

## **Violent Conflicts, Forced Migration and Internal Population Displacement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2011**

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**Abstract.** This paper interrogates the nexus between violent conflicts and internal population displacement during the first decade of the birth of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. It critically examines the challenge of various cases of violent conflicts on internal population displacement during successive administrations of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, late Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. It argues that this great human tragedy/humanitarian crisis caused by violent conflicts, has not only led to the disruption of human lives and property but also constituted a major threat to national peace and security. The paper contends that the root causes of violent conflicts, which could be ethno-religious, inter-ethnic, political and inter-communal are hinged on a decade of poor governance, underdevelopment of peripheral areas populated by ethnic minorities, mismanagement of identity conflicts, chronic abuse of power resulting in egregious violations of human rights, gross inequality in the sharing of power, national wealth and so on. It concludes that there is need for adequate management of various conflicts, ensuring equitable resource allocation, the practice of true federalism, the promotion of good governance, and national security.

**Keywords:** *Violence, Population, Displacement, Internal Displacement*

### **Introduction**

Internal population displacement has become an issue of serious concern to many scholars today because of the human tragedy and insecurity associated with it. Besides, the issue that mostly dominates discussions on Internal Population Displacement at global, continental and national level is the conflict-induced displacements caused mainly by ethno-religious, inter-ethnic, political and intra and inter-communal conflicts. With the return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has been affected by recurrent internal conflicts and generalised violence which have resulted in the displacement of many innocent people across the six geopolitical zones in the country. A critical analysis of the displacement of many Nigerians between 1999 and 2011 reveals that internal population displacement is caused by various categories of violence which are inter-ethnic, ethno-religious, communal and political. Okpeh (2008) argues that the systematic and overlapping patterns of inequality in the country have been described as "breeding grounds" for conflict.

There is no doubt the fact that Nigeria is a country that makes up of an

extremely complex web of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. Evidence have shown that series of conflicts in the country have been triggered by disputes over access to land, citizenship and broader questions of ethnic identity, particularly between people considered indigenous to an area and those regarded as settlers. The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in 2002 for instance in their strategic conflict assessment reported that the return to democratic governance and the competition for the new political opportunities had led to increased violence in the country. It is against this backdrop that this paper tends to examine the growing challenge of internal population displacement in Nigeria between 1999 and 2011 and its implication on the socio-economic life of the citizenry.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first section is introduction; second section focuses on conceptual clarification; the third section deals with Violence and internal population displacement in Nigeria while the last section is the conclusion.

### **Conceptual clarification**

It is important to consider the meanings of some key concepts and issues because they are inherent in this topic. They include violence, internally displaced persons, internal displacement and forced migration.

**Violence:** Violence has been viewed from different perspectives by different scholars from distinctive standpoints. Meanwhile, for the purpose of this discourse, we are looking at violence in terms of violation of human rights and social injustice. Thus, this paper critically examines some major types of violence that have greatly led to the displacement of thousands of Nigerians between 1999 and 2011 among which include ethno-religious, inter-ethnic, political and intra and inter communal. Gilula & Daniels (1969) cited in Wikipedia (2010) define violence as 'destructive aggression'. This conceptualization of violence implies the use of physical force to injure persons or property; and this is the core of most definitions of violence. This definition of violence can equally be corroborated with that of W.H.O. The World Health Organization defined violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (WHO, 2002). These two definitions of violence depict the situation of Nigeria since 1999. This is because; major categories of violence which have occurred in the country during the period

of study that have resulted in the massive displacement of innocent lives are “organized”, “patterned and deliberate”; and are geared towards the pursuit of the interests and goals of the organizer(s).

**Internally Displaced Persons / Internal Displacement:** The main description of Internally Displaced Persons is hinged on forced or obliged migration within national boundaries. In this discourse, internal displacement will be used interchangeably with “forced migration”, “relocation” or “forced relocation”. This is because, they are closely-related. In more specific terms, the description of internally displaced persons is given in paragraph 2 of the Introduction to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement by the United Nations. Thus, the United Nations Guiding Principles on IDP’s defines IDP’s as: ...persons or group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human – made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (UNHCR, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 2005). The distinctive feature of internal displacement/IDPs given above is coerced or involuntary movement that takes place within national borders. The reasons for this involuntary movement though may vary, include armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, and natural or human-made disasters. This definition shows that voluntary migration is not captured here. Therefore, we argue here that voluntary migration which involves the search for means of livelihood or economic survival due to occupation displacement/losses can though be qualified as internal displacement, does not fit the description of internally displaced persons to whom the Guiding Principles apply.

