

Impact of Human Security Threats on Leadership and Political Stability in Africa

Chukwudi Ani Amunnadi

Abstract

Human security threats in contemporary Africa have become a major political challenge. Whether it involves sectional conflicts, kidnapping, human trafficking, armed robbery they have continued to exert a far reaching impact on the leadership and political stability in the region. This paper is therefore an attempt to examine the impact of the rising trend of human security threats on the political stability in African context with a view to identifying the way forward. The work involved survey approach. It identified economic, social, political and environmental impacts as constituting the challenges being unleashed by the above security threats. It highlights that regional social security scheme, political framework that deemphasizes money politics, integrative ethical education that embraces various stake holders, good governance that promotes and protects fundamental human rights should be put in place in the African sub-region as a means of reducing above threats to leadership and political stability in Africa.

Introduction

Africa is living in highly precarious times. All through the continent from North to South, East to West, the Africa cities are overrun by violence of all sorts. The intensity and spread of this insecurity threats has become too alarming that even the law enforcement agencies as well as the state appears to be loosing strongly in battle to the hoodlums of violent crimes. There is no doubt rising trend on the infringement upon the fundamental human rights of the people of third world. This has grossly resulted in the heating up of the polity as expressed in various forms of violent crimes. The result is that we are now living in days of rising robbery, kidnapping, killing and maiming of innocent citizens with an intensity and spread that is unprecedented in our history. Consequently the life and property of our people are increasingly fraught with great insecurity and uncertainty as the Africa society rapidly degenerates helplessly into preventable chaos and turmoil. Ours is now the era of brigandine who unleash all forms of violence on the people such that the machine decline into hopelessness and lawlessness continues to be on the rise. It is against this backdrop that this study wishes to examine the impact of human security threats on leadership and political stability in Africa, with a view to proffering remedial actions.

The Conceptual Definition

Security: According to Wikipedia on-line security is defined as the state of being free from danger, or injury, defense against financial failure. Continuing it defines security as a form of protection where separation is created between the assets and threat. Noting that the term spans through a spectrum that embraces but not limited to the following: human, national, political, public, international, financial, economic, food, domestic, physical, infrastructural, health, and information security. Adding that security can be classified as subjective or perceived as well as real or objective security.

Corroborating the above view the Allen and Schwarz (2004) defines the above term as the state, feeling or means of being secure. Besides it defines it to mean the protection from espionage, theft, attack etc; provided such protection is guaranteed. Security, therefore, in this context refers to the measures taken to guarantee the safety of a country, people, thing of value etc. Security threats in this study will be confined to human security threats. By human security here is used to refer to that security that secures freedom from such threats as political exclusion, economic marginalization and social discrimination. It is the protection of fundamental human rights, potentials and absolute needs, that is pivotal on the survival and fulfilling existence of all. It is all about the entrenchment of the doctrine of equity, accountability, fairness, transparency and democratic governance in political leadership. It is the creation of balance in the protection of the overall safety, well-being as well as developmental and aspirational needs of not only the government but also the governed. Thus human security according to Wikipedia the free encyclopedia refers to the emerging paradigm for understanding security which is defined as the harmonizing of security to embrace protecting both the individual and the state from the threats that endanger both their individual and collective existence. Human security in other words refers to the function of government that seeks to guarantee not only freedom from threats of fear to the state but also that which threaten peoples wants and developmental needs as well as their freedom to participate in determining their political and economic destiny. Security threats therefore refers to those endangering factors or conditions that undermine the fundamental human rights of the people as it has to do with their rights to safety, good health, education, economic, political, cultural, religious and social freedom. It refers to those forces that deter fulfilling existence of not only the political leadership but also the governed.

