Global COVID-19 Pandemic: Insights from Africa's Governance, Development and Security Crises

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Abstract

Who or what is to blame for the elusive governance, development and security in Africa? Security and good governance are precondition for sustained development. Security involves the search to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts — whether the threat originates from other states, non-state actors, or structural socioeconomic conditions. The study examines the dynamic impact of COVID-19 on governance, security and efforts to embed sustainable development within the social, economic and political milieu of Africa. Accordingly, the methodology is based on qualitative mechanism of secondary data. We argue that poor governance undermines security which manifests in direct, structural and cultural violence. We, note among others, that there is a logical interdependence between good governance and development as insecurity inhibits development and diverts resources to military purposes that could be better used for total transmogrification of man which is central to sustainable development. The results show that COVID-19 pose great challenge to African state incapacitation arising from bad governance; increased economic fragility and has often been followed by outbreaks of conflicts, violence and wars.

Keywords: COVID-19, Governance, Security, Conflict, Sustainable development

Introduction

The social, economic, religious, cultural, security and political challenges of COVID-19 pandemics has changed the increasingly inter-connected world of the twenty-first century beyond human comprehension. COVID-19 represents the greatest challenge to global health and development since the second World War. Africa is currently facing daunting challenges of checking the rampaging nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to curtail economic and security collapse. Its spread in Africa has serious setbacks for actors in the informal economy and equally undermined urban governance in Africa (Onyishi et al., 2020). The weak and fragile economies of most African economies contribute in no small measure to this challenge (Gawanas, 2020). Globally and regionally, the impacts of COVID-19 go beyond the health and economic sectors to affect governance, security and development. Security

concerns have been more frequently connected with development since the end of the Cold War. As a result, securitization of boundaries of self-contained and self-governing territorial units, city states, empires, and colonies or other semi-autonomous dependencies or independent territorial entities have gained new momentum especially since the 9/11 attack in United States of America. COVID-19 has exacerbated inequities and increasing the fragility of Africa's economies. Amidst COVID-19, conflicts and civil strife manifests in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea- Bissau. In the midst of violent conflicts in Africa, insurgencies remain prevalent in the Sahel region affecting the West African countries of Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Mauritania and low intensity conflicts surges within notably stable countries such as Ghana and Senegal. This is an indication of the possible re-surfacing of internal and regional violent conflicts (Annan, 2014) which has adverse effects on governance, security and development.

Obi (2012) posits that many factors produces effect on the never-ending wars and conflicts in postcolonial African societies. Foe him, the roots of conflict in West Africa, nay Nigeria are much deeper and complex, and are embedded in the dynamic interplay of historical factors, socio-economic crisis, legacies of authoritarianism and the politics of exclusion, international forces, and local struggles. In Africa, Covid-19 pandemic has added to these factors and constitute threats on public health, peaceful coexistence, governance, security and development. According to Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), (2022), as at 17th October 2022, the continent had recorded 12,085,317 cases of infections, 255,909 deaths, 11,458,269 recoveries and 123,344,236 tests while as at 23rd October 2022, COVID-19 confirmed cases were 266,043, active cases were 3500, with 259,388 discharged, 5,593,537 sample tested and 3155 deaths in Nigeria (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2022). Existing scholarship on the nexus between public health, societal wellbeing, politics, and the performance of the national health systems have been examined in Africa, particularly in post-conflict countries as well as those experiencing protracted conflicts (John-Langba, 2013, John-Langba and John-Langba, 2020). While the United Nations (UN) Security Council has not yet formally determined the Covid-19 pandemic a threat to international peace and security, as it did in the case of the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic in West Africa (United Nations Security Council, 2014), the African Union (AU) has expressed concerns about the likelihood of the Covid-19 pandemic impacting negatively on the continent's stability. At its 910th meeting held on February 13, 2020, the African Union's Peace and Security Council noted that the Covid-19

