

# The Outgrowing Nature of Insecurity Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward

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## Abstract

The paper examines the proliferations of insecurity in Nigeria amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It also study the dimensions of the various security challenges and the pattern of variance from what is obtainable prior to the menace of SARS-19. The perplexing question is that the issue of Boko haram, banditry, kidnaping, rape, and other social problems are more evident during this pandemic to the extent that the relative peace that is been enjoyed prior to the novel coronavirus is now absence in majority of villages and towns in Nigeria. The Nigeria security outfits has not been able to find lasting solutions to this problems rather it getting worse, quick and lasting solutions is needed to avert and revert the country into normal state of peace if not the Nigeria state will turn into quagmire before the end of the COVID-19 novel virus. This paper made use of available secondary materials of events and cases. The paper suggests the need to re-orientate the government, security personnel's societies and the general populace towards it effects on security and Nigeria economy in whole.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 • Pandemic • Security • Insecurity • Government • Economy

## Introduction

In today's competitive world, every society is faced with different problems ranging from health, technology, resource, education or security wise. However, the most pronounced challenge that has been bedeviling Nigeria is insecurity; which is also one of the most important and collective challenges of any nation or economy. Why because no development can strive in the absence of peace. This conditions necessitated for the creation of securities outfits to protect life's and properties of the citizens, so has to be able to engage in their day to day activities that will converge to overall economic growth and development. Security used to be one of the lowest hierarchy among public needs but overtime have assumed to be one of the scarcest public needs since after the Nigeria civil war [1]. Sovereignty on the other side is been asserted to be the supreme power of a state over it citizens, it territorial boundaries and also the ability of the security personnel's to defend their country against internal and external attacks or aggressions. That why Microsoft Encarta 2007, understood security as the concept that has to do with safety of their territorial boundaries and population of a state, and by extension the policies adopted for its perpetual existence. Overtime, Nigeria has been battling with the issues of insurgence ranging from Boko Haram, Banditry, Rape, Abduction, and Kidnapping etc. The inability of security agencies to tackle these menace has cause a serious havoc on the nation's economy. However, due to the

emergence of the novel coronavirus, the insurgency appeared with a new face and tenser than ever before.

## Literature Review

Boko Harams has been tormenting the relative peace in the Northeast, banditry and cattle rustling dominated the Northwest and some part of North-central, the menace of rape cases is rapid every were but more tense in the Western part, kidnaping for ransom in the Western and Eastern parts. However, all this problems has left many questions unanswered as to why insurgency is triggering in this era of COVID-19 pandemic despite the national health challenges. Many people have flew from their villages leaving their farms lands, abandoning their means of living and relocating to state capitals because its more saver for them than their ancestral homes. Research undergoing revels that the issues of restrictions in movements, limits to social gatherings to partake in businesses, closure of boarders that has affected the supply of foods and amination to the terrorist, closure of hotels were people do patronize prostitutes, and restrictions on interstates transportations were robbers and kidnappers can easily attack as lead to the high hick in all this dimensions of insecurity and unrest in the country during this period of COVID-19. It is important to state here at this segment of the paper that the issues of insecurity has been an old challenge but

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is reoccurrence and devastating effect is more pronounced amidst the novel corona virus with reference to Nigeria.

## History of COVID-19 (SARS)

Most assertions relating the genesis of COVID-19 pandemic started in December 2019, when China discovered and notified the world about the emergence of a deadly virus within some patients in the Hubei province of the country. The novel coronavirus SARS has its attendant illness as coronavirus diseases or COVID-19. In matter of weeks, the virus has spread across Wuhan, the Chinese city where it was initially spotted, and to other parts of Asia, Europe, and United states of American. However, it was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the world health organization as the novel coronavirus continues to spread across the globe with a devastating effect on life's, securities and economies. As at April 20, 2020, over 2.4 million people have been infected globally and 168,500 have died from COVID-19 virus. In Africa the most recent covid-19 statistics giving by the African center for disease control and prevention indicates that out of the 55 African countries, 52 have been reportedly to have coronavirus infections amounting to 22,513 cases and 1,126 deaths. In Nigeria, the virus was first discovered in an Italian citizen who return from Italy to is place of work in Nigeria precisely Lagos on the 25th of February 2020 after been confirmed by the virology laboratory of Lagos state university teaching hospital which is also the part of network of the Nigeria center for disease control. As at Wednesday June 17, 2020 the number of samples tested was 96,402, confirmed cases was 17,148, actives case was 11,070, discharge case was 5,623 and the death toll stands at 455 with Lagos and Abuja having the highest number of cases and have been discovered in all the 36 states of the country, with 663 as the highest number of case recorded in a day and restrictions on movement and lockdowns was imposed in other to curtail the spread of the virus since it discovery globally.

