



Nigeria and the Change Agenda: From Dividends Optimism to Dash Hope

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Abstract

After a momentous electoral win that overturned the People's Democratic Party's 16-year hegemonic reign, PMB assumed power in May 2015. At a time when economic inequality and government corruption were at all-time highs and Boko Haram, with its base in Nigeria's northeast, had grown to be the deadliest terrorist group in the world, Nigerians were drawn to his promises to revamp the economy, improve governance, and reduce insecurity and violence throughout the nation. After seven years, PMB's track record in the areas of the economy, governance, and security is uneven. Data were obtained from a range of sources, including documentary records and semi-structured interviews, because the study used a case study research methodology with a qualitative approach. The research revealed that PMB's legacy will be determined by how successfully and shrewdly he uses the post-Covid-19 recovery to advance structural socioeconomic reforms that are politically unpopular but essential, such as the unification of the exchange rate, a redefining of Nigeria's social contract, and a restructuring of the federal system in Nigeria. The document outlined the commendable reforms that PMB's administration had implemented, such as the creation of a Treasury Single Account and ratification of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). Other politically contentious measures, such as the unification of currency rates, have been postponed by PMB's administration.



According to the article, PMB must commit to broad and timely economic and structural changes that unleash change and reshape Nigeria's political settlement if he wants to be regarded as the reformer who set Nigeria on a path toward political maturity and economic prosperity.

Keywords: Nigeria, Agenda, Change, Democracy

Introduction

Nigeria has had numerous cycles of democratic and authoritarian leadership since gaining independence in 1960, with the military in power for a total of 29 years during the post-colonial era. When General Ibrahim Babangida threw out the transitional elections for a civilian president, an unsuccessful Third Republic came to an end. A Fourth Republic was established in 1999 after new elections, with President Olusegun Obasanjo in charge. The Nigerian people responded to this most recent regime shift with enthusiasm that frequently bordered on rapture. Hopes for a "democracy dividend" that would bring about economic revival, the restoration of political liberties, inclusion for excluded groups, and the reduction of government wrongdoing were frequently expressed (Lawal, 2010; Ezeibe, and Ikeanyibe, 2017; Abdulyakeen, 2021).

High hopes were crushed, nevertheless, and widespread disenchantment developed. Politics has been rife with debate on the division of powers, the scope of rights, and particularly distributive issues. Thousands of people have died as a result of communal violence throughout the nation, whether as a result of conflicts over land ownership in the middle belt or oil earnings in the Niger Delta. Many Nigerians were also uneasy due to widespread insecurity, which fueled criticism of the government's failure to control violence (Lawal, 2010). Osundare (2012) asserts that after years of complaints and grumbling, tragically bad leadership performance has persisted. By accepting the direction of political outcasts, we have consented to our own gradual demise. It is astonishing that despite the leadership continuing to be unaccountable to the majority of the population, the much-anticipated democratic dividends failed to materialize.

Furthermore, according to (Ibrahim & Cheri, 2013; Nwekeaku, 2014), the actions of our past and present presidents (Obasanjo, Yar'adua, and Jonathan) are to blame for the majority of the issues Nigeria is currently experiencing, particularly in terms of development. Despite the country's wealth in natural and human resources, which makes it the envy of many countries, our leaders have not been at their best in terms of accountability, transparency, and service delivery. This is because people's hopes and opportunities for a better future have



long been dashed, and the ingredients for effective governance are still elusive to Nigerians. Nigerian politics are deteriorating as a result of the leadership issue that has plagued the country since independence. Most of the time, the leaders don't do much, if anything, to advance the nation; instead, their programs are quickly formulated and badly carried out. Poor governance has significantly contributed to the underdevelopment and widespread misery of the Nigerian people, who have previously suffered from neocolonial degradation by her post-independence leadership and colonial exploitation by colonial rulers.

President Buhari's "vision" has evolved over the years to include bringing about change in Nigeria in an effort to transform the nation and give the great people of the country more power. This vision led him to run for president three times before being chosen on the fourth attempt on March 28, 2015—roughly seven years ago—and becoming the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In contrast, this Federal Government under President Buhari's vision has tragically turned the victory of the much-anticipated messiah. This is one of the darkest times in the history of our beloved country - economically, socially, and politically. "To call a spade a spade and not an agricultural implement" (Obasanjo, 2019). The situation has gotten worse, and we now need to stand together, regardless of our gender, color, creed, or religion, to prevent the Nigerian nation from going from bad to worse or completely collapsing in the face of President Muhammadu Buhari's rigidity. People need to understand that what we have today is nothing more than sterile activism, puerile rascality, and infantile phrase-mongering of these sycophantic agents within the government circle trying to be more catholic than the pope. This is especially important for those who may be unwittingly misled by the seemingly radical rhetorics of "Change Begins with Me."

Along with their "transformation" promises, President Buhari and the APC unveiled three key policy priorities for their administration. These were to focus on corruption, the economy, unemployment, and security. They had pledged to increase security throughout the nation, develop Nigeria's economy, and get rid of corruption. The divide between the leaders and the led is this administration's conundrum. In reality, using Nigeria as a case study, it is necessary to redefine poverty, lack, and want. Even though Nigeria's unemployment rate has doubled and the cost of food and other vital commodities has increased, the country can no longer afford to feed each individual on average \$2 per day (Abdulyakeen, 2021).

Reforms imply change, and they should be used to remedy inequities. Because of this, "change" is the only constant in life. Unfortunately, the



shift this nation is going through has resulted in agonies, sorrows, despairs, trials, and horrifying experiences for the common Nigerian.

