Ethical Challenges of Human Security Threats in the South East of Nigeria: A Reflection

Chukwudi Ani Amunnadi

Introduction

Human security threats in the South East of Nigeria has continued to be on the increase in spite of the fact that security occupies a top rank in the Seven-Point Agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The impact of these threats have often been so far reaching that many concerned Nigerians have called for declaring state of emergence for the above view is corroborated by Hakeem (2009) who states that following the fall out and the subsequent dislodgement of the Niger Delta Militants by the Federal Government forces, the former were forced to relocate to South East and other parts of Nigeria where they have continued to perpetuate their violent crimes as a means of survival (http://www.dialytrust.com/index.php). It is against this backdrop that this work seeks to examine the ethical challenges of these threats in the South Eastern Nigeria.

The term ethical according to The Chambers Dictionary refers to the science of morals and/or ethics, approved standard of moral behavior or conduct. According to Nmah (2004). "The term relates to issues that addresses such questions as to what is right, good, bad or how we ought to behave". Norman (cited in Njoku, 2006) states that ethical challenges relate to those issues that address the questions about what could be counted as good reasons for acting in one way rather than another, about what constitutes a good life for human beings. Ikpe, Kur, and Agudosy (2009) posits that it has to do with the capacity to make rational choices between what is good and what is morally justifiable action and what is not.

In this work the term ethical challenges refer to those values that constitute threat to the ground norms, moral foundations, rules or standard of moral conduct for the Igbo of Nigeria. It is an attempt at identifying some lapses in the moral ethos in Igboland, their causes and possible remedies. It is all about the way in which human grapples with the art of being responsible beings. The term human security as defined by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria 14(2)C refers to the role or effort of both the individual and the government at ensuring the prevention and minimization of threats to human rights, safety and lives. Corroborating the above view Thomas (2000) posits that the term human security has to do with ensuring the protection of individuals from such threats that bother on their survival, livelihood, as well as their political, social and economic developments. (http://www.en.wikipedia.org.wiki/humansecurity

The term human security from the foregoing can be defined as the provision of those fundamental rights that bother on safety, survival, and capacity to attain satisfying and fulfilling existence. It is all about tailoring of national security to address not only the need of the states, but also that of the individuals within the state with respect to their safety, survival and capacity to participate in shaping their future.

Igbo Ethical Traditional Values
According to Chiedozie (2002), the South East Nigeria constitutes the following states Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Imo and Abia State. Adding that though there are pockets of non-Igbo speaking groups such as Ite in Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area, and Okpto, Ntezi, Amuda and Effium in Ebonyi State generally the South East States of Nigeria constitute Igbos of Nigeria.

In order to provide us a foundation to ethically evaluate the rising human security threats in the South East it would be imperative to first of all identify some traditional values of the Igbo of Nigeria. These values include:

a.   Sacredness of life:
According to the Igbo of Nigeria, life is sacred and must be preserved at all cost. This view is corroborated by the names Igbos give their children such as:'
- Ndukaku' (life is more valuable than wealth), 'Ndubueze' (life is king)
- Ndubuisi' (life is supreme or should be given precedence). Nzomiwu (1999) is in agreement to the above view when he stated that Igbo proverbs gives authenticity to Igbo value for life as indicated hereunder:
  i. Onye irom diri ma m diri' (Let my enemy live and let me live also).
  ii. Isi ntutu akara ibe ya' (No individual human life is greater than the other).

Igbo Israel on-line puts it tersely when it states that everything possible should be done to preserve human life. Noting that this is premised on the Igbo saying, which states inter alia:
'Mpempe ndu ka mpempe ownu mma' (a bit of life is better than a bit of death). From the foregoing, it is clear that in the traditional Igbo society, life is very sacred and should be protected with utmost care. However the only time life should be condemned is when an individual's life or group constitutes a threat to the greater majority such as in cases of war, self defense or land cleansing. This is in agreement with the 1999 Nigerian Constitution Chapter IV, article 33(1), which states as follows:

> Every person has a right to life, and no one should be deprived intentionally of his, save in the execution of the sentence of a law court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty. (p. 41).

