

INSECURITY AND THE MANIFESTATION OF STATE FAILURE IN NIGERIA'S
FOURTH REPUBLIC: A SOCIO-POLITICAL STUDY

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Abstract: The Nigerian state like many other Nation-states in the world today is currently faced with a lot of security challenges which has manifested in form of Boko-Haram threat, Fulani herdsmen militia, IPOB secessionist movement and Niger Delta Militant. These illegal armed groups now contend with the state in the legitimate use of force by carrying out series of bombings and killings, kidnapping/hostage taking, destruction of properties, armed robbery attack, political assassination as well as secessionist movement which security agents in Nigeria appears incapable of handling which is a clear manifestation of state failure. This is worrisome to scholars, practitioners, researchers and policy makers, as the continuous existence of Nigeria as a nation state is been threatened. The objective of this study therefore, is to examine the relationship between insecurities and state failure, its effects on the Nigeria state as a nation and to proffer solutions. The study collected data from the secondary sources and the technique of content analysis was used in analyzing the data. The Elite theory forms the theoretical framework of this study. The study revealed that there is a link between state failure and the existence of Boko-haram militia, herdsmen militia, IPOB secessionist movement and Niger Delta militant group. This study recommends in a very holistic approach, good governance as a panacea for Nigeria's security challenges and state failure. Apart, Nigeria as a state should also adopt an effective surveillance and forensic intelligence gathering to enable her defeat Boko-haram and other criminal groups in the country. The establishment of state police and community police will help solve the problems of insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: State, Insecurity, State failure, Boko Haram.

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity is a global phenomenon; the Nigeria state is not an exclusion. It is the state of being in danger, fear and uncertainty, (Akindiyo, 2023). Although insecurity is not new in Nigeria, it has intensified since inception of Nigeria forth republic.

Since May 29, 1999 when the former head of state, president Olusegun Obasnjajo was sworn into office as a democratic elected president, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. This has threatened the continuous existence of Nigeria as a nation state.

One of the basic human rights of the people of any country is the right to security, which is always enshrined in the constitutions of most sovereign nations. Nigeria is no exception, and Article 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, as amended, clearly states that the security and well-being of the people is the prime objective of the government. In this respect it is to protect its citizens, and since only the state has the means to guarantee security

and save society from anarchy, and government represents the state, the state, through its government, ensures adequate security must be provided (Gasking 2025). Any state in which this function cannot be performed is considered a failed state. Unfortunately, in relation to this constitutional responsibility, the Nigerian government has failed to adequately provide a safe and secure environment for living, protection of property, and conducting business and economic activities (Achumba and Akpan, 2013).

This has manifested in the formation of several illegal groups such as Boko-Haram, Fulani herdsmen militia, IPOB secessionist movement and Niger Delta Militant which now contend with the State in the legitimate use of force by carrying out series of bombings and killings/ hostage taking, destruction of properties, armed robbery attack, political assassinations as well as secessionist movement which security Agents in Nigeria such as the Nigeria Police, State

Securities Agency, the military, immigration and prison services appears incapable of handling.

Ezeoba, (2024) observed that in Nigeria today, not a day sometimes even an hour goes by without the press reporting a deadly attack or kidnapping by these illegal groups. This manifestation of state failure led to a declaration on the 1st of September, 2021, as reported by Nigeria Tribune that Bello Masari, the former governor of Katsina State gave an order to state residence to resort to self help by using, arm to defend themselves against bandits, boko-haram and other criminal elements due to the failure of official or state security apparatus to protect the state. the governor of katsina state gave this declaration due to the clear fact that the sub national government which he heads and the federal government whose direct obligation is to secure the country are incapable of protecting the lives and properties of citizens.

This is a clear manifestation of state failure. The Nigerian state is gradually stepping into a collapsed state and may soon cease to exist if this problem of insecurity is not checked. This study, therefore examines the relationship between insecurity and state failure, its effects on the Nigerian state and to proffer possible solutions.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was collected from secondary sources such as books, journal articles, government publications, news media and letters. The technique of content analysis was used in analyzing the secondary data.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Security is necessary and it is the constitutional right of the people. The government owe it a duty to protect the lives and properties of the citizenry within its territory (Igbuzor, 2023). Any state which cannot perform this function is regarded as a failed state. Regrettably, Nigeria government on this constitutional duty has failed to adequately provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities (Achumba and Akpan 2024). This has manifested in the formulation of several illegal groups such as Boko-Haram, Fulani Herdsmen militia, IPOB militia and Niger Delta militant which now rival the state in the legitimate use of force by carrying out series of bombings and killings / hostage taking, destruction of properties, armed robbery attack, political assassinations as well as secessionist movement which the security agents in Nigeria has failed to curb (Balogun, 2023).

Book Haram militants routinely wreak havoc across the country, and the military, known for its bravery in peacekeeping operations, seemed powerless to contain the threat posed by these terrorists (Farrel, 2024). Our military is losing officers and soldiers fighting mobs every day. Governments indirectly fund rebels by negotiating with terrorists and paying ransoms. This problem has led these terrorists to carry out daily attacks as they are now profitable. This has resulted in frequent news reports of school children being robbed, kidnapped and ransom demands for their release (Williams, 2023).

Fulani herdsmen roam freely with weapons, raping, murdering, and looting villages, driving people from their homes with most of the times they are not stopped by the security forces. It terrified the country. Except for the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has never been so unstable, even during civil war (Alemika, 2022).

