

# Governance And Security Question In Nigeria 1999-2020

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## Abstract

Leadership dysfunctionality in Nigeria since the return to democracy in 1999 has popped up several questions as to whether democracy is a blessing or a curse in the country. The dominant style of governance in Nigeria devoid of accountability, transparency and responsiveness has undoubtedly created some intense security challenges for the country further exposing some internal contradictions inherent in the system of government. This paper analyzes the nexus between the prevailing (in) security and the character of governance in Nigeria since the return to democratic rule. The study finds that the politics of exclusion, marginalization, unemployment, corrupt practices coupled with leadership inertia have direct links with the emergence of gross insecurity in all parts of the country. The analysis is based on the frustration aggression theory.

**Keywords:** Ammunition, Arms, Nigeria, Security, Violence

## Introduction

African democracies are bedeviled with a considerable number of violent crises. From Liberia to Nigeria, Sierra Leone to Angola, Ivory Coast to Ethiopia, political formations are up in arms against one another shaking the foundations of democracy by escalating tensions through violent

conflicts, insurrection, insurgency and terrorism (Ekanem, 2009). The return to democracy in Nigeria in 1999 was greeted with hope and political optimism; however, two decades after the transition, the exact contradictions that were the character of the military regime have worsened. The Military era in Nigeria undoubtedly was remarkable for gross corruption, nepotism, political killings, violations of human rights and insecurity. The political class of the new democratic era was dominated by erstwhile military personnel's, the same class of citizens who had wrecked the democratic foundations of the country through the successive military interregnum that began in 1966. Therefore, the comeback of erstwhile military personnel's in the garb of civilian politicians meant that not much had changed in the governance of Nigeria. It was not long; than the new 'civilianized' military officers reinvented the wheel of bad government and groupthink identities into the body politics of Nigeria's nascent democracy. The democratic experiment, contrary to expectations, marked the debut of all sorts of insecurity-a self-made terrorism and a self-made war, which threatened the binding thread of nationhood. Since the democratic transition, insecurity has become a recurring problem. There are at least ten ongoing incidence(s) of insecurity across the country including; militancy in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism in the North East; farmer herders conflict in the north central, North West and South East; banditry and kidnaping in North West, and North East, secessionist agitations in south east and south west to mention just these few. It is tempting to link these spates of security challenges in Nigeria with political parties, corruption and foreign interests. Although there is an associational relationship between these variables, this study argues that the current spate of insecurity in Nigeria flows from groupthink identities and inequitable distribution of common patrimony, which abnegate the hallmarks of democracy. Granted that kidnapping and banditry have become a lucrative stream of income for the perpetrators, the other aspects of security challenges such as insurgency and herdsman activities were not prompted by financial benefits but from the inherent desire for economic emancipation unattended to by the democratic posture of Nigeria.

In the first part of this paper, we provide a synopsis of the theory of frustration aggression as a framework for understanding the linkages between the character of governance and the security question. The second and third part highlights the character of governance in Nigeria since the return to civilian rule noting how a history of government broken promises fuels insecurity in the country and heightens the proliferation of small arms and light weapon. The last part of the study draws the conclusion.

### **Theoretical framework**

The use of theories in social science research provides helps to provide or offer an explanation for and of a particularly phenomenon. It is simply an attempt to make empirical sense of events as they occur in the natural world (De Benetti, 2014). In using theory, a researcher analyzes a particular social reality from a standpoint based on certain ideas, or belief developed out of a prior assumption and their relationships to the phenomenon under study. (Ademola, 2012).

Cohen (2013) noted that the goal of theory is to explain something that has taken place with a view to unraveling and dealing with accompanying problems. The explanatory powers and utility of a theory run through its device dubbed theoretical framework. It is the means for applying the tenets, constructs, basic assumptions and postulation of a given theory in the explication and interpretation of a research question (Obasi, 1999). In a bid to explicate the prevailing governance conundrum and security question in Nigeria, scholars from diverse intellectual persuasions have propounded theories, models and approaches.

Since the attainment of political independence in 1960, governance in Nigeria has been particularly challenging because of patrimonialism and institutional weakness inherent in the state. The seeming failure of the state to perform its basic responsibilities and the inability of the state to manage the real grievances of the citizens against the government has made the citizen's resort to various forms of strategies including the use of kidnapping and terrorism to attract the needed sympathy, responsibility and accountability from government. At present, the country battles with herders problems, banditry, kidnapping, terrorism unleashed by the Boko Haram sect, agitations for separation and possible sovereignty and general human security failures which characterize the Nigerian State. To explain the current security situation in Nigeria requires some appropriate theoretical model.