Buhari was sworn in as president for the first time on May 29, 2015, and for a second term that ends on May 29, 2023. The focus now shifts to how Nigerians see the last seven years and what they anticipate for the final year of his term. The objective standards for evaluating Buhari's last seven years have been the extent to which he has kept the campaign pledges that propelled him to the presidency. Through its 2019 milestone collection, the International Press Centre (IPC) Lagos has really given Nigerians a very helpful tool for reviewing Buhari's most important campaign promises and holding the president accountable. The publication's list of Buhari's 30 campaign pledges offers a visual framework for assessing his administration over time based on performance and other factors. Beyond accelerating the construction of vital infrastructure, combating corruption, reducing instances of insecurity and insurgency, and reviving the Nigerian economy, pledges are made. Rehashing the status of each of these pledges in this article may only be of minor use given that they are all currently public knowledge. The President's future executive tendencies are more important in light of the nation's political environment. Simply expressed, the pressing issue is which direction the nation is headed under Buhari.

The Presidency's image producers reportedly used a number of channels to showcase Buhari's accomplishments during the seven years, which are undoubtedly a mixed bag of pros and problems. However, there are a number of seemingly insurmountable differences between the president's claims and those made by the media, as many of the latter's assertions are not only difficult to verify but are even disputed by some government officials. As a result, it presents a challenge to examine such "authoritative" assertions in light of how they were made and for what reason. Many would question whether they were meant to deceive Nigerians in order to advance the President's political goals. This claim continues to be central to discussions about the social contract between an elected official and the people, in this case between Buhari as president and Nigerians as the people. Both parties must fulfill their obligations to one another in a good faith and equitable manner within the framework of the social contract between the electorate and the citizenry. Here, the citizen fulfills his promise to be obedient and follow the dictates of the government, and the latter, through its official activities, fulfills its obligation in kind. When an imbalance exists, as it does in the situation in Nigeria under the current leadership, it amounts to disservice in the truest sense of the word. In that case, the common citizen is left with no recourse and receives the raw deal of the social covenant. An intellectual contribution to the current discussions on the Nigeria

democracy effort is the study "Nigeria and the Change Agenda: From Dividends Optimism to Dash Hope."

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study seeks:

- i. To examine why has Buhari failed to fulfill his campaign promise in spite of all efforts towards transforming the country.
- ii. To espouse the much talked about "Buhari's Change Agenda" as an impediment to democracy and development.
- iii. To recommend policy measures that should be adopted to make our democracy more development oriented.

Conceptual and Literature Review

Meaning of Change

Gen. Buhari promised to create a lot of jobs, have enough security, fight corruption, upgrade infrastructure, and deliver quality healthcare in his New Year's 2015 statement. A nation in which you may take pride at any time or place, where corruption is combated, where your leaders are disciplined and guide with vision and clarity, and where the news that comes out of us to the rest of the world is positive and full of advancement. Ogenyi (2015).

- A Nigeria where neither you nor your parents, families, or friends need to worry about their safety.
 - A Nigeria where people have access to the fundamentals that any nation should offer, including functioning infrastructure, inexpensive or even free healthcare, respect for the environment and sustainable development, and competitive, goal-oriented education in a knowledge economy.
- a nation that creates work opportunities for its youth, lowers its unemployment rate to under 10%, and offers safety nets to ensure that no one is left behind.
- A Nigeria where business thrives, entrepreneurship flourishes, and the government removes obstacles to your ability to provide value, strengthen the economy, and aggressively increase wealth.

The 2015 Election and the Change Revolution

There were fourteen candidates running for president in the 2015 general elections, including the two front-runners, General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and incumbent President Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP. Oluremi Sanaiya, the only female contender in the KOWA party, competed among other

contestants. Ogenyi (2015) perceived agitation for both continuity and change as the scene's obvious voices. In response to the current socioeconomic needs, continuity supporters thought the Jonathan Presidency would be a better alternative.

Sekoni (2015) asserts that the notion that a regime of emancipation of the oppressed was established on March 28, 2015, must have been conveyed to voters by the promise of change inherent in the Buhari/APC campaign. Observers have paid greater attention than in the past to how the APC presidential candidate was made. The general consensus has been that since 1959, the nation has not had a President who voluntarily elected to serve. According to popular opinion in 1959, Sir Tafawa Balewa was summoned to Lagos to take over the government of Nigeria at Sir Ahmadu Bello's request. Before being chosen by the governing club to run for the highest office and get the support of the populace, Shagari publicly admitted in 1979 that he wanted to become a senator, preventing him from using his talent to lead Nigeria. General Olusegun Obasanjo was chosen in 1999 by a group of military dictators to run for president of a party founded by former military leaders and their civilian supporters with the intention of advancing military rule. General Obasanjo selected Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2007. The same forces that recruited Yar'Adua also attracted Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to the presidential ticket, and the rest is history. Only General Buhari had independently sought the top position in the nation's history for the previous twelve (12) years, until he ultimately discovered the APC as the key to victory on March 28, 2015.

Again, there are good reasons to be optimistic for those who feel the same way as they did in 1960 when British colonialists responded to the minor nationalist uprising and withdrew in a manner akin to President Jonathan's acceptance of the election that changed the guard from Jonathan to Buhari and from PDP to APC. This is typically the case when one ruling party is replaced by another in most democracies. It is remarkable that Buhari's victory in four of the country's six geopolitical regions shows more evidence of greater freely given support from more diverse groups in the country than at any other time other than at the conclusion of the free and fair Presidential election of 1993, despite claims by some pundits that Buhari's electoral victory depended largely on votes from the core North and the South West (Sekoni, 2015).

It is important to note that in the 2015 Presidential elections, General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC won with 15, 424, 921 million votes cast across 21 states, defeating incumbent President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan with 12, 853, 162 million votes cast across 15 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja (Channels Television News, 2015).



