A HERMENEUTIC OF LUTHER'S PRINCIPLE OF NONVIOLENCE VIS-À-VIS THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Charles C. Ugwu & Charles C. Nweke*
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v17i1.6

Abstract
Security of lives and property is a fundamental obligation the State owes her citizen. States are aware of this responsibility but sometimes renege against it or even take actions that result in insecurity. The citizens are also aware of this responsibility of the State. More importantly, they are aware that it is part of their civic duties to ensure the security of lives and property within the State. However, at times due to forces like poverty, unemployment, bad government policies, etc, citizens themselves indulge in activities that undermine the security of their country. They resort to violence as means of venting their frustration at their leaders. The result is anarchy, social, political and economic collapse. This article studies Martin Luther King Jr's principle of nonviolence. It identifies racism, poverty, and militarism, factors Luther described as the "Triple Evils that form violence," as the predisposing factors catalyzing insecurity in Nigeria. It interprets the forces behind the insecurity challenges in Nigeria in the light of Luther's postulations and posits Luther's six principles of nonviolence as the path toward resolving the mounting security challenges in Nigeria. The article concludes that Nigerian State actors must favour dialogue against the use of excessive military might while dealing with internal security situations, provide employment and food security, and ensure regional equality and justice for all citizens at all times; if the country is to surmount her rising insecurity crises.

Keywords: Equality, Justice, Nonviolence, Poverty, Security, Violence

Introduction
That Nigeria has manifold potentials for greatness- especially with its large population made up of a dynamic work force, a growing

economy, abundant natural resources, diverse raw materials, huge oil deposits and a reservoir of intellectuals- is not debatable. In spite of these indices for greatness, "Nigeria still remains a developing country struggling most frantically to find her feet among the comity of nations due to the prevailing insurgence and insecurity, among other factors, that have continued to pose as a challenge to its development and growth."[1] Nigeria is passing through turbulent and trying times as echoes of not just insurgency but criminality have marred its fledgling democracy. Crimes such as militancy, kidnapping, ritual killing, armed robbery, assassinations, destruction of public and private property and lack of relative peace appear to be on the increase in Nigeria. Arguably, "The security crisis that has presently engulfed the country is traceable to the aftermath of the Nigeria civil war and the adventure of the military into governance which necessitated the importation and use of arms and ammunitions."[2] Ewetan and Urhie avers that not long after the civil war, these arms that found their way into the hands of civilians and ex-military men, were now used to carry out criminal activities. Besides the proliferation and free flow of arms, many people lost their jobs as a result of the war and needed to survive to survive, they resorted to criminal activities.[3]

Consequently, an anomaly like kidnapping became prominent in the 1990s and was used by the Niger Delta militants as a means to protest the exploitation and environmental degradation of their community in the late 1980s, through 1990s to early 2000s. The Niger Delta region which is the source of Nigeria's wealth, regrettably suffers from a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. The agitation and disenchantment of the marginalized youths led to the emergence of various militant groups that were in involved in not just kidnapping but bombing of oil installations. These resulted to security crisis which the Federal government between May 2007 and May 2015 battled to bring under control.[4]

Today, the entire nation is brawled in various types and different degrees of insecurity issues. In the North Central Zone, insecurity presents itself mostly in the form of herder-farmer clashes. In Plateau and Benue States particularly, conflict between the Hausa-Fulani and the Birom, Idoma and Tiv peoples has left hundreds of people dead; properties, livestock and plants worth

billions of Naira have been destroyed. A lot of persons have also been either permanently or temporally displaced by the recurrent disturbances. In the North-East and North-West zones, insecurity rears itself ugly head in the mold of terrorism orchestrated by adherents of *Boko Haram* and ISWAP (Islamic State's West African Province). Banditry and kidnap has also been taken to an unprecedented level in these zones. The present trend is mass kidnap of students and unsuspecting travelers. The security apparatus of the country seems dazed or even suffocated by the challenges posed by these terrorists.