outbreak is a public health emergency that "could constitute a threat to peace and security on the Continent." (African Union, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic undermines Africa's fragile political systems and economies and creates developmental challenges for the continent. Some of the major factors behind Africa's heightened vulnerability to COVID-19 include, among others, high debt burden, dependence on primary commodity export, decrepit health system, economic marginality and poor governance (Onuoha, and Mbaegbu, 2022). Despite increased peacebuilding efforts in recent decades, violence and conflict, at times exacerbated by terrorism and the spread of violent extremism, transnational organized crime, and weak institutions, continue to pose a challenge in some areas and will inevitably complicate efforts to tackle the virus (United Nations, 2020). The implication of the above scenario is that Africa's development is in a reverse gear. Thus, poverty, diseases, civil disturbances, insurgence and in recent time terrorism are the core features of the continent. Following a protracted period of conflict, social unrest, and political instability, the rise of terrorism and its adverse effects on peace, security, and development in the continent remains a threat to human lives and property. Disappointedly, the wave of democracy of the late 1990s which is expected to neutralize the storm of social conflicts has not been able to do so. Rather the wave of democracy has brought with it the rising tide of conflicts characterized by election instigated political violence in various forms and magnitudes as witnessed in Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Gambia etc. This violence undermines the democratic character of elections by substituting free choice with coercion and by deterring participatory democracy, destroyed properties, infrastructures and claimed thousands of lives (Hoglund, 2009; Ogundiya, 2010; Bekoe, 2012; Harish and Toha, 2019; Birch, Daxecker, and Hoglund, 2020).

COVID-19 did not only complicate the existing peace and security challenges in many countries of the world but also constitutes an additional security problem for those already dealing with crises especially in Africa (PSC REPORT, 2020). In Africa, the dynamics of governance and political development has been one of steady decline throughout its landscape, and this manifests in poor leadership and weak institutions. The postcolonial African state manifests unbridled competition for power for personal aggrandizement, creates a violent political culture, with the state serving as the focus of the primitive capital accumulation (Ebiede, 2018; Mbaegbu, 2018). The predatory and prebendal nature of African states made African leaders to live for themselves and care little about the social and economic welfare of

the citizenries. The link between governance, security, and development in Africa poses profound challenges in human, social and economic development of the society (Lawal, 2007). The seeming elusiveness of sustainable development and human security in Africa raises questions about the nature of governance and security prevalent at the local and national levels. As a corollary to above, while conflicts manifest at various stages, the study of governance and security amidst COVID-19 remains underexplored in extant literature. Interrogating the nexus between governance, development and security at a time like this in Africa becomes apt. Specifically, the paper seeks to interrogate the dynamic impacts of COVID-19 on governance, development and security in an increasingly violent prone Nigerian society.

Methodology

Methodologically, this study relies on document based on secondary sources. The reviews involve media reports, reports of international development agencies, blog posts from reputable institutions such as ACCORD and other secondary literature on Covid-19 responses in Africa. The review was helpful in filling the gap in literature. The review was on mapping and searches of relevant terms that addresses the focus of the study at the time of this writing. The searches were on PubMed, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Google Scholar, Google, and Relief Web with the associated keywords: ("Global" OR "International") AND "Covid-19" OR "coronavirus" OR " pandemic") AND ("Governance" OR "Leadership") AND ("Security" OR "Well-being") ("Africa" OR "Nigeria" OR " developing countries") AND ("Development " OR "Social provisioning" OR "Crisis" OR "challenges" OR "Conflicts" OR "Violence" OR "insurgency" OR "Terrorism") AND ("Sustainable development" OR "sustainable growth" OR "lasting improvement "). The searches are restricted to articles published in English from March to July 2020. Literature retrieved were screened, selected and reviewed. The inclusion criteria were a clear focus on the Covid-19 pandemic, keywords and significant discussion of the preexisting fragile economies, leadership failures and state incapacitation of most African countries with exclusion criteria for non-English articles on Covid-19 studies. These different sources were deployed to produce a coherent narrative of security and governance during the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa, nay Nigeria.