Today in Nigeria, citizens are afraid to move freely on highways for fear of bandits and kidnapers. In most cases, they carry out these attacks without challenge (Orji 2025).

In the southeast of Nigeria, there is Biafra separatist agitation, which is currently the biggest threat to the existence of Nigeria as a political entity. They formed an illegal group known as Biafra's Indigenous Peoples "IPOB". This group has its own security agency known as the Eastern Security Network "ESN". They carry guns and vow to protect their areas from attack, a responsibility that rests solely with the state (Egbewole, 2023). These illegal groups carry out attacks against police stations and those who disobey orders. In fact, every Monday, people are not allowed to move in their homes by order of the "IPOB" group, and security agents are helpless in the face of this challenge. Additionally, militants in the Niger Delta are wreaking havoc in southern Nigeria. They kidnap citizens for ransom, kidnap foreign immigrants as well, and destroy governments and private property. Nigerian security services are unable to contain this threat due to their failure to gather information (Daniel, 2024).

Despite the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria, the government has failed to adequately address security concerns, which manifests itself in many ways. No one is safe in Nigeria today as bandits broke into Kaduna, the Nigerian Defense Academy, and kidnapped Nigerian soldiers unchallenged by the military (Wali 2021). This is a clear case of government failure as it failed to protect the lives and property of Nigerians, which is its constitutional obligation. It is also because of the state failure that the United States of America has brought its military into Nigeria to help fight the rising insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is to examine the relationship between insecurities and state failure its effect on the Nigeria state as a nation and to proffer solutions. Specifically, the study is established to:

- i. To identify the link between Boko-Haram insecurity and manifestation of state failure.
- ii. To examine the relationship between Herdsmen militant insecurity and state failure.
- iii. To identify the link between IPOB secessionist movement insecurity and state failure.
- iv. To examine the relationship between Niger Delta Militant Insecurity and state failure.
- v. To proffer possible solution to insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE

INSECURITY

The term "insecurity" has another meaning. It means danger, uncertainty; lack of protection and security. Beland (2025) defines 'insecurity' as a state of anxiety or fear arising from being actually unprotected or perceived as unprotected. It refers to the lack or inadequacy of freedom from danger. This means that insecurity is lack of peace, order and security. Akpor (2013) defines insecurity in two perspectives. First, insecurity is the state of being or being exposed to danger or imminent danger. Second, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or fear, and fear is the unpleasant feeling experienced in anticipation of misfortune.

These definitions of insecurity highlight the important point that people affected by it do not know what will happen, but are exposed to the threats and dangers that arise. Plan (2024) defines security as protection against potential harmful interference in the daily activities of a home, office, or community. This means that ensuring the safety of life and property is the boundary of safety. Williams (2023) views security from a sociopolitical perspective, arguing that security includes the ability to pursue worthy political and social ambitions. So security is inherently socio-political. Because without security there can be no political stability, and as a result social activity will be in chaos.

STATE

The term "state" is a concept of political science and international law that falls victim to pluralism of definitions. A quick look at the set of definitions reveals that state means:

A human community that has successfully asserted a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a particular realm with defined boundaries. The concept of territory is one of its distinguishing features (Akude, 2025). According to Ojo (2025), a state is a multi-agency body led and coordinated by a national leader (executive branch) that establishes and regulates rules and parameters of rules binding on all people. have the power or authority to do so. Use force and coercion as necessary on behalf of other social organizations in a particular area. Roberts (2023) viewed a state as a territory governed by a set of political authorities whose inhabitants successfully asserted compliance through exclusive control of legitimate powers. It was also recognized that the state exists "where there is a community of people with supreme authority that governs the social behavior of individuals and groups of individuals and is itself not subject to such regulation". (Abide 2022).

STATE FAILURE

There seems to be a problem with the term state failure. This is because of the controversy that such classification creates. But if the basic elements of a state are absent or too weak to sustain such state capacity, the state has failed. According to Abide (2022), a state failure is a situation in which a state is unable to perform the basic functions of a sovereign government, such as physical control of its territory, protection of the lives and property of its citizens, and monopoly of the use of force to compel obedience. A state can be said not to have failed if it has the physical strength and the ability to provide adequate public services or interact with other countries as full members of the international community.

Peace (2025), stated that a state can be said to have failed if it exhibits the following: loss of physical control of its territory or of the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force, erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions; and an inability to provide reasonable public services and also, an inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community (Ojo 2025).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ELITE THEORY

Vilfredo Pareto (1848 – 1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) are the two pioneer social scientists who propounded the Elite theory. Elite theory is included in this study because majority of Nigeria problems including political violence and terrorism which has led to widespread insecurity in Nigeria today are traceable to Elite hypocrisy, conspiracy, dominance and mis-governance (Okokhere, 2023). According to their views, public policy is nothing more than the testes and values of society's Elites. Elite's theory looks at the role of a select few in society who are privileged in various areas of endeavour. They perceive areas of politics and the economy as an exclusive preserve for themselves alone. Thus, any attempt to challenge their dominance is met with stiff resistance. This group is very active in Nigeria and operates freely particularly within the corridors of power. This class of Nigerians views politics as a business in which after investing so much, profit becomes the primary focus. The interest and welfare of the Nigerian people become insignificant. The Elite class has been socialized into a realm of politics of destruction, corruption, nepotism, visionlessness and mis-governance (Dye, 2000).

