

AN APPRAISAL OF THE FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Human rights are fundamental to the existence and dignity of every individual. In Nigeria, the Constitution and various international treaties guarantee these rights. However, the country continues to grapple with significant human rights challenges. Human rights violations in Nigeria have been a persistent issue, exacerbated by political instability, economic challenges, ethnic tensions, and insurgency. Despite being a signatory to various international human rights treaties, Nigeria struggles with implementing and upholding these standards. This article provides a comprehensive appraisal of the flagrant violations of fundamental human rights in Nigeria. This study employs a quantitative approach with data analyzed using thematic and statistical analysis techniques. This article examines the problem of fundamental rights violations in Nigeria. Despite constitutional guarantees and international obligations, human rights abuses persist in various forms, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, torture, and suppression of freedom of expression. The findings of this research reveals that impunity for human rights abuses and corruption remains a clog in the dispensation of justice in Nigeria. Furthermore, the paper advocates comprehensive reforms and sustained advocacy as a necessary tool to improve the human rights situation in Nigeria. It concludes with recommendations for addressing these violations and enhancing the protection of human rights in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Constitution, Fundamental Human Rights, Nigeria, UDHR.

Theoretical Framework

Fundamental Human Rights are a set of universal, indivisible and inalienable rights recognising the equal dignity and worth of all humans. These rights which are basic and central to humanity are fundamental to the existence and dignity of every individual. As a signatory to the UNDHR, the constitution of Nigeria and various international treaties guarantee these rights as inalienable to every citizen. However, the country continues to grapple with significant human rights challenges. This article aims to critically assess the ongoing violations, providing an in-depth analysis of their causes, manifestations, and implications. Human rights are "rights which all human beings have by virtue of their humanity, such as the right to life, dignity of human person, personal liberty, fair hearing and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. According to Dada (2012), fundamental human rights provide a common standard of behavior among the international community. They are natural, rational, inviolable, and unalterable, the deprivation of which would constitute a grave affront to one's sense of justice (Cranston, 1973). Rights, as defined, are generally understood as, "moral-political claims which by contemporary consensus, every human being has or is deemed to have upon his society or government," claims which are recognized "as of right" and "not by love or grace or charity (Henkin, 1978).

Human rights, as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nigerian Constitution, represent the cornerstone of democratic governance. Despite these protections, Nigeria has faced significant challenges in upholding these rights. Theories such as natural law and positivist theory provide a lens through which to examine these issues, highlighting both the inherent rights of individuals and the role of legal frameworks in protecting these rights.

On Dec. 10, 1948, representatives of various regions across the nations of the world came together to adopt a set of universal, indivisible and inalienable rights recognising the equal dignity and worth of everyone. At the meeting, stakeholders set common values and recognised that human rights are inherent to all humans. These common rights and values is today referred to as the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights (UDHR) and they set the framework for what is today commonly known as fundamental human rights.

Human rights, as noted by Ajomo & Okagbue (1991) are more than a collection of formal norms, they are dynamic political, social, economic, juridical, as well as moral, cultural and philosophical conditions which define the intrinsic value of man and his inherent dignity. These rights are basic, central and common to every human hence, their depiction as fundamental. Aduba (2012) defined Human Rights as those rights that are in the very nature of human persons. They define and affirm humanity, they exist to ensure that Human rights remain sacred and guarantee that inhumanity and injustice are prevented or redressed (Nzarga, 2014). Human Rights are rights possessed by all persons by virtue of their common humanity. They are universal, same for everyone' everywhere, are inalienable, can neither be taken away nor given up and they are indivisible. The United Nations in 1987 described Human Rights in the following manner; Human Rights could be generally defined as those rights without which we cannot function as human beings (Nzarga, 2014).