**Forced Migration:** Forced migration or involuntary migration is another key concept in this discourse. Forced migration refers to the coerced movement of a person or persons away from their home or home region. It often connotes violent coercion, and is used interchangeably with the terms “displacement” or forced displacement (Wikipedia, 2011). Someone who has experienced forced migration is a “forced migrant” or “displaced person”. Less formally, such a person may be referred to as a refugee, although that term has a specific narrower legal definition (Wikipedia, 2011). The International Organization for Migration defines forced

migration as any person who migrates to "escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters, ecological degradation, or other situations that endanger their lives, freedom or livelihood." According to NCCS (2006), forced migration consists of smuggling, disaster induced, conflict induced, trafficking and development induced. In this paper, our major focus is the conflict induced which involves political, economic, social/ethnic and cultural. According to Oxford University (2006), conceptualization of forced labour can be done in four major models. These models are legal institutional, social development, security and political economy.

First, legal institutional model of forced migration according to Gibney (1999) is characterized by three distinctive features. They are, an emphasis on demarcating and categorizing different groups of forced migrants such as refugees, de facto refugees, internally displaced persons; a concern with either the legal entitlements for these groups in relation to states and as determined by national and international law or the mandated responsibilities of various international agencies and NGOs to these forced migrants; and a focus on dealing with forced migration as primarily a matter of humanitarian concern for status, international organizations and NGOs. This legal institutional model of forced migration came as an initiation of the United Nations in order to address the growing number of refugees world-wide.

Second, social development model is an alternative approach which tend to establish the root causes of a conflict that invariably leads to the displacement of people (NCCS,2006). Cox (1999) argues that the root causes of a conflict include poor governance, atrocities, discrimination, marginalization and so on. This model emphasized that conflict is a reality and thus exists in a society. It argues that a society that has no norms and values is not a civic society, because, a civic society is a composition of group of people who think and perceive the same thing or idea differently, but live, act and behave together. Cox therefore suggested some social development agenda for addressing post-conflict situation among which are immediate needs of the displaced persons, the community and the society.

Third, security model basically emphasize that the security of human lives should be the major concern of every responsive government during any catastrophe. NCCS (2004) points out some security issues of discussion that need to be addressed because of their negative effects of violation of human rights and the massive displacement of person. Among these security issues are insurgency and militarization of ethnic militias, crisis of governance and security, environmental

security (degradation, flood etc) and so on. The above discussed first three models of forced migration actually depict the Nigerian situation which is the central focus of this paper.

### ***Violence and Internal Population Displacement in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic, 1999-2011***

Internal population displacement has become one of the human tragedies confronting the world today. In Nigeria for example, every citizen has recognized it as a critical and major problem which is largely blamed on flood, erosion and conflicts. Of these causes of internal population displacement, the conflict – induced (which could be ethno-religious, inter-ethnic, intra and inter communal and political) appears to be more, and is therefore given prominence in this discourse. These induced conflicts have resulted in large wave of internal displacement of thousands of people.

Historically, Nigeria had witnessed series of violence prior to her political independence in 1960. This violence happened as a result of the introduction of various policies of the British administration, like taxation. Notable examples of such violence or uprising were the 1929 Aba women riot in the East and the 1916 Iseyin-Okeho uprising in the West. The first major ethnic violent that occurred in the post colonial period took place in the Western Region and was between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Ladoke Akintola in 1962. The rift between them led to a series of crises and clashes which invariably led to the declaration of a State of Emergency (Falola, et al, 1990).

The Northern region was the second region that experienced another ethnic violent. This took place in Kaduna, the seat of Government and headquarters of the region. The first major crisis to erupt in Kaduna was as a result of the assassination of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto in a bloody coup d'état of January 15, 1966 led by Kaduna Nzeogwu, an Igbo ethnic stock. None of the Igbo leaders was assassinated in that coup which was said to have created resentment and triggered off a backlash against the Igbo by the Northerners, especially the Hausa. The resultant outcome of this growing resentment led to the Nigerian Civil war (1967-1970) in which majority of the Igbo were massacred in the Northern region of the country.