b.   Industry
The Igbos are by nature very industrious. They believe in accumulating wealth through legal means. Besides it is their creative tendency that made it possible for them to develop various forms of weapons during the Nigerian/Biafran Civil War. Corroborating the above view, Ekwunife (1990) describes the Igbos as follows, "The Igbos are by character strong, tolerant, competitive and ultra-democratic, highly individualistic with an excessive penchant for achievement and egalitarianism" (p.3). What this means is that the Igbos value wealth accumulation through hard work. Moreover the Igbo adage "ina enye m nri?" (Do you cater for my feeding?) shows that the Igbos believe so much in hardworking that they are quick to remind people who may dare to insult them that they can afford their daily bread and therefore should not be molested carelessly.

c.   Individualism and communalism
The Igbo of Nigeria value solidarity and community as a way of life. The above view is corroborated by Hyacinth (2003) who states that communalism and individualism thrive in Igbo society. Noting however that community interests supercedes individual interests (p.5). Obiora (2001) puts it tersely when he states that the Igbos are basically communal driven with the family playing a central role in establishing solidarity within the society. Nzomiwu (1999) is in agreement to the above view when he states as follows, "For Ibo, as for many Africans, to exists is to live in the group, to see things with the group, to do things with the group. Life is not an individual venture each one for himself" (p. 8). According to him, it is the sense of solidarity that holds Igbo together and strengthens them to develop capacity to cope with hazards of life collectively.

d.   Respect for elders/authority
To the Igbo, the place of the elders is sacrosanct hence Ezekwugo (1992) posits that, "The elders in the Igbo world is regarded as sacred" (p. 238). Noting that he is considered a reservoir of knowledge, wisdom and moral perfection, as well as the custodian of ancestral heritages". (p. 238). In most traditional Igbo society, authority is rested on the elders, because of their assumed wisdom and intimacy with the ancestors. Moreover it is considered a mark of God's gift to attain that age. Respect is therefore accorded them to receive their blessing rather than curse and also to learn from their wisdom. Against this backdrop the Igbos traditionally can be considered as ardent believer in constituted authority and most importantly that arising from age and experience.

e.   Honesty and transparency
Another traditional values of Igbo race is honesty that is rooted in truthfulness. According to Nwala (1985) cited in Amucheazi, (1985) states that the Igbos'

regard for transparency, honesty and truthfulness is symbolized by their 'offor-no-ogu' being their mystical symbol of innocence and uprightness. Corroborating the above view Ogbu (1985) in Amucheazi (1985) states inter alia:

> In Igbo traditional socio-religious system, 'Ozo' titled – man was not just a successful man but one who thereby attained a moral status where his words and actions were honest and conducive to peace and justice. He could therefore play a leadership role. (p. 316).

In his own contribution, Ilogu (1974) posits that honesty is a necessity that is demanded from titled holders in Igboland as they are required to uphold publicly and privately the morality, taboos, ritual and religious ceremonies of the land.

Human security threats in south-east Nigeria
The dimensions of human security threats in Igboland would be highlighted in this section. Because of the vastness of the scope of these threats, this work would confine itself on the following threats namely:

1. Kidnapping
2. Armed robbery
3. Human trafficking

i.   Kidnapping
Commenting on the growth of kidnapping in Nigeria, Hakeem (2009) states that it has taken an alarming dimension in Nigeria such that it has become a big business. Noting that this crime which hitherto was known only in Niger Delta is now a daily occurrence in Lagos, Ondo, Oyo and many other states in the country (http://www.dailytrust.com/index.php).   Contributing Umeagbalasi (2010) states that it is unfortunate that the ex-combatants of Aguleri-Umuleri bloody communal clashes of the late 1990s as well as the dislodged "Bakkasi Boys" from Abia and Anambra States have since turned to perpetrate violent crimes as a means of survival such that they now operate as deadly political thugs, assassins and kidnappers amongst others. Noting that this is consequent on the fact that though they were dislodged they were not disarmed (p.41). Corroborating the above view Chinedu (2010) posits that another cause of this sad development is the failure of the government to ensure safety for the ordinary citizen (http://www.nigeriainamerla.com/articles).