In the South-East and even South-West, insecurity presents as secessionist struggles. The agitation for a Biafra State in the South-East and Oduduwa Republic in the South-West led by Nnamdi Kanu's IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) and Sunday Igboho's gang, respectively, is currently a great security concern for the nation. The agitation became worse under the radar of President Muhammad Buhari due to the perceived marginalization and lopsided leadership style assumed by his administration. Effort is made in this article to interpret and apply Luther's principle of nonviolence to resolving the myriad of internal insecurity issues perplexing Nigeria. The insecurity challenges in Nigeria maybe classified into three major divisions: insecurity and violence arising from criminal activities; insecurity and violence arising from ethnic-nationalist (separatist) agitation; and terrorism and banditry. This article is specifically concerned with the first two divisions of insecurity. The effort made here, therefore, is restricted to interpreting and applying Luther's principles to resolving insecurity issues related only to criminal activities and separatist movements/agitations in Nigeria. These issues are purely internal and nationalistic. They do not result from the actions of sworn enemies of the Nigerian State; persons (like terrorists/bandits) who have declared war against Nigeria and have sworn to use every means to subdue Federal Might and lay claims to Nigeria's territorial integrity.

Instantiations of Insecurity in Nigeria

As already indicated above, Nigeria is perplexed at all corners by different kinds of insecurity problems such as secessionists

agitations, banditry, kidnap, terrorism, Fulani/herders and farmer's clashes, rape, armed robbery, vandalism, arson, etc. These instantiations of insecurity may be classified into three broad headings, the first two are suggested by Omotoye Olorode;[5]

- Insecurity and violence arising from criminal activities
- Insecurity and violence arising from ethnic-nationalist (separatist) agitation.
- Terrorism and banditry

Insecurity and Violence Arising from Criminal Activities

Under this classification of insecurity are criminal activities such as robbery cultism, gang wars, rape, kidnapping, etc that arise largely from conditions that breed *parasitism* in society such as lack of adequate education, lack of appropriate jobs, lack of social security generally and absence of appropriate cultural facilities that generate and maintain solidarity in society.[6] Clearly, this category of insecurity is also directly related to parasitism on society by members of the ruling class such as stealing of public funds and general corruptive practices that deprive the public of the use of public resources for the provision of appropriate social security facilities that will obviate the parasitism among the oppressed classes as described earlier on.[7] Consequently, a ruling class that is an essential parasite on society is as much a security risk to that society as poor people who have been forced into robbery, kidnapping, and various other criminal acts. Generally speaking, the violence relating to criminal activities have random, rather than, specific targets. It does not, therefore, necessarily have any political undertone or goal.

Insecurity and Violence Arising from Ethnic-Nationalist (Separatist) Agitation

Ethnic-nationalist or separatist agitation arise from actual oppression or from perceived marginalization or simple belief that life will be better in a separate sovereign territory of the nationality agitating for such separate State. This tendency, in Nigeria varies from violent agitation for separate local governments or states to agitations for

what is described as fiscal federalism, confederacy, or complete secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. At different points organizations like OPC (Oodua People's Congress), MASSOB (Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra), IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) have pushed separatist agendas, sometimes resorting to actual violence or threats of violence. Between 1999 and 2019, some of these organizations were characterized by Nigeria as "terrorist" organizations; notable mention here is the proscription of IPOB by the Buhari administration. At the height of the separatist agitation in the Niger Delta, the United States suggested sending intervention force to Niger Delta and the leaders of some of the organizations (like OPC, Ijaw Youth Council, Arewa Youth Council, Supreme Egbesu Assembly, and MASSOB) were detained for treasonable felony.[8]

These ethnic-nationalist organizations comprise members that are largely economically deprived, unemployed or marginally-employed, frustrated young people who are disgruntled with inequalities in the Nigerian society. The organizations are therefore largely working class and lumpen-proletariat movements. However, the separatist ideology or fundamentalism of the movements are derived from, and are often articulated by figures from the ruling class and political and intellectual elements of socio-cultural organizations like Afenifere, Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo etc. These figure-heads use the mutual threats of the militant youth organizations to bargain at the level of the elite while keeping safe distance from the more violent methods of some of these militant movements.[9]

Terrorism and Banditry

A third layer of insecurity, perhaps the most gruesome, has its locus in Nigeria's North-West and North-East and it involves Islamist militant groups- Boko Haram and ISWAP, and perhaps Fulani herders. Since early 2019, state governors in the North-West have warned of an uptick in the infiltration of jihadists linked to the original Boko Haram insurgency that erupted in North-Eastern Nigeria in 2009.[10] In June 2019, the theatre commander of the military's Operation Hadarin Daji, Major General Jide Ogunlade, said: "Jihadists and terrorists have now infiltrated the ranks of

bandits that are operating in the bushes of Zamfara" and "banditry is now heading toward terrorism."[11]