The Elites are corrupt and this has been identified by Agara, (2024), as the root cause of failure in virtually every sector of the Nigerian economy. The result of its pervasiveness is the failure of governance in service delivery, with the country being bedeviled with various degree of conflict and insecurity. One of the effects of Elite corruption in Nigeria is the threats it poses to National security. Insecurity of lives and properties has increased in the country because governance in Nigeria is marred with high corruption especially in the management of the nation security budgets (defence spending, internal security votes) and this is caused by the ruling Elites. Thus, instead of reaping the dividends of democracy, we are reaping the dividends of corruption. Some of these dividends are; increasing poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Alemika 2022).

Therefore, Elite corruption brings poverty to the people and poverty is a principal cause of political, society and economic conflict in the country. Poverty creates disaffection among the populace and leads them towards violent behaviour.

The role of the elite ruling class in Nigeria's politics is obvious to everyone both within and outside Nigeria since independent. The role has been negative, destruction, unpatriotic and disgraceful. It is a puzzle to many observers of Nigeria's politics as to why Nigeria has remained underdeveloped despite the very rich human and natural resources deposits in the land. There is no doubt that the main reason why the mirage of socio-political and economic problems persist in Nigeria is the mis-governance of Nigeria by the Elites of Nigeria. The Elite lack political will, managerial skills and lack of competence in the handling of state affairs (Babawale, 2006). Political patronage, large scale corruption, nepotism are the order of the day in Nigeria. This is the unfortunate situation Nigeria find itself over the years, at the mercy of a gang of ruling elites who have made Nigeria heaven for themselves and hell for everyone else. This explains the reason of the current insecurity challenge in Nigeria which has manifested in form of Boko-Haram terrorist, Herdsmen militia, IPOB secessionist movement and Niger Delta militant group.

BOKO HARAM AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Boko Haram insurgency is a major challenge in Nigeria which has adversely affected the peace, stability and threatens the continuous existence of Nigeria as a nation. The group originated in 2002, in the capital Bornu State, Maiduguri under the leadership of Islamist Cleric Mohammed Yusuf (Igbuzor, 2023). The word "Boko" is a Hausa word meaning "western" otherwise non. Islamic education, and the Arabic word "Haram" figuratively means "sin" or literally something "forbidden", this colloquially translate to western education is a sin (Olugbode 2010). According to Duma, (2010), Boko Haram is a controversial Nigerian militant Islamist group that has sought to impose sharia or its radical interpretation of Islam on the Northern states of Nigeria and then to other parts of the country like what Malians Islamists almost succeeded to do in Northern Mali. This group opposes not only Western Education but also Western Culture and modern science. Mohammed Yusuf followers consisted predominately of individuals from the impoverished North Islamic student, clerics and the Unemployed (Nwama, 2015). Prior to 2009, the small group of Islamists openly challenged the state with impassioned speeches but following the public execution of its leader Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 and the emergence of Abubakar Shekau as their new leader, the group launched an Islamic Insurrection and began to carry out a series of bombings assassinations, suicide bombings, and hostage taking. Since 2010, the group has attacked media outlets, journalists, school as well as kidnapped both Nigerians and foreigners (Adagba 2022). Cleen (2023) highlights that "Boko Haram" fighters often are indeed better armed and equipped than the government forces and such, the group's strength and resilience has succeeded in posing a significant threat to the government and the continuous existence of the Nigerian state.

The Boko Haram insurgency group carry out violent activities in the form of kidnappings, battles with security forces, clashes with one another and series of bombing (Nwagboso, 2012). The daily occurrence of violence occasioned by Boko Haram, has reached a deadly level that glaringly reveals the incapacitation and helplessness of the Nigerian government. Their sophisticated tactics and weaponry raises concerns about continuous violence and insecurity in Nigeria (Agara, 2024).

The high rate of insecurity in Nigeria is an example of a state inability to protect civilians from organized killings conducted by a non-state insurgency group (Boko Haram). The insecurity and violence caused a severe refugee crisis with 3.2 million Nigerians forced to flee their homes. Approximately 1.6 million are internally displaced, while another 1.6 million are refugees seeking safety in neighbouring countries such as Chad, Cameroon and Niger. According to Adeola (2021), the government counter insurgency actions will continue to fail due to Elite conspiracy and gross corruption. Boko Haram is an effect and not a cause. It is a symptom of decades of failed government and Elite delinquency finally manifesting into social chaos. The inability of the government to curtail the menace of Boko Haram is a clear manifestation of state failure.

BOKO HARAM AND RELATED ATTACK IN NIGERIA (2002– 2026)

2002: Mohammed Yusuf founded Boko Haram in 2002, establishing a mosque called Markaz as the headquarters of his movement, following his expulsion from two mosques in Maiduguri by Muslim clerics for propagating his radical views (Integrated Regional Information Network, 2012).

