

# Interrogating Nigeria's Governance Failure through the Prism of Insecurity

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## Abstract

The minimum requirements of a social contract are supposed to be delivered by the State, especially one in which democracy and good governance hold sway. Nigeria has never had this; and certain social, political and economic indicators predispose scholars and observers to speculate that Nigeria is destined for classification as a failed state. It has, however, been affirmed that the primary justification for the state is its role as the guarantor of last resort of the personal safety, liberty and property of the citizen. A state that cannot or does not perform this function has no reason to exist. It can be arguably said that no other time since the civil war era has the Nigerian state been seriously engulfed in perennial security challenges that threaten the very foundation of the country than now. This essay discusses the trends, dimensions and manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria. It interrogates the Boko Haram terrorism in some parts of the country and how it largely reflects failure of governance in the polity.

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*Index terms—*

## 1 Introduction

he modern state has become, among other things, a provider of goods and services, social insurer, wealth distributor, moral guardian, entrepreneur, keeper of the currency, banker, and economic planner. But it has been an abject failure in each of these roles (Ratnapala, 2006:9). Fuelled by the superpower rivalry that characterized the Cold War period, large portions of the developing world became engulfed in, and consumed by, protracted social conflict and societal warfare. As these societies emerge from years of intense societal conflict in the 1990s and early 2000s, they found their prospects for recovery challenged by their weakened state capacity, deeply divided societies, devastated economies, squandered resources, and traumatized populations (Marshall and Gurr, 2005:13).

Nigeria is not immune from this trend as it has witnessed a civil war and still battling a myriad of security challenges that incapacitate the central government. It is, however, an obvious fact that Nigeria is strategic to the African continent in particular and the entire world community in general. Expectedly therefore, emerging issues and developments concerning the country generate diverse interests across the globe. The reason is not far-fetched. As established by yoade (2008:vii), Nigeria is not just one country in Africa. It is also not just one country in the global setting. It is the most populous country in Africa as well as one of the best resource-endowed countries in the world. Its affairs are a concern to others continentally and globally. This is because, for whatever it is worth, in influential diplomatic circles, people believe that as Nigeria goes, so goes Africa". The Centre for Strategy and Technology (2011:2) in one of its occasional series, posits that: Nigeria's geographic and political position in Africa, its single-commodity and soon-to-be-top-20 oil-rich economy, extraordinarily complex demographics, culture of corruption, poor and failing national and human infrastructure, long history of dangerously destabilizing religious and ethnic violence, repeated and potential for future military coups d'état, endemic disease, and its growing importance to the global and US economy present researchers with a myriad of vexing and intractable problems and challenges.

### 2 II. Unpacking the Concept of Insecurity

The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations defines security as "a term which denotes the absence of threats to scarce values" (Evans and Newnham, 1998 cited in Malec, 2003). Ayeye (2010:195) defines security as the composition, structure and responsibilities of the security sector. It comprises also the personal and communal state of being secure from a wide range of critical and pervasive threats including but not limited to all forms violence, injustice and violation of human rights. The most accurate and most comprehensive definition of the term "security" is presented, however, in the Russian Federation Rules of Law related to security. Here the term security is defined as "defense of the vital interests of individuals, society, and state from internal and external threats" (ibid).

Security can be seen in two main aspects, internal and external. The internal aspect of security has two dimensions, the security of the people and the security of the state or the government. The security of the people is seen in terms of the satisfaction of the social, cultural, economic, political and human rights needs of the people. The security of the people is the only and best guarantee for the security of the government. The external aspect of insecurity relates to threats of armed invasion from outside the country. The UNDP developed the concept of 'human security' to encompass not just the achievement of minimal levels of material needs, but also the absence of severe threats to them of an economic or political kind: 'Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime -these are the emerging concerns of security all over the world'. In its fullest sense, Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007:96-97) contends, human security includes not only protection against criminal violence but also the promotion of the people's right to basic education, primary health care, water and sanitation, nutrition and reproductive health, as well as the implementation of preventive, relief and rehabilitation measures with respect to disasters, both natural and human made.