Leadership: Leadership is best seen as a day-to-day process encompassing both strategic and operational element. It is all about building or working with a much wider network of people, colleague, peers, clients and policy makers. The challenge of leadership is ultimately linked to the requirement to bring about

change. (<http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/exceed/leadership/hp/pages/default.aspx>). On its own, Wikipedia the free encyclopedia states that leadership is the process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a task. (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/leadership>). From the foregoing leadership refers to the process of whereby an individual directs a group of person or organization in such a way that cohesion and coherency is created in the pursuit of goals. Leadership challenges in Africa therefore refers to the factors that hinder African dreams, vision, development and relevance in the global map of development and flourishing nations. It is the force that undermines the type of leadership that would promote positive and sustainable development in Africa.

Political Stability: To appreciate the meaning of political instability it would be necessary to first of all examine the definition of political instability. According to with answers online the term political instability refers to a situation where a country is going through political turmoil. Continuing it states that it is a condition that is characterized by decrease in productivity level, dilapidation of infrastructure, overthrow of the state arising from excessive poverty, bad condition for the average people as well as anger of the people towards the government. (http://www.wiki.answer.com/Q/what_is_political_instability). Political stability from the foregoing refers to healthy state or polity exhibiting high sense of respect for human right, rule of law, equity, political, social and economic freedom and wellbeing of the generally of the citizenry in a given state. It has to do with a polity that promotes values that guarantees development, growth and rights of the people. It is very unfortunate that African leadership is tailored towards promoting political instability. Bushmeat on-line puts it tersely when it state that many African states are engrossed in political instability resulting in increase in socio-economic fall-out such as loss of rights, shifting of authority, destruction of infrastructure and pauperization of communities. (http://www.bushmeat_campaign_net/engsite/pdf/politics). The problem of political instability no doubt impacts negatively on quality leadership in Africa consequently creating a vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment and stagnation. It is against this backdrop that this study wish to examine the impacts of unending human security threats on leadership and political stability in Africa.

Security Threats in Africa

Violent crimes have continued to threaten human security in increasing dimension in Africa. The free library on-line commenting on the wave of crime in Africa notes that kidnapping is far more common in Africa than most realized. According to the above online African three countries namely South Africa, Nigeria and Somalia are among the world top ten kidnapping nations. (<http://www.ithefreelibrary.com/kidnap+for+r>). What this means is that African

nation occupies a hierarchy among the leading nations in the world in the area of violent crime such as kidnapping. Besides the spate of sectarian conflict in Africa in recent time appears unprecedented. These conflict which used to be confined to ethnic cleansings have snowballed to terrorism as is the case of Nigeria since last April election. The result is that Boko Haram sect have continued to bomb various locations in Nigeria including the Abuja the seat of government sending many innocent lives to untimely death. The revolution in Libya and Egypt arising from the people disenchantment to bad leadership is also another red alert sign of rising human security threats in Africa. Commenting on the rising state of insecurity in Africa the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshall, Paul Dike, as cited by Saturday Sun April 10, 2010 states that daunting security challenges confronting the continent calls for collective approach. Continuing, he stated that the security threats facing Africa include socio-political, criminal and environmental. Noting that these threats spans through the West Africa coast through Somalia and the Gulf of Aden in the Horn of Africa, to the Southern Africa. Thus he notes that violent crimes like terrorism have become rife in Africa because of porosity of African borders, weak government and ineffective national security systems.

Moreover, he posits that it is quite unfortunate that inspite of the fact that Africa is immensely endowed with natural resources, she remains the poorest continent in the world. A paradoxical situation which he notes derives from forces that institutionalize poverty and fuel vicious cycle of insecurity in the region. According to him these factors that promote poverty and insecurity in Africa continent include the following:

- a. Inadequate educational opportunities that has fostered the thriving of ignorance
- b. Dearth of social infrastructure like good roads, transportation, power and health care facilities
- c. Lack of vision and political insensitivity on the part of most post-colonial African leadership (p.12)

What this means is that African continent has become subsumed in the mess of state fragility, violent conflicts, rebellion, armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killing, sectarian conflict, human trafficking, corruption and bad governance.

Impacts of Security Threats in Africa

This section will attempt to identify the various impacts of rising trend of human security threats as it affects leadership and political stability in Africa.