It was momentous for the APC to win both the presidential and national assembly elections. Never before had the country seen an election that was so hotly contested but nevertheless largely transparent and free of irregularities. Again, never before has a President in office given up control through an election, and never before had Nigerians cheered the beginning of a new political period. In addition to winning the presidential election by a margin of 2,571,759,000,000 votes, the APC also confirmed a majority in the Red Chambers of the National Assembly in the political period from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2019, thanks to its over fifty-eight seats in the 109-member Senate.

The 2015 elections are now history in Gadu. Nigeria does not accurately represent the geo-ethnic or geo-religious structure of Nigeria. These changes have resulted in shifting opinions and beliefs among Nigerians on governance, accountability, and the chances provided by the democratic system to make decisions based on the larger public good and the interests of the country. The results of the elections demonstrated that most Nigerians are now more open to considering issue-based politics than ones that are focused on religion or ethnicity. Once more, these modifications were substantially to blame for the results of the 2015 Presidential elections. And it mattered a lot that President Jonathan and his Peoples Democratic Party were deemed to have performed appallingly on the scale of public expectations, particularly with regard to two crucial concerns, insecurity and corruption, among others, that have devastated Nigeria. In general, Nigerians across divides used the chance of the elections to make the decisions they ultimately did. Buhari's historical record against the two evils measures up favorably, notably when combined with his party's dedication to internal democracy as exhibited in the conduct of its primaries.

Diverse Challenges Facing Nigeria Prior to the Emergence of President Buhari in 2015

Insecurity

The former army general was re-elected to office in 2015 on the strength of his campaign promises to combat insecurity, eradicate corruption, and boost the economy. He was the first opposition candidate to win a presidential election in Nigeria. His election came after the Boko Haram armed organization kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok in the nation's northeastern Borno state.

The Boko Haram terrorists, who at the time had taken control of many local government areas in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states, were promised that Mr. Buhari would confront them "head on" in his

inaugural speech. In three months, he promised to defeat Boko Haram and reclaim all the areas it had taken over. However, security issues have gotten worse outside of the Boko Haram insurgency seven years following and around one year before the end of his final second term. Violence in some kind is currently prevalent almost everywhere in Nigeria, showing that the president has broken his pledge regarding security. Nigeria is the third-most terrorist-prone country according to the Global Terrorism Index (2019), with no improvement since 2017.

President Muhammadu Buhari visited the neighboring nations of Tchad, Niger, and Cameroon after being elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to discuss working together to combat the Boko Haram insurgency, which had severely impacted both the social and economic life of Nigeria and these nations (Wakili, 2015). The President removed the service chiefs he saw on the ground from their positions to deal with the insurgency in the area and appointed new officials to staff the defense sector as follows: Rear Admiral Ibok-EteEkwelbas is the chief of the naval staff, followed by Major-General Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin as the chief of the defense staff, Major-General Tukur Yusuf Buratai as the chief of the army staff, Air Vice Marshall Sadique Abubakar as the chief of the air staff, Air Vice Marshal Monday Riku Morgan as the chief of defence intelligence, and Major-General Babagana Monguno (The unambiguous directive to relocate to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, and put a stop to the Boko Haram Insurgency was delivered to these new service chiefs. The President informed them that the National Grazing Reserve (Establishments) bill had been brought to the National Assembly by the Federal Government in order to address the ongoing conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria. Similar to this, the Anti-Opening Gazing Law has been enacted in Benue and Ekiti States in an effort to persuade Fulani Herdsmen to take up cattle ranching.

The Chief of Army Staff, who stated that he will be directly participating in the operation to put an end to Boko Haram's insanity, changed the name of the counter-insurgency operation from Operation Zaman Lafiya to Operation Lafiya Dole (which in Hausa means no option for peace). The theatre command was also established in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, where the military chiefs relocated their command and control center. General Buratai, the Head of Army Staff, introduced a new paradigm shift from the previous period in which the army chief would be in Abuja and give orders to soldiers on the battlefield to the new era in which the Chief of Army Staff himself is leading the battle. He therefore accompanied the troops in operations that resulted in the reopening of the Damaturu-Biu route and the Biu-Damboia road with extremely high morale and the backing of the airlift jets. These signaled the start of



Boko Haram's enclave-specific defeat. Later, with the assistance of a valiant air force leadership and under the direct supervision of the Chief of Army Staff, the Nigerian army took the towns of Mafa, Dikwa, Gamboru-Ngala, and Kala-Balge. Following the capture of Guzamala, Bama, Gwoza, Baga Alagarno, and "Camp Zero," the Sambisa Forest headquarters of the Boko Haram Insurgents, on December 22, 2015, the troops continued their advance under the protection of the air force (Abdulyakeen, 2021; Abdullahi et al. 2019, Abdullahi et al. 2019, West African Early Warning and Early Response Network (WARN), 2020).

Despite this success, armed bandits have been carrying out deadly attacks in northwest Nigeria for more than four years, mainly in the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Sokoto. These attacks are motivated by a number of interrelated issues, such as cattle rustling, the spread of light and small arms, illegal artisanal mining, youth unemployment, poverty, and inequality. According to a report by the West Africa Network for Peace Building, armed bandits were responsible for more than 1,000 civilian fatalities in the Northwest from January to December 2019 (WANEP). According to the Nigeria Security Tracker, this is more than the number of civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same time period (though not greater than all those killed, which includes soldiers and Boko Haram members). These killings have long-lasting repercussions that cut across all cultural boundaries. In Zamfara state, between June 2011 and May 2019, armed banditry is believed to have caused 4,983 women to become widowed, 25,050 children to become orphans, and more than 190,000 people to be displaced, according to a committee established to investigate the threat posed by armed banditry and led by former police inspector general Muhammed Abubakar. West African Early Warning and Early Response Network (WARN), ACAPS (2020), (2020)

