tolls are ultra-high; a rapid depletion of the population in the region is evident. According to Governor KashimShettima of Borno State, insurgency, particularly in the Northeastern region of Nigeria, has led to the death of almost 100,000 persons (Tukur, 2017). In the North, violence is intensifying creating more IDPs with little or nothing left. The number of displaced persons in Nigeria is one of the highest in the world. According to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (2016), it is estimated that there are almost 2,152,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria as of 31 December 2015 due to Boko Haram insurgency. With most of the IDP camps exceeding their maximum carrying capacity, the survival of the displaced is further jeopardized owing to inadequate food, water, medical supplies and other humanitarian aids.

In the Niger Delta region, attacks by members of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), though having the various oil extracting conglomerates operational in the Niger Delta region and their workers as their primary targets, have also had indigenous Niger Delta denizens as their victims. According to Babatunde et al (2016), more than 100 persons have been abducted and/or killed by members of the NDA, and other sources report that about 5,321 casualties have been accounted for resulting from NDA's attacks. The situation is not far from similar in the Southeast. In the Southeastern region, the members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have perpetrated attacks that have led to the death and displacement of many Nigerians especially northerners. For instance, in September 2017, there were reports of attacks lasting for days by suspected members of the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) on the Hausa/Fulani community in Abia State and some attacks in Rivers State. Adebayo (2017) writing on the crisis in Abia State reported that the head of the community, Idris Bashir, who is also the Chief Imam of Muslims in the Southeastern state stated that the attacks in which the Hausa community was targeted by IPOB hoodlums materialized into the death of about four people, the displacement of about two thousand of his community denizens and about 25 injured people.

Due to the continuous insecurity and remoteness evident in the nation particularly in the northeast, the southeast and Niger Delta regions of Nigeria, many IDPs and refugees fleeing Boko Haram, IPOB and NDA have severely limited access to national and international humanitarian support. Without this support, Nigerians stay with host families, in police stations or schools but resources attempting to support this influx of people to new areas and surrounding countries are severely strained (Spindler 2014). This means the people are still very much exposed to the dangers of being attacked by insurgents, and dangers of food and health insecurities. For instance, high mortality rates for common illness like malaria are recorded in the majority of the IDP shelters. In 51 shelters, IDPs reported not having access to medicine (Global Emergency Overview, 2016). This issue is even compounded by the fact that without enough national and humanitarian support, poor communications, and inconsistent avenues for monitoring displaced persons, it is impossible to know the exact number of displaced citizens. So, a segment of the population may be at risk of dying out since they have not been accounted for and lack access to humanitarian supports.

Furthermore, the insurgent fighters make up a portion of the Nigerian population and their "extra-judicial execution" by the military threatens the survival of the population. According to Amnesty International (AI) (2015), the Nigerian military extra-judicially executed more than one thousand people; they have arbitrarily arrested at least seven thousand people have died in military detention in military detention in the course of security operations against Boko Haram. Also, the Nigeria 2016 Human Rights Reports shows that there exists little or no respect for human persons as Nigerians are arbitrarily deprived of life and freedom. For instance, on

February 9, 2016, police and military personnel reported use live ammunition to disperse protesting members or supporters of the IPOB movement at a school in Aba, Abia State, killing at least nine (United States Department of State, 2016). This threat to the survival of the population is bad for national security.

#### **4.2 The Impacts of Threats to the Dignity of Individuals and Communities on National Security in Nigeria**

The fundamental struggle for dignity has been a driving force in all human history. Human dignity is violated when one individual deprives another individual or community of both the means and capacity necessary to live with dignity and freedom. In Nigeria, the activities of insurgent groups are hampering on the dignity of individuals and communities. For instance, Boko Haram through its attacks infringes on individual and community dignity. It does this through its antipathy towards Western educational norms. Falola (2014) in Chiroma (n.d) reported that in 2012, Boko Haram targeted schools regularly, with 47 attacks that year resulting in 77 fatalities. While attacks on schools decreased in 2013, perhaps due to frequent school closures in its area of operation, Boko Haram carried out 14 attacks on schools in which 119 people died. This disrupts education in the region. Little wonder Duke, Agbaji & Etim (2016) wrote that UNESCO estimates that Nigeria is home to 45% of the global school drop-out population and has 10.5 million children out of schools. The resurgence of Boko Haram is increasing these numbers today because of the closure of schools in some states in northern Nigeria, thereby leading Nigeria to mass illiteracy.