The state, according to Okpaga et al (2012:80), exists fundamentally for the protection of life and property and ensuring the wellbeing of the citizens. As such, state-based institutions and agencies have responsibility for the security of the citizens. However, certain institutions and agencies are specifically charged with the responsibility for the security of life and property. They include the police, state security agencies, the military, immigration, and prison services. Insecurity refers to the breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, (which Nigeria has witnessed over the years) resulting in wanton destruction and loss of life and property. Insecurity also manifests in political problems, which according to Bouchat (2010:84), include lack of stability or violence through frequent coups, civil wars and cross-border fighting, dominance of self-serving elites, inadequate citizen representation, and poor or counterproductive government policies.

### 3 III.

## 4 Insecurity in Nigeria: Trends and Dimensions

Since 1999, Elaigwu (2011:213) contends that "an atmosphere of insecurity has enveloped the polity". Before now, the most serious security challenge, however, has been the intensification of the insurgency in the Niger Delta, an area viewed as increasingly lawless and unsafe, particularly for foreign nationals and Nigerians associated with the oil industry, government officials and security forces. (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2007:12-13). Though the amnesty programme of the Federal Government has stemmed the pace of insecurity in the area, cases of crude oil bunkering/theft by hoodlums have intensified while other parts of the country are engulfed in one security challenge or the other. According to the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, CBCN, (The Nation, 2012:5) Nigerians continue to live in fear and tension despite the acclaimed efforts to beef up security in the nation. Bombings and killings of innocent Nigerians continue in the northern part of the country while periodic murders and armed robberies continue in the southern part. Writing on the state of the nation with particular focus on security, Odunuga (2011) observes that "there are no safe havens anymore. Even fortresses like the Presidential Villa and the National Assembly have had to adopt desperate measures to stave off imminent attacks from the dreaded Boko Haram sect. And, of course, the outcome of that desperation is reflected in the humongous amount set aside to tackle security in the 2012 Budget".

It is observed by Hilker et al (2010) that states often fail to provide adequate security for citizens or undermine democratic governance through acts committed in the name of security calls into question top-down approaches to reducing violence. This ugly development has some implications. As noted in The Punch (2012:13) editorial, investors are wary of coming to a country where their lives and investments are not safe: Nigeria has been on a steady decline in the Global Peace Index. Out of 158 countries surveyed, the country was 117th in 2007, 129th in 2008 and 2009, 137th in 2010, 142nd in 2011 and 146th in 2012. Even a country like Chad is more peaceful than Nigeria. We are only better than such countries as Syria, Pakistan, North Korea, Iraq, Sudan, Congo Democratic Republic, Afghanistan, Libya, Israel, Russia and Somalia-pariah states or nations on war footing.

Nigeria has been perennially unstable due to ethnically and/or religiously motivated crises which have led to the loss of thousands of lives and billions of naira worth of properties. Although Panels are set up to investigate the causes of the crises, their recommendations are never implemented. The inaction If we agree that "security is a state when there are no threats?," this automatically suggests that the opposite state, "insecurity," is identified by particular threats within this area of security (Malec, 2003). The manifestation of human insecurity can be mental, physical and procural. It is based on current agitations or the anticipation of future conditions and needs or both.

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106 In broad terms, security then is the basic condition of safety from harm and deprivation, which is applicable  
107 to a person, living things, an entity and inanimate objects (Kayode Are, [http://www.lagoscountryclub.net/  
108 downloads/ PROJECTING % 20 NIGERIA's% 20Security. pdf](http://www.lagoscountryclub.net/downloads/PROJECTING%20NIGERIA's%20Security.pdf) ). As noted by Stewart (2004:3) people may  
109 have the potential to do and be many things, yet this potential may be cut off, or people's sense of well-being  
110 may be seriously adversely affected with high levels of insecurity. Such insecurity includes the possibility of  
111 economic vicissitudes, health crises, and injury or death as a result of criminal or political violence. Sustained  
112 political violence may lead to the break-up of communities and families, forced migration and the need to re-  
113 establish lives in strange and alien environments, or even a suspended existence in refugee camps. There is no  
114 question that if such events are widespread, they have a serious negative impact on many people's lives, and  
115 therefore adversely affect the achievement of development.

