THE FAILED STATE SYNDROME AND THE NIGERIAN NARRATIVE

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Abstract
This paper examines the of insurgency by non-state actors within the context of a failed state. It provides a non-positivist qualitative view from a number of indicators to argue that the spate of insurgency in various parts of Nigeria which has resulted in the increasing number of internally displaced persons, looming food crisis, the frightening rate of unemployment especially amongst youths, as well as the rate of poverty and hunger across various regions, makes Nigeria to be categorised as a failed state. More so, the problem of development or crisis of development in the country goes beyond poor economic performance. Other indicators such as the breakdown of political legitimacy, the state’s inability to protect lives and property and quelling religious extremism are necessary albeit not sufficient conditions in building strong states and its development process.

Keywords: Failed State, Insurgency, Religious Extremism, Grievances, Economic Development

Introduction
Nigeria has been under military regimes for more than three decades; the 1999 democratic elections was a turning point as Nigerians decided to reject military rule to embrace a democratic culture of governance. However, regime change from military to democratic rule seems to have created skepticism with regards on how long will democratic rule last in the country. Wouldn’t there be a likely return to military rule? These skepticism hinge of broken dreams and expectations, as the country seems to be tottering towards a brink of collapse given the socio-political and economic crisis currently affecting most states in the Northern and Southern Nigeria. More so, the economic performance of various democratic regimes, over the years have left many Nigerians not only poorer, but in a desperate situation (Isukul and Chizea, 2015). A situation that is further compounded by the spate of insurgency from non-state actors such as Boko Haram in the North, Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East and Niger Delta Militants in Southern Nigeria (Iyekekpolo, 2017; Markovic, 2021). Consequently, the Nigerian state is said to be failing in terms of securing lives and property, providing basic infrastructure, as well as, providing the...
enabling environment for its citizens to strive in meeting their potential desires. Although rights to participation in the political process, maintenance of law and order, social justice, human rights, provision of equal employment opportunities, and promotion of economic development are necessary conditions, they can only be enhanced and strengthened through the provision of security that protects lives and property (Rotberg (2005))

**Concept of State and Statehood**

A state is a political entity that is given recognition and authority with a defined territory and treated with equal rights as others within the international community (John; 2008). Statehood on the other hand, is represented as centralized government that has the legitimate authority over a defined territory, a defined population and the ability to enter into relations with other sovereign states. According to Niccolo Machiavelli, a key element of the state is the use of force and force alone. Also, Max Weber views the state as a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory, even when the right to use physical force is given to other institutions or other persons only to the extent to which the state authorizes it. Furthermore, Thomas Hobbes idea of the state was that of a social contract between the citizen and the state. Hobbes maintained that individuals who lived without the boundaries of a state, and the rule of law are likely to find themselves in a barbaric and hopeless state of war, in which life was short, nasty and brutish. Thus, statehood involved individuals willingly and voluntarily entering a social contract with the state, in doing so – the individuals would give up their freedom in exchange for peace, progress, security and prosperity. Also, Helman and Ratner (1993) were concerned with situations where a state is unable to sustain itself as a member of the international community. They held the opinion that a failed state would have severe ramifications for its own citizens and neighboring communities through random warfare, militancy, political instability and massive refugee inflow. On the other hand, Ignatieff (2002) suggests that state failure occurs when the state loses the monopoly of the means of violence. whilst, Zartman (1995) maintains that state failure occurs when the basic functions of the state can no longer be performed. That is a situation where the authority (legitimate power), structure, political order, sovereignty and law have fallen apart. In addition, the state failure to deliver positive “political goods” to her citizens, results in the loss of legitimacy (Rotberg, 2002).
Failed State and Resource Curse Theory

The resource curse theory is considered one of the most influential propositions in recent times. The theory states that the abundance of natural resources such as diamond, gold, silver or crude oil, causes poor economic growth, developmental crisis, as well as trigger conflict in developing countries (John, 2008; John, 2011). Whilst, the abundance of oil is considered beneficial to political and economic development, it is however more of a curse than a blessing to most developing countries (Goodman and Worth, 2008; James and Aadland, 2011; Aragon and Rud 2013; Zuo and Schieffer, 2014). In an extensive review of the theoretical literature, van der Ploeg (2011) suggests that the channels through which natural resources can negatively affect the economic performance of states or nation. These include (1) volatility of international commodity prices, (2) appreciation of the exchange rates, (3) temporary loss of learning by doing, (4) weak and decaying institutions, (5) expectation of better times and negative genuine savings, (6) rent seeking behavior, (7) institutionalized levels of corruptions, (8) authoritative political systems and (9) unsustainable policies. Thus, if developing countries to some extent learn to mitigate, control or avoid these channels, resources windfall leakages can be transformed from a resource curse to a resource blessing for nation states.

