

## "AN ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA'S SECURITY SITUATION FROM PRESIDENT BUHARI'S TENURE TO THE PRESENT DAY"

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**President Muhammad Buhari**

**Source:** nairametrics.com.

### INTRODUCTION

All around the world, the concern for security have taken the center stage of local, national and international discourse. The concept of security is therefore mostly not detached as a condition for peace and development. According to International Peace Academy (2004), the ability to provide security based on good governance are essential for sound conflict management, the effect of which

provides a safe and secure environment in which to entrench other programming initiatives. In other word, it provides a safe and enabling environment for other important socio-economic, religious and political development. The importance of security to national integration cannot be undermined.

Nigeria, often referred to as the "Giant of Africa," stands as the most populous nation on the continent and one of the largest economies in the world. Yet, despite its considerable potential, Nigeria has been plagued by a persistent and multifaceted security crisis that threatens not only the nation's stability but also its social fabric, economic growth, and global influence. This security predicament is marked by a complex web of challenges, including insurgency, terrorism, banditry, communal conflicts, and ethno-religious tensions (Adesoji, 2006). Nigeria's security landscape has remained a matter of paramount concern, both domestically and internationally.

Obi (2010) reported that Nigeria's security challenges are deeply rooted in its historical, ethnic, and socioeconomic complexities. The nation's colonial history, marked by the amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups by the British in 1914, laid the foundation for identity-based conflicts that would manifest in the post-independence era. The Biafran War (1967-1970) and the Niger Delta militancy of the 2000s were early indications of Nigeria's vulnerability to internal strife (Campbell, 2014). As Nigeria entered the 21st century, its security landscape witnessed a proliferation of security threats. The emergence of Boko Haram, an Islamist extremist group, in the early 2000s, introduced a new dimension to Nigeria's security challenges (Adesoji, 2006). Boko Haram's violent campaign for an Islamic state in northern Nigeria led to widespread instability, displacement, and loss of life, particularly in the Northeastern region. The group's evolution and the government's response to its activities have been central to Nigeria's security narrative. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria is no more a challenge, but a cancerous problem; the regularity of religious, political, communal and ethnic based insurgences, upheavals, conflicts and violence in post-colonial Nigeria has attained endemic proportion. In fact, the description of the trending precarious situation in Nigeria as insecurity is perhaps an understatement; the prevailing terrorist/Islamic fundamentalist threats and attacks, unrelenting kidnappings and assassinations at virtually all societal strata, irrepressible armed robbery muggings as well as structural ethno-religious cum communal conflicts among several other anti-social as well as life threatening and claiming activities have cumulated in the creating an insecure and almost uninhabitable atmosphere in Nigeria (Ehi, 2009).

In addition to insurgency and terrorism, Nigeria grappled with other security concerns, including widespread poverty, unemployment, and criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and oil theft (Amnesty International, 2020). These issues are often intertwined with larger socioeconomic problems and contribute to the overall security environment. Ethnic and communal conflicts have also continued to pose significant challenges. Tensions between ethnic groups, often fueled by competition for resources and political power, have resulted in violence and displacement in various regions, notably the Middle Belt. Successive Nigerian administrations have implemented various security policies and strategies to address these challenges, with varying degrees of success. The roles of different governments in shaping the country's security landscape are crucial to understanding the evolution of security dynamics in Nigeria.

As of the present day, Nigeria remains beset by multifaceted security challenges. These include ongoing Boko Haram insurgency, rising banditry and kidnappings, communal conflicts, and tensions surrounding resource allocation. President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure, which began in 2015, introduced new security strategies and regional collaborations aimed at addressing these issues.

The election of Muhammadu Buhari as Nigeria's president in 2015 marked a pivotal moment in the nation's history, with promises of renewed focus and vigor in addressing these security challenges

(Punch, 2018). President Buhari's tenure was characterized by ambitious security policies, counterterrorism efforts, and regional cooperation initiatives. However, the effectiveness of these measures, their impact on Nigeria's security landscape, and the evolution of security threats during this period require in-depth examination.

### **The Concept of Security**

Security is a very important issue in the survival of any nation. Without adequate security of lives and property, the system will be rife with lawlessness, chaos and eventual disintegration. This is why security is considered as a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. The security so concerned with by states, is multifarious. It might be military, economic, ideological or cultural. Accordingly, the security for any state embodies a notion of order, or of the conditions necessary to maintain the smooth functioning and reproduction of an existing society. According to McGrew (1988), the security of a nation is predicated on two central pillars. On one hand, it entails the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threat. On the other, it entails the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimize the threat to core values and interests, as well as to the domestic order.

In a similar manner, Nwolise (2006), explained that security is an all-encompassing holistic concept, which implies that the territory must be secured by a network of armed forces: that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, which in turn must be protected by the military, police and the people themselves, the people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals, unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution com socio-economic injustices. In his analysis of national security in Nigeria, a former Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Paul Dike, (in a lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institute, London, March 26th, 2010)., affirmed that Nigeria's security in based on a holistic view which sees the citizens as the primary beneficiaries of every security and developmental deliverable that the state can offer. The national security in Nigeria is an ensemble of two (2). broad elements, that is, state security and human security. The primary objective of Nigeria's national security shall be to strengthen the federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interest and objectives to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development progress and growth, and improve the welfare and wellbeing and quality of life of every citizen. The second aspect of the nation's national security entails the preservation of the safety of Nigerians at home and abroad and the protection of the sovereignty of the country's integrity and its interests.

The task of guaranteeing human security is enshrined in the constitution of nations around the world. In Nigeria, Sections 197 of the 1979, 215 of the 1989 and 218 of the 1999 Constitution, clearly spelt out the functions, of the military as:

'Defending Nigeria from external aggression, maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land sea and air, suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to so by the President, but subjected to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly, and performing such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly'

Nigeria, a complex federation with about two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groupings just like other African countries, is confronted with internal divisions and problems which are so serious as to

jeopardize her capacity to survive. The political situation especially with the effort to consolidate democracy and sustain development in Nigeria has contributed in no small measure to the high level of insecurity in the country. The struggle for political power, the quest to control the centre and the ethno religion differences among the various political groupings in the country can be described as a “push-pull factor” towards a “do-or die politics. Religious differences between the predominantly Muslim North and the Christian South coupled with the agitation for an equitable/fair distribution of resources by minority groups (from the Niger-Delta) has created a pattern of feuding and an unending circle of violence in Nigeria. Conflict among different ethnic groups (both intra and inter-state) had always resulted in violence and destruction of lives and properties. Several other factors have been attributed to the high state of insecurity in Nigeria. Poverty for instance, has become domesticated in Nigeria and is pervasive in the Northern States particularly in the North East zone. Frustration emanating from lack of access to the basic needs of life has made many Nigerians to take solace in nefarious activities like “human trafficking, prostitution and several other social vices that were alien in the not too distant past” (This Day, 2011).

Unemployment is another major cause of violence in Nigeria. Majority of university graduates are not gainfully employed (Louis Theroux, BBC Broadcast, 2011). President Jonathan Goodluck acknowledged this fact himself when he warned that “unless Nigeria tackles the issues of unemployment, the unharnessed potentials of youths might be negatively employed and throw the nation into avoidable crisis. In a population where over 70 percent are below 30 years implies that the youths have to be critically engaged in productive ventures to tap from their positive side, which if not properly harnessed, could be channeled towards destructive purposes. To stem this negative tide, President Goodluck asserted that providing jobs for the youths would definitely push down crime wave in the country (The Nation, 2011). An addendum to this problem is the politicization of employment of personnel and the decline in the quality of functions performed by most of the security agencies. A report by the Associated Press (The Punch, 2011) revealed how incompetence, corruption and nepotism in the security agencies have helped to boost the activities of the fundamentalist Islamic sect. According to the report, most of the units created by the government under a United States assisted anti-terrorism program Focal Point in 2007 to monitor terror suspects, have been abandoned because most of the recruited personnel were friends of government officials who saw the anti-terror units as “opportunity for their boys’ to go on overseas trips and make money” (The Punch, 2011). The issue of corruption and nepotism was aptly captured by Agekameh, in The Nation (2011), when he enthused that:

‘Standards have fallen due to political partisanship. People now occupy sensitive positions in the security agencies not because of their ability to perform, but because of they are either from one geographical location, simply wield some influence or know some people at the top who will nurture their career. The twin evil of godfatherism and favouritism has eaten deep into the entire gamut of the security agencies. Sycophancy rather than professionalism has been elevated as the most important criterion for career advancement.’

The influx and proliferation of small and light weapons has also impacted on the high level of insecurity currently being witnessed in Nigeria today. The vacuum created by government inability to secure lives and properties has led to cycle of insecurity/security dilemma in which every man looks after his/her own security. The pursuit of individual security had not only led to the search of weapons of protection against armed robbers and hoodlums, it had also resulted in the pursuit of the types of weapons with the most delivery capacity (fire-power) that will match the aggressors “fire-for-fire”. Finally, one can surmise that the whole problem of instability and insurrection is due among

other things, to the lack of social justice and economic inequality between the various economic classes existing in Nigeria.