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The sect has also been accused of violating the human rights of especially women and children residing in the north. Over nine years of war have caused gender-specified suffering. While men have disproportionately been killed, women are indiscriminately recruited, abducted, raped, enslaved and awarded as 'wives' to fighters. Quintessential cases include Boko Haram's kidnap and threat to sell 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in April 2014 and the kidnapping of over 100 women and children in Gumsuni, Borno State, in December 2014 (Duke, Agbaji & Etim, 2016).

In the Southeast, the activities of IPOB have led to threats to the dignity of individuals and communities. The immediate psychological impact of IPOB's violence, especially on northerners in the southeastern region, includes feelings of fear, anger, hostility, anxiety and depression. *Newsrescue* (2017) reported that afraid of reprisal attacks, northerners in the Southeast have started fleeing in droves to their hometowns and other places of refuge provided by the government. This issue reflects a rising deep sense of distrust of the community and the Nigerian society as a whole (since the northern region they are running to is relatively not safe), and a damaged internalized sense of morality and notions of caring for others. It is alleged that northerners have lost their sense of worth and dignity before Igbos; a situation that breeds low self-esteem and hostilities.

IPOB protesters are also human beings like every other Nigerian. So, every extrajudicial campaign can be seen as a threat to their human dignity. According to Amnesty International (2016), Nigerian security forces have been involved in several human right violations. For instance, after the analysis of the 87 videos, 122 photographs and 146 eyewitness testimonies relating to demonstrations and other gatherings between August 2015 and August 2016, it was discovered that the military embarked on extrajudicial executions at least 150 'peaceful' pro-Biafra protesters.

#### **4.3 The Impacts of Threats to Livelihood on National Security in Nigeria**

Securing the necessities of living such as food, shelter and clothing has been hampered by insurgent activities in Nigeria. The activities of groups like Boko Haram, IPOB and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) have threatened the livelihood of Nigerians. Poverty and social vices like robbery and theft are high because businesses are being destroyed or abandoned, thus, people possess little or no disposable income. This is conspicuous in the Southeast. Afraid of reprisal attacks by northerners on Igbos in the north, northerners in the Southeast flee in droves since September 2017. According to *Newsrescue* (2017) a visit to the cattle market, Waterside Ogorhill Aba, showed that northerners, who sell onions and tomatoes, were no longer there. The

news outlet further reported that several northerners, who work as gatemen in different compounds and companies also left Onitsha and other cities in Southeast Nigeria. In Imo State, the every busy Hausa quarter (aka Ama Hausa) along Douglas Road, Owerri, is now a shadow of itself, following the exodus of Hausa families and the abandonment of their business (*Newsrescue*, 2017).

The cattle rustling in the northwest, central, and recently, southeast Nigeria has deprived many farmers their farms and farming implements. Clashes between herdsmen and farmers in states like Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi, Plateau, Abia, Imo, etc. in central and southeastern Nigeria has rendered many people destitute. People were dislocated from their villages for fear of attacks, leaving the farms and losing their livestock which is their main source of income thereby creating more burdens on government and donor agencies hence making the elimination of poverty extremely difficult (Maigari & Abdul-Qadir, 2017).

More so, in the northeastern region, Boko Haram has ravaged the livelihood of Nigerians there. Poverty has become second nature to the area. Villages are destroyed, schools are razed, and businesses are abandoned. Communities in Nigeria's northeast depend on farming for their livelihoods but families (and those returning from displacement) will not be able to support themselves because of dangers and insecurity lurking around epitomized by Boko Haram, thus, limiting their opportunities for wage labour. Fishing and cross-border trade, particularly with Niger, have also fallen due to insecurity (Global Emergency Overview, 2016). In the northeast IDP camps, income opportunities for IDPs are very limited. Only 11 per cent of registered IDPs have a regular source of income, compared to 55% before displacement, while 49% do not have any source of income (Global Emergency Overview, 2016). Likewise, former Minister of Information, Mr Labaran Maku, stated that Boko Haram's attack on Kano State is so significant because it affected the multi-billion naira Kano Textile Market otherwise called the Kanti-Kwari Market. This market is regarded to be the oldest and biggest textile markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, and as such it affected the foundation of economic and social wellbeing and livelihood of the northern region (Duke Agbaji and Etim, 2016).