It's been 76 years since the UDHR came into being, however, many Nigerians continue to suffer deprivation of their rights, especially in the hands of government and security agencies. Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful and arbitrary killings; forced disappearances; torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the government; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious abuses in a conflict, including reportedly unlawful or widespread civilian deaths or harm, enforced disappearances or abductions, torture, and physical abuses or punishment; serious restrictions on free expression and media, including violence or threats against journalists, and enforcement of criminal libel and blasphemy laws to limit expression; serious government corruption; lack of investigation and accountability for gender-based violence, including domestic or intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and other forms of such violence; instances of coerced

abortion or forced sterilization; enforcement of laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults; and the existence of the worst forms of child labor. (Human Rights Watch, 2020)

Human rights violations in Nigeria have become a persistent issue, exacerbated by political instability, economic challenges, ethnic tensions, and insurgency. Despite being a signatory to various international human rights treaties, Nigeria struggles with implementing and upholding these standards. This analysis explores the multifaceted nature of human rights violations in Nigeria, focusing on key areas such as security forces' abuses, violations by non-state actors, freedom of expression, and socio-economic rights. The existence of the aforementioned and other issues related to the deprivation of human rights in Nigeria forms the basis of discourse in this paper.

This article is divided into four parts which are the abstract, theoretical framework, methodology, problem, findings/discussion and finally, conclusion and recommendations.

Methodology

This study employs quantitative approach. Data were collected through surveys of affected communities, and analysis of legal documents and case reports. The sample includes reports of several individuals with direct and indirect experiences with human rights violations. Data were analyzed using thematic and statistical analysis techniques.

Problem

Human rights violations in Nigeria are pervasive, ranging from extrajudicial killings and torture to arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances. These violations are often rooted in systemic issues such as corruption, a weak legal system, and lack of accountability. The impact on Nigerian society is profound, resulting in psychological trauma, social unrest, and economic instability.

As noted earlier, a 1978 meeting set in order, a set of values and privileges that is applicable to all humans irrespective of status, country, skin colour, race etc. At the meeting, stakeholders set common values and recognised that human rights are inherent to all humans. The agreement on the recognition of these set common values is known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is an international treaty that finds expression as an integral legal instrument that seeks to protect the inalienable rights of every man. In Nigeria, these rights are documented in chapter 4 of the 1999 constitution of the country. In addition, in chapter II of the constitution, provisions are made for several other rights under the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy.

Besides the UNDHR, there are several other regional and international charters and treaties that Nigeria is a signatory to as an indication of the country's commitment to the acceptance and protection of the fundamental human rights of its citizens. These charters and treaties include International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. These rights are right to life, right to dignity of human persons, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to private life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to freedom of expression and the press, right of freedom of movement, right to freedom from discrimination, right to acquisition of property.

As part of its commitment to the protection of the rights of Nigerians, the Nigeria government established the National Human Rights Commission. The commission, established by the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act of 1995 to promote and protect all human rights in Nigeria is an affiliate of regional and international organizations on human rights. The Commission serves as an extra-judicial mechanism which safeguards the human rights of the Nigerian population. It monitors human rights in Nigeria, assists victims of human rights violations, and helps in the formulation of the Nigerian Government's policies on human rights (Agbamuche-Mbu, 2015).

However, the NHRC Act was amended in 2010, granting more powers to the commission in the discharge of its statutory responsibilities. The NHRC (Amendment) Act of 2010 conferred on the Commission additional independence and strengthened the Commission's power with respect to promotion and

protection of human rights, investigation of alleged violation of human rights and enforcement of decisions. More so, through the Amendment Act, the scope of the Commission's mandate was widened to include vetting of legislations at all levels to ensure their compliance with human rights norms. Specifically, the NHRC is now mandated to

- Deal with all matters relating to the promotion and protection of human rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international and regional instruments on human rights to which Nigeria is a party;
- Monitor and investigate all alleged cases of human rights violations in Nigeria and make appropriate recommendation to the federal government for the prosecution and such other actions as it may deem expedient in each circumstance;
- Assist victims of human rights violations and seek appropriate redress and remedies on their behalf
- Undertake studies on all matters pertaining to human rights and assist the Federal, State and Local Governments, where it considers it appropriate to do so, in the formulation of appropriate policies on the guarantee of human rights;
- Publish and submit from time to time to the President, the National Assembly, the Judiciary, State and Local Governments, reports on the state of human rights promotion and protection in Nigeria;
- Organize local and international seminars, workshops and conferences on human rights issues for public enlightenment;