Many Nigerian security and other independent local sources interviewed by *Crisis Group* corroborate that amid the breakdown of stability in Zamfara and elsewhere, two Boko Haram offshoots are making inroads into the region, where they are forging tighter relationships with aggrieved communities, herder-affiliated armed groups and criminal gangs.[12] The first is Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan (or the Group of Partisans for Muslims in Black Africa), better known as Ansaru, an al-Qaeda linked group that declared itself independent from Boko Haram in 2012 and was operating in North-Western Nigeria until it was largely dismantled by security forces by 2016. Now it seems to be making a comeback.[13] Secondly, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) – another splinter of Boko Haram in Nigeria's North-East zone – has forged links to communities in the North-Western region on the border with Niger, which is separately in the throes of fighting its own local Islamic State insurgency. These terrorists groups have wrecked immeasurable havoc to the Nigeria at all fronts.

Overview of Martin Luther King Jr's Principle of Nonviolence

According to King, nonviolence is a powerful demand for reason and justice.[14]Luther developed his principle of nonviolence based on six fundamental principles. First, Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is active nonviolent resistance to evil. It is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally. He notes, "It must be emphasized that nonviolence resistance is not a method for cowards; it does not resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly nonviolent...."[15] The second principle states that Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding. The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation. That is, the purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the "Beloved Community". Luther notes:

> [Nonviolence] does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win his

> friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through non-cooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent, the end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.[16]

The third principle is that Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice not people. Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people. The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil not people. Thus, the nonviolence method is that in which the attack is directed against the forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is the evil that the nonviolent resister seeks to defeat, not the persons victimized by evil. If he is opposing a racial injustice, the nonviolent resister has the vision to see that the basic tension is not between races.[17] The fourth principle of nonviolent resistance is that Nonviolence that suffering can educate and transform. Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation. Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities. King was vehement on this when he said that it is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back. He notes, "Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood."[18] The fifth principle is founded on love. Luther notes that nonviolence chooses love instead of hate. Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative. The sixth principle of nonviolent resistance is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. According to Luther nonviolence is founded on the conviction that God is a God of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the

nonviolent resister can accept suffering without retaliation, for he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship.[19]

Luther's Triple Evils that Form Violence: Predispositions to Insecurity in Nigeria

Martin Luther King described poverty, racism and militarism as the triple evils of violence. According to him, they are interrelated, all-inclusive, and stand as barriers to our living in the beloved community. In a speech titled "America's Chief Moral Dilemma," Martin Luther King posits:

> Three major evils- the evil of racism, the evil of poverty, and the evil of war; these are the three things that I want to deal with today. Now let us turn first to the evil of racism. There can be no gainsaying of the fact that racism is still alive all over America. Racial injustice is still the Negro's burden and America's shame…. The second evil that I want to deal with is the evil of poverty. Like a monstrous octopus it spreads into cities and hamlets and villages all over our nation. Some forty million of our brothers and sisters are poverty stricken, unable to gain the basic necessities of life. And so often we allow them to become invisible because our society's so affluent that we don't see the poor... Now there is nothing new about poverty. It's been with us for years and centuries. What is new at this point though, is that we now have the resources, we now have the skills, we now have the techniques to get rid of poverty. And the question is whether our nation has the will… Now I want to deal with the third evil that constitutes the dilemma of our nation and the world. And that is the evil of war. Somehow, these evils three evils are tied together. The triple evils of racism,

> economic exploitation [poverty], and militarism [war]…. We have greatly strengthened the forces of reaction in America, and excited violence and hatred among our own people. We have diverted attention from civil rights….[20]

The above excerpt is quite long but it is necessary for proper analytical demonstration of the nexus between the political, social and economic condition of America at the time of Luther and that of present day Nigeria. Remarkably Martin Luther King identified three factors- Racism, poverty and militarism as predisposing factors enabling violence in America. These same factors are also important to understanding violence and insecurity in Nigeria. Aliyu Muktar Katsina rightly affirms that poverty, inequality and mass unemployment are factors behind the fundamental security threats which have engender insecurity in Nigeria today.[21]