### **Pre-Buhari Security Issues.**

#### **The Goodluck Jonathan Era (2010-2015).**

Nigeria has been identified as a country where the activities of terrorist organizations thrive (Lyman & Morrison, 2004; Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012; Solomon, 2012; Nsude, 2016). Despite domestic terrorism throughout the country's history, it was only during the Jonathan administration that Nigeria became internationally recognized as a country conducive to terrorist activity (Okpaga, Chijioke & Eme, 2012; Adepoju, 2012; Nsude, 2016). This was because of the increase in terrorist incidents and the severity of such attacks during the administration (Omede, 2011; Nsude, 2016). Jonathan's administration faced many security challenges and internal disorders, particularly terrorism (Adepoju, 2012; Chinwokwu, 2013; Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014). According to the 2016 Global Terrorism Database (GTD), there were 2,888 terrorist incidents in Nigeria from January 1980 to December 2015. More specifically, 297 incidents occurred between 1980 and 2008. The vast majority of incidents (2,591) occurred from 2009 to 2015 (GTD, 2016). The severity and intensity of the terrorist attacks that rocked Nigeria from 2010 to 2015 were also unprecedented (Solomon, 2012). In fact, during the first three weeks of 2012, more than 253 people were killed in 21 attacks. An additional 900 individuals were killed due to the 164 terrorist attacks between July 2009 and January 2015. (Solomon, 2012; GTD, 2016).

A few months into the presidency (August 2011), the terrorist organization Boko Haram bombed the United Nations building in Nigeria's capital city, Abuja. Several years later, Boko Haram abducted 276 girls from the Chibok Government School (Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014). As a result of the administration's failure to act, and the resulting negative press terrorism in Nigeria became a matter of international concern (Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012). During Jonathan's administration, the primary focus of terrorist activities was the four northern states of Borno, Kano, Bauchi, and Yobe. These were the areas where Boko Haram concentrated its efforts. On May 14, 2013, due to the rise in security challenges arising from the terrorist activities of Boko Haram, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three northeastern states (Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe), which included two of the areas where the organization operated. The violence associated with insecurity in Nigeria took its toll on both the people and government of Nigeria. Amnesty international – a Human Rights group, in its report estimated that about eight hundred (800) people died and sixty five thousand (65,000) others were displaced in twelve (12) states in the North when violence, erupted during the conclusion of the presidential election on April 16th 2011. The same Amnesty group. that more than 300 people were killed in religious and ethnic violence that erupted in Jos capital of Plateau State between 17th and 20th January 2011, while over 10,000 people were displaced and thousands of shops and homes destroyed. On March 7 2011, armed men killed more than 200 men, women and children when the Boko Haram sect attacked the villages of Dogo Nachawa, Zot and Tatsat. On July 16 2011, two (2). people were killed while, seventy (70)., vehicles were either burnt/damaged in the bombing of the police headquarter in Abuja.

The insurgency resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis (MSF, 2015). Thousands of people were killed, and countless others were displaced from their homes. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which tracks terrorism-related incidents worldwide, Boko Haram was responsible

for over 15,000 deaths in Nigeria from 2010 to 2015. The Nigerian military was engaged in operations to counter Boko Haram. The Nigeria military, under President Jonathan's leadership, launched several operations to counter Boko Haram, including "Operation Lafiya Dole, but progress was slow, and the group continued to carry out attacks with devastating consequences. The impact on education, healthcare, and social services was profound, particularly in the northeastern region. President Jonathan's government faced criticism for its handling of the Boko Haram insurgency. Reports by Human Rights Watch (2012), claimed that there were allegations of corruption within the security forces, inadequate resources, and poor coordination in the response to the crisis, despite the billions of naira allocated to defence. According to Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance, budgeted allocations for defence are as follows: 2010; 369 billion Naira, 2011; 398 billion Naira, 2012; 405 billion Naira, 2013; 348 billion Naira, 2014; 968 billion Naira, 2015; 387 billion Naira.

The impact of these attacks and bombings are ominous. It constitutes a major threat to the nation's internal cohesion. It has the potential of warding off foreign investors and create negative image about Nigeria. Above all, it retards economic development and spiraled the level of violence to a dizzying height of unprecedented levels of armed robberies especially bank robberies; car hijacking and attack on individuals with sophisticated weapons such as assault rifles, (AK47) submachine guns etc. The series of bomb-blasts and its accompanying effects of deaths, destruction of properties and the disruption of the day-to-day activities constituted a high-level threat to the national security and corporate existence of Nigeria. Asides, the occurrences have elevated Nigeria to the status of other terrorist/ insecure hot spot around the world.

To avert a total descent into the abyss of insecurity, President Goodluck Jonathan in his response to the independence-day bombings and the subsequent breaches of Nigeria's national security posited, that the time has come for a serious review of the security policy in the country. To show his commitment, Jonathan directed the nation's security services to "rise to the occasion and arrest this new and dangerous challenge (bomb-blasts and other acts of domestic terrorism). to our peace and stability". In order to give meaning to his words, President Jonathan deployed a large number of security forces to flashpoints in the Northeastern part of the country. The President also mandated the security agencies to use justifiable minimum force where necessary. The Jonathan administration also took other measures including the adoption of the anti-terrorism bill and the establishment of various committees to look into the security situation in the country.

In addition to the Boko Haram insurgency, Nigeria faced persistent ethnic and communal conflicts, militia groups in the south, kidnapping in the East and South, ritual killings in the East and West, political and nonpolitical calculated assassinations across the nation (Ikenga & Efebeh, 2013; Obi, 2015) during President Jonathan's tenure (Agbibo, 2012). The crises in the Southern region, which started in the 1990s, arising from different militant groups' activities have negatively impacted economic development in Nigeria (Nwogwugwu et al., 2012). Organizations such MEND, Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), among others, in the Southern region, was famous for hostage-taking, kidnapping for ransom, pipeline vandalism, oil-theft, arson and ambush (Nwogwugwu et al. 2012; Adeyeri, 2012; Obi, 2015). These groups utilized kidnapping and hostage-taking to force experts involved in crude oil exploration to pressure the Nigerian government to take decisive steps towards ameliorating the environmental, social, and political problems bedeviling the area (Obi, 2015). The Jonathan administration took steps to reduce the violence in the Southern regions through its amnesty programs. The militants were offered jobs, scholarships to study oil-related majors, and vocational training programs. This led to a marked reduction in violent activities in the Southern regions of Nigeria (Obi, 2015).

### A summary of Fulani Herdsmen attacks in Nigeria

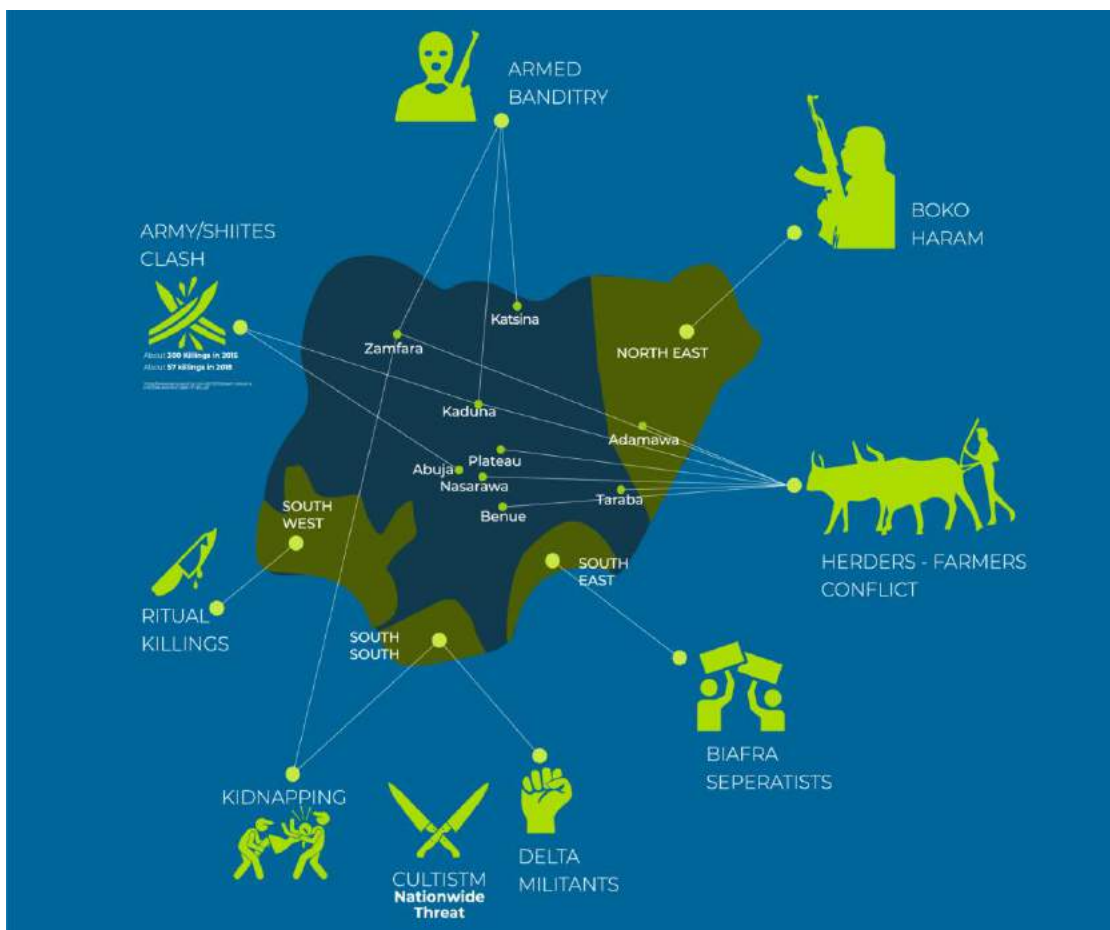
S/N	Date	Location of attacks	Casualties
1	June, 2012	Chakaruma village in Jos.	2 people killed
2	July, 2012	Maseh, Tse and Shong villages in Plateau state	192 people killed, communities razed down
3	August, 2012	Ojankele and Ijegwu communities in Benue state	12 people killed, properties destroyed
4	September, 2012	Ubiaja, Edo state	1 person killed
5	October, 2012	Dallyam, Ranghol and Lotton villages in Plateaus state, and Yogbo village in Benue state	34 people killed. Several others injured
6	November, 2012	Barkin-Ladi and Riyo LGAs in Plateau state	13 people killed
7	December, 2012	Bachit village in Plateau and Gwarko village in Abuja	6 people killed.
8	January, 2013	Du village in Jos, Agbu, Ekye and Agwasu villages in Nasarawa state	13 people killed.
9	January, 2013	Wadatan Gerba village in Jos, Amla village in Benue	570 people killed, 20 houses razed down
10	February, 2013	Iga and Rutu communities, Nasarawa state	10 people killed, 15 injured
11	March, 2013	Uvir community in Benue, Kardarko in Plateau, Anguwah, Mafan, in kaduna	28 people killed, 500 displaced.
12	April, 2013	Yobe village in Benue, Ogume community in Delta, Riyom LGA in Plateau.	32 people killed, 1000 displaced, farmlands destroyed.
13	May, 2013	Okpachanyi and Akough villages in Benue, Zangang village in Benue.	75 people killed. Many displaced.

