CAUSES OF NIGERIA UNREST AND CONFLICT SITUATION

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Abstract- In 2005, the CIA published a report warning that Nigeria, the seventh most populous country in the world, could disintegrate within 15 years. Nigeria experiences civil unrest, violence and strikes. Nigeria has one of the highest rates of internal violence in the world, only unlike others with similar levels of bloodshed such as Colombia or Chechnya, there is not a civil war going on. Between 1999 and 2006 alone, over 30,000 were killed in ethno-religious violence and over 80,000 displaced. In the north, an explosive growth of strident Christianity confronted an upsurge of puritanical, reformist Islam. In the Middle Belt, the mainly Christian local farmers collided with predominantly Muslim settler herdsman in Plateau State, requiring the president to declare a state of emergency. In the Niger Delta, new rebel groups escalated their attacks on government and multinational installations, including the use of car bombings. According to the Guardian [2], Nigeria is the result of a 1914 British colonial decision to lump together more than 250 ethnic groups, differing in culture and social structure. In 1967, the eastern part of the country, dominated by the Igbo ethnic group, announced secession under then Colonel Ojukwu after a pogrom of Igbos living in the north. But the central government eventually battled the breakaway republic into submission at the cost of more than 1 million lives.

Keywords- Unrest; Conflicts; Boko Haram; Disturbance

I. INTRODUCTION

According to John Pike [1], Nigeria has one of the highest rates of internal violence in the world, only unlike others with similar levels of bloodshed such as Colombia or Chechnya, there is not a civil war going on. Between 1999 and 2006 alone, over 30,000 were killed in ethno-religious violence and over 80,000 displaced. In the north, an explosive growth of strident Christianity confronted an upsurge of puritanical, reformist Islam. In the Middle Belt, the mainly Christian local farmers collided with predominantly Muslim settler herdsman in Plateau State, requiring the president to declare a state of emergency. In the Niger Delta, new rebel groups escalated their attacks on government and multinational installations, including the use of car bombings. According to the Guardian [2], Nigeria is the result of a 1914 British colonial decision to lump together more than 250 ethnic groups, differing in culture and social structure. In 1967, the eastern part of the country, dominated by the Igbo ethnic group, announced secession under then Colonel Ojukwu after a pogrom of Igbos living in the north. But the central government eventually battled the breakaway republic into submission at the cost of more than 1 million lives.

II. CONFLICTS AND UNRESTS IN NIGERIA

Civil disorder, also known as civil unrest or civil strife, is a broad term that is typically used by law enforcement to describe unrest caused by a group of people [3]. Civil disturbance is typically a symptom of, and a form of protest against, major socio-political problems; the severity of the action coincides with public expression(s) of displeasure. Examples of civil disorder include: illegal parades; sit-ins and other forms of obstructions; riots; sabotage; and other forms of crime. It is typically intended to be a demonstration to the public or the government, but can escalate into general chaos [4]. In 2005, the CIA published a report warning that Nigeria, the seventh most populous country in the world, could disintegrate within 15 years. At the time, that prediction was dismissed by most Nigerians as baseless alarmism. But recent events have prompted a re-evaluation of that gloomy forecast. According to conflict solution international [5], Nigeria is a nation of approximately 120 million people and is home to more than 200 ethnic groups. Since the 1990s this West African country has been the scene of frequent civil disturbances. Protests in the Niger River Delta, location of Nigeria’s oil wealth, has troubled successive military administrations. The military government has responded with repression. Movements in the Niger Delta Region sprung up after the execution of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and several of his peers by the military regime in 1995 for protesting against the alarming poverty in the region and the pollution resulting from the oil production. In 2003, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) was founded with the sole purpose of promoting the economic development and the cleanup of pollution in the area. There have also been clashes between the two largest ethnic groups in the country: Hausa in the Muslim-dominated north and the Yoruba in the Christian-dominated south. Yoruba people have customarily accused Hausa administrations of neglecting their causes while Hausa blamed the Yoruba for hogging the economic life of the nation. Since 2003, violence has escalated in Nigeria. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as well as various other rebel groups (born along the way) kidnapped and hijacked oil workers and attacked oil production facilities and government forces. In 2009, hostilities between both the government’s Joint Military Task Forces (JTF) and the Niger Delta’s militants and also between Muslims and Christians have escalated seriously. At least more than 111 foreign nationals have been kidnapped in Nigeria since January 2009, including 21 in 2010 (as of October, 2010). The lack of access of media in
the conflict zone casts a shadow over the actual number of casualties; however, a 2004 study commissioned by the Royal Dutch Shell estimated the yearly deaths directly related to the conflict in the Niger Delta Region at 1,000. Another 2009 report estimated 1,700 deaths have occurred in 2009 alone as a result of clashes between government and rebel forces. On October 1, 2010, while Nigerians were celebrating the 50th anniversary of independence, two car bombs blew up near Eagle Square in Abuja, killing at least 7 people. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta claimed responsibility of the blast.

### III. TYPES OF CONFLICTS AND UNREST IN NIGERIA

Nigeria experiences civil unrest, violence and strikes. From literature consulted the conflicts and unrest experienced in Nigeria can be categorized into the followings:

1. Religious unrest: Nigeria's two major religions, Islam and Christianity, are sometimes depicted as monolithic entities that confront each other in pitched battles, with formal implementation of the criminal aspects of the Muslim shari'a legal code (or the likelihood of implementation) providing the spark that touches off violence. Clashes between Muslim and Christian gangs triggered by disputed local government election kill at least 700 people in Jos, according to U.S.-based Human Rights Watch. In November 2008, Three gunmen attack the congregation in Biu Town, in Borno state. In Jos, the Christ Chosen Church is attacked wounding 41 people. Youths attack bystanders in retaliation, killing two. Boko Haram claim both attacks [6].

