# The Nigerian State and the Emergence of Militia Groups in the Fourth Republic

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*Abstract*

This article used secondary data and content analysis to identify the militia groups as self-determination groups employing act of violence against the constituted authority to champion the interest of their ethnic cleavages. The article established that these groups emerged in Nigeria due to government inability to meet expectations of democratic values to the citizens. It also established that activities of these groups were sustained by the states' repressive policy and deployment of its arsenal against the group holistically thereby institutionalizing act of violence. The article recommended equitable distribution of resources and practice of true federalism as tools to restore peace. Moreover, the state should address the issues that led to the emergence of the groups and be civil in their policy response. It is underpinned by Relative Deprivation Theory.

**Key Words;** Democratic; Disenchantment; Marginalization; Militia and Motivation

**Introduction**

After years of military rule characterized by regimentation, Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 raising hopes among Nigerians for restoration of national question issues. However, the capability of the democratic government to address these issues is largely constrained by its institutional weakness. The democratic structures emerged too weak and inexperienced to respond to the national challenges. Thus, the discussion that gained currency and describes the disenchantment of the majority of the people with the democratic government is marginalization. This led to emergence of various militia groups clinging to religion, ethnicity or other special interests in different parts of the country taken up arms against the state and the citizens. The horror they unleash on the people can only be comparable to the civil war years. The Nigeria State on the other hand, unleashes force to maintain order and politicize even genuine agitation to favour those in power. Depending on one's perspective and understanding of the motivations of each group, the groups are defined using different terms; self determination groups, nationalists, guerrilla fighters, rebels, terrorists etc.

Consequently, Nigeria's Fourth Republic has witnessed upsurge of ethnic and communal conflicts. Years of pent-up anger suppressed by years of military misrule found outlets as a result of the expansion of the democratic space. This led to quick escalation of most of already

existing ethnic on flicts in the country. There is nothing new about ethnic conflict in Nigeria. The country's diverse groups have always lived in somewhat uneasily together, and there have been terrible outbreaks of violence in the past (Dokubo, 2001).However, democracy being an ideology which sets a high premium on the basic freedom of fundamental rights of the citizens, the rule of law, right to property ownership, free flow of information and the right of choice between alternative political positions gave Nigerians great expectations from the state at the dawn of democracy which the governments could not fulfill due to institutional weakness (Ikedinma, 2014). Hence, the transition to civilian rule created its own challenges for national security and socio-political development. This is demonstrated by diverse conflicts, upheavals and anti-government agitations by the militia groups operating under the cloak of being marginalized.

Therefore, hiding under the cloak of marginalization, various militia groups clinging to religion, ethnicity or other special interests sprang up in Nigeria, unleashing terror on the people. In addition to their terrible toll on humanity, the activities of these groups and their conflict-prone relationship with security officials have been a constant menace to peace, security, stability and territorial integrity of Nigeria (Dokubo, 2002). The Nigeria State on the other hand, demonstrates through its responses, that its approach is to unleash force to maintain order and to politicize even genuine agitation to favour those in power. Although, these militia groups emerged under different historical circumstances however, they are bound by a common factor of deep dissatisfaction with the Nigerian state.

The emergence of groups resorting to the use of violence and challenging the government, attacking state targets and instilling fear in the minds of citizens is not a historical accident. These groups use violence as an avenue to be heard. They may appear to exist in specific locations and settings across the country and seem to be disparate. However, their emergence is a call for the government to take urgent steps to act in a more just and equitable manner. It is the persistent feeling of deprivation and marginalization that lead these groups to resort to terror, constitute a

security challenge and even raise the question of the sustainability of Nigeria as one country (Ikedinma, 2010).

Consequently, in discussing the emergence of militia groups in Nigeria, it is important to factor in the activities of the groups whether their agitations are genuine or not. This is because, their agitations in whatever cause they believed in and pursue, had elements of violence leading to damage to property, and constituting a threat to national security of the country. All these groups had mounted attacks against the government either by directly attacking the representation of government like the security officers or its economic vein by paralyzing oil exports through pipeline vandalization or kidnapping of citizens and even foreigners. Notwithstanding, the resolution to resort to suppression using the states stock of arsenal of violence often sends the wrong signal to groups that have genuine grievances against the state.

## Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative Deprivation Theory essentially holds that feelings of deprivation and frustration underlie individual decisions to engage in violent collective action. According to this theory, when groups' expectations are met by sustained repression or second class status, the group's reaction may include political violence and aggression. Their motive for engaging in political violence is their observation that they are relatively deprived vis-a-vis other groups in an unfair social order. This should be contrasted with absolute deprivation when a group has been deprived of the basic necessities for survival by government or a social order. This condition can also lead to political violence and aggression.

This theory given by (Gurr1968 in Ikedinma 2014) provides that relative deprivation occurs where individuals or groups subjectively perceive themselves as unfairly disadvantaged over others perceived as having similar attributes and deserving similar rewards to their reference groups. To this end, Walter (1999) contributed that subjective experiences of deprivation is more likely when the differences between the groups

narrow to the extent that comparisons can be easily made than where there are caste-like differences. The discontent arising from relative deprivation has been used to explain radical politics, the rise of social movements, industrial disputes and the whole plethora of crime and deviant behaviour that do occur.

Resistant groups under different socio-political conditions may have specific cause or aim of operations. However, several features are common to all groups, like giving publicity to the existence of their groups, making their interest public to attract support for their cause of actions, discrediting or destabilizing the authorities that may oppose their cause and where necessary adopt resistance, and most often provoke the authorities targeted into taking repressive measures.

These reasons start from the feeling of deprivation which must be considered an essential element in the cause of terror acts. Events have proved that groups relapse to terrorism when they believe all other avenues, including economic protests; public appeal and organized warfare have been blocked. For instance "when defence becomes aggression and offence becomes defence", the weak and the cheated may rely on terrorism to shape up for revenge. This sense of estrangements heightened the conflicts and violence situations in the Niger Delta. On the other hand are alleged encouragements from corrupt elites who are threatened by anti-corrupt policies of the government to sanitize the nation of corrupt practices. These groups are having estranged feeling of being deprived of their privileged opportunities by the constituted authority. They therefore embark on resistance through of violence in order to discredit and destabilize the government.

## Emergence and *Modus Operand* of Militia Groups

The environment in which Nigerians live and their experiences of governance practices is the main factor that led to the emergence of militia groups in Nigeria. And that is why Nigerian State is perceived as unjust, demeaning to the citizens, without guarantees of individual safety and security and exploitative. There is a widespread disenchantment with the government arising from its failure to meet its obligations to the people and the perception that State policies are implemented to advance private interests for personal accumulation. Also the Police and the Judiciary had been greatly enfeebled and subjected to government manipulation, thereby lacking the public credibility and popular confidence to arbitrate on conflictual issues (Olayode 2011). Thus, the governments do not respect court judgments thereby forcing the citizens to take the law into their hands and jungle justice became the order of the day.

Moreover, the politicization of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria has been responsible for the formation of groups such as Odua People's Congress (OPC), Egbesu, the Movement for the Actualization of the State of Biafra (MASSOB), Arewa People's Congress (APC), the Bakasi Boys, Igbo Youth Congress (IYC), Igbo People's Congress (IPC), Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), Niger Delta Resistant Movement (NDRM), Movement for the Survival of the Izon Nationality of the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), the Nigerian or Yobe Taliban, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Jama'at Ahlus al-Sunnab Liddawati Wal Jihad popularly known as Boko Haram and other violence wielding-groups. Indeed political theorem has been the most consistent if not coherent explanation of the rise and fall of militias and catastrophic terrorist groups in Nigeria (Yahaya 2013).

All these militia groups emerged due to the failure of governance, a complacent security regime and absence of strong culture that enables citizens to make effective demands from their rulers. The *modus operandi* of four of these militia groups is here x-rayed as an example of the role and operation of the groups to ascertain their motives namely; Arewa People's Congress (APC), Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Militias in the Niger Delta and the Boko Haram insurgency in the North.

## (i). Oodua People's Congress (OPC)

The group was formed in 1995 as an underground movement trained in preparation for armed resistance against the Abacha regime. It made its first public outing on December 14, 1995 at All Politicians meeting in Lagos, where its banner and hand bills exhorted the Yorubas to take their destiny into their own hands. The group was largely seen for self-determination and as mouth piece of the Yoruba race (Dukubo, 2000). The OPC at its inception had the agenda to liberate the Yoruba nation from the vestiges of oppression and suppression.

