

The State in Conceptual and Theoretical Parlance: Reflection on Security Challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Adebiyi, Oluwashina Moruf

University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Oyekunle, Tajudeen Olufemi

University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract

The objectives of this article are in twofold. First, the article undertakes a critical conceptual and theoretical analysis of the state with focus on concept and the emergence of the state. Second, it assesses the performance of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis security issues in the Fourth Republic. Adopting the historical qualitative research design and through a critical examination of extant secondary data and the adoption of the social contract theory and the political economy approach as the theoretical framework of analysis it finds that the inability of the Nigerian state to provide adequate security for the lives and properties of its citizens is the major driving force of ethnoreligious cum socio-political conflicts. This has put the nation in the comity of fragile states. The study, however, concludes by suggesting that there is an urgent need on the part of the government to put in place adequate and effective security measures to stem violent conflicts in the polity.

Keywords

State, social contract, Niger-Delta, Boko Haram, herdsmen

Introduction

The State, since the emergence of political philosophy, has remained a major topic of discourse. Themes relating to the concept, origin, organization and responsibility of the state to its citizens have taken a prominent position in discourses pertaining to conceptual and theoretical foundations of the state. The writings of both classical and modern political philosophers have been largely dominated by issues relating to the state. The state in political theory and philosophy according to political philosophers is the basis of human co-existence. The notion that man is a social and political animal as espoused by Aristotle is premised on the fact that man is a political being and in essence finds it undesirable to live outside the ambit of the state. In this regard, being a man and living within the state are inseparable. It was further posited that a

Corresponding author:

Oluwashina Moruf Adebiyi, Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
Email: shinna7@gmail.com

man who is self-sufficient and who does not require the need to live within the state is either a beast or a god (Aristotle, 2000). This assertion demonstrates the indispensability of the state to the existence of Man. The indispensability of state to Man was further buttressed by Plato when he claimed that the state is a living organism and represents at a larger level of what the individual represents at a smaller level. Perceiving individual as an organ of the state, Plato sees the individual as not being able to survive without the state (Farooq, 2013).

The state by virtue of its functions is indispensable to human existence, particularly as it relates to safeguarding lives and properties. The basic essence of the state, however, is to provide the general framework for provision of public goods which ultimately promote public welfare particularly in the areas of security, access to basic needs including good health care services and sound social infrastructure. In states where these are not present there is popular dissatisfaction by the citizens with the government. Since returning to multi-party democracy in 1999 the Nigerian state has been bedevilled by a myriad of security challenges that can perhaps be described as potent threats to the peaceful co-existence of its people and unity.

Such threats and the attendant security challenges emanate from agitation for self-determination and resource control as exemplified in the Niger-Delta militancy, religious fundamentalism as typified by the Boko Haram insurgency particularly in the North-Eastern part of the country, the agitation of the separatist organisation as epitomised by the agitation for self-determination by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the herdsmen and farmers clashes in the North-Central geo-political zone of the country. The activities of the insurgents, the separatists' organisation and the incessant occurrence of violent clashes between farmers and herdsmen have indeed culminated into loss of lives and serious security challenges for the country thereby threatening the nation's existence as a united and sovereign nation. There is, therefore, an urgent need to find a lasting solution to such challenges facing security in the Nigerian state. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the state in conceptual and theoretical perspective vis-à-vis security issues in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

The objectives of this paper are in twofold. First, this paper undertakes a critical conceptual and theoretical analysis of the state with focus on concept and emergence of state. Second, it assesses the performance of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis security issues in the Fourth Republic. From the introduction, this paper proceeds to a conceptual exposition of the concept of state. This is followed by the section on theoretical explanation of the emergence of the modern state. Following this part is the section on the political economy of violent conflicts in Nigeria. The next section assesses the performance of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis some security issues in Nigeria. This is followed by an examination of government efforts at contacting the conflicts under review.

The last segment is the conclusion. Data for this paper was largely drawn from secondary sources and was analysed through the historical qualitative mode of analysis.