The resource curse argument can be categorized into two variants. The first is the rent seeking or honey pot argument, which states that developing countries with an abundance of oil tend to generate valuable rents and the presence of these rents tends to cause violent forms of rent seeking that take the form of greed-based insurrection, insurgencies and conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler (2001, 2002, 2004; Di John, 2011). Also, Rent can easily be explained as excess income or the proportion of earnings that exceeds the minimum amount that is needed to attract a firm to enter a particular industry or a worker to accept a particular job (Milgrom and Roberts, 1992). Rents usually take many forms such as: extra income earned from exclusive ownership of a resource, whether specialized knowledge or natural resource, higher than competitive rates of return in monopolies, extra income from politically organized transfers such as subsidies (Khan, 2000). In the conventional view, the availability of rents is the main source of rent seeking and corruption (Mauro, 1998). Rent seeking can be described as an economic activity that occurs when individuals, firms or entity seeks to gain wealth without any reciprocal contribution of productivity. Alternatively, rent-seeking can be explained as an activity which seeks to create, maintain or change the rights and institutions on which particular rents are based. They can be
regarded as influencing activities, which range from political lobbying, bribing, and advertising, to taking up arms.

The second variant of the resource argument is used specifically to explain the instruments through which resource abundance instigates violent conflict, is the rentier state model. The main proposition of the rentier state model of governance is that when states gain a large percentage of their revenues from external sources, such as resource or commodity rents, consequently reduces the necessity of political/state decision-makers to levy domestic taxes and it causes leaders to become less accountable to groups and individuals within the society. Fearon and Laiti (2003) postulates that the oil resource states are most likely to have weaker state structures because they do not have a need to build strong bureaucracies to increase revenue. Weak state structure – tend to make the state more vulnerable to insurgency. Oil abundant economies in developing countries possess high levels of rents accessible within the economy, there is evidence to suggest that the resource abundant-political violence link in such developing economies is critical to assertions that oil resource rents contribute to armed rebellion in developing countries.

State Failure: Religious Extremism
Religious extremism is a problem that has been in existence since the invention of religion (Iannaccone and Berman, 2006; Hashmi, 2009). As history has revealed, virtually all religions have exhibited some form of violent extremism (Juergenmeyer, 2006, Hent de Vries 2009, Martin, 2011). There are several definitions of religious extremism, Prus (2005) defines it as an intense sense of ideological fervor that is usually accompanied by highly focused sets of activities that express the devotion of one or more individuals to their particular belief system. He further identified specific characteristics of religious extremism, they include: eradication of designated enemies, monastic seclusion of members, vilification of outsiders, criminalization of non-compliant members and extended proselytization of non-members. Although religious extremist sects appear to have harsh and cruel practices, these practices tend to reflect the norms and ritual activities of different religions and are embraced, supported and certified by members who do not perceive these practices as extreme, but a normal way of doing things that has been approved by a superior being. Religious extremism in some sense can be seen as a process of the expansion of religious laws beyond the boundaries of the religious sect to the inclusion of the public domain. Religious extremist sought to enforce their laws in the society they live in and as a result it creates political conflict as its laws contradict the laws of the state.
The rise of religious extremism is sometimes as a result of the state functioning poorly, the state is unable to provide the basic needs of the individuals who live within the state, religious extremists become major suppliers of social services, political action and cohesive force. Thakur (2006) suggest that religious extremism can be as a result of increasing levels of poverty within the state that stems from state policies that encourage marginalization, economic inequities, massive levels of unemployment, deteriorating standards of living. Iannaccone and Berman (2006) supports the view of Thakur (2006) who observes that the rising incidents of religious extremism in developing countries is the result of failing or failed states that have been unable to provide protection for individuals within the state, incapable to provide an environment for unemployed individuals within the state to earn a living – leading to the emergence of various extremist groups. Sudan has been identified as a safe haven for breeding and training religious extremist groups and sects such as Egyptian Islamic group, Palestinian Islamic group, Hamas, and Hezbollah. This is as a result of decades of worsening economic condition, deteriorating standard of living, government repression and political instability. Furthermore, in developing countries like Nigeria, the story is the same, an emergence of religious extremism from a failure of the state to do the needful. Nigeria has rising levels of unemployment, skyrocketing prices levels resulting in galloping inflation, poor and declining per capita income, dilapidated infrastructure and high levels of corruption in government especially in Northern Nigeria (Danjibo, 2009).