116 by responsible authorities to punish the perpetrators of violence sends the signal that it pays to go on rampage.  
117 It often fuels fresh cycle of violence ??Erinosho, 2012:36). The situation in this regard is both precarious in the  
118 rural as well as in the urban areas. Due to the armed and violent conflicts, social services and facilities are  
119 disrupted. As noted by Okolo (2009), what the current trend of violence is imprinting on the psyche of Nigerians  
120 is that the government security apparatus is incapable of guaranteeing the safety and security of people. This  
121 perception creates fear, limiting the people's ability to develop economically. It also limits the state's capacity  
122 to attract investors because the perception of insecurity is shared by outsiders. The number of avoidable deaths  
123 arising from these extrajudicial and other violent activities has been documented:

124 It may be correct to say that over 54,000 Nigerians have died outside the law since 1999. Vigilante killings  
125 account for at least 15,000 murders; ethno-religious and sectarian violence including Boko-Haram terror account  
126 for at least 16,000 criminal deaths; extra-judicial executions by Nigerian security forces led by the Nigeria Police  
127 account for at least 21,000 killings, which include Odi, Zaki-Biam and the Niger Delta (i.e. Gbaramatu invasion)  
128 massacres. Police killings or extrajudicial executions may have accounted for over 17,000 deaths. The election-  
129 related killings since 1999 may also have accounted for over 2,000 deaths. These figures did not include deaths  
130 arising from other man-made tragedies such as road accidents, flood menace and those killed by armed robbers  
131 including deaths arising from robbery gunshot injuries (Nigeria Daily News,2011).

132 IV.

## 133 5 The Boko Haram Terrorism

134 Armed groups have increased their use of violent tactics over the past year in the form of kidnappings, battles  
135 with security forces, clashes with one another, and car bombs, which is a more recent tactic. Such groups are  
136 demonstrating increasingly sophisticated tactics and weaponry, raising concerns about future violence (Fisher-  
137 Thompson, 2007 cited in ??azen and Horner, 2007:18). Yet, by failing to take effective measures to stem the tide  
138 of violence, the Nigerian authorities have fostered a climate of impunity. They are creating conditions conducive  
139 to an escalation of violence (Amnesty International, 2011:6). As can be daily witnessed, such violence has reached  
140 a deadly level that glaringly reveals the incapacitation and helplessness of the Nigerian government, particularly  
141 with the bombing activities of the Boko Haram Sect. The paradox of Nigeria's security is that instead of the  
142 State being the framework of lawful order and the highest source of governing authority, it now constitutes the  
143 greatest threat to itself. Forest (2012:90) observes that while the violence in the south of Nigeria is mainly  
144 secular and driven by grievances associated with resources and environmental damage, the north has seen far  
145 more ethnic, tribal, and religious violence, often manipulated by politicians for political gain and profit especially  
146 in areas where neither Muslims nor Christians are a clear majority. Resource scarcity and ethnic identity politics  
147 play a prominent role in the conflicts of this region.

148 The large number of young unemployed or under-employed graduates in Nigeria constitutes a risk to the  
149 security of the country. This situation portends a bleak future for the country because Nigeria is now creating an  
150 army of potentially restless, miserable, frustrated and violent young people with reasonable amount of education.  
151 This group can easily be mobilized to demand their social and economic rights. It can also become another tool  
152 of political violence just as the Boko Haram is to us today ??Erinosho, 2012:36) While some analysts believe  
153 the group is divided into factions, others argue that Boko Haram has evolved into a cell-based organization that  
154 remains unified under Shekau's control. Complicating the matter are criminal gangs in the north, including  
155 political thugs that are suspected of committing crimes under the guise of Boko Haram. Despite Boko Haram's  
156 clandestine nature, the largely consistent pattern of attacks documented in the Human Rights Watch's (2012:11)  
157 report suggests a degree of coordination or organizational control within the group. Although there is no  
158 conclusive link with jihadist movements outside Nigeria, the modus operandi of the sect, fashioned after the  
159 Taliban in Afghanistan, has generated some curiosities. Given its large following and the claim that it had sent  
160 members to Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Iraq, Mauritania and Algeria for training, it could be that the Boko  
161 Haram modeled itself after the Taliban simply to acknowledge its source of inspiration. It could also be that it was  
162 meant to attract sympathy and support from the Taliban or related groups. Viewed from another perspective, it  
163 could also be that the links actually exist but have not been conclusively proven ??Adesoji, 2010:101). However,  
164 there are indications that members of the group have received weapons and training in bomb-making and other  
165 terrorist tactics from al-Qaeda affiliates in the north and/or east of the continent ??Forest, 2012:2).