The State: Examining Conceptual Perspectives

The state in terms of conceptualisation in political theory is a complex phenomenon (Dusza, 1989). This cannot be unconnected with the fact that most definitions of the state are drawn from two distinct perspectives namely; the institutional and the functional perspectives. This implies that the state can be conceptualised from the perspective of what it looks like, institutionally and what it does, functionally (Mann, 1984). A combination of the two perspectives of the state can be found in the definition of the state as put forward by Weber (1968). The state according to Weber (1968) is a distinct set of institutions and personnel occupying a central position in which political power is exercised from a centre which covers a defined territorial space over which it possesses and exercises a monopoly of effective authoritative law making which is backed up by a monopoly of the use of physical force. Thus the state is seen as the only authority which is vested with the legitimate right to use physical force within a definite territory. The use of physical force by other bodies or individuals within the state can only be authorised by the state (Weber, 1968).

The above conceptualisation as espoused by Weber shows that the state is intricately linked with coercion or force to the extent that many believe that the state is essentially coercive in nature. Buttressing this assertion, Levine (1987) has noted that states are inevitably established on force because coercion is required to coordinate and regulate the behaviour of people. This notion was aptly supported by Guess (2001: 12) when he stated that 'state power is coercive power'. In another interpretation, Rawls (1996) argued that political power is coercive power made effective by government's use of sanctions which arise out of the fact that only the government can possess the authority to use force in achieving compliance with laws. This definition most especially that aspect which has to do with force and coercion as well as the interpretations has not gone without criticisms. Morris (2004) contends that situating state within the use of force and coercion is erroneous. He claims that such an assertion that without coercion a state is not conceivable is confusing and not realistic. In essence, therefore, state, coercion and force cannot be conceptually linked to one another.

The state has also been defined as "a community of persons, more or less numerous, permanently occupying a definite portion of territory, independent of or nearly so of external control and possessing an organised government to which the great body of inhabitants render habitual obedience" (Garner, 1952: 52). In a similar definition, Roberts (1979) suggests that a state is related to the presence of a supreme authority who exercises power over a definite territorial boundary and who is recognised as having the power to make laws and take

decisions related to government issues and has the capability of enforcing such laws and implementing such decisions and generally, maintain law and order within the state. The above definition bears semblance with that of Weber (1968) in the sense that they see the state as having the monopoly of power to force obedience to the state and its laws. In essence, the capacity to exercise coercive power is an important aspect of the state which is tested by the ability of the sovereign to exercise the authority of life and death over his subjects (Roberts, 1979). For the purpose of this paper, however, the state is seen as a collectivity of people who dwell in a particularly well-defined territory and whose affairs are overseen by a sovereign who derives his powers from the people he governs and whose main responsibilities include but are not limited to protecting the lives and properties of his subjects.

The Social Contract Theory and the Emergence of Modern State

One of the formidable theories for explaining the origin of modern state is the social contract theory. The social contract theory has been described by political philosophers as the foundation for the establishment of modern state and that it forms the basis for governance, order, security and justice. Though Plato and Aristotle mentioned social contract in their writings, the main proponents of the theory were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Levine, 2002). The social contract theory is premised on the fact that the infinite liberty that characterises the existence of man and the relationship among men in the state of nature where there is no government, rules, culture and tradition has a very high possibility of degenerating into a chaotic situation of war of all against all. Life under this situation is therefore, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short (Hobbes cited in McClelland, 1996).

The social contract theory proposes that men lived in a state of nature which is pre-social and pre-political essentially because it is not an organised society and Man's existence and relation was devoid of man-made rules and regulations. Therefore, man is perceived as self-centred and egoistic in nature, doing things to fulfil his self-esteem. This informs the antagonistic and competitive tendencies of man in the state of nature. This is a state of war, where justice and morality are absent. Jungle law is the order of the day and everyone is free to do whatever he or she desires thereby causing man to live in perpetual horror of violence and being killed. According to Hobbes the analysis of the state of nature can be summarised in the following: first, the state of nature is pre-social and pre-political. The life of man is competitive and miserable. Second, there is a constant war of man against every man and a perpetual skirmish of man against man. Third, the notion of law and justice is alien to man in the state of nature. What is obtained is jungle law in which might is right and where the fittest survive and where force plays a crucial role in the day-to-day dealings of man (Macpherson, 1962).

The basic assumption of the social contract theory however, is that men having unlimited wants and living under a condition in which there is no order and where life is not guaranteed come into an agreement by submitting part of his freedom to an authority or an assembly of men who in turn provides welfare and security for all. Under the contract the ruler and the ruled are saddled with certain roles and obligations to be performed in the interest of all. The social contract theory, in essence, is based on popular sovereignty in which the prime source of power and authority resides with the people (Baradat, 1984). The desire to come out of constant fear of death and organise a society in which lives and properties of men are secured is the driving force behind the social contract theory. The only means to achieve this is to establish a commonwealth which will have as its ultimate aim the promotion of peace and stability which is achievable by all men conferring their power on a man or an assembly of men who will hold such powers on their behalf. In this manner, the wills of men become a unified will signifying unity of all in one meaning a unity of every man with every man (Macpherson, 1962).