Some scholars have questioned the poverty thesis as the root cause of religious extremism in developing countries as fairytale by arguing that most religious extremists do come from the elite and upper class in the society (Gorski, 2002). These further evident in Nigeria where the leader of Boko Haram Sect, Mohammed Yusuf lived a very opulent life style, and the Christmas day terrorist Umar Farouk was also born to a wealthy family. Thus, the poverty proposition thesis has failed to account for these variations, whereby a peculiar elite interest/manipulation have further increased our understanding of acts of violent extremism. Muogbo (2009) and Onuoha (2012) suggest that members of the political elite, who feel neglected, deprived and are vehemently opposed to the prevailing socioeconomic order – use violent disposition of religious extremist for the purpose of economic and socio-political gains. At other times, the political and religious elites use violent extremism as an instrument to express their personal grievances against the state by mobilizing their members to commit crimes against the state. Thus, they intentionally and carefully by design exploit their religious to score cheap political points at the expense of the state (Falola, 1998).
Failed State: Some indicators
A number relevant studies (Cammack et al., 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2007; Stewart and Brown, 2009; NAY, 2012), have linked state failures to issues of security and development (Collier, 2007; Iqbal and Starr, 2008), with the assumption that a legitimate and functioning state is a necessary condition for re-establishing security and peace, social order and economic development as well as, credible democratic institutions, (Collmer erhoff, 2007; Zoellick, 2008; Brink, 2009). However, despite the diverse literature on state failure, there is some consensus in terms of specific indicators that are necessary in categorizing a failed state. The most notable is a consistence and persistent level of political violence in the state by agents and organizations who do not have legitimacy in the usage of violence within the boundaries of the state. In Rotberg (2003) perspective, failed states are deeply conflicted, tense, dangerous, and intensely contested by contending factions. It is the norm in most failed states that government troops battle armed militants, religious and extremist groups in the state. In defining a failed state Rotberg was clear, he maintained that the intensity of violence does not necessarily define a failed state. What does, is the persistent, enduring and consistent character of the violence (as in Sudan, Burundi, and Angola). The growth of criminal gangs can be regarded as a closely related indicator of state failure. Here the presence of drug-trafficking, gangs, arms and criminal syndicates are substantive evidence of symptoms of a failed state. A second indicator that can be used to tell when a state has failed is the inability of a country to effectively control its borders. In such states, the expression of official authority is usually limited to the capital city and city center’s – while other regions and zones are heavily contested by armed militants and other extremist groups. As the literature on failed state suggests, one important measure of assessing state failure is how much of the state geographical territory is under government control. Also, failure of a state can be based on inability to deliver political goods such as securing lives and property. The purpose of a nation state is to deliver political goods – security, economic opportunity, education, environmental surveillance, and providing of basic infrastructure.

Failed State and process of Development
It is argued that there is a positive relationship between the state and its levels of development – strong states are states which maintain territorial integrity, provide security of lives and property, maintain a monopoly of violence, and has effective institutions that creates an enabling and conducive environment for trade and business to take place (Rotberg, 2003) The same cannot be said of failed or failing states. In such state where there are parallel and shadow governments and
the level of political violence is escalating on a persistent basis, where the lives and properties of the individuals in the state cannot be secured – it is impossible for any meaningful development to take place, whatever initiatives or development that occurs, can easily be wiped out by the levels of political violence that occurs within the state. As such, state failure has a negative impact on the levels of development (Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Ibaba, 2013). States that are failing are unable to maintain any sensible levels of development, states that are failing are likely to be experiencing a developmental crisis across its territory; as there is an obvious inability of the state to protect its citizens from militants, religious extremists and other armed gang that consistently unleash violence against the state (Zartman, 1995; Di John, 2008).

