

**ASSOCIATION OF CREATIVE WRITERS (ACW)**

**ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION**

**A BLUEPRINT FOR TACKLING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA.**

**Entrant's Details**

**Name: Zachariah Victoria Agbomeire**

**School: University Of Abuja, Abuja.**

**Department: Biological Sciences.**

**Phone Number: 07040574883, 09097874644**

**Email Address: victoriazachariah20@gmail.com**

**Word count: 2,823 (excluding title page and references).**

## **A BLUEPRINT FOR TACKLING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of security challenge whether insurgency, insurrection, sectarians or communal/tribal conflicts, religious conflict or war, kidnapping, murders, political assassination, banditry, Fulani herdsmen terrorism and general eruption of peace and tranquility in Nigeria has put both the government and the populace on the edge. The heightening insecurity situation in the country has impacted negatively on economic, social, political, civil and national development; we have witnessed the virtual death of economic activities in the north-eastern states of Nigeria over the last decades due to the violent Boko Haram insurgency. We have also seen how agricultural produce in Benue and a number of other north-central states of Nigeria have been badly affected by the herdsmen-farmer clashes. Protracted insecurity, as it has been the case in recent years in Nigeria can depress consumer confidence, which in turn reduces consumer spending. Not only does insecurity affect consumer spending; it also affect businesses who due to the uncertainty insecurity creates, put off investment decisions. This certainly affect economic output and could be a major factor in the slow growth-environment in Nigeria. Continued insecurity and government's inability to bring an end to it has led to a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, especially in the areas that are vulnerable and amongst victims and their families. This state of agitation can affect productivity. For instance, with rampant kidnapping on major highways in some part of the country, many roads have become no-go areas. Inability to travel on its own can reduce productivity of those affected. The vicious cycle of insecurity in Nigeria has diminished

public confidence in the government, this feeds the helplessness even further. And as people are afraid to move around freely, many opportunities in business are being lost.

There is no consensus on the definition of security, this is not surprising because as a social phenomenon, it is often approached from different perspectives. Above all, the concept security has been seen as a situation where a person or thing is not exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or deterioration.

Therefore, there is need for government, stakeholders and citizens to collectively rise up and explore realistic means and techniques in order to fight these menace of insecurity which has eaten deep into the fabrics of the nation at large. From all indications, these security challenges need to be promptly nipped in the bud before it get worse than what we are experiencing today, though some people may argue that the situation has already gotten out of hand.

There is need for decentralization of the present system of government to help improve security service delivery especially at the grassroots. The Nigeria police force as well as the military personnel should be stationed in various states of the federation, in remote villages surrounded by mountains, thick forest and ungoverned spaces where these miscreants perpetuating evil hibernate and use as camp or hideout. Security is not only about arms and ammunition but information gathering and if that is limited to the federal government alone, there will be a lot that the state governors will not be aware of and a gap at the grassroots level will be created. The state and local government need to be part of this intelligence gathering so that within their sphere of jurisdiction, they can maintain some level of network on who and where the flashpoints are. The local government should be properly funded to empower them to

meet some needs of the people and that being done, taking steps to address poverty would go a long way in stemming some of these insurgencies and militancy.

The federal government should put the security sector in outmost priority, there is need for security sector transformation. Central to any states' is its arm forces, the strength or weakness of the armed forces determines the level of and political status in the international system. Nigeria is known worldwide as the giants of Africa and of course, Nigeria military can remain a concrete pointer to this fact. Unfortunately, the level of decay in our armed forces today does not depict that of a giant but that of a dwarf and left nothing to be desired. The decay reached its zenith in late 2014 and early 2015 when the Boko Haram openly celebrated their victory over the military as they did not only run-over them in a number of cases but killed their troops and took their weapons and military hardware, as well as the well-known Chibok school girls adoption which has caused great upheaval for Nigerians home and abroad.

There is need for professional restructuring, which is a key policy that will purge the military of its ills and reposition it for its improved professional task. A thorough probe and investigation of the armed forces with a view to identifying, trying and sacking of corrupt officers, should be a paramount policy in the restructure agenda. The military reform agenda will focus on the various affected departments of the armed forces that require urgent attention and this would be in three folds. The first step is to provide civic education for the armed forces on the need to respect and form strong alliance with civil authority and populace as against the current culture of looking down on them as bloody civilians. The second is stepping up professional training and lastly, procurement of military hardware and equipments necessary to conduct advanced intelligent services. Again, government should mobilise both domestic and international resources towards

uplifting the general image of the armed forces. An increased budget of the armed forces will go a long way in taking care of a number of issues bordering on wages, procurement of more modern arms and most importantly, the need for the Nigerian military to start developing Nigeria brand of firearm and military hardware.

