

Original Research Article

GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

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Abstract: This paper focuses on governance and security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Governance has been described as the formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and actions are conducted from the perspective of maintaining a country's constitutional values. The negligence of the security sector is responsible for the non-performance and good governance, resulting in its attendant violent crimes, such as armed robbery, ethnic crisis, electoral violence, kidnapping, etc. Unlike Nigeria, Britain, Canada, and China were nations with high political culture, giving priority to the provision of democratic values such as rule of law, accountability, transparency, equity etc. In Nigeria, governance and security is abysmally low. This has manifested in poor infrastructural conditions, high levels of unemployment, poverty, rising inflation and trends of violent crimes, abuse of human rights by the law enforcement agencies, Fulani Herdsmen imbroglio, banditry, and kidnapping of school children, electoral violence, communal conflicts etc. This paper uses available secondary data and chi-square statistical methods to analyze the missing link between governance and security. The paper recommended that the government must ensure good governance, respect for the rule of law and equality before the law. Nigeria must improve on its existing security apparatuses in order to combat the dynamic and sophisticated 21st century security challenges. Funds made available to the security agencies are judiciously utilised for the acquisition of skills and the procurement of up-to-date equipment. The government should form a platform that will accommodate all stakeholders, such as the politicians, the media, civil society organizations and religious institutions at the local, state and national levels in order to sensitise and re-orientate Nigerians for peaceful co-existence and the consequences of electoral violence. Community policing should also be constitutionally introduced with a view to promote adequate security.

Keywords: Governors And Security, Banditry And Kidnapping, Ethnic Crisis, Police Brutality, Fulani Headsmen

Introduction

Nigeria gained independence on October 1st S, 1960, with the objective of establishing democratic governance that will enthrone fundamental human right which is a prerequisite of human security. The nation has marked its 66th independence anniversary with myriad of challenges. It behooves on analysts to x-ray the nation's activities politically, economically, socially and security dimension to enable the nation face its socio- economic and political reality with courage and determination with a view to build a sound, virile and relative peace and security nation. However, bad governance has driven the country into numerous security challenges such as murder, wanton destruction of properties, electoral violence, stealing, persistent kidnapping of school children, Fulani herdsmen crisis, communal conflicts etc.

In Nigeria, governance and security is the means by which government through its various agencies control and direct the nation's approach to security of public and private affairs. When it is well planned and executed, governance and security will effectively coordinate and translate the entire activities of the country for sustainable development. Just as security is the responsibility of everyone within an organisation, security decision making can happen at all levels in Nigeria, (Oluwakemi, 2016).

Over the decades, there has been a recurrent and sustained argument that the Nigerian state, like its counterparts in Africa and other countries of the developing world, underperforms its governance and security due to lack of state capacity to deal with the contemporary complexities of security doldrums. Thus, the nature of the state, the public institutions through which legitimate power is exercised and enforced, is germane to the study of politics in any state (Smith 2003, p108). Therefore, the issue of good governance and security is central to understanding the Nigerian socioeconomic malaise.

Dhikiru and Adeoye (2019) posits that the expectation of citizens is for states to take a decisive role in economic transformation, growth, and development and jettison every act that is inimical to improved livelihood as well as socioeconomic and political development of the country. With the weakness of the Nigerian state and its ineffectiveness, it has become challenging to eradicate impoverishment, engage in infrastructural development, and stem the tides of insurgency and terrorism, which have the potency to derail the country's moderate political development.

Without doubt, the Nigerian state stood in between exhibiting attributes of state collapse and state failure. Mimiko (2010) posits that the Nigerian state has degenerated to the point where it is unable to provide minimal social security for its vulnerable population. This explains why the mass of the people continues to regard a low pumping price of oil as a social security and birthright.

The objective of this paper is to examine the concept of governance and security, role of governance and security in subverting; extra-judicial killings, electoral violence, kidnapping of school children, Fulani-Herdsmen impasse, and communal clashes.

Research Question

1. Have the Government of Nigeria's security policies improved security?
2. Poor Governance have resulted in insecurity in Nigeria.