Much as the social contract theory offers a tenable explanation for the origin of modern states it has been criticised on the basis of some certain shortcomings. The social contract theory has been criticised for lacking documented evidence that can be used to prove that the state is the outcome of a contract. Also, the theory has been described as not being based on reality (Agarwal, 2011). These criticisms notwithstanding, the social contract theory offers a valuable insight into the ideal situation of the origin and basis of existence of the state. Apart from the fact that the theory gives valuable insights into the origin of the state, it shows the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. The theory, based on its assumptions stresses the idea of striving and eventually achieving common good for which serves as the basis for the existence of the state.

The Political Economy of Violent Conflicts in Nigeria

The various approaches to explaining violent conflicts in Nigeria are bound in literature. To some scholars conflicts in Nigeria are products of religious fundamentalism (Canci and Odukoya, 2016; Paden, 2015; Sodiq, 2009). Some are of the opinion that such violent conflicts are products of ethnic and identity politics (Adetula, 2005; Egwu, 2004). To others violent conflicts in Nigeria are orchestrated by the fierce contestation for resource control (Ovwasa, 2002; Ikelegbe, 2005). While these perspectives offers valuable insights into explaining occurrence of violent conflicts in Nigeria, it is important to note that the perspectives most especially the last two revolves around how the social structure of the society influences the distribution of wealth among various contending social groups (Onapajo and Isike, 2018). This brings to the fore the inter-connectivity between economy and politics which serves as valuable tool for explaining the occurrences of violent conflicts in Nigeria.

The political economy approach to violent conflicts in Nigeria offers valuable insight into materialist explanation of conflicts in Nigeria. This portends that the Niger-Delta conflict, the Boko Haram insurgency as well as the farmers-herdsmen conflicts are products of fierce struggle among various social groupings for power so as to secure and promote their identified political and economic interests. Onapajo and Isike (2018) argued in this regard that all other causal factors of such violent conflicts are moulded by the salience of political economy of the conflicts. Habu (2006) noted that central to the argument of political economy approach is that conflict is a phenomenon that is built in human societies according to how they are structured and organized. The approach focuses on internal and external forces that affect the structure and the way societies are organized to propose that conflict arises as a result of deep-rooted structural dysfunction. The author noted that radical political economist, Karl Marx, African revolutionaries such as Kwame Nkrumah as well as under development and dependency theorists such as Samir Amin have argued along the perspective of structural conflict in their analysis of imperialism, colonialism and Neo-colonialism in the context of the experience before, during and after independence of most African States (Habu, 2006).

The political economy approach for explaining violent conflicts in Nigeria suggests that society, economy and politics are organized in such a way that generates conflict (IFES, 2001). In essence, the causal factor of violent conflicts is the political economy of the state. At the centre of these conflicts however, are the ruling elites who manipulate such conflicts for their selfish and group interests (Matlosa, 2007). It was observed that the capture of state power at independence assured the new ruling elites enormous political power. Such power was translated into economic power through accumulation of wealth and in most instances, malfeasance by the ruling class. This access to state power, in the Nigerian context, is equivalent to a political license to rapid accumulation of wealth by fraudulent and foul means (Matlosa, 2007).

Accordingly, capital accumulation outside the ambit of the state is not guaranteed therefore, the elites manipulate existing social cleavages which most times lead to violent conflicts. The structure of the Nigerian state makes the stakes involved in politics and economy extremely high. Thus, the situation is such that for the ceaseless occurrence of conflicts among the various social and ethnic groups is for the political elites to be assured of a perpetual source of livelihood. Therefore, for conflicts not to occur among the groups is for them to become unemployed. In order to maintain or gain access to state wealth the political class instigates violent conflicts. Amuwo (1998) asserts that the Nigerian polity is driven more by a political economy of distribution than by one of rules and regime, institutions and identity. Within this context violent conflict is a medium of accumulating wealth.