Education promotes human development both at individual and collective levels and this enhances better employment and a possible exit from the world of poverty. A formidable education system leads to employment and promotes gradual exit from poverty. The myriads of insecurity problems can be tackled if the federal government can make universal basic education available to the citizens because education is the right of every child. There is a significant relationship between national security and education. A cursory look at the personality of Boko Haram Islamist and bandits in the north and various state in Nigeria reveals high level or rate of illiteracy among them. It was in the light of this that the former Emir of Kano, HRM Lamido Sanusi, admonished the elites in the region to establish schools instead of building mosques. Also, in a bid to help reduce the rate of illiteracy, the past administration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan established nomadic education and Al-Majiri schools in the northern region.

Education helps in developing intelligent social actors with the ability to make rational decisions and act intelligently. It also helps to address issue of poverty, violent crimes and illiteracy. Through education, the moral personality of man is built up as it equip learners with the skills of moral judgment that in turn guides his action and behaviors. In other words, the right type of values such as honesty, respect for others, integrity, etc. is inculcated into the young ones. Quality education also promotes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Through

education, it has been discovered that youth develops positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards the entire nation.

No development can be possible without humans, and no humans can reach development without quality education. For a nation to be developed and secured, there must be a very considerable proportion of trained educated citizens in that nation not only to act as doctors engineers, teachers, agriculturist, scientist and the likes, but also to create a new class sufficiently large and hence, sufficiently strong to establish its own values of justice, security, selection on merit, flexibility, empiricism and efficiency. For this to be actualised, our education system (primary, secondary and tertiary level) must be practical and functional. Therefore, quality education is the primary agent of national security and development for bringing the vision of the society in reality. For example, if the militant, bandits, arm robbers, kidnappers, Boko-Haram were properly nurtured with quality formal, informal and indigenous education from the grass-root level, all these security threat/challenges such as terrorism, riots/civil unrest, demonstration, intolerance, cult-related criminal acts, religious intolerance, armed robbery, intra and inter-ethnic strife, drug trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapping, hijacks and many other vices threatening lives and properties would not have been in existence.

There is need for increased private and public partnership towards sustainable job creation. Public-private partnership is a fundamental roadmap to massive job creation, which is paramount to the economic security of our teeming youths. Job creation improves human security and reduces security risk and criminal behaviors. Through the public/private collaboration and resources mobilization at all the levels of government in the country, employment would be generated, leading to poverty reduction and societal stability. It has been

argued that unemployment is one of the major factors that cause insurgencies in Nigeria. Most people who are unemployed especially youth are always involve in crimes and illegal activities in order to care for themselves and families. Unemployment increases poverty, lack of opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills. Many Nigerian especially the vibrant men in the society due to frustration and socio-economic difficulties join militant and terrorist group that hinder the country development because the challenge have great negative impact on the economic and national security. Provision of adequate employment to qualified unemployed citizens will eliminate arm-robbery, kidnapping and other criminal activities.

Micro-finance banks and non-governmental organization, should make it easy for uneducated and unemployed to obtain both short term and long term loans to assist them in commerce and other business activities they may wish to involve in and the promotion of small and medium scale enterprises in the villages. Skill acquisition programs will help in training youths to acquire skills that will make them self-employed or employable by others. The federal government should bring economic opportunities to the people who don't have it and reduce the rate of prosperity which has always been concentrated in and around urban areas. Effective management of these policies would create jobs and cushion the effect of poverty, which is a fundamental driver of insecurity in Nigeria.

Good governance is the foundation upon which a formidable economy and sustainable security is built. Unfortunately, the idea of good governance is a mirage in Nigeria. Indeed, there cannot be found in the continent of Africa any single government that can boast of living up to the global standards, expectations and core values of governance. All African leaders are guilty of subverting the expectations of their people. As a result of this, Africa and indeed Nigeria

suffers a drastic decrease in standard of living of citizens who are either low income earners or unemployed and poor. Bad governance in Nigeria over the years has immensely succeeded in killing developmental process and weakening security policies. The political, economic and social well-being of Nigerian people is often largely compromised by the politicians who sing songs of change that ends up in their pocket and for their family members. Corrupt administration precipitating the abuse of economic and political power has tremendously enhanced human insecurity, especially in the face of the criminal loot and excessive financial allowances that the governing political elite allocate to themselves.

While good governance goals would seek to address human insecurity issues bordering on several areas including promotion of equitable distribution of resources and power, promotion of peace and prevention of conflict. Others include support of macro-economic fundamentals for poverty reduction and eradication like maintenance of transparency and accountability, reduction and removal of social exclusion, promotion of gender equality, protection and promotion of the environment. There is equally the need to meet national economic objectives in order to ensure stability, high employment and sustainable growth as well as job creation and retention through efforts in business finance, marketing, small business development and real estate development. It should be noted that bad governance flourish in different parts of the country and at the federal level, otherwise creating the obvious insidious high insecurity situation facing the country today. That fundamental confidence building and trust based on processes of governance supportive of human development that creates an environment which favors investment and sustainable economic development, is lacking. Individual and collective trust are considered essential elements of social capital and are key to launching programs against economic and human



security but the lack in the re-appropriation of the core values of governance, stifle this in Nigeria.