Interrogating Conflict, Terrorism and Insurgencies in Nigeria

The dominant view in extant literature by scholars, civil society and human right activists is that conflicts, insurgency and terrorism is an expression of community or local grievances against the African, nay Nigerian state and the non-state actors due to unmet value expectations (Ibaba 2005; Obi, 2009; Ukiwo, 2011; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Obi, 2012; Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi, 2016). The challenges of COVID-19 have exacerbated the manifestations of these conflicts, terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria and beyond. COVID-19 pandemic did not only devastate the world economy but actually allowed terrorists and insurgents to thrive. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in conflicts, terrorism, insurgencies and insecurity in Nigeria and the neighbouring countries in West Africa and beyond. The deployment of military personnel to various parts of Nigeria to enforce lockdown directives has created security challenges for the state and the populace (Iweze, 2020). Specifically, COVID-19 benefited Boko Haram/Islamic State's West African Province (ISWAP) insurgents in northern Nigeria. The Nigerian military is currently facing the added pressures of budget cuts and the need to police the response to COVID-19, which weakened the already thinly stretched military's efforts to fight jihadist groups like Boko Haram/ISWAP. This forced the Nigerian army to withdraw from the more remote, rural outposts in the North East. The difficulty in conducting proper counterterrorism operations is also coming at a time when Boko Haram/ISWAP have launched multiple attacks, the highest profile of which being a day of violence that killed more than 100 Chadian and Nigerian soldiers. So far, Boko Haram has been quick to capitalize on the global pandemic. The Boko Haram insurgents have begun developing state structures – such as tax collection, agriculture subsidies, and introducing their own form of Sharia justice (Madeira, 2020).

In analyzing the motivations behind the formation of insurgent or terrorist groups and their activities against the state, academic debates have been sharply divided. On the one hand are scholars who emphasize insurgency as fallout of religious activities, while on the other hand are those who prioritize geostrategic politics or political marginalization as the root cause. To some other scholars, terrorism originates from various sources. There are individual and group levels of analysis of this origin of terrorism. At the individual level, some experts have distinguished rational, psychological, and cultural origins of terrorism. According to Simonsen and Jeremy (2000) rational terrorists think through their goals and options, making a cost-benefit analysis. Psychological motivation for resorting to terrorism derives from the terrorist's

personal dissatisfaction with his or her life and accomplishments. At the group level, terrorism can grow out of an environment of political activism, when a group's goal is to redirect a government's or society's attention toward the grievances of an activist social movement. Either of the claims, however, is only valid in part and obscures a holistic understanding of insurgency as political, social and economic contradictions in governance deficit of any given country.

With respect to Nigeria, since her independence in 1960, she has experienced different types of violent conflicts that have negatively impacted on the country's population across the six geopolitical zones. As expected, peace and security have been badly undermined by the episodic, yet recurring conflict disorders causing harm, displacement and even death. Apart from violent community conflicts, the insurgency caused by the Boko Haram Extremist Islamic sect in northern Nigeria; the militancy in the Niger Delta region; the increasing incidences of farmers-herders' violent clashes; the spate of kidnappings and violent robberies, there are also incidences of cultism and separatist agitations that have often turned violent. These conflicts, no doubt, portend harmful consequences for the country's cultural and social values; ethnic cohesion; social integration, stability and sustainable development (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017).

In the North-Central geo-political zone, the herders-farmer's incessant conflicts have remained dominant and features in all the states located in the zone. Land remains a scarce resource in this zone, worsened by increasing demand resulting in frequent clashes between the herders and the host communities – most of whom are farmers. Also, rural banditry and cattle rustling are rife in this zone, characterised by armed assaults, rape, kidnapping, organised attacks and reprisals on the villages and communities. Amaza (2016) has reported that, out of a total of 389 incidents of herders and farmers conflicts that spanned 1997 to 2015, a significant chunk of 371 had occurred in the Middle-Belt region alone, also known as the North Central geopolitical zone of the country. The latest occurrences of intense herders-farmers conflict and the associated problem of cattle-rustling and other forms of criminality driven by informal networks (Kwaja, 2014) signify the economically induced nature of conflicts in the zone. In addition, protracted disputes over supremacy and the right to chieftaincy stools are also historically prevalent in this geo-political zone; often degenerating into indigene-settler conflicts.

In the North-East zone, politically, the region is very active, and sometimes out rightly restive – even before the escalation of the Boko Haram crises – whose roots cannot be completely divorced from the patron client nature of politics in the geopolitical zone (Animasawun and Saka, 2013). Boko Haram insurgency is the consequence and manifestation of desperation of politicians to ascend to political power. It is, therefore, plausible to state that the emergence of the sect is a reflection of elite politics played with the mask of ethnicity and religion based on primordial sentiments and the North-South divide kind of politics (Mbah, Nwangwu and Edeh, 2017). The impact of insurgency on all aspects of human security, that is, economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, social and political security, are apparent in this zone. This has created an atmosphere of fear, despair and material lack for the displaced and those still in the states in the zone. The state of human insecurity in the zone has not been helped by allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse leveled against the managers of the camps of the Internally Displaced Persons. The visible and invisible actors in the landscape of conflict and insurgency have cut across local and international spheres – which have made an outright defeat of terrorism quite challenging for the government.