The Nigerian State: Examining Performance vis-à-vis Security Issues in the Fourth Republic

Since returning to multi-party democracy in 1999 the Nigerian state has been enmeshed in various forms of violent conflicts which have threatened its existence as a united and strong nation. Such violent conflicts have generated serious security issues and challenges in the country. Notable among such violent conflicts are the Niger-delta militant insurgency in the South-South region, the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East and the farmers and herdsmen conflict presently raging in different parts of the country. Though, these conflicts are not new to the nation's political system, they have assumed an unprecedented dimension since the commencement of the Fourth Republic.

Violent conflicts in the Niger-Delta region and the ensuing security challenges are seen as manifestations of perceived exploitation and the paradox of "lacking in the midst of plenty". Akpan, Eric and Olofu-Adeoye (2013) noted that the existence of oil in the Niger-Delta region plays a paradoxical role on both the lives of the inhabitants and the development of the region. They contend that while the foreign oil firms and the Nigerian state enjoy the proceeds from oil exploration and exploitation, the communities and their inhabitants bear the adverse consequences of such oil exploitation and exploration. The consequences of oil activities in the area include: oil spillage, water and air pollution, gas flaring and other ecological tragedy (Akpan et.al., 2013).

To protest what they perceive as injustice and neglect militant groups in the Niger-delta region take up arms to register their grievance to the government. This has indeed generated serious security challenges in the region in particular and the nation in general. However, on the 29th of June 2009 the federal government in a non-confrontational effort to address the security challenges in the region proclaimed a 60-day unconditional amnesty period for militants in the Niger-Delta region. The terms of the amnesty programme centre on the willingness and readiness of the militants to surrender their arms and unconditionally renounce militancy and sign an undertaking to that effect. On its part, the government promised to establish programmes that will assist in disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and provision of reintegration assistance to the militants (Egwu, 2013). However, after the expiration of the period security challenges in the region still persist. This has raised the question of the government's ability to find a lasting solution to the security issues facing the region.

The Boko Haram insurgency that has ravaged the North-Eastern parts of the nation constitutes another security challenge in the Nigerian state. Though sectarian insurgency is not a new phenomenon in the Nigerian state, the Boko Haram insurgency has assumed a pre-eminent position in the sources of security challenges facing the nation as a whole and the North-East in particular in the Fourth Republic. Since the advent of Boko Haram insurgents in 2009 several lives has been lost while thousands of people have been

rendered homeless. It was claimed that between 2009 and 2017 more than 100,000 people have been killed while over 2,000,000 (two million) have been displaced (Tukur, 2017). The terror unleashed by the deadly Boko Haram insurgents on the Nigerian state have been so enormous that it has been compared to that of the Civil war.

The recent spate of killings orchestrated by the unending feud between Fulani herdsmen and farmers across the country is another potent source of challenges facing security of lives and properties of the people in Nigeria. The Fulani and farmers conflict remains one of the threats to the nation's stability. The herders and farmers conflict over pastoral land has assumed an unprecedented dimension in the Fourth Republic. The herdsmen and farmers conflict has resulted to loss of lives and homes of community farmers. Violent conflict between herdsmen and farmers in fourteen states across the country in the year 2017 claimed at least 549 deaths and rendered thousands homeless (Ameh, 2018). In a similar vein, it was noted by Amnesty International that between January and March 2018 the conflict claimed at least 168 lives (Ameh, 2018). The incessant killings and destruction of properties which occur as a result of herdsmen and farmers clashes appear to be more pronounced in Benue state. The killings in the state might have got to its prime when no fewer than 73 people were killed on the 1st of January, 2018 (Ameh, 2018). This attracted the attention of both international and local observers and was described as genocide.

The Niger-Delta conflict, the Boko Haram insurgency and the herdsmen and farmers' conflict have indeed constituted security challenges in the Nigerian state and have threatened the unity and peaceful co-existence of its people. While it is undeniable that government has taken some measures to solve these security challenges, their persistence suggests that the state has not been able to perform its primary role effectively most especially as it relates to securing lives and properties of its citizens. Despite the amnesty programme established to douse tension in the Niger-Delta region the spate of killings and kidnapping increases almost on daily basis. Similarly, after capturing the Sambisa forest and some towns which were formerly strongholds of the sect in the North-Eastern part of the country, the Nigerian Army claimed that the Boko Haram terrorist group has been defeated (Marama, 2018).