Having examined the brief history of violence in Nigeria, most importantly during the First Republic, it is essential to know how series of violence have continued to persist under different successive administrations since the return to

civil rule up till date in Nigeria. Since the re-emergence of democracy in May 1999, not less than one hundred politically, ethnically and religiously motivated conflicts have occurred in Nigeria. The democratic opening presented by Nigeria's successful transition to civil rule in May 1999 unleashed a host of hitherto repressed or dormant political forces. In fact, the most of these political forces is the dreaded Islamic sect called Boko Haram. The most unfortunate is that aside the fact that the leaders of this dreaded sect are faceless, they have not come out with their demands, but continued with outright criminality and mayhem on the country and innocent lives through bombings.

Post-transition Nigeria has continued to experience the rise of conflicts across the six geo-political zones, borne out of various agitations by a plethora of movements purportedly representing, and seeking to protect, their ethnic, political or religious interests in a country which appears incapable of providing the basic welfare needs of its citizens. Ayodele (2004) has argued that different reasons and circumstances which are the weak character of the Nigerian State and the inability of its equally weak institutions to engender order and security are responsible for these conflicts and violence. Olu-Adeyemi (2008) posits that poverty, military intervention in politics, citizen's apathy to the State, elitist greed and manipulation are major reasons for major conflicts and violence. Adeniji (2003) also points out that land, space and resource availability, Jurisdictional disputes between Monarchs, disregard for cultural symbols and pollution of cultural practices are major causes of violence and conflicts. The first major violence that occurred with the inception of a civilian government in May 1999 took place in the Niger Delta region. The major violence in this region was between the local militias, who emerged during this period as a result of the need to address long years of neglect and deprivation, coupled with the insensitivity of successive governments (military and civilian) and lack of corporate social responsibility from trans-national oil companies operating in the region (Omojeje and Adesote); and the Nigerian security forces.

The major violent incidence that occurred in this region with return to civil rule in 1999 led to the displacement of about 60,000 people during Odi crisis in Bayelsa State (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC Report, 2009 Retrieved from [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)) The northern region was said to have been second region that witnessed series of violence following the emergence of this administration in 1999 and resulted in the displacement of several people. The type of violence in this region is both inter-ethnic and ethno-religious violence.

While inter-ethnic violence erupted in Taraba and the north-central states of Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue; ethno-religious violence broke out in some northern states of Kaduna, Zamfara, Kano and others. For instance, in Kaduna state, the imposition of sharia law led to a series of uprisings and violent clashes in February 2000 between Christians and Muslims in the city of Kaduna. Many Igbo, who are generally Christian, were killed. For safety reasons, Christians and Muslims moved to areas dominated by people of their own faith, and as thousands fled the far north, religious tensions increased in other areas. In reprisal for the Kaduna violence, Igbo groups in the south killed hundreds of generally Muslim Hausa migrants from the north (HRW, 2003).

Majority of inter-ethnic violence that took place in Taraba, Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue States between 2000 and 2002 centred on the issues of land, boundary and indigenes/settlers. This view corroborated by Dunmoye in his survey of conflicts in Nigeria with particular reference to the Middle Belt Zone that: “a major factor of communal conflicts in the zone is land or boundary disputes. This shows that land is becoming a very scare factor of production either due to population pressure, land alienation or concentration of land in a few hands.” (Dunmoye, 2003). Besides, ethno-religious violence broke out in Plateau State, Jos in particular in 2001. In 2001, religious clashes erupted in Jos, the capital of Plateau state, which sits on the dividing line between the largely Muslim north and Christian south. More than 1,000 people were killed and thousands more displaced (Best, 2011; HRW, 2006). Many settled in temporary camps or permanently in neighbouring Bauchi state (Blench, 2003).

In fact, in the four years of the first civilian administration in Nigeria between 1999 and 2003 more than forty incidents of violence nationwide claimed estimated 10,000 lives while many were displaced (Manby Bronwen, 2002). The violence took many forms among which are, inter ethnic conflict, ethno-religious, communal and so on. In an interview with a local newspaper, the Federal Commissioner for Refugees recently estimated that around half a million people had been displaced between 1999 and 2005, when communal clashes peaked (This Day News, 17 April 2008). Also significant is that, between 2003 and 2007, of the second term of the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, a number of violence which could be inter-ethnic, ethno-religious, political and communal featured across the country. For instance, there was a series of clashes over farmland in Adamawa and Gombe States which led to the displacement of over 20,000 and 3,700 people respectively.