166 The Presidency has been, ridiculously, oscillating between the use of force and dialogue as an approach to  
167 combating the insurgency. However, the obviously adopted application of force has attracted human rights issues.

168 International organisations, for instance, Human Rights Watch report (ThisDay, 2012), catalogues atrocities for  
169 which Boko Haram has claimed responsibility. It also explores the role of the Joint Task Force (JTF), whose  
170 alleged abuses, it said, contravened international human rights law and might also constitute crimes against  
171 humanity. According to it, government security forces have also engaged in numerous abuses, including extra-  
172 judicial killings. The unlawful killing by both Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces only grows worse.

173 Nigeria's government has responded with a heavy hand to Boko Haram's violence. In the name of  
174 ending the group's threat to citizens, security forces comprising military, police, and intelligence personnel,  
175 known as the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), have killed hundreds of Boko Haram suspects and random  
176 members of communities where attacks have occurred. According to witnesses, the JTF has engaged  
177 in excessive use of force, physical abuse, secret detentions, extortion, burning of houses, stealing money  
178 during raids, and extrajudicial killings of suspects. These killings, and clashes with the group, have  
179 raised the death toll of those killed by Boko Haram or security forces to more than 2,800 people since  
180 2009 [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1012\\_webwcover.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1012_webwcover.pdf) Boko Haram has repeatedly  
181 enunciated its objectives, which are to Islamise the northern part of the country, enforce the Sharia law and  
182 control territories. In one of its audacious taunts, the group that bombed the UN building and the Police  
183 Headquarters, both in Abuja, once told President Jonathan that only his conversion to Islam would bring an  
184 end to the insurgency (The Punch, 2013:18). To date, Boko Haram has used car bombs in fewer than a dozen  
185 attacks, but each of these has attracted tremendous attention and with the exception of the attack on Nigeria's  
186 Police Headquarters, has been extraordinarily deadly. In sum, Boko Haram was once viewed by authorities as a  
187 nuisance confined to the far northeast, attacking Christians with machetes and small arms. It has now become  
188 the most notorious armed group in Nigeria. It has expanded its attacks in terms of frequency, lethality, and  
189 range of targets. While armed assaults were the predominant mode of attack in 2009, the group has added  
190 suicide bombings to its arsenal, beginning with the attack against the Abuja police barracks on 16 June 2011.  
191 These developments indicate an increasing level of capability and sophistication (Forest, 2012:70). However,  
192 the group's ideology resonates for many reasons beyond religion. Socio-economic grievances include the huge gap  
193 between aspirations of Nigeria's youth and the opportunities provided by the system for achieving a better life.  
194 A swelling population amid economic despair creates an environment in which radical extremist ideologies can  
195 thrive.

196 Attempts by the Federal Government to engage the terrorist group in negotiation have been seen as a  
197 manifestation of capitulation. In its editorial, the Sunday Punch (2012:13) submits that: Only a failed or  
198 failing state negotiates with terrorists seeking to dismember the state. Going by the published agenda of Boko  
199 Haram, it is wrong to view its brand of terrorism like the Taliban of Afghanistan, the Basque separatists of  
200 Spain or even Palestinian radical groups. These are primarily violent dissident groups seeking independence for  
201 their homelands. Not so with Boko Haram which seeks the dismantling of the Nigerian State and the overthrow,  
202 by violence, of its constitution. The extremist group shares a perception that Western culture has polluted  
203 Islamic values and traditions and views violence as the natural and justified by-product of a cosmic struggle  
204 between good and evil. It has, therefore, made no secret of its rejection of the authority of the state and western  
205 education, and is bent on expelling Christians and mainstream Muslims that do not subscribe to its narrow,  
206 Salafist interpretation of Islam.

