

OIL MULTINATIONALS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INSURGENCY IN THE NIGER DELTA OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Often times, the government, corporate bodies, the body of civil rights, non governmental organizations and individuals only talk about the devastating effects of the activities of the insurgents, without mentioning the root cause of insurgency. People don't bother to ask what could have been the cause of insurgency and how it can be resolved amicably. The insurgents are only tagged as terrorists. Nobody is born into this world with a mission to be a killer. Condition, sometimes can push people to behave like animals and even become cruel and wicked. Poverty can make people behave foolish and irascible. People who are fed up with life due to poverty and oppression are aggressive and they can do anything to gain attention. Instead of being subjective, the presenter tried in this paper to be objective in looking at the causes of insurgency and why it would be difficult for the government of Nigeria to stop insurgency. This paper takes a swipe at the causes of insurgency, the impact of insurgency on Nigeria and Nigerians, reasons why the fight against insurgency in Nigeria will remain unabated and the following recommendations were made as way out of this crisis and menace that has bedevil our nation, Nigeria: need for reorientation, need for education and poverty alleviation policies, the need for disarmament in Nigeria, prompt trial and prosecution of corrupt Nigerians, Provision of good arms for the military and the promotion and teaching of non violence in Nigeria.

Introduction

Insurgency is one major problem facing nations of the world especially in this twenty first century, and Nigeria is not exempted. Since the inception of

insurgency in the north eastern part of Nigeria in 2002, the Federal Government had made concerted and frantic efforts at completely dislodging this sect, but to no avail.

The government has spent billions of Naira on the fight against insurgency, yet it has not been able to bring insurgency to its knees. The prevalence of insurgency in Nigeria remains a great challenge confronting the government and the people today. What could be the reasons for the government's inability to crush the insurgents and also stop their activities? The aim of this paper therefore is to present some of the reasons why the fight against insurgency in Nigeria will remain unabated.

Causes of Insurgency

Nigerian leaders keep people uneducated and the same uneducated people are the ones kidnapping and killing people everywhere. How is it not coming back to bite us? A large mass of our youths are very susceptible to brainwashing because nobody taught them better; they were never exposed to better education, so any fanatic can influence them (Lawal,2019). Their brain is plain canvas for anybody to program.

If you go to the northern part of Nigeria, you will see a very large number of uneducated, malnourished, ill-informed and hungry youths. They are like walking missiles and we keep complaining about insurgency. As long as there is manpower to be used, insurgency is not going to end.

Mohammed Yusuf founded the sect that became known as the Boko Haram insurgents in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of the north eastern state of Borno, establishing a religious complex with a school which attracted poor Muslim families from across Nigeria and neighboring countries. (Retrieved September 23, 2011 from <http://www.rickross.com/reference/islamic/islamic27.htm>). The centre had the political goal of creating an Islamic state, and became a recruiting ground for Jihadists. Having denounced the police and the state of corruption, Yusuf attracted followers from among unemployed youths.

Often times, people and the government keep on talking and talking about the activities of the Boko Haram sect without considering what must have led to the formation of this ruthless organization (sect). The insurgents are not mad people who just woke up one day and began to destroy lives and properties. Something must have provoked their actions.

People who are fed up with life are dangerous. The challenges of daily life, which governments have neglected for years, are affecting the people; even though the government has all the resources available to use in tackling the matter. Sometimes, the only way people can express their anger and displeasure over certain issues is for them to revolt. With what we see and hear during network news and in newspapers, Nigerians know that there had been no meaningful development in most states of Northern Nigeria. People who know their rights can do anything to take back what belongs to them. The insurgents may have gone to the extreme in their activities, but the simple truth is that they are only fighting for the liberation of the poor masses. Nigeria thrives on ignorance of the masses.

One may surmise, that the formation and the activities of the insurgents are the aftermath of bottled anger by some of the elites in the regions. In the Nigeria of today, it seems, we no longer have middle class citizens. We have only two classes of people: the extremely rich and the extremely poor. In this kind of atmosphere, insurgency is inevitable. One can make bold to say that deprivation and inequality are the primary causes of insurgency in Nigeria.