The renewed violence in Plateau State over indigenes/settlers issue led to the declaration of a state of emergency in the state. According to President Obasanjo, justification for the declaration of state of emergency in Plateau State under Governor Joshua Dariye in 2004 was as a result of communal conflict over land and boundary which led to the killing and the displacement of many people (Obasanjo, 2004). He also emphasized that: Violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification. Schooling for children has been disrupted and interrupted; businesses have lost billions of naira and property worth much more destroyed (Obasanjo, 2004). He went further to observe that visitors and investors have fled or are fleeing Plateau State and the neighbouring States have had their economies and social life disrupted and dislocated by the influx of internally displaced persons (Obasanjo, 2004).

By 2005, statistics of the Global IDP project showed that the internally displaced persons numbered 23.7 million, and affected 50 countries. 20 of these were in Africa with 12.1 million IDP's (Sohne, 2006). The most affected countries, according to the statistics, are Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Uganda. Together with these three countries, the total number of IDPs in Africa amount to 9 million (This day, June 27, 2006). In Nigeria, the number of IDP's, range between 200,000 and 800,000. In the 2005 report of the Norwegian Refugee Council, the total number of IDPs was put at 200,000 (online <http://www.idpproject> in Nigeria: a hidden crisis, February 2005). Also paramount in this discourse is the administration of Yar'Adua/Jonathan following a successful transition from Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in 2007. The regime which began in 2007 and ended in May 2011 also witnessed various forms of violence that invariably led to the displacement of thousands of people mostly in the northern region; and few numbers of displaced persons in the southern part. The major forms of violence in Nigeria during this period would be analyzed. In November 2008, disputed results in the Plateau State elections led to inter-communal unrest which greatly heated the country. For instance, in Jos, the state capital, several thousand people were reportedly displaced by clashes that were described to have occurred between Christians and Muslims (BBC, 1 December 2008). Later report revealed that the tensions primarily reflected resentment between the indigenous (Christian) minority and settlers from the Hausa-speaking Muslim north (Reuters, 30 November 2008). Meanwhile, the IDPs of both religious groups reportedly found refuge together in makeshift camps around



Jos city, which consists of temporary camps in mosques, churches, army barracks and hospitals (IRIN, 4 December 2008).

At the beginning of December, the Nigerian Red Cross had registered some 14,000 IDPs in 13 camps (ICRC, 4 December 2008). In February 2009, between 4,500 and 5,000 persons were displaced following sectarian violence in the city of Bauchi (IRIN, 25 February 2009; *This Day*, 28 February 2009). Although the exact cause of the clashes remained unknown, violence flared up after a dispute between two different religious communities. Many people found shelter in schools, army barracks while some fled to neighbouring city like Jos, as violence spread throughout Bauchi and led to more deaths and destruction (*Punch*, 23 February 2009). Some of residents who fled reported that security agents either did not intervene to prevent the unrest, or were absent from certain areas, thereby contributing to the spread of violence (*Punch*, 23 February 2009).

Before the declaration of Amnesty for the militants in the Niger Delta region by Alhaji Yar'Adua in August, 2009, there were series of clashes in region between the militants and the security forces which also led to displacement of innocent people. For example, in May 2009, thousands of people were displaced as a result of a fight between government forces and militants of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which was created through the merger of different armed groups in 2005. The Joint Task Force (JTF), charged with restoring order in the Niger Delta, launched Operation Restore Hope in an effort to uproot militant groups. The JTF launched land and air strikes around the city of Warri in Delta State, and later extended its offensive to neighbouring Rivers State (Reuters, 24 May 2009). The number of casualties among the civilian population due to the conflict was unknown; and the reported IDP figures varied, from 1,000 people sheltering in a school and hospital in the local capital Ogbeloh to 10,000 residents which were believed to have fled to the forest and unable to return home (IRIN, 22 May 2009; BBC, 21 May 2009). Most of the people that were being hosted in the hospital were reportedly women and children, and while the men who were arrested on suspicion that they were militants encouraged other men to remain in hiding in the bush (FoE-Nigeria, 19 June 2009).

