Women and Insecurity: A Case Study of Toto Local Government of Nasarawa State

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Abstract
The country is currently bedeviled with insecurity challenges that have defiled many security procedures and policies, in spite of the large budgetary provisions made to the relevant agencies. The problem of insecurity in Nigeria has negative impact on the society; most especially on the vulnerable groups like the women. Women are mostly hit because they are seen as feeble victims. Most women especially farmers are afraid of going to farm for reasons like being kidnapped, raped or even killed due to insecurity. This paper examines women and insecurity in Toto local government area of Nasarawa State. The study adopted survey and the population is 119,077. Primary data were collected by administering 100 questionnaires and the data were analyzed using simple percentages. The study revealed that insecurity in Nigeria constitutes hindrance to women economically, socially and psychologically thereby placing them in a traumatized situation because of fear of bandit/Fulani herdsmen and kidnappers. Findings revealed that insecurity is a pivotal factor hindering growth and development of the women of Toto Local Government Area and placing them in a state of poverty, unemployment, religious difference and inequality. It was concluded that the involvement of women in insecurity issue most be established. The government should employ more women in the security unit of the country. Government should also give women equal standard of security training and quality education to encourage the involvement of women in peace and security resolution committees as they are considered the feeble group and needed to be protected.

Keywords: Insecurity, Women, Security Challenges, Feeble group

Introduction

Right to security is one of the fundamental human rights of citizens in any given State that is why it is always provided for in the Constitution of most sovereign States. Nigeria is not an exception, thus section

14(2s)(b) of the 1999 Constitution as amended states clearly that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government. Security has long been a part of human existence and its sustenance could be aptly viewed as a freedom from threat or violence which could lead to loss of lives and properties. That is, security is a situation in which citizens are free from any threats to their lives and means of livelihood, safe from bodily harm, diseases and human rights violations whenever they may find themselves within a sovereign nation. Insecurity is the opposite of security which has great effect on women, most especially the farmers who are at risk of herdsmen, bandits and kidnappers. Belard (2005) defines insecurity as lack of protection from crime [being unsafe] and lack of freedom from psychological harm [unprotected from emotional stress resulting from paucity of assurance that an individual is accepted to have opportunity and choice to fulfill his or her own potentials including freedom from fear. Insecurity according to Awo (1982) in Gbenga and Augoy i(2011) is the absence of fear from all kinds of threat to human directly or indirectly. Insecurity in Nigeria just like any other country has hampered growth and sustainable development in the country.

Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented incidence of insecurity ranging from the activities of Fulani herdsmen, Political/religious crisis, Boko haram Insurgencies, murders, Child abduction/trafficking, Armed Robbery attacks and destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militant, causing the loss of their livelihood , psychological traumatization which were also a violation of the right of the women in different ways. In Nigeria, Insecurity is on the increase as no day passes without report of insecurity issues in some areas of the country. More worrying is the fact that the government seems unable to curb the threat of these issues despite huge government budgetary provisions, pronouncements and re-jigging of the security apparatus of the country.

Therefore, insecurity has led to the death of thousands of people and destruction of economic sources of livelihood through insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, and robbery in the country. The society is bedeviled with the issue of insecurity and women who are vulnerable are worst hit; most especially the farmers in their various localities. Women are in secured economically, socially and financially, thus Olana (2012) attested that the state of insecurity in Nigeria is a deep and structurally entrenched crisis of development that creates conditions for inequality, poverty and unemployment. They are also in secured in the aspect of food production thus inability to go to the farm freely due to the fear of being kidnapped or even killed creating an adverse effect on the growth and development of the women, shortage

in food production and lots more. This Study intend to look at the issues of in security, causes and its effect on the women of Nasarawa Toto Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Literature Review

Insecurity Perspective in Nigeria

According to Muonso (2021), the 1966 coup is unarguably the ugly cornerstone for the insecurity experienced today in Nigeria. The coup was staged and led by Igbo Christian officers, while Northern soldiers primarily Muslims, led the counter-coup. With the excuse of curbing corruption, the highest-ranking military officers from Northern parts of Nigeria, the then Prime Minister, TafewaBalewa and the Premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello from the Muslim North, lost their lives in the coup. The Counter-coup staged by northern military officers resulted in the killing of Major General Aguiyilronsi, who seized power after the coup in what was considered the Igbo's conspiratorial plot to control the country. The immediate consequence was mutual distrust between Igbo ethics groups and the Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups. That distrust provided strong subterranean currents driving insecurity today. This distrust gave birth to ethic secessionist agitations that led to the 1967-1970 Nigerian Civil War that brought several baggage items that aggravated the country's insecurity situation.