- 23-21 Dec, 2003: A group of about 200 members of a Boko Haram's splinter group launched attacks on police stations in the towns of Kanamma and Geidam in Yobe State from an enclave outside Kanama on the Nigerian-Niger border. Militants killed several police officers and stole police weapons and vehicles
- 23 Sept, 2004: A Boko Haram splinter group launched a militia attack on police stations in the towns of Gwoza and Bama in Borno State, killing four policemen and two civilians.
- 26 July, 2009: Boko Haram launched a short-lived uprising in parts of the north, which was quelled by a military crackdown that left many dead-mostly sect members, including the Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf. A mosque in the capital of Borno State (Maiduguri) that served as sect headquarters burnt down.
- 7 Sept, 2010: A group of Boko Haram gunmen freed 700 inmates including around 100 sect members from a prison in Bauchi. Four people including a soldier, one policeman and two residents were killed in the raid.
- 27 June, 2011: Boko Haram's gun and bomb attack on a beer garden in Maiduguri left at least 25 dead and dozens injured.
- 25 August, 2011: Gun and bomb attacks by Boko Haram on two police stations and two banks in Gombi, Adamawa State, killed at least 16 people including seven policemen.
- 9 November, 2011: Boko Haram members bombed a police station and the office of Nigeria's road safety agency in Maina Village, Borno State. One number was hurt.
- 26 November, 2011: Three policemen and a civilian wounded in Boko Haram's bomb and shooting attacks in Geidam, Yobe State. Six churches, a police station, a beer parlour, a shopping complex, a high court, local council building and 11 cars were burnt in the attacks.
- November 27, 2011: A Borno State Protocol official in the governor's office was shot dead by a motorcycle-riding cultist on his way home.
- December 25, 2011: On Christmas Day, Boko Haram killed 42 followers in an attack on St. Theresa's Catholic Church in the town of Madara near Abuja. Killed in a suicide attack while driving a bomb-laden vehicle into a military convoy outside the gates of SSS headquarters in Damatul. Failed Boko Haram bombing of a church in the Layfield district of Jos, the capital of Plateau state. A police officer died in
- January 3, 2012. Boko Haram attacked a police station in Vilniwa city, Jiggiwa province, killing a girl and injuring a police officer.
- January 5, 2012: A Boko Haram attack on a church in Gombe City killed six adherents and injured 10 others.
- January 6, 2012: A shootout at Yola's church killed eight of his followers. Boko Haram shot dead 17 Christian mourners in the city of Mbi in northeastern Adamawa state. The victims were his one friend and relative out of five who were killed in the Boko Haram attack on the hotel the day before.
- May 7, 2013: Boko Haram launched a coordinated attack on security forces in northeastern Bama, killing 55 people and freeing 105 prisoners.
- July 6, 2013: Boko Haram attacked a public secondary school in Mamud, Yobe State, killing 41 students and a teacher.
- October 31, 2013: Boko Haram ambushed a regular bus in the Bama district and killed 13 passengers.
- November 22, 2015: A 20-year-old female Boko Haram suicide bomber disguised as a refugee returning from Diqwa detonated a bomb while people were being searched in Maiduguri, killing eight people.
- February 10, 2016: Two Boko Haram suicide bombers attacked a refugee camp in Dikwa, Bornu state, killing 58 of her in a suicide bombing.
- April 20, 2016: Boko Haram bombed Gonoli refugee camp, killing seven.
- October 29, 2016: Boko Haram suicide bombers attack Bakashi refugee camp in Maiduguri, killing eight.
- September 1, 2017: Boko Haram members attacked former Minawao refugees returning to Banki, killing 18.

September 20, 2017:	Boko Haram attacked Daima people who went out daily to farm, killing nine. Some survivors fled to Cameroon.
March 1, 2018:	Boko Haram has carried out a coordinated attack on a military base in Rana, Borno state. Nine Nigerian security force members and three UN advisers were killed.
October 31, 2018:	Boko Haram raided the Darrow refugee camp near Maiduguri and surrounding areas, where he reportedly killed at least eight people and kidnapped many women from the camp. Hundreds of people were forced from their homes as a result.
December 13, 2019:	Four of his aid workers from Action Against Hunger (AAH) were executed by the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWA).
June 9, 2020:	Boko Haram militants are said to have killed at least 30 people and kidnapped women and children in Auno city, Maiduguri.
June 13, 2020:	Boko Haram militants attacked the town of Mongno, killing at least 38 civilians.
November 28, 2020:	Boko Haram killed at least 70 of his civilians and injured and kidnapped dozens in Jele municipal government area of Borno state.
18 February, 2021:	Boko Haram abducted about 48 People including students and staff of Government Science college Kagara in Niger State.
26 February, 2021:	Boko Haram (armed group) abducted 279 female students of Government Girls Science Secondary School in Zamfara State one Police officer was killed.
5th July 2022.	The Boko Haram breakaway faction Islamic state west Africa province led a successful attack on a well secured prison in Nigeria capital, Abuja and all 68 imprisoned Boko Haram detainees escaped.
30th April 2023.	In Bena village, Kebbi State, violent extremists riding on motorcycles attacked a convoy of law enforcement officers, killing 20 police officers and 10 villagers
31st July 2024	BokoHaram Suicide Attack Kills at least 19 and injures dozens in a Borno Village.
September 6th 2025.	Boko Haram attack in Borno state kills at least 63 people including civilians and Soldiers.
January, 26th 2026.	Pastor, two hunters and others killed by Boko Haram in BIU village Borno.

Source: Adopted from Onuoha 2026 with additions and modifications from vanguard Newspapers.

The impact of this scenario to the Nigerian Internal Security is heart rendering posing a serious threat to the nation corporate existence. It has the potential of warding off foreign investors and create negative image about Nigeria. Above all, it retards economic development and national progress. These ugly activities have elevated and blacklisted Nigeria to the status of terrorist nation to the extent that the United States of America has now declared Nigeria as a state of particular concern.