Contemporary Instantiations of the Triple Evils in Nigeria
Segregation

Martin Luther King talks about racism as a predisposing factor to violence in America. Racism is not properly so called a social vice evident in Nigeria. However, features of ethnic segregation contained in the critical social, economic and political concerns which he complained about in his discourse on racism are common within the Nigerian context; and these have, to a very large extent, aggravated the crisis of insecurity in Nigeria. In contemporary Nigeria, this is manifested in the form of ethnic conflicts, ethnic and identity politics, all forms of inequality and disregard for the federal character principle in the appointment of public office holders and distribution of public goods to the different regions that make up the country. Segregation emphasizes inequality- some are more equal than others. Martin Luther King echoes this viewpoint when he averred that: The fact is that there has never been any single, solid, determined commitment on the part of the vast majority of White Americans to genuine equality for Negroes.

In Nigeria, the nature of the economy order entrenches inequality. The economy is primarily export oriented, oil producing,

and one based on royalty collection. Because of this, a wide gulf exists between a tiny minority who have access to the oil revenues and the majority of Nigerians who continue to wallow in abject poverty. Consequently, together with a huge percentage of Nigerians that is excluded almost completely from enjoying the benefits accruing from oil wealth, resentment and anger is building among the economically excluded groups. Muller and Seligson argue that a high level of income inequality in a country increases the possibility of violence against the State for at least two reasons. The number of alienated persons in the society that can easily mobilize is great. And two, it is possible for the groups that emerge out of this frustration to establish alliances with others sharing same values.[22] In today's Nigeria, the result of this is the emergence of many militant anti-State groups such as Boko-Haram and Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Poverty

In the Nigerian scenario, poverty may be described as a purposive tool employed by the elites to perpetuate their control and enslavement of the hungry and helpless masses. The situation of present day Nigeria with regards to the humongous poverty among the masses is quite similar to the situation at the time of Martin Luther King. King himself seemed to have suggested also that poverty is tool of enslavement in the hands of the mighty in the society. He notes: "Now there is nothing new about poverty. It's been with us for years and centuries. What is new at this point though, is that we now have the resources, we now have the skills, we now have the techniques to get rid of poverty. And the question is whether our nation has the will…" Martin Luther King suggests that with the right political will the leaders of America had everything needed to raise the standard of the underprivileged races amongst the Americans. However, the leaders seem to be enjoying the sufferings of this caliber of Americans; hence instead of fronting policies to ameliorate their plight, they go about promulgating laws that aggravate the already bad condition of the less privileged classes. This is not far from the narrative in present day Nigeria.

Otherwise, how else can one explain the epidemic poverty in Nigeria in the midst of an abundance of human and material resources?

What Martin Luther King identified as poverty is manifested in Nigeria in the form of unemployment, homelessness, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, infant mortality, etc. A study titled *Growth, Inequality and Poverty in Nigeria* (2008) prepared for the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA) by Prof. Aigbakon, points that poverty level increased in Nigeria from 27.2% in 1980 to 65.6% in 1996, an increase of about 141.2%. In absolute terms, the reports observe that the number of the poor rose from 67 million in 1996 to 68.7 million in 2004, with the urban poor increasing to about 40% and the rural poor to about 60%. By 2010, it is believed that about 70% of Nigerians live under $1 per day, no less than 92% of the total population live on less than $2 per day.[23] The situation is even worse since the inception of the Buhari administration and the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic. A good chunk of the economic policies of the administration is considered to have targeted at worsening the plight of the masses; there has been rapid increment of pump price of petroleum products, electricity charges, bank charges, taxation, etc.

The figures from the studies presented above (note 6) generally represent the level of poverty in Nigeria, but in reality, do not capture its depths. Its depth can best be seen from the thousands of urban slums that criss-crossed the country in which millions live in infested conditions without access to sanitary facilities, drinking water, medical care or affordable education for their children. So deplorable is the condition in terms of shelter for example, a whole family of ten or more lives cramped in a single room without ever hoping to escape from the clutches of abject poverty. The streets of urban areas provide another mirror that captures the depth of poverty in Nigeria. On these streets, children of school age hawk, young women prostitute, young men peddle drugs and tout in motor-parks, and the aged and physically challenged beg for sustenance.