In the beginning, the OPC had developed adequate structures such as Elders Council, the National Executive Council that constituted its think tanks. It also had a pseudo- guerrilla arm that had to undergo a systematic dismantling since the original plan that could herald possible secession was over-taken by the overwhelming desire of other zones to allow the South West present the presidential candidate for the 1999 election.

The activities of OPC started to generate serious concern in September 1998, when it called for a boycott of the local government elections scheduled for December of that year. The OPC had no faith in the transition programme of the government headed by General Abdulsalam Abubakar, believing that a return to democracy should be preceded by the restructuring of the Federation. This explains the persistence of the OPC's call for a Sovereign National Conference. The stand of OPC on the election brought the members in direct confrontation with the Police. This hostility before the transition claimed lives of over two hundred (200) policemen and many more of the congress members. The group went underground with "the shoot at sight" directive given by the then President Obasanjo to control the excesses of the group. One can therefore; say that OPC was a purely ethnic militia group formed to champion the interest of the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria because of being marginalized as a result of the annulment of the 1993 claimed to have been won by Abiola of the Yoruba ethnic group.

## (ii) Niger Delta Militants: Origins and Dimensions

The region has an estimated 40 billion barrels in oil reserves in addition to its enormous wealth in forest and water resources (Agbo, 2008). The Niger Delta region is of critical geostrategic importance in the global energy equation and for national economic survival. Despite the enormous natural resources of the Niger Delta, its strategic significance to global energy security, and its importance to Nigeria's national survival, the region has suffered perennial neglect (Agbo, 2008). Although oil is produced from its lands, the Niger Delta remains in poverty, deprivation and environmental despoliation. Poverty in the region is on the increase and is the highest of all six of Nigeria's geo-political regions (UNDP, 2006).

In terms of Nigeria's legal regime, ownership of land and all mineral resources rest in the State. In section 44(3) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the entire property in and control of all mineral oils and natural gas in, under or upon the land or territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria are vested in the Federal Government (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004). Similarly, State ownership of land in Nigeria has also been given statutory authority. In section 1 of the Land Use Act (Cap.L5, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004), all land is vested in the State and held in trust for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians. The combined effect of these provisions is that the Federal Government, through the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, grants exploratory and production rights to Multinational Oil Corporations (MNOCs) through joint venture agreement. The result of this exploration has been that the host communities are excluded from participation and do not share in the benefits, either.

The exclusion of local communities from the economic benefits of oil production triggered demonstration against the entrenched legal order by those demanding resource ownership, leading to sporadic revenue-sharing configurations. The militancy in the Niger Delta is, therefore, occasioned by the endemic poverty of the locals, fragment environmental degradation and destruction of livelihood sources by MNOCs,

marginalization and inequitable distribution of revenue, repression and human right abuses.

Niger Delta militancy is not a new phenomenon. As early as 1966, Isaac Jasper AdakaBoro, a former police officer from the Delta, led a rebellion against the Nigerian state with the aim of achieving liberation for the Niger Delta people. The extreme repression of the protests by the military government momentarily calmed down the agitators. However, the resistance resurfaced with greater intensity in 1998, when Ijaw Youths gathered in the town of Kaiama to endorse what later become known as the Kaiama Declaration. The Youths declared that all land and natural resources within the Ijaw territory belonged to Ijaw communities and further denounced all laws that robbed their people of their land and resources. The Kaiama declaration was the harbinger of the contemporary form of violence by the militants who abandoned the non-violent and embraced massive disruption of oil installation, car bombings, taking of hostages (especially expatriate workers and politicians), and indiscriminate attacks and killing of security/military personnel as their *modus operandi* (Dukobo, 2000).

For the Niger Delta people, the struggle in the region is for self-determination against expropriation of their natural resources by the Nigerian State (Agbo, 2008). Analysts on the whole support the view that the conflict in the region is as a result of a history of injustice, inequality and inequity (Kamedi, 2002). On this basis, therefore, their violence against the State and the oil companies that personify this injustice is justified in accordance with the principle of a liberation struggle (Sampson, 2012). Thus, the militant groups in the Niger Delta enjoy substantial local support (Howden,2006). Unfortunately, Nigeria's response to the liberation struggle is consistent with State practice in relation to self-determination.