After the civil war, there were couples of military regimes until 1979 when the military constitution under General Olusegun Obasanjo ceded the ownership and control of all mineral resources anywhere in the country to the Federal Government. This Military promulgation set the stage for the illicit exploitation and marginalization of the Niger Delta region in a resource expropriated from their soil (Muonso, 2021).The concentration of economic resources in the hands of the Federal Government coinciding with the discovery of oil made political positions economically attractive and created opportunities for corruption and theft of public financial resources. The economic benefits for doing whatever it takes to occupy political positions led to thuggery and mercenaries in political campaigns and electioneering processes, these snowballed into insecurity where the needs of the mercenaries and thugs are not met after elections.

The challenges of the 1979 constitution actually deepened the mistrust among the ethnic group in Nigeria. The Federal Character Principle supposedly created for national integration and cohesion was heavily compromised in its implementation by several democratic and military regimes favoring some ethnic groups more than the others. In

spite of the challenges of the constitution, the combination of the elevated level of corruption and economic mismanagement through lots of white elephant projects escalated tensions and gave room for extremists to nurture religious ideologies that became the forerunner of today's Boko Haram and other extremist views. Majority of Nigerians lived in fear as people were no longer safe anywhere and the burden were more on women because they were more hit but they seemed not to be involved in finding solutions concerning insecurity in the society because only few of them are included in policy making. Schools were shut down and a lot of children dropped out due to fear.

The Second Republic economy further opened the doorway for smuggling, drug peddling, trafficking of human beings and other border crimes. There were also palpable laxity in managing land, Air, Sea borders and Ports by State institutions with those responsibilities. Again, the long years of military rule also created an enormous disconnect between the Government and the citizens. The citizens do not have any constitutionally guaranteed voice in the affairs of the country as no law compels military rulers to enforce balanced citizen representation in Government. Consequently, most Government institutions became weak and could not effectively respond to emerging challenges, particularly on the security front. Such a situation led to illegal execution of Niger Delta activists comprising Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues. This resulted to the rise of Niger Delta militia and this got the buy-in of most Niger Deltas. The Niger Delta people, through several of militias, protested the unjust and uncompensated exploitation of their natural resources. The Niger Delta militancy technically brought in and domesticated the kidnapping for ransom that is currently widely adopted by hoodlums and bandits in terrorizing the country.

Muonso (2021), further opined that government politicization of insurgency and terrorism gave headroom for their rapid expansion and replication despite the pressure from neighboring countries to contain them. However, absolute poverty, illiteracy, and neglect of the youths in most states created ready pools of recruits that found solace in the use of weapons. Combining our porous borders and corrupt immigration agencies, trade in small arms and other weapons used in the Libya war blossomed and found their way in droves into the country. Finally, injustice, inequality and ethnic distrust paved the way for the scary situation of insecurity that has engulfed the country.