Seven Years After, Buhari Has Failed To Keep Promise of Securing Nigeria

The actions the Buhari administration has made to reduce insecurity are examined in this section along with the reasons why they have not yet produced the anticipated outcomes

Fighting Boko Haram

President Buhari moved the military headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri, the birthplace of Boko Haram, upon taking office again in 2015. He increased the military spending and gave his approval to buy weapons for the security forces and government entities. Mr. President launched an investigation into the usage of military funds under President Goodluck Jonathan's previous administration as part of his campaign pledge to also fight corruption. In the course of that, he mandated the arrest of Sambo Dasuki, a former national security

adviser, on charges of stealing \$2 billion, or almost N650 billion, intended for the procurement of weaponry. Although the government insisted frequently that it had achieved a "technical defeat" over the terror group, some progress was made in the recovery of lost regions, although the respite was brief. A new era of terror was ushered in by Boko Haram's split in 2016, which produced the Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA) breakaway group.

The presidents' "long and continuous medical vacations overseas caused a leadership gap that reinforced insecurity," according to security analyst Oshinnaike (2020). After only a few months in power, President Buhari traveled to the UK for medical treatment. He kept making these journeys, and in 2017 alone, he spent more than 150 days abroad receiving treatment for an unspecified illness. According to a Daily Trust investigation, the president had spent more than eight months in the UK by 2017 after taking office. Meanwhile, the military lost the most soldiers to Boko-Haram in 2018. According to the Conversation, the organization killed at least 600 Nigerian soldiers and took a sizable cache of military equipment. It attacked nine military installations the same year and took control of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) base in Baga, Borno state. Due in large part to the rising insecurity (Several states in the war-torn regions of the north warned not to vote for him), Mr. Buhari would soon start losing important political allies before to his reelection effort in 2019. Later in 2018, the president approved the withdrawal of \$462 million from the Excess Crude Account (ECA) for payment to the United States for the purchase of 12 Super Tucano aircraft, without the National Assembly's prior approval, in an effort to reassure Nigerians of his commitment to putting an end to the insurgency. According to the former defense minister, Mansur Dan Ali, he also authorized the military to buy \$1 billion worth of armaments during that time. The planes have not yet been deployed to Nigeria, and the army there has continued to attribute its setbacks in the war against insurgency to a lack of equipment and manpower. After receiving months of criticism for his response to the deteriorating security situation, President Buhari sacked his service chiefs and top military commanders in January 2019. The president acknowledged in his New Year's greeting that, while he was in office, insecurity was damaging (Nwozor& John, 2020)

Funding

Nigeria's defense budget has consumed a sizable portion of the country's overall budget over the previous ten years, even before Mr. Buhari took office. The security sector received N934 billion in the 2015 budget under former President Jonathan. N920 billion and N924 billion were the amounts for 2011 and 2012, respectively, while N923 billion each was awarded to the sector in 2013 and 2014. However, it's



unclear how these enormous sums were spent because the security agencies at the time didn't provide any trustworthy performance reports (Alabi, 2018).

The defense budget has remained high for the past five years under President Buhari, with N878.4 billion and N840.56 billion set aside for the military in 2020 and 2021, respectively. However, the military continues to perform poorly. What then explains the disparity between funding and effectiveness? According to security experts, the greatest obstacles to the efficient use of finances to combat insecurity include corruption, funding mostly allocated to recurrent budgets, and the late adoption of yearly budgets (Idris, 2020; 2017). For instance, recurrent expenses, which include overhead and staff expenditures, accounted for a staggering 91% of the budgets for the military and the police in 2020.

In 2020, N878 billion was divided across the Ministry of Defence, which included the Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense Headquarters, Nigerian Defense Academy, Defense Intelligence Agency, and 11, other divisions. Recurrent expenses accounted for N778 billion of the total budget, while the remaining N99 billion was spent on capital projects, including the acquisition of ammunition, sea boats, barracks rehabilitation across the six geopolitical zones, and other items required to combat insecurity and defend Nigerian territory. Payroll costs, which include salaries, wages, allowances, and social contributions, are recurring expenses. Total recurrent expenses came to N395 billion or a staggering 96.75 percent of the N409 billion the police earned in 2020. Some security organizations are being forced by the circumstance to pay only a portion of the cost of security equipment they would have purchased to combat insecurity (Abdulqadir, 2020).

In terms of corruption, the Conversation recently conducted a study and found that certain military personnel, legislators, and other public officials were misusing taxpayer money intended to fight terrorism and insecurity. The investigation exposed how personnel in the defense ministry and military institutions occasionally duplicate expenses under various areas. Additionally, it demonstrated how corruption was made more likely by the procurement process's lack of transparency. Military equipment was frequently acquired in secret, which led to the purchase of antiquated equipment rather than cutting-edge weapons (International Crisis Group (ICG) (2019).



Negotiating with terror groups

Around the world, the choice in dealing with rebels, militant groups, or bandits has been whether to engage them in dialogue and negotiation in an effort to reach amicable agreements, or to battle them to the death. Even though they may officially deny it, several developed nations fighting terrorism, including the U.S., have held conversations with terrorist groups. Nigeria first engaged in formal negotiations with armed groups in 2009 when the late President Umaru Yar'Adua reached an amnesty agreement with militants in the Niger Delta in an effort to calm unrest in the oil-rich region. In March 2018, President Buhari declared that his administration was prepared to accept the "unconditional laying down of arms by any member of the Boko Haram organization who displays strong commitment in that direction." Some "repentant" Boko Haram fighters were "rehabilitated" and given the chance to live normal lives in Borno State in July 2020. However, this action was opposed by many Nigerians. The majority of Nigerians who took part in a poll conducted online by Abdulqadir (2020) in August 2020 opposed a law that would have established a center for the rehabilitation of atoning Boko Haram members. After it was introduced, the measure had caused controversy. Many worry that releasing 'repentant' Boko Haram militants among civilians would have the opposite effect of what they intended. Negotiating with terrorists won't lead to a permanent resolution and will likely only give them more confidence to keep making demands, according to security experts. As long as the government is still paying terrorists to deter them from restarting hostilities, the Niger-Delta amnesty program will continue (Abubakar, 2020).

