

Community Based Early Warning in Conflict Management and Peace Building in Nigeria: An Analysis of Internal Security Issues

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Abstract

The myriad of conflict situations in Nigeria has made international communities to perceive the country as unsafe for investment. Our situation is worsened by government seeming insensitivity to early warning signals or rather security intelligence reports which tend to portray the potential for security breach, unless prompt action is taken by government to contain the situation. There is no single day that passes by, without one form of ethno-religious, communal conflict or the other in the country; talk less of the upsurge of violent crimes and acts of terrorism across the states. This paper examines community based early warning as a means of conflict management and peace building with a focus on the internal security issues. It also interrogates the causes of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria focusing on the theoretical assumptions that act as impetus to them. The paper notes that there is no conflict situation and insecurity emanating in the country without the foreknowledge of government but the management of the early warning determine to a great extent the intensity or other words the dimension, pattern and dynamics of the conflict. The paper notes further that it is government passive approach to conflict situations that generates to great destruction of lives and property. The paper recommends among others: effective communication between government and stakeholders, proper enlightenment at the grass root, quick response to early warning signals, building synergies across all stakeholders and prompt action against defaulters.

Keywords: Early warning, Conflict, Conflict prevention, Conflict management, Peace building, Internal security, community based, Nigeria.

Introduction

Violent conflicts continue to undermine human security in many African societies. It is certain that violent conflicts and insecurity pose a great threat to human development and progress (Institute for Security Studies, 2008). The Nigerian situation is pathetically entrenched in our colonial past. Thus, Chinwokwu (2012c, p.425) argues that “because the Nigerian nation was built on a faulty foundation of suspicion, intimidation, fear, violence or threat of violence and terrorism, stability, peace and oneness had eluded us as a nation”. Consequently, every small misunderstanding or statement is immediately perceived wrongly with intense acrimony resulting to conflict tension and insecurity. In other words, there is too much hatred filled with suspicion of each other and so every ethnic group in Nigeria (no matter how small) is always on the look out to avoid being suppressed by another. This is true, because historically, “violence was the means used to impose colonial domination” on the people (Akinwale & Aderinto, 2012, p.65). It is still the same modus operandi that is been used in the country by the neo-colonialists and imperialist stooges parading the country as our political leaders. Anugwom (2010, p.214) described this kind of leaders as “opportunistic political and economic elite” whose power base are fanned in the ambers of violent conflicts.

It is important to note that our colonial past is still haunting us with the implication that since 1963, violent conflicts have dominated the geographical landscape of Nigeria with greater intensity, pattern and dynamics. The current trends emanating from the emergence of militia groups and religious fundamentalist coupled with suicide bombers have posed great national insecurity and weakened the structure of the state. Kwaja (2009) was right when he observed that as far back as pre-independence, Nigeria has been entangled with one kind of conflict or the other. In fact, we can aptly aver that the return of democracy in 1999 till date violent ethno-religious conflicts and terrorism have become a common instrument or tool for bargaining and expressing disaffection over the affairs of the country. The implication has been massive destruction of lives and property. This was noted by Human Right Watch Report on Nigeria in January, 2012. According to the report it was estimated that the number of death lost in Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram terrorist activities between 2009 and 2011 was 935 and over one billion worth of property destroyed (Laden, 2012; Chinwokwu, 2013b). It is certain that there has been more death caused by Boko Haram bomb attacks across North East Zone of Nigeria from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2013 and other sundry communal clashes across the country. Nigeria has between 350-500 linguistics groups and may be populated by fairly half Christians and Muslims (Tiffen, 1968; Hansford, Bendor-Samuel & Stanford, 1976; Paden, 2008). In fact, The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2008), is of the opinion that Nigeria is a multilingual country that is endowed with more than 500 languages. The implication is that we are short of the exact figure of Nigerian linguistics composition. Notwithstanding, its plurality and heterogeneity, violent conflicts occupy its landmark. Instead of dialogue or use of bargaining power to address or settle differences Nigerian nations have been involved in

ceaseless confrontations. More so, the state capacity to build synergies to address conflicting issues has been lacking. Where they have been employed, it had come late or at wrong time when lives and property might have been destroyed and wounds yet to heal. There are ample examples of ethno-religious and communal conflicts across Nigeria as shown on Appendix 1 below. It is saddening to note that most of the cases in the appendix would have been avoided if government had acted promptly to early warning. For instance, the case of the 2010 Christmas Eve bomb blast in Jos, Plateau State where it was alleged that government and security agencies got the information of the attack and yet failed to pro-actively act to prevent the attack which resulted to several deaths and loss of property. Peace building becomes a last resort when law and order has been broken down and lives destroyed.

It is important to stress that prevention of violent conflicts should form the bedrock of any early warning mechanisms which government must endeavour to build in order to entrench a lasting democracy in Nigeria. It is pertinent to note that the essence of early warning is to alert peace practitioners and conflict resolution experts that a catastrophic situation (problem) is developing, brooding, building up or anticipated to enable them move into intervening actions to nib it at the bud before it generates into uncontrollable events. In other words, early warning may also direct actions to a solution of pending crisis but the ability of the authority concerned to move into solving the anticipated problem is a matter of great concern. This was captured by Nnoli (2006) when he argued that the objective of early warning was not only to inform peace practitioners that a crisis was developing, but to build a political will and thrust to do something about the dwindling position. We affirm thus, that without peace there will be no security, unity, development and progress. Peace is sine quo non to development and progress in any given society. The life of our democratic principles and sustenance is rooted in tranquillity and peace without which democracy is a utopia. Thus, attention to early warning signal indicators seems to be a realistic and realizable option of ensuring that troubles are handled timely and decisively before they generate into crisis situations of unimaginable proportion.

In order to foster the building blocks for early warning mechanism, there is need to partner with the local based organizations like the non-governmental organizations, local councils, traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, market women, private security practitioners and other stake holders within and without the community. The reason is that these groups of people are nearest to the citizens at the village and rural levels and they have intimate and privileged information and knowledge of the local politics and conflict events which make their involvement imperative. More so, the fact that they share similar historical and social cultural antecedents with the communities of their residence make them very relevant and more likely to be involved in ensuring conflict situations are promptly reported and solved. Aside from that, they are also in positions in which they can intervene in resolving conflicts and disputes within their communities in which they too may be engrossed. The Nongovernmental organizations are most likely to have information which may be very vital to government in resolving conflicts issues in the community. Government and managers of conflict must harness the abundant experiences of these groups of people at the grassroots and ensure early warning signals are effectively utilized for the desired peace and conflict resolutions.