The question to ask at this stage is just how dangerous are these figures to Nigeria's stability, peace, and progress? And how does poverty explain insecurity? The answers to these questions are evident in the increase in crime rate in Nigeria. Many hungry and unemployed youths take to armed robbery, kidnap, cultism as ways

of providing for their basic needs. Some end up in the hands of opportunistic individuals like terrorists, militants and agitators who use them to perpetuate and perpetrate their self-objectives. This thus confirms Martin Luther King's submission that poverty is a predisposition to violence and insecurity.

Militarism

Martin Luther King sees militarism, as sometimes arising from the inability of the State to fulfill her obligation to her citizens. He notes: "We have greatly strengthened the forces of reaction in America, and excited violence and hatred among our own people. We have diverted attention from civil rights…. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."[24] What Martin Luther King points at by enlisting militarism as one of the trifles of violence and insecurity manifests in Nigeria as unnecessary show of military might, unnecessary use of force by the government against civilians, media violence, abuse of political power and authority by elected public officers, etc. King objects to incessant use of force, especially by the State, to tackle issues that can be resolved by dialogue or any other friendly means. King's position is that such approach can make the citizen view the State as an enemy and take up arms in self-defense against the State, leading to full blown war.

This captures, in many ways, the situation in Nigeria. Poor handling of dissenting voices or cries of marginalization or even clamours for good governance by the government has led to the rise of grave insecurity crises in Nigeria. In Nigeria political agitations, social movements or even peaceful protests are often viewed by the government as threats or slight to the State authority (even in the present democratic dispensation). The Civil War of 1967-1970 arose due to unnecessary show of federal might by the Government where dialogue was necessary. Unnecessary military attack and ban of the Shiite Muslim group founded by Ibrahim Zakzaky led to the loss of many lives in Kaduna in 2015. Today, the growing insecurity concerns in the state may not be unconnected to Government's poor handling of the group. The same unnecessary show of military might turn Boko Haram into the thorn it has become in the flesh of the

Nigerian State. Abu-Bakarr Jalloh affirms, while reacting to the ban of Shiite group, that: "Mondays ban has raised fears that the IMN [Islamic Movement of Nigeria, also Called Shiite] could go underground, providing a potentially serious security challenge for a government already dealing the threat posed by Muslim militant groups Boko Haram in the countries northeast [now terrorizing North-West also]. Civil society has called on the government not to repeat its past mistake."[25] The Nigerian State made the same mistake while dealing the agitation in the Niger Delta. That also led to the rise of more than one militant group in the area leading to serious security issues and clashes with Nigerian military that lasted for about two decades. Today the same mistake is being made in handling the IPOB and the gang led by Sunday Igboho. The unnecessary militarization of the ENDSARS protests and the almost nationwide damages and tension it cost the federation is not left out. These are specific proofs that Martin Luther King Jr. was perfectly right with his avowal that militarism can foment serious security concerns in the State.

King's Fundamental Principles: Path to Resolving Insecurity in Nigeria

Martin Luther King Jr. propounded an elaborate doctrine of nonviolence. This doctrine is broken into six fundamental principles. Effort is made to interpret and apply them to resolving the insecurity challenges faced by Nigeria arising from disturbances due to criminal activities and separatist agitations.

Nonviolence is a Way of Life for Courageous People

Here Martin Luther King described his doctrine as an active nonviolent resistance. It is not a display of weakness or an action taken in despair as a last option. It is rather an attitude of mind; a way of life; a procedure taking based on personal conviction even when the aggressor is at the mercy of the State or vice versa. Nonviolence, for King, is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally. This principle has grave implications for battling insecurity in Nigeria. The State as a machinery of governance in Nigeria is aware of the values and benefits of nonviolence approach to conflict resolution. It does appear however that the government

sees nonviolence as a display of weakness. The leaders do not see the spiritual, mental and emotional perspective to nonviolence; and hence, they fail to understand the psychological and emotional damages military might (show of force) causes when it is used to resolve disagreement between the State and her own citizens. This is why, as has been the characteristic of the Buhari administration and some before him, once there is report of the slightest civil disturbance (including mere peaceful protests), heavily armed soldiers and policemen are drafted in. Often, this results to abuse of the fundamental human rights of the citizens.