Direct negotiations with armed groups were started by authorities in the states of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara last year. In exchange for stopping their violent attacks, the governors promised criminal organizations amnesties and other rewards. But many of the armed factions lack central command, making it challenging to get them all to the negotiating table, which is one reason why these deals collapsed. Negotiations that failed resulted in further attacks. AminuMasari, the governor of Katsina State, claimed that bandits betrayed him twice after the state had given them amnesty (Abdulrahman, 2020).

Paying ransom to kidnapers

Over the past five years, kidnapping for ransom has increased in popularity and profitability. Idris (2020) stated in 2018 that some MPs said that paying a ransom was necessary to secure the return of some of the Chibok girls who were abducted in April 2014. Leah Sharibu and

her colleagues were kidnapped in Dapchi, and it was stated that this forced the government to negotiate with militants.

In December 2020, a school in Kankara, close to Katsina, the president's home state, was assaulted by gunmen, and 344 young students were reported missing. Despite terrorists claiming blame, the boys apparently received a ransom and were eventually released, according to security experts. They feel that the government's approach to combating crime has changed to include such payments and conversations. According to a recent analysis by SB Morgen (SBM) Intelligence, Nigerians paid at least \$18.34 million (about \$7 billion) in ransom to kidnappers between 2011 and 2020. According to reports, terrorists who smuggle weapons over the Sahara Desert depend on the ransoms paid by hostages who have been abducted (Nagogo, 2020; Moriki, 2020; Mohammed, 2020; Johnson and Akinrefon, 2019).

Highway: Regional policing and CCTVs

On Nigerian roads, violent crimes, homicides, and kidnappings continue to be commonplace despite numerous checkpoints along many motorways. One of the most extensively reported violent crimes on Nigerian highways in the past three years was the murder of Funke Olakunrin, the 58-year-old daughter of a Yoruba elder, Reuben Fasoranti, during a kidnapping attempt by suspected herdsmen at Kajola along the Ore-Ijebu Ode expressway. At the time, it caused widespread outcry, and the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) subsequently ordered a "complete revamp" of the security arrangements along the highways in southern Nigeria (Olaniyi, 2015; Oladele and Adeniran, 2020; Johnson, 2017a).

Following the incident, the Buhari administration "decided" to let state governors in the South-west use community policing techniques to reduce the region's rising tide of instability. In order to reduce violent crime, President Buhari also said that the government will put CCTV cameras along roadways. Little to nothing, though, has been done in that direction. The governors of the South-west states created Amotekun as a state-based law enforcement organization last year after agreements with the federal government (Abdulyakeen, 2022; Olawale, 2020).

However, kidnapping and killings have continued to be common in the area more than a year after Amotekun was founded. The formation of a security organization with the codename Ebube Agu was also announced by the governors of the South-east states last month (Wonderful Tiger). A permanent ban on open grazing was also

established. However, ongoing confrontations between the security forces and ESN, the paramilitary arm of the illegal Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), have the potential to undermine efforts to maintain regional stability with Ebube Agu.

Botched RUGA programme

President Buhari announced the RUGA program in 2019 as a way to address the farmer/herders crisis, which has resulted in thousands of fatalities and the destruction of property worth billions of naira. The program allows willing states to donate land to the federal government for the construction of animal husbandry settlements.

RUGA is positioned as a novel approach to developing the framework that supports restricted pastoralism, which many have called for as an alternative to the extremely dangerous practice of open grazing. According to the presidency, 12 states have expressed a desire to participate in the initiative. But after it received harsh criticism from many Nigerians and opposition from many state governors, the president postponed the program while the problem persisted.

Porous borders and arm proliferation

In order to ensure better management of Nigeria's porous borders, the president authorized the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to build e-border facilities in 10 Nigerian border checkpoints in 2016.

The almost 1,000 km long border between Nigeria and Niger, Cameroon, and Chad is not well policed, which increases the risk that terrorist activity will extend to the northwest. The presence of substantial forest reserves in the area worsens the border's susceptibility to terrorist groups infiltration. The woodlands are excellent hiding locations and operational bases for terrorist organizations due to their large, rocky terrain, limited population, and lush foliage that makes observation difficult. The woodland terrain is made up of ungoverned areas where there are either no authorities present or just sometimes. Several times, President Buhari has claimed that terrorists from Chad and Niger who enter Nigeria through its porous borders are to responsible for herdsmen attacks (Olurounbi, 2019; Sydney & Onwuemele., 2019).

Intelligence gathering, monitoring

In 2018, Mr. Buhari declared that his administration was refocusing its fight against insecurity by making significant investments in the nation's information collecting capabilities. Speaking at the 8th National Security Seminar 2018 of the Alumni Association of the National Defence College, he said, "Intelligence-sharing at the level of the military and intelligence services must become the rule and not the exception (NDC).

He asserts that the North East's enormous geography broadens the scope of the conflict against insurgency. Without spending money on intelligence collection, he claimed, there would be very little chance for the nation. This publication has conducted an investigation that showed how Nigeria's inadequate intelligence collection procedures have damaged its capacity to prevent crime, violence, and killings as done in more developed countries.

