

## CORRUPTION, INSURGENCY AND NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES

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### **Abstract**

*The paper examines the nexus between corruption, insurgency and Nigeria's developmental challenges using descriptive research method. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria since 2009 recorded unprecedented scale of killings, destruction of public and private property, incessant kidnapping and abduction of people, increase in internally displaced persons and acquisition of territories due to Boko Haram insurgency. Unfortunately government's efforts directed at fighting the scourge remained a failure. The paper, however, argues that corruption is the main factor responsible for the prevalence of insurgency in Nigeria as well as preventing its total obliteration. However, both corruption and insurgency have had grave consequences on Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. The paper submits that the twin evils have contributed to poor economic growth and development, political instability, increased level of insecurity in the country, and underdevelopment, among others. In the light of the foregoing, strengthening of existing anti-corruption agencies, effective delivery of good governance and dividends of democracy to the people, effective mechanism for poverty reduction, provision of employment opportunities, infrastructural development and basic human needs, and establishment of special anti-corruption courts, among others, are suggested towards curbing corruption as measure of finding lasting solution to insurgency in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** corruption, insurgency, developmental challenges, anti-corruption strategy, anti-Insurgency initiatives

### **1. Introduction**

Nigeria, recently, was listed as one of the dangerous countries in Africa with a sharp increase in insurgency, acts of terrorism and crime against humanity and public structures. This no doubt dealt a severe blow to the so-called "giant" of Africa. The climax of such crises was the emergence of different groups under plethora of names operating in the Niger-Delta region. These groups were solely attacking the facilities and personnel of oil companies in the region and equally carried out abduction and kidnapping of expatriates. The Amnesty programme initiated by the Federal Government in 2009 drastically reduced the militants' deadly activities in the region. As if that was not enough, another group, called *Jama'atul ahlul Sunna Lidda'awati Wal Jihad* (Boko Haram) became another nemesis to contend with since 2009 in the North-East Nigeria.

It is no longer news that Nigeria, since 2009, became one of the most dreaded places on earth with insurgency and alarming rate of terrorist attacks assuming centre stage. The Boko Haram terrorist group proved more ferocious than the Niger Delta militancy, deploying the lethal strategy of suicide bombing, hitherto unknown in the country which placed it in the global terrorist map. The terrorist activities of the group which had left thousands of people dead including policemen, soldiers and civilians, property worth billions of naira destroyed, remains one of the recent terrorist-related dimensions to security challenges facing the Nigerian state.

Expectedly, the goal of any insurgency is to challenge the existing government for control of all or a portion of its territory, or force political concessions in sharing political power as being demonstrated by the Boko Haram insurgency. *Ipsa facto*, the high level of insecurity in Nigeria due to the insurgency has increased the issues of national and international concerns such as political instability, migration, brain drain, capital flight, reduction in inflow of Foreign Direct Investment and underdevelopment, leaving unpalatable consequences on national development (Nkwede and Abah, 2016). Unfortunately, the resolute fights against the scourge by the Federal Government have not yielded expected optimistic results.

Evidently, the challenges of corruption remains a major devastating issue facing Nigeria since the colonial period but the high level of corrupt practices since the commencement of the current democratic experience in May 29, 1999 and most especially during the Goodluck Jonathan administration and the level at which this act were demonstrated was alarming and worrisome. Various cases of alleged scams and scandals of high magnitude were reported during the regime, some of which are being investigated by the regime in power. Meanwhile, it is a known fact that once the political system is corrupt, it will manifest in different sectors of the society frustrating the national development objectives thereby giving room for chaos, crimes, violence and instability in the polity.

Corruption no doubt is an endemic disease that has frequently emerged as a critical obstacle to national development, national integration and national security in Nigeria; Boko Haram insurgency cannot be an exception. No doubt, huge money was allocated to the security sector between 2009 till date to actualize the national security objectives in which the fight against Boko Haram insurgency is paramount; hence instead of curtailing the scourge, it escalated to gargantuan height proving difficult to defeat. The question is: why Boko Haram insurgency persists despite huge budgetary allocation to the security sector annually?

However, many scholarly writings advanced to explaining inducing factors for Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria identified corruption as one of the main factors responsible for the menace but there is dearth in literature as to the connection between corruption and the escalation of insurgency by the Boko Haram religious sect. Thus, the gap in literature which this paper seeks to fill is to establish the nexus of corruption and continuous ascendancy of Boko Haram insurgency taking into cognizance of their implications for national development in Nigeria.

## **2. Corruption, Insurgency and National Development: A Conceptual Discourse**

Corruption is seen as a universal phenomenon which has long been with every society and thus identified as the bane of most political, social and economic development as well as democratic stability in many countries of the world (Nkwede and Nwogbaga, 2017). However, various perceptions have been offered by scholars on the meaning, dimension/forms, causes/reasons and effects of corruption which means that the term is one of the many non-universally acceptable defined concepts.