To explain the above scenario, the study adopted the frustration aggression theory to unravel the causes of the security problems and conflicts in Nigeria and their relationship to the character of governance. John Dollard and his cohorts Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears propounded the frustration aggression theory in 1939. According to them "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (1939, 1). The logics of the frustration aggression hypothesis implies that frustration proceeds aggression and that frustration will always give rise to some levels of aggression. That is aggression expressed in the form of hostilities, violence, insecurity, conflict is the outcome of certain psychological, political or economic frustration.

Although the foundation of the frustration aggression theory was within the field of social psychology, it has since its emergence been applied in the study of conflict and violence. Scholars in the field of political science and international relations have further extended the logic of the theory to analyze certain political behaviors of individuals within the state and the international system. To buttress the theory, Anifowose (2011) stated the central tenets of frustration aggression perspective thus:

The central premise of the frustration aggression theory, simply put, is that aggression is always the results of frustration. Given the requisite conditions, an individual whose basic desires are thwarted and who consequently experience profound sense of dissatisfaction and anger is likely to react to his conditions by directing aggressive behavior at what is perceived as being responsible for

thwarting those desires or at a substitute. The greater the perceived importance of the desires and the more comprehensive the checking, the more vigorous the aggressive response.

The primary objective of governance is to guarantee the security of lives and property of its citizens. This is pursued and achieved by the State through the provision of requisite infrastructure that provide quality and equitable healthcare, housing, electricity and economic well-being for its citizens. Where a state fails or is failing to deliver on this core objective, the citizens resort to self-help or create alternative systems that may run parallel and contrary to that of the government. In other to meet the needs where government has hitherto failed, these alternative systems although illegitimate employ different political tools to compel government to meet their demands. The theoretical underpins of the frustration aggression is therefore, suitable in explaining the nexus between governance and (in)security situation in Nigeria. It follows the logic that the current spate of insecurity across the country arising from the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their use by organized groups for some self-actualization is a consequence of the failure of governance. Similarly, government orchestrated policies of political exclusion, nepotism, marginalization, and corruption that has increased the margin of inequality, poverty, unemployment and other negative functional indicators has evoked a feeling of frustration among the populace prompting the aggressive use of smuggled arms and light weapon to compel accountability and responsiveness from the government.

The Boko Haram onslaught, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, are born out of the fact that governance has failed abysmally to satisfy the psychological, political and economic needs of the populace. Recently, the agitations for separation and call for sovereign State of Biafra stems from the dire marginalization of the easterners in Nigeria (mainly Igbo people). The attendant violence orchestrated by Eastern Security Network (ESN) and aggressive violent behavior from the eastern parts of the country emanate from the abysmal failure of the Nigerian State to protect and provide for her citizens. Consequently, while the farmer herder's conflict, is a consequence of government failure to modernize livestock farming in the country, militancy, banditry and kidnaping amidst other forms of insecurity is a consequence of the state's failure to ensure equitable distribution of income and development. This attitude of the government frustrates the citizens, which in turn stimulates and fuels aggressive behaviors.

### **Proliferation of small arms and light weapons**

Admittedly, insecurity has become a recurring problem faced by many African nation-states. This malaise appears to have escalated in the last three decades following the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic – USSR in 1991. Such a malaise has complicated the security reality of such nation-states leading also to tenuous stability of governments. For instance, the military grade weapon 7.62 mm caliber short manufactured by Alexander Kalashnikov otherwise referred to as AK-47 assault rifles used by the armies in the collapsed Soviet Empire could easily

be bought on the streets of the capitals of newly freed Eastern European countries (Osuntokun, 2018). The proliferation of these small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Sub-Saharan Africa has catalyzed crises, armed violence and insecurity in the region. These weapons have become useful in the hands of organized groups who resort to the use of violence to demand dividends of development and independence (Yacubu, 2005).