The North-West geo-political zone has its own tapestry of conflicts; some of which are peculiar while some are not. The herders and farmers conflict are one of the conflicts that are not peculiar to the zone. Others are: indigene-settler conflicts; inter-faith tensions between Muslims and Christians; and intra-faith tension between mainstream Islam and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria. Intra-faith conflicts also persist amongst Islamic sects in states in the zone. As the immediate neighbour of the North-East geo-political zone, the North-West perhaps comes next as the most terror-affected zone in Nigeria, after the North-East. The existence of big forests that extend across the states of the zone has facilitated the perpetration of violent acts of rural banditry by criminal gangs who use the expansive and dense forests to terrorise rural areas and commuters on the highways. The situation is further compounded by the proliferation and easy access to sophisticated light arms and ammunitions, which are easily smuggled across the porous borders of the country as well as the fall-out of the degradation of Boko Haram insurgents in the North-East region. Many of such insurgents had escaped into the scattered dense forests of the North-West states. Another manifestation of conflict between youths and constituted authorities in the zone – which fuels insecurity in the North-West zone

– is the easy access to, and the use of hard drugs by young people comprising male and female (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017).

The South-East geo-political zone experiences vertical and horizontal forms of violent conflicts. At the vertical level, inter-communal conflicts exist in the zone within and between communities over land, boundaries and chieftaincy. The zone also experiences violent conflicts between communities in the geo-political zone and others from neighbouring states. The affront to constituted authorities in the zone and nationally in recent times has come first from the Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) – which are laying claim to a sovereign state of Biafra. The conflicts are as result of people's perception of their material conditions of life and the expectations from the Nigerian state (Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi, 2016). Therefore, the South-East suffers separatist agitations and inter-group conflicts. The conflict between farmers and herders in this zone has also been persistent, bearing all the scars of such conflicts. Thus, the existence of self-determination groups (MASSOB and IPOB) in the zone has created a kind of generational conflict in the zone between the old and the young. The impact of conflicts in the zone is broad – resulting in loss of lives and property, displacement and the disruption of economic and communal life (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017).

The South-South geopolitical zone, besides being the hotbed of oil-induced militancy in Nigeria, is also afflicted by inter- and intra-group conflict. Manifestations of conflict between youth groups and constituted authorities therein are evident in instances of youth restiveness. Chieftaincy tussles, thuggery, piracy, land disputes, gangsterism and cultism, political and economic conflicts are equally common in the zone. As the main source of national earnings, militancy in the zone has had debilitating effects on the socio-economics of the zone and the country. The destruction of critical state installations and that of the multinational oil companies (MOCs) has worsened the degree of environmental degradation in the zone – with harsh implications for food and environmental security. Every sphere of life has been badly affected by the militancy in the zone. At the base of instability and militancy in the zone are injustice, criminality, underdevelopment, ethno-nationalism and the perceived criminal short-changing of the people by the élite of this zone (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017).

The South-West geo-political zone is enmeshed in conflicts and tension, variously resulting from recurrent sheer banditry, oil bunkering, kidnapping, other criminality and anti-social activities. Presently, the South-West geo-political zone is presently enmeshed in kidnapping on a daily basis. Indigene-settler conflicts, resistance against the proscription of Okada motorcycle operators by state governments, sundry labour disputes, and the hijab crisis also constituted some of the incidences of conflicts in the zone. Increasing wave of gang and cult violent clashes – which imperil the lives of innocent by-standers and residents is prevalent across the zone. Also, clashes between commercial bus drivers and law-enforcement agents were observed as an urban phenomenon; sometimes leading to wanton destruction of government properties and loss of lives. Land, boundary and chieftaincy-related conflicts – often with long histories – are also common in the zone, and with many of such subject-matter cases pending in the civil law courts.