In Nigeria, the State is never proactive when it comes to handling issues bordering on insecurity. Nonviolence demands pro-activism. The option for nonviolence resolutions shouldn't be a last resort informed by despair. This is often the case with the Nigerian State. The government, most times, resort to dialogue or other means of nonviolence only when the State is in a helpless situation; when military might has proven insufficient. However, at this stage the malice between the State and those the government considers as aggressors has grown almost beyond repair. This was exactly what transpired between the Niger Delta militants and the Federal Government. The government applied military might when it was supposed to listen to the demands of her citizens; she began to seek dialogue when grave damages and malice have already been incurred. The federal government did the same in her dealings with IPOB and even the now volatile and very aggressive Boko Haram.

When nonviolence is applied psychologically, spiritually and emotional, and used as proactive measures; the State is salvaged from unnecessary use of military might against her citizens. Government is then seen by the citizen as a loving father ready to listen to the needs of his children. This engenders love for the nation and nourishes the spirit of patriotism.

Nonviolence seeks to win Friendship and Understanding

Martin Luther King noted that the end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation. The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the "Beloved Community". The 'Beloved Community' was a term that was first coined by the philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce in the early days of the 20th century.[26] He is the founder of a

renowned nonviolence promoting group called 'Fellowship of Reconciliation'. However, it was King Jr. (a member of the Fellowship) who popularized the term and invested it with a deeper meaning which has captured the imagination of people of goodwill all over the world.[27] For Luther, the Beloved Community was not a lofty utopian goal to be confused with the rapturous image of the peaceful kingdom promised in heaven. The Beloved Community was for him a realistic achievable goal that could be attained by a critical mass of people committed to and trained in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence.[28] This Community envisaged by Martin Luther King is not devoid of interpersonal, group or international conflict. Instead, he recognized that conflict was inevitable to human existence. But he believed that conflicts could be resolved peacefully and adversaries reconciled through a mutual, determined commitment to nonviolence.[29] No conflict, King argues should erupt into violence. And all conflicts in the community should end with reconciliation of adversaries cooperating together in a spirit of friendship and goodwill.[30]

Is Nigeria a beloved community in the mold offered by King? Has disagreement between the State and aggrieved elements within Nigeria ended in reconciliation where adversaries cooperate together in a spirit of friendship and goodwill? The answer to these questions is no. Today, almost sixty-one years after the civil war, the Igbo of the South-East Nigeria have not been fully reintegrated into Nigeria. The Igbo race continues to face enormous political and economic challenges since the instigated and imposed civil war. A plain glance at the economic and political development in Nigeria may be considered normal in terms of where the Igbo people stand politically, especially economically when compared to other ethnic nationalities given the industry of the average Igbo. Indeed a cursory look at the poverty level among the ethnic groups would make the Igbo race appear exceptionally successful.[31]

The Igbo people in reality experience an overwhelming level of disadvantages based on public policies that seemed crafted to undermine their ability to maximize political and economic potentials. In terms, of state creation, the region has less State than all other regions in the Federation; and this is not only an impediment politically; it impacts the economic potentials of the

Igbo people negatively.[32] Such policies as the failure to rehabilitate the Biafra land after the war; the 20 pounds flat refund to any Biafran who wished to convert the old currency, or deposits with banks prior to the war; the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972, also known as Indigenization Decree, Federal Character Principle, manipulated population census, creation of states and local government areas in favor of the Northern Nigeria, deliberate underuse of seaports within the Igbo axis, glaring infrastructural decay, etc are indicative of the fact that the Igbo is still perceived as an enemy in his own country.

This situation is not common to the Igbo people alone. The Niger Delta region is also a victim of the failure of the Federal Government to properly reintegrate and reconcile a part of the State after damages suffered due to excessive use of military might.

Nonviolence Seeks to Defeat Injustice, not People

Martin Luther King posits that Nonviolence recognizes that evil doers are also victims and are not evil people. The non-violence resister seeks to defeat evil, not people.[33] Adherence to this principle by the State machinery in Nigeria is critical to the attainment of the goals of national integration. Unlike the proposition Luther stated in this principle, State forces in Nigeria often treat perceived criminals worse than the crime they are alleged to have committed even before they are declared guilty by law. This has a way of turning the citizens against the State; consider the destructive attack of police formations in Nigeria by unknown gunmen. But King admonished that even when the individual is found guilty, the target, while punishing such offences, should be to defeat evil, eradicate injustice, not to destroy or harm the assailant or culprit. The enforcers of law in Nigeria, the police, military and paramilitary and the government have a lot to learn from this principle.