- Liaise and cooperate, in such a manner as it considers appropriate, with local and international organizations on human rights for the purpose of advancing the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Participate in such manner as it considers appropriate in all international activities relating to the promotion and protection of human rights;
- maintain a library, collect data and disseminate information and materials on human rights generally
- Receive and investigate complaints concerning violations of human rights and make appropriate determination as may be deemed necessary in each circumstance;
- Examine any existing legislation, administrative provisions and propose bills or bye-laws for the purpose of ascertaining whether such enactment or proposed bill or bye-laws are consistent with human rights norms;
- Prepare and publish, in such a manner as the Commission considers appropriate, guidelines for avoidance of Act or practice with respect to the functions and power of the Commission under this Act;
- Promote an understanding of public discussions of human rights issues in Nigeria;
- undertake research and Education Programmes and such other programmes for promoting and protecting human rights and co-ordinate any such programme on behalf of the Federal, State or Local Government on its own initiatives or when so requested by the Federal, State or Local Government and reports concerning the enactment of Legislation on matters relating to human rights;
- on its own initiative or when requested by the Federal, State or Local Government, report on action that should be taken by the Federal, State or Local Government to comply with the provisions of any relevant international Human Rights Institutions;

- Refer any matter on human rights violation requiring prosecution to the Attorney General of the Federation or of a State as the case may be;
- Where it considers it appropriate to do so, act as a conciliator between parties to a complaint;
- Carry out all such other function as are necessary or expedient for the performance of these functions under the Act (NHRC, 2013).

Findings/Discussion

Before and after the return of civilian rule in the country, cases of human rights violations seem to have become a norm. It is not uncommon to typically hear or read from electronic, print or social media incidents of human rights violation. These violations which cut across diverse stratas of the Nigerian society have become allusions of various factors.

Case studies reveal harrowing accounts of abuse, such as the notorious incidents involving the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and statistical data from human rights organizations indicate a significant rise in reported cases of violations over the past years. Patterns suggest that marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities and political activists as well as ordinary Nigerian citizens are more affected.

One of the most significant sources of human rights violations in Nigeria is the conduct of security forces. The Nigerian military and police have been frequently accused of extrajudicial killings, torture, and other forms of mistreatment. Reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch indicate that Nigerian security forces often engage in extrajudicial killings and torture, especially in regions plagued by insurgency, such as the Northeast. The fight against Boko Haram, a militant Islamist group, has seen numerous allegations of human rights abuses by the military, including unlawful detentions and killings of suspects without trial. It is not uncommon to have reports of the government or its agents committing arbitrary, unlawful, or extrajudicial killings. At times authorities investigated and held accountable police, military, or other security force personnel responsible for the use of excessive or deadly force, or for the deaths of persons in custody. The Nigerian military has been implicated in

human rights abuses, particularly in the fight against Boko Haram in the northeast. Reports have documented extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and torture of suspected militants and civilians. One would recall with great sadness, the Odi massacre of 1999, Zaki Biam invasion of 2001, Baga invasion in 2013 and other brutal invasion of communities, all highlighting the needless slaughter of civilians by military personnel. Recently, troops of the Nigerian Army conducting a cordon-and-search operation invaded another community in Delta state and allegedly whisked away no fewer than 10 persons. This incident, which occurred on April 12, 2004 was reported with the caption "Okuama: Army invades another Delta community, arrests 10 persons, razes homes" (Igbekoyi, 2024).