Economic Effects: According to Essien (2010) in Albert and Olarinde (2010: 156, 157) there is an inverse relationship between the rise in human security threats and the fall in the economic indices and the general well-being of the

citizenry. Continuing, he posits that the Nigerian economy has been in a state of dilapidation since the late 1970s through the 1980s to the present date. According to him this underlines the material basis for the escalation of inter-ethnic and inter-religious and unending hostilities in the nation. In other words, it is the quest for economic survival and control that pervades the entire country that is expressed in forms of palpable hostilities among the various interest groups in Nigeria. This unfortunately results in economic losses that are expressed in massive loss of human and material capital as well repression on investment and economic growth.

Massive Loss of Human Capital and Material Resources: According to Bolarinwa (2010: 71) in Isaac and Olaniyi (2010) the consequences of sectarian conflicts in Nigeria is that whenever they occur they leave in their wake a devastating effect on the human capital and material resources. According to him, with massive loss of lives and properties that accompany these violence, there is no need denying the fact that valuable human and material resources are usually lost by the country. Against this backdrop, the human security threats in Africa, is impacting greatly in terms of losses of lives and property. No doubt, this is counter productive for our nation especially when one considers value of such losses in terms of high level manpower diminution and economic wastes arising from loss of lives and property through violent deaths and damage to property.

Depression on Investment and Economic Growth: According to Samuelson (2005: 632) economists define investment as production of durable goods. In this context it refers to growing economic productive capacity of a nation through manufacturing, saving, and growth of its capital base e.g equipment / or building. Volatile nations like Africa with high level of human security threats are usually referred to as high risk countries for investors and because they would have trouble attracting domestic and foreign investors, their investment level would therefore be low. Ezirim (2009) put it tersely when he cited Ikejiani-Clark (2009: 21) as subscribing to the view that Africa has been given the toga of crime ridden nation with the result that she has been classified as high risk country for investment by global community. Against this back drop, high level of human security threats in Nigeria as demonstrated by violent crimes, ethnic conflicts, and poor road infrastructures promotes poverty, and retards economic growth and investment by fostering capital flight, a depletion of both human capital as well as material resources.

Social Effects: High trend of human security threats exert a social influence on the nation. One of the areas that Africa is grossly affected socially is in the dehumanizing influence of human trafficking. This is because human trafficking

denies people of their fundamental Human Rights as enshrined in Article 22, of Universal Declaration of Human Right, and also affirmed in Chapter IV Article 34(1) in The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that individuals should be protected from threats that subject them to slavery, in human torture as well as forced labour. This is corroborated by Amujiri (2009) in Chiegboka and Uguweye (2009) who states that Nigerian children are now subject to modern day slavery through human traffickers who traffic children between the ages of 10 and 18 years for forced labour, and sex toys to countries such as Gabon, Equitorial Guinea, Cameroun, Guinea, Republic of Benin, Cote d'ivore and Saudi Arabia. Continuing, he posited while citing Eke (2008: 51 – 54) that the discovery of a slave camp in Ibadan Oyo State by the Nigeria Police where 23 youths between the ages of 13 and 27 were subjected to highly degrading inhuman treatment by a certain Alfa Abdult Imoniyi underscores the socially dehumanizing influence of human trafficking in Nigeria. Noting that in the said slave camp these youths were being fed with human excreta. Against this back-drop it is evident that human trafficking in Nigeria is posing a great threat to the social and cultural rights of Nigerian youths as well as their personal dignity and full development of their potential and personality. That is to say that these activities promote cruel treatment that reduce human being to inanimate object that should be treated as brute creation. Equally, human trafficking as well as other violent crimes create a multiple impact of eroding the nation's image abroad. Odili (2004: 11) puts it pointedly when he states that criminal acts such as kidnapping of foreigners serves to dent the image of the country in the international community and consequently discourage companies and businessmen from investing in our economy.

According to Nwosu (2008: 6) these negative social impacts of human security threats is a fall-out of the decay in our moral values which had resulted in the prevalence of get-rich-quick mentality of Nigerians. Obiora and Edozien (2001) are in agreement to the above view when they posit that urbanization, migration and modernization are greatly eroding the values which ones served as moral roots of the Africans.