Nonviolence holds that Suffering for a Cause can Educate and Transform People and Society

Martin Luther King avers that nonviolence is self-sacrificial because it accepts suffering without retaliation.[34] According to this viewpoint, "unearned suffering for a cause is redemptive and has

tremendous educational and transforming possibilities."[35] This principle is of utmost practical importance in a clime like Nigeria where many have resorted to various degrees of crime and acrimony against the State as means of surviving within the presenting harsh economic realities. Today people use the humongous level of poverty and unemployment in the country as justification for their involvement in crimes. Separatist and militant groups use perceived marginalization and absence of federal presence in their regions as justification for their attack and destruction of State and public property (including public servants like soldiers and policemen and top ranking politicians). But, two wrongs can never make a right. These destructive retaliatory tendencies of citizens against the State have led to increased tension and insecurity in the country. The masses themselves are yet the most affected because the top political elites they seek to hurt or whose attention they seek to attract by their actions remain largely unaffected.

Martin Luther King urges calm and toleration in the face of perceived injustice. Violence can never be successfully applied to defeat perceived State violence or disregard against the masses. In situations like this, he calls for dialogue and sustained peaceful demonstration. The demonstration must be sustained even if it becomes threatened by State forces because it is the most potent way the masses can nonviolently oppose State tyranny. Even if it becomes obvious that such sustained nonviolent protests may lead to loss of life, King admonished that for the sake of justice the masses should be ready to shed their blood because unearned suffering for a just cause is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities. This is where nonviolent protests often lose meaning in Nigeria. Most Nigerians are not ready to die or suffer any harm or pain for the sake of justice and the ultimate good of the nation. The State is very much aware of this fact. Hence, whenever nonviolent protests or demonstrations are beginning to foil the State might and attract reasonable national and international attention; when victory is near, heavily armed military and policemen are usually drafted by the government to intimidate the protesters. The mere sight of these men sends shivers down the spine of the protesters and they vamoose. That has been the trajectory of peaceful demonstrations in Nigeria- they are never sustained due to

State intimidation and the fear of death, harm or suffering on the part of the masses. Martin Luther King Jr reminds us that until a greater majority of the Nigerian masses becomes ready to earn suffering for the course of justice; the country may never be delivered from the manipulations of unscrupulous politicians.

Nonviolence chooses Love instead of Hate

Martin Luther King avers that "Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative."[36] By this principle, Martin Luther King warns that the State must exercise restraint and wisdom while combating internal security crises due to issues like militancy, separatist agitations, robbery, cultism, rape, kidnap, etc. The State is not required to unleash her full military might in combating such crimes else the aim is ultimately defeated. The fight against such criminals should be done with love, not selfishness; it should be creative, not destructive. This is because the perpetrators of such crimes are still members of the State's commonwealth.

Nonviolence Believes that the Universe is n the Side of Justice

According to King Jr, the nonviolent resister has a deep faith that justice will eventually win. Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice. This principle should be the fiat of the average Nigerian that feels undone by the State. It should be the fiat of the separatist agitators who get frustrated by the State's silence or even defiance to their demands. It should be the fiat of the unemployed, hungry and frustrated youth who sees the State as an enemy and is moved to accept crime as the only option for survival. Justice will eventually prevail; not even State tyranny can stop this. This is because God is a God of justice. At no time therefore are Nigerians permitted to take the easier route- violence, crime, as ways of expressing their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the country knowing that God is the God of justice and justice always prevails at the end.

Conclusion

This paper presents nonviolence as a particular way to conduct political, social, and/or economic resistance. By this means, nonviolence is a form of resistance that is different from other forms

of resistance such as violent and arm resistance. What distinguishes nonviolence from violent forms of political change lies in its means which can be pragmatic or principled. The means are inseparable from the ends they promote. The paper submits that nonviolence portrayed by Luther King is an effective tool for public action against all forms of violence and suggests peaceful demonstration, occupation, civil disobedience, unarmed resistance and negotiation as its tool. It further submits that nonviolence operates on the hinges of the values derived from the principles of respect for dignity and equality.

This paper is convinced that, as rightly acknowledged by Luther King, poverty, Inequality and militarism are the basic predisposing factors to violence and insecurity in Nigeria. Hence, controlled use of military might by the State for resolution of civil unrest; job creation and improvement of the living standard of the masses; policy-making that ensures regional equality and that closes the gap between the poor and the rich in the country, are practical proactive measures to be taken by the government to check the rapid increase in crime rate and the mounting insecurity crisis in Nigeria.