However, despite the claim that the group has been defeated, the recent spate of successful attacks suggests otherwise. After declaring that the sect has been defeated, the acclaimed leader of the sect Abubakar Shekau declared renewed war on the country. He urged his followers to engage in renewed abduction and killing (Toromade, 2017). Consequently, there has been increase in the rate of suicide bombings, attacks on mosque and churches and abduction by the sect. Furthermore, the persistent killing as a result of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen suggests that there is no end in sight. The inability of the government to find a lasting solution to these security

challenges indicates that the Nigerian state has not kept to terms of contract with its citizens to protect and secure their lives. Such inability of the state to perform its primary role of securing the lives and properties of its citizens has given rise to the loss of confidence on the part of the citizens in the state to secure their lives. Reacting to the 1st January 2018 attack in Benue state, a leader of the Tiv nation and the former Chairman of the Northern Elders Forum, Professor Paul Unongo said “if the Federal Government can’t protect us we will raise an army” (Adetayo, Charles, Tyopuusu & Muhammed, 2018).

This implies that the people of the state will take-up the responsibility of protecting their lives and properties, a role that is the primary responsibility of the state. It has however, been noted that one of the prominent features of the Nigeria’s Fourth Republic is the poor and inadequate response to threats to security of lives and properties of the people by the government (Leme, 2018). While ethno-religious conflicts and violent agitations for resource control persist in the polity, it is believed by many that the state is not adequately performing its role in terms of responding immediately to such conflicts with a view to curtailing them. The situation is worsened by the inability of the state to bring the culprits of violent attacks to book. Thus, the ability of the Nigerian state to protect the lives and properties of its citizens has come under intense criticism. Such criticism centres on the failure of the state to keep to the terms of the contract with the people as regards the provision of adequate security for their lives and properties. Section 14(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigerian states that: “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Based on this section of the Constitution it can be affirmed that a state that is not able to secure the lives and properties of its people to a reasonably adequate extent is a failed state (Nwabueze, 2018).

Rotberg (2003) has suggested that the government of a state which fails to provide adequate security and basic necessities for enhancing the general welfare of its citizens loses its legitimacy. In essence, the citizens perceive the state as incapable of performing its primary role. Therefore, the state in their perception becomes illegitimate. Such states are described as highly heterogeneous and are divided along religious and ethnic lines and are highly characterised by intra and inter-communal conflicts which usually manifest in violent clashes. In such states, there is low capacity to provide public goods, there is infrastructural decay, inadequate provision of basic social amenities and the government’s inability to adequately safeguard and protect the lives and properties of the citizens through effective control of communal conflicts. Such states are governed through electoral authoritarianism and may be described as weak states (Rotberg, 2003). The above description gives a vivid picture of the Nigerian context. While the Nigerian state cannot be regarded as a failed state, it exhibits the features of a failed or weak state (Fund for Peace, 2017). According to the Fund for Peace (2017) Nigeria is ranked 13th out of

178 countries in the Fragile State Index. Nigeria's poor position in the index is derivable from social, economic and political indicia.

Elements of social indicators are: civil disorders caused by ethnic, racial or religious conflicts, Incidence of massive movement of refugees and internally displaced persons, chronic and sustained human flight and demographic pressures resulting from drought and crop failure. Elements of economic indicators include but are not limited to the following: uneven economic development, severe economic decline as measured by a progressive economic decline of the society as a whole using per capita income. Political indicators includes: endemic corruption or profiteering by ruling elites and resistance to transparency, accountability and free election, widespread loss of popular confidence in state institutions and processes; progressive deterioration of public services particularly basic state functions that serve the people, including failure to protect citizens from terrorism and violence and to provide essential services, such as health, education, sanitation, public transportation and widespread violation of human rights (Fund for Peace, 2017). The presence of some of these factors in the Nigerian state suggests that government has reneged on its responsibility of guaranteeing adequate provision for the welfare of the people essentially as it relates to ensuring adequate security for lives and properties of the people. This has turned the state into a nation on the brink of collapsing into a failed state.

State Efforts at Curtailing the Conflicts and their Impact

Efforts at containing violent conflicts in Nigeria predates the independence period. For instance, efforts have been made by the colonial government to put an end to the Niger-Delta conflict prior to 1960. The colonial government in its efforts to finding a lasting solution to the conflict set up the Willinks Commission to look into the problems of the Niger-Delta. The Commission however, confirmed the neglect of the area and recommended among others solutions, the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB). The board could not achieve its aim chiefly because of the proximity of the Headquarters of the board to the problem area. The headquarters was located in Lagos (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017). Following this was the establishment of the Niger Delta River Basin Authority (NDRBA) in 1967. Despite the failure of the NDDDB and the NDRBA to solve the challenges of the area, the Federal Government in its resolve to find a lasting solution to the challenges established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). The OMPADEC lasted from 1992 to 1999. According to Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2017) the Commission also failed due to corruption, political interference and official profligacy.

