

## **State Territorial Sovereignty and Human Security**

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### **Abstract**

The long- established concept of security has always revolved around state establishment. A state- centric security architecture-which is tailored to protect state functionaries at the highest echelon of statecraft. The officials symbolized the state, hence, the latter and its government did everything humanly possible to ensure, no harm, either in body or estate befell those at the helm of state affairs. In such conception of security, the state personalities could afford to fiddle while Rome burns. Again, the state conceived in the image and likeness of the governing elite are wont to crush and decisively deal with citizens, who dare challenged the status quo. This particularization of security has led to, most often, to distancing the leaders from the led, to the extent that, the latter, more or less feels alienated, neglected and consigned to life of morbid inertia. This study posits that, security which neglects actual human security, which is encompassing has become obsolete and anachronistic. The methodology employed is the descriptive and qualitative method of data collection and analysis, using secondary sources of information. The researchers are of the view that, overwhelmingly protecting state functionaries to the detriment and neglect of human security might be a potential threat to state territorial sovereignty. For the state to be actually secured, human security should form the fulcrum of governance. The clinch of state-territorial security has led to the jettisoning of good governance, waste, misapplication and mismanagement of resources, with its attendant detrimental consequences for the maximum wellbeing of the citizenry.

Keywords: Human security, injustice, poverty, state-centric, people-centric.

### **Introduction**

Traditionally speaking, state agents from time immemorial had always thought and believed territorial security should be uppermost in state and governmental policy; security then was state-centric and establishment driven. Protection and security of state functionaries, and

mobilization of state resources to sustain such would undeniably, guarantee territorial security, once those at the helm of affairs were securely and adequately shielded from either threat to their person and or estate. Hence, the apparent swam of security details around such personalities, and all which pertain to them. The issue of security should not be territorially and state-centric biased. Rather, it should be pro- people, which would undoubtedly secure both the state and the state. In any functional state, the issue of security as we alluded, should not be territorially, state-centric and militarily driven for the state's very important personalities, to very exclusion of the real people, the greater majority. In other words state security should not be equated to human security, as the latter is presently conceptualized. Nothing threatens state territorial security than insecurities of the greatest human persons.

Insecurity is a global phenomenon which threatens and frightens the populace. It is antithetical to harmony, concord and peace. It could be traumatizing, tormenting and horrific-as it upsets the social order-with its attendant uncertainties, worries and anxieties. It comes in the garb of different dimensions of crimes-low range, middle range and high range. Impact of insecurity could be overt and or covert. In the former, it could readily be felt and noticed, altering a person(s) psychology, causing undue fears and trepidations, in the latter, and its effects could affect a person(s) in estate. Its destructiveness and wasteful characteristics are quite glaring and open. Its traumatizing and psyche distorting nature are inescapable for victims.

The long- established concept of security has always revolved around state establishment. A state-centric security architecture, which is tailored to protect state functionaries at the highest echelon of statecraft. The buzz words are territorial integrity, national unity, national interest, indivisibility and indissolubility of the territorial space of the state. All geared, most often to regime protection, to the near neglect of the security of the individuals. The pristine notion of security was state-centric, militarized, which gives support and legitimacy to instruments of the state. The officials unduly symbolize the state, hence, the latter and its government could do anything humanly possible to ensure, that, no harm, either in body or estate befell those at the helm of state affairs. In such conception of security, the state personalities could afford to fiddle while Rome burns. Again, the state conceived in the image and likeness of the governing elite are wont to crush and decisively deal with citizens, who dare challenge the status quo. This particularization of security most often has led to the distancing of the leaders from the led, to the extent that, the latter, more or less feels alienated, neglected and consigned to life of morbid inertia. This study posits that, security which neglects actual human security, which gives meaning to human existence could fester poverty, injustice, violence, unemployment,

despair, disillusionment, inequality and squalid existence- the real drivers of insecurity. This traditional concept of security was state-centric, in that, it gave overwhelming support and legitimacy to instruments of states and upholding state sovereignty (Menon 2007). Under such state-centric idea of security, all which had to do security, whether national security, national interest had emphasis on the military might of the state, ostensibly to protect the regime and state apparatus. Initially, the United Nations concept of security tailored toward ways and means by which the structures and practices of the modern state could secure its sovereignty. Bajpai (2006) with the demise of feudalism,

In a fragmented and divided world, with its attendant escalating risk both at the family, community, national and international sphere, the protection of the individual person's socio-economic, cultural, psychological and physiological needs which are commonly known as human security from threats and fears has engaged the intellectuals, scholars, statesmen, governmental and not-for-profit organizations since the end of the Cold War. Particularly, with the emergence of multi-polarity and violent extremism, terrorism and insurgency. Just as conflict and peace studies are new entrants in the lexicon of social sciences, the concept of human security is yet to be adequately conceptualized and theorized (Menon 2007). In as much as it is yet to be conceptualized, it has come to the security of the individual and communities alike from pervasive threats to their wellbeing and welfare. It has become a subject of intellectual and policy debate (Menon 2007). He is of the view that human security, though latest entrant in the lexicon of the social sciences, its relevance could be situated in the very idea of human development, human rights and dignity.