For most developing countries that are dealing with failing state, the issue of development is usually on the front burner, as government officials, policy makers and foreign investors grapple with this complicated problem (Barbier, 1987; Sen, 1993; Todaro and Smith, 2015). The importance of development for developing economies battling with the failed state issue cannot be over emphasized – as development in socio-economic terms is one means of resolving the failed state issue (Acemoglu, et al., 2001; Osaghae, 2007; Ibaba, 2013). If a state is developed, and citizens of the state are gainfully employed and put to productive uses and earning a decent wage – while providing for their family and making meaningful contribution to the society, it becomes difficult, and almost impossible for these citizens to be aggrieved with the state and maliciously use violence to destroy and distort the fortunes of the state. Consequently, it is much easier to develop states which are not dealing with this level of political violence and threats to the territorial integrity of the state. Nevertheless, development is an issue that developing countries continue to grapple with. In the development literature, the word development is heavily contested, theoretically, empirically and politically and it can be regarded as ambiguous, complex and vague (Meier, 1976; Rodney, 1973; Isukul and Chizea, 2022). We view development within the lens of progress, transition and change, a change in productive capacity, a change in living conditions, a change in basic infrastructure and a change in the well-being of the citizens of a state (Todaro and Smith, 2015; Isukul and Chizea, 2022). Certainly, the simple definitions of development tend to maintain the notion of good change – although this description further results in generating further questions as to what is good and what sort of change matters (Aduloju, and Pratt, 2014). Although the narrative and theme of change is an overriding consensus in the development literature – what comprises or what consists of good change is something that is bound to be severely contested. As the development literature suggests, there is no uniform answer on what good change is – views
that may be supported by one segment of the development community may not necessarily be shared or valued by other members of the development community (Aduloju, and Pratt, 2014).

**Demographic Pressures**

Nigeria currently has the largest number of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa, with 105 million people said to be living in extreme poverty according to the 2020 World Poverty report. Ibaba (2013) suggests that the poverty problem in Nigeria is actually getting worse, the estimates of people in poverty has increased over the last twenty years from 17 million in 1980 to 105 million people in 2019. Furthermore, the report reveals that men tended to me worse off on the poverty ladder when compared to their female counter part, with an estimated 53 million men living below poverty levels. The women were slighted better, but almost just as bad – with an estimated 51.5 million women who were extremely poor. From the report, it the following conclusion can be drawn, Nigeria has fallen short of its goal of reducing poverty with -4.4 people escaping poverty on a per second basis. With limited government intervention, social safety nets and welfare packages, more than 105 million Nigerians live on less than $2 a day. The global economic recession and the recent ongoing COVID-19 crisis has worsened poverty levels in developing countries especially Nigeria, and there is the need for government intervention, improvement in social protection systems and poverty alleviated programs targeted at reducing future shocks through expanding existing social facilities.

The worsening poverty levels and numbers come as a shock as president Muhammadu Buhari administration has provided conflicting data – his reports maintains that his poverty policy initiatives have successfully removed an estimated 10.5 million Nigerians. This contradicts data from the World Poverty Clock and the World Bank which suggests that the poverty problem in Nigeria is getting worse. Regardless of overwhelming evidence of the abundance of natural resources and arable farm lands, Nigeria is a poor country with a teeming population and lacking the existence of basic social infrastructure and amenities. The frightening perspective is that the population appears to be increasing faster than the available resources that is being generated to support it. In spite of increasing government earnings and revenues from the petroleum sector, estimated to be about $700 billion dollars since independence, the standard of living of the average Nigeria is not only getting worse, but it is also becoming pitiable. The available socio-economic and demographic indicator provided by the World Poverty Clock depicts the grim reality – deteriorating living conditions, the lack of basic social infrastructure and social amenities, lack of accessibility to health care, education and poor epileptic power supply for a country the size of
Nigeria. In most satellite towns and rural areas, the problem is even worse – as the access to basic social amenities and infrastructure worsens as you move from the cities to the rural areas. The data of demographic pressure on the failed state indicator is suggesting that poverty in Nigeria is worsening from a score of 8.4 in table 3 in 2010, to a score of 8.8 in 2021. These results appear to be consistent with that of the World Poverty Clock and World Bank data.