The volume of this caliber of weapons found in Nigeria today has increased the upsurge of militant groups or irredentist movements, which has serious threat implications to national security and cohesion. In addition, local gunsmiths are pirating SALW imported from neighboring countries. The inability of the Nigerian government to mount effective control, patrol and surveillance on its borders implies that illegal arms and weapons are easily smuggled into the country. A recent report by the United Nations, shows that 350 million (70%) of the 500 million illegal firearms circulating in West Africa are found in Nigeria (Ikhtalor, 2021). For instance, F. Onuoha has observed that at Warri and Bonny where small arms and light weapons were offloaded from the boat, their prices ranged from \$850 for an AK-47 rifle to \$2,150 for a Bazooka (Ehiane & Uwizeyimana, 2018). In fact, it is difficult to determine the volume of small arms and light weapons in the hands of non-state actors in the country. Although the regulatory agencies have occasionally demonstrated efficiency in the discharge of their core responsibility by impounding caches of illegally smuggled arms, this was not always the case. Interestingly, by early August 1999, as many as 75,000 rounds of ammunition and bags of rifles were in circulation (Yacubu, 2005), by 2013 alone, 39,880 were recovered from one of the former Niger Delta militants (Ehiane & Uwizeyimana). This scenario suggests that there is a widespread and unchecked proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria.

The restoration of democratic rule in 1999 must have emboldened some States such as Borno, Yobe, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara and others to embark on the tortuous journey of restoring Islam to its pre-1903 status through the introduction of Sharia legal system. Rather than uphold their oath of office, some of the governors were said to have contributed One Hundred Thousand Naira (₦100,000) each to purchase arms for the defence of Islam (Okojie, 2009). The subsequent distribution of Islamic literature in both primary and secondary schools, though deepened religious doctrines, it also imbued the students with the ideology of extremism in defence of Islam (Vaaseh et al, 2016). Islam was not known to be under any threat thereby casting doubt on the intentions of such public holders in a given secular state like Nigeria. In the context of the above, it can be argued that insecurity has been elite-driven as they have provided the perpetrators with support and instruments of violence to unleash mayhem, killings and maiming of their fellow citizens. Under such a circumstance, it is difficult for any security operative to challenge or arrest non-state actors armed by the political elite.

Under the guise of defending Islam, there emerged Sheik Jafaar Muhmud Adam and the violent extremist Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, Borno State. With financial support from within and

outside Nigeria, the group was able to establish business and welfare schemes for hordes of jobless, homeless and illiterate young people in Maiduguri (Vaaseh et al, 2016). Having emerged from repressive regimes, these gestures earned the group many more adherents; a development that bolstered up the popularity rating of the leaders. In this context, it can further be argued that the problems of poverty, favouritism, injustice and ethno-religious bigotry formed the integral issues on security challenges which played out as a result of bad governance. In other words, governance system in Nigeria has created many more problems than it can solve (Alimba, 2017). Undoubtedly, the existing socio-economic parameters engendered the demand for and supply of more arms; an opportunity taken up by some conflict entrepreneurs to weaponize the members of the sect.

One other area where the political class has encouraged the proliferation of small arms and light weapons was in the recruitment of political thugs for the purpose of harassing, intimidating and scuttling election results to their favour. In Nigeria, politics has, in recent years, become a profitable business which bolsters up the personality profile and status of an individual politician. The arms build-up was so alarming that, shortly before the 2003 general elections, President Olusegun Obasanjo raised an alarm over cases of politicians raising private militias for political use (Olaniyan & Amao, 2015). As was to be expected, the actions and inactions of one group became suspicious to the other groups especially when the government in power seemed to be supporting a particular group at the detriment of the others (Alimba, 2017). Our point of argument here is that the 'do-or-die-warfare' nature of Nigerian politics has fostered the drive for small arms and light weapons to attain and retain political power.

By implication, the political class having perpetuated hunger, unemployment, weak economic status, and sufferings employed the victims of their (mis)rule in their struggle for power. This is a case where bad governance makes its victims its defenders. At the end of each election, the political leaders never retrieve the arms with which their thugs 'delivered' the election results and never absorb them into meaningful employment. This act of bad grace on the part of the political class created a situation where people vented their anger and frustration on the government by consequently using the arms provided them by the politicians to either terrorize innocent civilians as a way of discrediting or destroying the reputation of the government or to attract the sympathy of the masses. Furthermore, such a failure has had extenuating influences on the unity and cohesive tendencies of the constituent ethnic nationalities that formed Nigeria (Ogunniyi, 2020).