Conceptualization of Terms

Conflict is seen as a situation between two or more individuals in which one individual observe that another individual has negatively affected, or is about to take actions that will adversely affect his interest. Conflict is described as the resort to the use of force and armed struggle in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interest and goals by contending groups or individual (Oraegbunam, 2006). In other words, for conflict to occur, individuals must perceive a situation against each other or among themselves irrespective of the accurate or inaccurate nature of that perception of the situation. Nonetheless, whenever such perceptions are held, there are usually negative and the contending matter must be something parties involved have a common interest or desire. Most often; none of the contending parties would like to be short changed in the matter. Thus, Shehu (2007) argues that conflict is inevitable in social life process and even in well developed human societies such as United States and Britain conflict occurs. Uzuengbunam (2010 p. 80) notes that conflict evolves in phases such as “early conflict indicators, conflict resistance, explosive or exhaustive conflict and the most deadly spiral and the highest level of violence”. Conflict managers must be wary of the early conflict indicators in order to assiduously ensure that it does not erupt into unmanageable crisis. Despite its negative connotation, Van-Tongeren (2005) argues that conflict is intertwined with the notion of change, and can be embraced as a way of creating a proactive solution to an existing problem. The key to successful change is in avoiding armed and direct conflict or violence. It is this concept that guides peace building theory to work towards an improved future among all the parties in a conflict. Conflict may also be described as “a period of intense pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups” (Reychler, 2001, p.15). Henderson (2005, p.4) contends that conflict is a “sustained violent clash between opposing groups, which may or may not involve fatalities”. Swanstrom and Weissmann (2005, p.9) while trying to reconceptualise conflict by extricating it of its traditional definition of war and military action see conflict as “perceived difference in issue positions between two or more parties at the

same moment in time” According to them, “conflict is not a static situation but a dynamic one whose intensity level changes over a conflict cycle”. The understanding of the cycle according to them is critical in the understanding of how, where and when to apply different strategies and methods of conflict prevention and management. We argue that though conflict is inevitable in every human society, it may not always result to violent clash. Hence, we talk of conflict prevention.

Conflict prevention is the process of controlling and managing strained relationships early enough (timely and promptly) to avoid the threats of a conflict. This calls for effective, proper and timely use of early warning mechanisms or systems to contain and respond to early threats of violence and thereby save the situation from escalating out of unmanageable proportion. This is premised on the notion that prevention is better than cure. However, extant literature on conflict prevention have failed to agree on any acceptable definition of conflict prevention (Best, 2008; Carment & Schnabel, 2003; Munuera, 1994; Lund, 1994), while others have referred conflict prevention as ‘preventive diplomacy’ (Lund, 2002; Boutros-Ghali, 1996).

According to Munuera (1994, p. 3) conflict prevention is “the application of non-constraining measures that are primarily diplomatic in nature”. The onus is on the non-constraining measures which imply that a compromise of 50-50 should be adopted to ensure peace is achieved without the application of force or intimidation. In other words, it is not a win-win or loss affairs. Carment and Schnabel (2003, p.11) see conflict prevention as “the medium and long term proactive operational or structural strategy undertaken by a variety of actors, intended to identify and create the enabling conditions for a stable and more predictable international security environment”. This view is predicated on networks of intelligence gathering aimed at preventing conflict at short and long term period at the international level. It ignores conflict prevention at the domestic level, but pointed out one of the main issues in policing which is proactive policing.

Lund (2002, p. 117) defined conflict prevention as “any structural or intercessory means to keep intrastate or interstate tension and disputes from escalating into significant violence and use of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of potential parties to violent conflict for resolving such disputes peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce these issues and disputes”. This definition recognizes the part of structural provisions and mediations as ways of reducing conflict and enshrines peace amongst contending groups in the society. It also downplayed the use of force in ensuring peace in troubled areas of the society. The typical example of what Nigerian government is doing in the North East Nigeria to stem the outrage of Boko Haram insurgency. But we must stress that the use of combatant force to checkmate conflict must be pursued with caution and as a last resort when all other peaceful actions failed.

Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) (2008, p.9) defined conflict prevention as “non-violent (or creative) conflict transformation and encompasses activities designed to defuse tensions and prevent the outbreak; escalation, spread or recurrence of violence”. It went on to say that the “emphasis is not on preventing conflict per se (conflict being a natural consequences of change) but in halting its descent into violence” The implication is that individuals, groups, communities and states should ensure that issues that will degenerate into violence are completely halted at its earliest stage before it gets out of control. Government therefore must strive to built bridges across all sections of the society and ensure prompt information network gathering system and action to reduce tensions whenever they rear their ugly heads. Structural facilities that trigger acts of violence should be accessible to all persons in the community. In Nigeria, security intelligence have been neglected or ignored in the past as mere whistle blowing until situations burst into unimaginable proportion leading to massive waste of human lives. We recognize the basic aim of conflict prevention which all the above definitions tend to agree, which is the fact that what is fundamental in conflict prevention is not actually preventing the conflict but the prevention of conflict issues from escalating or relapsing into violent crisis. It is when conflict has been allowed to degenerate into crisis in such a way that requires restoration of law and order that peace building steps into the arena.

The concept of peace building refers to activities, efforts and interventions which are directed at alleviating the sufferings caused as a result of breakdown in the social structure. In other words, it is the attempt to remedy the trigger and root causes of conflict. It is an attempt to surmount the structural, relational and cultural contradictions which lie at the root of conflict in order to underline the processes of peace-making and peace keeping (Best, 2007). Peace building is a reactive strategy aimed at engaging multiple agencies to interact towards solving socio-economic challenges in order to have conducive environment for sustainable peace.

According to Reyhler (2001, p. 12), peace building is “a synergy on social and economic development through multiple organizations”. He went on to say that it is fundamentally targeted at transforming conflict in a constructive way to creating environment conducive enough to sustainable peace. Thus, successful peace building is that which encompasses a complex process that is truly interdisciplinary and which covers such areas that include: direct security, economic development, social rehabilitation and political reform (Jeong, 2005).