Objective of this Study

The main objective of this study is to examine governance and security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, while the specific objectives are to:

1. To examine how the Government of Nigeria's security policies had improved security
2. To establish how poor Governance have resulted in insecurity in Nigeria

Conceptual Discourse

Governance not only encompasses but transcends the collective meaning of related concepts like state, government, regime and good government. Many of the elements and principles underlying good government have become an integral part of the meaning of governance. John and Mark (2021) define good government as follows: "It implies a high level of organisational effectiveness in relation to policy formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability, and popular welfare. Good government also implies accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law. It does not necessarily presuppose a value judgment, for example, a healthy respect for civil and political liberties, although good government tends to be a prerequisite for political legitimacy and security inclusiveness.

Drawing from this, governance presupposes a power structure with its own hierarchical categories, incorporating the economic, social, cultural, and political tensions within the society, and thus spreading out an inherent dynamism which absorbs the ebbs and flows of pressures toward ensuring peaceful and effective solutions to existential problems confronting the society and its people. The attempt by Nzongola-Ntalaja to isolate three main types of governance is quite apt and relevant here. First, political or public governance, whose authority is the state, government, or public sector, it relates to "the process by which a society organises its affairs and manages itself" (CLEEN, 2015).

On his part, the United Nations (1997) has listed some fundamental characteristics of governance. They include participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision. Hassan (2015) identified that national and global security is a term which refers to the measures taken by states and international organisations, such as the United Nations, European Union, and others, to ensure mutual survival and safety. These measures include military action and diplomatic agreements such as treaties and conventions.

International and national security is invariably linked. International security is national security or state security in the global arena, (Sheehan, 2005).

UNDP (1994; Buzan and Hansen, 2009), argued that states should provide the fundamentals of security which are holistic and inherent in human nature. Their emphasis was on economic security, an assured to basic income, food security; physical and economic access to basic food, health security which is protection from disease and unhealthy lifestyle, environmental security, providing enabling physical environment, community security, protection of safe membership, political security, living in a society that honors basic human rights and finally personal security, being free from personal violence.

Nigeria's security forces are often accused of human rights abuses including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, extortion, sexual harassment, and disappearances. This leads to mistrust and negatively affects relations between security forces and the civilian population. Furthermore, civilian oversight of security institutions is ineffective and they remain largely unaccountable to civilian line ministries and the general public.

Literature Review

The fourth republic of democratic governance in Nigeria was ushered on May 29, 1999, Nigerians were hopeful that this democratic experiment would enhance and entrench constitutionalism, respect for human rights, the rule of law, accountability, transparency, popular participation, and improve the economic wellbeing of the people (Bello-Imam, 2004; Inokoba and Kumokor, 2011). Implicit in the expectations is the recognition that the country's previous experience with democratic governance in the other republics failed to respond to the yearnings of majority of Nigerians. The inability of democratic governance to meet the challenges of food, employment, security, potable water, accessible health care, roads, qualitative education and other basic needs of the masses are glaring and well documented (Ogundiya, 2010; Inokoba and Kumokor, 2011; Yagboyaju, 2011).

Therefore, given the existing state of poverty and deprivation, the emergence and prevalence of diverse security threats like armed robbery, kidnappings and abductions, electoral violence, and crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism in the country can be well appreciated (Yagboyaju, 2011). Moreover, high level unemployment among the youths coupled with the proliferation of small arms in this dispensation appear to have contributed to the terrible state of violence and insecurity in the country (Lewis, 2011).

Consequently, political corruption, perversion of the rule of law and due process, subversion of the institutions of accountability and transparency, reckless and rudderless political leadership, violation of human rights, authoritarianism, criminalisation of dissent, widespread impunity and personalisation of political power have become significant attributes of democratic governance in Nigeria. These governance deficits have profoundly affected development and security in Nigeria in the following areas as discuss in this paper.

Extra-judicial killings and Abuse of Human Rights. Police brutality and extrajudicial killing are norms in Nigerian security context. Overtime, the Nigeria Police Force, already criticised for being a relic of colonial oppression, has become a cesspool and citadel of killing machines, and tools wielded by the rich and powerful to oppress citizens of lesser means. Personal experiences with the police are at best vulgar and coarse communications if the victim is female, and at worst, murder if male. The police including SARS operatives have been condemned for being corrupt, inefficient and sick killers. But the police force is a microcosm of the Nigerian society – decayed, corrupt, and lacking accountability. From politicians to the ordinary man, our behavior runs the gamut of every imaginable morally reprehensible behavior, (CLEEN FOUNDATION, 2015).