Women and Insecurity Issues

Insecurity has eaten deeply into the fiber of our countries and the people have been living with fears of the unknown. In Nigeria women who are vulnerable to insecurity were mostly the victims and are not involved in finding solutions to insecurities matters especially at the top decision making level, where efforts are put in place to end the menace which always concerns them. This prompted Savage(2021) to opine that peace and security were areas in which women are particularly relegated to the background when key decisions are made. This has affected the development of the society particularly at the local level were women are not accorded with leadership positions. According to Kolawole (2020) in Afolabi (2022) women and children takes most of the impact of the world's clashes and war, during which they are exposed to inconceivable dreadful challenges like massacres, sexual assault, kidnapping, forceful marriages, defilement slavery and forced pregnancy. In support of this vanguard news 2016 wrote that women have been used as arms and target of violence and therefore there is need for the government to act fast in curbing the problems. Afolabi (2022) pointed out that women are often seen as feeble victims of violent war rather than agent of change whose ability could be exploited in peace processes. Thus Garba (2016) stated that committees formed for the resolution of insecurity issues are areas where women have been marginalized predominately, especially the key areas of allocations of resources and their continual marginalization has affected the community growth and development at the local level. In 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women's peace and security which calls for increase participation of women and the incorporation of gender perspective in all UN peace and security effort. In 2008, it adopted landmark resolution 1820 which is devoted to addressing sexual violence in conflict situations with follow up of resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010) respectively.

The convention on the elimination of discrimination against women, other human right treaties and the general recommendation No. 30 provided guidance to protect, respect and fulfil women's human right in situations of conflict and instability.

At the second annual national women conference held in Abuja, it was advised that women should be included in the decision making procedures which will help in the reduction of some issues especially insecurity in our society. The Vanguards 2020 wrote that when women go to the farm, they are at risk of been attacked. When they travel for

their business, they are at risk of been adopted by these invaders for ransom or rape. Women are at risk because they don't carry guns and equally bears the burden of care of the young thus usually the soft spot for attack, installing fear in the woman thus traumatized. United Nations Security Council is also in support of including women in the conflict determination and peace building.

Women, despite relegated to the background are agents of transformation and development and when involved in decision concerning them, they will be eager to put in their best especially as it concern insecurity issues. Women have not been given adequate opportunity to head core bodies in charge of security in the Senate House of Reps, Head of Department, Aviation and most especially women affairs.

Causes of Insecurity

recently insecurity has been prevalent in the country as no day passes by without a report of insecurity issues. Nweze (2004), opined that many factors are responsible for insecurity but the following were identified: It is a known fact that unemployment causes poverty and extreme poverty leads to crime that gives rise to insecurity. Majority of the citizens of the country are living below the poverty line of $1 per day and the associated effect of this is criminal acts such as Kidnapping, military and armed robbery etc. unemployment in Nigeria is like a disease that the cure is not yet discovered Nation Bureau of Statistics(2017). Ali (2013) also opined that failure of successive administrators in Nigeria to address the challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethic nationalities is one of the major causes of insecurity in the country. Oluwa (2014) also listed some causes of insecurity to include hunger ,poverty ,illiteracy, unemployment, systematic corruption , ignorance and income inequality.

It is worth noting that the Country's diverse ethnic make-up is not itself a cause of insecurity, rather some political and religion leaders across the nation sometime use ethnic sentiments to achieve their selfish ambitions. In this situation, the elites exploit people's minds to stir up mistrust and resentment among different ethnic groups and among the country's major religions, this is a prelude to insecurity in Nigeria. Nigerian's various ethnic group also draw attention to neglect, racism, dominance, nepotism and intolerance, this often result in ethnic violence and religious conflict affecting the society most especially women and children.

Corruption is largely responsible for government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse, resulting into large-scale insecurity in the country. A situation where government agencies and personnel who are saddled with the responsibility of providing the basics of life, abdicate and compromise their function for self-aggrandizement resulting in distrust and lack of confidence in the system. This also will result in the misplacement of priority where individuals abdicate their responsibilities for frivolities, and where not been sanctioned, will embolden other persons not to take their assignments seriously.

Weak Security Apparatus is causing Nigeria's Security System to be seen as very deficient in both personnel and the aspect of equipment, due to the fact that officers are poorly trained and remunerated, and as a result of the requisite expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges (Nweze, 2004).The contributions of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general safety is equally of serious concern and the weak security system can be due to a number of environmental factors such as insufficient officers, lack of modern equipment.