### (iii). The Arewa People's Congress (APC)

The Arewa People's Congress preceded the formation of the Northern People's Congress, the brainchild of the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduana of Sokoto, arguably the most powerful politician in the first republic who preached a "Policy of North for Northerners"

However, on 13th December 1999, Sagir Mohammed a retired operative of the Directorate of Military Intelligence became a rallying point when he launched the re-born Arewa People's Congress (APC) in Kano specifically to checkmate the militancy of the pan-Yoruba Oodua People's Congress (OPC).

After the launch of the APC, Mohammed started receiving solidarity messages from individuals across the northern states. While some of them commended him for the non-violence posture of the APC, others out-rightly pressured him to raise an army to combat the OPC especially. He is believed to have acquiesced to this latter request, even though he denied that APC recruited some retired or dismissed soldiers for training as a counter force.

Mohammed, an intelligence officer was known to have made this calling to achieve his aim. To achieve his aim, that is balancing terror in Nigeria, he has formed a committee of Northern traditional rulers, retired judges and lawyers, retired senior members of the Armed forces, the police, professionals, student leaders, market people, farmers and politicians. This body convened a series of meetings in Kano and Kaduna. It was at the meeting of 4th and 5th December 1999, held in two northern cities that the men resolved to form the APC to, among other things, "carry out activities aimed at protecting and promoting the cultural, economic and political interests of the northern states and their people" (The News, January, 2000). In its mission statement the APC clearly stated that:

i.    That the organization is firmly committed to the preservation of the corporate entity known as Nigeria since 1 October, 1960 and in its present composition is not negotiable;

ii.   The organization shall use all democratic and legal methods to achieve its objectives of ensuring the survival of one indivisible Nigeria;

iii. The organization shall maintain offices in each of the states of the former Northern Nigeria;

iv. iv. The organization will carry out activities aimed at protecting and promoting the cultural, economic and political interests of the Northern states and their people;

v. v. The organization deplores the sectarian killings in various parts of the federation; While the organization has the fullest confidence in the law enforcement apparatus of the country, it will look at ways to protect Northerners from any such attacks and this in a swift and decisive manner (Agbo, 2000).

At a press conference in Kano, the group's director of publicity, research and documentation, AsapZadok, listed the double standards by the Federal government which he alleged were encouraging violence against other Nigerians, especially those from the North. The APC, therefore, was formed in "direct response to the unacceptable and violent activities of the OPC against the northerners (This Day, June, 2000). He warned that henceforth, the APC will respond promptly and appropriately to any attack on a northerner by the OPC in the country.

### (iii)    The Boko Haram Group

The group evolution and differing interpretations regarding motivations, presents challenges in defining this group from a local, national and international perspective (Blanguart, 2012). Boko Haram can be understood as an Islamist insurgency that has risen from political and religious discontent within Nigeria (Adesoji&Onuoha, 2012;Blanquart; 2012). Boko Haram can be considered as a terrorist organization, freedom fighters or religious fanatics. However, through an examination of the origins and philosophy of Boko Haram and comparisons with established terrorist organizations such as the Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram is described as a terrorist organization with both political and religious motives. Thus, Boko Haram is a Nigerian militant Islamist terrorist group which seeks political and religious reform within Nigeria specifically the adoption of Sharia law with beliefs based in the practice of orthodox Islam (Bagaji*et al*, 2012).

Their interpretation of Islam abhors and rejects western civilization and education as sacrilegious and the name 'Boko Haram' is derived from this belief (Adesoji, 2011). This fanatical Islamist sect recruits from the Northern Nigeria targeting disaffected youths, unemployed university students and street children (Almajiris) by addressing grievances and radicalizeing its members (Nicoll, 2012). This group threatens Nigerian sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace, national security and stability by targeting symbols of authority within Nigeria as well as committing a broad range of crimes such as robberies and acts of vandalism.

Within Nigeria, religion has played a crucial part in politics with religion and State seemingly inseparable. In the last two decades, Nigeria has experienced recurrent religious and ethno-religious hostilities and conflicts (Bagaji *et al* 2012, Isichei, 1987). Boko Haram can be seen to have risen out of a change in political landscape and sponsored for political discontent and religious aims.