Terrorism remains a sinister yet poignant force in world affair. A variety of groups with political, nationalist and increasing radical ethnic and religious foci continue to embrace terrorism as a means of spreading their message and influencing political discourse (Sullivan 2014). Nowadays, terrorist groups have become more violent, with individual incidents yielding greater injury and death and there seems to be increasing tendencies to select targets. In Nigeria, their attacks are severe and widespread with international connections as well as inter-coordinated strikes against individuals and government infrastructures especially in North Eastern Nigeria where most of the attacks took place (Mbah, Nwangwu and Edeh, 2017). Conflicts, terrorism and insurgencies do not occur in a vacuum. Therefore, structure, agency, collective and individual actions and inactions can go a long way in determining whether a conflict will be violent or peaceful. It is evident that drivers of conflicts, terrorism and insurgencies in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria are context-specific, but also largely inter-connected and mutually reinforcing, irrespective of geographical spread.

COVID-19 and Securitization of human development in Nigeria: Resolving the Contradictions

It is a statement of fact that numerous studies have provided evidence of the linkages between security, violence, and development. The notion that violence, insecurity, and socioeconomic development are linked is not new: from economic theorists such as Adam Smith to the crisis

of the interwar period of the 20th century and the post-World War II implementation of the Marshall Plan and the Bretton Woods institutions, economic thinkers have considered that violence, security, and economic development interact negatively. The dominant understanding of the link, however, held that economic development was a precondition for security, and that increased economic development—and, potentially, economic integration—would reduce the incidence of conflict and violence within, and possibly even among, states. However, critical security studies school of thoughts sees the state and its armed forces as a potential source of insecurity, rather than a guarantor of security (Krause and Williams, 2003, p. 33). The process of development and socio-economic change was also regarded as largely distinct from the dynamics of conflict and insecurity within and between states; for some, preparations for and the fighting of wars could even be seen to spur economic growth and technological innovation (Krause, 2014, p. 382).

In African countries (especially in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Lake Chad Basin) conflict, terrorism and the spread of violent extremism continue to take a heavy toll on local communities. A sense of deprivation or marginalisation as a result of bad governance, poverty, corruption etc. in turn stoke revolts, conflicts, and insurgencies in African continent (Onuoha and Mbaegbu, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic complicates efforts to address violent extremism. Spikes in attacks, often involving the use of improvised explosive devices, were observed in the Sahel from February to April 2020 — reaching 1,784 fatalities around March 2020 — before dropping to 726 in April (United Nations, 2020). Boko Haram has already increased its attacks in the Lake Chad region, provoking strong counter offensive operations by the countries in the region. In the Sahel, terrorist and violent extremists have also maintained pressure on international, national and local security forces. The group described government public health warnings and measures as illegitimate and indicated it opposed the closure of mosques and Islamic schools, making the population and communities under its control particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 infections. Beyond attacks, these groups have been instrumentalizing the pandemic, propagating hatred and fundamentalism, rumours that the virus is not lethal, and further offering services and protection in areas where the State is absent. These attacks have had negative humanitarian consequences with increased IDPs and refugees across the states (United Nations, 2020).

With respect to Nigeria, the conflict is in many cases a symptom of deeper issues — widespread poverty and inequality, poor governance and institutional capacity, a lack of public services and high unemployment, among others. Okolie and Ugwueze (2015: 33) contend that insecurity in Nigeria can also be situated within the character of the political elite[s] that control … state power and the quest to use such power for material accumulation; in doing so, anything goes … including formation and empowering of ethnic militias (by politicians) who ipso facto would be the vanguard for actualizing what was impossible in a civilized process through a backdoor act. According to Okolie and Ugwueze (2015: 29) these factors are responsible for generating 'reactionary and rebellious counter-reactions' which manifest themselves in 'unprecedented crimes and in the emergence of insurgent groups'. The conflict-affected areas are home to extremely vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants, marginalised groups, and people in hard-to-reach areas. Many lives in camps and crowded environments that lack adequate sanitation facilities to prevent contamination from Covid-19. Many lack access to healthcare and basic social services, and many do not receive accessible information in order to understand how to protect themselves from infection.