For Lederach (1997, p. 84), peace building is “more than post accord reconstruction and is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and

stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships". Boutrous-Ghali (1992) contends that peace building is an action aimed at identifying and supporting structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. This definition is very implicative in many conflict situations across the globe. Conflicts have been seen to break out even when it seems that peace building was gaining grounds in many troubled societies. The United Nations (1992) Agenda for Peace described peace building as a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing the root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. It is important to reiterate that peace building process have failed to yield positive and lasting peace because the root causes of many violent conflicts have been properly addressed by stakeholders at the end of a peace building and reconciliation processes. The result has been relapse and recurrence of violence in such situations thereby rendering peace building and reconstruction process untenable. For peace building to make sense and be sustained, the root causes of conflict must be fully tackled. For instance, in Nigeria the government initiative of rehabilitation programme for ex-militants in the Niger Delta Zones after the amnesty was the only viable option for sustaining the peace process in the zone. This was done by tackling the source of the conflict which was unemployment and lack of education. This has yielded some positive results even though some government antagonists have argued that government have ended up in settling some youths while neglecting to address the main and root problems of the zone. Notwithstanding the arguments against the programme, the same approach could be applied in diffusing the already tensed acts of terrorism in the North East Zone and other violent prone areas of Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

There are various theoretical perspectives that could be used in explaining conflict and peace building in the Nigerian context. One conceptual theoretical framework that provides an insight into the Nigerian case study is the human needs theory as articulated by John Burton to the study of social conflict. Burton (1990) explains that in analyzing conflicts one must distinguish among interests, values and needs. In trying to resolve conflicts it should be understood that only interests are negotiable in the short term; while values can only change over the long run in an atmosphere of security and nondiscrimination, and needs cannot be negotiated away under any circumstances (Burton 1990: 36). Scholars like Carroll, Rosati, and Coste (1988) argue that when you look at the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, both needs (identity, security, freedom) and interests (e.g., Allocation of resources, international boundaries) are involved and that even if the needs of both parties are met; the conflict will probably not be resolved. For them, resolution can only come about when both needs and interests are dealt with. However, Carroll et al (1988) contend that all human beings have basic needs which they seek to fulfil and failure caused by other individuals or groups to meet these needs could lead to conflict (cited in Faletti, 2006). "So whether the need is in solving group interest or basic needs of life, failure to address such exigencies of life causes conflict to emerge" (Chinwokwu 2013c, p. 97). For Burton, the implications of these formulations are far reaching. For example, it suggests that there are limits to the extent to which the human person, acting separately or within a wider ethnic or national community, can be marginalized or manipulated, and that there are human developmental needs that must be satisfied and catered for by institutions, if these institutions are to be stable, and if societies are to be significantly free of conflicts. Among other requirements to satisfy some of their needs, he said humans require some control over their environments. If these are not met, the institutions lose support and legitimacy, and confront increasing opposition. Government or political authorities irrespective of the kind of political structure in place tend to react with oppression and coercion in order to gain the support of the ruled. This theory of needs by Burton is very relevant to the Nigerian situation especially as it is being espoused by various militancy in the country to achieve their aims. For instance, the Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) used conflict to bargain for amnesty for the group. The same gain plan is being played out by Boko Haram whereby government have initiated a committee to consider the granting of amnesty to them. But the issue is what is the basis of conflict and insecurity in the country? The above reviewed theory pointed at one reason or the other as the basis of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria, but failed to expose the veil behind the conflict – the inner struggle between the rich and the poor, the owners of production and the workers/labourers, the employer and employee and so many other socio-economic relationships in the society. In otherwords, the economy plays a vital role in determining the kind of political or social relations which exist in the society.

Marx's conflict theory which sees the economy as the infrastructure in which the superstructure of the society is based. According to Marx the struggle for survival or domination of one group over the other is a historical one and this is true because of the scarce resources in the society which triggers conflict between individuals in their struggle to have it all. This struggle for scarce resources often lead to conflict resulting to insecurity in the society. In otherwords, conflict and insecurity in Nigeria are related to economic struggle between the haves and the have nots. We must emphasize that this is typically the case with the Niger Delta Militants and the Boko Haram insurgency and more particularly with conflicts associated with ethno-communal crisis in Nigeria. The question of ethnicity, citizenship and indigeneship which has caused so much crisis in

many communities in the country are mainly offshoots of struggle for economic space. More so, the conflict and insecurity which has occurred across the landscape of Nigeria especially communal land conflicts or that between the indigines or settlers or that between the fulani herdsmen and farmers across the country are indicators of the importance of the economy in the on-going conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria. The Nigerian case is worsened by neo-imperialists and neo-colonialists which parade themselves as political leaders in the emerging democratic governance in Nigeria. The greed and corrupt attitude in which these new democratic leaders exhibit intensifies conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. This theory is therefore very critical to our analysis and understanding of the conflicting forces which acts as 'pull and push' factors in the country and the basis for which conflict management should be sustained for peaceful existence amongst the ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Thus, we hinge our theoretical framework within the context of Emile Durkheim theory of social solidarity. The reviewed theories above, point to the fact that poverty, resource control, unemployment, marginalization, human needs (basically food) and even environmental pollution which are basically associated with the economy are major causes of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. It thus means that any effort at peace building without addressing the root causes of the conflict (which are usually economic in nature) will be meaningless. In otherwords, society needs to arrive at a meeting point in which they have to jettison their primodial interest and seek for a common good. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) recognizing the part played by the economy arrived at the theory of Division of labour. He inquired into the question: how does society hold itself together despite the contradictory differences of individual or group interests?. He was therefore interested on what keeps society together especially when it is made up of people with specialized roles and responsibilities. The result of his inquiry led him to the theory of social solidarity which according to him is made up of mechanical and organic solidarity. For him, mechanical solidarity was associated with small societies that has religion as its unifying force while organic solidarity is common with complex society which is secular and individualistic with higher division of labour. Durkheim argues that as societies progresses from mechanical to organic solidarity through division of labour, competition for available resources began to mount (Durkheim, 1964; Schmans, 1995; Lincoln & Guillot, 2005). In the struggle for available resources unhealthy competition emerged which resulted into violent conflict. However, if the crisis is not properly checked and brought under control it might generate into uncontrollable situation or anomie. We recognize that Nigeria is a heterogenous society characterized by multi-ethnic groups with varying religious faith. The implication is that conflict in the society especially as exemplified by various ethno-religious and communal violence has resulted from the struggle for economic space and "struggle for existence" (Durkheim, 1964, p. 270). Peace building must look out for areas of consensus and ideological basis for organic solidarity. The search for sustainable peace must be based on getting to the root causes of conflict and violence in the society and using the mechanisms of solidarity to restore peace and order. It must be stressed that the idea of neglecting the root causes of conflict while window dressing the problems will yeild but temporary peace.