According to the sun newspaper Olukoya Isaac of July 23rd 2019, the un-checkmated human movement at our various border towns has contributed to the high level of insecurity in the country. Because of the unregulated movement around these borders, there have been influx of small arms and light weapons into the country which has enabled militancy and kidnapping in the country to strive. Edeko (2011), opined that Nigeria host over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons that have been used to create insecurity crisis. The uncontrolled influx of migrants who are predominantly young people from nearby African countries such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin account for some of the criminal activities.

Marginalization and Inequality in Distribution of Positions; the current government has been accused of nepotism and lopsidedness in the distribution of resources and appointments, and most section of the country have been marginalized in the provision of basic infrastructure. These may explain the constant agitation for Republic of Biafra which has caused serious security breaches in the eastern part of the Country. Vast majority of the people have a sense of deprivation, oppression, marginalization and this has resulted in dissatisfaction and loss of hope, particularly among the Youths. These Youths ventilate their anger within the state of affairs by any means possible, whether legal or illegal, its consequences are growing uncertainties that may result to insecurity.

instability, social unrest and crime infested environment, it breeds inefficiency, incompetence, mediocrity, unethical values and other negative instincts in man such as greed, malice, envy, avarice and rapacity. Corruption and injustice has led to damages and retrogression in the growth of the country, therefore it must be totally controlled. Nepotism and culture of impunity must also be eschewed from our national psyche and life, to ensure national growth and sustainable development in Country.

Creation of Employment Opportunities because lack of employment opportunities in the society is detrimental to the populace and breeds criminal intent. Furthermore, unemployment increases government's expenditure or transfer payments where welfare programs are implemented in favor of the employed. Unemployment must be seriously tackled and curtailed. The private sector must be encouraged and supported to create the much needed jobs. Constant electricity supply will no-doubt boost employment and increase productivity.

Equipment of Security Personnel/ Agencies; Training and retraining of officers must be carried out on a regular basis with special focus on human rights, weapon handling, communication skills, new interrogation techniques, exposure to new equipment and technology. Other measures of controlling insecurity in the country include, proper border control, inequitable distribution of wealth and positions in governance, political-will to nip the problems of insecurity on the board.

Empirical review

A study on women and security in Nigeria by Mathias (2013) discovered that the biological basis for women insecurity is their relative physical weakness making them incapable of self-defense in the face of stronger sex. The paper made use of secondary data and concluded that women have always played significant roles in national security despite hindrance by culture and religion. The paper also outlined some unique role of women to include full security, economic security and political security. Lastly the paper recommended the creation of ministry of peace and conflict resolution to be headed by women in other to reduce insecurity in Nigeria.

In another study carried out by Adam Oluwadamilola and Olajumoke (2016) on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Nigeria, the study talks about how women are subjected to domination by men due to the result of persisting cultural stereotype,

misuse of religion and traditional practices which education, political and social power are dominated by men who sees themselves as leaders while women as followers. Qualitative research methodology was used with the aid of questionnaire and secondary data was also used. It was concluded that to respond to the challenges of gender inequality, there is a need to recognize the main issue leading to inequality and to achieve sustainable development and national security in Nigeria. *The unique roles of women in national security which encompasses food security, economic security and political security etc.* In Nigeria, the 1995 constitutional conference in Nigeria had only eight women out of a total of 369 delegates. The 2011 Federal House of Representatives, 13 out of the 352 members are women. This represents 3.69%. Worst still the 2011 senate has only 6 women (http://www.nassing.org./nass2/memlist.pdf). As with other aspect of society, women's roles were primarily governed by regional and ethnic differences. In the north, Islamic practices were still common. This process meant generally less formal education, early teenage marriages and confinement to the house hold. For most part of the north women do not participate in the field of decision (http://www.photius.com).At the national scene, a look at the history of Nigeria revealed that women had made remarkable security impact even before the advent of western education. Some of them include: Inkpi, the Princess of Igala royal family who buried herself alive to save the Igalas from the stronghold of the Junkuns, Moremi of Ile Ife who allowed herself to be captured by the Igbos during a clash with the Yorubas. This action made her to discover the secret of the Igbos which she revealed to her people when she escaped. Queen Amina who became the Queen of Zazzau in 1576 not because there was no strong contenders, but she emerged as the most suitable successor to the office. She proved herself a capable leader both on the home front and on the battle field. Similarly, Omu Okwei of Osomari made great impact in the land of Onitsha in her time she abolished slave trade in Onitsha and provided alternative trade on palm oil, alcoholic drinks, tobacco, textiles and other imported manufactured goods for the people (Mathias, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