207 Yet, not much has been done by the Northern leaders-by way of intervention-to curb the menace. According  
208 to The Punch editorial (2013:16): "It is regretted that many northern leaders still refuse to face up to the  
209 implications of the mistake of allowing religious extremists get a foothold in the North. Rather than heed the  
210 warning, some northern leaders prefer to sit on a keg of gunpowder, offering tame and untenable excuses for the  
211 actions of terrorists, shielding them from arrest and prosecution, and some even allegedly funding them. They  
212 have refused to acknowledge the threat posed by Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation. That is why they call  
213 for dialogue with the group and falsely blame poverty for their actions. A problem that would have been nipped  
214 in the bud has been allowed to fester". The lack of a vibrant local press to articulate the desires and wants of the  
215 people who have been culturally conditioned not to question their leaders and who for years were satisfied with  
216 the crumbs from the tables of their leaders have all led to a complacency on the part of the leaders who have  
217 taken the people for granted (Osuntokun, 2013:21).

218 In a bid to constructively engage key members of Boko Haram and define a comprehensive and workable  
219 framework for resolving the crisis of insecurity in the country (Abati, 2013, <http://saharareporters.com>), President  
220 Jonathan appointed a commission to explore a possible "amnesty" programme for Boko Haram, but the insurgents  
221 have shown no interest in laying down their arms. Instead, they are increasingly using tactics associated with  
222 international jihadist groups, such as kidnapping and suicide bombs (Campbell, 2013). The sect has repeatedly  
223 rejected peace talks, citing the government's insincerity, following a series of failed mediated negotiations  
224 (Christian Science Monitor, 2013). In May 2013, the President, however, declared a state of emergency in  
225 three states-Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. More troops were deployed in these states with the mandate to take  
226 "all necessary action" to "put an end to the impunity of insurgents and terrorists".

227 V.

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## 228 6 Nature and Manifestation of Governance Failure

229 Nigeria's political development has always been punctured by governance crisis and corruption at all strata of the  
230 society. There is thus a disconnection between the governed and the government. As comprehensively enunciated  
231 by Alemika (2004:1-2): some manifestations of the crisis of the state and governance in the country are (a)  
232 inability to guarantee a basic minimum standard of living that accord with human dignity for the majority  
233 of the citizens?(b) lingering conditions of political instability, repression and violence; (c) widespread petty  
234 and grand corruption; (d) economic decline resulting in capacity under-utilisation, structural distortion..., huge  
235 debt burden; (e) very high unemployment rate, especially among young people .. (f) deterioration of socio-  
236 economic infrastructure?; (g) widening inequality among individuals and between rural and urban communities;  
237 (h) insecurity of life and property due to violent crimes and socio-political violence engendered by competition  
238 over resources, and (i) deterioration of the social services-particularly education and health care, which has been  
239 made worse by structural adjustment programmes implemented by successive governments since 1986. This  
240 situation of anomie has continued to give serious concern to many Nigerians as ??ukah (2012:36) rhetorically  
241 puts it: how do we explain the fact that after over 50 years, we are unable to generate and distribute electricity,  
242 supply water to our people, reverse the ugly and avoidably high infant mortality, set up and run an effective  
243 educational system, agree on rules of engagement of getting into power, reverse the circle of violence that attends  
244 our elections, contain corruption, instil national discipline and create a more humane and caring society?