THE MENACE OF HERDSMEN MILITIA RESULTING TO INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Nomads in Nigeria are said to be pastoralists who lead a lifestyle of moving animals from one place to another in search of greener pastures. It is a large ethnic group that straddles the borders of West and Central African countries (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2016).

The Fulani in Nigeria are a part of the Peul or Fula, ethnic group which has existed in some form for thousands of years (Iro, 1994). Fulani are more than 20 Millions in Africa today and the largest community in the tribe is located in Nigeria where they make up of the nation's largest ethnic group (Abass 2021). The influence of foreign Fulani groups in search of pasture accounts for the irreconcilable conflicts being witnessed between the Fulani and their host communities. Due to cultural and religious affinity, it is practically difficult to distinguish between Nigeria Fulani and Fulani from other countries across the Sahel region moving into Nigeria (Omitola 2014).

For many centuries herders in Nigeria have confirmed their movement to the far north. However, in the early part of 20th century, the herders started moving down south of Nigeria. As at this time, there were wild animals in the forest and herders carried only sticks to defend themselves and their animals. But now in this 21st century that there are none or very few wild animas in the bush herder uses sophisticated guns not to attack animals but his fellow human being even in the face of alternative peaceful dispute resolution methods (omitola, 2024). This has

caused the nomadic threat to spread like wildfire, posing a major threat to the existence and cohesion of businesses in Nigeria.

Nte (2016) argued that most of the highly violent conflicts caused by Fulani nomads occurred generally in central Nigeria and the highlands, particularly in Benue and Taraba states. In the case of Benue State, there has been a highly devastating conflict that has claimed the lives and property of a large number of people in communities in municipal areas such as Agatu, Gwer West, Markurdi, Kwande, Katsina Ala. A communal conflict organized by a Fulani herder in Benue State claimed the lives of more than 5,000 people in the first half of 2014 (Nte, 2016). However, recent attacks by Fulani herders against host communities in southeastern, south-south and southwestern Nigeria have been aggressive as these Fulani nomads have used more sophisticated weapons and communications equipment in recent years, (Omojola 2025).

Several heinous crimes have been committed by Nigeria's Fulani nomads today, including:

In February 2016, suspected Fulani herders killed five people in the village of Okokoro, Agatu District, Benue State. Similarly, on 5 March 2016 they killed 500 people in the simultaneous attacks launched in nine communities (Aria, Akw, Adagbo, Okokoro, Ugboju, Odagbeho, Ogbaul, Egba and Obagaji, (Vanguard, March 6, 2016). 15 people died in two of the communities as a result of herdsman attack in Gashaka District, Taraba. On April 19, 2016, the entire Delta state government suspended all economic activity in the state to protest the killing of 23 of his people in the state by fulani herdsman. In Enugu, Igata (2016) reports that the sleepy communities of the Ndiagu, Attakwu and Akegbe-Ugwu in the Nkanu-West Municipality of Enugu were invaded by more than 50 machete-wielding Fulani nomads massacring Catholic seminarians. Lazarus Nuwafor. His four members.

Buari (2017) also reported several attacks perpetrated by the Fulani herdsman in Taraba state. He reported that, the Fulani herdsman imported about 500 others from Nasarawa state to help launch the attack on the community causing death of more than 13 people and many sustained injuries. Reacting to the development, stakeholders from the local government held a meeting where they tried to find solutions to the increased attacks by herdsman on communities. during this time, Vanguard newspaper reported in December 10, 2017 that, some aged women were attacked and machete in between Moto and Egelu villages for the refusal to submit themselves to be raped by the herdsman (Vanguard Newspaper, 10 December, 2017). six months after the attacks reported by Vanguard Newspaper, several attacks and killings have been carried out in Taraba State and its environs without any counter-attacks from the Federal Government. Which is a clear manifestation of state failure.

The terrorist atrocities were also committed in Kogi State, as the suspected Fulani herdsman killed traditional ruler, the Onu of Agbeneman town, Ajichekpa, Opada and Iyade villages on 19 March, 2018 (Buari, 2017). Dimelu, Salifu, Enwelu and Igbuzor (2011) has recorded similar attack carried out in Kogi that hundreds of lives lost in Kogi State in 2017. In Ondo State, suspected Fulani herdsman attacked the farm of a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation Chief Olu Falae, at Ilado Village at Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State. The hoodlum burnt down five hectares of the oil palm farm; this attack preceded the attacks later carried out in his farm killing his security guards in the farm this was after the said man Olu Falae was kidnapped by suspected Fulani herdsman in September, 2015 and released three days (Buari, 2017). Similar experience of Fulani herdsman attack recorded in Oyo state, Adegoke (2014) gather that, farmers in Lagos, Iyan Offa, Offa Atagba, Lapata and their surrounding communities in Lagelu Local Government Council Area of Ibadan were attacked by a group of Fulani armed men between 30-40 in number and injured a guard, raid farms and carted away valuables. On 31st March, 2021, Vanguard reported that suspected Fulani herdsman attacked four communities of Egedege, Umuhuali, Obegu and Amezu in Ishielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and killed at least 18 persons and kidnapped many of their women. Nigeria's middle belt has been struck this year by a spike in herdsman attack, killing more than 2,000 people according to the International Crisis Group. On April 27, 2021, Vanguard reported that herdsman killed at least seven people in Abahena, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The attack reportedly targeted an IDP camp on June 6, 2021, and the Premium Times reported that at least eight people were killed in an attack by Fulani herders in a village called Igangan, a town south of Oyo. They reported that several people had died. These herdsman are involved in raping women, kidnapping and killing farmers, carrying out gun robberies on rural roads, and kidnappings (Okogba, 2018). These attacks has continued till date.