2. Communal of ethnic unrest: Communal violence, stoked by competition between local farming communities and nomadic herdsmen, has plagued this region for many years and is spreading to other states in northern Nigeria.

3. Political unrest: According to the free dictionary, political has to do with (Government, Politics & Diplomacy) of or relating to the state, government, the body politic, public administration, policy-making, etc. So any unrest base on or Influenced by, based on, or stemming from partisan interests or political ideology. It means there is a significant level of dissatisfaction among the citizens of a Country or State. People often think poorly of their leadership but if they start seriously considering the removal of their leaders with or without regard to the established political process than you could say that the country has some dangerous amount of political unrest.

4. Labour unrest: The year 2013 was characterized with prolong strikes by various labour unions. But analysts believe that 2014 may experience more strikes except government take proactive measures to nip such industrial actions before they arise [7]. The organised labour in the textile industry has attributed the causes of labour unrest in the country to federal government insincerity and wrong approach to reforms [8]. Labor unrest is organizing and strike actions undertaken by labor unions, especially where labor disputes become violent or where industrial actions in which members of a workforce obstruct the normal process of business and generate industrial unrest are essayed [9].

5. Social unrest: this is very prominent in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria which started as a result of social injustice in the social status and degrading environment of the inhabitants due to extraction of crude oil in the region.

### IV. CAUSES OF CONFLICTS AND UNRESTS IN NIGERIA

Labour analysts say that most industrial actions in the country are often due to unresolved labour matters, which ought not to have been allowed to degenerate to a level that would disrupt the scheme of things [7]. The social unrest as observed in the Niger Delta is an inevitable and serious conflict of interest between Delta communities that bear the environmental damage of oil extraction and the rest of the nation for which oil money is essentially a free good. Delta populations, clearly a minority, regularly lose these struggles. Had they some authority over environmental issues, many current problems might be more manageable. Lacking this, and given the federal government's control over all subsurface resources as well as "ownership" of all land, all Delta issues inevitably become national issues. The national government has failed to resolve these. In its campaign to "buy off" Delta discontent on the cheap, earlier administrations frequently corrupted Delta community leaders. There is a deep distrust in the Delta concerning the federal government and a feeling among local populations that most other Nigerians care little for their problems, so long as the oil flows. Delta populations constantly campaign for a larger share of the federal cake, most of which originates in their homelands. As a result of these factors, and because oil companies did and do make tempting targets, many aggrieved youths in the Delta resort to direct action to extract compensation for their perceived losses. They invade oil company properties, take employees hostage, and shut down facilities. Oil companies typically negotiate release of captured personnel and properties with relative ease by paying the youths modest ransoms. This oil company strategy creates a "moral hazard": the willingness of companies to pay ransoms stimulates imitators of this lucrative "business," leading to sustained disruptions, at times to competition among youths, and to a general sense of anarchy in the Delta.
Unemployment coupled with the ever widening social gap was what prompted the youth of the Niger Delta to pick up arms in protest [10] (Adamu, 2011). According to Bekele [11], The lack of justice for years of violence resulting from inter-communal tensions has created a combustible situation. The government needs to ensure full criminal investigations and provide justice for the victims and their families.

CONCLUSION

Citizens not directly involved in a civil disorder may have their lives significantly disrupted. Their ability to work, enjoy recreation and in some cases, obtain necessities may be jeopardized. Disruption of infrastructure may occur during very severe events. Public utilities such as water, fuel and electricity may be temporarily unavailable, as well as public infrastructure for communication. Occasionally, the disruption of such services may be the original cause of the disorder [12]. In the not too distant past Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) went on about six months strike, the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) went on about 12 months strike, the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) were on about 5 months strike during the Ebola saga of 2014 but for God’s grace it would have been a disaster for the nation, the judiciary workers are on strike and the lists is endless. Boko Haram killed more than 5,000 civilians between July 2009 and June 2014, including at least 2,000 in the first half of 2014, in attacks occurring mainly in northeast, north-central and central Nigeria [2,13,14]. The cost of the unrests in terms of human, material and financial is huge and has cost the nation a lot. According to Famuyibo [15], the social, political and economic development of a nation is largely determined by the quality and level of its educated citizenry. The main causes of the violence appear to include struggles around livelihood and identity, particularly between sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists over access to grazing lands. An activist working on peace initiatives in the north central states told Human Rights Watch that some affected state governments were failing to impartially protect residents, siding with one group against the other. In other cases, the advocate said, state governments were using force to restore peace, but, instead of quelling violence, seemed to exacerbate it [16]. “People say if you are not informed you are deformed”. Information is very important in fighting unrest and corruption and injustice, religious tolerance should be preached and embraced. Also un-fulfillment of agreement signed on the part of government results to about 99% of all labour related unrest. Nigeria experiences civil unrest, violence and strikes. The causes and locations vary. Locations where outbreaks of violence have occurred include the Lagos area, Southwestern Nigeria, the oil-producing states in the southeast, and Kaduna State.

REFERENCES

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