**Group Grievances**

For a multicultural and diverse ethnic group in a country like Nigeria, it is a common occurrence to have ethnic divisions, arguments and conflicts as one ethnic group is pitted against another, or as the various ethnic group jostle for political powers and economic positions, it is inevitable that there will be disputes over property ownership, tussle over chieftaincy stools, and ministerial positions in public offices. Over the years, these disputes have continued to worsen, both in intensity and length of time, with conflicts turning very violent and the loss of lives and property increasing over time. As a result of these conflicts, a lot of bad blood, suspicions and acrimony have been generated over the decades among the various ethnic group in Nigeria. These grievances, agitations and conflict continue to escalate across the state. More importantly, these agitations and conflicts have resulted in instability in the country in northern and southern Nigeria. The agitation by separatist groups has continued to worsen, as the various groups in the Nigeria have been seeking to become separate and independent states. Agitations by independent people of Biafra (IPOB), Oduduwa People Republic (OPR), Arewa Republic (AR) and the Niger Delta Republic (NDR) have become the norm rather than the exception. The calls for separatism tend to come in different forms, the OPR has been explicit on the need for a Sovereign National Conference to decide two critical issues, should Nigeria continue to exist as a country and if so how and under what arrangement? In northern Nigeria, separatist songs are being chanted by AR and the demand for their own republic – as these group in Northern Nigeria perceive that Southern Nigeria is benefitting immensely from the North, and the North would do so much better without them. The region of the Niger Delta, is not left out from the separatist agenda, as the group within this region strong feel that they have not benefited immensely from the oil resources within the region. That the government of the day has neglected them, and usurped the use of their natural resources to develop other regions within the state.

Consequently, there is presently some feeling of dissatisfaction and alienation among the various ethnic groups that constitute the Nigerian State. As each group is suspicious of the intentions of the other and this has resulted in deep levels of mistrusts and may be one reasons the calls by
separatist groups has been on the increase. The IPOB tend to be running a shadow government and have called for no work days on several occasions as the leader of the group remains incarcerated and is presently being tried for treasonable felony. However, some caution and circumspection should be taken – it is still very difficult to know if the calls for separation by the leaders of the separatist group across Nigeria is a reflection of the will of the people since a referendum has not been called. It could well be that, the separatist group are intent on wielding political power, and this agitation may simply reflect the interest and aspiration of the leaders and not the people. A recent gallop poll reflects the dissatisfaction of the people, as it appears that the citizens have lost faith in the ability of the present government to address most of the concerns that the country is having, the economic challenges are worsening, the insecurity issues are escalating, tensions between the various ethnic groups is on the rise. The group grievance from the failed state indicator is suggesting some marginal decline. Table 3 reveals some minor improvement from a score of 9.5 in 2008 to a score of 8.8 in 2021.

Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons
After more than 14 years into the crisis in north-eastern Nigeria, there are no sign of the crisis waning or abating in the region. The worrisome tragedy is that the prolong, protracted and escalating nature of the crisis has left the region devastated – and worsening and bad situation caused by a long history of under development, poverty and marginalization. The intensification and escalation of the crisis in 2014 resulted in great deprivation, widespread displacement, massive loss of life and property in the region, and a sense of despondency and dispiritedness in the region. More recently, the various escalation of the crisis has resulted in the security situation in the region becoming unpredictable as the fluidity and rapidity of the attacks have risen to new levels. In 2020, some of the most ruthless attacks were recorded against aid workers and internally displaced persons. At the moment, the humanitarian situation that has resulted from the crisis is speedily and imminently approaching famine levels and is characterized by severe malnutrition, food insecurity, and exposure to communicable diseases. The persistent and protracted attacks against fishermen and farmers have been reported, has worsened an already bad food security problem in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe (DTM, 2021).