The way out remains a positive complementary interaction between governance and economic development. Obviously, governance built on proper, effective and prudent management and appropriation of significant core values of governance would to a great extent guarantee sustainable economic growth and development that would re-build confidence and trust in the people towards the government. Secondly, good governance requires political renewal. This means a concerted attack on corruption from the highest to the lowest level of government and every facet of the private sector. It is not a fight against corruption that is selective of those who sponsored the political sovereign. Sustainable fight against corruption should start from the relatives, friends and political colleagues as well as supporters of the Leadership at federal, state and local government areas. This can be done by setting good example by strengthening accountability through nurturing and encouraging the running of a wealth assessment program for all public office holders. This program would expose illegally acquired wealth by public office holders and recommend them for consequent trial and subsequent imprisonment as deterrence to others. It is only when the "political and administrative-criminals," who steal more money on the spot than the armed robbers are tried and convicted, irrespective of class and affiliations that the security of Nigeria and the defence of the corporate commonwealth of over two hundred million Nigerians will be guaranteed.

There is need for efforts to create an enabling environment to build capacities would not be wasted by the negative political culture in Nigeria. Over the years, political context has been marred by electoral malpractices and consequent electoral conflicts. This has undoubtedly

occasioned unwanted and imposed leadership, which by many standards lacks the traits of good governance and transformational leadership but often rich and efficient in corruption and nepotism. The sanitization of the electoral body and process would help solve this problem. Good governance is fundamental in fighting insecurity and promoting national defence in a country.

## **CONCLUSION**

From all indication, national security issues are big challenges in Nigeria's effort to develop; of which the primary efforts of any government is to ensure the security of lives and properties of the citizens. Decentralization of the present system of government to help improve security service delivery at the grassroots' level need to be taken into consideration by the federal government. The Nigeria police force and military personnel are to be deployed in large number to remote villages and rural areas especially in the north-eastern parts of Nigeria, and they should endeavor to do all they can to stop the continuing bloodletting. The government should as well provide modern equipment for the force to enhance effective crime fighting and prevention which is also of immense value. The security sector should be the central focus of the Nigeria government, they should be constant checkmating, financing, and training as well as an increased budget of the armed forces will go a long way in taking care of issues bordering on wages, procurement of arms and gadgets. All levels of government; federal, state, local needs to partner with the private sector to undertake aggressive job creation program for Nigeria teeming and idle youths. Strengthened intervention by all levels of government to promote peaceful coexistence among the different ethno-religious and political group in Nigeria remains imperative. Corruption which has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigeria society which is an obstacle to

national security and development. Government should be transparent and open in all their activities and put in place measures to curb corruption in Nigeria, the rule of law should be promoted at all time, good governance and socio-economic and political development. Quality education for the masses as well as vocational, technical and entrepreneurial program in the country need to be put in place. This will enable more and more people to acquire practical skills that will help them to be self-employed and not to continue to seek for white-collar jobs.

In all, to fully enjoy peace, love, equity, togetherness, cooperation and unity in Nigeria, the fight against insecurity is a collective work not only for the government but requires the citizens-young and old, especially the youths to join hand together in order to make insecurity a thing of the past in Nigeria at large.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Ani, K.J., Onyebukwa, C.F., (2016). National Security Challenges and Recommendation for Sustainable Development. Urbanization, Security and Development Issues in Nigeria, 1914 – 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>.
2. Anekwe, R.I., Ndubuisi, O.P., & Nwanna, C., (2020). Insurgencies and National Security in Nigeria: The way forward. American International Journals of Business Management (AIJBM). Retrieved from <https://www.aijbm.com>.
3. Charles O., (2020). Commercial Policy Economic Governance, Fiscal Policy Law and Economic monetary policy Management (online). Retrieved from <https://www.financialnigeria.com>.

4. Emma U.O., May 12, 2020. Decentralize Police for Effective War against Insecurity Rep tells FG. Retrieved from <https://www.Vanguard.com> accessed on October 1, 2021.
5. Nweke P.O., Nwanchukwu T.S., (2014). National Security Issues and Challenges in Nigeria: Which Way Forward. International journal of Youth Entrepreneurship Development. Volume 1(1), P. 96 – 106 available online at <https://www.ijyeedjournal.com>.
6. Seji D.O., Omoroje P.O., & John E.E., (2020). Achieving National Security through Education. Ujah volume 24, No.4. Retrieved from <https://www.dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.V2/i4.8>.