The fractured social tradition or cancerous growth in our traditional social order of living in the community has continued to create a multiplying effect of violence, poverty and oppression that is turning us to collectively live as dehumanized society driven by brute mentality of dog eat dog. What this means is that the culture of indiscipline, lack of respect for the following truth, virtue, hard-work, tolerance, brotherhood, honesty and equity is fast turning our continent to a society on a mission of self-destruction through unending terrorist activities.

Militarization of the Polity: Rise in violent crimes has created a militarized polity in the nation Nigeria. This was the view of Odili (2004) when he states that due to the activities of violent crimes and their sponsors who supply them with sophisticated arms there are weapons in all nooks and corners of the land. Noting that the proliferation of arms in the polity are aided by those who promote sectarian conflict as instrument of gaining upper hand in power struggles. Continuing, he notes that these arms unfortunately filter into hands that also use them for other forms of crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping (p. 10). The result is that our land has become a militaristic driven society with everybody at the neck of one another.

The above impact according to Ajah (2009: 18) is predicated on government poor attitude to crime control which has continued to fuel violent crimes in the nation. Thus, he submits that because Nigeria has not been blessed with good leaders who are committed to fighting crime by ensuring that the full weight of the law are employed on law offenders the nation has continued to live as a militarized society. What this means is that government in most cases lack the will to deal decisively with crime and insecurity challenges in the nation, because of their overt and covert interest. As a result justice is not only delayed but in most cases denied as criminals go about having a field day in the business of crime.

Population/Demographical: Demographically, Africa is rapidly been depopulated by violent crimes. In most cases the actual figures of human losses are not made public, but it may not be out of place if one estimates that Africa is loosing human lives in their hundreds of thousands on a yearly basis through violent conflicts. The worst hit demographically is the Northern Nigeria where people are fleeing in their thousands to the South because of unending ethno-religious riots that always leaves behind untold number of lives and properties lost. For instance Jos and Kaduna are typical examples where the Igbos of Nigeria have lost thousands of their people in recent times due to violent conflict. Commenting on the depopulating impact of violent conflicts in Nigeria Prof. Attahiru Jega, the National Chairman, Independence National Election Commission was quoted by Awowule – Brown (2010) as subscribing to the view that with the spate of kidnapping, abduction and other forms of insecurity in Nigeria statistics have shown that apart from the scourge of HIV/AIDS deaths from political killings have come second.

High Cost of Crime Control: Poor legislation is another factor that promotes violent crime in Nigeria. This view is corroborated by Ajih (2008) when he posits that poor legislation is a serious factor that is promoting human trafficking in the nation. Poor legislation in this context refers to poor and inadequate legal system that is necessary for protecting people from the threat of various forms of

violent crimes. Amujiri (2008) puts it tersely when he states inter alia:

Weakness of our law is another contributing factor to trafficking and child abuse. According to him, weakness of our law and lack of punishment for those, who sexually assault the underage. He blamed the authorities as responsible for lack of implementation of law and human trafficking and child abuse. (p.5).

According to Nnadozie (2009) the lack of enabling laws to tackle the violent crimes is compounding the problem of security in Nigeria. In other words, where laws are made to shield corrupt and criminal driven political class such nation like Nigerians would continue to be enmeshed in the state of insecurity and instability. Moreover delay of justice in administering prompt punishment on the criminals of terror contributes to growth in terrorism in Nigeria.

Consequently, due to delay in carrying out justice on criminals as well lack of creation of enabling laws that protects the citizenry from abuse of their fundamental rights and privileges the cost of fighting violent conflict is swelling daily in the continent as criminals continue to have a field day in the business of crime. In other words, much revenue which would have been diverted for development and economic growth of the people is wasted by government in trying to control the effect of insecurity arising from violent conflicts. This high cost of crime management unfortunately expands the level of our collective poverty by the diversion of public fund to fight crisis instead of promoting development. This unfortunate development stems from the poor proactive role of the government in crime control.