On April 3, police shot and killed Osun State Polytechnic student Afolabi Abiola during a raid at a friend's apartment in Iree. (Human Rights Watch, 2020). There were no reports of investigations or prosecutions regarding Abiola's killing. Also, in early April, members of the Ogun State Special Weapons Tactics unit killed a commercial motorbike operator named Abiodun Oladele while in police custody. Oladele was part of a protest following the death of a motorcyclist rammed by a Nigerian Customs Service vehicle during a car chase. (Ammensty International, 2021) According to Oladele's elder brother, other suspects released on bail told him they witnessed Oladele being abused by police. There were no reports of investigations or prosecutions regarding Oladele's death.

The EndSARS movement, which gained international attention in 2020, highlighted the issue of police brutality. SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) was notorious for extortion, harassment, and extrajudicial killings. Despite the disbandment of SARS, protests were met with violent crackdowns by security forces, culminating in the Lekki Toll Gate shooting, where peaceful protesters were fired upon, leading to deaths and injuries. Following the #EndSARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) protests in 2020, the federal government established judicial panels of inquiry investigating reports of police brutality, including killings. The Lagos State Judicial Panel Report was released by the Lagos state government though it rejected some of this panel's key findings and took no further action on recommendations or compensation to victims of the Lekki Toll Gate shootings,

choosing instead to compensate victims of police brutality more broadly (Amnesty International, 2021).

The constitution guarantees the right to dignity of human persons. This fundamental human right presupposes that each person should be treated with respect and accorded dignity as a human. However, this basic right is flagrantly abused by security agencies. Security services routinely commit torture and inhuman treatment of criminal suspects, militants, detainees, and prisoners. Amnesty International carried out investigations into human rights abuses in the states of Anambra, Imo, Ebonyi, and Abia. The organization documented 62 cases of arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, and torture. It also reportedly reviewed video and audio recordings showing security forces using excessive force and "other unlawful means to address the rising violence" (Onwuazombe, 2017).

Moreover, the constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court. However, the government sometimes does not observe these requirements. Though the Police and other security services have the authority to arrest individuals without a warrant if officials reasonably suspect a person committed a crime, yet security forces sometimes abused this authority. Security forces frequently fail to obtain arrest warrants in cases requiring them and the Police frequently holds interrogation for individuals found in the vicinity of a crime ranging from a few hours to several months (Human Rights Watch, 2020). In some cases, police detain suspects without informing them of the charges against them or allowing access to counsel and family members; such detentions often included solicitation of bribes. A good example is the continued detention of Nnamdi Kanu by the Department of State Services after his arrest was nullified and adjudged as a breach of fundamental human rights by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Furthermore, lengthy pretrial detention remains a serious problem in Nigeria in violation of the right to fair hearing. Detainees often wait for years to gain access to a court, and in many cases, multiple adjournments result in years-long delays. The shortage of trial judges, trial backlogs, endemic corruption, bureaucratic inertia, and undue political influence seriously hampers the judicial

system and ultimately breaches the fundamental rights of detainees. Of greater implication is the epitaph that 'justice delayed is justice denied'. In many cases, provision of bail is often arbitrary or subject to extrajudicial influence. In many areas with no functioning bail system, suspects sometimes remain incarcerated indefinitely in investigative detention (Onwuazombe, 2017).

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, but the government does respect judicial independence and impartiality. The judicial branch remains susceptible to pressure from the executive and legislative branches as well as business interests. There is a widespread public perception that judges are easily bribed, and litigants cannot rely on the courts to render impartial judgments. Many citizens encounter long delays and report receiving "requests" from judicial officials for bribes to expedite cases or obtain favorable rulings. (Mela, Garba and Osanubi, 2022).

The constitution provides for the right to a fair and public trial, but the judiciary does not always enforce this right. Authorities do not always respect the rights of defendants. Insufficient numbers of judges and courtrooms, together with growing caseloads, often result in pretrial, trial, and appellate delays that could extend a trial for as many as 10 years. Although accused persons are entitled to counsels of their choice, there are reportedly some cases where defense counsels are absent from required court appearances so regularly that a court might proceed with a routine hearing in the absence of counsel(s) except for certain offenses for which conviction carries the death penalty. If family members want to attend a trial, police sometimes demand payments.