When human security is mentioned, State-centric apologists undoubtedly would construe it to mean a relegation or interference in the fundamental functions of the state which is the protection of lives and property of residents in the territorial space of the state. But, this is far from the truth.

### **Historical perspective on security (Human security)**

Human security is still an evolving concept in the social sciences realm. It is yet to acquire a clear identity, conceptual framework and existence; though very novel, it should not be construed as non-existent from time immemorial. As thinkers and philosophers had always, using and utilizing various means, articulated ways and means of attaining the good life for the individual and community alike. According to (Jolly and Basu 2006) Philosophers like Plato, in his classic, *The Republic*, emphasizes the place of justice, equity, morality and the common

good. For, Plato, individuals would be secured if the society is just, equitable, and governed by individuals who are altruistic in the well-being of the individual and community. It is on the strength of this, that the ideal state would emerge. This would be highly improbable if laws are not adhered by individuals, institutions and rulers; in this case, social order and well-being of the individual would be highly compromised.

In Aristotle's *Politics*, he harps on human flourishing. For him, a well ordered society, with a variety of constitutions, and vibrant working class, would not only secure the individual, but, the state as well. As virtues like courage, justice, relate to human security and welfare of the citizens. Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* "state of nature" deals with the insecurity of human life, hence, he calls for a strong sovereign to protect and shield the individual from risks and threat in body or estate. For Marx, the socio-economic insecurity and deprivation faced by the working class, calls for socialist revolution, whereby a more secure and equitable society would be enthroned. Despite the fact that, none of these historical previews out rightly, emphasized human security, nor gave it independent identity and existence (Jolly and Basu 2006), they are nonetheless foundational for the concept of human security as it continues to evolve.

### **Insecurity and Human security in Nigeria:**

It is an undeniable fact that Nigeria is one of the most unsafe places to live and work in the world. According to Global Terrorism Index 2025 report, Nigeria, ranked sixth in the global terrorism scale. This is quite worrisome! With the mass murders, rampant kidnapping for ransom, terrorism, armed banditry, rape and other crimes taking place simultaneously on a daily basis and secessionist agitations, one begins to ask if Nigeria is a failed state. Do citizens still enjoy protection of government as enshrined in the constitution, considering the daily onslaught by terrorists, armed bandits, kidnappers on the citizenry? Insecurity has caused devastating mayhem on Nigerians as well as impacted negatively on the country's economy. In Nigeria, it has threatened food security, foreign and local investment, and has hurt the country's economy.

In the last 24 months in Nigeria alone, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands forced to flee their homes by armed bandits (Premium Times, 2022). Insecurity has caused over 70,000 deaths in Nigeria between 2012 and 2020. According to Adeyeye (2020), Boko Haram insurgency has led to 37,500 deaths, 2.5 million displacement, and 244,000 refugees; in just two years, farmer-herder clashes claimed 10,000 lives and resulted in the displacement of 300,000 people; Nigeria, he further opined, has one of the world's worst kidnap-for-ransom

with 685 kidnaps reported in the first quarter of 2019 alone. Between June 2011 and March 2020, Nigerians had paid about 18.34million Dollars as ransom. Militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta has resulted in kidnapping, unrest and economic distortion (Adeyeye, 2020).

In other to achieve their aims and draw quick government response to their demands for ransom, schools have become the targets of these criminal elements. A timeline of how terrorists and criminals have gone to make schools unsafe especially for girl-child has shown that, in 2014, 276 female students aged from 16 to 18 were abducted from Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Bornu State by the Islamic terrorist group, Boko Haram. Although some of them died, escaped, rescued or released, others remain missing or married by those monsters. Barely four years after the attack on Chibok, had the insurgents taken their onslaught to Yobe, another State in troubled North-West region where in 2018 they invaded Government Girls Science Technical College, Dapchi and kidnapped 110 students. Some of them were eventually released and reunited with their families; Leah Sharibu remains with her captors on The Dapchi incidence provided inspiration for subsequent heists in Northern Nigeria, are grappling with are cord of number of out-of-school -children in the world.