Udofia (2010) is in agreement to the above view when he states that bad and corruptive leadership which is defined corruption as the circumvention of standardized and legalized process of conducting affairs among people has remained a major concern of the government instead of their commitment to the provision of amenities for economic and social development as well as the general wellbeing of the citizenry.

Public Health Implication: According to the ANPA Blog on-line, city Dr. Emerole, a member of Nigeria Medical Association and also a cardiologist, states that the kidnapping siege on medical doctors will only worsen the already severe shortage of doctors in Nigeria as well as demoralize the few who risk their lives in the service of their patient. Noting that the ultimate victims will be the masses of Nigeria citizens for whom their already poor health conditions would worsen as more doctors flee to safer parts of the country or migrate to foreign lands. (<http://www.anpaorg.blogspot.com/2010/09/kidnap>). What this translates is that violent crimes like kidnapping not only endangers the lives of medical

doctors and their career in Nigeria it also affect the health of the public who would be compelled to stay without qualified medical experts where such doctors flee abroad for fear of their lives.

Cultural dysfunction: According to Ezirim (2008) in Ikejiani – Clark (2009) Globalization which is referred to as the opening up of international frontiers for more trade flows as well as the promotion of interdependence among nations has become one of the major sources of crimes in modern times by creating cultural dysfunction+. Noting that by employing the revolutionary advances of Information Technology (ICT) globalization have brought the nation closer and equally provide a leverage for swiftness in business and trade; global reach of crime syndicates, dismantling of barriers as well as greater sophistication of criminal organizations via the use of ICT (p. 26, 27). Walter (2002) corroborates the above view when he states that advances in global communication technology have made international financial transaction easier, faster and more convenient for legitimate financial institutions and their customers but that technology is just as attractive to those who use it to finance global organized crime, including terrorism. Thus according to him the culture of crime is rapidly being integrated into our cultural value systems with cyber crime taking the lead as new alliances are developing between strange bedfellows (http://www.ctca.org/documents/trafficking_money_laundering.doc).

In his own contribution Dukor (2008: 43,44) while defining globalization as the philosophy of one humanity in a village i.e society globally integrated, states that it has done more harm than good to African nations. By making African nations dumping ground for technology from advanced nations its makes them poorer.

From the foregoing globalization which could be defined in this context as the unionization, unification and integration of nations into one cultural, scientific, technological and economic family could be said to be a source of increasing human security threats in Nigeria. Firstly, by providing highly sophisticated information network to criminals, it invariably serves as a most potent tool in the hands of criminal in the area of crime sponsorship, management and execution. Secondly, by impoverishing the African nations economically through expanded dependence on foreign technology, it expands the frontiers of poverty, unemployment, frustration and hopelessness and subsequent resort to violent crimes for survival. Moreover it enhances erosion of our cultural values and heritage through emphasis on foreign culture and values thereby those values that promote our sense of brotherhood and value for life endangering our creativity, Africaness, and our inclination to create and export development or ideas to the world. The result is that we remain a consumer driven culture living at the mercy of the productive driven powerful nations.

Conclusion

Human security threats is grossly impacting negatively on the entrenchment and sustainability of quality leadership and political stability in Africa. This paper has identified these impacts as embracing but not limited to the following challenges: economics, social, militarization of the polity, high cost of crime control, demographic and public health implications. These threats were identified as arising from poor legislation, institutionalized structures that perpetuate economic and political subjugation; ignorance, religious syncretism, poor attitude of government to crime control, ill-equipped/ill-funded security agencies as well as high spate of unemployment, erosion of value systems and corruptive leadership. Consequently addressing the issues of threatened leadership and political stability in Africa call for a multi-dimensional efforts that should engage both the government, non-governmental bodies as well as the general public. The following recommendations are therefore suggested as the ways towards redressing the impact of the above human security threats on leadership and political stability in Africa.