The activities of these insurgent groups at one time or another have led to the death of thousands of Nigerians, and the loss of properties and homes. In response to this, the Nigerian government utilised its security forces to bring the situation under control. This phase represents the militarised use of force (Appiagyei-Atua, Muhindo, Oyakhirome, Kabachwezi and Buabeng-Baidoo, 2017). Similarly, the fight against insurgent groups is securitised. The resultant effect of this securitization is corruption which manifest by the huge financial outlay that is channeled to the military and other security agencies to fight the insurgency (BBC 2016). Another impact are rampant human rights violations being perpetrated by the soldiers on the ground. Arising from this, the government and the military are not in a rush to end the insurgency (The Telegraph 2015). Thus, several previous administrations in Nigerian remains complicit to the various acts of arbitrary executions, detentions and torture carried out by various security forces. Nigerian government over the years cover the nefarious activities of security agencies involved in the counterinsurgency measures (Appiagyei-Atua, Muhindo, Oyakhirome, Kabachwezi and Buabeng-Baidoo, 2017).

The nexus between development, peace and security have become a central focus of post-conflict reconstruction thinking and practice over the last decade. The key policy tension in the

post-conflict setting appears to be between economic efficiency and political stability. While the need and benefits of improved coherence is widely accepted, there seems to be no consensus on who should coordinate, what should be coordinated and how coordination should be undertaken. The 'securitized' environment in Africa has done little to solve many of the continent's developmental problems. Rather, we see the roll-back of advances made in human rights, democracy and respect for the rule of law (Appiagyei-Atua, Muhindo, Oyakhirome, Kabachwezi and Buabeng-Baidoo, 2017). Human security embodies a notion of security that goes beyond conventional concerns with military capacity and the defence of borders. Human security approaches usually treat an expanded range of social and developmental variables as being able to constitute an international security threat. Poverty, population displacement, HIV/AIDS, environmental breakdown and social exclusion, for example, all bear directly on human and hence global security. Human security is commonly understood as prioritising the security of people, especially their welfare, safety and well-being, rather than that of states. Instead of examining human security as a measurable or specific condition, however, the focus here is how human security as a technology of governance facilitates the way that populations living within the territories of ineffective states are understood, differentiated and acted upon by aid institutions emanating from effective ones (Duffield, 2006).

According to Annan (2000) human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security. For Annan (2000) the restrictions of rights that undermine human security are made by human beings who possess a certain amount of power. Juxtaposing the above, COVID-19 related restrictions and lockdowns led to human rights abuses in Nigeria given the nature and character of the political realities and leadership which are fading shadow of democracy. Arrests related to violations of lockdown measures have increased between states and citizens. The use of the state apparatus like the police, Army et cetera led to abuse of power and assault on the citizens. Cases of excessive use of force by security officials when enforcing emergency measures have been documented in Nigeria, (Accord, 2020). Nigeria's human rights commissioner reported in mid-

April that police had killed 18 people (Aïdi, 2020) between 30 March and 13 April in Kaduna, Abia, Delta, Niger, Ebonyi and Katsina States. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), also recorded 33 incidents of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, 27 incidents of violation of the right to freedom of movement, unlawful arrests and illegal detentions.

In Africa, nay Nigeria, peace and security are at the top of the agenda for Africa. The African Union (AU) created in 2002, recognized peace and security as among the most urgent challenges facing the continent. Although the AU's ownership approach to peace and security is fundamentally correct, it contrasts sharply with African funding and implementation capacities. Ultimately, the AU will prove to be effective only if the relevant donors are prepared to support, and above all to fund, its policies *(*Klingebiel, 2006; and Powell, 2005). Development experience of many fast-growing developing countries such as Nigeria revealed that their high Gross National Product growth rates failed to reduce the socio-economic deprivation of substantial sections of their population. Sustainable development defines the type of "development" that is securitized in human security. We make bold to state that the findings in this study give credence to the concept of "prebendalism", a European feudal practice utilised in explaining the contradictions of affluence and underdevelopment in Nigeria as observed by Joseph (1987). Overtime, "prebendalism" as a form of dysfunctional governance, has promoted horizontal inequalities making governance and the allocation of state resources, conception and allocation of resources, to be done in a way that is conflict-insensitive. Thus, this constitutes the main structural context for most intergroup conflicts and insurgency as manifested or experienced in different parts of the country.