Although the constitution and law provide for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, in some cases the government restrict these rights. Despite the transition from military to civilian rule in 1999, clampdowns, beatings unfair arrests and police raids against producers of print media have continued unabated.

Critics of the government report of being subjected to threats, intimidation, arrest, detention, and violence. Security services detain, harass and threaten journalists, sometimes for reporting on sensitive problems such as political corruption and security. In 2021, security services including the Department of

State Services and police occasionally arrested and detained journalists who criticized the government, including journalist Agba Jalingo, reportedly for criticizing the sister-in-law of a politician (Amnesty International, 2021). The government also uses regulatory oversight at times to restrict press freedom, notably clamping down on television and radio stations. On August 5, the National Broadcasting Commission fined three stations five million naira (\$11,210) each for broadcasting two documentaries on heavily armed criminal groups known as bandits. One was a Trust TV documentary in March and the other a BBC documentary in July (Amnesty International, 2021). The Commission declared that the documentaries glamorized terrorism and banditry.

The constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly but sometimes, the army, national police, and other security services sometimes used excessive force to disperse protesters. Police forces engaging in crowd control operations generally attempt to disperse crowds using nonlethal tactics, such as firing tear gas, before escalating their use of force. On May 31, a peaceful protest occurred in the Osun State capital of Osogbo in response to an April 3 killing in Iree (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Police allegedly opened fire on the protesters, wounding Toba Adedeji, correspondent for The Nation newspaper.

The constitution and law provide for the right to associate freely with other persons in political parties, trade unions, or other special interest organizations. The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and authorities generally respected these related rights but in areas subject to frequent attacks or depredations by Boko Haram, ISIS-WA, or groups associated with them, residents often found themselves subject to roadblocks, searches, and other restrictive security measures.

Non-state actors, particularly insurgent groups like Boko Haram and bandits in the North, contribute significantly to human rights violations. Boko Haram has been responsible for widespread atrocities, including massacres, abductions, forced recruitment of child soldiers, and sexual violence. The group's violent campaigns have resulted in the displacement of millions, creating a humanitarian crisis with severe implications for the rights to life, education, and freedom from

torture. In the Northwest and North-central regions, banditry and inter-communal clashes over resources have led to mass killings, kidnappings for ransom, and destruction of property. The government's response has often been inadequate, leaving communities vulnerable and exacerbating the cycle of violence.

Socio-economic rights, including the rights to health, education, and an adequate standard of living, are also areas of concern in Nigeria. The Nigerian healthcare system is underfunded and understaffed, resulting in poor access to quality healthcare services. High maternal and infant mortality rates, coupled with inadequate responses to public health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlight systemic issues in the healthcare sector. Access to education is hindered by various factors, including insecurity, poverty, and inadequate infrastructure. In the North, Boko Haram's attacks on schools and the abduction of students have severely impacted educational access. The government's inability to ensure safe learning environments exacerbates educational inequalities (UNHRC, 2022). Despite being Africa's largest economy, Nigeria grapples with high levels of poverty and inequality. Economic mismanagement, corruption, and insufficient social safety nets contribute to widespread poverty, impacting citizens' right to an adequate standard of living. The wealth gap between different regions and social groups fuels social tension and hampers overall development.

Gender-Based Violence is also a source of worry when it comes to protection of rights in Nigeria. Particularly susceptible in this area are women, girls and children. Domestic violence, rape, child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue. Cultural norms and weak enforcement of laws contribute to the problem. According to a 2013 national survey by the National Population Commission and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 28% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, while 7% have experienced sexual violence (Nigerian Demography and Health Survey, 2013). These figures likely underestimate the true extent due to underreporting influenced by stigma, fear of reprisals, and societal pressure to maintain family unity. The impact of domestic violence extends beyond physical harm, often leading to psychological trauma, long-term health consequences and economic dependence (Muslim, 2024:13). Victims may suffer from depression,

anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), affecting their overall well-being and ability to participate fully in society.