In all, as Ronis (2011) stated, without capital, there is no business; without jobs, there are no taxes and there is no military capacity. So, the quality of people's lives deteriorates, without a sustainable livelihood of the people – economic security to a point where society itself can disintegrate. This issue also further degenerates to as many social problems as starvation, illiteracy, high mortality rate, and the spread of infectious diseases negatively impacts on the livelihood of the population.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

National security in Nigeria has to a large extent being threatened as a result of the spate of ethnoreligious crises in Nigeria. The ideologies, as well as the various activities of the perpetrators of this violence, have led to an insecure Nigeria. Insecurity here is not just limited to military security but also human security, economic security, environmental security and such like. The survival of the Nigerian population has been severely affected following the number of lives that have been lost and the number of displaced persons in Nigeria owing to vast ethnoreligious based confrontations; the livelihood of the people have also been hampered since the crises lead to the destruction of businesses, decimation of arable land, the contamination of potable water, poverty, loss of jobs, disrupted access to medical supplies and humanitarian supports, and so on all of which make life unbearable for many Nigerians especially in the Niger Delta, Northeastern, and Southeastern regions of Nigeria; and the dignity of the human person and communities of Nigeria have been relegated to the background owing to these crises as women are raped and enslaved, men are indiscriminately executed, children are killed, orphaned, and forced to drop out of school, the military undertakes extra-judicial executions, and environmental hazards lurk around the corner owing to indiscriminate gas flaring. Unless the Nigerian government effectively tackles with concrete remedial actions the factors which have bred aggression of the aggrieved groups, national security would not come to fruition in Nigeria as the groups will continue to destabilize the nation and their attacks would eventually spread to other parts of the country, and more groups may even take up arms to challenge the nation's sovereignty.

Ethno-religious crises have engulfed almost half of Nigeria. This would continue to be the case (and probably increase) as long as the government does not rethink and reposition its notion of national security to include not just military power but particularly human security as well as economic, environmental, political, cyber, natural resource, demographic securities, and suchlike; and as long as the issues of corruption, poverty, poor foreign direct investment into the nation, poor government transparency and citizenship dialogue are not addressed.

From the review of various pieces of literature on the violence of Boko Haram, IPOB and NDA, it is pertinent to say that the activities of these groups have posed as a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. Therefore, to effectively curb their activities and the impacts they have on the national security of Nigeria, the Federal Government should apply pragmatic approaches. The following recommendations will help curb the activities of the insurgent groups in Nigeria as a means to sustain its national security and maintain its national integration:

- i. The government should address the issue of poverty and unemployment in the nation. This can be done by introducing socio-economic empowerment programs which would create jobs for the jobless youths who are used as tools by the insurgent group leaders to carry out attacks and to ensure that the people in insecurity affected areas are reintegrated to the wider society.
- ii. In addressing the problem of severely threatened livelihood, hunger and malnutrition of people in Nigeria especially those in the Niger Delta, the Southeast and the Northeast (the IDP camps inclusive), rehabilitation of the lands and the treatment of the contaminated water sources should be undertaken to facilitate farming and fishing which are the main sources of livelihood in most of the crisis-ridden regions of Nigeria.
- iii. There should be developmental reform in the aspect of education and infrastructures in the nation. Particularly in the north, through efforts made to correct the Almajiri school system, the government needs to consolidate these efforts by incorporating the Almajiri system of education wherever it exists in Nigeria within the ministry of education and it should be supported by the Federal and State governments.

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DUKE, OTU OFFIONG, et. al. "Ethnoreligious Conflicts And Nigeria's National Security." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(7), 2020, pp. 15-23.