Conflicts and violence in 2021 were responsible for triggering 376,000 new movements in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. This increment surpassed the 2020 figure by two and folds. The most damaging event were two successive attacks in Yobe in the month of April that led to the displacement of 190,000 persons. The intensity in the violence and worsening insecurity led to the
closure of humanitarian operations in Dikwa and Damasak areas in Borno in April. Many indigenes and non-indigenes resident in the crisis prone areas have been forced to flee for fear of loss of their lives at various times. Others have had to return home after the closure of the displacement camps by the Borno state government (DTM, 2021). These violent attacks by the Boko Haram sect have spilt into other bordering countries in the region, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger who have been unwillingly drawn into a destructive, devastating and protracted regional conflict. Thus far, the Lake Chad Basin is struggling to address a complex humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the expanding violence caused by the Boko Haram Islamic sect. It is estimated that more than 3.2 million people have been displaced as a result of the crisis, a bulk of the 2.9 million displaced persons were resident in north-eastern Nigeria, while there is over 684,000 IDPS in Chad, Niger and Cameroon (DTM, 2021). Despite the best effort of the Nigerian, Chad, Niger and Cameroon government, in terms of provision of humanitarian aids – to address the issue of humanitarian crisis that has resulted from conflict, an estimated 12.5 million people are in dire need of humanitarian aids in the region, with more than 5.3 million people in need of food security. The enormous challenge of securing and protecting displaced persons is amplified by the declining security situation as well as the economic depravity, with communities in the region facing harsh climatic condition, poor infrastructure, recurrent epidemics, chronic poverty and limited access to basic social amenities. Furthermore, some concerted effort by the Nigerian military in combined effort with the Multinational Joint Task force, have made some modest successes in driving the extremist sects from many territories once controlled by the Islamic sect, however these gains have been dwarfed by an increase in the presence of Boko Haram Sect in neighboring countries (DTM, 2021).

Poverty and Economic Decline/Uneven Economic Development
The Nigerian economy is currently facing severe external macroeconomic shocks whose global occurrence has had significant impact on the economy – the COVID 19 pandemic has devastated the global economy and developing economies like Nigeria. With an estimated 6.4 million deaths, 538 million recovered cases and 567 million infected persons. Even before the pandemic plague disrupted global economics, developing countries like Nigeria had structural vulnerabilities such as food shortages, social and economic inequalities, extreme poverty, violent conflicts, environmental fragility, climate change-related emergencies and declining trust in government (Isukul, Chizea and Tobin, 2020). As such, many developing countries such as Nigeria seemed to lack the resources and economic capacity to scale up health and social interventions as well as the
fiscal spaced needed to implement support measures the way countries in Europe and Asia have done. More importantly, containment measures put in place to mitigate the spread of the virus further affect businesses and domestic households, and has disrupted food and product supply chains, which has worsened the food security crisis and may result in social disruption. Beyond the enormous and uneven burdens of death and hospitalization, the pandemic has seen more women forced out of work than men, while children and disabled persons have faced severe barriers in accessing education (Isukul, Chizea and Tobin, 2020). The international monetary fund (IMF) estimates that the loss to the global economy from the pandemic will be $12.5 trillion dollars by 2024. For low-income countries such as Nigeria, the pandemic has escalated the debt burden to new heights, it is estimated to rise between $2.5 and 3.3 trillion over the one year. Furthermore, developing countries lost more than a $110 billion flowing out of the region, this was more than 2.5 times the number of outflows during the global financial crisis. The sudden capital outflows resulted in many developing countries local currencies depreciating by 20% and in so doing, causing inflationary pressures to set it, thus forcing people to pay more for goods and services imported into the country (Shalal, 2022).