Dori (2016:8) stressed that “corruption, globally, does not respect any political or economic system, it is found in democratic, military, capitalist, socialist, developed and developing

societies only the level or rate of corruption varies”. This shows that no society is free of corruption, which is the reason why its obliteration requires combination of political, economic and socio-cultural measures.

The widely cited definition of corruption is the one offered by the World Bank (1997: 2) which defined corruption as “the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains”. The modified aspect of this definition sees corruption as “the abuse of public office for private gains when an officer accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe” (Oviasuyi, et al, 2007, cited in Odo, 2015b: 180). Corruption does not only take place in the public sector but also in private realms. The United States Agency for International Development (2005) argued that corruption though commonly attributed to the public sector also exists in other sectors such as private business sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Following from the above positions, many other definitions point to undoubtful fact that corruption is illegal, exploitative, immoral, and illegitimate which any personality of decent nature should stay away from. Corruption comes in various forms as classified by scholars including bribery, favouritism, extortion, fraud, abuse of authority, patronage, theft, deceit, malfeasance and illegality (Svensson, 2005; Tanzi, 1998; Nkwede and Abah, 2016; Transparency International, 2003 and 2009).

Corruption also involves unethical actions like nepotism, conflict of interest, divided loyalty, influence-peddling, misuse or stealing of government property, selling of favours, receiving kickbacks, embezzlement, misappropriation, and under-or over-invoicing, among others (AAPAM, 1991; Caiden, 1991). No matter its forms and classifications, what is certain is that corruption is caused by political, economic and socio-cultural factors and has adverse effects or negative consequences on national development.

Insurgency on the other hand is a crime against public order; a pattern of internal disturbances and tensions that poses serious problems to public safety, law and order (Ladan, 2012). According to Powell and Abraham (2006), insurgency refers to a violent move by a person or group of persons to resist or oppose the enforcement of law or running of government or revolt against constituted authority of the state or of taking part in insurrection. Traditionally, however, insurgencies seek to overthrow an existing order with one that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals (Gompert & Gordon, 2008).

Nwala (2013) contends that insurgency is a political movement with specific objectives and political goals such as rejection of an existing authority with intent to seeking to opt out of such territory and establishing a new one. Nwala, further submitted that some of the factors that give rise to and promote insurgency and other forms of security challenges include, injustice, illegitimacy of the regime, longing for freedom and self-determination, poverty, ideological (religious, ethnic and political factors) influences, and the militarisation of the society due to long reign of the military.

Insurgents use varieties of tactics and methods including cell-networks that maintain secrecy, terrorism used to foster insecurity among the populace, multifaceted attempts to nurture support

locally and internationally, incessant attacks against the government, and massive propaganda (Tomes, 2004). Insurgency becomes a crime of terrorism when insurgents use arbitrary violence or threat of force deliberately aimed at causing fear, harm or kill by attacking defenceless civilians and their property or undermining peace by disrupting the social, political and economic life of a nation or any part thereof (Ladan, 2012).

Several groups have emerged at different point in the political history of Nigeria with different insurgent tactics and forms, some of which include the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Ogoni People, Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in the South-South and South-East, and the Boko Haram in the North-East Nigeria. As Obafemi and Galadima (2013: xvi) observed, Boko Haram started as a “weak, disorganised, loosely coordinated and inchoate movement, mutated to pose serious threats to national security...developed the capability for strategic power projection (terrorism), strategic intelligence, and the building of wide-ranging linkages to subvert the state”.

Development is traditionally recognized as a process by which a country provides for its entire population, the basic needs of life such as health, nutrition and housing, and provides them with the opportunities to contribute to the process through gainful employment as well as scientific and technological innovations (Oludayo, 2004). It is also a process by which the national government authorities facilitate the construction and maintenance of the infrastructure and mechanisms such as agriculture and industries, so as to ensure that the society overcome the pressures and necessities of the national and related economics systems for the present and all future times (Fagbemi, n.d).

National development, according to Abimbola and Adesote (2012), means “the ability of a county or countries to improve the social welfare of the people such as providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, infrastructural facilities, medical care, and so on” (p. 83). It entails producing more and better food to eat, better living accommodation, improved road network, qualitative education and enlightenment among the populace (Balogun, 1972; Nkwede, 2017).

National development is the country’s collection of strategies aimed at bringing growth, expansion and progress to the country at both the local and international level. It is the overall or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country achievable through development planning and implementation.

### **3. Theoretical Review**

Various theories abound in extant literature adopted to discuss and evaluate the prevalence and implications of corruption on rising wave of violence/instability such as insurgency especially in the developing democracies. For the purpose of this paper, the state fragility theory is adopted. The state fragility theory stresses the failure and weakness of a particular state in effectively ensuring adequate provisions of basic human needs for human survival for its citizens as well as security of lives and properties.