In his own contribution Umeje (2010) noted that these crimes have subsisted, because of the sophisticated arms and ammunitions at the disposal of these criminals. According to him, these criminals operate with weapons that are beyond the capacity of even state governments.

In contributing to this, All Africa (2009) states that kidnapping for ransom is persisting in the Southeast because it has become a high profile business that now targets monarchs, traditional rulers of big towns, high profile business tycoons, politicians as well as children and relatives of wealthy politicians as victims (http://www.allafrica.com/stories/printable20090260163.htm).

Moreover the editorial of Daily Sun of Thursday November 12 (2009) notes that the abduction of the father of Professor Chukwuma Soludo, the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Pa Simeon Soludo, at Isuofia in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State is most likely not unconnected with the political controversy connected with the recent picking of the former CBN Governor as the gubernatorial flag bearer for Peoples Democratic Party in the State. From the foregoing, kidnapping thrives on the Southeast Nigeria for reasons which range from economic, political and lapses in the national security system as well as lack of adequate commitment from the government.

ii.   Armed robbery

Armed robbery is also one of the human security threats in South east Nigeria. According to The Allen and Schworpz (2004) the term robbery is defined as the use of weapon of offence to deprive wrongfully, forcibly or to plunder, or to steal, theft aided by violence.

According to Ekpenyong, the incidence of armed robbery is on the accelerating rate in Nigerian cities, and he states that widespread corruption at the most influential levels of national life encourages and provides justification for armed robbers in their dastardly acts of sending their victims to untimely death. Moreover he notes that the type of socio-economic order shapes in large part the prevalence, promotion and rationalization of Nigerian crime problem. Adding that the inadequacy or in most cases the failure of social control and government crime prevention programme contributes to a large extent the prevalence of v i o l e n t   c r i m e s   s u c h   a s   a r m e d   r o b b e r y . (http://www.bjc.oxfordjournals.org/content/abstract/29/1/21)

The above view is corroborated by Agha (2008) when he states that cities in the Southeast are currently experiencing high spate of armed robbery with banking sector mostly targets. Noting also that it is a crime which in many cases leaves many lives lost and whooping amount ranging in millions carted away. Moreover Price on-line puts it tersely when he states that the reported incessant robberies and gruesome murders at Enugu, the coal city, known for its moderate life style and calmness and Nuskka the base of intellectualism in the zone no doubt portends great security threats to the zone. Continuing, he noted that in one of the operations at Nsukka the robbers blocked roads for hours, robbed banks and

thereafter shot the Divisional Police Officer, freed prisoners and burnt down the Police Station leaving many people dead and others seriously wounded. What this translates is that armed robbery has assumed very high sophistication in the Southeast Nigeria. Unfortunately given the failure scenario being demonstrated by the government agencies charged with crime control, the security challenges in the zone no doubt call for collective action if it is going to be redressed.

iii.   Human trafficking

Human trafficking according to Ajih (2008), is referred to as a modern day slavery motivated by greed, poverty and poor legislation with women, girls and children as the predominant victims. Continuing he defines human trafficking as the practice that involve moving people within and across local or national boundaries for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In his own contribution, Mordi and Ojie state that it has to do with movement of a victim from one location to another with the promise of employment, education or marriage through the instrument of trickery, treachery or violence. Against this backdrop the term human trafficking refers to that act of dealing on human beings for reasons ranging from sex hawking, dehumanizing jobs or other ill motivated intentions against the wishes of the victim for the purpose of gaining financial benefit.

According to International Labour Organization/IPEC (2000) report, 40% of Nigerian street children and hawkers are trafficked persons. It states also that human trafficking is concentrated in Southern Nigeria. Adding that Ebonyi and Imo State in the Southeast are hotbeds of internal and cross-border trafficking. Moreover, it states that human trafficking is predominantly for exploitative domestic work, forced labour and prostitution.

Moreover, it lists that several factors are responsible for the prevalence of trafficking. The highly lucrative nature of the business is one reason. For instance, it is noted that about US$7 - (N10 billion) annually is generated from the business. Besides it adds that poverty is the most visible cause of the vulnerability of women and children to trafficking in Nigeria. In addition; it states that armed conflict such as wars, which increase resort to illegal means of immigration, as well as demand for cheap labour and quest for education abroad all contribute to promote market for human traffickers.