## The concept of security

The concept of security has many diverse meaning to experts and also differs between countries. The desire to live in peace must be accompanied by the provision of security for peaceful coexistence of people within the state. Since time immemorial, citizens has understood the importance of coming together to form state and create a government that will provide security for the protections of lives and properties in their territory. The presence of insecurity will led to dismal peace which is the most essential public good but the most elusive in Nigeria. Security is "the condition of feeling safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values, and the lack of threats to acquire values" [2]. However, reverse is the case in Nigeria from all the pose of security challenges happening around the country. Insecurity in Nigeria has gone beyond people normal expectations, only fake information's are been disseminated by the military about the success of derailing the strength of Boko Harams and other terrorist groups in Nigeria. Going further in the words of [3]. "National security entails the appropriation and development of state apparatus of coercive force to deal with situations of crisis, nationally or internationally".

In an elaborated manner, national security is regarded as the whole range of measures affecting the economic and social welfare of a population, as well as provision against aggression from abroad

or subversion from within, [4]. According to Adebayo security is a measure to ensure peaceful coexistence and development. However, he went further to say that in the presence of security, there is no treat, fear, anxiety, tension, and fear over loss of life, liberty, property, goals and values.

## COVID-19 and insecurity in Nigeria issues and challenges

It is glaring that the outgrowing rate of insecurity in Nigeria amidst the novel corona virus is so devastating and has also gained bad name to the country. This outgrowing insurgencies now arises the need for a wake- up call to the Nigeria government due to happens before and during this period in time; From activities ranging from Boko haram attacks, banditry, kidnappings, rape cases and cattle rustling etc. Insecurity is simply asserted to be the absence of security, because all the issues happening is due to insecurity which can only be addressed by providing constant security to [5]. Insecurity is the condition of fear and anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.

The issues of insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria has been a long issue dating back to 2006 by the so called group named "Boko Haram" which claims to be one of the largest and deadliest militant groups in African, and has conducted terrorist attacks on religious, political groups, local police, military and civilians [6]. However, the mode of operations and consequent attacks committed during this period of corona virus is so rapid and ramped. The numbers of attacks that has been carried out across different states is so alarming in the word of the Governor of Maiduguri during an interview, he said "that this attack as become daily for over two weeks since the emergence of the virus". On the 10th of June, 2020 more than eight-two people were killed and many properties were destroyed Zowo in Gubio district of Borno state. Another attack was carried out were 41 persons were killed in Goni Usmanti of Nganzai local government. Some attacks were carried out in Monguno local government on 13th of June, 2020 killing nine soldiers, three civilian JTF and many government properties were destroyed. There was Attack on Auno village were six soldiers were killed and many missing. In Khaddamari, the headquarters of Jere local government was also under attack were many soldiers properties were looted and destroyed. Subsequent attack on June, 10 in Gwoza, Borno were another four people were killed .There was also a reprisal attack on Dapchi in which house of the village head was destroyed and many other houses in the community were set ablaze despite the first attack in which over two hundred female student were abducted. And also several other attacks in Yobe and Adamawa state living many lives and properties destroyed and many displaced people relocated to the cities and neighboring state which also constitute another problems as major schools and other places are converted into IDP camps and increase in the rate of transmission from these IDP camps, for example Katsina recorded 335 cases and 14 death as at 26 of May 2020. From the records of event carried out by this deadly group over this period it is a matter of necessity for quick and lasting solution to be provided before in goes beyond control this is just to mention but a few among several attacks that has been carried out and still evident till this moment [7].

Banditry in Northwestern Nigeria is gaining another momentum as its environs her becoming violence theater and peculiar to that of

Boko Haram in the northeast. These issues initially started as a local disputes between herders and farmers over access to land which as overtime developed to an issue of national security. The level of rural banditry escalated between 2014 and 2019, but the menace of Banditry violence has gain shape as it affect population living In Zamfara and part of it neighboring states like Kastina, Kebbi, and Sokoto, Niger, Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau in North central Nigeria. Due to this, about 21 million people has been exposed to insecurity from activities of bandits by march 2020, more than 210, 00 people have been internally displaced and more than 35,000 refugees have crossed communal borders to Maradi in Niger republic. There has been rampaging gangs of armed bandits which engaged in violent act like attacking, abducting, killing, and robbing villagers and travelers and engaging in cattle rustling. In Zamfara the governor is reported to have said that “nearly five hundred villages and thirteen thousands hectares of land have been devastated, and over two thousand eight hundred and thirty five people were killed between 2013 and 2019”. On 27 may 2020, armed bandits carried out midday attack on five villages which includes Katumi, Masawa, Dan Adua, Garki and Kuzeri in Sabon Birni, sokoto, killing over seventy-four peoples. Several attack has been lunch on Fakari before that of June 12 killings by bandit, killings of six people in Talata Mafara and fifteen people in Maru all in Zamfara, another twelve civilians were killed in Guma and thirteen (13) in Obi Benue state on May 31st. A senator in Niger state also cries out over the killings of four police men, some civilians, and also a threat to abduct village head again over 4 million naira ransom in June 2020, several killings in Katsina by bandit has made many indigenes to come out and protest as the killings intensifies and government are not on the move to do anything. Plateau state indigenes have also been crying out loud that the killer herdsman will kill them all before the end of COVID-19 due to their constant stay at home and consequents attacks. It is worrisome that most of the atrocities were carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic as settlers are always home, lack of highways to operate and diverged attention of the government to health issues.