Other causes of insurgency, bothers on ideology, ethnic or linguistic difference, politico-socio economic reasons, fundamentalism and extremism. Boko Haram was founded as an indigenous group, turning itself into a Jihadist group in 2009(Cook, 2011). It proposes that interaction with the Western World should be forbidden.

In 2009, Yusuf, the then leader of the group, stated his belief that the concept of a spherical Earth is contrary to Islamic teaching and should be rejected, along with Darwinian evolution and the concept of rain origination from

water evaporated by the sun. Before his death, Yusuf reiterated the groups objective of changing the current education system and rejected democracy. In a nutshell, this presenter wishes to state that the insurgency in Nigeria is a product of frustration.

The Impact of Insurgency on Nigeria

The impact of insurgency on security, the society, development and politics has been serious and complex. Some of the serious impact are as follows:

i. Internal Displacement of Persons.

The activities of the insurgents has led to the internally displacement of persons in three major states of north eastern Nigeria. The states include Bornu, Adamawa and Yobe. We have a lot of IDP's camps in North East Nigeria. Many have been killed, but those who survived the attacks from the insurgents have been settled in IDP camps where the Federal Government and NGO's are taking care of them.

ii. Education of Children is Frequently Disrupted

Many schools in areas of Boko Haram operations have been closed down due to attacks on these schools and their students. A good example is the attack on Chibok School girls. In April 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 female students from Chibok, Bornu State.

iii. Business in Many Parts of the Country have been Adversely Affected:

Many businesses in Nigeria have collapsed due to Boko Haram activities. People who use to go to Bornu, Yobe, Benue and Adamawa for business can no longer travel to those areas for fear of been killed or kidnapped. This fear of killing and kidnapping, has also made many foreign expatriates and business men to relocate to other countries in Africa where insurgency is not too pronounced.

iv. Funding of Security

Large portions of Nigerian earnings and budget, now go to security. Money that was supposed to be used in developing other sectors such as education, road, agriculture, tourism e.t.c, is now been diverted to security. And this has affected the Nigerian economy adversely. Business and enterprises have failed because of frequent attacks by the insurgents.

v. Loss of Lives and Properties

Between 2009 and beginning of 2012, Boko Haram was responsible for over 900 deaths (Glenn, 2014). On 14 May 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the States of Bornu, Yobe and Adamawa in a bid to fight the activities of the insurgents. In recent times, the insurgents have now put on the toga of herdsmen. In May 2018, 200 residents of Plateau state were massacred by suspected herdsmen.

In December 2010, there was a bombing in Jos (Plateau State) that saw 80 people dead followed by an attack on Abuja barracks. 2010-2011 was a year in which dozens of civilians were killed in various shootings that took place in Maiduguri and in addition, the Abuja Police Headquarters and the United Nations Headquarters. On the 19th of November, 2018, 70 soldiers of the Nigerian Army were killed in Bornu by the insurgents. Moreover, the nexus between some politicians and the insurgents has made elections a farce in some quarters

Reasons Why the Multinational Fight Against Insurgency In Nigeria Will Remain Unabated.

For anything that is happening, whether good or bad, there are always supporters (Obudu, 2018). To be frank, the fight against Insurgency in Nigeria will remain unabated because there are some prominent persons in Nigeria that are benefiting from the fight against insurgency. These persons include politicians, religious leaders, traditional leaders, the military and

NGO's. The following are some of the reasons why the fight against insurgency in Nigeria will remain unabated.