**Source:** Vanguard Newspapers June 2012-May 2013.

Another major insecurity challenge during Jonathan's administration involves the activities of the Fulani herdsmen. The Fulani Militants are not members of one group, but they are nomads traveling from city to city on foot to graze their livestock (Obi, 2015). In their travels, they frequently trespass farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables. Attempts by

farmers to prevent the destruction of their properties lead to death, injury, and eviction from their homes due to the stiff and violent resistance from the Fulani herdsmen. There have also been allegations to the effect that the herdsmen take advantage of these opportunities to steal, raze houses, rape, and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through (Chilaka & Odoh, 2012; Obi, 2015).

### Nigeria Security Situation under President under President Goodluck Jonathan.



### Security Challenges and the Buhari Administration (2015- 2023)

Insecurity was the greatest challenge facing the new administration of President Buhari. Since the return to democracy in 1999, traditional security threats such as violent conflicts, militancy, armed robbery and kidnapping have assumed worrisome dimensions in Nigeria. Evolving threats such as insurgency and terrorism further complicated the situation. According to Osuji (2013), the outbreak of violent conflict was the major source of insecurity in Nigeria. It is estimated that Nigeria has "witnessed over 300 violent ethno-religious, communal and political conflicts of varying intensity and magnitude". For example, some 262 incidence of kidnapping, about 405 cases



of armed robbery and 139 cases of cultism have been recorded in the last six months in Nigeria. These violent crimes have resulted in the death of 1,113 persons between January and June 2015 (Arase, 2015).

The escalation of terrorist activities is the gravest security challenge facing Nigeria. Particularly worrisome is the activities of the Boko Haram, which seeks to impose Islamic law in Nigeria. Since stepping up its activities in 2009, the group has killed over 18,000 people and displaced about 1.5 million people (Hinshaw, 2015). President Buhari vowed to eliminate the Boko Haram. The extremist group responded with a series of deadly suicide bombings and attacks on soft targets that have killed over 444 Nigerians in the first 39 days of Buhari's administration (Binniyat, 2015). Killings by the Boko Haram since 2009 is largely responsible for Nigeria's decline from 7th of 115 countries in 2012 to 4th of 121 countries in 2014 in the Global Terrorism Index.

When Muhammadu Buhari was sworn into office as President of Nigeria on May 29 2015, he reiterated his campaign promises that his administration would concentrate on the economy, fight corruption, and tackle insecurity (Abe, 2023). In May 2023, as Buhari's tenure winds down, the Presidency claimed his administration had made outstanding progress between 2015 and 2023 in addressing security-related challenges. The Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, stated in a 90-page document released in Abuja that Buhari's efforts had had a favorable impact on the paramilitary. Buhari himself had said at a military event in Abuja on May 10 that since taking office, his administration had successfully provided the security forces with the necessary equipment, and contained the operations of terrorists, bandits, kidnappers, and other criminal elements (Abe, 2023).

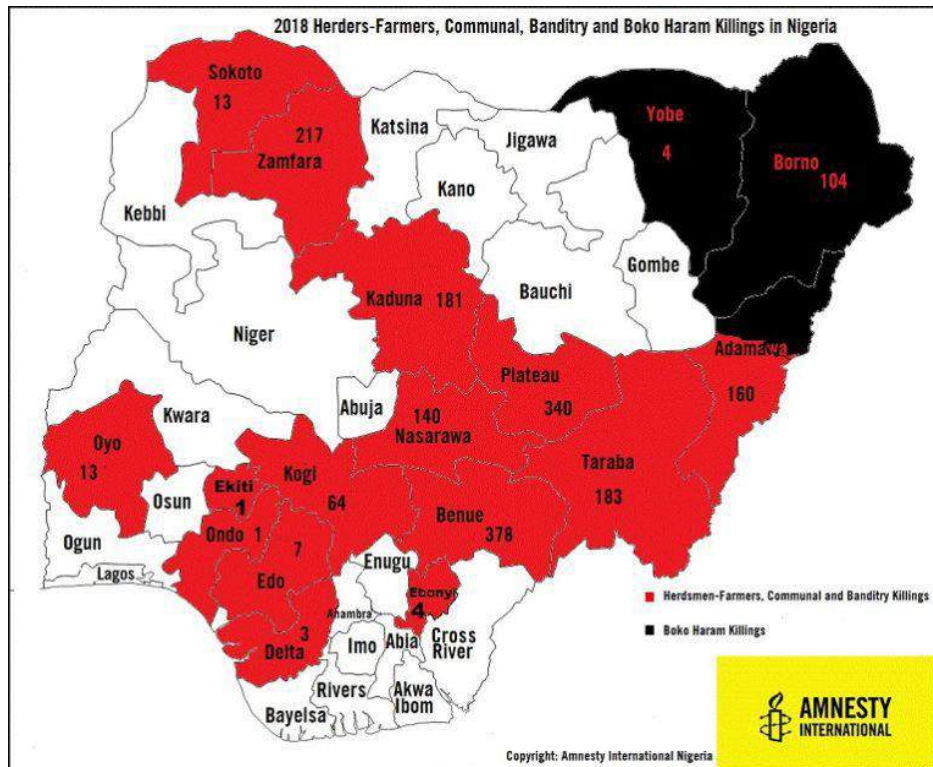
As reported by Elumoye (2023), President Buhari disclosed in a publication by This Day Newspaper, in April, 2023, that his government since inception in 2015 has succeeded in adequately equipping the security agencies, as well as subduing the activities of terrorists, bandits, kidnappers and other criminal elements in the country. He also declared that upon his assumption of office in May 2015, the nation's security situation was greatly challenged by the activities of violent non-state actors.

According to him, "Today, I am pleased to specially note that the situation has tremendously improved and I wish to also proudly highlight that we have made remarkable progress in the fight against insurgents, militants, oil bunkers, kidnappers and other criminal elements in the country. "This administration has achieved a remarkable transformation of the military in the areas of fighting power, training, operations, manpower, remunerations and medical services.

"These are in addition to maintenance efficiency, accommodation and expansion of forces. The improvements in these areas have collectively enhanced the Army's capacity to effectively carry out its constitutional mandate."

He noted that the robust plan to improve the security architecture of the country had been realized, with the upgrading of hardware, building of facilities, training, and equipping of staff and officers, and structuring of a welfare system that caters for more than 50,000 children of fallen heroes. He said he instituted the recruitment of 60,000 soldiers into the Armed Forces, and thousands graduated from the Nigerian Defence Academy and other security institutions to tighten security. The president, who endorsed 81 flags for the various units of the Army, noted that the fighting

power of Nigeria's military was at a low ebb as of May 2015, adding that: "However, seven years later, its fighting power has increased significantly making it fourth in ranking among African militaries as against seventh in 2015". He said interventions and yearly budgetary allocations to the Army, between 2020 and 2022 alone, had been able to procure hundreds of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, Troops Carrying Vehicles, utility vehicles, tanks, and Armoured Personnel Carriers to augment those earlier procured.