Beyond COVID-19 and Security: Challenges and Prospects for Sustainable Development

Globally, COVID-19 is dealing a great blow on humanity and threatening security and development The effects of COVID-19 on the peace and security conditions in the North-East Nigeria could be catastrophic as it risks further eroding an already fragile social fabric and in turn undo the gains made in deepening foundations for peace and stability in the region. Currently the number of incidences between non state armed groups, such as Boko Haram, and the Government are not much higher than monthly averages seen over the past two years. While past trends indicate that confrontations with Boko Haram intensify during the first quarter of the year, incidences of defensive attacks in March 2020 are over 2 times what the monthly

averages have been over the past two years. As such, threats of retaliation may further compound security challenges amidst a COVID-19 outbreak (UNDP, 2020).

The proportion of security personnel vis-à-vis the size and population of Nigeria has inadvertently turned some areas in the country into insecure and unsafe spaces. Nigeria has vast difficult terrains (forests, mountains, water ways and caves) which are left unmanned by security agents across the country. In some parts of the country, such places have been turned into enclaves of criminal activities. The existence of such places provides hide-out for warlords, militants, insurgents and other criminals who might seek the protection of communities during conflict by claiming to be protecting the interests of the communities. According to (UNDP, 2020) there is evidence that violent extremist groups have used moments of disasters – natural or otherwise - to either enhance their recruitment through propaganda aimed at exploiting marginalized portions of the population. It could also exploit security vacuums that are created as the government diverts attention towards containing the outbreak or as outbreaks occur within the various entities of the security infrastructure. Outbreaks within the police forces, for instance, could place added pressure on the military to distribute capacity towards enforcement of law and order. Outbreaks in strategic military camps themselves pose significant security risks as it could weaken military capabilities and present opportunities for non-state armed groups to expand their areas of influence.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government ordered the initial 14 days' lockdown (restrictions on all interstate movement and banned business operations of all kinds except for those in charge of essential services) in Lagos state, Ogun state and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on Monday, 30th March, 2020. However, majority of Nigerians still live on less than $1 daily and rely on everyday transactions to survive. The failure of the Federal and state governments to provide palliatives and complementary socio-economic support for the most vulnerable groups while restricting movements and closing all businesses shows government level of insensitivity and this reduced the full compliance of the 'stay at home order' (Lawal, 2020). The consequent effect of this inconsideration is that the plight of the vulnerable groups and the unemployed youths worsened with the scourge of hunger which is partly responsible for the recent occurrence of burglary of stores and homes, increase in violent attacks by hungry Nigerians on fellow citizens and other petty crimes in an attempt to dispose people of food items to eat and survive. Thus, there was an increased rate of criminality and violence especially among young

people as they cannot remain indoor for a long period without food and provision of social amenities (Lawal, 2020).

The government of Nigeria has not demonstrated or shown a conflict-sensitive approach to confronting COVID-19. Specifically, the complete lockdown declared by the Federal government and the state government especially in Bornu, Adamawa and Yobe with little or no palliatives or protection measures for vulnerable populations where social safety net are weak feed into civil unrest and exacerbated communal conflicts thus contributing to an undetected spread of the COVID-19 disease and impeded containment (UNDP, 2020). This manifested in the form of rise in criminal activity and unrest among communities who cannot access livelihoods support and/or clashes with the police or military used to enforce the lockdown and adopt a heavy-handed approach. Efforts at radicalizing and reintegrating former combatants were halted as some of the youths were easily convinced to join the Boko Haram groups because of their socio-economic vulnerability and enticement by the Boko Haram insurgent groups. There is a deep-seated distrust and anger against the government by the local residents for their suffering and misery. Some of the residents preferred life in the camp of the Boko haram because of ideology and provision of their material needs.

Due to military preoccupation with enforcing the lockdown order, Boko Haram and its affiliates, capitalizing on the shift of government`s focus from counterinsurgency operations and public apathy to restrictive measures, has intensified the abduction of civilians and the recruitment and training of new fighters. The insurgents have swelled their ranks and relaunched an offensive on both military formations and civilian targets in the northeast. The impact of the heightened Boko Haram attacks has become more glaring with reports of top Nigerian military commanders being ambushed and killed during military operations in the region. In one such case, on March 21, 2020, some military officers and over fifty security forces were ambushed and killed on their way to Alagarno forest in Borno State (Sahara Reporters, 2020; Iweze, 2020).