- i. **Corruption:** Corrupt government officials use the fight against insurgency as an opportunity to siphon government funds meant for the purchase of arms and ammunition. A case in point is that of Dasuki, who diverted funds meant for the purchase of arms during Jonathan's regime. During the regime of Obasanjo, the then Inspector General of Police, Tafawa Balogun was also discovered to have stolen more than Eighteen Billion Naira; money that was meant for the police commission. And he ended up being dismissed. Some government officials do not want the fight against insurgency to end, because it has become the conduit through which they steal government money.
- ii. **Economic Reasons:** The supply of fire arms is a very big business which runs into billions of Naira. Those who are into this business, supply the Federal Government as well as the insurgents arms. Since those who supply arms make a lot of profit, many even pray for the fight against insurgency to continue. It is even possible that nations which produce arms do not want the activities to come to an end so that they can continue exporting arms and make foreign earnings.
- iii. **Religious Bigotry:** Another reason why the fight against insurgency in Nigeria will remain unabated, is because, we have too many religious bigots in Nigeria who fan the ember of religious crisis. They say one thing today, and tomorrow, they say another thing. Religious bigots have strong, unreasonable beliefs about religion and would not want to listen to or accept the opinions of anyone who disagrees (Eshe, 2018)
- iv. **Poverty:** Poverty sometimes can make people to behave foolish and irascible. No rich man or a son of a rich man would want to risk his life living in Sambisa forest all in the name of Insurgency. Would the son or daughter of a former president or a business mogul be an insurgent? People who are fed up with life are aggressive and they can do anything

to gain attention. They will fight the authority if they are not given attention or when their needs are not met on time.

- v. **Tribal Sentiment:** It is all “Lip Service” when we say “Nigeria is one”. Nigeria has never been one and it can never be one. Even, the Hausas are saying that the Fulani’s do not like them. In a crisis situation, the Fulani’s can massacre the Hausas without any recourse. Tribal sentiment is one strong reason why the fight against insurgency cannot be stopped. The crisis in Jos, is political, religious and tribal in nature (John, 2008). The herdsmen/farmers clashes in Benue state, is both tribal and religious in nature. The typical Fulani man believes that Land does not belong to man; it belongs to God. So to them, nobody has the right to stop them from grazing on any land.
- vi. **Foreign Aid/Sponsorship:** In February 2012, an arrested insurgent revealed that while the organization (Boko Haram) initially relied on donations from members, its links with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, opened it up to more funding from groups in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom (Glenn, 2014). On May 2014, Boko Haram was officially declared a terrorist group affiliated to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb by the United Nations Security Council. International sanctions including asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo were imposed against the Islamist extremist group.
- vii. **Lack of Adequate Ammunition and Motivation**
The Nigerian military is now a shadow of what it is reputed to have once been. It has fallen apart. They are short of basic equipment, including guns, radios and armored vehicles. The morale of our military is now very low. The insurgents are better armed and are better motivated than Nigerian troops. Given the present state of affairs, it is absolutely impossible for us to defeat Boko Haram (Ogidiagba 2018)

A Nigerian soldier who survived the deadly attack on a military base in the northern part of Borno State on Monday 19th November 2018, said, they suffered a heavy casualty figure due to lack of adequate weapons

(Vanguard, 2018). The fight did not last for more than 45 minutes, but it was bloody because the Boko Haram fighters had more armament advantage than the soldiers (Vanguard, 2018). Nigerian soldiers are being killed on a daily basis as if their lives don't matter. Of course as soldiers, they have signed to lay down their lives in defence of this country, but certainly not in the manner they are being presented for slaughter without dignity. The morale of the Nigerian military has been dampened so badly, not only because they are not given their due allowances, but for the fact that they have been out gunned by Boko Haram.

- viii. **Betrayal:** On May 2014, Nigerian Soldiers shot at the car of their divisional commander whom they suspected of colluding with Boko Haram and it was reported that nine Nigerian generals were being investigated for suspected sale of weapons to the insurgents (Guardian, 2014). One cannot deny the fact that most of the ambushes laid by the insurgents against the Nigeria army is as a result of information divulged by some unscrupulous elements within the military to the insurgents. On channel's Television on November 25, 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari, promised to correct the flaws within the military that has led to the killings of Nigerian soldiers
- ix. **The Fulfillment of Bible Prophecies**

While talking about the signs of the End of the Age, Jesus said in Matthew 24: 6-14

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars,
but see to it that you are not alarmed.
Such things must happen, but the end is
still to come. Nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom. There will
be famines and earthquakes in various places.
All these are the beginning of birth pains.
Because of the increase wickedness,
the love of most will grow cold..... .And

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached
in the whole world as a testimony to all
nations, and then the end will come.