He claimed that "From 2017 to 2022, significant numbers of new fighting and utility vehicles along with supporting artillery guns, machine guns, rifles and corresponding ammunition were acquired and inducted into various theatres of operations. This translates to a significant increment in the Army's equipment holding since 2015. "The quantum of platforms inducted into the Army since 2015 had enabled troops to take the battle to the terrorists and criminals, particularly in the North-east resulting in the recapture of territories hitherto held by the insurgents," Buhari stated.

Despite Buhari's claims to the contrary, insecurity across the country appeared to have deteriorated. Data collected by the Council on Foreign Relations' Nigeria Security Tracker (NST)

#### Picture showing 2018, Herder-Farmer, Communal, Banditry and Boko Haram killings in Nigeria

checked by The ICIR showed that non-state actors killed 31,821 people between May 2015 and April 2023. The NST website tracks violent incidents related to political, economic, and social grievances directed at the state or other affiliated groups. Uche (2020), reported that Buhari administration failed in its mandate to ensure security, from which there are economic implications, coupled with an intersection with poverty. The narrative that Boko Haram insurgents in the North East have been 'technically defeated' now appears propaganda as fatalities continue to be recorded from attacks. In addition, other bandits continue to cause mayhem through countless kidnappings and massacres in parts of Zamfara and the President's home state,



Katsina. An independent researcher, Dr Jose Luis Bazan, reported that an estimated 2,539 persons have been killed from 654 attacks between 2017 and 2020. In 2019, Nigeria was ranked 3rd below Afghanistan and Iraq out of 138 countries in the Global Terrorism Index and is said to be the 14th most fragile in the world and the 9th in Africa, according to the Fragile States Index. Unsurprisingly, in the same year the country was also ranked 148th out of 163 countries in the Global Peace Index, far below former war-ravaged countries like Sierra Leone (52), Liberia (59) and Rwanda (79) (Uche, 2020).

Attacks and reprisal attacks have continued in states like Kaduna with accusations of ethnic cleansing and mismanagement of religious and cultural diversity. Part of the reason for the spread of insecurity that has allowed these groups to operate with impunity is due to what has been described by Scot Bower, Chief Operating Officer of the UK based organization CSW, as 'the failure or unwillingness of those in authority to address these and other non-state actors and to secure ungoverned spaces, has not only allowed the violence to mutate, but has also created an environment in which Boko Haram can extend its operations'. The heightening insecurity continues to impact negatively on the business environment and business

### **Challenges of National Security under Buhari's Administration**

#### **Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict**

According to Chukwurah *et al.* (2020), not all Fulani are herders, but they dominate the pastoralist business and not all Fulani are Muslim, but majority of them are Muslims. In the same manner, not all farmers are Christian but majority are. Inability to view the conflict from the ethnic and religious lens is yet to redress the historical land dispute and identity and a people's sense of belonging in the society. Tensed relationship between the herders and the settler/farming communities are not new, Pastoralist in search of grazing land for their cattle have often found themselves in dispute with farmers landowners which have turned violent. This dreadful clash presumed to be predicated by unresolved land dispute, climate change, religious and ethnic sectarianism and lack understanding have resulted in killing, internal displacement, food insecurity and extensive damage to people's properties and livestock within the affected communities, and have metamorphosed into industrial scale occurrence of civil unrest, riots, mass killing, destruction of homes believed to be driven by religious and ethnic differences. Essentially, one hardly sees any group or people in Nigeria that is not felt marginalized by the ruling class. Hence, the victims of the Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict consider it that the ruling Fulani elites who occupy the centre of power is marginalizing them. Marginalization leads to fear and suspicion towards an assumed oppressor. In the herdsmen/Fulani clash, the assumed oppressor is the Fulani ruling class who are represented well in the Nigeria political and security echelon. This is why the victims of the violent clashes claim that powerful politicians of the Fulani ethnicity protect the violent elements within pastoralist entities (Chukwurah *et al.*, 2020).

According to Nwosu (2017), an accurate account of the death toll resulting from herdsmen – farmer violence in Nigeria is difficult to come by due to the lack of a dedicated database. Therefore, most of the evidence comes from newspaper reports of various incidents involving the herdsmen and farmers in settled communities. Some sources claim that since 2001, over 60,000 persons had died as a result of the conflicts, making it deadlier than the notorious Boko Haram uprising. A BBC reported that over 50,000 deaths were caused by the crisis between 2001 and 2004 alone. Of these deaths, women and children accounted for almost 35,000. Some accounts have it that the violent confrontations started since 1990s or earlier than that. A report showed that the economic cost of the herdsmen-farmer conflicts in only the four states of Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa and Plateau at about \$14 billion annually. Current figures are likely to be higher, especially with the spread of the conflict to other states. Little wonder, the Global Terrorism Index showed the Fulani herdsmen as the fourth deadliest terrorist group in the world



**Figure: Protesting Youths in Agatu community, Benue State and Fulani Herdsmen carrying AK-47**

in 2014. Only the fearsome trio of Boko Haram,

ISIS and Al-Shabab were adjudged deadlier. Though herdsmen-associated carnage halved year later, herdsmen remain a formidable armed group (Nwosu, 2017).

According to Nwosu (2017), though the crises obviously predate the Buhari administration, the administration's actions and inactions in the face of continued confrontations have subjected it too much flak by Nigerians. Notable Fulani clashes over farmland destruction occurred on September 30, 2012, April 5, 2014, February 18, 2016, March 5, 2016, April 12, 19 and 25, 2016, June 16 and 20, 2016, and December 18, 2016. Of the ten cases in total, eight were recorded in 2016 alone (). One of the most prominent attacks allegedly perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen in the Buhari's era was the Agatu Massacre in Benue State. In February 2016, over 300 persons from the communities were massacred, while some 7,000 were displaced. Some reports showed that many people died in ten Agatu communities at the hands of suspected herdsmen in early 2016. Also, the curation of attacks and fatalities by SBM intelligence (2016), revealed that Pastoral conflict is the deadliest threat which has resulted to 470 victims killed during cattle rustling and about 1425 killed in attacks involving Fulani herdsmen, with an average of 30 deaths per attack by Fulani herdsmen and the residents of the attacked communities account for most of the deaths. These killings were accompanied by the destruction of houses and other property as well as allegations of rape. According to their leader, the attacks were reprisals against the Agatu people for killing a prominent Fulani man and stealing his cattle in 2013. That it took the president more than one week to issue a statement of condemnation and order an investigation, and that his spokesman stated his taciturn stance on the crisis on the grounds that "[the President] is not a