The issues of rape cases and sexual assault have been so tremendous over this period despite the fear of transmissions of the virus. Several cases of rape has been reported in which most of the victims are been killed or injured after the assault. The most trending part of the cases is Uwa, followed by that of student named Vera Uwaila that was raped in a church that lost are life to it and that of another student Barakat in Ibadan that was also raped and killed. Another case is that of the hawker that was defiled in Ekiti and also the 18 years Jenifer that was raped by five gang in Kaduna, another 16 years old Tina in Lagos among other several cases that was kept silent and unreported. According to the inspector general of police in an interview he said that “717 issues of rape cases has been reported from January-May 2020”. Amnesty International also write to the federal government to declare emergency of rape and many other protest by civil-organizations as at 20 June 2020 the Niger state house of representative sing into law death penalty for any person convicted of rape case. It was asserted that constant staying at home, closures of hotels and hardship lead to this menaces of rape cases.

Robbery and other killings have also been carried out within the period. Among them are the attack in Isanlu Yagba east local government of Kogi state livening a DPO and seven other police

officer dead. Also the killing of Funke Olakuri, daughter of Afenefre leader, communal crisis in Lamurde Adamawa state which lead to the death of twenty-three people. Another communal crisis in Onicha, Ebonyi were four people lose their life's, sectarian violence on June 4 in Guma, Benue leading to death of five people another in Bali, Taraba state where eleven life's were lost, on the 3rd of june 2020, gunmen killed three people in kajaru, kaduna state. ISWA fighters also killed six Nigerian soldiers in Konduga, Borno. Abduction in Shiroro, Niger state by gun men on June1st. Since the corona virus lock down many resident of Lagos, Ogun have been complaining on daily bases of attacks by hoodlums in their various localities. From all these happenings it is glaring that insecurity amidst the corona virus has been so rampart and worse and has gone out of hand.

The outbreak of the novel corona virus as posed many challenges as government imposed restriction and banned some daily activities and closed up some important sectors of the economy. The closure of borders as lead to the constant attack by Boko Haram since there is no means to get aid in terms of foods, amination and relief materials from their donors, so the need arises to source there means of living by all means that why they have been attacking to cart away foods and amination to sustain their self-amidst the corona virus. In addition to displacement, the violence has hampered agricultural activities and heightened the risk of acute food insecurity. Following the banned of hotels and bar houses were people could patronize prostitutes as the constantly do and also lack of money since their various means of survival have been affected in one way or the other has led to the increase in rape case and infidelity among parents and their daughters and within the societies.

However deploying security personnel's to the areas affected by insurgency has been a problem since there is need for social distancing and also there has been constant news regarding our security personnel are more vulnerable to the virus not only in Nigeria but also around the world as the move from one place to another to ensure compliance to lockdown rules and settlement of disputes and maintenance of social order. Also money to be used for financing security has also pose a problem since but internal and external revenue has been affected and the fall in oil price which is the major source of revenue has fall below bench mark. The fund allocated to the health sector in Nigeria as the means to curtail the spread of the virus and also fund been pushed to provide palliative measures to the Nigeria citizens coupled with other challenges has been a major hindrance and set back to government on the fight against in security in Nigeria during this COVID-19 virus.

## Way forwards

In an attempt to provide solution to the lingering problems of security challenges in Nigeria amidst this corona virus the following recommendations were made.

1. Government should provide more security personnel to the affected areas disturbed by insurgency if possible set up military base at the affected or most vulnerable locations for a long period of time because their presence in large numbers will force the terrorist to flee from those locations.
2. Government should easy down lockdowns and restrictions in movement so has to enable people partake in one or other business so has to make a means to put food on the table for their families.

3. Palliatives measures should be provided by government and other non-governmental organizations so has to provide foods and other essential materials for the displaced people or areas more affected by lockdowns.

4. Private organizations should try and reduce the manners in which the layoff workers within this period so has to reduce putting their workers into distress.

5. All locations occupied by bandits, kidnapers and other terrorist should be cleared and captured back by the military force so has to restore peace.

6. lastly Bandits, Boko Harams, Rapist, kidnappers and other terrorist should have it in mind the are committing abominations and a sinful act and the will account for their deeds on the day of reckoning.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Providing security during outbreak of disease or virus is a serious problem due to the means to curtail the spread of the virus so deploying security personnel and decisions making will be costly, lengthy and uncertain. However the devastating effect of the insecurity is outrageous more than that of the virus as in the case of Nigeria, so the need to provide measures to tackle the insurgency becomes imperative because of the desire to live in peace and protect life's and properties within and beyond this period is the key fundamentals of any government. Measures and efforts should be put

in to curtail the insurgency despite the spread of the deadly novel 19 corona viruses. The afore mentioned recommendations if properly adhered to will no doubt help in providing lasting solutions to the issues raised and insurgency and other terrorist activities will decline.

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