### **Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic**

With the restoration of democracy in 1999, a debauched ruling class have continued to weaponize poverty and illiteracy to be able to perpetuate itself in power. The civilian elite succeeded in taking over the reins of power from the military arm with the same orientation and ideology. The political class having been recruited extensively from urban elite and businessmen,

their advantage or gains rather than the welfare of all citizens became the corner-stone of public policy (Achebe, 1983). Consequently, the state rulers in coalition with state agents or a particular faction of the subject population competed with subjects in dividing up society's wealth (Ogunniyi, 2020). This was aptly exemplified in the personal emoluments of the segments of public office holders. Some marginalized, unemployed, misguided and neglected people, in reaction, resorted to vent their grievances and frustrations on Nigerians and the state, thereby becoming home-grown-terrorist groups. This contextualized the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria.

With the advent of the new democratic order came a fresh feeling of relief and lofty expectations among Nigeria (Orngu, 2008). These expectations remained a tantalizing mirage as the cost of governance became disgustingly high without reasonably positive impact on both the economy and the citizenry. This created a fertile ground for home-grown-terrorism such as the Boko Haram to thrive as some jobless people availed themselves of the welfare scheme provided by its leaders. Apart from economic insecurity following the democratic order, the government response to the Yusufiyya Movement further radicalized the sect as the group began to unleash violence and mayhem on innocent citizens as well as on security agencies. Given the way the Movement snowballed into a security risk, one is inclined to think that insecurity in Nigeria resulted from estranged state-society relations. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF), proved to be inefficient and ineffective to contain that activities of the sect which prompted the entry of the military into the internal security of the country.

Zooming on the security agency like the NPF, the Fourth Republic, unfortunately, inherited a weak and ill-equipped Force in 1999. The numerical strength of the NPF was abysmally low just as the officers and men were poorly motivated to discharge their primary responsibility of maintaining internal security, and law and order. By 1999, the population of its officers and men was 112,000 which increased to 320,000 by 2007 (Naankiel & Ayokhai, 2016). The inadequacy of this figure is made more manifest by the Nigeria's overwhelming landmass and population. This situation was made worse by their poor equipment in terms of logistics and firearms which, in most cases, were obsolete compared with more modern and sophisticated ones born by their adversaries. The military also handed over a constitution that foreclosed State or Regional Police Force to complement the efforts of the NPF thereby leaving the citizens at the mercy of kidnappers, bandits, terrorists, herdsmen and insurgents.

If Olusegun Obasanjo's reign did not promote a viable democratic culture such as impartial and unwavering judiciary, vibrant legislature, law-abiding executive and efficient security agencies, the situation deteriorated further under Goodluck Jonathan. The spate of insecurity increased many folds resulting in Boko Haram taking control of a number of local government areas of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Both the Army and the Police could not stem the rising tide of violence and killings that engulfed many more places than the North East geopolitical zone up to

Abuja, Niger State and others. The National Security Adviser (NSA) to Jonathan, Sambo Dasuki, on assumption of office, went round the flashpoints and the consensus of most Northern leaders was that dialogue and amnesty would end the Boko Haram crises. Away from the sophistication of the Boko Haram, the government was also disturbed that the consequences of their violent attacks were capable of dividing Nigeria along ethnic and religious lines (Ali, 2013).

By implication, the idea of amnesty for the sect-a reward for crime against humanity can be regarded as a tacit admittance of failure on the party of the government. Rather than punishing the insurgents in accordance with the deterrent theory, the advocates of amnesty would appear to be encouraging many more people to follow the same path. This advocacy was capable of taking Nigeria to a point where the law would no longer be understood by all and sundry as being supreme (Wuam, 2013). All told, it can be said that, insurgency revealed the failure of the Nigerian state to live up to its core responsibility of protecting the lives of the citizens. In fact, several analysts contend that the inadequacy of the Nigerian government's response – if not the Nigerian state structure itself, its failures and deficiencies – is the main reason for the widespread uprising (Adamo, 2020). The security challenges experienced in Nigeria were a reflection of many decades of profound economic and political malaises.