In July 2009, clashes between an Islamic group and the Nigerian army, which started in Bauchi and quickly spread to neighbouring states of Borno, Yobe and Kano, led to new displacement. Between 3,500 and 4,000 people reportedly fled the violence across the four states, most of them following heavy fighting in Maiduguri,

the capital city of Borno State (ICRC, 31 July 2009). IDPs found shelter in police and army barracks. By the beginning of August, the Nigerian Red Cross was reporting that most of the IDPs in Maiduguri had returned home, except for around 160 people whose homes had been destroyed during the violence (IRIN, 5 August 2009). One major ethno-religious violence that deserves brief illumination during this administration was caused by the insurgence of a dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram in the northern region. Although the sect had not adequately engaged in attacking and bombing public places and religious buildings like now, evidences show that this sect had carried out a number attacks on police station in Bauchi which also spread to Maiduguri on 26 July 2009 (Punch17, June, 2011). Following the untimely death of President Alhaji Yar'Adua in the early 2010, who hails from the region, and with the emergence of his Vice, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, first as the Acting President and later as the substantive President, the activities of the dreaded Islamic sect became noticeable. The emergence of President Jonathan in the April, 2011 general election marked a shift of power from the North to the South. This development did not go down well with many of political big wigs in the region (North) some of whom publicly promised to make the country ungovernable for the Jonathan administration (Ajayi, 2012). The immediate result of this was a political violence (post-election violence) which broke out in some Northern States of Bauchi, Kaduna, Kano and Kastina and so on. This postelection violence which broke out in this part of the country resulted in the killing of about ten Corps members in Bauchi State (The Punch, Saturday, December, 2011.p.46) who were from the Southern Nigeria of Ondo, Osun, Lagos and so on. Later development that followed this killing was the evacuation of some other corps members from the South who were serving in the State by their different State governors like Dr. Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State. By the time the crises abated, a new and more dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram began to launch a formidable and frontal attacks on government security agencies, public institutions, worship centres and symbolic monuments as well as assassination of important public figures and many other unfortunate peoples through frequent deployment of bombs and other instruments of mass destruction. In fact, hardly has any day passed without fresh report(s) of the dastardly activities of this group which has virtually brought the country to his knees, security-wise (Ajayi, 2012). The activities of this sect have taken different dimensions and trends. The sect has graduated from cruel drive by attacking beer parlous to bombing of security buildings, public buildings and

Christian institutions (churches) which happened to be the most affected (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012).

Due to the nefarious activities of this sect, in late December 2011, following a series of attacks carried out by the sect in which more than 100 people were killed and some 90,000 displaced made President Jonathan to declare a state of emergency in some local governments in some Northern States like Niger, Borno, Bauchi and others (ICG, 2 Jan. 2012; The Economist, 14 and 23 Jan. 2012; Reuters, 9 April 2012). At a certain time, the sect released a threat message that the southerners should vacate the north within 2 weeks. In early January 2012, after Boko Haram had issued a warning to Christians living in the Hausa dominated north to leave or face retribution, Igbo leaders in the south-east called on Igbo families to head for safety in the south and offered a free shuttle bus service (BBC, 15 March 2012). Since then, thousands of people have reportedly moved and families split up to send women and children to safer areas in the south-east, a situation reminiscent of the population movements from northern states provoked by the religious clashes in 2000 (AP, 19 March 2012; BBC, 15 March 2012; Business Day, 18 April 2012; The Economist, 14 and 23 Jan. 2012; VOA, 30 Jan. 2012).

Recent development about the activities of this sect especially with major attacks on churches in the northern states of Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Adamawa, Niger and Plateau revealed that it was anti-western values (Christianity inclusive). We therefore conclude that the violence being unleashed on the Nigerian state in general and the Christians in particular by Boko Haram is both political and ethno-religious. Thus, according to Gwamna Dogara Je'adayibe (2008), ethno-religious violence was the major violence that has produced the highest number of IDPs in Nigeria and of which the Boko Haram is currently perpetrating.

#### **Selected Statistical Data of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria, 1999-2008**

Though there is no accurate statistics of the total number of IDPs caused by various forms of violence, the available information at our disposal enable us to present the table below which shows some of the pattern of violence that has erupted in the country between 1999 and 2008.

**Sources:** Norwegian Refugee Council, Profile of Internal Displacement in Nigeria, February 2005, online <http://www.idpproject.org> in Nigeria: a hidden crisis,

February 2005, online [www.idpproject.org](http://www.idpproject.org). & Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC Report, 2009 Retrieved from [www.internaldisplacement.org](http://www.internaldisplacement.org)).