Despite these deadly atrocities committed by Fulani nomads, there has been insufficient reaction from Nigeria's federal and state authorities, which is a clear sign of government failure.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA (IPOB) SEPARATIST AGITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a secessionist movement based in South East Nigeria with the aim of restoring the defunct Biafra, through peaceful means. The group is an offshoot of a similar group, movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) with same objectives as IPOB but in a less radical manner. In fact, it was the “weakness” in the modus operandi of MASSOB in pursuing its objectives that paved a way for the hysteria of the more radical IPOB as “an undisputable champion, fronting the Igbo secessionist cause” (Ekpor & Agorye, 2018:36).

The objective of the group, inter alia, is to push for, facilitate and advocated the Igbo’s right to self determination while advocating “for the right and fundamental freedom of the remnants of the Biafrans who are scattered in all parts of the world as refugees and people in self-exile”. Generally, the agitation for the restoration of Biafra is a product of the failure of the Nigerian government to create a sustainable transitional justice system after the 30 months Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-1970).

There are evidence, or so it look, of unfair treatment of the Igbos in the present political dispensation. Analysis have noted indicators such as lack of economic opportunities, palpable degree of political exclusions, unequal development, lack of federal government presence and others. The Igbos feel relatively deprived at the economic, political, cultural and social levels (See Ekpo & Agorye, 2018). This victimage of horizontal inequality meted against the Igbos by other groups in Nigeria (and in the case of IPOB, Hausa-Fulani) is the force behind the emergence of groups such as IPOB to agitate and aggravate a favourable recognition and redistribution of national resources or a breakaway of the Igbos from the Nigerian State to form the ideal and utopian state of Biafra.

Until 2015, the activities of IPOB have been superficial and reduced to the level of online radio (Radio Biafra) tirade and other media frenzy and were largely ignored by the then president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan’s administration. However, the group became more daring, brazen and audacious from 2015 just after President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office. Ekpo (2018:48) has argued that it was a culmination of what he described as “Buharophobia” – the fear of Nigeria’s incumbent president, Muhammadu Buhari. The authors had corroborated literatures which demonstrated the enduring relationship between Buhari and the Igbos during the military regime (1984-1985) as regards his treatment of Igbo second republic political leaders and distribution of developmental projects in relation to other regions and ethnicities. The president’s “95 percent and 5 percent” comment. of those who voted him into power and the brazen killings and national arrogance of Fulani herdsmen has spurred up anxiety among the Igbos of which IPOB assumed, only Biafra can guarantee.

By October, 2015, the leader of IPOB had left his propaganda office (Radio Biafra) in London for a trip to Nigeria and was arrested upon arrival by security operatives and detained in the State Security Service (SSS) custody. This marked the beginning of the escalation of the conflict and the animosity between IPOB and the Buhari administration. There were series of protests by IPOB members for the release of their leader and such protests were meted with crude force by security operatives. It is estimated that not less than 146 people died in such clashes secessionist protesters and security operatives in 2016 alone (Ekpo & Agorye, 2018:38).

When Mazi Kanu was subsequently released in April 15, 2017, situations further deteriorate. As Ekpo & Agorye (2018:39) puts it:

His (Kanu’s) release came with a euphoria which further gave impetus to the illusions of victory which must be sustained through constant rallies aimed at intimidating and influencing the federal government and international community respectively. The frenzy orchestrated by Kanu’s histrionics and megalomania heated the polity and aggravated popular calls for “restructuring” of Nigeria’s federalism and similar threats of secession from elements both from the Niger Delta and the Western geopolitical zone. Kanu’s popularity disrupted the political levers – a development which was repercussive of the Kaduna Declaration.

The polity was indeed heated with secession calls, ultimatums and threat and counter threats of ethnic wars and attacks. IPOB had challenged Nigeria's national security to the extreme and had preposterously recruited a militant group it christened Biafra Security Service (BSS) for the purpose of intelligence gathering. It was obvious that IPOB had constituted a major security nuisance but tackling it within the confines of established laws and conventions meant the group was legally untouchable. Hence, there was a need for a necessity to prevail over legality. So, in order to kill the dog, a bad name was sorted for it- this marked the beginning of the securitization of the IPOB by the Nigerian government through the Nigerian military. Already, President Buhari had described them in August, 2017 as "Irresponsible element" and had utilized the Nigerian army, through operation python dance II, to provoke, attack and declare the group as a terrorist group in September, 15 2017, even though the group's objectives and operations fail to meet such conditions as speculated by the 2011 Terrorism Act (as amended). The proscription of the group generated a plethora of censure by the citizens and international communities for the securitization was poorly executed.

However, following the recent re-arrest of Nnamdi Kanu the leader of Indigenous People of Biafra, by the federal government of Nigeria, the rate of insecurity in the south east has increased as the arm bearer of IPOB otherwise known as Eastern Security Network keep attacking police station and other security outfit of the federal government. The current sit at home order by IPOB on some specific days like compulsory sit at home declared on October first Nigeria Independence Day was a great threat to the citizens living in the south east as anyone who disobeyed this order were either killed or property destroyed. Several lives have been lost as a result of the agitations of IPOB thereby making the federal security agents helpless and failed in the responsibility of protection of lives and properties. Till date every Monday has been declared as a seat at home in the North East and the federal government has not been able to stop it.