The new democratic order which came with lofty expectations failed to translate into equitable distribution of the national resources among Nigerians. Bad leadership which transited from the era of military dictatorship into the democratic experiment remained an impediment to good governance and security of all in the country. Kidnapping for ransom, which started in the Niger Delta as a reaction to marginalization, exclusion and injustice from the oil wealth, gradually became a nation-wide phenomenon. While in the Niger Delta region, kidnapping was intended to draw local and international attentions to the environmental insecurity and poverty in the land, in other areas it turned out to be a lucrative industry for the kidnappers. It remains to be said that while kidnapping for ransom was a consequence of the attempt to legitimize the privatization of the common patrimony, the same cannot explain the Fulani killer-herdsmen activities. The way the Fulani herdsmen carried out unprovoked attacks on non-Fulani or Muslim communities in the Middle Belt and elsewhere shows that Nigeria is a crabby country. The failed efforts to checkmate all these lapses not only dehydrated national resources but also eroded the popularity of the Jonathan's administration.

### **Broken Promises and Increased Spate of Insecurity**

Jonathan's government got entangled in wars without fronts which were to overwhelm it eventually. Muhammadu Buhari won the 2015 presidential election on a change mantra that rested on a tripod promise of ending insecurity, corruption and revamping the economy. The Buhari, administration increased the tempo of security challenges through its selective and exclusionist policies skewed in favor of the Fulani's. By failing to address the Fulani herders conflict, and granting of amnesty to repentant terrorists the administration widened the ethnic



divide in the country and further incentivized the use of violence by organized to reach some economic ends. With the realities on ground, it appears certain that plus ça change, plus c'est la meme-in spite of the change, things have remained the same. Under this regime, many more states came under the siege of bandits, kidnappers, herdsman-killers and insurgents-creating a staggering number of internally displaced persons (IDPS) and refugees in their own country.

Arguing on this, Tony Marinho contends that there are about 50-100,000 murders and over 2.5 million IDPs, all related to government's inability to protect first, farmers from those claiming to own the country and then, failing to protect Nigerians from terrorists and kidnappers (Marinho, 2021). The Chairman of the National Peace Committee and the last military Head of State, Abdulsalami Abubakar contended that there were six (6) million weapons in Nigeria; these have caused the death of 80,000 persons and close to three (3) million IDPs (Abubakar, 2021). While the Federal Government claims to have 'degraded and dislodged' the Boko Haram insurgents, our farmlands have remained fearful and killing enclaves for Fulani herders with the government doing nothing (Offor, 2020). Members of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) have been traversing the length and width of Nigeria wielding AK-47 assault rifles without any interference from security agents. This is probably on the account of groupthink identities between the security chiefs, the leadership of Nigeria and the Fulani herdsman.

The criminal activities of these killer-herdsman appear to enjoy robust support of high profile public office holders like Bala Mohammed-the Governor of Bauchi State. He justified the Fulani herdsman's carrying of AK-47 rifles on the failure of the government to protect both the herdsman and their cattle from rustlers (Mohammed, 2021). Such a stand is not only a violation of the rights of the citizens but also an indication that the law is no longer supreme just as it reflects the pre-modern nature of Nigerian State. This clearly contravenes Section 33 of Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria which states inter-alia that every person has the right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria (CFRN, 1999). The failure of the democratic institutions and security agencies to checkmate the desecration of the Constitution suggests that crises in Nigeria have been between the elites and the masses.

Indeed, Nigeria has remained moldy that lacked sturdy institutions and good-willed politicians. This lack of genuine intentions for the country and crass deficiency of political and ethnic leaders have created a systematic and incredible country of convolutions for the citizens (Offor, 2020). Succinctly put, what started in the North East grew in dimension and spread to other parts of Nigeria because the leadership of the country did not give it deserved seriousness. Gradually, Nigeria has degenerated into the top three of kidnap-for-ransom hotspots in the world and also holds the highest record of kidnaps of local and foreign nationals in Africa (Munshi, 2019). The

beauty of democracy does not just lie in routine elections but also in producing good leaders with political will to put in place strong institutions to protect the weak and vulnerable in the society.

Leadership inertia in Nigeria has engendered what Mary Kaldor has called ‘new wars’ in which there is blurring of the distinction between wars, organized crime and major violation of human rights (Tanghan & Umoh, 2014). Against the backdrop of the ineptitude of Nigeria’s leaders, there have emerged militia and irredentist groups such as the Egbesu Boys, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, the Niger Delta Avengers, the Oodua Peoples’ Congress, the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra that have become violent in their demonstration of dissatisfaction with the political class. Their agitations have been accentuated and exacerbated because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through Nigeria’s porous borders. In the face of all these, Nigeria has remained one of the most under-policed countries in the world with about one policeman to about 400 Nigerians and one soldier to less than 100 Nigerians (Momoh, 2021).