The right to protest falls within the right to peaceful assembly and association under Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The former part of the section states that ‘everybody shall be entitled to assemble freely...’ both rights to assembly and association play a crucial role in the existence of a democratic system. The right to assemble is central in protecting the freedom of expression of individuals and groups in peaceful demonstration. The ENDSARS protest was therefore, simply an expression of the right to assemble and express discontent.

Kidnapping of School Children. For Nigerian government and security forces, securing towns and communities across the vast north-eastern region affected by the Boko Haram insurgency or within militants’ striking range is clearly an enormous challenge. In April 2014, members of the Jihadist group Boko Haram ambushed an all-girls boarding school in Chibok in the middle of the night and kidnapped 276 students and vanished into the forest. On February 19, 2018 at 5:30 pm, 110 schoolgirls aged 11–19 years old were kidnapped by the Boko Haram terrorist group from the Government Girls' Science and Technical College (GGSTC) DapchiYobe State, Nigeria. During the evening of 11 December 2020, over 300 pupils were kidnapped from a boys' secondary boarding school on the outskirts of Kankara, Katsina State, Northern Nigeria. A gang of gunmen on motorcycles attacked the Government Science Secondary School, where more than 800 pupils reside, for over an hour. The list is inexhaustible, (The Cable, 2020).

Olowojolu , Rasak , Ake & Ogundele (2019) agreed that ransoms are allowing criminal groups to buy more arms and expand their power. And the Nigerian state increasingly looks too weak to respond. This indicator of Nigeria governance and security depicts government insensitivity towards its citizens and must be handling immediately.

Electoral Violence. Violence or the threat of violence is a universal phenomenon. Individuals and groups throughout history have, in one way or another, resorted to violence or its potential use as a tactic of political action. Violence has been used by groups seeking power, by groups holding power and by groups wanting to retain power. Violence has been pursued in the defense of order by the privileged, in the name of justice by the oppressed, and in the fear of displacement by the threatened (Prince and Luke, 2021).

Electoral Violence According to Albert (2007), electoral violence involves all forms of organised acts of threats aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political

stakeholder or opponent before, during and after an election with an intention to determine, delay or influence a political process. Ogundiya and Baba (2005), see electoral violence as all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after elections. Fischer (2010) defines electoral violence (conflict) as any random or organised act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced “protection”, blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination.

The new drama of inconclusive elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) orchestrated by elections violence is another determinant of Nigeria’s weak governance and insecurity. In Bayelsa State of Nigeria, gubernatorial elections had been marred with killings, sporadic shootings, and arson. This political characteristic is almost displayed in all states during elections.

Communal Clashes

Communal clash in Nigeria socio-cultural record is not a new phenomenon. It has long historical records. But over the years, government at federal, state and local level is failing to nip the situation in the bud. The focus should be for governments to examine the innate factors that act as enablers of the communal conflicts. Nigeria is bedeviled by challenges that lead to many avoidable losses to lives and properties. One of these worrisome challenges is communal clashes.

According to (Albert 2007; Brosche, 2014; Boone 2014) argument on communal conflict was build on the general assumption that local conflicts are often intricately connected to national power struggles and conflicts at higher levels. Local and national political dynamics may cause the state to take sides actively or passively in communal conflicts. Based on their need to strengthen or protect their position of power, state actors have vested interest in some conflicts but not others. Bias may derive from their relationship to the conflict actors, or from local resources and the issue at stake in the conflict.

Fulani Herdsmen Saga: Herder-farmers conflicts in Nigeria have mainly involved disputes over land resources between mostly Muslim Fulani herders and mostly Christian farmers across Nigeria but more devastating in the Middle Belt (North Central) since the return of democracy in 1999. Attacks have also taken place in the Northwest Nigeria against farmers who are mainly Hausa people. While the conflict has underlying economic and environmental reasons, it has also acquired religious and ethnic dimensions (Adebanwi,2009).

In South Western Nigeria, herdsmen and farmers crisis have remained the most predominately resource-use crisis. The necessity to provide good governance has been hampering by the activities of herdsmen. The herdsmen/farmer crises have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity in rural communities where most of the crises are localised, with reverberating repercussions nationwide. This unwholesome culture has led

to the death of many persons and properties destroyed, which negate government fundamental duty; protection of life and properties.