NIGER DELTA MILITANCY AND INSECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

One of the known root cause of the Niger Delta region is the agitation for resource control by the youth of the Niger Delta. What informed the agitation, is three-prong: namely the exploration and exploitation of the Niger-Delta Area by foreign multinational companies activities and ecosystem; the failure of the federal government of Nigeria to pay attention to the suffering of the peoples of the Niger-Delta by calling on the foreign, multinational companies to be alive to their corporate social responsibility and to also guide against oil spillage and gas flaring; and the growing rate of unemployed capable youth some of who are educated and skilled while lucrative jobs in the multinational companies are reserved for expatriates and the Nigeria collaborators.

The resultant effect of the scenario created in above was the mobilization of the youth of the Niger Delta into various militant groups to make demands on both the government and the multinational companies. They wanted the government and the multinational companies to draw up a framework for attending to the immediate and future needs of the people of the Niger Delta whose land lays the golden eggs that oils the economy. They wanted jobs and a say over their resources their environment is endowed with. They equally wanted an end to environmental pollution, environmental degradation, oil spillage and gas flaring. In fact this made the region witnessed severe security threats and the emergence of other agitations group affiliated to the movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) like the Niger Delta people's volunteer force (NDPVF) led by Mujahid Dokubo – Asari and the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom. These groups purportedly joined the struggle to address the injustice by the federal government against the region and this move exacerbated the security problems not only in the region but also in the entire Nigeria State (Nwagboso, 2025). These groups carried out bombing, vandalization of oil installations and constant kidnapping and hostage taking. The salvo of kidnapping was first fired by MEND in late 2005 when it adopted some expatriates as a means of alerting the world of the many years of injustice, exploitation, marginalization and underdevelopment of Niger-Delta region (Odoh, 2010). MEND in a statement released by the leader says "the taking of foreign hostages is to draw the attention of the people of other countries to happenings in Nigeria. So that these truths will now be forced into the open "(Guardian, 2006 cited in Odoh 2010).

As part of the mobilization process by these groups, they acquired illegal weapons to carry out series of attack on oil installations in the area which was later followed with the kidnapping for ransom of multinational companies' expatriates. Later the politician in the region re-armed and use these armed jobless militants as political thugs against their opponents and this has been so since 1999 election till date. Even though the initial focus of

kidnappers were the expatriate oil workers, the apparent shift to kidnapping of relatives of politicians and other suspected wealthy Nigerians is due to the nature of our politics and the character of the Nigerian state. The apparent neglect of the area with an increasing idle youth population seemed to have been a time bomb that exploded through militancy including kidnapping and vandalization of government and private properties.

NATURE AND MANIFESTATION OF STATE FAILURE IN NIGERIA

The question then is: What is the capacity of the Nigerian state in its state? Is the state weak or strong? Has the Nigerian state failed? Or is the state manifesting marks of failure? Why has the state becomes so helpless, incapacitated and ineffective? Equally pertinent is the question of the relationship between the capacities of the Nigerian state to legitimately use force against the activities of individuals and groups including criminal gangs such as Boko Haram, herdsmen, IPOB secessionist movement and Niger Delta Militants who effectively challenge the state. Is the state still able to compel obedience from the citizens?

The foregoing serves as a useful point of entering the discuss on the nature and manifestation of state failure in Nigeria. The Nigerian state like its counterpart in Africa has been referred to as the: crippled giant, underdeveloped, weak, decadent, criminalized, greedy, corrupt, irrational, illegitimate, rogue, failed and collapsed state among others (Osaghae, 2025). Against this backdrop, the Nigerian state tends to exhibit the traits of weakness, incapacitation and failure compel to its counterpart in Europe and America. As a matter of fact, the Nigerian state had been rendered incapacitated, ineffective and weak by the combination of illegal groups such as Boko haram, herdsmen militia, IPOB militia and Niger Deltan militant who constantly challenge the state authority on the monopoly use of force. Since it appears that the state had been robbed of its ability and discipline to prevent threats to public safety and national integrity and it is assailed by active challenges to its legitimacy. The underlying interpretation of this scenario is the fact that many Nigerians across the specific of our national life no longer see the state as an object of permanent obedience. (Ihonvbere, 2004).

Based on manifestations of the Nigerian state's apparent failures, key attributes or functions of the state are examined namely, the state's monopoly on the use of force and the legitimate use of force. therefore:

Article 14(2)(6) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, as amended, clearly states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the Government". Today, the Nigerian state seems very weak in protecting life and property, especially the violence associated with constant attacks by Boko Haram terrorists, pastoral militias, militants in the Niger Delta, and the IPOB separatist movement. On August 24, 2021, gunmen attacked the Nigerian Defense Academy, killing two army officers and kidnapping one army officer without being challenged by the military. This is a federal security agency that was supposed to protect citizens from attacks, but is now being targeted by the same terrorist groups, leaving citizens without hope of government protection (Ebohon 2021). On February 26, 2021, Boko Haram kidnapped 279 students from a public girls' secondary school in Zamfara without prior complaint from state security authorities. In this particular case, the government was involved in secret negotiations with the kidnappers to pay them a large ransom, so it was impossible for the state to compel obedience from its citizens through the legitimate use of physical force. Clearly it cannot. Surprisingly, this does not justify the state's enormous financial expenditures on security and defense each year. This is the most blatant manifestation of government failure.