245 The culmination of these failures accounts for repeated poor performance of the country on the Global  
246 ranking. For instance, out of the 177 countries considered in the 2011 ranking by the Fund for Peacean American  
247 independent non-profit research and educational organization-Nigeria was ranked 14th most failed state in the  
248 world. According to the 2011 result which is the seventh annual Failed State Index report, the country maintains  
249 the same position as that of 2010. Nigeria was 15th in 2009, 18th in 2008, 17th in 2007, 22nd in 2006, 54th in 2005,  
250 which means that its 14th position assumes its worst stagnant status since 2007. The fall from 2005 to 2006 was  
251 sharp, while it has since then been maintaining the margin of one of the most failed in the world, having a status of  
252 being better than just eight other countries (Vanguard, 2011, see also [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Failed\\_state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Failed_state)).

253 The 2012 Failed State Index ranked Nigeria as the 14th most troubled state. Also, in the 2012 Global Peace  
254 Index, published by the Institute of Economics and Peace, Nigeria was ranked 146th out of the 158 countries,  
255 signifying a decline in peace and stability in the country particularly in the last five years (The Punch, 2012).  
256 The ranking evaluates, among other things, the risk of renewed fighting, the resurgence of political instability  
257 and terrorist threats <http://www.rescuechristians.org/2012/06/26/africa-global-peace-index-top-10-most-d>.  
258 Nigeria is also ranked the 6th most dangerous African country. The latest ranking came on the heels of Federal  
259 Government's insistence that Nigeria was safe for investment, despite incessant bomb attacks that had killed  
260 many people, especially in the North. Fawole's (2012) submission is very pertinent here:

261 Any government that derogates from this fundamental responsibility (securing lives and property) would soon  
262 become irrelevant and obsolescent, as citizens may be forced to resort to self-help for their safety and security,  
263 and watch the country descend into Thomas Hobbes' conception of the state of nature where life is nasty, brutish  
264 and short. If the government fails to live up to its responsibilities as the domestic security situation demands,  
265 Nigeria risks going down the road travelled by the likes of Rwanda, Sudan, and Somalia. Lest we forget, almost a  
266 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were callously slaughtered in Rwanda in 1994 in an orchestrated bloodbath;  
267 Sudan had the longest and bloodiest civil war in Africa between the Muslim North and the Christian and Animist  
268 South, resulting in the independence of the new Republic of South Sudan last year; an unrelenting bloodbath and  
269 ethnic cleansing is still raging in the Darfur region of Sudan; and Somalia which nearly vanished off the global  
270 map in the 1990s is today a hellish enclave of warlords, bandits, murderers and pirates.

271 The abortion of the Nigerian possibility has been long signposted by the total institutional collapse, festering  
272 corruption, barefaced fraud, incandescent ethnic and religious violence and ineptitude, total collapse of the value  
273 system and entrenchment of official roguery. Nigeria has remained a clay-footed giant, stuttering from one  
274 fall to another despite her enormous endowments (Nwakwo, The Guardian, 2012). According to the Minister of  
275 Information, Labaran Maku (The Nation, December 14, 2012), "Boko Haram, highprofile kidnapping, corruption,  
276 oil subsidy scandal, ethnic and religious strife, negative politics and politicking are some of the issues that smear  
277 the country's image at home and abroad". Kidnapping for ransom, especially in the southern states of the  
278 country, has become a lucrative business for criminally-minded young men, who seem to be avoiding the high  
279 risk involved in armed robbery. For this class of young men, kidnapping has become a multi-billion naira business,  
280 where victims are freely targeted, with scant regard for age or social status (The Punch, ??ay 24, 2013). As a  
281 matter of fact, Nigeria is now ranked among such countries as Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Philippines,  
282 Columbia, Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico as kidnap havens, and is said to have moved up to the third position,  
283 behind Mexico and Columbia since 2007. Victims have changed from being predominantly foreign oil workers  
284 to Nigerians, including parents, grandparents, toddlers and about anyone who has a relative that could be  
285 blackmailed into coughing out a ransom (The Nation, ??ay 21, 2013).