According to several of the experts we spoke with, many of the crimes committed and acts of violence were preventable if Nigeria had a robust intelligence network and there was greater cooperation rather than competition between the government agencies in charge of security and intelligence.

Analysis of President Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policy: A Reality or an Illusion?

President Muhammadu Buhari said in his inaugural speech that "he belongs to no body and he belongs to everybody" in response to the widespread corruption charges that dogged President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in Nigeria from 2010 to 2015. No matter whose ox is gored, the President has promised to fight corruption in Nigeria. In fact, the general election victory of his party and himself in 2015 was made possible by Nigerians' perception of him as a man of strong character. At the time, President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan was criticized for his alleged timidity and lack of resolve to address the country's issues, particularly corruption. Salau, Mudashir, and Krishi (2017). Thus, Nigerians believe that the "national ethics" listed in section 23 of the Federation of Nigeria, 1999 constitution, which deals with discipline, integrity, and the dignity of labor and which, if ingrained in and practiced by Nigerians, high and low, will check corruption and return the country to the path of greatness, could have been one of the legal frameworks among others-like, The Nigerian Constitution of 1999, section 88 a. Additionally, the All Progressives Congress (APC), his current ruling party, clearly states in Article No.4 of its constitution that it will fight corruption if given the opportunity to govern in its current form. Even nevertheless, Nigerians are starting to doubt whether



President Buhari's administration's campaign against corruption and corrupt behavior is a reality or an illusion after a year in office.

President Buhari committed to fight corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox was gored as he assumed the reins of power on May 29, 2015. When Buhari remarked, "I belong to everybody and I belong to no body," he made this point extremely plain (2015). According to Campuswaka (2015), he began by detaining Col. Dasuki (rtd), President Jonathan's then national security adviser, who was a young Nigerian Army colonel in 1983 when General Buhari's government as the military's head of state was deposed by General Babaginda. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arrested and filed criminal charges against Dasuki's accomplices from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and members of the military for the massive fraud in weapons and defense procurements that resulted in the misappropriation of three trillion naira in defense budget since 2011 under the pretext of combating the infamous Boko Haram threat. One of the reasons why President Buhari committed to fight corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored was the NNPC inquiry, in which Mrs. Diezani Alison Madueke was required to give a comprehensive account of her stewardship while in office. (8) NIMASA fraud, which is under investigation (www.punch.com). (9) Premium Times, "The NDDC scandal involving N27 billion Nigerian naira contract award" (8th August 2015). (10) Premium Times: Police Service Commission scam inquiry involving N150 million Nigerian Naira (2015). In general, the administration of President Buhari has made an effort to look into a number of corruption allegations that occurred under President Goodluck Jonathan. Jimoh (2016).

The widespread corruption in Nigeria was a significant factor in ending the People's Democratic Party's 16-year administration there. In the 2015 general election, Nigerians expressed their frustration by supporting Muhammadu Buhari, the APC's presidential candidate. In addition to tackling corruption, Buhari pledged to tackle terrorism and the economy. While ranchers conflict with rural communities and bandits kidnap for ransom, Boko Haram terrorists continue to wreak havoc, endangering food security and national unity (Tade, 2021). Corruption still exists two years into Buhari's second tenure as president. Implementing the Treasury Single Account, the Biometric Verification Number (BVN), and the "Whistle Blowing" policy form the three pillars of Buhari's anti-corruption campaign. As evidenced by higher savings, these have won praise (Tade, 2021). However, problems like the politicization of the fight against corruption and the refusal to look into allegations have raised questions about it. The allegations of corruption that led to Ibrahim Magu's removal as acting head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the alleged application of different standards to individuals who support Buhari



are only two instances. Party politics protects those who support the ruling class from prosecution. Adams Oshiomole, the previous leader of Buhari's party, had urged opposition party defectors to join the ruling party in exchange for forgiveness of their "sins" (pulse.ng January 17, 2019).

Nigeria fell to position 146 at the end of 2019 when President Buhari was re-elected, and position 149 by 2020 in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. The Buhari administration has referred to the ranking as "senseless and unsubstantiated," yet data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) reveals how Nigerians perceive corruption when they interact with state servants. The information on public experiences with corruption demonstrates that this issue is still very much present. The bureau compiles information on:

- Direct experiences of corruption events, as victims, by citizens;
- The experience of reporting corruption and other crimes to the public authorities;
- Opinions and perceptions of citizens concerning recent trends, patterns and state response to corruption (NBS, 2019).

Tade (2021) looked on how the Buhari administration had implemented the Treasury Single Account, biometric data verification, and other anti-corruption initiatives. His research demonstrates how politically exposed individuals pillaged the nation's coffers and used a variety of covert tactics to bury their stolen goods in graveyards, deserted stores, septic tanks, and even airports. An additional study explores Nigeria's experiences with corruption. It makes use of data from a May–June 2019 study by the National Bureau of Statistics that involved 33,000 households. According to the bureau's research, three (the north-east, north-west, and south-west) of the six regions saw a slight decline in the prevalence of bribery. The prevalence of bribery did, however, increase more in the north-central, south-east, and south-south zones from 2016 to 2019 (NBS, 2019).

However, some critics of Buhari's anti-corruption campaign have charged him with lacking sincerity and a comprehensive approach to the fight against corruption given that the opposition party, the PDP, and his alleged rivals make up the majority of the individuals and corporate entities under investigation. In light of this, Nigerians are both openly and secretly asking whether President Buhari is earnest in his fight against corruption or whether it is a vengeance, a reality, or an illusion.