Failed states are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous and contested bitterly by warring factions. In most failed states, government troops battle armed revolts led by one or more rivals. Occasionally, the official authorities in a failed state face two or more insurgencies, varieties of civil unrest, different degrees of communal discontent and a plethora of dissent directed at the state and at groups within the state. This is the case of Nigeria today. To illustrate those definitions of state failure by focusing on Nigeria, the government seems to be helpless to prevent or adequately respond to the frequent bombing and killing in Nigeria, which leads to questions concerning the ability of Nigeria's national security to function proactively. The Niger Delta militant located in the south of Nigeria, the Boko Haram in the North East, herdsmen militia and the IPOB separatist movement serves as good examples through which to examine the inefficiency and lack of trust which are the tenets of state failure. The Nigerian government has failed to effectively address the constant vandalization of the oil pipeline which is the nation's economic hub or the incessant bombings of boko haram neither has it been able to stop the constant attack carried out by herdsmen and destruction of lives and properties. It is on record that herdsmen are allowed

to carry arms on the disguise to protect themselves against wild animals but latter use these arms for kidnapping, high way robbery and raping of our women in their farms (Osaghale 2025). Neither has the federal government been able to stop the constant killing by arm branch of IPOB (Eastern Security Network) who usually enforce sit at home order as declared by their leader Nnamdi Kanu. These attacks and the helplessness of the Nigerian security forces have become a threat to national security and the continuous existence of Nigeria.

It is through government that the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realized. Therefore, the failure of government is synonymous with state failure. If the government is strong, the state would be strong and vice versa. It would be right to say that therefore, the Nigerian state failed in bringing the dividends of good governance and good use of the abundant natural resources to Nigerians. When the government deliberately or due to weakness fails to discharge its responsibility, it gives rooms to criminal elements to form, illegal groups. This is what has resulted to the formation of Boko haram terrorist group, herdsmen militia, IPOB secessionist movement and Niger Delta militant group. The activities of these illegal groups has caused high rate of insecurity in Nigeria today.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Nigeria current state of insecurity and threat emanated from state failure. Over the years, the inability of government to address the root causes of dissatisfaction, discomfort, distress, unabating official corruption, high unemployment rate, economic crisis, decaying infrastructure, a futile national integration, anger and agitation among various group manifested in the formation of illegal armed groups such as Boko haram terrorist, herdsmen militia, Niger Delta militants and IPOB secessionist movement in the country which have resulted to security challenges confronting the contemporary Nigerian state. These illegal armed groups carried out series of bombings, killings, kidnapping, armed robbery operations and destructions of private and government properties. In Nigeria today, everyone is now living in perpetual fear of danger. This fear is most glaring in all faces of human endeavor. In the market place, in our homes, motor parks, offices, even in churches and mosque, is that alarming. Because of insecurity in Nigeria, life is now short, nasty, poor and brutish. This is obviously because of the inability of the Nigeria government to adequately arrest the “monster” called insecurity.

Sequel to this development, it becomes imperative to strengthen the security system with all sincerity and address the root cause of insecurity which has manifested in the formulation of these illegal groups so that Nigeria will be habitable for indigenes and non-indigenes and for the continuation of the existence of the Nigerian state.

These recommendations were made in line with my observations:

- i. This study recommends in a very holistic approach, good governance as a panacea for Nigeria’s security challenges and state failure.
- ii. Nigeria as a state should adopt effective surveillance and forensic intelligent gathering to enable her defeat, Boko Haram and other criminal groups in the country.
- iii. The Nigerian government should formulate and effectively implement policies and programs capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria such as poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, death of infrastructural facilities and uneven development among others.
- iv. There should be a collective security arrangement by federal, state and local government in Nigeria. This arrangement should produce a committee at village community, local state and federal level with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will ultimately assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideouts in Nigeria.
- v. The federal government should as a matter of urgency provide more sophisticated weapons to the military, police and other security agencies so that they can curb insecurity menace in Nigeria.
- vi. The Nigerian government should re-organise the country’s security apparatus to accommodate state police and community policing. This will add more values in checking incessant bombings, robbery, kidnapping and violent crimes by hoodlums all over Nigeria.
- vii. Nigerian government should make peace studies and security management in school curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary level in Nigeria compulsory. This will enable the Nigerian youths to appreciate the importance of peace and security in a secular state like Nigeria.
- viii. The Nigerian government should be more committed to enhance the quality and standard of education in Nigeria. The three levels of government in Nigeria should collaborate to ensure free education at all levels.

This will reduce the spate of ignorance among the youths who engage in numerous violent crimes against the government and the citizens.

- ix. The renewed agitation for Biafra (IPOB) is seen to result from the continued perception of inequalities and injustice in the distribution of power in the country. As part of the reconciliation, government should correct this imbalance and injustice by strictly applying the federal character principle in the distribution of political appointments and amenities. Government should be made to include all states in the scheme of things in order to reduce the feeling of marginalization, exclusion and victimization.
- x. No section of region or tribe should be allowed to bear or carry arms freely. Anyone guilty of this should be treated as criminal and should face the law accordingly.

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