Understanding conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria: A synopsis of some of the causes

The white man's encroachment into the geographical landscape tagged Nigeria provided the foundation for what is now known as the root cause of violence and conflict in Nigeria. The history of colonialism, particularly the 1914 Lord Lugard's amalgamation of Nigeria without consulting the natives has been the country's socio-political quagmire. Aside from that, the unequal division of Nigeria into North and South with the North having two third of the land mass was the worst crime against humanity which the colonial leaders committed against the people of Southern Nigeria. Thus, scholars have hinged the root cause of the current ethno-religious violence and conflicts in the Nigerian polity on the colonial experience of the country (Okwueze, 1995; Shively, 1997; Chinwokwu, 2012c; Chinwokwu, 2013c). Other scholars have argued that most of the conflicts and insecurity are rooted in ethnicity, politicization of ethnic and religious identity, bad governance, the competition for political control and resource control (Nnoli, 1978, Eyo, 1980, Okwueze, 1995; Egwu, 2001; Ibrahim & Toure, 2003; Anarti, 2004).

In explaining the factors that gave rise to the politicization of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria, Takaya (1992), outlined the following:

- I. The existence of two or more ethnic and religious groups with numerical strengths that can significantly affect the outcome and direction of a democratic political process;
- II. The instrumentalism of ethnicity and religion as legitimizing tool of hegemony in instances when the interests of the political class are under threat;
- III. When there is an ascendant radical thinking within a politically significant ethnic or religious group capable of upstaging hegemony.
- IV. When the society is characterized by political, social or economic hardships that can cause alliances along ethnic and religious fault-lines (cited in Kwaja, 2009: p.107).

This is further stretched by political and institutional factors situated in weak state institutions, political exclusion, breakdown in social contract and corruption, identity politics, marginalization, greed, blatant violation

of human rights, disobedience to rule of law, executive inertia, and weakening of social cohesion which has provided the leverage for increased internal violence, conflicts and terrorism. Akanji (2007: p. 63) contends that “it is corrupt and ineffective political leadership that often engenders poverty and, consequently, violent activities”. In other words, “conflict and insecurity can be generated as a result of leadership ineffectiveness or failure to address certain fundamental issues in the society or due to greed for power which may lead to power struggles amongst the political juggernauts” (Chinwokwu, 2013c, p.94). The implication is the lack of capacity to manage the affairs of governance and increased insecurity and conflicts. This situation has led many scholars to describe the country as a weak and failed state (Patrick, 2006; Rotberg, 2002; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007; Atiku & Shaw, 2003). The implication is that militants and other insurgents now take up arms against the state and government seems not to have the wherewithal to tackle the situation. The situation is further punctured by general insecurity leading citizens to seek for alternative security measures for their protection and security. More so, whistle blowing is completely ignored despite its contribution to early warning and stemming of conflict at the bud.

Conflict Management and the Nigerian State: Retrospective Review

Conflict management is “the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in the conflict. It covers the entire area of handling conflicts positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflict, by being proactive. It encompasses conflict limitation, containment, and litigation” (Best, 2007, p.101). According to Okolie (2009), “the fundamental processes involved in conflict management include: grassroots community-based activities, good governance, communication, collaboration, negotiation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication and crisis management which at times could involve the use of law enforcement agencies to maintain the peace” (cited in Nnamani & Okpara, 2010, p.105).

The Nigerian nation has witnessed various dimensions of conflict situations since its birth as an independent state in 1960. Many of these conflict situations have threatened the very foundation of the nation, yet providence has kept the country united and strong. There are many instances of troubled waters that the Nigerian state has carefully ferried across to the shore without its boat capsizing. According to Chinwokwu (2012c, p. 420), “insecurity and social vices resulting from political and religious tensions among rivalry ethnic groups dominated the geographical landscape of the country culminating to the present state of terrorism and acts of violence being experienced”. Awoniyi (2013, p. 125), noted that “the phenomenon of conflict and its attendant effects with our day-to-day struggles over inter-locking agitations on issues like primordial ties, national resources distribution, power sharing, ethnic tolerance, social justice and welfare should be critically examined” in order to fashion a road map for peaceful co-existence and harmony in Nigeria. We may thus inquire, “how has Nigeria managed its conflicts all these years to ensure the spinal cord of the Nigerian state is not broken or damaged beyond repairs”.

Nigerian state has become increasingly involved in the management of conflict situations through military engagements, economic blockade and blackmail. These were the conflict management strategies that was deployed during the Nigerian – Biafran War of 1967-1970 in addition to the total war of annihilation carried out against the Igbo nation. This war of attrition has been on-going against the Igbo nation despite the declaration of “no victory no vanquished” by the Nigerian state.

In the area of ethnic and religious pluralism, Kwaja (2009, p. 110) observed that the Nigerian state has managed the situation through the following ways:

- a. In the design and report of population census, questions of religious or ethnic identity were downplayed;
- b. The promotion of inter-faith cooperation through the setting up of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which consists of clerics from both Christian and Muslim leaders. At present, NIREC is co-chaired by Arch-Bishop John Oneiykan and the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa’ad Abubakar III;
- c. The establishment of the Federal Character Commission (FCC) in the Nigerian constitution, so as to ensure inclusivity of all the states of the federation in appointments, admission and promotion among others;
- d. The application of the principle of the North –South power sharing arrangement. For instance, if the President comes from the North, the Vice President would no doubt come from the South and vice versa; and
- e. Emphasis on the non-registration of political parties with ethnic or religious colorations so as not to heighten ethnic or religious apathy in the electoral process. In spite of these, Nigerian leaders from the North have blatantly jettisoned the federal character principle and appointed Northerners to almost every office with impunity to the ration of 1:10 in favour of the North.

The Nigerian state has also engaged in the management of ethno-communal conflicts through the use of military might and destruction of communities, acquisition of disputed area, boundary adjustment and treaties.

The cases of Aguleri and Umuleri, in Anambra state, Zango and Kataf in Kaduna state, Tiv and Jukun in Taraba state, Ife and Modakeke in Oyo state, Ijaw and Itsekiri in Delta state, Zaki – Biam and Gbeji in Benue state, Odi and Jesse in Rivers state and so many others.

Furthermore, the Nigerian state has employed state of emergencies, amnesty and dialogues in the management of conflicts in the country. The emergences of ethnic militancy in the Niger Delta, the rise of Boko Haram in the North East Zone of Nigeria are instances. At the moment the state of emergency declared in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states of North East Nigeria is still in force. The Military Task force has been on the rampage to smoke out the insurgents as was done in the Niger Delta before amnesty was granted to the militants.