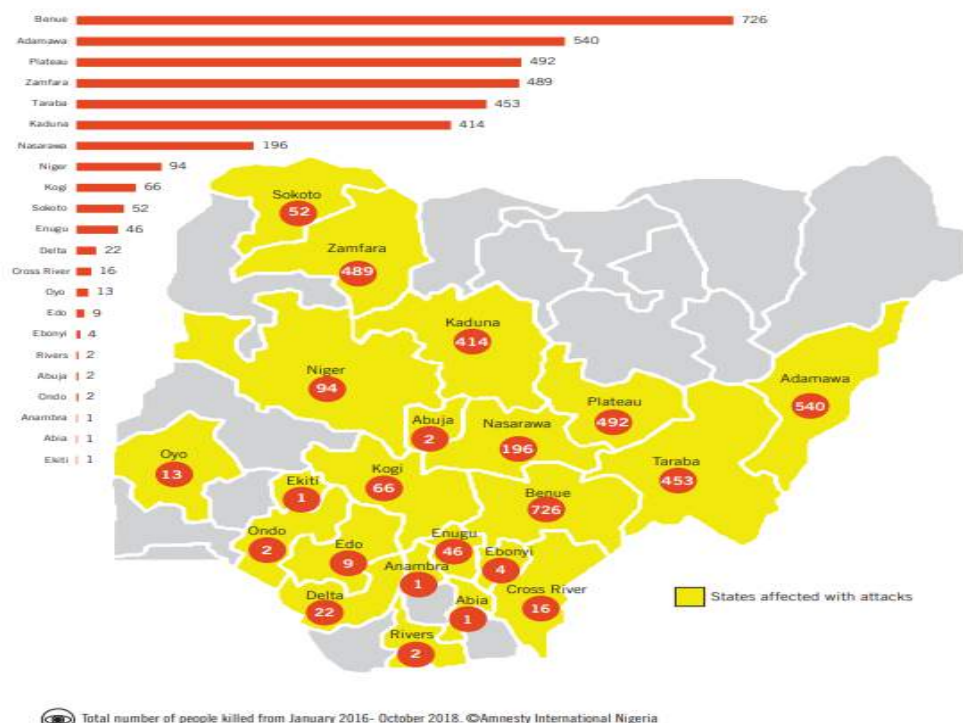


(sic) talkative,” have angered many Nigerians. Moreover, allegations of either inaction or outright collusion with the herdsmen have been leveled against the government and security agencies. In an interaction, the member representing Agatu in the Benue State House of Assembly, Mr. Sule Audu, accused the military of allowing the Fulani herdsmen to occupy the sacked communities, while their cattle’s, numbering over 100,000, freely grazed on their farmlands. That the president is Fulani also added ammunition to his attackers, who saw his slow response as a tacit support for the killers (Nwosu, 2017). Akinyetun (2016), reiterated that, President Buhari who is from the Fulani clan apparently disengage himself from the incessant attack on farmers and settler communities by the violent Fulani herdsmen together with the levity mannerism in responding to the grievous issue further provides ground for suspicion and political cover up. Anytime there is a massacre of people in a state by Fulani herdsmen like it occurred in January 1st 2018 in Benue State with 73 reportedly killed for the umpteenth time, there is an outcry by Nigerians for the Federal Government to take action. Most times, there is not even a verbal response from the Buhari government. Even when there is a verbal response, it is a plea for people to live together in peace or a promise to arrest the perpetrators. But nobody ever gets arrested. Just like in other cases, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigerian (MACBAN), which has President Muhammadu Buhari as its grand patron, would usually give reasons why they carried out the attack. The leaders of MACBAN, claimed that the attacks carried out by the Fulani herdsmen is more of a necessity arising from the effects of attacks which they have suffered many groups within Nigeria. They noted that the Boko Haram insurgents attacked the Fulani in the North-East and other parts of the country and stole millions of cows from the breeders. They added that the Fulani were also victims of the activities of cattle rustlers in Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue and parts of Kogi states with millions of cows taken away from them. According to them, the herdsmen were simply acting in self-defense (Akinyetun, 2016).

Further south, on 25 April 2016, suspected armed Fulani invaders attacked Ukpabi Nimbo, a town in Enugu State, killing so many souls. This drew wide-ranging condemnation, and highlighted the potential threat of the conflict feeding other security flash points.

The global index (2015) had ranked the Fulani herdsmen as one of the five deadliest terrorist groups in the recent times. The Global Terrorism Index of 2015 states that over 90 percent of the attacks carried out by the group are on private citizens, accounting for 81 percent of deaths in the area. And these attacks have mainly been through armed assaults, killing an average of 11 people per attack. The Fulani militants are ranked just after the al Shabaab in terrorist attacks (Adedayo, 2018). Thus, there is a display of notable ineptitude of the leadership administration of the president Muhammadu Buhari in arresting the horrific violent that occurred daily in the country which is drew much attention than every other national security challenges in the country. Suffice is to say that the Buhari Administration had shown a lackadaisical attitude towards the Fulani herders and farmers menace which could be said to be a display of ethnic and religious sentiment from the side of the presidency.

However, efforts has been made by state government to curb the violent crisis between the farmers and herders. Egbuta (2018), Kwaja and Ademola (2018) noted that both Benue and Taraba state enacted the open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment law in 2017. Ameh (2018), Egbuta (2018), Kwaja and Ademola, (2018) note that effort by the government to enact the National Establishment Grazing Reserve bill in 2016 was met with a lot of resistance by many states in southern Nigeria. There were sentiments that such law if enacted will be undue favouritism to the herders and an infringement on the rights of land owners across Nigeria.



**Figure:** Picture showing total number of people killed from January 2016- October 2018 in Farmer-Herder clash across States in Nigeria.

### **Buhari's Government Intervention to the Farmer-Herder Clashes.**

The Buhari administration implemented several interventions and initiatives to address the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. These conflicts have been a persistent challenge, resulting in violence, displacement, and economic losses. The government's responses have aimed to promote peace, security, and conflict resolution while addressing the underlying causes of the disputes. One of such interventions is the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) and National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP), which is a key government initiative aimed at modernizing livestock farming and promoting peaceful coexistence between farmers and herders. It seeks to encourage herders to transition from open grazing to ranching, which is a more sustainable and less conflict-prone method of livestock farming. The plan includes provisions for the establishment of ranches and the development of infrastructure, such as water sources and grazing areas, to support livestock production. This were supposed to be the answer to the heated farmers and herders' conflict. It has instead become a highly politicized debate and generated a lot of controversies. One major point of controversy is the acquisition of land for the establishment of ranches. Critics argued that acquiring large tracts of land for ranching could displace local communities and lead to conflicts over land rights and ownership. Several states in Nigeria opposed the NLTP, expressing concerns about its feasibility and suitability for their regions. Some state governments have opted for alternative approaches to address farmer-herder conflicts, such as enacting anti-open grazing laws, saying that the bill is premised on the need to protect the lives, crops and properties of indigenous farmers and to forestall the perceived Islamisation of the Middle-Belt and south-eastern states of Nigeria by the Fulani tribes through herding.

Some herders and pastoralist communities have resisted the idea of transitioning from open grazing to ranching. They argue that ranching may not align with their traditional way of life and could have economic implications for them. The government also responded to the rise in clashes by announcing that a fund of N10 billion (\$28 million) for affected communities, in Benue and Nassarawa states would also be made available for Plateau state. It deployed additional Special Forces and security units to specific flashpoints (Ejike, 2018).

### Boko Haram Insurgency



**Figure:** Boko Haram Fighters

In June 2013, Nigerian President Jonathan Good luck officially declared Boko Haram a terrorist organization and proscribed it under Nigerian law. The terrorist members and anyone caught aiding them could be prosecuted under the country's Terrorism Prevention Act, which was expected to facilitate legal prosecution of the accused. Over the years, Boko Haram has adopted two strategies—offensive and defensive. Their offensive method is aimed at defeating, destroying or neutralizing the Nigerian state authority, while defensively, they use avoidance, protection and decoy to sustain their forces and campaign. Boko Haram uses large numbers of assault rifles, rocket propelled grenades, shells, mortars and improved explosive device (IED) and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) in their activities. The group retains an unknown number of tanks, armored personnel carriers, some anti-aircraft capability, and of recent uses drones to drive their offensive and defensive operations (THISDAY (Nigeria) newspaper, 22 September 2019; Vanguard (Nigeria) newspaper, 2018; Open Briefing, 2015; US Army TRADOC, 2015). Due to the group's frequency of attacks and threats in Nigeria, the country remains the third most impacted country in the world by terrorism—a position it has retained since 2014, when Nigeria was ranked the second most terrorized country in the world (Global Terrorism Index (GTI), 2019). Boko Haram has helped to create political environments where violence is dominant, and the military campaign has been unable to end the threat.

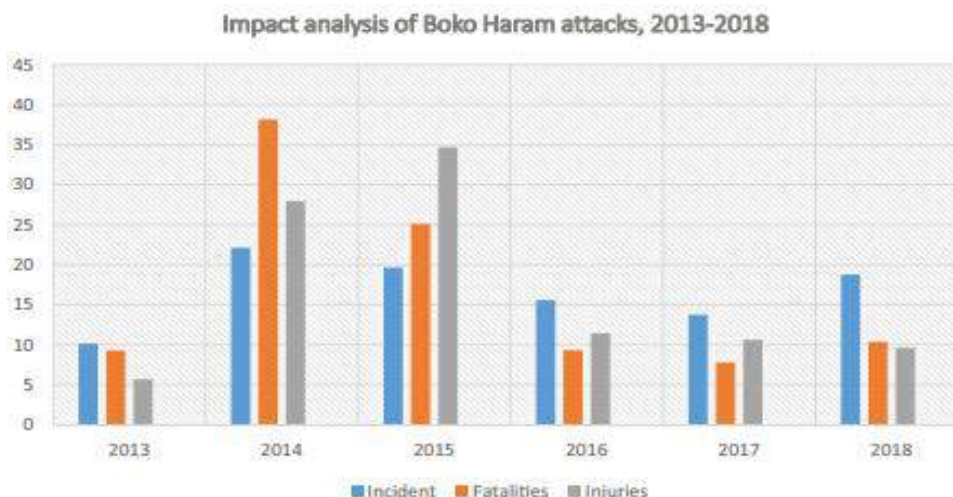
The activities of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria have created series of threats and concern for the survival of Nigerian citizens and the state. The Boko Haram insurgency has killed thousands of people and displaced millions of people while hundreds of thousands have left Nigeria and fled into Cameroon, Chad and Niger (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015, 2016; Onuoha, 2014; Boko Haram, 2018). It has been reported that fatalities from Boko Haram's

violence ranges between 20, 000 and 30, 000. As at mid-2017 it was reported by government of Borno State that Boko Haram activities had led to destruction of N1.9 trillion (\$5.2 billion) worth of properties, including one million houses and 5, 000 classrooms (Onuoha and Oyewole, 2018).

The result of Global terrorism index shows that in 2014, the Boko Haram over took Islamic state of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to become the most deadly terrorist group in the world. Death attributed to Boko Haram increased by 317 percent in 2014 (6,644 deaths). While in 2015 report, Boko Haram was among the first four terrorist groups that were responsible for 74 percent of all deaths and has killed about 5,478 people in same year. Also, in 2016-2017, Nigeria was seen as the third highest countries that experienced terrorist attacks (scoring 9.31) (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). Since 2014, Boko Haram has transformed as internal security threat to a regional security or transnational threat, which is as a result of its intensification of

cross-border attacks (Onuoha, 2016). Furthermore, the Boko Haram cross border terrorist activities have enabled it to form an effective alliance with other terrorist groups in other countries such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab etc. These threats by Boko Haram have made successive administrations (Jonathan's) to Buhari's administration in Nigeria to put in place several measures to effectively counter terrorism in Nigeria. Some of the notable counter terrorism measures are the establishment of Military Joint Task Force (JTF), declaration of state of emergency, establishment of anti-terrorism Act, establishment of Alimajiri Institutions, establishment of military command and control centre in Maiduguri, revitalising of Multinational Join-Task Force etc.