It is important for all and sundry to see the activities of the insurgents all over the world as part of the fulfillment of biblical prophecies. If it is part of Biblical prophecies, it therefore means that it will be difficult for any government or nation to totally annihilate the insurgents and their activities.

x. The Porosity of Nigeria Borders

The porosity of Nigeria Borders has led to the infiltration of the country by illegal immigrants from Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal whose aim is to wreak havoc on the land. Most of the kidnappers and armed robbers terrorizing the Highways in Nigeria, are Fulanis from neighbouring countries.

xi. Violence: The Only language African Leaders Understand

The only language African leaders seem to understand, is the language of violence of which Nigerian Leaders are not excluded. Often times, our leaders do not listen to those who embark on peaceful protest or follow the path of dialogue. Peaceful protest, sometimes do not move our leaders to take the right action or step in tackling issues of national interest. For example, the Niger Delta youths have to start bombing and destroying oil pipelines before the Federal Government of Nigeria, saw the need to introduce the Amnesty Programme that brought relative peace to the region.

Conclusion

One cannot solve the problems of insecurity in a place like Nigeria where majority of people are poor and where people are not using the benefits of technology (Oboh, 2018). The foreign security personnels that came to Lagos after the killing of Funsho Williams some years back, could not do

anything. They had no CCTV to review activities around the scene of the crime. Those who ran this country ruined it. They made the people poor. The signature of poverty is everywhere. They placed money ahead of implementation of programmes. Even foreign powers are also acting as threat to Nigeria's internal security, by either committing or sponsoring terrorism or rebellion, without actually declaring war.

Nigerian Leaders over the years are prone to the habit of shielding the truth from their people, not caring as long as it does not happen in their time. They are actually very ignorant of what is going on round them, and are obstinate and tyrannical in their nature. The endless killings in the North Eastern part of the country in spite of the heavy presence of the military, have shown that security of person and properties is still far from being realizable.

Who are the people we voted for? What are their plans for the country? We keep recycling leaders and the worst part is that the world is advancing at the speed of sound and we are decades behind.

On different terrorist attacks, leaders with political will had something to say. On September 11, 2001 after the bombing of the World Trade Centre in the United States of America, George Bush said, "This is an act of war against the United States. We will hunt down the terrorists. They can run, but they can't hide. We will pursue peace by pursuing those who threaten it" (CNN news, 2001).

During the London bombing, Tony Blair said, "We will track down the terrorists and bring them to justice". However, in Nigeria, after the UN House bombing in 2011, Goodluck Jonathan said, "Terrorism is a global phenomenon, maybe it is Nigeria's turn". That shows the depth of intelligence and care of our leaders.

Security was a driving issue during the 2015 presidential campaigns following the unwater destruction of lives and properties by the insurgents in the Northern part of the country. President Muhammadu Buhari campaigned very hard to convince Nigerians that his government would

meet those security challenges. But the continuous killings by the Boko Haram sect in the North East after his election since 2015 has raised a lot of questions, which are still unanswered. At least over 2000 people have been killed since the President assumed office.

Presently, the Federal Government of Nigeria and the military, seems to be confused as a result of how the insurgents are defeating the Nigerian military. The Nigerian Army is in a helpless situation because they lack the morale and the armory to fight with the insurgents. This indeed is an aberration. It is for us to appreciate the fact that the nation is faced with a serious crisis that may consume everybody and therefore, we must find a way to solve the problem.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. **Need for re-orientation:** There is need for religious and social re-orientation. Ayuk(2012) submits that,

The solution to end insurgency lies in the hands of our political and religious leaders. They must be able to call their followers to order and begin to preach the gospel of peace rather than violence. When violence becomes intense, it can lead to war which will ultimately result in suffering and undue loss of lives and properties (p.2)