This is in addition to legislations that tend to proscribe terrorism, kidnapping and other acts of violence in the state. In most of these instances, the use of dialogue had not solved the situations at first instance. Nonetheless, dialogue tends to be effective when conflicting communities, individuals and groups have flexed their muscles and tested each other's strength in one way or the other. After that time, everyone will be tired and willing to accept dialogue in resolving whatever conflict. It is important to emphasise that in most instances, the use of force in the management of conflict had not yielded the desired positive results other than massive waste of human lives and properties. Potential causes of conflicts in Nigeria have increased and intensified to a large extent posing greater problems for conflict management. Nigeria has recently engaged in diplomatic dialogue with neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger, Benin, and Cameroun especially after the discovery of about twelve Boko Haram training camps in Cameroun. It is expected that the discussion between the two countries will go a long way in easing the outrage of Boko Haram terror campaign in Nigeria.

Consolidating Democracy under Conflicts in Nigeria

The consolidation of our nascent democracy and even the sustenance of the Nigerian State under conflicts have come to depend on the ability of the federal government to manage those contending pressures which seem to pose great challenge upon its ability to govern. To present date, the response of government to conflict management has been mainly the use of police and military force. Root and trigger causes of insecurity and conflicts have been allowed to persist over time without any sign in sight of their solutions. In order to preserve our democracy and our entity as a country the root causes of insecurity and conflicts need to be identified and properly addressed instantly with a wider range of policy responses that will automatically halt further tensions from escalating. As we put down this piece of paper, Nigeria is happily celebrating a centenary of its existence as one nation despite the tensions and agonies going on in the North East, Nigeria following the ill fated attack of the Federal Government College in Yobe state by Boko Haram where over 59 students are said to have been killed.

As a matter of fact, there is no alternative to good governance that is able to deliver the dividends of democracy on the platter of people's welfare. Good governance is sine- quo - non in conflict management especially when it is based on accountability, rule of law, social justice and equity that is capable of accommodating the rich and the poor within the polity. Government must realize that the responsibility of peacemaking and peace-building lies squarely on their shoulders and not on any foreign collaborator or allies. Foreign friends of the country may promise heaven and earth to ensure acts of violence and terrorism is eradicated, but the onus of ensuring a stable democracy lies with the Nigerian state as a whole. Therefore, government must resolve to have less external interference or reference in taking decisions that borders on our national security and the wellbeing of her citizens. One way to do this is for government to be able to distinguish between national security interests and foreign interests in handling conflict management. More often than not, government relies so much on foreign aid or assistance (dependency theory) in taking decisions bordering on our national security interests. The implication is that instead of focusing on developmental efforts that will improve the living standard of the people, government engages themselves in implementing detrimental policies that only serve the interest of donor agencies.

Government agencies like National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Orientation Agency (NOA, Non-governmental Agencies (NGOs), and other Civil Activists must launch an enlightenment campaign whereby citizens are educated on the need for peace building and peacemaking. Communities must be enlightened to recognize risk signals in their environments and be able to understand how to go about them to ensure the wellbeing of their people without escalation. Peace building strategies have no alternative to prevention and resolution of conflict and insecurity situations. This must be stretched further to our institutional learning curriculum in which peace education should be incorporated. This will be complemented with peace seminars, lectures, workshops organized by the above mentioned and other agencies of government on quarterly basis. It is better and safer not to engage in conflict than to engage in violence conflicts and after that peacemaking and peace building. Citizens must work assiduously with government agencies to ensure that minor issues of misunderstanding, quarrels, provocations and conflicts which threatens our democratic principles are resolved at all cost before they get out of control.

Our political elites must be encouraged to play politics of tolerance and not do or die politics. Our legal

institutions must be empowered to strip off any politician or political party of their victory in any election they are found to have used force or threat of force to secure without fear of favour. There must be an equal ground for all to express their popularity before the electorate. Politics of bitterness, win-win politics must give way to fairness and justice and popular choice. Government must begin to hold traditional leaders/rulers, governors, political office holders and political elites responsible for any breach of peace in their domain or political entity. It has been muted that most conflicts and insecurity are fomented by these groups of people for their political greed and interest.

It must be important to know that there is no crisis of conflict that has not been traced to someone within the political environment and because of government attitude of looking away from the substantive issues; culprits are allowed to go scot-free while injuries continue to deepen until it explodes and becomes a major disaster. For instance, the current violent outrage being waged by Boko Haram on innocent, harmless and armless citizens started just like joke until now that government are finding it extremely difficult to contain. Government must sincerely tackle the issue of corruption in order to demonstrate their willingness to alleviate problems associated with poverty, unemployment and infrastructural dilapidation in the country. There have been serious allegations of government misappropriation of funds and missing billions of dollars in the NNPC account. These must be properly investigated to create the confidence that government is really for the poor and the rich. Issues of national security and interest should be given accelerated attention and proactively tackled to avoid it from escalating into major crisis. The development of the Nigerian state would therefore require the deepening of democracy and increased commitment to true federalism being clamoured for by the downtrodden. When the state is generally perceived as serving the interest of one particular group, it starts losing its legitimacy, and in fact, its authority.

Community Based Early Warning and Peace Building in Nigeria

Early warning refers to “the communication of information on a crisis area, analysis of that information and the development of a potential, timely, strategic response options to the crisis” (Adelman, 1998, p. 52). According to Haye (2014), early warning is basically concerned with prevention, mitigation or management of violent conflicts within a geographical landscape. Haye went on to distinguish between early warning system and intelligence system. He argued that early warning is not concerned with a direct threat to the gatherer or analyzer of the information, or those contemplating a response. However, we argue that there is no significant difference between them. It all depends on the mode of gathering the information and the prevailing security situation at the time of sourcing the information. Intelligence gathering however, does not always involve risk or threat to the gatherer unless it is covert intelligence (undercover, secret or spy work in which individuals doing it are not supposed to be known or identified). Both early warning and intelligence involves the use of anticipatory initiatives or removing criminogenic social conditions that breed violence or conflicts in a society. This is their meeting point. In that case, information on social situations are carefully gathered, assessed, interpreted and if the social actions has antecedents towards violent actions, such social conditions are stopped to avoid conflicts or crisis situations. By these reports, actions are carried out to prevent what might have become a major disaster. This is what we consider as early warning, the ability to forestall unhealthy social conditions from spreading or escalating into uncontrollable situations by acting timely to contain conflicts from breeding into major disaster. The process of gathering this information need not be in secret or threat of the individual safety. We emphasize that the key to early warning lies in the prompt action of preventing conflict issues from escalating beyond control. For instance, the bomb blast at Abuja on October 1st, 2010 the day of Nigeria’s Jubilee celebration, where the bomb threat was communicated to the security agencies. The timely and proactive action of the state security services and the police helped to reduce the number of casualties, even though it was not completely prevented. On the other hand, the failure of the police to act on the security intelligence/early warning signals as made available to them in respect of the Boko Haram plan to destabilize the Christian Christmas celebration led to the mass death recorded on the Christmas Eve 2010 bomb blasts in Jos, Plateau State.