Recommendation

- Ø The problem of extreme poverty in Africa calls for establishment of regional social security scheme that would help to provide minimum economic succor to the unemployed physically challenged and the elderly, by creating economic survival fund for the poor and the weak.
- Ø Synergy should be built into the approach of controlling violent crimes by integrating the various stakeholders in crime control namely the government, industries and non-governmental agencies into a network.
- Ø Political framework should be built on democratic principles that fosters integration instead of religious, ethnic or sectional cleavages. Governance should promote the framework that fosters living together based on shared rules which though not excluding diversity but shared avert violence.
- Ø The military approach to crime control should be augmented by social values education emphasis by the homes, churches and schools and the media to promote ethical driven society.
- Ø Political leadership that emphasize high monetary compensation should be discouraged by constitutional reviews that provides for part-time sitting allowances for politician instead of full time appointment.
- Ø Our educational systems should emphasis skill development and entrepreneurship culture from the cradle to ensure that those who graduate from schools are more disposed to create jobs and wealth instead of remaining as idle hands that are easily hired for all kinds of criminal activities for mere financial inducement.

- Ø Good governance that promotes equity, rule of law and protection of fundamental human rights should be modeled in Africa by establishing professional bodies that regulate political leadership through adequate sanctions and training.

References

- Aja Cyprian (2009) Menace of Kidnapping, in *Daily Sun Wednesday, December, 2009 Logos*: The Sun Publishing Limited.
- Amujiri B. A. (2008): *Human Trafficking and Child Abuse: Their Effect on our Nations Image*.
- Akwa Ibom State in *The Guardian editorial Friday, March 5, 2010*.
- Amujiri, B. A. (2009) Human Trafficking and Child Abuse: Their Effect on our Nations Image in Chiegboka and Ugwueye (eds) (2009). *Journal of Religion and Human Relations Awka: Department of Religion and Human Relations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*.
- Amaefule, Ernest, (2010) Johnathan Rules our National Conference in *Punch, Wednesday October 20, 2010*. Lagos: Punch Publishing Ltd.
- Awowole – Brown, Francis (2011) FG to fight Boko Harma with armored vehicles in Nigeria. In compass Wednesday June 15, 2011, Lagos.
- Bolarinwa, Joshua Olusegun (2010), Clash of Cultures: Muslim – Christian Violence in Nigeria and its implication for Political stability in Isaac Olawale Albert and Olaniyi Nurudeen Olarinde (2010), *Trends and Tensions in Managing Conflicts*.
- Chiegboka, A.B.C. and Uguweye L. E. (eds) (2009), *Journal of Religion and Human Relations vol., 1; No 2, 2009*.
- Community Development, in En-wikipedia.org/wiki/community_development Retrieved on 26th April 2010.
- Defence Challenges (2010) (ed) Saturday Sun April 10, 2010, Lagos: Sun Publishers Limited.
- Essien, Francisca (2010) (ed) Saturday Sun April 10, 2010. Lagos: Sun Publishers Limited.
- Ezirim, G.E. (2008), Transborder Crime and Nigeria's Global Reputation: An Analysis in Ikejiani-Clark (2008) (ed) *Journal of Liberal Studies Vol. 12 No 1 & 212 Dec. Nsukka: School of General Studies, University of Nigeria*.

Igwe Leo (2004) Ritual Killing and Pseudoscience in Nigeria Volume 14.2 June,
2 0 0 4 i n
http://www.esicop.org/sb/show/ritual_killing_and_pseudoscience_in_nigeria

Ikejiani-Clark, M. (2008) Women Trafficking and Food Crises in Africa: An Evaluation of incidence of women Trafficking and Food Production in Nigeria 2000–2008.

Mohammed Bala A. (2010) The Role of Directorate of Societal Reorientation in managing, Ethnicity and Religious Conflict in Kano in Albert and Olarinde, Op cit.

Leadership,
(<http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/exceed/leadership/hp/pages/default.aspx>)
retrieved on 2nd Jan., 2014

(<http://www.ithefreelibrary.com/kidnap+for+r>). retrieved on 2nd Jan., 2014

(http://www.ctca.org/documents/trafficking_money_laundering.doc). retrieved on 2nd Jan., 2014