The Economy

One of the promises President Muhammadu Buhari made to Nigerians was to restore the country's economy. When he became Nigeria's president, his administration inherited the following: There was an acute shortage of petroleum, payment of #500 billion and owing of #98 billion balance and 200 billion subsidies of petroleum, along with billions of dollars spent on Turn Around Maintenance (TAM) of the four refineries; 110 million Nigerians were living in poverty; 70% of states in Nigeria owed salaries of some or all of their employees; and the foreign reserve had drastically decreased to about \$29.79 billion (Yakubu, 2015)

Due to these unresolved concerns and the Buhari Administration's failure to address them right away, Nigeria experienced an economic recession that lasted for approximately 20 months, for example, from January 2016 to September 2017. Temitayo (2017) claims that the current economic downturn (which lasted from 2016 to September 2017) was brought on by the inability of the previous government, led by Goodluck Jonathan, to make savings, Nigeria's excessive reliance on imports, the administration of President Buhari's economic policies, the delay and controversy surrounding the 2016 budget, as well as the actions of militants and pipeline vandals.

Seven Years in Office, Buhari Fails to Deliver on Economy

When the All Progressives Congress, APC, officially launched its presidential campaign in January 2015, Muhammadu Buhari, who was running at the time, pledged to fight corruption and insecurity while also advancing the economy. Tade (2021).

At the Adokiye Amasiemeka Stadium in Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, Mr. Buhari, a former military leader, assured party members that he would appoint qualified individuals to manage the country's economy, which he claimed was in disrepair. "This country's main problems are instability and its poor economy, which was made worse by corruption. I can tell you that we will eventually put together a capable team of Nigerians to effectively run the nation," he stated. "I'm pleading with you; the harm done to this nation is severe. It is disgusting how high unemployment and insecurity are. The trip has started. To ensure that we are successful, it will need time, patience, and your help. Make sure our votes are counted. The economic and security issues we currently face are the main issues. To manage the economy and address insecurity, we have gathered capable individuals. Seven years have passed since Mr. Buhari became president of Nigeria on May 29, 2022, following his victories against former president Goodluck Jonathan in 2015 and his reelection in



2019. Only one year remains for him to finish the two maximum four-year terms. The country has struggled economically throughout his seven years in office, with unemployment and inflation levels worse than when he took office (National Bureau of Statistics; 2019; Oshinnaike, 2020). How has the economy done overall under this administration?

Inflation

Even though analysts thought it was high at the time, the country's inflation rates remained in the single digits prior to 2015. For instance, the nation's inflation rate fluctuated during 2014 from the lowest point of 7.7% to the highest point of 8.5%. When Mr. Buhari assumed office in 2015, the inflation rate was 9% on average. Inflation rates have been steadily rising in the country in recent years, hitting their highest levels in four years (Yahaya, 2017). According to data made public by the statistics office, Nigeria's inflation rate has recently risen dramatically as a result of rising food prices and low purchasing power. Inflation increased to 18.17% in March 2021 from 17.33% in February 2021. According to the National Bureau of Statistics' report on the Consumer Price Index, this was 0.82% points higher than the statistics from February (NBS, 2021). However, the bureau reported that the inflation rate in April was 18.12%.

Food Prices

The skyrocketing costs of food and other associated commodities and services have been a significant contributor to inflation in Nigeria in recent years. This newspaper reported in February that food inflation in Nigeria reached its highest level since 2008, a somber indication of the catastrophe the country's food industry has experienced as millions of underprivileged citizens battle every day to purchase food at outrageous prices. Agricultural and Food Organization (2008).

According to figures issued by the Bureau of Statistics, food inflation increased to 20.57 percent year-over-year in January 2021, the highest level in more than 11 years. In recent months, as a result of border closures and a blockade of southern Nigeria, Nigeria has had one of its longest inflationary streaks. Analysts attribute the increase in food prices to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, shortages of dollars, and ongoing limitations on the importation of some foods long after the country reopened its borders. The ongoing attacks on farmers, which have led to a lack of products, are another contributing reason. John, Nwozor, and Kunle (2020).



Unemployment

The creation of jobs was a central theme of the Buhari-Osinbajo campaign in 2015. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate increased after the administration entered office in the second quarter of 2015 from 8.2% in the second quarter to 9.9% in the third (NBS). Since then, Nigerian life has continued to be troubled by unemployment, poverty, and economic disempowerment. Nigeria's jobless rate has more than tripled from May 2015 to May 2021. The jobless rate in Nigeria, which translates to almost 23.2 million people, increased to 33.3% in March, according to the country's statistics agency. This is the highest rate in at least 13 years and the second-highest rate in the world. The figure increased from 27.1% in the second quarter, when the ongoing economic crisis in Nigeria was rendered worse by the coronavirus outbreak. Oshinnaike (2020).

GDP and Recession

The Nigerian economy experienced two recessions from May 2015 and 2020. The economy first entered a recession in 2016, when it shrank by 2.06% between April and June. When the country's crucial oil industry was affected by falling world prices, it saw two consecutive quarters of declining growth, which is the traditional definition of a recession. Analysts blamed Mr. Buhari's failure to form a government and launch an economic blueprint for the recession, among other things. According to figures issued by the nation's statistics department, Nigeria entered a recession once more in 2020 as its gross domestic product shrank for the second consecutive quarter. Additionally, the statistics demonstrated how the COVID-19 epidemic and low oil prices affected economic output. Prior to 2015, the GDP growth rate was estimated to be 2.3%; it is currently averaging 1.01%. (Abdulyakeen, 2021; Muhmmad, Iloani, Clement, and Ogwu, 2017).