In the Northern part of the country, child marriage remains a common event despite legal prohibitions, thus depriving these "young wives" their right to education, social inclusion and other associated rights. Incidents of rape are ever on the increase but such cases of sexual assault are underreported due to stigma and inadequate legal protection for victims.

Factors Accountable for Violation of Human Rights in Nigeria

Some factors can be regarded as being responsible for the flagrant violations of fundamental human rights in Nigeria. These factors include but are not limited to the following;

Illiteracy

Illiteracy, lack of information are major factors responsible for the unwanton and incorrigible perpetration of human rights abuses in Nigeria. Many Nigerians are uneducated and consequently unaware of their fundamental rights as citizens of the country. They therefore do not know when such rights are infringed upon or violated not to talk of seeking redress. This readily brings to mind Hosea 4:6 which says "my people perish due to lack of knowledge" (Holy Bible).

Lack of Adequate Training

Lack of adequate training and improper orientation contribute greatly to the misconduct of security agencies in Nigeria. Security agencies are poorly trained to manage civil unrest hence, there is violation of Human Rights and heavy casualties whenever they are involved. They are ill-trained, ill-equipped; ill-orientated, ill-paid and ill-motivated and have nothing but blatant disregard for human life.

Lack of diligent prosecution of violators

This factor also contributes to exacerbate Human Rights violations. However, more troubling is that perpetrators of rights violations are hardly or never held accountable or brought to justice due to the myriad of problems besetting the judicial institutions. Besides, there is an apparent lack of trust and confidence in the courts and general apathy towards the judicial processes amongst Nigerians as the civil remedies in law are rarely enforced. Furthermore, the criminal justice

system and the judiciary, generally perceived as dysfunctional, are ineffective in bringing security personnel and corporations involved in crimes and violation of rights to justice due to systemic and institutional corruption, lack of independence of the judiciary, political interference, and so on.

Poverty

Poverty is another reason for continual violations of Human Rights in the Nigerian society. As a result of the high level of legal representation, many people whose rights are violated hardly seek redress when they consider the cost of legal litigation.

Socio-cultural Factors

Violations of sexual rights hardly receive attention in Nigeria. Many victims of rape and sexual assaults decide against legal actions due to stigmatization and social ostracization.

The Effects of Human Rights Abuses in Nigeria

The prevalence of human rights abuses has no doubt impacted negatively on the country in various aspects. The unabridged cases of violations have led to a myriad of consequences on the citizens, governance and overall landscape of the country casting long shadow over its progress. These abuses—ranging from extrajudicial killings and unlawful detentions to gender-based violence and suppression of free speech—have significant implications for individuals and the nation at large.

One of the consequences of human rights violations in Nigeria is the mental and psychological toll on the citizens. Victims of violence, torture, and discrimination often suffer from long-term mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For instance, survivors of police brutality or ethnic violence frequently struggle with feelings of fear and helplessness, which can lead to social withdrawal and a diminished quality of life. In another vein, victims of insurgency grapple with displacement, loss of properties and other economic costs. In Northern Nigeria, the number of internally-displaced people is constantly on the rise with its attendant socio-economic effects such as disruption of agricultural activities and other activities

necessary for the well-being of the people. In recent times, disruption of agricultural activities in the North have led to serious food crisis on Nigeria and a soar in the prices of agricultural produce that are majorly produced in the North. Furthermore, vandalization also has its effects as not only will it disrupt commercial activities but also lead to the use of monies that can be used for infrastructural development to go into repairs.

Another notable impact of human rights violations in Nigeria is socio-political instability. Human rights abuses often undermine the foundations of democracy and governance. In Nigeria, reports of extrajudicial killings and police brutality, such as those highlighted during the #EndSARS protests, have eroded public trust in law enforcement agencies and government institutions. Citizens increasingly view the state as a source of oppression rather than protection. This distrust fuels civil unrest, as marginalized groups and disillusioned youth resort to protests or even violence to demand justice and accountability. Moreover, the suppression of free speech and the press has stifled democratic engagement. Activists, journalists, and ordinary citizens face harassment or imprisonment for expressing dissenting views. This atmosphere of fear discourages civic participation and weakens the mechanisms that hold leaders accountable. Over time, the lack of transparency and accountability leads to a culture of impunity, where public officials and security forces operate without fear of consequences.