Derogatory Statement. Constitutionally, chapter four of the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended, provided freedom of speech. However, where such statement amount to slander which is capable of causing insecurity in the polity must be visited by law enforcement agencies, especially, the police. Several political actors had made such indicted statement, yet nothing had been done by Nigeria security institutions. The first to issue this threat was the National Chairman of the All-Progressives Party, Chief John Oyegun, during the campaigns for the Osun State governorship election in 2014. According to him, APC will no longer recognise “stolen mandate” or any outcome of an election that is not free, fair and credible. Again, in Abuja on November 20th, 2014, Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, after a street rally and a barricade of the Police Force headquarters, reissued this warning ‘we will form a parallel government if APC loss. These statements even from major political stakeholders are core indices of poor security and governance.

GOVERNANCE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Security challenges continue to remain focal issues of discussion in Nigeria polity. This was driven by government insensitivity towards performance of its statutory duties and architecture. This act of poor governance has exacerbated into poverty, lack of sustainability, marginalisation, inadequate basic amenities etc. Growing insecurity in Nigeria in recent years has coincided with rising poverty levels as Nigeria now has an estimated 91 million people (43% of its population) living in extreme poverty (less than \$2 a day). This is up 29% from 70 million in 2016 and this is projected to reach 106.6 million by 2030. Nigeria is now regarded as the world's poverty capital. Nigeria is currently grappling with security challenges ranging from farmer/herder clashes, cattle rustling, banditry, kidnapping and the Boko Haram insurgency. The situation has deteriorated significantly since 2017 with most of the incidents occurring in northern Nigeria and the middle belt.

Angela and Ugwoke (2014; Adesuwa, 2016, Ezeonwuka and Oluchukwu, 2018)), maintained that as of 2016, 112 million Nigerians live in poverty. In 1990, that number was 51 million. As Nigeria continues to grow, the number of people that live in poverty within its borders should not expand with it. To alleviate poverty, it's important to understand the causes. Here are four of the root causes of poverty in Nigeria; government corruption, lack of economic infrastructure, poor access to education, and poor access to healthcare.

Lack of sustainability in the socio-political and economic parlance as well as environment has added color to insecurity. Environmental insecurity can be considered the absence, deficit, or lack of environmental security.

Methodology

The researcher uses a purposive random sampling technique and community- based survey to derive his respondents, as well as administering a structured questionnaire. Ten

communities; Kaduna, Yobe, Katsina, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Yenagoa, Enugu, Okene, and Agatu where selected due to their political presence and occurrence of societal issues. The data were analysed using Chi- Square statistical method.

Do Security Agencies involve in extra-judicial killings?

S/No	Response	Number	Df	T. Cal.	T. Crit.	Decision
1	Yes	210	1	3.273	5.991 @ 0.005 Sig. level	Accepted
2	No	190				
3	Total	400				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the data above, $\chi^2_{cal}=3.273$ and $\chi^2_{table}= 5.991$ at 0.005 significant level. Comparatively, the Chi- Square value (3.273) is less than the table value (5.991). Therefore, we accept the decision upholding that there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female that security agencies involved in extra-judicial killings in our society.

Has Government presence stopped communal crisis?

S/No	Response	Number	df	T. Cal.	T.Crit	Decision
1	Yes	220	1	3.382	5.991@ 0.005 Sig. level	Accepted
2	No	180				
3	Total	400				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the data above, $\chi^2_{cal}=3.382$ and $\chi^2_{table}= 5.991$ at 0.005 significant level. Comparatively, the Chi- Square value (3.382) is less than the table value (5.991). Therefore, we accept the decision upholding that there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female that government cannot stop communal conflicts in our society.

Does it mean that Government Security Agencies are not proactive in securing school children?

S/No	Response	Number	df	T. Cal.	T. Crit	Decision
1	Yes	235	1	3.196	5.991 2 0.005 Sig level	Accepted
2	No	165				
3	Total	400				

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

From the data above, $\chi^2_{cal}=3.196$ and $\chi^2_{table}= 5.991$ at 0.005 significant level. Comparatively, the Chi- Square value (3.196) is less than the table value (5.991). Therefore, we accept the decision upholding that there is no significant difference between the

responses of male and female that government has not been proactive in securing school children in Nigeria

Have government institutions provided violence-free elections in the Fourth Republic?