Politicians and religious leaders should re-orientate their followers on the need for peace and peaceful co-existence. They should feed the youths with the message of peace (Wariboko 2017). The governor of Niger State, Muazu Babaginda Aliyu, on the aftermath of the 2011 Christmas day bombing of a catholic church in Minna Niger State, advocated for religious reorientation and called on Muslim scholars to teach more on the subject of Jihad, asserting that the destruction of innocent lives and properties have nothing to do with the Islamic concept of Jihad. Religious leaders need to rise and emphasize peace which happens to be central in the major religions in Nigeria. It should reflect in practice, since all religions in Nigeria, teach peace.

2. Education and Poverty Alleviation Policies:

According to Halliru (2012) as cited by Wariboko (2017), “lack of education or poor education is one of the major causes of crises in Nigeria. In 2012, some state governors and religious and political leaders, said, that the north east region of Nigeria has the greatest number of school dropouts (Wariboko, 2017). Therefore, some unscrupulous political and religious leaders gather these dropouts/almajiris and feed them with all sorts of information to motivate them to start up riots or even accept to become suicide bombers. These dropouts/almagiris believe them because of ignorance and perhaps, unemployment and poverty. It has been revealed that the north-east and north-west geopolitical zones have the greatest amount of poverty in Nigeria. This is why the incidence of ethno-religious riots and killings are more rampant in these areas (Wariboko, 2017). Hence, the establishment of free schools for the almagiris in the Northern region by Dr. Goodluck Jonathan’s administration is a right step in the right direction and should be applauded. However, more need to be done to educate them, create meaningful jobs for them and when their poverty and sense of worthlessness is alleviated; they will be less gullible and know that life is worth living and that other’s lives are also precious. Then they will be able to reason more critically and sensibly.

3. Disarmament:

Disarmament is necessary in Nigeria presently so as to reduce the amount of arms in the possession of individuals. This will help to; at least reduce the effect of conflicts in future. The possession of arms have a way of boosting one’s confidence in times of violence, therefore, the absence of it will serve as a deterrent to bloody and perilous conflicts.

4. Prompt trial and prosecution of culprits:

Special courts should be established for trying suspected terrorists, and perpetrators of all kinds of violent conflict. This will accelerate hearings and

curb unnecessary delay in trying suspects and the prosecution of those found guilty. Justice delayed, they say is justice denied. When legal actions are expedited and culprits punished as soon as possible, others will be deterred from committing such crimes and there will be little or no room for the intervention or interference of “godfathers” on behalf of those found guilty

5. Provision of good Arms for the Military:

Adequate arms should be given to the Nigerian Army. This would enable them to fight and crush the insurgents. Basic equipments such as guns, radios and armoured vehicles and war planes should be supplied to the military to enable them defend the nation and her people. Nigerian soldiers have been suffering defeat in the hands of Boko Haram insurgents due to lack of adequate weapons

6. Culture of Non-Violence:

Political and religious leaders in Nigeria should be unequivocal about their abhorrence of it. Non violence remains an indispensable tool whenever it has to do with conflicts and settling of differences so as to give peace` a chance (Wariboko, 2011). Violence and conflict will not take this country anywhere. Nigerian should learn to imbibe the culture of nonviolence. Hence religious or civil war should never be considered as an option in Nigeria, rather tactful and meticulous non violent steps should be taken to stop such despicable acts and restore tranquility in Nigeria.

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List of interviewees

S/N	NAMES	OCCUPATION	AGE	SEX	PLACE	DATE
1.	Eshe, P	Lecturer	52	M	Warri	6/7/2018
2.	Augoye, J	Civil servant	41	M	Ugbokodo	9/8/2018
3.	Obudu, T.	Clergy	54	M	Effurun	12/8/2018
4.	Ogidiagba, B	Lecturer	56	M	Warri	10/11/2018
5.	Oboh, Alfred	Engineer	40	M	Ugbokodo	9/8/2018