McLoughlin (2009) submitted that fragile states are often described as “incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens”. It depicts a situation when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population (OECD DAC, 2007). This reflects the prevailing characterization of state fragility as the failure of a state (especially the Third World countries such as Latin America, Africa and Asia) to perform certain functions necessary to meet citizen’s basic needs and expectations.

Apparently, when a government fails to deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor, there is a tendency for increased criminal violence which further weakens the states’ authority. Hence, fragile states are associated with tensed, deeply conflicted and dangerous warring factions, which most times lead to breakdown of law and order and increased humanitarian disaster (Department for International Development, 2005; Rotberg, 2003).

Based on the report of the Fund for Peace’s Fragile States Index (2015) which covered the 2014 collected data on 177 countries, Nigeria is placed among the high alert fragile state with 102.4 having ‘most worsened’ in the area of marginal improvement (Messner, *et al.*, 2015). This report among the previous ones pictured Nigeria as a fragile state.

The prevailing conditions as put forward by Osaghae (2007) as criterion for measuring the fragile state such as weak, ineffective and unstable political institutions and bad governance, inability to exercise effective jurisdiction over its territory, legitimacy crisis, unstable and divided population, underdeveloped institutions of conflict management and resolution, pervasive corruption, poverty and low levels of economic growth and development, among others. Applying these to Nigeria, one could not but agree that it is a fragile state which further presents the linkage between the state weaknesses and the rise of terrorist groups in the country. However, majority of scholars have identified one or combination of some of the above-highlighted characteristics of the fragile state as the genesis or reason(s) for Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East Nigeria (see Akinbi, 2015; Barttolotta, 2012; Bintube, 2015; Okoro, 2014; Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015; Tella, 2015). The ferocious campaigns by Boko Haram insurgents in the North-Eastern part of the country since 2009 have heightened the internal political pressures in the country which have brought about the increase in internally displaced persons, wanton destruction of lives and property, and abduction of foreign personnel and girls/women.

In the light of the foregoing perception, the application of state fragility theory to the phenomena under study is appropriate because it explains that the failures and weaknesses of the Nigerian state to curb the excessive abuse of offices and public funds (political corruption), provide human basic amenities for the needy and poor, advance good governance to enjoy democratic dividends, and to a large extent, secure the lives and property of the people from *northern ruling vampires* in the North-eastern region could be advanced as the factors responsible for the continuous ascendancy of Boko Haram insurgency in the affected region.

#### **4. Inducing Factors for Insecurity in Northern Nigeria and Boko Haram Movement**

Northern Nigeria consists of 19 out of 36 states of the Federation clustered into 3 geo-political zones of North-West, North-East and North-Central. The North-Eastern region comprises six states most of which are “less densely populated, poorer and with worse health outcomes” in Nigeria. These states including Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe have been under series of attacks by the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009. It is a region characterized since 2009 by violent, ethno-religious and political conflicts, rising violent crimes and widespread corruption resulting into socio-economic and political insecurity (Ladan, 2012). It has been acknowledged that the Northern region has always been a very fertile ground for religious activism, beginning with the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio in the early 18th century, partly due to inability or unwillingness of the ruling elites to separate politics from religion. Ever since, many fundamentalist religious groups have evolved to confront the pretentious ruling elites through several religious uprisings (Ajayi, 1990; Ajayi, 2012). The most prominent among these groups was the “Maitatsine sect”.

The *Maitatsine* movement, largely comprised of youths, unemployed migrants and extremist Muslims, was a group of adherents of Mohammed Marwa (1927-1980), popularly known as *Maitatsine*, a Hausa word for “the one who curses” from northern Cameroon. Mohammed Marwa, who claimed himself to be a prophet (Messiah) championed the violent uprisings occurred in many Northern states and cities such as Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Borno, Maiduguri and Yola in 1980s (Isichei, 1987). The uprisings claimed about 10,000 lives including Maitatsine himself, and left more than 10,000 homeless and property worth millions of naira destroyed (Omosho, 2003; Pham, 2006).

Various scholars believe that Boko Haram sect is an offshoot, mutation or resurrection of Maitatsine in terms of inspiration, objectives, and ideology (Danjibo, 2009; Johnson, 2011). In fact, their modes of teaching made it clear that they are similar in nature. Mohammed Marwa often instructed his followers that “any form of Western influence is a sin and that westernization has corrupted Islam”.

Similarly, the name *Boko Haram* (combination of Hausa and Arabic languages) was interpreted to mean “western civilisation or education is sinful or forbidden”. However, the organisational planning, armed resistance and modus operandi of Boko Haram as argued by Danjibo (2009) are more in tune with Afghanistan’s Taliban. Nonetheless, the two groups are deadly and unIslamic. Although scholars, security experts and analysts are yet to agree on the actual date the sect emerged but tends to rely on the date in which this sect became violent and deadly. According to Akinbi (2015), the movement started in the Borno-Yobe axis in the 1990s but gained notoriety in 2001 following the clashes between the sect and the government officials. The sect was said to become more notorious after the death of its founding leader, Mohammed Yusuf, who was argued to be extra-judicially executed while in police detention in 2009 (Bintube, 2015).