S/No	Response	Number	df	T. Cal	T. Crit	Decision
1	Yes	305	1	3.268	5.991 @	Accepted
2	No	95			0.005 Sig	
3	Total	400			level	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the data above, $\chi^2_{cal}=3.268$ and $\chi^2_{table}= 5.991$ at 0.005 significant level. Comparatively, the Chi- Square value (3.268) is less than the table value (5.991). Therefore, we accept the decision upholding that there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female that government has not been able to provide violence-free elections in Nigeria

Does the government take decisive steps against the Fulani Herdsmen saga?

S/No	Responses	Number	df	T.Cal.	T. Crit	Decision
1	Yes	280	1	3.468	5.991 @	Accepted
2	No	120			0.005 Sig	
3	Total	400			level	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the data above, $\chi^2_{cal}=3.468$ and $\chi^2_{table}= 5.991$ at 0.005 significant level. Comparatively, the Chi- Square value (3.468) is less than the table value (5.991). Therefore, we accept the decision upholding that there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female that government has not been able to take decisive action against Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria

Discussion of findings

From the data provided, it is imperative to state that extra-judicial killing has become a norm in the police force and other security agencies. This corroborates with the works of Mitchel (2019) which maintained that according to UN figures, nearly one third of the 881 children killed in conflict in Nigeria in 2017 died at the hands of the very people who should have been protecting them – the security forces – rather than the terrorist group Boko Haram, (Mitchell, 2019).

Again, the (New Humanitarian, 2010; Cabinet Office ,2008).) posits that police kill an average 4.6 people per day, according to statistics provided to Human Rights Watch in April 2004 by Tafa Balogun, then Inspector-General of Police. In November 2007, Acting Inspector-General of Police Mike Okiro, during his first 100 days of office, claimed the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) killed 785 people. One week later the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua promoted him. The Nigeria Legal Defense and Assistance Project also

found 2,987 extrajudicial executions by police in 2004, but no force member was convicted. This is the height of inefficiency in governance and security in Nigeria.

The Nigeria elections in 2019 that brought President Muhammadu Buhari back into office for a second term were marred by political violence, some of it by soldiers and police officers, Human Rights Watch 2019 said. Electoral violence is a political phenomenon that further displayed government lackadaisical culture. Human Right Watch (2019) avers that during election period there are persistent attacks by factions of the insurgent group Boko Haram in the Northeast; increased communal violence between nomadic herdsman and farmers spreading southward from north-central states; and a dramatic uptick in banditry, kidnapping, and killings in the Northwestern states of Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara, (Jega, A.M. (2007; Relief web, 2020)

Finally, kidnapping of school children abound in our nation. Irrespective of this heinous crime, government views it with levity. The value for human life is completely silent, giving room for parents and individuals to protect their children, (BBC, News, 2021)

Conclusion

It is very clear from the foregoing that governance and security is a pathway to sustainable development in Nigeria. It is also an incontrovertible fact that, bad governance is cyclically intertwined with the lacks of peace, security and sustainable development. In fact, sustainable development is not likely to thrive and persist where there is systemic poverty, deprivations, frustration of aspirations, and violent activities by a sizeable number of the citizens. The downsides of governance and security failure have been analysed in previous sections on security of lives and properties, electoral violence, derogatory statement, Fulani herdsman saga, school children kidnapping and the rule of law; the latter covering the legislative and judicial arms of government

Recommendations

First, the leadership in Nigeria must ensure good governance, respect for rule of law and equality before the law. Poverty, injustice and discrimination are some of the causes of conflict in Nigeria. Insecurity is a threat to life in all ramification. Government must give priority to the safety of lives and properties

Secondly, Nigeria must improve on its existing security apparatuses in order to combat the dynamic and sophisticated 21st century security challenges. Recruitment of security personnel should be based on merit. Government should ensure that the funds made available to the security agencies are judiciously utilised for the acquisition of skills and the procurement of up-to-date equipment.

Thirdly, the Government should form a platform that will accommodate all stakeholders such as the politicians, the media, civil society organizations and religious institutions at the local, state and national levels in order to sensitize and re-orientate Nigerians on peaceful co-existence and the consequences of electoral violence.

Lastly, Community policing should also be constitutionally introduced with a view to assist conventional security agencies to combat insecurity.

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