The development of early warning systems as a strategy for conflict management has gained currency across the world. In most countries, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have played a vital role in the development of a framework for conflict early warning and response. Nigeria has benefitted from their experience and expertise of gathering information on the political, socio-economic and security aspects of the community (Haye, 2007). The fundamental reason for this is not unconnected with the fact that CSOs are basically grass rooted. Foster and Mattner (2006) highlighted seven peace building roles associated with Civil Society Organizations. These are: protection; monitoring and early warning; advocacy; socialization; social cohesion; intermediation and facilitation; and service protection. We reiterate that for early warning system to be effective, it must be understandable, trusted by and relevant to the communities that they serve. In this regard, early warning system must have a local content that is domestically relevant to the geographical area where it is applied and managed.

Radice and Tekle (2011) identified basic requirements for an effective community based early warning

which include but not limited to the following:

- I. Individuals and institutions have knowledge about what is threatening them;
- II. People are able to monitor, analyze and forecast the hazards;
- III. Communicating or disseminating a change in threats, alerts and warnings is possible; and
- IV. There is sufficient local capacity to respond to warnings.

There are various early warning models that countries across the globe have adopted to suit their local needs in the management of conflicts. We shall briefly discuss only a few of them. The International Crisis Group Early Warning Model is anchored on the analysis of what is happening and why. They are basically centered in the collection and analysis of information from the local field and are at home with the language and culture of the people. They ensure timely release of information to the appropriate authority for immediate action to prevent conflicts from escalating to dangerous dimension. This model is applicable in over 50 countries (Haye, 2007). There is also the West Africa Early Warning and Early Response Network (WARN) which is concerned with human security. The ECOWAS has effectively utilized this model in solving and managing conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. It is important to note that the ECOWAS early warning mechanism is anchored on the United Nations Council Resolution 1625 and is a core component of the elements of the comprehensive conflict prevention framework (Ibrahim & Ndongo, 2008; Ndinga-Muvumba & Lamin, 2006; Miller & King, 2005).

We must emphasize that an important component which early warning system should address is the mandate to provide incident and trend analysis report on peace and security as well as real-time preventive response options. This will make policy makers to ensure predictability that will facilitate interventions towards averting, diffusing and innovatively transforming delicate situations of conflicts, insecurity, disruptions and disasters. According to Ndinga-Muvumba and Lamin (2006), early warning system has intended to collect and analyze data systematically as it occurs in real-time. The implication of this is that early warning information must be processed timely, accurately, validly, reliably, verifiably and must reflect the actual on-going event within a community especially Nigeria. The system's methodology for gathering information is an open system.

Early warning system is adversely affected by lack of prompt preventive response actions which leave a gap that may generate into uncontrollable situation. Lund (1996) argued that early warning signals were received in several instances but did not precipitate any preventive action. More so, strong expectations of potential conflict nature or even the outbreak of violence were not in themselves sufficient to generate prompt preventive action. In the case of Nigeria for example, grievous and human rights violations in Northern Nigeria were widely witnessed as a result of the activities of religious fundamentalists – the Maitasine Religious Cult in the early 80s but no serious legislative action was put in place by government to prevent its re-occurrence in the future. When some Northern States in Nigeria declared themselves full Shariah states despite the constitutional provision that Nigeria is a secular state, no preventive action was done to dismantle it at the onset. The result is the impetus it provided for the emergence of Boko Haram and terrorism in North East, Nigeria. The Fulani Herdsmen are currently commandeer land space from various communities in Southern and North Central Nigeria claiming the ownership. Early warning indicators showed that the trend is dangerous and have been causing serious conflicts and violent clashes between those communities and Fulani herdsmen. Most especially, over 300 communities in Benue and Nasarawa states of Nigeria have been displaced by Fulani herdsmen. Government response to contain this ugly trend has been apathetic. The early warnings that are being generated in this kind of forceful acquisition of land by Fulani herdsmen are being downplayed. The implication is that we are deliberately piling up time bombs for future destruction of lives in those communities. We are witnesses of the violent activities of Fulani herdsmen in Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia states speak volumes of this ugly trend. On Monday March 10, 2014 the Governor of Benue state Gabriel Suswam was attacked by Fulani herdsmen on his way to visit Tee-Akanyi village in Guma local government area of Benue state. The Fulani herdsmen are said to have raided the village and killed over 30 persons and burnt down some of the houses (Godwin, 2014). The people living in these communities have completely abandoned their ancestral homes and taken refuge in neighbouring communities. Government and all stakeholders must work assiduously to ensure early warnings concerning any situation are promptly investigated and preventive response acted upon to checkmate unhealthy situation. What is important for us as a nation is to create conducive environment where talk on non violence are delivered, accepted and practiced by people even when the political elites call for violent actions. There is need therefore for government to ensure social conditions are provided and that peoples lives are secured in the society. This may provide the platform for successful community based early warning and early response system. Although, it may be a long term strategy especially in creating the desired environment which will enhance inter-ethnic activities by connecting individuals from one ethnic group to another but the eventual outcome will ensure peaceful co-existence, understanding and unity within the community. The idea is that the greater people's will and determination to live peacefully, the higher the chance of success in conflict prevention and management. In this regard, we aver that community-based early warning and response systems would function effectively if they build on the

foundation of long term understanding and confidence building approaches.

Nigeria's peace-keeping and peace building efforts across the globe is enormous. This is predicated on the assumption that peace is sine-quo-non to development and without peace development and progress will be impeded. Thus, in the realization of this basic truth, Nigeria strives to live peacefully with her neighbours and in doing so attempts to wade off problems that could have emerged especially over boundary matters dislocated by colonial administrators by entering into treaties and bilateral agreements with other countries as shown in the case with Equatorial Guinea. Nigeria's silence and acceptance of the International Court of Justice verdict on the Bakassi Peninsular which was ceded to Cameroun is a demonstration of her resolve to live peacefully with her neighbours. Nigeria's dominant role in the mediation of the crisis between Liberia and Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Mali, Togo and Ghana are clear examples of her commitment to conflict resolution and peace building in Africa.

This is aside from its global involvement in peace keeping operations in war troubled areas across the globe. Nigeria's role in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is overwhelming. Through its support, ECOWAS contributed to greater regional integration and stability which provided the enable environment for peaceful resolutions of border disputes, creation of a mechanism for conflict management, peace keeping, peace building and strengthening of West Africa's position in Africa and in the international community. ECOWAS has through its social and cultural policies, trade agreements, investment opportunities, customs agreement, monetary policies, immigration policies and mechanisms for conflict management such as the early warning systems with four observational bases situated in Banjul, Cotonou, Morovia and Ouagadougou, as well as ECOMOG. ECOWAS has also sought and gone a long way in creating a broad framework which economic integration, peace, democracy and regional development could be realized. Nigeria has remained a peace building advocate in the sub-region and Africa as a whole.