***Charles C. Nweke**
Department of Phlosophy
Nnamdi azikiwe University
Awka-Nigeria

***Charles C. Ugwu**
Department of Phlosophy
Nnamdi azikiwe University
Awka-Nigeria

References

[1] Emmanuel I. Obarisiagbon & Emily O. Akintoye, "Insecurity Crisis in Nigeria: The Law Enforcement Agents a Panacea?," *Journal of Sociology and Social Work*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 44-51, 2019, p. 45.
[2] O. O. Ewetan & E. Urhie, Insecurity and socio economic development in *Nigeria Journal of Sustainable Development Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1, 40-63, 2014, p. 43.
[3] Ibid.
[4]Emmanuel I. Obarisiagbon & Emily O. Akintoye, Insecurity Crisis in Nigeria, p. 45.
[5] Omotoye Olorode, ""Security" Crisis: Implications for National Integration and Development" (Abuja: University of Abuja, 2012), pp. 4-9.
[6] Ibid, p. 4.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid, p. 7.
[9] Ibid.
[10] In April 2019, Zamfara State Governor Yari said the crises in the North-West included ''infiltration from Libya and Boko Haram''. "Bandits kill 3,526 people in Zamfara – Yari'', *PM News*, 9 April 2019. On 22 September 2019, the Zamfara State government said it had obtained "credible intelligence reports" indicating that politicians in the state were collaborating with "dispersed elements of Boko Haram to launch a series of attacks" in seven local government areas and on the state capital, Gusau. On 4 October 2019, Kaduna State Governor Nasir el-Rufai said the state government had been "receiving intelligence for three months" that bandits and kidnappers in the North-West were working with Boko Haram members to attack schools. "Kidnappers collude with Boko Haram to attack schools, says El-Rufai", *The Guardian*, 5 October 2019.
[11] Ogunlade made the disclosure at a press briefing at the command headquarters in the Zamfara State capital, Gusau, 25 June 2019. He added that jihadists were "identifiable through their headgear, which carries a 'jihad' inscription". "Terrorists, jihadists have infiltrated bandits in Zamfara, says commander", *This Day*, 26 June 2019.
[12]*Crisis Group* interviews, conflict researcher in Zamfara state, researcher at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto; police officer who previously served in Zamfara state, Abuja, December 2019- January 2020.
[13] Jacob Zenn, "The Return of Al-Qaeda's Faction in Nigeria: What's Going on in Zamfara?", *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation, 2019), p. 4.

[14] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?: (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 21
[15]M. L. King, Jr. *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), p. 90.
[16]*Ibid.*, Pp. 90-91
[17]*Ibid.*, p. 91
[18] Ibid.
8[19] Ibid, p. 95.
[20] Martin Luther King Jr, "America's Chief Moral Dilemma," A speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr to the Members of Atlantic Club, Atlanta, May 10, 1967.
[21] Aliyu M. Katsina, "Nigeria's Security Challenges and the Crisis of Development: Towards a New Framework for Analysis," *International Journal of Developing Societies,* vol. 1, no. 3, 107-116, 2012, pp. 114-116.
[22] E. N. Muller, & M. A. Seligson, "Inequality and Insurgency," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 81, no. 2, 425-450, 1987, p. 437.
[23] CIA World Book, 2011 cited in C. Ucha," Poverty in Nigeria: Some Dimensions and Contributing Factors," *Global Majority E-Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, 46-56, 2010.
[24] Martin Luther King Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 15.
[25] Abu-Bakarr Jalloh, "Nigeria's Ban of Shiite Muslim Group Risks Boko Haram Repeat," *DW: Deutsche Welle,* 2019. https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.dw.com/en/nigerias-ban-of-shiite-muslim-group-repeat/, accessed 05/08/2021.
[26] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963) Pp. 85-112
[27] Ibid, p. 90.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, p. 97
[30] Ibid.
[31]Ezeakukwu Emmanuel Nsoedo, "The Marginalization of the Igbo People in Nigeria's Political and Economic Sectors: What Is the Way Forward?," *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 7, 427-437, 2019, p. 429.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait,* p. 102.
[34] Ibid, p. 103
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid, p. 104