

Insecurity and Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study interrogated how insecurity affects the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 1 (Hunger) and 2 (Poverty) in Nigeria. This is based on the target to end hunger and poverty by 2030 and the precarious situation of these two important phenomena in Nigeria's development trajectory. Hunger and poverty are ugly socio-economic realities that most of the Nigerian populace, regardless of age, gender, religion and region, are confronted with. The study was anchored on Maslow's theory of Needs and Systems Theory. Data was gathered through documentary sources of literature, and it was analysed using an explanatory method of data analysis. The study found that insecurity has made the efforts of the United Nations (UN) through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end hunger and poverty in Nigeria by 2030 unattainable. The insecurity situation in Nigeria is aggravated by the high level of unemployment, especially among the youth and the non-availability of basic infrastructure to drive development. It is recommended that youth unemployment must be curbed through investment in the critical infrastructure, like roads, power, schools, health and social justice. This will help to engage the teeming unemployed youths who fall prey and are lured into activities that constitute security threats. Also, International Development Institutions should engage the Nigerian government in ensuring implementation of programmes and projects that will end to hunger and poverty, especially in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and technology. The security architecture of Nigeria should be restructured to engage the locals (state police, vigilante) in taking active decisions concerning the security of their immediate environment without undue restrictions from the centre.

Keywords: Hunger, Insecurity, Nigeria, Poverty, Sustainable Development Goals.

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity is one of the social ills that threaten humanity. It creates fear within the environment of its occurrence, obstructs and stagnates social progress, destroys people's means of livelihood and creates more insecurity. This made it a serious menace to human life, culture, territories, states, religious beliefs, property, and institutions (Obi, 2015). Obi's description portrays

insecurity as a phenomenon that threatens humans' existence and affects their environment. In many countries of the world, the situation has claimed many lives, wiped out communities, upturned governments, destroyed businesses and properties and created a state of anarchy, fear and terror. Because of this, the global community has devoted resources and time to avoid, avert and manage security situations as a crucial way to keep humanity and attain global peace. This notwithstanding, countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia-Ukraine, Congo, Sudan, Libya, Chad, Gaza, Nigeria, etc., are confronted with complex security challenges.

Insecurity recently became a challenge that has affected every part of Nigeria and hinders efforts in place to drive social, economic, political, and religious activities. Its daily occurrences are in different forms and shapes, and no part of the country is safe. It has become a serious concern for attaining any meaningful development. It operates in various forms such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual killing, rape, successionist agitations, religious extremism, etc. Homes, schools, places of worship, markets, businesses, and security establishments like police stations (where people usually run for safety) have become soft spots for attacks. The North Central, North West and North East zones of Nigeria are ravaged by Boko Haram and Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorist groups, bandits, kidnappers and other social vices. In the South East zone, bandits known as Unknown Gunmen and IPOB secessionist groups are constituting a serious security threat that every Monday since August 2021, no business, education, religious and other human activities take place in the region in what they call Monday-Sit-At-Home (Nwagbo, Ofoke & Ezeamu, 2025; Ogba, Akogwu & Eze, 2023). South West is challenged by banditry, cultism and farmer-herder conflict. South South is faced with oil bunkering, oil theft, cultism and militant groups. Development of Nigeria is obstructed, and its existence as a country is threatened as a result of rising forces of insecurity (Fagbadebo, 2009). About 10,366 lives were lost in 2021 to insecurity, according to a report by the Skill-Based Morgen (SBM) Intelligence (Daka 2022). This report presents an outrageous increase from the 2018 death rate of 2000, as recorded by the Global Terrorism Index (2019), which shows a worsening state of insecurity in Nigeria. According to the report, Nigeria moved from 36th to 3rd place in the terrorism index during the 2002–2018 evaluation. Nigeria Bureau Statistics (2024) reported that about 614,937 Nigerians were killed, 2,235,954 were kidnapped, and 2.2 trillion was paid for ransom between May 2023 and April 2024. Even the rural areas where food-sustaining production activities sustaining urban areas are undertaken were mostly affected as there were about 335,827 incidents of murder cases, and 1,668,104 persons were kidnapped. Dauda (2019) added that the gains in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production, suffered a serious setback as a result of the Fulani herdsman-farmers' crisis. Farmers in the food-producing areas hardly go for their farming and other socio-economic activities for fear of being kidnapped, raped, maimed or killed. This aggravated the level of poverty among Nigerians, especially in rural areas where farming activities are a major source of livelihood for many. People in the cities, especially low and middle-income earners, are struggling to feed themselves due to the high cost of food items emanating from the collapse of farming activities in rural areas. Also, in the cities, kidnapping and ransom payments have forced many people out of business, pushing them into poverty and deepening the poverty level of their down liners/ dependents. This affects efforts towards policy implementations, the drive towards human development and the fight against hunger and poverty. This setback has engendered hunger and poverty. This concern made the federal government of Nigeria and the state government devote a huge portion of their budget to security amidst escalating socio-economic needs. For instance, in 2001 the budget for defence