286 It is said that the nature and character of the state and of its operators, actors and agencies determine the  
287 trajectory and quality of governance. Where and when there are negative turning points in the sequences of  
288 the use of power and authority, the nation experiences alienation and instability, and sometimes it experiences  
289 extreme trouble and grave danger (Oyovbaire, 2007). Thus, as observed by Natufe (2006) "Nigeria is experiencing  
290 a fundamental crisis in governance". This perversion of governance flows from Nigeria's corrupt society, culture,

291 and pre-colonial history. It also inflames growing ethnic nationalism across the country ??CSAT, 2011:22).  
292 Although citizens regularly carry out their voting obligations, their concerns are often not reflected or their  
293 rights protected by elected officials in policy-making and governance decisions. The states' failure to respond to  
294 citizens' needs despite economic growth has created disillusionment with democracy.

### 295 7 VI.

## 296 8 Concluding Remarks

297 Achieving greater security requires a heightened focus on how insecurity affects the lives and prospects of poor  
298 people. Ayooob, 1991 (cited in Sachs, 2003) observes that security strategy has often been focused on external  
299 threats in the past, and more specifically external military threats (which, therefore, require a military response).  
300 Yet, the nature of future conflicts may require that those concerned with preserving the state's monopoly on  
301 force look beyond such traditional categories as "material capabilities and the use and control of military force by  
302 states" (Katzenstein, 1996 cited in Sachs, 2003) ), Nigeria has a future which is tied to her security. That future  
303 depends on events which have shaped her history and are responsible for the present. The linkage of security to  
304 the future is predicated on the consequence of coping or not coping with current challenges. The repercussion of  
305 security failure can be grave, which then means that security deserves priority attention.

306 With regard to the Boko Haram menace, it has been observed that terrorism demands painstaking surveillance  
307 and forensic intelligence gathering. Experts have always advocated a shift of emphasis from naked force to  
308 effective intelligence-gathering since the terrorists are not sitting targets but people who blend easily with the  
309 local population. Defeating them requires a ready and trained operational force. This is the preferred strategy  
310 globally. Since the Americans were taken unawares during the 9/11 attacks of 2001, for instance, no such terrorist  
311 attacks have succeeded again. The same goes for Britain. On a regular basis, terrorists are apprehended in these  
312 two countries before they have the chance to carry out their deadly acts. That should be the approach in Nigeria  
313 (The Punch, 2013:18).

314 It has been rightly observed by the UNDP (2012:29) that "the exclusion of key segments of society from  
315 political processes often lies at the heart of grievances that, when unaddressed, can incite violence and ultimately  
316 undermine collective action". Participatory governance should, therefore, be encouraged in Nigeria to give room  
317 for a sense of belonging among the citizens regardless of class status, political affiliation or social background. It  
318 is not a good omen for a segment of the populace to feel neglected and inconsequential.

319 However, beyond the specificities mentioned here, this essay strongly recommends, in a very holistic approach,  
320 good governance, as a panacea for Nigeria's security challenges. Though governance is all-encompassing, some of  
321 its major attributes will surface in our discussion. Good governance, according to ??amdok (2001:2), presupposes  
322 the existence of effective domestic institutions. While the latter are generally few, those that exist are bound to  
323 address complex agency problems. What makes government institutions particularly complex is the hierarchical  
324 nature of the political power structures, each level being at once a principal and an agent. Good governance  
325 is the process where public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the  
326 realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard for the  
327 rule of law. The basic tenets of good governance is the degree to which it delivers the dividends of democracy:  
328 provision of quality education, potable water, provision of employment, safe guard of fundamental human rights,  
329 cultural enhancement, provision of good economic atmosphere for development, and political and social rights  
330 ??Abdullahi, 2012:1).

331 The quality of a country's rule of law and access to justice speaks volumes about how a society processes  
332 and resolves conflict, armed or otherwise. Despite experiencing different levels of fragility, a functioning law and  
333 justice system is essential for protecting civilians, maintaining social order, establishing predictable norms and  
334 rules, protecting private property, and ensuring clear proscription and sanctions (UNDP, 2012:56). It has been  
335 noted that governance institutions should be efficient and effective in carrying out their functions, responsive to  
336 the needs of people, facilitative and enabling rather than controlling, and operate according to the rule of law.  
337 These institutions should be tolerant of diverse perspectives, provide equitable access to opportunities and be  
338 service-oriented (<http://magnet.undp.org/Docs/!UN98->).