Equally it notes that unequal access to education that limit women opportunities to quality education, lack of employment opportunities in the rural communities, lack of access to information on migration/job opportunities, recruitment channels, traditional community attitudes which tolerate violence against women all promote growth in human trafficking. (http://www.unescodoc.unesco.org/images/001478/147844e.pdf). By posing

threats to right to work, right to free choice of employment, right to favourable condition of work, and right to an existence worthy of his human dignity as contained in Article 23 of Universal Charter of Human Rights and Chapter IV Article 34(1) of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Human trafficking remain a human security threat in the nation.

iv. Ethical Challenges
1. Threat to life

In traditional Igbo Society, life is highly regarded as sacred and must be protected by all means as stated earlier unless in some exceptional cases. Unfortunately, the flagrant destruction of lives through armed robbery in contemporary Igbo society is a great ethical challenge to the value of life in Igboland. It is a development that is not only undermining the Igbo value for respect for life, it is also a gross violation to individuals' fundamental human right to life. Besides, armed robbery is threat to Igbos traditional heritage or value such as follows:

1. Continuity as indicated in such names as '*Amaechina*', let the clan not close. '*Eziechina,*' let the compound not close.
2. Solidarity/Community Spirit: as indicated in such names as '*Igwebuike*' 'There is power in large number of people'.

Armed robbery erodes lives that often renders some families sudden extinct. It also depopulates a people as if there is war and thereby reduce their capacity to cope as community.

2. Threat to hardwork and transparency

The sudden rise to wealth of many Igbo youths through armed robbery and kidnapping is threatening the culture of hardwork and transparency in wealth accumulation. This is because the sudden discovery by many South Easterners that one could be turned a multi-millionaire with zero effort through kidnapping and violent crimes such as armed robbery is causing the increasing number of unemployed youths and lazy folks in the Southeast to turn to kidnapping and armed robbery as a means of livelihood. This development does not augur well for our future Igbo youths since no nation ever develops on the sand of get rich quick and greed consciousness and philosophy.

3. Threat to truthfulness/justice

The use of trickery, treachery and force to promote human trafficking in the Igbo land is a serious ethical challenge. In an age where great nations are building on the principles of truth, justice and equity, the Igbo race is operating on the faulty foundation of greed, dishonesty and get rich quick ideology. It is unfortunate that driven by deception, craftiness and might is right philosophy to perpetuate these violent crime culture the Igbo race is moving backward instead of forward as far as modern trend of civilized nation is concerned. By employing lying and

compulsion human trafficking aids and abets dehumanization of the Igbo race through reformed slave trading.

4.   Threat to brotherhood/community
Violent crimes on Igboland such as kidnapping, armed robbery and human trafficking is fast eroding the culture of brotherhood and community. This is because people who suffer in the hands of these criminals in most cases where they survive develop permanent hatred on those who are the perpetrators of these crimes. In some extreme cases there is an unquenching passion to revenge on the relations of the criminals who perpetrate their crimes thereby damping the spirit of brotherhood, love and tolerance in the community. Equally, these crime promote pervasive fear and this no doubt endanger community interactions both in business and social intercourse. The result is that that the Igbo society becomes unattractive to investors and developments experts.

Recommendations
No society is truly prepared for safety until the government, the community, organizations, families and individuals take responsibility individually and collectively for their own safety. The following are some of the ways the high rate of security threats could be reduced in the Southeast.

1.   Campaign:
The government, individuals, communities and organizations including churches should promote campaign against rising security threats such as armed robbery, kidnapping and human trafficking. Violent crimes in the Southeast is fast becoming a pandemic like the much dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome disease, and government must therefore move in fast with anti-campaign progamme against this deadly trend of insecurity in the land.

Such campaign should mobilize churches, mass media, schools, non-governmental organizations for assistance. For instance, the 'Ready North Carolina Campaign' is a programme designed by the North Carolina in United States to provide her citizens information they need to prepare against all forms of violent crimes and other emergencies arising from natural disasters (http://www.readync.org). Such campaign if developed and sustained in the Southeast in particular and Nigeria in general would help the citizens to proactively deal with the threats arising from violent crimes.