Beyond the devastating impact of COVID-19 which resulted in a global economic recession, the Ukrainian/ Russian war is also taking a toll on developing countries as both countries are responsible for significant production of wheat, Russia ranks 3rd and Ukraine ranks 7th in the world. Furthermore, Russian ranks second in production and exporting of crude oil, and as the war between Russia and Ukraine escalates the price of crude oil in the world market. This surge in the price of crude oils has resulted in inflationary pressures as the price of most goods and services in the global markets and domestic markets have all seen massive price increases. On the domestic front the Nigeria economic annual average inflation has increased from previous year of 13.1% in 2020 to 17.0% in 2021. Inflation is predicted to persist and stay above 16.9% in 2022 and it is also expected to stay higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2023, fueled mainly by rising diesel, gas and food prices and protracted supply chain disruptions intensified by the Russia–Ukraine conflict. In Nigeria, inflation was fueled by devaluation of the national currency and rising food prices. The rising food prices is attributed to protracted violence in north eastern Nigeria as farmers could not access their farmlands as a result of the crisis. Violence between farmers and herders over access to land and water in many Nigerian states has put food production at risk, consequently a hunger crisis is looming as the price of affordable food products has gone beyond the reach of the average Nigerian (DTM, 2021).
The heightened sense of insecurity across the land, wanton destruction of lives and property, deteriorating standard of living, rising level of unemployment, and worsening social vices occurring in several parts of the country is evidence that some parts of the population are left behind. Thus, all the modest economic gains and progress made prior to the COVID-19 has been lost and as such this unstable socio-economic state will deprive the country of the desperately needed foreign investments that is necessary to ensure that the Nigerian economy is placed on a path of sustainable economic growth and development. The challenges associated with rising prices, lower economic investments, protracted unemployment, dilapidated infrastructure, deteriorating standard of living and uneven level of economic development are all pointers to the need for serious and urgent economic reforms that would position the country on the path of strengthened economic progress and improved social cohesion and inclusion (World Bank, 2022).

State legitimacy/ Security Apparatus

The Nigeria state appears helpless, confused and discombobulated on how to salvage the land from the state of perdition and nihilistic trends. Prison breaks, kidnapping, banditry, secessionist agenda, terrorism, ENDSARS protests, and the alarming violence and death across the country are all manifestations of the crisis of legitimacy in the state. In 2021, the Anambra state government intentionally declared Saturdays as school days, following the weekly sit-at-home declared by IPOB, the group had in a media announcement mandated everyone in the state to sit at home. The commissioner for information and public enlightenment stated that the decision of the state government was because under the current situation students and teachers’ life will be put at risk, He said: ‘if the government insists, there is the possibility that students and teachers who disobeyed the directive of the IPO group could be killed or set ablaze. He narrated the incident of the Anglican bishop who was killed and his teachers set ablaze for disobeying the sit at home directive from the group. (Edeme, 2021). In south-eastern Nigeria, the climate has been of fear, trepidation and foreboding. The nefarious activities of the unknown gunmen have littered the streets, gun violence has become the norm rather than the exception, extra judicial killings are rampant and insecurity in Ebonyi, Anambra and Enugu. The sit-at-home orders issued by the parallel government (Indigenous People of Biafra) is being complied by the citizens of the state, and the reason for compliance is that the citizens have understood that the government is incapable of securing their lives or their property.
In Ebonyi, the state government has made concerted effort to reassure its citizens to disobey and disregard the sit-at-home order, and so far, it has been very unsuccessful in its plea. It has gone as far as issuing sanctions but these threats are blatantly disregarded as the citizens of the state easily comply with the instructions of the non-state actors (Edeme, 2021). The same issues plague northern Nigeria, states such as Kastina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, and Borno, have all been plunged into a state of anarchy and doom as non-state actors such as the Fulani herdsmen, Boko Haram, and bandits have had the audacity to occupy territories in northern Nigeria. Even worse, is that these non-state actors have the effrontery to impose levies and taxes on some local farmers in some of the villages in the north. Those who intentionally refuse to pay the levies and taxes dealt with, with severe consequences. Those who are lucky are severely beaten and those who are unfortunate pay the ultimate price with the loss of their lives. A recent incident is the brutal killing of 17 local persons in Danko Wasagu local government area in Kebbi. These dastardly acts were committed as the local persons refused to pay the levies and comply with the directives of the bandits, and in some ways has placed a question mark on the legitimacy of the Nigerian state (DTM, 2021). The barest minimum in fulfilling the legitimacy of a state is that the life and property of state actors are sacrosanct. The inability of the Nigerian state to do this, questions the legitimacy of the state, but above all the state should be secure, sovereign and legitimate for any democracy to thrive. State actors need to be provided an enabling environment to thrive. Unfortunately for those who have lost their lives in northern and southern Nigeria and thus far, may fail many more.

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