From the Figure above, during President Jonathans' era, Nigeria experienced the biggest yearly deterioration in terrorism in 2014, which is represented by the astronomical rise in the number of attacks (22.13 %), fatalities (38.17 %) and injuries (27.96 %). There were 5686 more people killed



from terrorism in 2014 than in 2013, "an increase of almost 300 per cent, which is largely due to the increasing ruthlessness of Boko Haram" (GTI, 2015). Although, there was a slight fall in Boko Haram attack incident from 22.13 % in 2014 to the 19.65 % in the year of 2015, showing a decrease of 2.48 %. Under President Buhari, incidents, deaths and injuries from Boko Haram terror activities fell for the three consecutive year, since its peak period of 2014, and the percentage of incidents, deaths and injuries keep decreasing for the 2 years (2016 and 2017) running until an increase of 5.04 % in terrorism incidents in 2018. As at 2015, 8 years after Boko Haram inception, approximately half of the violence (49 %) attributed to Boko Haram involves



civilian targets, 44 % involves engagement with state and external forces, and 2 % involves conflicts with other non-state armed groups (ACLED 2015 cited in Dowd and Drury, 2017).

**Table:** Incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria from June 2015 – July 2020

Year	No. of Casualties	Incidence of Attacks
2015 from June – Dec.	2224 casualties (2016 people killed and 208 injured)	88
2016	871 casualties (477 killed and 394 injured)	33
2017	901 casualties (590 killed and 311 injured)	65
2018	985 casualties (460 killed and 525 injured)	49
2019	292 casualties (238 killed and 54 injured)	21
2020	724 casualties (564 killed and 160 wounded)	19

**Source:** Timeline of Boko Haram (2020), Toromade (2017)

**Table:** Showing the report of Global Terrorism index on number of fatalities caused by Boko Haram 2013 to 2018

Year	Number of Fatalities	Number of Incidence
2013	1, 587	-
2014	6, 118	-
2015	4, 095	-
2016	762	-
2017	1, 022	222
2018	589	144
2019	1,068	-

**Source:** Institute of Economics and Peace (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Using the above tables above, Ibekwe and Nosiru (2022), further discussed the reduction in Boko Haram terror. They reported that there was a reduction in the rate of Boko Haram terrorist activities and number of casualties in the Buhari administration, as compare to 2014 attacks. Therefore, it indicated that the Buhari administration had contributed in curtailing the Boko Haram activities. The above result of the performance of Nigerian military in combating Boko Haram insurgency can further be authenticated in research of Onuoha and Oyewole (2018), Omenma, *et al.* (2020), Saliu and Saka (2019) etc. According to Onuoha and Oyewole (2018) "Nigeria's military forces have been successful in the fight against the group, killing its members, destroying insurgent bases, disrupting their logistic networks and freeing captives". This reduction in casualties could be attributed to the substantial budgetary allocations for defense during President

Muhammadu Buhari's regime. According to a Daily Post publication in, 2021, President Buhari took the budget from N4.6 trillion, which was the last budget by Goodluck Jonathan to N16.34 trillion being proposed in 2022, which means, the budget increased by about N12 trillion within seven fiscal cycles.

**Table:** Budgetary allocation for Ministry of Defence between 2016 and 2021

Year	Defence Budget
2016	1.04 trillion naira
2017	1.053 trillion naira
2018	1.305 trillion naira \$496 million for 12 Tucano fighter jets
2019	1.76 trillion naira
2020	1.78 trillion naira
2021	1.97 trillion naira

**Source:** Daily Post (2021).

In terms of occupation of territory, the Nigeria military during Buhari's administration was able to recover most of the territories that were under the control of Boko Haram. Report indicated that from July 27, 2016, Nigerian government with the help of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has recaptured 801 of territories under Boko Haram control. The MNJTF has not only significantly weakened the capabilities of the terrorist group, but also continued to dislodge it from its strongholds (Omenma *et al*, 2020). This had made the operation of Boko Haram to be restricted to areas like Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states and areas in Chad, Cameroon and Niger (Omenma *et al*, 2020, Ajah, 2018). The study of Ajah (2018) noted that the offensives deployed by MNJTF have drastically degraded the Boko Haram capability which made the terrorist to be confined to remote villages and little pockets of enclaves. Studies proved that from 2015 to 2018, the Nigerian government through its military and MNJTF had recovered or recaptured about 29 local governments that were under Boko Haram control. This comprised of 107, 513.66 km<sup>2</sup> of size of territories with 7, 203, 301 population (Ajah, 2018).

### **Buhari Government's Response to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria**



Since Buhari's administration was inaugurated in 2015, the administration has adopted several strategies or initiated responses for effective combat of Boko Haram insurgency. Some of these measures or responses, as reported by Ibekwe and Nosiru (2022) include:

1. Revitalizing or strengthening of Multinational Joint-Task Force in 2015.
2. Relocation of Nigerian Military Command Centre from Abuja to Maiduguri in June 2015 with the aim to centralize operation close to the action of Boko Haram and reduce the rate of bureaucracy to speed up decision making.
3. President Buhari terminated the STTEP contract and turned to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).
4. Negotiation of peace deal with Boko Haram by offering of unspecified amnesty.
5. Review of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism.
6. De- radicalization programme through the office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA).
7. Formation of Presidential initiative for the North East (PINE) for alleviation of poverty which is the prime cause of terrorism.
8. Initiation or launch of the Operation Safe Corridor Programme since 2016 for reintegration of repentant terrorist members (Boko Haram).
9. Launching of the National Action Plan for prevention of violent extremism which focuses on key four areas: strengthening institutions for prevention of PVE; strengthening of rule of law and human rights; building of community engagement and resilience and integration of strategic communication to PVE.
10. Alliance with Saudi Arabia's Islamic Military Alliance: This is a counterterrorism military coalition that involves 39 Islamic countries.
11. The use of civilian vigilante known as Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) in order to help the Nigerian military Joint Task Force (JTF) in fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East.
12. Establishment of cooperation with United States and United Kingdom. This led to approval of nearly 600 million dollars sale of high-tech attack planes to Nigeria by Trump administration. Also the Prime Minister of U.K pledged for provision of military training and equipment to Nigeria. UK also promised for investment of about 16 million dollars in educational institutions for children living in conflict zone and launching of crises response programme (Counter Extremism Project, 2020).
13. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) that focuses on the provision of humanitarian relief to victims of violence National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) that focuses on the provision of humanitarian relief to victims of violence.

Despite the success of Nigerian government (under Buhari's administration) in curtailing the Boko Haram capabilities, it still shows that the Nigerian government is yet to totally win the war against the terrorist groups. This is because; the Boko Haram still poses a great threat to Nigeria national



security. The Boko Haram is still carrying out much successful attacks or terrorist operations leading to deaths, injuries and displacement of good number of people in communities especially in the North East. This unending attacks by Boko Haram has generated a lot of controversies over time, in which the government has been accused of complacency. A retired Navy Commodore and Head of the Department of Criminology and Security Studies at the Chrisland University, Kunle Olawunmi, who was on Channels Television programme, In the wake of the recent attack on the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) in Kaduna State by suspected Boko Haram, where some officers were allegedly kidnaped and killed. He noted that the military had no power to carry out any operation without the assent of the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces whom he accused of complacency. Olawunmi, also disclosed how military intelligence reports have been undermined by the deliberate efforts of the government not to prosecute funders and perpetrators of terrorism in the country. In a rather shocking revelation, the Security expert stated emphatically that a certain crop of the Nigerian ruling class consisting of Governors, ministers and Senators is one of the sponsors of Boko Haram. He went on to state that some Bureau De Change operators are also sponsors of Boko Haram, known to the Nigerian intelligence community. He (Olawunmi) who doubles as a Professor of Global Security Studies also accused the government of escalating insecurity rather than curbing the spate of insecurity in the country. Speaking further, the University Don suggested a radical change of security policy that will discourage the actual perpetrators and funders of the crimes. He warned that failure on the part of the government may lead to chaos of indescribable magnitude.

### **Kidnappings**

Kidnapping has become a menace and one of the security challenges in Nigeria. It is an illicit practice in which human-beings are forcefully abducted to an unknown destination for the purpose of payment of ransom by relatives by relatives. The predominance of this illicit practice has made the country to be ranked in the global against their will by another human-being because of the reason best known to them. As a result of this, Nigeria was ranked in the global index as one of the worst place to dwell, especially in the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. Many factors account for this development, prominent among which include criminal source of money, elimination of political opponent, human sacrifice or for performance of rituals etc. Kidnapping has now become a generic word both in public and private discuss going by its prevalence in the country. According to Abdulkabir (2017) kidnapping rates have 'geometrically increased', in that between 2014 – 2017, it was reported that over 2000 people including young Chibok girls, government officials, politicians and kings were subjected to kidnap. Recorded incidents of the risk of kidnapping (geographically based) between 2014-2016 shows that Bayelsa, Rivers, Yobe, Borno, Kogi, Delta, and Lagos have the highest record of kidnapping (Control Risk).