2.   Increased funding of security
The government should give more serious commitment to crime prevention in the Southeast by increasing the funding of security services and their agencies.

This could be done by creating National Security Trust fund to be jointly funded by the government and corporate organizations in the country.

3.   Video-surveillance
To join the global village the world of information technology, Nigeria and especially the Southeast must adopt modern technology of video surveillance in her crime control. According to Marcos (1997), close Circuit Television Video (CCTV) surveillance is a means of public surveillance used to protect the public, and public property against intrusion and other forms of crimes. Noting that as an effective crime prevention tool it has worked in Great Britain, France and Spain for more than twenty two years. Adding that as a 'Mechanical Police Officer' it helps to provide database for crime control and prevention. It noted that Chicago Farragut High School, which was notoriously violent campus prior to the installation of a CCTV surveillance system, recorded almost near ceasation of major acts of violence after the installation. Moreover it stated that about 15 Universities which have installed CCTV surveillance system to improve safety and security against robbery, and other violent crimes have reported sharp drops in crimes as a result of the installation of the above system (http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/97/05). What this means is that Nigeria and indeed Southeast Nigeria should avail itself of this modern trend in security management if she hope to drastically reduce the high level of human security threats arising from violent crimes. While the Federal, State and Local Governments should bear the cost of providing such modern security surveillance system to cover federal, State and rural roads and public establishments, communities, individuals, and organizations should contribute to provide such systems for residential areas and private establishments.

4.   Adequate legislation
Government should provide legislation that develop regulation and standard for personnel training with respect to the usage of the modern technology video surveillance in crime control. Moreover she should establish legislation that provide for increased funding of the judiciary so as to reduce the delays arising from corruption in administration of justice.

5.   Collaboration
Security agencies should collaborate with community policing efforts in adopting modern technology in crime control. Individuals as well as communities should collaborate with the Police and other security agencies in providing volunteers for community policing as well as those who should undergo specialized training needed in management of public video surveillance. Besides individuals, families and communities should join hands in identifying loitering juveniles as well as suspicious individuals who may likely pose danger to public peace and report same to relevant authority.

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6.   Provision of more employment opportunities

Parents, churches, government, and private organizations should help to provide more employment opportunities to our teaming population of unemployed youths through aggressive promotion of farming, self-employment and revamping of our dead industries.

7.   Reduction of cost of governance

Government should reduce excessive cost of governance so that more of the national wealth should be diverted to service other sector of the economy for the promotion of industrialization and reduction of poverty.

8.   Promotion of moral education

Moral education should begin early at the cradle by parents, churches, schools and mass media to enable us build a morally educated citizenry. One of the areas where moral education can be harnessed in crime control in the South East is in the use of home video. Home video artistes should be censured to promote video productions that further quality moral education. In other words, government should regulate home-video production with a view to ensuring that only those that promote healthy societal values such as love, transparency, hardwork, tolerance, value for life, etc are encouraged.

Government should ban immoral home video from being produced and marketed in the country. Parents should ensure that their wards are protected from watching home video that promote violent crimes and immoral lifestyle.

Conclusion

It is worthy to note that the ethical human security threats is a subjective phenomena that has dual property of universality and inevitability. It is with man everywhere and at all times. The only difference lying on the degree. This work has stated that it has reached a degree in the South East that demands urgent attention, if the zone is to enjoy a measure of stability that would foster sustainable development. This paper has been able to posit that the challenge of human security is a collective responsibility involving government, individuals, families, communities, churches and organizations. It has noted that the nation must mobilize all and sundry through public campaign in order to create awareness in the fight against the high wave of crime in the region. Moreover it stated that there is the need for increased funding of national security services through the establishment of National Security Trust Fund. It also called for the introduction of modern technology in crime control such as public video surveillance. Moreover it made a case for adequate legislation that will provide for regulation of modern technology in crime control. In addition, it posited that to avoid delays in administration of justice government should increase the

funding and working condition of the judiciary. Adding that by reducing cost of government, generating more employment opportunities as well promoting early moral education of the citizenry by parents, the churches, schools, and the media would no doubt contribute significantly in reducing human security treats in Igboland.

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