The physical and mental health consequences of gender-based violence, including child marriage and sexual exploitation are far-reaching. The effects of gender-based violence includes economic inequality, depression, vulnerability to STDs etc. More over, it can be argued that girls who marry in childhood are at greater risk for intimate partner violence than girls of the same age who marry later. Tragically, child brides face higher risks of death in childbirth. Early pregnancy driven by child marriage also makes girls particularly vulnerable to pregnancy-related injuries such as obstetric fistula.

On the educational front, children of school age have had their academics halted as a result of conflicts by non-state actors such as Book Haram in the North. Reports suggests that many elementary and secondary academic institutions in the North have become non-operational due to constant attacks by

religious fundamentalists. The educationally displaced children contribute to the increasing number of Almajiris in the North and exacerbates the educational disparity between Northerners and Southerners whilst also been capable of contributing to increase in crime rate as an 'idle hand is the devil's workshop'. This is not only applicable in the Northern but in places where conflict-endangered human rights abuses is prevalent. The overarching consequence is that the 'leaders of tomorrow' become "wasted" before tomorrow.

On a broader scale, human rights abuses erode social cohesion and trust. Ethnic and religious violence, often fueled by discriminatory practices or government neglect, deepens societal divisions. Communities become fragmented, and the shared sense of national identity weakens. This disunity hampers collective efforts to address pressing challenges, such as poverty, education, and healthcare.

Nigeria's reputation on the global stage suffers due to persistent human rights abuses. International organizations and foreign governments frequently criticize Nigeria for its failure to uphold human rights. Subsequently, reduced foreign aid, strained diplomatic relations, reduction in direct foreign investment and reluctance of foreign investors to country affect the country's GDP and ultimately casts a dark shadow over the country's image in the comity of nations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Human rights violations in Nigeria are a complex and multifaceted issue, driven by both state and non-state actors. The Nigerian government's failure to uphold and protect basic human rights, coupled with the abuse of state powers, excessiveness of security agencies, violent actions of insurgent groups and the impact of systemic socio-economic challenges, paints a grim picture of the country. Addressing these violations requires comprehensive reforms, greater accountability for security forces, improved governance, and sustained efforts to tackle poverty and inequality. The international community also has a role in supporting Nigeria through diplomatic pressure and assistance aimed at human rights protection and socio-economic development. Finally, the government needs to make human rights protection its priority by ensuring that every Nigerian's

rights are protected and that perpetrators of rights breaches do not go unpunished.

Having explicated the abuse of fundamental rights of Nigeria as well as factors responsible for these violations, below are recommendations on how to mitigate the violations of fundamental human rights in Nigeria.

- Government and Non-governmental Organizations should make legal representation accessible for the common Nigerian. Human Rights agencies and civil societies can also volunteer and assist poor Nigerians in fighting for their rights.
- Sensitization sprees should be embarked on by the NHRC, civil societies and other stakeholders such as religious and traditional rulers to educate Nigerians on their fundamental human rights and channels of seeking redress whenever there is an infringement of their rights. Workshops, seminars, capacity-building trainings should be constantly organized for security agencies on humane ways of handling civil unrest and conflict resolutions. Security forces should be educated on the protection and promotion of Human Rights in Nigeria.
- Violators should be diligently prosecuted to act as a deterrent to others.
- Modalities should be put in place to enforce all laws that ensure the protection and promotion of Human Rights.
- Judicial bottlenecks and legal beauracracy that contribute to slow dispensation of justice and impede appropriate prosecution of violators should be removed by the government.
- Future research should focus on the effectiveness of implemented reforms and recommendations.

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