Furthermore, in 2020, bandits took 303 students of Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina State but were released a week after they were taken into captivity. Less than two days after the release of the Kankara students, some gunmen abducted more than 80 Islamic School students in Dandume, about 64 kilometers from Kankara in the same Katsina State, but were quickly rescued by security forces after fierce gun battle (Ojelu,2022).Niger State is by no means an outlier, as more than 41 persons from Government Science College,Kagara in Niger state were abducted by terrorists for both economic and ideological reasons,just two months after kidnapping at least 303 students from a similar school in Kankara,Katsina.The gunmen raided Government Science College Kagara, capturing students, teachers and their family members from the school on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February,2021.Less than 10 days after the bandits raided Kagara, gunmen kidnapped 317 school girls from Government Science Secondary School Jengebe,in Zamfara State.

In March 2021, just weeks after the attack in Jengebe, gunmen also attacked College of Forestry Mechanization, Afaka, Igabi LGA, Kaduna State, and kidnapped 39 students, with some of them rescued and few others released in batches after spending 55 days in captivity. In the following month (April) at least 20 students and two staff were kidnapped from Greenfield University in Kasarami village,, Kaduna State by armed bandits. Three students were killed

by the kidnappers after which others were released with ransom paid (#150 and eight brand new motor cycles). Dozens of students from an Islamic school in Tegin, Niger State were also abducted by an armed gang on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. While on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, a mass of heavily armed bandits struck at Federal Government College, Birnin Yauri, Yauri LGA of Kebbi State (Vanguard, 2021). In fact, between January 2020 and February 2021, at least 301 people were killed in 73 various violent incidents in Niger State (SITREP, 2021).

With roadside kidnappings all too common between Abuja and Kaduna, the train service appeared to be the only safe and affordable option left. But to the frustration of Nigerians, armed bandits attacked an Abuja-Kaduna bound train at about 7:45pm in which hundreds of passengers travelling northwards were kidnapped in Katari, Kaduna State, while others were killed and injured by the bandits who bombed the train. Approximately 970 passengers were on board, and several abducted into the bush by the marauding bandits who arrived on motorbikes holding firearms and other deadly weapons. Although 26 passengers were officially declared missing as of April 4, over 150 passengers were unaccounted. More than 60 people were killed including Aminu Mahmoud, a youth leader of the ruling All Progressive Congress, APC, Chinelo Megafu, a medical doctor, Tibile Mosugu, a rising lawyer and son of a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, and Barrister Musa Lawa-Ozigi, secretary-general, Trade Union Congress, (TUC) etc (Channels Television, 2022). These are human resources that would have contributed to the economic development of this country, but their lives were cut short. What a waste.

It is quite unfortunate, to say the least, how armed bandits invade and terrorize communities and kill vulnerable citizens with reckless abandon. The killing of Dr. Chike Akunyili, widower of former NAFDAC DG and Minister of Information, late Dr. Dora Akunyili and eight others in Onitsha, and several other assassinations point to the grave insecurity in the South-East Nigeria. Others killed in the same gruesome manner include Prof S N Ndubuisi, former Head of Scientific Equipment Development Institute, Enugu; a Federal High court Judge, Justice Stanley Nnaji; former presidential aide, Ahmed Gulak; a traditional ruler, Chief Alexander Eduzueuno; an Anglican Priest, Rev. Emeka Merenu, and a young lawyer, Darlington Prime, among others (Nwezeh, 2021). Some of the latest victims include soldiers; Master Warrant Officer, Audu Linus and Private Gloria Matthew, who were travelling to Imo State for their traditional marriage and were gruesomely killed right before the bride to be helpless mother and 10 years old daughter by unknown gunmen. They were shot dead and beheaded (Oluwakemi, 2022). According to the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of

Law, (The Point, April 21, 2025) from the middle 2015 to date close to 20,300 innocent defenceless of the South East resident have been killed by marauding jihadist. The report went further to allude that since the commencement Boko Haram campaign for a caliphate in 2009, an estimated 40 million indigenous Christians in Northern have been displaced; while their habitats are overran, renamed, with an entirely new settlers, heavily armed taking possession

The spate of insecurity in different parts of the country is a complete negation of the spirit and letter of human security, which implicitly imply freedom from fear and the well-being of individuals and communities. Vanguard, April 7, 2025, had it the Benue South, particularly Otukpo, has witnessed attacks, which has put the people in perpetual fear. In Plateau state, since 2010, more than 400 people were killed in a coordinated night attacks on the villages of Dago Nhawa, Ratsat and Zot.