Naira

Six months after Mr. Buhari took office as president, in November 2015, the naira sold for N197 to the dollar. The Nigerian unit has undergone constant depreciation since then, with two of these exercises taking place in 2020 alone. The naira was essentially devalued by 7.6% last week when the Central Bank of Nigeria decided to use the Nafex rate as the government's official exchange rate. Officially, the naira was set at a fixed rate of 379. Nearly two weeks after the CBN removed the exchange rate that had been regarded as the government's official rate for about a year from its website, the currency traded at 410.25 to the dollar on the generally flexible Nafex or Investors and Exporters window. After Finance Minister Zainab Ahmed claimed that

the government had accepted the Nafex rate utilized by investors and exporters, the CBN denied weakening the naira in March (). The government's determination to standardize the various exchange rates across the country was reflected in the action. Both investment and local businesses and manufacturing organizations have been hurt by the local unit's decreased worth. The Nigerian currency is in the "greatest possible health it can be, considering the circumstances we are in," according to presidential spokeswoman Garba Shehu earlier on Sunday. The COVID-19 pandemic, according to Mr. Shehu, has had a detrimental impact on the world economy, and "only the Nigerian economy is recording 'positive growth' in Africa."

Foreign Exchange Policy

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Ministry of Finance's lack of clarity in policy appreciation have significantly contributed to the nation's foreign currency policy's uncertainty, especially in recent months. For instance, in March, the Central Bank of Nigeria promptly refuted a claim made by Nigeria's finance minister, Zainab Ahmed, that the country had established a new flexible currency rate policy for official transactions. Investors and analysts expressed anxiety about the news, with several stating that the uncertainties could hurt investment. People's opinions on the country's foreign currency management strategy are divided, with many criticizing the administration for its stringent regulations and lack of transparency in the CBN's distribution of foreign exchange to high-profile figures like bureau de change owners.

Debt

Since Mr. Buhari assumed office, the country's debt level has increased significantly as a result of budgetary measures that place a high priority on debt. Nigeria's debt profile was N12.12 trillion as of June 2015, not long after Mr. Buhari assumed office, according to the Debt Management Office (DMO). According to the Debt Management Office (DMO), as of December 31, 2020, Nigeria had a total national debt of N32.915 trillion. The debt stock of the federal, state, and federal capital territories are all included in the calculations. In order to ensure debt sustainability, the government of Nigeria has reportedly been slowing the rate of growth in the stock of public debt since the country's 2017 escape from recession, according to DMO. The amount of fresh borrowing to partially finance budget deficits "has dropped steadily from N2.36 Trillion in 2017 to: N2.01 Trillion in 2018, N1.61 Trillion in 2019, and N1.59 Trillion in the first 2020 Appropriation Act," it was further said. The COVID-19 Pandemic's economic and social effects, however, caused a reversal in the trend in 2020, according to the DMO, as evidenced by the N4.20 trillion in new borrowing in the

updated 2020 Appropriations Act. Many nations, even developed nations, had increased their borrowing as a result of COVID-19, it was said. Analysts have countered that the level of borrowing may not be manageable, particularly if attention is paid to the country's concerning debt-to-revenue ratio as well as its worrying debt-to-GDP ratio.

Conclusion

Nigeria's national security is seriously threatened by poor administration, as shown by the group's use of violent attacks, kidnapping, murder, rape, and property destruction. The growth of SALWs, the environment, poverty, unemployment, jungle justice, and the failure of state defense policy are all contributing factors. This has caused the citizens of Nigeria's quality of life to worsen. Since corruption is prevalent in Nigeria and has eaten deeply into the fabric of the country's society, it should not be seen as mere rhetoric in President Buhari's fight against it. This has deterred foreign investors, led to inflation, and caused our currency to depreciate. Last but not least, the Buhari administration's campaign against corruption in Nigeria is positive, but it should be comprehensive and transparent, not focusing solely on a certain region of the nation. The analysis finds that improving the socioeconomic conditions of people in both rural and urban areas will be more effective at reducing insecurity in Nigeria than using military force alone. This can be accomplished by giving the army of unemployed youths employment opportunities, implementing programs to combat family poverty, offering free health care and food and non-food item subsidies to the populace, fostering communication between pastoralists and sedentary farmers, and improving the working conditions and equipment available to security personnel.

Recommendation

By talking with bandits and kidnappers and compensating them with millions of dollars, the state governments are unintentionally adding to the insecurity that is destroying the nation. This will just inspire others to start criminal gangs both within and outside of your state. Only when there is a political commitment to putting an end to insecurity throughout Nigeria can we hope to see results. It is necessary for the government, institutions, security services, and citizens to make several sacrifices and compromises.

A comprehensive and open campaign should be waged against corruption. Nigeria needs morally upright men with a track record of integrity as its leaders. Leaders who are trustworthy, sincere, and disciplined. The anti-graft organizations should make sure that those

who engage in corrupt behavior are promptly prosecuted. There shouldn't be any sacred cows, and there shouldn't be "one rule for all and another for the privileged few" when it comes to prosecution.

To ensure that the agencies can carry out the criminal justice process without interruption, the government should provide them with adequate funding. To prevent false claims, the Code of Conduct Bureau should thoroughly examine every public official's income both before and after they take office. A special court should be established to try those accused of corruption. This will shorten the lengthy and onerous procedures of the traditional court.

Criminals should be subject to the death penalty, as is the case in other modern nations. Perhaps the punishment should be death or life in jail, as is the situation in China and the majority of Asian nations. Both the anti-graft professionals and Nigerian police officers need to be taught and provided with the necessary tools to conduct investigations without bias. To have job satisfaction, public employees should be adequately compensated and motivated with improved staff welfare programs. To lower the rate of unemployment and crime in society, the federal government should work to create employment possibilities. To serve as a deterrent to other dishonest leaders, the Federal Government should imprison former officials. This would spread fear throughout the system and lessen corruption in Nigerian politics and governance.

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