Walker (2012) noted that since 2009, after the death of their leader, attacks perpetrated by this group have grown in lethality and sophistication and the group has become increasingly cell-like in structure. The sect has engaged in targeted killings, kidnappings, especially school girls, shootings, and fire bombings, bombings using Impoverished Explosive Devices (IEDS), Vehicle-Born Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDS) and suicide bombings. Target selection has evolved from a focus on Nigerian security forces to also include politicians, military, police, critical infrastructure, civilians, government infrastructure, schools, churches including UN building (Gruenbaum, 2009).

Boko Haram can be seen to exhibit similar tactics and motivations as the current wave of terrorism that is 'religious'. Religion acts as an ideological force, legitimizes and unifier of the group and aims to achieve one of the three primary religious goals: establishment of a pure religious state;

establishing religious government; or destruction of earth (Johnson, 2011). Nigeria is a religiously heterogeneous, ethnically diverse, a highly polarized country and the government is ineffective in dealing with non-state groups such as Boko Haram. Delvin-Foltz (2010) described the potential for this situation to be an incubator for international terrorism. He pointed out that Boko Haram could springboard into the remaining parts of Nigeria and eradication is increasingly difficult with the wider security force being infiltrated and corrupted by Boko Haram members (Blanguart, 2012).

The ethnic militia groups examined here that is, the A.P.C; O.P.C.; the Niger Delta Militants and Boko Haram differ in many respects. The A.P.C; O.P.C. and Niger Delta Militants are notinvolved in any religious bigotry. Instead, they sought major restructuring of the federation, focusing on collective grievances and were highly selective in their destructive tendencies. The basis of their struggle is self-determination. They often used traditional symbols and cultural solidarity for grass-root mobilization. Their sense of unity was defined to a large extent by resentment against exploitation. The Niger Delta militants were motivated by deep-seated feelings of economic injustice and political marginalization. Almost the same logic drives the A.P.C. and the Oodua People's Congress(OPC); the Yorubas feel a sense of political marginalization in the deliberate frustrations of their past attempt to capture federal power, particularly with the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election claimed to be won by Chief M.K.OAbiola; while the Northerners, on the other hand, felt being marginalized with the shift of power to the South in the second republic when Gen. Obansajo became the president of the country after the 1999 general elections. The North regards the leadership of the country as their birth-right and was fidgeting with the change in 1999 with a southerner as the president.

However, the motivations and demand of the Boko Haram group are totally different from that of other groups and can easily lead to total disintegration of any political system. From the onset, the mission of Boko Haram is to stifle western culture and democracy. They have intended to advance a religious and political cause

by aiming to intimidate the Nigerian government to create Sharia law and intimidate the Christian public. Acts committed by this group have not been advocacy, protest, dissent or industrial action that is not intended to cause serious harm, that is, physical to a person. Boko Haram members are not freedom fighters or religious fanatics.

"The emergence of private armies or militias in Nigeria has serious implications for security. As a symptom, it suggests a deterioration of the Nigerian political condition. The activities of militias being uncontrolled as it were, tend exacerbate problems rather than facilitate solution" (Ikedinma, 2014).

**States' Policy Actions**

Sometimes government applies force in addressing the problem of illegal possession and use of arms by armed groups as is the case of deployment of soldiers to Rivers State at present by the Federal government to stop the cult clashes in the state capital, Port-Harcourt. In an important report by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2000), it is depicted thus: Government often makes a reactive response to conflict relying on use of force. Such deployments fail to address the root cause of conflict and it is extremely unusual for them to include any attempt to facilitate reconciliation among the warring factions. The Police have attempted to respond at different stages of conflicts, but lack the capacity to do so effectively. In many cases, they have been overwhelmed by the proliferation of arms in the community. Their lack of capacity to guarantee security has in itself encouraged militarization of the nation. Many societies are becoming increasingly militarized. Militarization includes the presence of heavily armed police-men or soldiers patrolling streets, military censorship, armed guards in schools and public buildings, armed checkpoints along roads and curfews (Musa, 20014). The most consequence of societal militarization has been the realization of cultural militarism and the horizontal diffusion of weapons throughout the communities.