Covid-19 undermined the securitization efforts in the North East (Iweze, 2020). It is extremely difficult for military personnel on the battlefield to practice social distancing. The rising number of people that have tested positive for the virus has serious implications for counterinsurgency operations in the region. This has placed an additional burden on the security personnel, who are tasked with not only combatting Boko Haram but also conveying medical

equipment and supplies to designated areas, as well as the protection of internally displaced people (IDPs) in camps. The engagement of troops in multiple national tasks has also reduced the number of those available for deployment to the battlefield. A daily update from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) revealed that as of May 20, 2020, 662 persons have been confirmed as having tested positive for Covid-19 in the northeast states, with Borno State, the epicenter of the Boko Haram insurgency, leading with 227 confirmed cases. With the lifting and easing of the lockdown in the northeast states, the NCDC has predicted an increase in the number of infections in the coming weeks (Iweze, 2020).

Nigeria's quest for sustainable development has been a tortuous one. In Nigeria, corruption has been at the centre of development and it is an impediment of true and real development in our society. Political instability, corrupt regimes, insecurity brewed by intra-community wars and unrest, strangulating international debts, trade imbalances, abject poverty and other governance challenges have characterized Nigeria's desire for sustainable development and require the concerted efforts of all actors to surmount. These challenges are many and growing. Nigeria is endowed with human and natural resources as well as great cultural, ecological and economic diversity of diverse manifestations (Abdullahi and Muoghalu, 2006). Yet, it still struggles with developmental issues. The nature of development in Nigeria is such that has not harnessed the abundant human and natural resources to pull the country out of the wood. The shift in focus from state-centric development to 'human' development is perhaps the most profound and durable impact that can be traced to the critiques of the dominant development narrative (Pietersee, 2000). However, the 21st century is now for sustainable development through broadening, deepening and humanizing development for a sustainable society. In Duffield's (2010) words, understanding development and underdevelopment bio politically means understanding them 'in terms of how life is to be supported and maintained, and how people are expected to live, rather than according to economic and state-based models'.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study has shown the worsening fragility of African economies, security and the healthcare systems as a result of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is impacting heavily on state capacities to support peace and security efforts in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. On 23 March, the United Nations Secretary General called for a global ceasefire to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Echoing the continent's "Silencing the Guns" initiative, the

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, also called for a ceasefire. The Secretary-General also appealed for an end to the escalation of violence targeted at women and girls, including domestic violence, as the pandemic spreads. Similarly, the emergency measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 have been used to violate the right to life, as guaranteed under the Nigerian constitution, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

COVID-19 has compounded the long years of managing governance and security challenges in Nigeria. There is no part of the country that is not affected by insecurity. For instance, there are farmers-herder conflicts in the North Central zone of the country. There is arm banditry in the North West zone; Boko Haram insurgencies in the North East; self-determination and civil-agitations in the South East, militant groups in the South-South zone and kidnapping cum arm robbery in the South West zone of the country. It is our contention that the issues to be considered in combating insecurity amidst COVID-19 include social security provisioning, human resource development and education. With education, we can kill terrorism and de-radicalize the minds of the youths which are very much impressionable to terrorist acts/tendencies. Civil society could play a major role in addressing the challenges of peace and conflict in Nigeria, however, due to paucity of funds, there has been very little that they could achieve beyond advocacy, research and mediation.

COVID-19 induced conflicts across the country have placed more strains on hitherto unhealthy inter-group relations, and worsened state-society relations in many other cases. The import of this is that the conflict actors and entrepreneur have latched on to the seeming lacuna in the governance space especially with regards to security architecture of the country. There is also funding gap in the Nigeria security architecture. In Nigeria, there is missing of politics with security and these results in insecurity. Peace, justice and strong institutions are central to the pursuit and attainment of sustainable peace. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the 16th goal, provides strategic guidance for identifying means and ends towards having sustainable peace and development that is people-oriented.

In view of the above, the following recommendations are made for policy implementations:

➢ Peace and justice are the prerequisite for development. Behind every crisis in the world is as a result of injustice, bad governance and poverty. There should be justice and fair play to all manner of Nigerian people/citizens.

➢ Security is not achieved with technology alone, leaders must be able to analyse security threats and potential conflicts, during peacetime and crises like COVID-19 pandemic

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