Internal Security Issues and the Nigerian State: A Way Forward

Marxist philosophers have always maintained that the state is controlled by the political elites who ensure that the status quo within the state is constantly maintained to their favour. As such, "power is used to further the interest of the powerful" in the society (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008: p. 535). The implication is that the state is always in a constant flux with the masses always striking for a balance to change the status quo and seize power from the powerful political elites. The place of the state put them in a critical position to escalate or de-escalate conflict situations. This is because the state has sworn an oath to protect all citizens irrespective of tribe, language, culture, religion, race, ethnicity, and sex. Accordingly, Section 14 (1) of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be a primary purpose of government". Whenever the state either by implication or deliberate action shows signs of shying away from its statutory responsibility, the result has always led to the emergence of potholes of insurgents that would challenge the authority of the state. The activity of Boko Haram in North East, Nigeria is a typical example in this regard. We have had and still have series of security issues that have been affecting the Nigerian state since its inception as one nation. We must address these security issues as we join the rest of the world to ensure peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace building within and across the globe. Government must shun every attempt that portrays its activities as anti-people and incapable of delivering security to the people.

One of the greatest internal security issues in Nigeria is electoral fraud. This poses a great challenge to democracy in Nigeria and by implication threatens the security fabrics of the polity. Charade elections desecrate the sanctity of democratic principles and weaken its capacity as an instrument for social mobilization of natural and human resources for the development of the country. In society where the development of the people is anchored on security and peace, it is certain that without security, development will be far-fetched; the consequences of such acts catch up very quickly with the system. Electoral fraud undermines the credibility and integrity of the democratic process and makes governance much more difficult. Concerned citizens, burdened with anger and frustration can resort to violence. Thus, Nigerian political elites have distorted true democracy as the opinion of the general public cannot be considered during elections. The democratic process involves the election of a candidate by the people; it is devoid of the imposition of a candidate on the people by political elites. The experience of 2011 after election violence should serve as our guide in 2015 general election. Government should endeavour to resolve all the contending issues that gave rise to the 2011 post election violence before the next election to ensure free and fair election devoid of any violence before and after election.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons which has manifested in increased violent crimes - kidnapping, terrorism, armed robbery, murder, communal violence, trans-border crimes and general insecurity is a serious internal security issue that needs urgent attention. Lack of synergy amongst government security agencies coupled with inefficiency and corruption as evidenced in the unprofessional tackling of insecurity and conflict situations specifically in extra-judicial killings, escape of political and high profile criminals and wanton destruction of criminal exhibits are complexities in our internal security. The involvement and proliferation of foreign mercenaries and criminals in home grown terrorism, violence and internally generated conflicts resulting

in increased level of destructions thereby complicating conflict management as we have witnessed during the Nigeria-civil war, religious riots in the North and the current Boko Haram outrage. The new trends in conflict and violent attacks through the use of improvised explosive devices (IED) or bombs and the emergence of suicide bombers which are used to attack worship centres, military/police barracks, market places, prisons, public leisure areas and security road blocks as witnessed by the activities of Boko Haram. This trend is dangerously moving to motor parks as witnessed recently in the Sabongari motor park suicide bomb attacks at Kano where over five luxurious buses heading to the Eastern zone of Nigeria was attacked by suicide bombers killing over 200 passengers. The April 14, 2014 attack at Nyanya Motor Park, Abuja by Boko Haram where over 89 people died while over 250 persons sustained serious injuries. The May 1, 2014 bomb attack at Nyanya killing over 19 people and injuring many others is yet another Boko Haram impunity to heighten fear and insecurity in Abuja (Ezigbo, 2014). The attack of school children in a Federal College in Maiduguri leading to the killing of over 60 children and abduction of yet unidentified number of school girls in Chibok, Borno state by Boko Haram sect, and the closure of all federal government colleges in North East, Nigeria are internal security issues that should be of great concern to the government. Government should ensure complete control of all borders – land, sea and air to prevent the infiltration of terrorists members and smuggling of dangerous weapons into the country. The Northern Nigeria borders should be completely closed in order to monitor the smuggling of arms and other dangerous weapons.

Ethno-religious war being carried out by Fulani herdsmen in Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Enugu, Nasarawa, Cross River and other states across the country is a new security issue which is cropping up now that demand serious government intervention. The use of chemicals by Fulani herdsmen to attack their perceived enemies as shown in their attack on the Tiv people of Benue state is a matter of international concern. It is a trend that is dangerously manifesting in the new wave of terrorism in Nigeria. The wind of violence emanating from this direction must really be tackled before the debacle catches up with all of us. Government must put a halt to the massive destruction of lives and properties by these Fulani herdsmen to avoid reprisal attacks that may lead to unquantifiable catastrophe. The kind of lukewarm attitude demonstrated at the inception of the emergence of Boko Haram must be jettisoned for a rational and concrete approach that will put an end to the Fulani herdsmen onslaught on the people. Government are never serious with early warning signals until the matter develops into dangerous alarming situations, this must not be so with them in this critical situation. Government must move in urgently to address the problems of Fulani herdsmen and host communities to stop the hostilities and violent conflicts destroying the unity of the country. According to Ibrahim (1999):

The legitimacy of the modern state is linked to its capacity to present itself as a provider of public goods and more important, a neutral arbiter that guarantees the security of all sections of the society. When the state is generally perceived as serving the particularistic interest of one group, it starts losing legitimacy and, indeed, its authority. As state capacity declines fear of the other rises and people resort to other levels of solidarity-religious, ethnic and regional in search of security (cited in Kwaja, 2009, p.111).

Government must ensure that all unites of the country are carried along in its socio-economic developmental strides irrespective of the political leaning. State and institutional structures should be predicated on the provisions of basic security, good governance, and accountability. Conscientious efforts must be made at continual and sustained analysis and mapping of conflict prone areas as well as early warning signs to eliminate any form of dangerous uprising or reoccurrence of any crisis within any community.

Recommendations

Although, many of peace building's aims overlap with those of peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, it is a distinct phenomenon. Peacemaking involves stopping an ongoing conflict, whereas peace building happens before a conflict starts or once it ends. The aim of government in peace building should be to address issues before they generate into uncontrollable conditions. These demand great efforts by government and the people involved in every community. To achieve effective peace building, we recommendation as follows:

The key to effective management of conflict and peace building in the community should be anchored on effective communication between government and stakeholders. The government should engage Non-governmental agencies within communities that will help in sourcing information regarding any matter threatening the peace of the community. Early warning data banks should be created for the analysis of such information and every information received must be investigated promptly; to determine its reality or otherwise.