Widespread proliferation has often led to the acceptance of weapons as a normal part of life and violent conflict as an everyday occurrence.

These developments have created widespread anxieties induced by perceived threats to personal security and consequent domestic arms races. The formation of ethnic militia groups, civilian defense groups and armed *vigilante* groups can be seen as both symptoms and causal factors in processes of societal militarization and weapons proliferation (Ikedinma, 2014).

## The Implications for National Security

The foregoing situations pose serious challenges and obvious threats to national security. The fact is that whereas Federalism and National Security are supposed to be mutually reinforcing for managing conflicts by societies that are characterized by multiplicity of ethnic groups, acrimony and convoluted hostility are fostered among people of the different ethnic backgrounds who ordinarily should be at peace with one another. This obviously has grave implication for national security. The security of any nation is heavily dependent on its internal social cohesion. Political stability, internal social cohesion, a solid economic base, a content citizenry among others, thus constitutes the credible foundation upon which the value of national security is predicated (Zabadi & Gambo, 2000).

The declining capacity of Nigeria State to deliver dividend of democracy to the citizens has several implications to the national security of the state itself. It is thus a threat to its survival. The declining capacity of the states in Africa and Nigeria in particular for development is clearly seen in the record of their economic failure, lack of human development, poverty, illiteracy, electoral violence and political conflict.

Democracy is, although, a constitutional means of resolving conflicts, the expansion of the democratic space released the cap on pent-up anger suppressed over the years of autocratic rule. Nigeria is currently trying to consolidate democracy civilian-to-civilian elections and even an opposition party winning election without an open war. However, the acrimony within the contesting tendencies is palpable.

Localized conflicts have been sustained by massive socio-economic disparities and the emergence of emancipator movements. These issues present a major obstacle to achieving log-term peace (with justice) and human security. Communal conflicts have been exacerbated and even intensified by wide spread poverty which has provided the protagonists with the tools to resolve conflicts violently and improve their socio-economic position by engaging in criminal activities.

In a democratizing polity like Nigeria, where resources tend to be scarce and state capacity relatively weak, ethnic cleavages provide ethnic warriors with the means and power in criminal activities, and in the process severely undermine the rule of law. Consequently, this leads to an increasing sense of insecurity as a result of lack of faith in the states' ability to provide personal protection.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Clearly the challenges facing Nigeria are serious and the solutions are scarce. Militia activities have proven to be the most prolific and perennial threat to the national security of Nigeria the contemporary times. After over six decades of independence and seventeen years of continuous democratic government, the country has failed to perform the three basic responsibilities of a State, which are maintenance of peace, security and welfare of its citizens. The improvement of the security situation in Nigeria, the enhancement of the ability of Nigeria to achieve its national security objectives and combating violence against the state and the citizens remain the main challenges.

Ethnic conflicts, exacerbated by the proliferation of militia groups, have led to loss of lives and valuable property. They have also created a state of uncertainty and economic dislocations. Investor's confidence in the economy has been weakened. The capacity of law enforcement and security agencies has been over-stretched beyond limits. Attention of government has been diverted from social needs of the people to efforts to manage these conflicts and control the proliferation of these agents of death.

Human security does not supplant national security. A human security perspective asserts that the security of the state is not end-in-itself. Rather, it is a means of ensuing security for its people. In this context, state security and human security are mutually supportive. Building an effective, democratic state that values its own people and protects minorities is a central strategy for controlling ethnic militia proliferation. At the same time, improving the human security of its people strengthens the legitimacy, stability and security of a state.

Therefore, citizen's security provides an enabling environment for peaceful co-existence. Enhancing safety for people is a prerequisite for bringing ethnic conflicts and militia activities under control. Promoting human development is also an important strategy for changing violent behaviour of the populace. This ultimately strengthens national security. Precisely, addressing inequalities which are often root causes of violent ethnic conflicts, strengthening governance structures and providing humanitarian and development assistance are vital compliments to political, legal and military initiatives which will ultimately stop ethnic militia conflicts in Nigeria.

Finally, the establishment of culture of peace should be encouraged among the citizenry. There is the need among Nigerian people for re-orientation, particularly among the young ones and in the grass-root, in terms of violence as a means of conflict resolutions

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