The Underlying theory for this paper will be anchored on feminist and human security theories. According to Ritzer (2008), this theory is generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from woman centered perspective. It is woman

centered or women centered – in two ways. First, the starting point of all its investigation is the situation(s) and experiences of women in society. Second, it seeks to describe the social world from the distinctive vantage points of women.

This theory initially emerged in 1794 through the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft, entitled "A Vindication of the Rights of Women". Its objectives were to understand the nature of gender equality, examine the social roles of women and men, interest, responsibilities and feminist politics in a variety of fields Brabeck and Brown(1997). The main focus of feminist theory was enhancing gender equality in society and the inclusion of women in all programs, opportunities, chances and choices like their male counterparts. This theory favored equal opportunity for all men and women in all societies and nations including women's equal involvement in issues of insecurity like men. Women should be given the opportunity to partake in all security matters to aid in the issues of insecurity.

The goal of this theory is to establish the fact that women are important and do not only play passive role in the society. This is also concerned with equality of men and women, meaning that women should share with men equally the scarce natural resources including top position in the Army, Police and other security architecture, this will strengthen the fight against insecurity in Nigeria. Women should be appointed in positions of responsibility in the country's security affairs as their efficiency in other climes has shown that effective performance in offices is not determined by ones gender alone.

Human security is a guiding theory for this study. Coined by Williams EmetBlatz (1895-1964). This theory brings together the human elements of security, rights and development. It gives all inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the relevance of human security. It place individual at the center of analysis. It considers a broad range of conditions which threatens survival, livelihood and dignity identifying the threshold which human life is intolerably threatened. And that human security emphasizes the interconnectedness of both threats and responses. They are interlinked, for example violent insecurity can lead to deprivation, poverty and death. This interdependent has implication for policy making in Nigeria as this implies that women insecurity cannot be tackled in isolation through fragments but through comprehensive approaches, with the involvement of cooperative and multi-sectorial rights. Society becomes in-secured when basic needs are not made leading to criminality like insecurity affecting lives and properties especially vulnerable group like the women in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employs the survey research method because the method focused on exploratory cross sectional study of the population A sample of 100 respondents drawn from the population of 119,077(2006) census were administered questionnaire. The study adopts Clauster sampling to select 2 wards from the 12 wards of Toto Local Government of Nasarawa State, Umaisha and Toto wards were selected. Simple random sampling was used to select GadaBuke and Karbana villages. Simple random sampling was equally employed to choice the respondents. The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data collection by administering questionnaire to women who are farmers and the worst hit and making use of available material concerning women and the issue of insecurity. Data collected were analyses using simple percentage.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Response on whether women go to their farm alone or with other members of their family

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Alone	22	22
Not Alone	78	78
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 indicate that 78% of the respondents attested to the fact that they don't go to the farm alone because of herdsmen or fear of being kidnapped or being beaten by herdsmen or possibly been raped and killed. While 22% attested to the fact that they go to their farm land alone. This signifies that most of the women from Toto Local Government don't go to farm alone due to fear of the insecurity.

Table 2: Response on whether the respondents produce Food as much as before the insecurity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	86	86
Yes	14	14
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results shows that 86% of the respondents attested to the fact that they don't produce as much as usual because of the fact that a lot of women don't go to the farm alone meaning without a company they might not go at all. While .14% accepted to produce as much. When asked the majority on why they produces less, it was made to understand that

sometimes the Fulani herdsmen will allow their cows to feed on someone's farm land and once they are confronted, they can kill, rape or beat up the farmer thus are afraid.