The activities of the sect since 2009 have constituted a major security threat to the nation and make Northern Nigeria particularly the North East (where their activities are rife) the most dangerous region to live in the country (Akinbi, 2015). The group has been responsible for thousands of death of Nigerians and resulted in loss of life-worth properties. It is argued that

between 2009 and 2015, the Boko Haram insurgency has killed more than 30,000 people and destroyed properties worth billions of naira (Tijani, 2015).

Different accounts had been advanced in extant literature as to inducing factors for insecurity including the Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria. Some of which include bad leadership, poverty, corruption, illiteracy, unemployment, poor government policies, weak judicial system, bad governance and religious extremism. No doubt, bad leadership has been the bane of country's national development; the Northern Nigeria is not an exemption. Politicians run for political offices to have their own share of 'national cake' without taking into consideration those who voted them into such offices. As such public funds meant for national development are diverted for private benefits.

Corruption has also been identified as one of the main factors inducing insecurity in Northern Nigeria (Zumve, Ingyoroko & Akuva, 2013; Nkwede, 2013). The former Director-General of State Security Service (SSS), Mr. J. Gadzama alluded that the "primary cause of sectarian riots in the northern part of the country is the grand looting of the treasury by political leaders" (Nadabo, 2013).

Bintube (2015) accounted that socio-economic factors such as poverty, joblessness, bad governance occasioned by leadership deficit, corruption, deception and injustice were the major factors responsible for the insurgency in the North-East Nigeria. To this author, the neglect of the government in the dispensation of justice under democracy to its citizenry and the denial to practice individual's religion by the government's law enforcement agencies, were seen as the root causes of the Boko Haram insurgency. The recent statement made by Yemi Osinbajo (Vice President of Nigeria) has captured it all. He Yemi Osibanjo cited in Mathias (2015) submitted thus:

*the Northern states occupy about 70 per cent of the land mass of the country, they also have the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the country, the lowest rate of child enrolment in schools, highest number of unemployed young people, highest levels of poverty and faces the challenges of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict including the Boko Haram terrorism.*

Poverty has also been one of the advanced factors for insecurity in the Northern Nigeria. In terms of absolute poverty line by geo-political zone, the North-East has retained the title of the poorest zone in Nigeria since 1985 (Ladan, 2012). A World Bank Report (2014) shows that all Northern states in Nigeria fell below the national average of 46.5% having the North-West recorded highest with 80.9% followed by North-East with 76.8% and North-Central with 45.7%.

The relationship between poverty and insecurity is very glaring that many youths especially in the North-east who have been denied choices and opportunities to go to better schools, have access to hospitals, houses, basic social life as well as participate actively in the societal affairs joins any groups ready to meet their needs as a result, most of the armed robbers, terrorist groups, kidnappers, come from poor masses (Tella, 2015).

Furthermore, the North-East is reported to be the home of the state with the highest unemployment rate in the Federation, i.e. Yobe State at 60.6% as at the end of 2011 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Unemployment, is argued to be one of the induced factors for insecurity in Northern Nigeria in that the unemployed youths often engage in crimes and other illegal activities to the extent that Boko Haram sect succeeded in luring vibrant and jobless youths into their den since they have no choice rather than to join in order to take care of themselves and that of their family.

The unemployment rate currently in Nigeria was put at 13.9% against the previous declaration of 13.3% in July 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016) with severe figure of unemployed youths in the Northern Nigeria. The implications of this trend include continued increased internally displaced persons (IDPs), political instability, underdevelopment, economic meltdown and worst of all recession.

### 5. Corruption and the Nigerian State

The menace of corruption in Nigeria has been discussed at different levels of governance, academic discourse, fora, symposia, conferences, with the aim at curbing the menace yet this ugly incidence keeps surviving at all levels of government and non-governmental level. The challenges of corruption remain a major devastating issue facing Nigeria since the colonial period; the phenomenon has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigeria polity. Specifically, the high rate of corrupt practices in the post-independence period in Nigeria is noticeable in various governments (civil & military) occasioned by mismanagement and misappropriation of fund, lack of transparency and accountability, arbitrary award and inflation of contracts, embezzlement, bribery, and diversion of funds, among others.

Although, successive governments in Nigeria since independence in 1960 had in one way or the other devised measure or strategy at curbing corruption but with little success. The 1996 survey of 54 corrupt countries by the *Transparency International* ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt nation on the list. In the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 1998 survey, Nigeria was ranked 81 out of 85 countries. In the 2001 CPI survey of 91 countries, Nigeria remained second most corrupt nation in the world. Nigeria is ranked 139th out of 176 countries in the 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index, by implication, Nigeria is the 35th most corrupt country in the world.