was #966.4 billion, in 2022 it was 1.2 trillion, in 2023 it rose to #1.383 trillion, and in 2024 it increased to #1.647 trillion. The Police got a budget of #455 billion in 2021, #559 billion in 2022, #838 billion in 2023 and 969.6 billion in 2024 (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), Feb. 5, 2024). The opportunity cost is critical to a developing country like Nigeria.

However, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The goals are designed to promote sustainable development, address global challenges, and ensure a better future for all by 2030. The SDGs focused on: “no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice, and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals. These goals aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all (United Nations, 2020). The essence is by 2030, there will be better conditions for human lives and development, the future will be preserved through today’s activity, better human security and an improved planet, and all people will enjoy peace and prosperity (United Nations Development Programme, Nd; United Nations, Nd). The Goals 1 (to eliminate poverty) and the Goal 2 (to eradicate hunger) prioritised some of the basic needs of man, which are first to eat to live and to avoid poverty. These two concerns are attainable in a society where there is security of lives and properties, which are major motivations for establishing the United Nations.

In line with this, the UN established platforms through which it is driving sustainable development goals to address hunger and poverty. These include the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) that works to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, supporting sustainable agriculture and food security initiatives; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which implements programmes to promote sustainable agriculture, reduce poverty, and improve food security, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), it invests in rural development and agriculture to reduce poverty and hunger. These efforts aim to address the root causes of hunger and poverty have been hampered by insecurity. Farmers, especially in the North East and North Central Nigeria, have been forced to abandon their farming activities due to rising insecurity. Herders destroy farmland in the course of feeding their herds or in retaliation of farmers' resistance to feeding on their farmland. Farmers are killed and maimed in extreme situations. Bandits and Boko Hara Terrorists kill and destroy farmland in their efforts to cripple food security in Nigeria. These aggressive activities of the bandits and terrorists have resulted in the killing and displacement of farmers, thereby contributing to poverty as a result of displacement and hunger due to food shortage and high cost of available food items within the Nigerian food chain. In line with this, this paper explores the pertinent issues of national insecurity in contemporary Nigeria and how it bedevils goals 1 and 2 of the Sustainable Development Programme

LITERATURE REVIEW

Insecurity

Scholars across the globe have postulated differing viewpoints on the concept of security. Security also has various stripes and shades like human security, cyber security, environmental security, infra-structural security, intellectual rights security, internal security, global security, etc. Security is a concern of every human being and society because it is the fulcrum of human

development and harmony (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). The United Nations Development Programme (2020) asserts that human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in daily activities, at homes, offices or communities. This implies that security is the state of being safe and secured from danger; it could also be protection from chronic threats such as hunger, diseases and repression. According to the Commission on Human Security (2003), human security is the protection of important aspects of human lives in a way that would enhance human freedom and fulfilment. Of course, this aspect of human lives includes the environment, water, animals, and access to them. Abuse of these essential aspects of human existence has led to all manner of crises and insecurity. Human security encompasses freedom from want, harm, fear and the freedom to take appropriate actions without hindrance. It is also the assurance of future well-being and freedom from threat. It helps to ensure political stability, social harmony, economic well-being and survival of the citizens (Palme, 1992; Nwagboso, 2020). Security is not the total elimination of threats, but it is the ability to respond to them with appropriate skill and expertise to avoid escalation for the continuation of life and activities (Nwagboso, 2020). Security is an enormous responsibility that demands a formidable institution with leadership that is charismatic, courageous, articulate and sincere in approaching human concerns and needs to stabilise human interaction. Insecurity is the opposite or absence of security. It can variable be explained as a precarious condition that destroys, obstructs, threatens, and retards human and material safety and put them in states of danger and fear.