## Conclusion

S/N	Year of Occurrence	Type of Violence	Location/State	Number of Displaced Persons
1	1999	Violent clashes	Odi, Bayelsa	60,000
2	2000	Ethno-Religious	Kaduna	63,000+
3	2000	Ethno-Religious	Kano	Thousands
4	2001	Ethno-Religious	Kaduna	Thousands
5	2001	Ethno-Religious	Kano	80,000
6	2001	Ethno-Religious	Plateau	60,000
7	2001	Ethno-Religious	Bauchi	22,000
8	2001	Communal	Ebonyi	1000
9	2002	Inter-Ethnic	Nasarawa	Hundreds
10	2002	Inter-Ethnic	Lagos	5,000
11	2002	Religious	Kaduna	30,000
12	2002	Indigene/Settler	Plateau	Hundreds
13	2002	Indigene/Settler	Benue	Hundreds
14	2002	Political	Taraba	Thousands
15	2003	Political	Warri	12,000
16	2003	Political	Delta	4,000
17	2003	Communal	Adamawa	20,000
18	2003	Communal	Gombe	3,700
19	2004	Indigene/Religious	Plateau	298,000
20	2004	Ethno-Religious	Kano	10,000
21	2004	communal	Adamawa	2,000
22	2004	Political	Port Harcourt	6,000
23	2004	Political	Rivers	10,000
24	2006	Communal/Political	Onitsha	50,000
25	2007	Ethno-Religious	Bauchi	3,000
26	2007	Inter-Ethnic	Sokoto	Hundreds
27	2007	Political	Port Harcourt	Not mentioned
28	2007	Political	Kano	Not mentioned
29	2007	Pre & Post-election	Kogi	1,250
30	2007	Pre & Post-election	Ukwale L.G (Delta)	2000
31	2007	Pre & Post-election	Asakio. LG (Nasarawa)	1,415
32	2008	Land Dispute	Ebonyi	Thousands
33	2008	Violent clashes	Rivers	20,000
34	2008	Electoral	Jos	7,000
35	2008	Communal clashes	Akwa Ibom	Not mentioned

There is no doubt the fact that governments at all levels have been responding positively to the challenges of various forms of violence being unleashed on the Nigerian state in general over the years. It is important to point out here that the gradual return of enduring peace to the Niger Delta region is attributed to the proactive measure taken by Yar'Adua/Jonathan administration through the Amnesty

Programme of which the preceding administrations failed to address. Before the emergence of Yar'Adua administration, due to the repressive measures being unleashed on the people of the region by different successive administrations, militancy and every form of criminality were noticeable there. This development forced Yar'Adua and his Vice, who is from that region to change their tactics by withdrawing stick (this has been the method being adopted by successive governments) and offer carrots in form of Amnesty. The first major step taken by Yar'Adua administration was that, his Vice, Goodluck Jonathan was sent to meet with his people in the creeks and dialogue with them. The outcome of the dialogue made President Yar'Adua to make public announcement that: "I hereby grant amnesty and unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta". The president gave the militants 60 days which started from August 6, 2009 to October 4, 2009 (Omojeje and Adesote, 2011). A large number of militants who laid down their arms and ammunitions within the stipulated time were compensated through various training programmes which have resulted in their re-integration and gainful employment.

Today, the activities of militants in the Niger Delta region have reduced due to this approach of which, before the Amnesty Programme, the zone was a dangerous place to live and has driven away, both people from other regions of the country, and foreign investors. It is on this passing note that the current administration needs to take drastic step at addressing the nefarious activities of this dreaded Islamic sect called Boko Haram which is capable of breaking the country. It is high time the Northern leaders and stakeholders in the region put hands on deck to see how this challenge could be addressed through dialoguing/holding talks with the leaders of this sect. This is because they cannot claim ignorance of it. The fact remains that the leaders and members of this group, even though they claim to be faceless people, still live within them in the same areas where these activities are being carried out. The former President Yar'Adua through his Vice and the governors of the Niger Delta region took this step towards addressing the menace of violence in the Niger Delta region.

On a final note, some constitutional issues need to be adequately addressed. This is because one of the causes of various forms of violence in the country like land/boundary issues, citizenship (indigenes/settlers issues) among others can be addressed through constitutional reform. In all, the promotion of good governance

at all levels of governance in the country is very paramount at addressing the problem of various forms of violence which have resulted in the displacement of many innocent lives. Each political leader must live up to their constitutional responsibilities. Corruption must not only be fought, but should also be get rid off in the country. The dividends of democracy in terms of high standard of living, good portable water, constant power supply, abundance food supply, quality education as well as the provision of other infrastructures that can make life worthwhile for every citizenry must be adequately provided.

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