339 Good governance and political will are required to support human development in terms of health and  
340 education, legal rights for private enterprise and political freedoms, and the construction and maintenance  
341 of a basic physical infrastructure. Such good governance also enhances other economic endeavours (Bouchat  
342 2010:79). This notion is emphasised by Kayode Are ([http://www.lagoscountryclub.net/downloads/PROJECTI  
343 NG%20NIGERIA's%20Security.pdf](http://www.lagoscountryclub.net/downloads/PROJECTING%20NIGERIA's%20Security.pdf)): An appropriate infrastructure for governance, law enforcement, surveillance  
344 and protective service delivery creates the conducive environment for the projection of security. It begins with  
345 the basic issue of governance. History shows that there is correlation between the willingness of citizens to obey  
346 rules or bear the pains of economic or social adjustment dictated by public policy, and the level of trust they have  
347 in those who govern them. Good governance depends on good laws and effective instruments of enforcement.

348 True federalism, devolution of powers and genuine unity founded on respect for minority and opposition rights  
349 in a true democratic fashion has been advocated as a panacea against a full-blown balkanization come 2015 or  
350 beyond (Oluwagbemi, 2012). Also, tackling the problems of corruption, the assurance of good governance and  
351 the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy are the instruments likely to douse the volatile situation

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352 we now have in the country ??Yaqub, 2007:27). As noted by ??siodu (2012:21), the degradation in the quality  
353 of governance and unresponsiveness to the real needs of the people seem to be accelerating and must be reversed  
354 in order to avoid disaster. He argues that what the ordinary man desires is shelter, food, educational facilities to  
355 ensure his children's advancement in life and of course adequate and improving availability of power, health and  
356 transportation infrastructure. The ordinary man is really not interested in the power struggles among politicians.  
357 It can be said that Nigeria is at the crossroads; it is tottering between integration and disintegration. The  
358 forces of the two phenomena are more or less equally matched. It requires an enlightened leadership to swing the  
359 pendulum in the direction of stability and cohesiveness of the polity ??Yaqub, 2007:32). The essence of this essay,  
360 therefore, is to contribute to knowledge just as affirmed by ??arshall (2008:21) "that gaining a more succinct  
361 understanding of the(se) sequential problems?will enable policymakers and scholars to design better policies of  
362 conflict and crisis management so that we can, collectively and effectively, engage in war by other means. In  
363 doing so, this better understanding of the global system, its complexities, and its conflict processes will also  
364 help in distinguishing between political violence and war (driven by grievance) and organized crime and political  
predation (driven by greed)". <sup>1 2 3 4 5</sup>

The year 2009

represented a watershed in Boko Haram's history. Immediately following the public execution of its leader, the group launched an Islamic insurrection and began to carry out a series of bombings and assassinations across the Nigerian state.

The sect's membership cut across the broad spectrum of society, but a preponderant number of members came from its poorest groups. Thus, beyond former university lecturers, students, bankers, a former commissioner and other officers of Borno State, membership extended to drug addicts, vagabonds, and generally lawless people. Although the common denominator among all members was their desire to overthrow the secular government and to propagate Islamic law, the oratorical prowess of Yusuf arguably contributed to their mobilization and participation (Michael and Bwala 2009; Omipidan 2009a; cited in Adesoji, 2010:100). Oluwagbemi (2012) avers that Nigeria, with her sordid history of prevalent inter-ethnic suspicion, religious violence and extremism in the north and poor/illiterate population coupled with rising unemployment, dissatisfaction and clueless local and national leadership provides a fertile ground for the terror network.

Figure 1:

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<sup>1</sup>© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

<sup>2</sup>20 2 3 Interrogating Nigeria's Governance Failure Through the Prism of Insecurity organization. Not only is the sect on rampage and the

<sup>3</sup>2 4 Interrogating Nigeria's Governance Failure Through the Prism of Insecurity

<sup>4</sup>2 6 Interrogating Nigeria's Governance Failure Through the Prism of Insecurity

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