In a country of about 200 million people, the numerical strength of the Police and the army approximately 500,000 and 340,000, respectively (Kilete, 2018), was far below acceptable strength. Out of these police officers and men, a reasonable number served as orderlies attached to politicians and other high profile public office holders both of whom formed an insignificant proportion of the population. Given this scenario, the greater percentage of Nigerians were left at the mercy of bandits and criminals. Surprisingly, various regimes have not exhibited sufficient political will to enhance the working conditions of the security agencies in terms of remunerations, logistics and modern technological devices for counter-terrorism and optimal performance. In most cases, while the security operatives had counted bullets, the bandits controlled unlimited bullets hence they could shoot sporadically to cause confusion and panic before their operation (Mustapha, 2021). This is an indication that the State in Africa and Asia is a pale copy of utterly alien European social and political systems that is not only inefficient and a burden on society but also a funder of violence (Asante, 2020).

In response to the burden of insecurity occasioned by bad governance, various regions have set up their own security architectures. For instance, in the North East, the hotbed of insurgency, there was established the Civilian Joint Task Force to complement the efforts the conventional security agencies. There is also the Amotekun for the South West, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), a security outfit of the proscribed IPOB, HISBAH (an Islamic security outfit) in the Kano territory and the Niger Delta Avengers. The emergence of these outfits points to the fact that security is beyond the narrow sense of the police, military and other state security agencies. The repeated calls for the creation of state police force, in a way, buttresses this line of argument. The separate state security outfits are a symbolic expression of deep dissatisfaction brought about by either insensitivity or ineptitude of the national security architecture and political leadership of Nigeria in dealing with security breaches.

However, it remains to be noted that the NPF has some achievements to its credit in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria. For instance, the Force, according to Frank Mbah, the Public Relation Officer,

is prosecuting 31, 478 suspects for offences ranging from kidnapping, armed robbery, murder, cultism, banditry and other forms of crime. Furthermore, 5,526 sophisticated and locally fabricated firearms and 2 rocket launchers as well as 159,108 live ammunitions were recovered. In addition, 2,345 kidnapped victims were rescued. (Mbah, 2021)

With respect to equipment, there is a measure of improvement in providing the Force with modern technology in response to the sophisticated weapons used by the agents of violence in the country. In the light of this, it has been observed that the NPF has:

Embarked on a digital trunking communication projects, strategic GSM tracking and interception systems, 10 Mercedes Benz anti-riot water cannon, assorted items of uniforms accoutrement, 6300 upgraded AK-47 rifles, 900 pump action short guns, 2000 riot guns, 7,238,335 pieces of assorted ammunitions, 10,960 units and 20,000 units of Bullet Proof vests and Ballistic Helmets, respectively. (Naankiel & Ayokhai, 2016)

Given Nigeria's landmass of 923,768 km<sup>2</sup> and the population figure of about 20 million persons, these measures were grossly inadequate to create a meaningful impact on the security realm.

## **Conclusion**

This study has argued that the absence of responsible and good leadership is a primary driver of insecurity in Nigeria. While the democratic transition in 1999 was looked up to as the window to quality leadership following the dismantling of military regime, the democratic transition is yet to yield any meaningful impact on the security of lives and property of the citizens. Governance since the democratic transition has been characterized with groupthink identities, inequality, and politics of exclusion, marginalization, and injustices. The study also argues that because of the leadership inertia, pre-modern security apparatus like the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has remained centralized with obsolete approach to counter-terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other forms of criminalities. Nigeria is at the precincts of dismemberment because she has lost control and monopoly of the use of coercive instruments to the perpetrators of 'new wars.

Insecurity bred (still breeds) hunger, low productivity and stunted economic growth. Investments can hardly take place in an unsafe environment or area strewn with landmines as Nigeria has been experiencing since 1999. Given this, there exists a nexus between economic insecurity and physical insecurity; the fight against the latter amounts to treating the symptoms rather than the causes of the ailment. For instance, the National Social Investments Programme (NSIP) which transfers money to the vulnerable and poor masses can hardly create any impact in eradicating

poverty in the society. The government should provide more jobs for the teeming youths and less weapons which have turned Nigerians against their fellow citizens. There is, therefore, a causal relationship between leadership failure and Nigeria's myriad of security challenges.

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