(Olaotan 2025) recounting the dire security situation in the country as captured by former Minister of Defence and retired army boss, General Theophilus Danjuma at the maiden convocation of Taraba State University in 2018, did say, “the armed forces are not neutral. They collude with the armed bandits. They kill people, kill Nigerians. They facilitate their movements, they cover them. If you depend on the armed forced forces to stop the killings, you will all die one by one

**What Is Human Security?** Despite the none clarity of what human security is, proponents of the concept are of the view that, it has no specific borderline. It is all encompassing, in that, it involves anything which affects the security of the individual, community and collective existence, welfare and well-being of persons. The idea of human security featured prominently in the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994. In the said Report, there was a paradigm shift from traditional state-centric security to people-centric security. According to this report, state policies, which are not protective of the person in body or estate, her well-being and dignity, are antithetical to human security. This particular document has remained a precursor to other UNDP’s human security articulations. Succinctly, the report, described human security as “*freedom from fear and freedom from want, giving equal weight to territories and to people.*” It went further to declare,

*Human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced.*

*Human security is not a concern with weapons-it is a concern with human life, dignity...It is concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many*

*choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities-and whether they live in conflict or in peace.*

Also, the Stockholm Institute on Global Security and Governance, in their paper, *Common Responsibility* in the 1990s, counseled for a new concept of Human Security. According to this report, nations, territorial space might not necessarily be in jeopardy through military and political rivalry between nations, but a wider security paradigm, which includes; policy failure, ecological degradation, population explosion, extreme poverty, health hazards etc. The report posits that human security as a tool of policy making and implementation. According to the report, the concept of human security are multidimensional. They include Economic Security, which involves the basic needs of the individual and community, like access to food, water, and shelter. Food security entails availability of affordable and nutritious food especially for children for their cognitive, psychological, emotional and social development.

According to former Pakistan Finance Minister, Mahbub UI Haq, in his paper, *New Imperatives of Human Security*, sees human security as involving the security of and individuals and not nations. For him, the world is entering a new epoch of human security, whereby, there will be a revolutionary shift in the concept of security. In this new idea, security will be measured by the security of individuals, not just security of their nations, or to put it differently, security of people, not just security of territory. He opines, that, rather than investing heavily in arms, armaments, military hard and soft wares, regime and establishment protection, people's welfare and well-being should be the fulcrum of policy making and implementation. The survival of individual and community should be the essence of governance, rather than territorial integrity. In the view of Haq, human security is a deviation from militaric-centric, state-centric security to that of development. He identified five palpable ways of achieving human security. (Bajpai 2006)

- A human development conception with emphasis on equity, sustainability, and grassroots participation.
- A peace dividend to underwrite the broader agenda of human security.
- Anew partnership between North and South based on "justice , not charity" which emphasizes "equitable access to global market opportunities" and economic restructuring
- A new framework of global governance built on reform of international institutions such the IMF, World Bank, United Nations; and finally,
- A growing role for global civil society.



According to the UNDP Human Development Report 1994, which is a forerunner to subsequent reports on the need for governments and policy makers to prioritize human security, identified the following as very pertinent –

Economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community security.

**Theoretical Framework-** Thomas Hobbes' Social Contract theory aptly fits this work, which is about the need for prioritization and democratization of human security; much as state territorial sovereignty is crucial, the welfare and dignity of individuals and community should be the basis for securing the latter. Thomas Hobbes social contract theory appeared at a very challenging epoch in Britain. His *Leviathan*, published in 1651, turbulent Britain he highlighted the nature of man. According to him, prior to Social Contract, man lived in a State of Nature, where everyone has the right to everything, and there is no impartial power to prevent violent persons from taking what others may need to survive. The consequence is 'war of all against all', in which human life was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". In such ugly and despicable situation, a contract become inevitable, whereby each person relinquishes his right to everything and acquiesce to a central authority or sovereign with absolute power- the Leviathan- which, in turn guarantees the safety and security of all. Individuals must obey the sovereign in all matters and may revolt against it only if it fails to ensure their safety. For Hobbes, in the state of nature, we would lack all social comforts which come about through mutual cooperation. We would be unable to grow food, import goods, or build dwellings on our own, since we would thereby make ourselves targets of attack by other people. This means, when we travel, we would have to be self- protective against robbers. Hence, for Hobbes, as long as we hold unto our rights to kill each other, we can never achieve peace. In other words, man's life in the State of Nature, was one of perennial fear. However, man has a natural desire for security and order. In order to secure self- protection and self- preservation, and to avoid misery and pain, man entered into a contract. This idea of self- preservation and protection are inherent in man's nature, and in order to achieve this, they voluntarily surrendered all their rights and freedoms to some authority by this contract, who must command obedience. Man's life in the State of Nature was one of constant fear and chaotic situation. The state government must of necessity secure those within its territory, by ensuing they are free from fear or threat of it, to pursue happiness and actualize their potential.