Worse still, Nigeria ranks 136th out of 175 countries with a score of just 27 out of 100 on the 2014 CPI released in 2015 while in the recent release of the 2015 CPI, Nigeria is ranked 136th out of 168 countries with a score of 26 out of 100 which depicts that Nigeria is the 32nd most corrupt countries in the world (*Transparency International*, 2016). Thus, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) on Nigeria since 1996 is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Corruption Perception Index (CPI) Rankings & Scores, Nigeria (1996-2015).

Year	Rankings by countries	Scores (scale of 10/100)
1996	54 of 54	0.69/10
1997	52 of 52	1.7/10
1998	81 of 85	1.9/10
1999	98 of 99	1.6/10
2000	90 of 90	1.2/10

2001	90 of 91	1.0/10
2002	101 of 102	1.6/10
2003	132 of 133	1.4/10
2004	144 of 146	1.6/10
2005	152 of 158	1.9/10
2006	150 of 163	2.2/10
2007	147 of 179	2.2/10
2008	141 of 180	2.7/10
2009	130 of 180	2.5/10
2010	134 of 178	2.4/10
2011	143 of 183	2.4/10
2012	139 of 176	27/100
2013	144 of 177	25/100
2014	136 of 175	27/100
2015	136 of 168	26/100

**Source:** *Transparency International*, 1997-2016; compiled by the Authors.

Various incidences of corruption have been reported since the commencement of current democratic experiment in 1999. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the first Nigeria's Fourth Republic president between 1999 and 2007 laid the foundation of his administration on the belief that corruption will be eliminated in Nigeria when he signed the two anti-corruption bill into law. By so doing, the two anti-graft agencies namely Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were established in 2000 and 2004 respectively.

However, corruption continued to grow unabated. It was reported that Nigeria lost between \$4 billion and \$8 billion per year to corruption during the eight years of Obasanjo's administration (*Human Rights Watch*, 2007, cited in Mohammed, 2013). As at 2012, Nigeria was estimated to have lost over \$400 billion to corruption since independence (Okoye, 2012). Recently, it was reported that Nigeria lost \$174 billion to corruption at the end of 2015 (Akinmutimi, 2016).

The Nigerian experience since 1999 indicates that corruption has become a norm with newspapers inundated on daily/weekly basis with news on political and bureaucratic corruption. In fact, all the three arms of government and virtually all the Nigerian ministries and agencies as well as private organisations are immersed in corrupt practices with the police ranked the most corrupt among them (Adetoro, 2012a). This high level of moral decadence was exemplified in the presentation of the 2016 budgets to the National Assembly, which brought the term "budget padding" into Nigeria's political dictionary. Table 2, however, shows some of the major incidences of corrupt practices in Nigeria between 2010 and 2015.

Table 2: Major Alleged Corrupt Incidences in Nigeria (2010-2015)

S/N	Corruption cases	Actor(s) involved	Amount (\$/₦)
1.	Fuel Subsidy Scam	Mamman Ali, Mahmud Tukur & others	\$6billion
2.	Fraud at the Federal Civil	Stephen Oronsaye	₦123billion

	Service		
3.	Police Pension Fund Fraud	John Yusuf, Uzoma Cyril & others	₦32.8billion
4.	Bullet Proof Car Scandal/ NCAA Operational Vehicles	Stella Oduah (Minister of Aviation, 2010-2015)	₦255million & ₦643million
5.	NNPC missing fund	NNPC Officials	\$20billion
6.	Private Jet Arm Scandal	Goodluck Jonathan administration	\$15million
7.	Immigration Recruitment Scandal	Abba Morro (the then Minister of Interior)	N/A
8.	Malabu Oil Scandal	Dan Etete, Yerima & others	\$1.1billion
9.	Arms Procurement Scandal	Sambo Dasuki & others	\$15billion
10.	Defence Contract Scam	Arthur Eze	\$500million
11.	Bribery Scandal	Farouk Lawan & others	\$3million/ \$620,000
12.	Alleged links with Know-front	Kola Aluko, Diezzani Allison- Madueke & others	\$1.5million
13.	Bribery Scandal to Christian Religious Leaders	Goodluck Jonathan Administration	₦6billion
14.	Pension Fund Scam	Abdulasheed Maina	₦195billion
15.	Kerosene Subsidy Scam	Top PPMC Officials	\$30million
16.	NIMASA Scam	Patrick Z. Akpobolokemi & 5 others	₦2.6billion

**Source:** Ajomole (2015), Olalemi (2016); compiled by the Authors.

## 6. Corruption and Prevalence of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria (2010 – 2015)

Corruption has been acknowledged to be one of the major factors for the emergence and prevalence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Recently, Wole Soyinka, while speaking on the topic “How corruption created Boko Haram” at a session in Oslo, the Norwegian capital in June 2016 emphasises that corruption bred Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Dokunola, 2016). Although the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency precedes year 2010, but the scale and mode of operation of the terrorist group between 2010 and 2015 assumed an alarming dimension, raising serious concerns for both local and international community.