After the demise of OMPADEC, the Niger Delta Development Commission was created in year 2000 to find a lasting solution to the socio-

economic challenges of the region and “to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful” (Niger Delta Development Commission, 2000: 103). Other efforts at curtailing the conflict in the region were the creation of the Task Force on Pipeline Vandalisation in 2000 operated by the Nigerian Police Force and the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) and the creation of similar task force operated by the navy, army and State Security Service (SSS) in various states of the Niger Delta (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017).

Having observed that the use of force by the joint task force was not helping matters, the federal government under the leadership of President Umar Musa Yar’Adua on the 25th of May, 2009 inaugurated the Amnesty Programme which was aimed at ensuring peace, security, growth and development of the community (Ikelegbe, 2010). The programme was an outcome of report by the Niger Delta Technical Committee (NDTC) constituted in 2008 by the Federal Government. The amnesty programme is all about granting of national and unconditional pardon to all armed militants in the Niger-delta region and who in turn were expected to surrender their arms and ammunitions, sign a pact not to return to militant activities and sign the military re-unification form (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017).

The federal government has also put in place mechanisms to curb the Boko Haram insurgency Nigeria. Adedire, Ake and Olowojolu (2016) has noted that one of the major efforts at combating Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria was the use of naked military force as exemplified in the deployment of over 8,000 soldiers of the Nigeria army to the troubled spots of the North-eastern part of Nigeria. In addition to this is the deployment of specially trained anti-terrorism combat squad to the troubled spots top neutralise the potency of the terrorist groups prowess. Again, there is the government encouragement of public and media provision of intelligence report on moves by individual’s suspected to be Boko Haram members (Adedire *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, on assumption of office in May 29, 2015 President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the reconnaissance and advance team for the establishment of Military Command and Control Centre (MCCC) for Operation Zaman Lafiya for the fight against terrorism and insurgency be moved to Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state which is one of the troubled areas in North-East Nigeria. The Centre is an elaborate part of the Army Headquarters Command and Control arrangement where fight against terrorism and insurgency would be monitored, coordinated and controlled from this centre (Marama, 2015). Such efforts were also put in place to mitigate farmers-herders conflicts particularly in the North-Central zone of the country. Also worthy of note in this regard is the creation of ranches across the nation for grazing.

It is however, important to note that while the federal government has put in efforts at curbing or mitigating violent conflicts in Nigeria such efforts have

in reality have not led to the total eradication of such conflicts. Despite several efforts at curbing the Niger-Delta militancy peace seems to be elusive in the region. This has however, been attributed to the adherence to the 13% derivation principle (Akintunde and Hile, 2016). Also, the deployment of brute military force was criticised for not having a well-defined military code of justice for operation. Again, the instruction from the federal government as regards the creation of ranches herders have met with stiff resistance from state governments most essentially in the southern part of the country. Such defects in the efforts by the federal government have served as stumbling blocks in efforts at curbing ethno-religious and economic conflict in the country.

Conclusion

The theoretical underpinning of the state as regards the existence and responsibilities of the state to its citizens is basically to provide adequate security for the protection of the lives and properties of its people and ensure adequate welfare for their general wellbeing. Where this is adequately provided government of such state enjoys unfettered support from the citizens and as such are seen as legitimate. The reverse however, is the case in states where the lives of people are under constant threat by violent conflicts, the properties of the people are not safe and where there is penchant disregard for fundamental human rights of the people. Such state loses its legitimacy and thus lacks the support of the people. The Nigerian state since the beginning of the Fourth Republic has been a hotbed of high level socio-political and ethno religious conflicts such as the Niger-Delta militant insurgency, the Boko Haram terrorist group and the herdsmen-farmers violent conflict. These socio-political cum ethno-religious conflicts have led to several thousands of deaths and have rendered several thousands homeless. It is however, contended that the inability of the state to provide adequate security for the lives and properties of the people is the major driver of the conflicts. It is therefore, required that urgent and adequate security measures need to be put in place so as to curtail and curb socio-political cum ethno-religious conflicts in order to secure the lives as well as the properties and guarantee adequate welfare for the entire citizens of the Nigerian state.

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