Table 3: Problems faced by women farmers on the issue of insecurity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Distance to the farm	5	5
Fulani Herdsmen	45	45
Bandits/ Kidnappers	40	40
Lack of Money	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

The results in table 3, shows the problems faced by women on the issue of insecurity. 45% attested to fear of Fulani herdsmen who usually consume the farm produce and if confronted might beat or kill the owner of the farm. 40% attested to kidnappers. Insecurity is an issue of concern, preventing the women from going to farm alone but with the company of other members of the family or community for protection and safety.

Table 4: Response on the measures to taken by government of Nasarawa state

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Provide Enough Security	40	40
Provide Grazing fields for the Fulani	30	30
Orientation for Unity	20	20
Provide Job Opportunities	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results shows that 40% indicate that the government should provide enough security, 30% agreed that the government should provide a grazing ground for the Fulani herdsmen, 20% of the respondents agreed to the provision of orientation for security while 10% of the respondent agreed to the provision of job opportunities. This means that most of these villages might not be close to security units therefore suggested security while 30% suggested the provision of grazing ground to avoid eaten up the farm produce by the cows.

Discussion of Findings

The study found out that women who are mostly farmers are afraid of going to the farm because of fear of been raped, kidnapped, beaten or killed by Fulani herdsmen. Weak Security Apparatus is causing Nigeria's

Security System to be seen as very deficient in both personnel and the aspect of equipment, due to the fact that officers are poorly trained and remunerated, and as a result of the requisite expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges (Nweze, 2004).The contributions of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general safety is equally of serious concern and the weak security system can be due to a number of environmental factors such as insufficient officers, lack of modern equipment.

The study also found out that a lot of women don't go to their farm alone because of the issue of insecurity; they prefer to go in groups to safeguard themselves from the unknown as they feel secured in a group than been alone. Olana (2012) attested that the state of insecurity in Nigeria is a deep and structurally entrenched crisis of development that creates conditions for inequality, poverty and unemployment. They are also insecured in the aspect of food production thus inability to go to the farm freely due to the fear of being kidnapped or even killed creating an adverse effect on the growth and development of the women, shortage in food production and lots more.

The study also found out that women who are mostly the producers of food crops don't mostly produce as much as they do before the outbreak of insecurity in Nigeria, this is because of the fact that most of their farm products are mostly eaten by cows apart from being afraid of staying in the farm for the usual period of time. A lot of women who go to farm in company of others will prefer to leave as soon as others are leaving to avoid been alone therefore reducing the number of hours usually spent in the farm which will in turn reduce productivity thus the reduction of farm produce

Conclusion

The research examined the issues of insecurity in the country and specifically on women and insecurity challenges in Toto local government Area. The roles of women in insecurity should be established, as their importance cannot be overemphasized in curbing the menace of insecurity. The situation of insecurity has led to the death of thousands of citizens through insurgency, kidnapping, banditry and armed robbery in the locality and certain measures has also been proffered in orderto reduce the level of insecurity in Toto. Above all, women and children who are mostly affected by insecurity in Nigeria are less visible than men when talking of the headship/command of the army and other government agencies responsible in one way or the other in the administration of security policies.

Recommendations

Government should give women equal standard of training and quality education with that of their male counterparts, in order to be prepared to occupy their places in the employment spheres, including officers cadres in the Army, Police and other security agencies.

Government should encourage the involvement of Toto women in peace and security resolution committees, as well as build on women's native knowledge for the purpose of including them in community development as negotiators and peace keepers.

The multiplier effect of insecurity in any country is enormous, therefore, the security agencies should form synergy with community based surveillance organizations to identify suspicious individuals and spots that are prone to crime, and this will ensure prevention instead of being reactive in the fight against insecurity. Active security outpost should be place in the villages which are prompt to security outbreak.

To avoid distrust among the citizen, nobody should be denied being promoted to positions of responsibility in the security agencies because of his/her gender and government should bridge the gaps of security intellect that existed between the ordinary citizens and the various security agencies in Nigeria and Toto Local Government Area. Provide information and communication technological innovation that would be used to detect any form of security threats, and make available security gadgets that would be used to neutralize explosive devices. All these measures if applied appropriately, will encourage women to contribute their part towards nation building and in turn reduce the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria.

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