**Applicability of Thomas Hobbes Theory and Human Security in Nigeria-** If the primary purpose of government is the welfare and security of the citizens, not, necessarily territorial and regime protection, and with the parlous state of security in the country, it is doubtful if the social contract is still in place; as every indices points to insecurity, poverty, inequalities, poor healthcare and educational enrollment etc which are antithetical human security.

According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2023/2024, which focused on human security, emphasized a people- centered approach to security. It goes further to highlight that human security is all about protecting the individual from violence, but, also about ensuring their well- being and dignity. Though, the report is of the view that Nigeria has made some progress in human development, it is still ranked as a country with low human development. On poverty, the National Bureau of Statistics 2022 report, revealed the grim hold of poverty of a great number of Nigerians, which more or less has become a scourge. It's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), reveals that 63% of Nigerians (133 million people) live in multidimensional poverty. This very report was in collaboration with the UNDP, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). According to World Bank report, the country's greater population currently struggles with poverty, inequality and slow economic growth. Its report states that 56% of Nigerians lived below national poverty line in 2024, up from 40.1% in 2018, which is 129 million Nigerians. As Nigeria grapples the issues of poverty and insecurity other indices of development are not showing signs of improvement to warrant sustainable human security. According 2023 World Bank publication (Peterside 2024), in The Niche, it estimates that 104 million Nigerians are living below the poverty line. With youth unemployment exceeding 42.5%, this has fuelled sundry crimes, inequality and hopelessness amongst the young population. In Nigeria, human security is challenged through varied channels, which has made living the good life Herculean. In terms of infrastructure, which drives economic growth and development, thereby enhancing human security, the country seems to a lagging behind. Nigeria, which prides herself as the largest economy in Africa, could barely generate, transmit and distribute adequate and affordable power and commercial, industrial and domestic use. With an estimated population of 200 million, the World Bank, estimates that Nigeria, loses approximately \$29 billion annually due to unreliable electricity supply (Peterside 2024)

**FOOD INSECURITY:** Food is one of the basic necessities of human existence, and it is one of the defining factors, when the issue of human security is been discussed. Without adequate and

affordable foods for the populace, they are bound to face multidimensional challenges in their day-to-day living. Food insecurity is detrimental to human security. According to Peterside (2024), food insecurity is not all about feeding the population, it about the stability, security and prosperity of the country. Food insecurity, he posits has direct link to national security. According the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) 2023 report, Peterside (2024), 25 million Nigerians were facing moderate to severe food insecurity. This, according to the report, represents 20% increase from the previous year, attributable to inflation, high interest rate, insecurity and climate change.

**Conclusion/Recommendation:** As long as factors, which make the actualization of human security sustainable, which has to do with pro-people policies by the government and the state, the stability and health of the territorial space of any country might not be guaranteed. There is need for the prioritization and democratization of human security in all its ramification. Human security is all about the security and welfare of the citizens; without which the territorial space would be in mortal jeopardy, as we are currently witnessing today's in Nigeria. Human security, is the primary duty of any responsible government, which is abreast of the social contract it entered into with its residents. Human security should form the basis of any government policy; and it is on this strength that social contract between the government and governed will be appreciated by the latter. Governance should work towards improving the living conditions of the citizens, through the provision of basic services. Again, government should ensure, that citizens live without fear, worries and anxiety for them to realize their potentials, by making the environment conducive and livable. As, it is only in a safe and secure environment, that, would people be able to productively apply their knowledge, skills talent, creativity and innovativeness

**Recommendation:** We are of the view that, when human security, which has to do with the psycho-socio- economic wellbeing of a greater number of residents of the state, the latter becomes secured and stable. This will bring about a just, equitable and egalitarian society. The should work towards improving the living standard of the citizens, through the provision of basic human services of healthcare, education, water/ sanitation, poverty reduction/employment opportunities and teem the tide of insecurity. Governance should be about purpose, performance and people; not, necessarily state-centric approach, which a

negation of the former could threaten state territorial space. To secure the stability and health of the state, security should shift from state personalities, institutions to human security.

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