The Boko Haram insurgents justified their existence on the high level of corruption in the Northern Nigeria. This is quoted in the Human Rights Watch Report (2012) that the teaching of Mohammed Yusuf was easily accepted by the unemployed teeming youth because of the fertile land for corruption. Equally, the ideology behind the formation of the Boko Haram sect and the incessant attacks on the government institutions and its personnel justifies the proposition that corruption constitute one of the factors responsible for the evolution of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Adetoro, 2012b; Bintube, 2015; Nkwede, 2013; Odo, 2015a; Tella, 2015). This is remarked by a Nigerian journalist who interviewed senior Boko Haram leader some years back as quoted in Human Rights Watch (2012) thus:

*Corruption became the catalyst for Boko Haram. Mohammed Yusuf the group first leader would have found it difficult to gain a lot of these people if he was operating in a functional state. But his teaching was*

*easily accepted because the environment, the frustrations, the corruption[and] the injustice made it fertile for his ideology to grow fast, very fast, like wildfire.*

As Adesoji (2010) rightly observed, Boko Haram is an Islamic sect that believes politics in the Northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt politicians. In view of this, many scholars equally believes that the insurgency by the Boko Haram sect is as a result of corruption prevalent in the Nigerian society especially in the Northern region (Eyieyien, 2012; Walker, 2012). These scholars argued that the failure of the government to curb the tide of corruption and to provide a conducive environment for business activities to thrive caused frustration and drive many to join self-help ethnic, religious, civil or community groups some of which are hostile to the state.

The followers of Mohammed Yusuf far back in 2004 equally cited corruption as motivation for their actions. It is argued that the Boko Haram sect dreamt of a new society devoid of corruption and whose sole purpose was to remain close to Allah (God). In pursuance of their vision of creating an Islamic state in Nigeria, the group drew on the teachings of Taymiyyah (a 13th century Islamic cleric) which advocated that “in the face of leadership by Muslims who did not behave in a benevolent way and used their leadership to oppress, it was accepted to Allah for individuals to withdraw from corrupt system and fight it with violence” (Walker, 2012).

The purpose of the group was therefore, to withdraw from the Nigerian society, which in their view had become corrupt beyond redemption and wage war against it (Odo, 2015a). According to Plouch (cited in Blanchard, 2014),

*Understanding Boko Haram’s appeal among some citizen in Nigeria’s far North requires an examination of underlying development challenges facing northern Nigeria, where high rates of poverty and unemployment are exacerbated by extreme population growth and low level of literacy. These factors combined with weak governance, rampant corruption and inadequate public service delivery, has contributed to the widespread disaffection that some suggest may facilitate Boko Haram recruitment.*

However, since 2009, the operations of the group witnessed the use of sophisticated weapons, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used to destroy government establishments, security institutions, religious and educational institutions, and even international institutions’ edifice such as the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja. The period between 2010 and 2015 recorded unprecedented scale of killings, destruction of public and private properties, while the invasion of towns and villages has led to increase in internal displacement. The operations of the group also extended to kidnapping and abduction of women and school children, thereby threatening Nigeria’s corporate existence.

It is unfortunate that despite the huge sum of money accrued to the security sector from the national budget annually (see Table 3) and those humanitarian interventions from the international donor agencies, the fight against the menace remained a failure. It was reported that a total of ₦4.62trillion has been allocated to the federal security sector between 2011 and 2015 (Olufemi, 2015). Table 3, therefore, presents the federal government budgetary allocation to security sector between 2010 and 2015.

Table 3: Federal Government Budgetary Allocation to Security Sector (2010-2015)

S/N	Year	Budget (in trillion ₦)	Allocation (in billion ₦)	% on Budget
1.	2015	4,493	934	25.0
2.	2014	4,962	923	20.0
3.	2013	4,987	923	13.0
4.	2012	4,888	924	19.0
5.	2011	4,972	920	21.0
6.	2010	4,239	448	11.0

**Source:** Adapted from Financial Intelligence (2014).

The period between 2010 and 2015 under the administration of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan recorded several corrupt practices as revealed in Table 2 which impeded the security agencies from fighting the menace head on. Jonathan's government which cited anti-corruption, power and electoral reforms as its focus was enmeshed in serious corrupt practices. There were several alarming and scandalous cases of corruption under the administration, out of which some perpetrators have been taken to court, some cases were never investigated while some are currently being investigated by the EFCC.