**Figure: Abducted Chibok girls**

According to the Punch Newspaper, 2022, there were 2,256 abductions across the country from December 2021 to June 15, 2022. The figures were obtained from the daily incidents recorded by the Nigeria Security Tracker, a project of the Council on Foreign Relations, an American think-tank, during the period under review. A monthly breakdown showed that in December 2021, no fewer than 342 innocent Nigerians were killed while 397 were abducted, including 34 women in Zamfara. In January, at least 603 people were abducted by non-state actors. In March, 606 innocent lives were lost while 450 were abducted. Between June 1 and 15, a total of 223 individuals were kidnapped. It was observed that bandits and terrorists were largely responsible for the abduction and killings recorded in the North-central region, North-West and North-East.

In the South-West and South-South, the perpetrators were identified as cultists, suspected herdsmen and gunmen, while in the South-East, the number of deaths and abductions were mostly caused by the Indigenous People of Biafra and its militia wing, Eastern Security Network.

According to a report by SBM Intelligence, an average of 13 persons were abducted daily in Nigeria in the first half of 2021, bringing to 2,371 the number of persons kidnapped in the country within the first six months of the year. According to the report, N10 billion (\$19.96 million as of June 30) was demanded as ransom for the kidnap victims. Same year, the highest number of kidnap victims, about 605, was recorded in February. This was closely followed by March with 534 kidnap victims; May, 355 kidnap victims; while April, January and June had 316, 284 and 277 respectively. The report also indicated that Niger State recorded the highest number of persons abducted, with 643 victims in 28 kidnap incidents, while 58 people were killed during the abductions. This was followed by Zamfara State with 519 kidnap victims in seven incidents, leading to the death of 22 people, while Kaduna State recorded 360 kidnap victims in 26 incidents, leading to the deaths of 41 persons.

The kidnap victims in other states are; Abia (6), Abuja (50), Adamawa (3), Akwa Ibom (2), Anambra (14), Bauchi (3), Bayelsa (7), Benue (6), Borno (1), Cross River (4), Delta (51), Ebonyi (5), Edo (18), Ekiti (14), Enugu (15), Gombe (1), Imo (25), Jigawa (2), Kano (3), Katsina (236), Kebbi (81), Kogi (31) and Kwara (10). Others include: Lagos (6), Nasarawa (44), Ogun (26), Ondo (17), Osun (23), Oyo (61), Plateau (10), Rivers (14), Sokoto (10), Taraba (46), and Yobe (4).

Schools were often targeted in the abductions that took place in the first half of 2021, with hundreds of students taken hostage in the north-west.

### **Secessionist Movements:**

Primarily, under the administration of Muhammadu Buhari, the problem of underdevelopment, poverty, social and political imbalance further fuel the desire for agitation and division within the Nigerian federation. Again, the politics of uneven wealth sharing formula further stimulate feelings of secession from the Nigerian state, via agitation for Biafra from the south eastern Nigeria, calls for restructuring also from the south western Nigeria stemmed from the marginalization and exploitation of the resources from the South-South area of Nigeria. The feeling of marginalization



and deprivation nursed by people of the south east region occasioned by the high spate of poverty in the region has fueled the call for secession from Nigeria.

The commencement of the activities of this group coincided with the inauguration of Mohammadu Buhari as Nigeria's President whose administration has made no pretention about deliberate marginalization and victimization of the Igbos on account that he got only about five percent of the votes cast in the region during his electoral contest with then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015. This thus, formed the basics for the period of this study, which is from 2015 till 2021. Gradually, the activities of IPOB have oscillated from peaceful to non-peaceful means and their grouse has often been couched in terms of the alleged unconscionable marginalization of the region by the Buhari administration. Also, the abduction of the leader of IPOB (Nnamdi Kanu) from Kenya by forces believed to be acting at the best interest of the Nigerian government and his subsequent arraignment in a federal high court in Abuja on charges of treason has resulted to issuance of a weekly sit-at-home order by the group in the five states of the southeast region of the country with unquantifiable economic

**Figure: Ipob supporter with Flag**

losses to the region and the nation at large. It is against this backdrop that this study examines



the interface between the policy of the Nigerian state and transformation of Biafra secessionist movements in southeast Nigeria, from 2015 to 2021.

Nwangwu (2021) reported that military repression in southeast is of the major factors why Biafra secessionist movement took a more militarized approach. First is the formation of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) in December 12, 2020 by the IPOB group. The south eastern zone has become highly militarized over the years. For instance in 2016, Amnesty International accused the Nigeria military of embarking on a campaign of extrajudicial executions and violence. It said that the action had resulted in the death of at least 150 peaceful pro-Biafra protesters over the course of a year. According to Nwangwu (2021), IPOB has set out three possible routes to sovereignty. The first is the threat of armed secession. The second is civil disobedience and the third is a referendum (the last two are not mutually exclusive).

According to a report by Premium Times magazine in 2021, The Federal Government stated in a letter to western diplomats that the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, 'orchestrated' the killing of 60 persons and the destruction of property in 55 violent attacks across the South-east and South-south zones within four months. The report then listed the IPOB attacks in the South-east and South-south zones:

1. Abia: Between January 26 and April 19, 2021, six policemen were killed while property worth huge sums were destroyed by IPOB members in coordinated attacks at Uratta junction, Aba North LGA; Omoba Police Station, Isiale-Ngwa South LGA; Abriba Community in Ohafia LGA, and Uzuakoli Police Station in Bende LGA.

2. Akwa Ibom: 25 persons, including security personnel were killed in deliberate attacks on different locations across the state, between January 27 and April 19, 2021.

Cross River: Seven police officers were killed at Calabar-Ikom highway in Obubra and Yakur LGAs, on March 2, 2021, while a soldier was killed two days later on March 4 at a military checkpoint at Obubra Junction in Obubra LGA.

4. Delta: Between January 10 And April 14, IPOB members attacked and killed 11 persons including security personnel in Ughelli, Ndokwa East, Ezza South, Onicha, Ezza North, Ohaozara, Ohoukwu, LGAs.

5. Enugu: Three policemen were killed in attacks on different locations across the state between February 28 and April 18.

6. Imo: Between January 3 and April 24, 2021, IPOB members killed seven persons and injured many others in different attacks in Orlu, Obouo, Aboli Mbaise, Chitte Uboma, Isiala Mbano, Owerri, Njaba, Mbatoli, Oru East LGAs.

7. Rivers: On April 17, 2021, IPOB operatives killed an NSCDC operative on guard duty at Shell crude oil manifold in Elelewon village in Obio/Akpor LGA and injured many others.

Mr Kanu, who jumped bail in 2017 and fled the country after his country home was attacked by Nigerian soldiers, was arrested and re-arraigned before Justice Binta Nyako of a Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday.(NAN)

However, several attacks on Ipob by the Federal Government under President Muhammad Buhari has also been documented. A report by Amnesty International in 2015, stated that Since August 2015, the security forces have killed at least 150 members and supporters of the pro-Biafran organization IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) and injured hundreds during non-violent meetings, marches and other gatherings. Hundreds were also arbitrarily arrested. Buhari has been accused of violation of Human Rights by Human Rights groups. Amnesty International reported that the military, which has been deployed instead of police to control pro-Biafran events, has dispersed peaceful gatherings by firing live ammunition with little or no warning. They also reported extrajudicial executions and the use of excessive force by military, police and other security agencies. It also shows a worrying pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions, including soldiers arresting wounded victims in hospital, and of torture and other ill-treatment of detainees.



President Buhari has repeatedly expressed his opposition to Biafran independence. For example, in May 2016 he said: "We will not let that [division of Nigeria] happen. For Nigeria to divide now, it is better for all of us to jump into the sea and get drowned." Similarly in September 2016 he said: "Tell your colleagues who want Biafra to forget about it." Amnesty International itself takes no position on the political status of Biafra or any other question of self-determination or independence. However, it calls on states to comply with their international human rights obligations which include respect for the right of everyone to freedom of opinion and expression, including the peaceful expression of political views about the status of particular territories.

By far the largest number of pro-Biafra activists were killed on 30 May 2016, Biafra Remembrance Day, during events to mark the 49th anniversary of the declaration of the Republic of Biafra, when an estimated 1,000-plus IPOB members and supporters gathered for a rally in Onitsha, Anambra state. The night before the rally, a joint security force task force raided homes and a church where IPOB members were sleeping. The deployment of the military to police public gatherings has directly contributed to the high numbers of casualties. Trained to eliminate enemies, the military clearly was unprepared to control a largely peaceful crowd with means other than force. Worse, in many of the incidents documented in this report, the military seems to have chosen tactics designed to kill and neutralize an enemy. Many of the shootings were clearly outside any concept of public order management and amounted to extrajudicial executions. Eyewitness testimony and video footage of the rallies, marches and meetings demonstrate that the military used what should be their last resort in public order situations, force, at the first instance. The use of firearms was unlawful in almost all cases documented, as there was no threat to life. Time and again, people told Amnesty International that the security forces fired tear gas and at the same time or seconds later, they heard gunshots and had to run for their lives.