The local people should be enlightened to be security conscious so that they can be able to identify issues that threaten their lives or livelihood in the community. Peace building programme should be community based with local content relevant to the security needs of the community. It must be an integrative initiative that incorporates all levels of age, sex, tribe, religion and the likes within the community in order to provide a broad base information gathering mechanism.

One of the issues that can weaken any early warning signal is the rate of response. Efforts must be put in place to ensure that early warning signals are responded to promptly and decisively in order to checkmate any unpleasant security situation within any locality. Thus, pro-active preventive strategy should form the nucleus of any peace building approach in tackling conflict.

There is need to build synergies across all stakeholders and prompt action against defaulters. In this regard, persons who are found to be involved in fomenting conflict situations in their area should be dealt with promptly to discourage other would be trouble makers. Government must be decisive in taking action on matters which threaten the security of the state in order to provide the concrete evidence that they can protect the people in time of crisis. Government must go beyond primordial, personal and party interest and come out hard on any defaulter in order to stem the tide of violence and insecurity in the country.

Government should go beyond mere provision of relief materials to indigent and displaced persons to building strong community based economy that caters for the masses. One of the things that provoke conflict is poverty and ignorance. Government must strive to eradicate poverty and ignorance in the society. The huge amount of financial resources that are put in meaningless ventures should be redirected to building industries and educational institutions that will empower the people.

In most times, we engage in dialogue when lives have been destroyed. Government must strive to go beyond window dressing of issues and engage in inter-faith dialogue or inter-communal dialogue as a strategic model undertaking which shall contribute positively to peace building in the society. This will strengthen proactive mechanisms aimed at checking conflict in any society.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that peace building is better than peacemaking in conflict resolution and management. Government should build capacities that are readily available to manage conflict situations before they manifest into disasters. Energies put into peacemaking should be channeled into peace building. The reason is that lives lost during conflict situations are never restored back to life. We must endeavour to protect life at all cost before it is destroyed than providing funds for mere palliative measures that cannot bring back human existence.

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Appendix 1: Ethno-Political/Communal Violence in Nigeria 1980-2008

| DATE | COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN THE VIOLENCE |
|-------------------|--|
| 1980 | Communal clash between Kadara host communities and Hausa settlers in Kasuwan Magaric Kajuru LGA of Kaduna state over land dispute. |
| 1984 | Communal clash between host community and Hausa-Fulani settlers of Yarkasuwa in Saminaka/Lere LGA of Kaduna state over land dispute. |
| 1987 | Communal violent between Kurama local inhabitants of Lere and Hausa settlers in Lere town Saminaka/Lere LGA of Kaduna state over land ownership. |
| 1991 | Communal violence between Jarasaiyawa host community and Fulani settler community of Tafawa Belewa in Bauchi state over land dispute. |
| April 2, 1992 | Violent clash between the Tayiawa (original owners of Tafawa Balewa) and the Fulani immigrants of Lere District Council of Bauchi state over leadership of the town. |
| May, 1992 | Violent communal clash between Zango and Kataf of Kaduna state over farmlands. The clash saw many lives lost and property worth millions of Naira destroyed. |
| 1993/1994 | Communal violent between the Tiv settler community and the Jukun west community in Wukari Ibi Bali LGA of Taraba state over land dispute. |
| May 30, 1999 | Renewed Warri communal clash in Delta state in which many lives and properties were lost. |
| July 18, 1999 | Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and Hausa people clashed at Shagamu in Ogun State over the killing of an Hausa woman who was alleged to have dares the Oro festival. The aftermath of the violent clash left many people dead. |
| November 25, 1999 | Communal clash between the OPC and the Hausa community in Lagos state over the leadership of the Abattoir in New Oko Oba – Lagos. Many people lost their lives. |
| January 25, 2000 | Communal clash in Brass LGA of Bayelsa state. |
| January 29, 2000 | Communal clash in Etsako LGA in Edo State. |
| February 2, 2000 | Boundary dispute between communities in Akwa Ibom State. |
| March 5, 2000 | Communal clash between Ife and Modekeke over land. This violent clash claimed many lives while properties worth millions of Naira were destroyed. |
| March 16, 2000 | Communal clash between Eleme and Okirika in Rivers state. |
| April 8, 2000 | Communal clash between two communities in Ovia South LGA in Edo state. |
| May 18, 2000 | Violent clash between Local farmers/land owners and Fulani cattle rearers in Saki, Oyo state as a result of destruction of farm crops by the Fulani cattles. |
| June 5, 2000 | Communal clash in Owo community in Ondo state. |
| June 12, 2000 | Communal clash between communities in Isoko North LGA of Edo state over land. |
| June 23, 2000 | Communal clash between the people of Ikot Offiong and Oku-Iboku of Cross River State over land. |
| July 1, 2000 | This is the beginning of communal clash at Ikare Akoko in Ondo state. |
| July 21, 2000 | Communal clash between the Ijaws and Urhobo communities in Delta state over land dispute. |
| August 22, 2000 | Communal clash in Bende LGA of Abia State. |
| August 22, 2000 | Violent clash at Agboma community in Epe LGA of Lagos state. |
| October 16, 2000 | Igbos and Hausa traders clashed at Alaba Ram market area of Lagos state over leadership. |
| December 11, 2000 | Renewed clashes between Ife and Modeke over land dispute. |
| May 12, 2001 | Communal clash between the Ijaws and Itsekiri communities in Delta state. |
| June 2, 2001 | Communal clash between Odimodu and Ogulagba communities in Delta state. |
| February 2, 2002 | Clash between OPC and Hausa people at Idi Araba in Lagos State. |
| February 26, 2002 | Communal clash between Apprapum and Osatura communities of Cross River state. |
| August 31, 2002 | Communal clash at Ado Ekiti in Ekiti state. |
| September 2, 2002 | Renewed communal clashes in Owo communities in Ondo state. |
| March 25, 2008 | Violent clash between Jakun and Kuteb communities in Taraba state resulting to the death of 7 persons and destruction of property worth millions of Naira. |
| July 23, 2008 | Violent clash between the Atagenyi and Omelemu communities of Benue state. This resulted to the loss of five lives. |
| December 28, 2008 | Violent clash between Jekun and Kuteb when Kuteb was been prevented from holding their festival Kuchicheb. The clash resulted to mass destruction of property worth millions of Naira. |

Source: Chinwokwu, 2012c:442-443.

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