Some of the identified cases of corruption include ₦195 billion Maina pension scam, \$6 billion fuel subsidy scam, Stephen Oronsaye's ₦123 billion fraud, Police pension fund fraud, Stella Oduah's car purchase scandal, NNPC's missing US \$20 billion, \$15 million in private jet arms scandal, ₦7 billion bribe to Christian religious leaders, and \$2.1 billion Arms (now \$15 billion plus) deal scam, among others. There was a report on September 5, 2014 about a private jet which conveyed \$9.3 million cash from Nigeria to South Africa for an alleged arms deal between the two countries. Since then the money has been seized by the South African government which accused the Nigerian government of violating its laws regulating the transfer of cash, and is yet to be released (Ajomole, 2015; Ibekwe, 2014).

It was also reported that another payment made by the Nigerian government for arms in order to combat the menace of Boko Haram insurgency was also confiscated. The second transfer, totaling \$5.7 million, was wired through the banks. The South African government later claimed that the money had been returned to Nigeria, a claim that was difficult to be verified (Ibekwe, 2014).

Sometimes in December 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari remarked that the former administration of Goodluck Jonathan spent billions of naira and millions of dollars on efforts at equipping the Nigerian military against the insurgency, but there was rampant "abuse of trust". According to him, the major challenge in the security of the country was the threat posed by the Boko Haram. He further reiterated that the current administration under him had set clear targets toward the re-organisation, retraining and re-equipping the military to neutralising Boko Haram (*Premium Times*, December 10, 2015).

The revelation made by the Buhari government late 2015 on the arms deal scandal of \$2.1 billion (otherwise known as Dasuki Gate) was quite worrisome and despicable. The scandal which

involves the former National Security Adviser (NSA) to the former president, among other former military chiefs in collaboration with top-notch Nigerian politicians allegedly accused of involving in the dastardly act (see Hakeem, 2016; Nwankwo, 2016).

It is appalling to see that funds meant to purchase arms and ammunitions for the Nigerian soldiers battling the Boko Haram insurgency was allegedly shared among some politicians and used to execute their political campaigns during the last general elections. Meanwhile, the insurgency flourished in leaps and bounds despite the complaints of the military that they were ill-equipped compared to the insurgents. According to Nwankwo (2016), the ongoing investigation by the EFCC of the infamous arms fund diversion case is perhaps the biggest corruption scandal in Nigeria. The network of people involved in this case is vast, entangling and complex as more and more people are drawn into the web as partakers in the largesse.

Contrary to earlier reports on the total arm fund which was diverted, fresh discovery by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission's (EFCC) report on April 27, 2016, shows that another \$12.9 billion was discovered on arms deal fraud during the last administration. The development brought arms funds, which were diverted to over \$15 billion as the initial probe covered only \$2.1 billion. It was also discovered that the \$2.1 billion fraud was just for one of the several transactions and that top military officers deliberately incorporated companies to divert anti-insurgency funds for their personal use (Alli, 2016).

The above report is corroborated by the incumbent Vice President of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo, who claimed that Nigeria lost about \$15 billion to fraudulent and corrupt practices on security equipment spending during the administration of Goodluck Jonathan (*Premium Times*, May 3, 2016). No wonder, the intense bombings and ceaseless killings by the Boko Haram insurgents persisted for so long to the extent that the group occupied at least three states of the federation despite the fact that Nigeria's armed forces are known as one of the best in the world (Odebode & Akinkuotu, 2016).

The implication of the above scenario is that, corruption has cost Nigeria worthy lives and properties. Some junior army officers were court-martialed because of their refusal to fight the insurgents, perhaps understandably given the shortage of weapons. This also reduced the morale of the soldiers to tackle the scourge of insurgency in Nigeria during the period.

Moreover, the revelation made on arms deal scandal made some countries to believe that Nigeria, which had earned reputation in the fight against criminal activities and defence of territories, could no longer defend few local government areas occupied by the insurgents. The inhumane nature of a good number of Nigerian politicians was on display as they sacrificed the lives of innocent Nigerians on the altar of corruption by sharing the billions of dollars equipment funds among themselves.

The foregoing analyses show that the fight against the menace of corruption during the Jonathan administration was a failure and thus contributed to the prevalence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria between 2010 and 2015.

## **7. Implications of Corruption and Insurgency on National Development**

The damages and havoc both corruption and Boko Haram insurgency have done to the Nigerian polity are astronomical. Corruption and insurgency had contributed to economic doldrums Nigeria found itself today. Corruption is a monster that should be blamed for economic woes facing Nigeria at the moment. The reduction in economic growth and development by lowering incentives to invest in the economy due to bribery often requested and received by corrupt officials and the fear of contract breach are all blamed on corruption. By implication, many investors have been frustrated thereby withdrawn their capital from Nigeria.