The Arrest of Ipob's Leader Nnamdi Kanu further aggravated the security issues on ground. According to Amnesty International, On 14 October 2015, the DSS arrested Nnamdi Kanu when he arrived at Lagos airport, transferred him to Abuja and charged him with criminal conspiracy, managing and belonging to an unlawful society and intimidation. Amnesty International further reported that over the next two months the DSS repeatedly failed to comply with court orders in this case. Following Nnamdi Kanu's arrest on 14 October 2015, the Chief Magistrate Court in Abuja granted him bail on 19 October.<sup>15</sup> He met the bail conditions but the DSS didn't release him, and on 10 November the DSS obtained an order from a Federal High Court to detain him for 90 days "pending conclusion of on-going investigation of terrorism and terrorism financing".<sup>16</sup> On 23 November Kanu appeared in the Federal High Court in Abuja to challenge that order.

Despite persistent state repression, the IPOB movement has gained significant public attention in the last couple of years. Thousands of people frequently tune in to the clandestine radio station Radio Biafra, which is run from the UK and its broadcasts includes messages that may constitute incitement to violent acts against the Nigerian state. The authorities initially allowed IPOB rallies to take place, but from September 2015 onwards the authorities have claimed that IPOB is a threat to the security of Nigeria, despite the fact that the IPOB protests and gatherings documented by Amnesty International were largely non-violent. Since the IPOB leader and Radio Biafra director Nnamdi Kanu was arrested on 14 October 2015, the meetings and demonstrations calling for his release have increased and so have the violations committed by the military.

### **Post Buhari Security Issues 2023**

In Summary, according to Abe (2023), when Muhammadu Buhari was sworn into office as President of Nigeria on May 29 2015, he reiterated his campaign promises that his administration would concentrate on the economy, fight corruption, and tackle security. In addition, In May 2023, as Buhari's tenure winds down, the Presidency claimed his administration had made outstanding progress between 2015 and 2023 in addressing security-related challenges.

However, data by the Council on Foreign Relations' Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) checked by The ICIR showed that non-state actors killed 31,821 people between May 2015 and April 2023. The NST website tracks violent incidents related to political, economic, and social grievances directed at the state or other affiliated groups.

### **Summary of some major killings under Buhari's tenure**

#### **2015**

**Borno state:** In Buhari's first year in office, at least 55 people were killed in two Boko Haram raids near Maiduguri, the state capital.

**Taraba state:** In the same year, 21 people were also killed in Takum.

#### **2016**

**Benue state:** On February 29, 2016, Agatu Massacre happened, leading to the displacement of thousands.

#### **2017**

**Ondo state:** In 2017, an attack by cultists led to the death of at least 10 persons in Akure.

In the same state, five persons were killed by armed robbers during a bank robbery in Ogbagi Akoko.

#### **2018**

**Yobe state:** In July 2018, the Nigerian Army suffered heavy casualties as Boko Haram killed 62 personnel in an attack on a military base in Geidam local government area,.

**Kogi State:** In 2018, unknown gunmen killed 12 people in Kpanche, Bassa local government.

#### **2019**

**Ebonyi state:** At least 15 persons met their death during a communal clash in Izi in April 2019.

**Kaduna state:** Herdsmen on a rampage killed 21 people in Anguwan Aku, Kajuru, in April

**Katsina state:** In the home state of President Buhari, at least 36 people were killed by bandits in Kankara in April.

#### **2020**

**Katsina state:** In April, bandits killed 47 people in Safana, Dutsinma and Danmusa local government areas of the state. The police reported that 47 people were killed during the attacks, while the locals said 70 remains were found.

**Borno state:** Boko attacked a convoy returning families to their homes in Baga and killed 30 persons during the incident. In the home state of President Buhari, at least 36 people were killed by bandits in Kankara in April. On July 29, Near Baga, Boko Haram militants attacked a vehicle carrying the governor of Borno state, Babagana Zulum.

According to media sources, the governor was unharmed, but there were casualties among his group.

#### **2021**

**Ebonyi state:** 14 people were killed in 2021 when gunmen attacked Effium, Ohaukwu local government area.

**Niger state:** Rampaging bandits killed 27 people in Kurebe Ward in February 2021.

#### **2022**

The ICIR, in a report in 2022, looked at the cost of insecurity in the southeast region and how billions of naira went up in flames amid intensifying attacks.

The report looked at how billions of naira had been lost due to attacks that were becoming more frequent.

Two hundred and eight-seven people died due to insecurity in Nigeria's southeast region in five months, as shown in NST data covering January to May 24, 2022.

**Anambra state:** On February 26, 2022, up to 20 people were killed at a burial ceremony in Ebenebe, Akwa North, LGA.



**Niger state:** The security situation in Niger State, in the Northcentral region, worsened in 2022. The governor of the state, Abubakar Bello, disclosed that terrorists wreaked havoc and killed over 300 people in two weeks.

**Ogun state:** In 2022, records showed that Ogun state had the highest number of deaths from violence in five months in the Southwest region of Nigeria.

The Southwest states are Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo, and Oyo. A total of 165 deaths were recorded from 122 incidents of violence that occurred in the region between January and May 2022. Data obtained from NST covered January to May 31 2022. The deaths are mainly from cult-related activities, armed robbers, kidnappers, farmers/herders crises and security operatives. According to the data, there were 122 incidents within the period, resulting in 165 deaths. Ogun state had the highest number of fatalities, with a total of 44 deaths within the period, with many of them linked to cult-related violence.

### **2023**

**Kaduna state:** In April 2023, the state government disclosed that bandits killed 1,266 persons in 15 months in the state. Also, 746 persons were kidnapped in the state between January and March 2023.

**Plateau state:** In May 2023, in the Bwoi District of Mangu Local Government Area, gunmen killed around 30 people.

## **Other attacks that occurred during Buhari's eight years tenure**

### **Attacks on worship centres**

Over 289 people were killed in worship centres within 18 months during Buhari's tenure. The rate of attacks on worship centres leading to death was brought to the fore with the attack on Saint Francis Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo state, on June 5, 2022. No fewer than 40 worshipers died in the attack. The data obtained from the NST covered January 2021 to June 20, 2022.

## **Figure: Military Personnel**

### **Attacks on military personnel**

Gunmen reportedly attacked military personnel and facilities across the country during this period. For instance, an Army patrol van in Aba, the commercial city of Abia State, was attacked by unknown gunmen. It was gathered that the attackers laid ambush for the unsuspecting soldiers.

The attackers burnt the Army patrol van, but the number of casualties could not be ascertained.

### **Attack on Police personnel**

The Nigeria Police lost 138 officers in eight months during Buhari's eight in years tenure.

Data from the NST website showed that 138 policemen were killed within eight months nationwide. The data covered January 1 to August 10, 2022. The deaths resulted from the activities of unknown gunmen, ESN, armed robbers, kidnappers, and security operatives. The data showed that the killing of these policemen cut across states.

### **Post Buhari Era**

#### **Nigeria's Security under Tinubu**

**President Bola Ahmed Tinubu**



According to Adedoyin (2023), Nigeria may have a new president, but the challenges facing the country are all too familiar. In his inauguration speech, President Tinubu committed to make security his administration's top priority, repeating the Panglossian pledge unfulfilled by his two predecessors. Adedoyin further reported that President Tinubu's speech followed a depressingly predictable pattern. Despite the evident urgency of the security situation and the prominence of the issue throughout a protracted election campaign, his address made clear that he has no plan. Promises to reform Nigeria's security doctrine and architecture were devoid of any detail, and his pledge to increase investment in security unquantified.



However, in contrast to Adedoyin's report, Tinubu has made security one of his key priorities and promised reforms to the sector, including the recruitment of more soldiers and police officers while paying and equipping them better, as reported by aljazeera. On his first day in office, Tinubu said: "We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number. We shall provide, better training, equipment, pay, and firepower." Subsequently, he made sweeping changes to the defence forces, forcing out the security chiefs and the head of police less than a month after taking office. However, it is not unusual for a new Nigerian president to send security chiefs into early retirement upon taking office, as Tinubu did.

Analysts have said the security threats facing Africa's most populous nation and biggest economy are mainly due to limited resources, which leave Nigerian security forces often outgunned and outnumbered in violent hotspots. In the closing ceremony of the 2023 Nigerian Army Day Celebration (NADCEL) and 160th Anniversary of Nigerian Army on Thursday in Ibadan. President Tinubu, represented by Vice-President Kashim Shettima, said his government is conscious of the security situation in Nigeria and ready to address all the concerns of Nigerians on the issue. The president said his administration would continue to do all it could and as permitted by the Constitution to ensure the safety of law-abiding citizens and the nation's unity.

In his words, "I assure the Nigerian Army and the entire Armed Forces of my commitment to their welfare, and I will address the issue of equipment, insufficient funding and other factors constraining their efficient operation,"

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