On the other hand, Boko Haram insurgency led to the closure of many businesses in the North-Eastern region which dealt a dirty blow to the Nigerian economy. Many foreign investors have relocated to the neighbouring countries like Ghana, where their lives, properties and capital will be secure. Even domestic and foreign investors who managed to remain in the country count their losses on yearly basis, for instance, the Lagos Chambers of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in its Business Environment Report (2014) attributed the loss of 30% of firms' sales to the insecurity in the North-East region (Omoh, 2014; Nkwede, Abah and Nwankwo, 2015). By implication, investors were discouraged to enter into business relations with Nigeria and could not set up factories in the affected region. As such, economy and national development objectives suffer.

It is evidenced that corruption has led to series of political violence in Nigeria ranging from military coups and counter-coups to ethno-religious conflicts and insurgency. Likewise, political instability as a result of Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram insurgency, etc being experienced in Nigeria in contemporary time are blamed on corruption. This in turn has undermined democracy, good governance, rule of law, socio-economic and political development, democratic stability and national integration.

Corruption is partly responsible for 'budget padding', perversion of justice, ineffectiveness of the anti-graft agencies, contradictory judgments by judiciary on electoral matters, delayed justice, electoral fraud, pervasive poverty and poor service delivery by public officials, among others. Moreover, no meaningful political development could take place in the affected areas in the North East due to Boko Haram insurgency.

Similarly, both corruption and insurgency have grave consequences on socio-economic life of Nigerians. Funds meant for social services welfare schemes for poor masses have been embezzled, misappropriated and mismanaged which further compounded the woes of infrastructural decay, inadequate medical services, failing educational standards, poor road networks, increase in IDPs, mass poverty, hardship, unemployment, lack of basic amenities such as food, water, electricity, among others, the non-existence of which no meaningful development could take place. Moreover, Boko Haram insurgency has led to destroyed infrastructural facilities, bombed schools and displaced indigenes thus aggravated the high rate of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the region (Nkwede and Nwogbaga, 2017).

Furthermore, corruption has undermined human and capital development in Nigeria. The Jonathan administration was elite-centered thereby lacking accountability and transparency in

governance. This situation had undoubtedly threatened national development as quality of governance is eroded while inducing political apathy among the populace (Odo, 2015b). Corruption also contributed to massive brain drain experienced in Nigeria in the years past. No doubt, Nigeria is blessed with citizens of high intellect with many of them having trooped abroad in search of greener pastures. Such experience is dangerous for the achievement of national developmental objectives.

Equally, corruption has done greater havoc to the image of Nigeria globally. Nigeria is often painted by the Transparency International, as one of the most corrupt countries in the world as a result of its promotion and inability to fight corruption. Nigeria has also been described as one of the most insecure nations to travel to in the world to the extent that some of these countries like USA recently warned their citizens against traveling to some Nigerian states (Ujah, 2016). This kind of situation will persist until some urgent measures are taken to address the twin evils of corruption and insurgency in Nigeria.

## **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper interrogated the nexus between corruption and prevalence of Boko Haram insurgency focusing on the threats posed to national development in Nigeria between in recent times. It has been established in the paper that corruption has been a major contributory factor for insurgency in Nigeria. Corruption and insurgency are twin evils that have led to bastardized national economic growth and development, hindering political development, contributed to infrastructural decay, mass poverty, increased level of unemployment and insecurity. They have equally undermined democracy, good governance, human and capital development, political stability and have done great havoc to the image of Nigeria globally. However, eliminating corruption and insurgency requires critical efforts from the government, its public officials and agencies as well as the general public.

Consequently, the following recommendations are proffered towards curbing corruption as measure of finding lasting solution to the Boko Haram insurgency in order to achieve national development objectives in Nigeria.

Essentially, the regime in power has recorded exemplary performance in dealing with corruption in Nigeria. However, the people's continued trust and confidence in the anti-graft war would be determined by this dexterity (political will) to bring those alleged powerful individuals in government circle caught in corruption web to book, as this will go a long way in curbing the rate of corrupt practices to a barest minimum.

The Federal Government should continually ensure that the EFCC, ICPC, and CCB, among others, are strengthened to ensure timely and vigorous prosecution of corrupt offenders. The leadership of these anti-graft agencies when appointed should be of right calibre, selfless, integrity and unquestionable character in order to ensure diligent prosecution of looters, recovery of looted funds and thus, end the looting of public treasury.

Effective mechanism for poverty eradication, provision of employment opportunities, infrastructural development and basic human needs, such as affordable housing, food, portable

water and qualitative education should be of utmost concern to the government at different levels in order to overcome the current challenge of insecurity in Nigeria.

The establishment of special anti-corruption courts is long overdue in order to help lighten the burden of the regular court system in Nigeria. Likewise, the high level of corruption, dependence and interference in the Nigerian judiciary in the recent past is worrisome. Therefore the sanitization of the judicial organ is imperative and timely.

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