The state primarily exists to provide security (Nwagbo and Abaneme, 2019). It is upon this that all other development activities are anchored (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). Thus, the measurement of a state's relevance and accomplishments is evaluated by the level of security its citizens can enjoy both internally and externally (Ebele, Gloria & Ogwuda, 2018). After the Cold War, scholars' focal point on security was now centred on people or human security. This is because violent conflicts were no longer perceived as the only threat to human life but as a multifarious collection of internal and external factors. In view of this, security challenges are seen as anything capable of provoking harm or fear towards a person. This could be in the form of diseases, poverty, gender discrimination, political instability, unemployment, insurgency, or inaccessibility of good education (Ajodo & Ugwuoke, 2014). Many developing countries have not done well in providing this basic infrastructure to their citizens. This has raised many concerns about the relevance of the state in such societies (Nwagbo & Abaneme, 2019). Individuals are becoming strong entities, whereas states are becoming weak and compromised. Groups use the state as an instrument of domination and accomplishment of group interest, notwithstanding how destructive it is to the entire system (Nwagbo & Eze, 2015). This has resulted in breeding agitations, conflicts and unending group contests that weaken the state (Agbaenyi & Nwagbo, 2016). Nigeria, for instance, at different times experienced the emergence of different groups that have held the Nigerian nation to ransom (Nwanegbo, Umara & Tersoo, 2017). The government has always reached a form of settlement with these organisations. The trend is that each time the government reached a compromise with these lawless groups, it became weaker and new groups emerged to use violent means to extract a commitment from the government. Nigeria, as a country that flourishes on a rent economy, the government often strive to buy peace rather than to address burning issues holistically. It always ended with the peace of the graveyard as experienced in the Niger Delta scenario where former militants have been transformed into either top-level government contractors or illegal oil refinery owners in the creeks and kidnap ringleaders, notwithstanding an amnesty

programme that costs the government billions of Naira every year (Agomuo, 2013: 26). Unfortunately, these approaches have not been able to restore security and confidence of the citizens on the state rather has continue to aggravate insecurity and escalate destructive agitation in every part of the country. The unresolvable security situation affects every aspect of the economy, from micro to macro-economic activities. The uncertainty of the economy affected investment adversely (Nwagbo & Ofoke, 2024) and contributes to a level of poverty and hunger within the Nigerian state. Deployment of military forces, formation of special and Joint Operations, the closing of borders, procurement of military infrastructure and equipment, declaration of a state of emergency and establishment of the national security council were also other ways the Nigerian government has responded to the insecurity crisis bedevilling the country (Olawole, 2020). There is a need to address the root causes of insecurity in the country, which include population explosion, youth unemployment, poverty, poor education enrollment, etc. Corruption and poor governance have also exacerbated insecurity in Nigeria.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

It is a transformation from the Millennium Development Goals, which ended in 2015. It is designed to enhance future generations while driving today's challenges. It was launched in 2015 with 17 goals to be accomplished by 2030 (SDGs, 2015). It has its roots in the United Nations' (UN) efforts to address global development challenges. The majority of the concerns of the goals are targeting the developing countries, which have been confronted with numerous development challenges. These goals include: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions and Partnerships for the Goals (UN, 2020). Sustainable development is a product of concerns for the effect of human activities on the environment, and human lives and with high irreversible implications in the future; therefore, the need to regulate them. It entails development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need (Ejumudo, 2015; Karpagam, 2014). Sustainable development targets to improve the living standard of the poor and underdeveloped societies through improvement in food availability and accessibility, better health care, quality education opportunities, sanitation, water supply, etc. Its target starts with basic human needs to other environmental, social, legal and political needs. Without achieving the basic needs like hunger, poverty, education, health, etc. it may be difficult to attain advance needs like gender equality, life below water, life on land, climate actions, etc. Tietenberg (2015) asserts that it is an improvement in per capita income, a better health, wellbeing and nutrition, enhanced access to educational, access to resources, a inclusive distribution of income and liberalised freedom which should be achieved through the willingness and the ability of the present generation to device a means of using depletable resources such that future generations, at a minimum, would not be left worse off than the current generation. Sustainable development, summarily, is a development approach that prioritises the needs of man and his environment and designs a pattern of addressing them with the present resources without compromising the future of the unborn. In this instance, it is designed to depart from other development approaches that did not consider the consequences of their development and scientific advances on the future generation, which are what is affecting humanity presently, especially climate change issues and security crises. Some of the present challenges are by-products of industrialisation,

unbalanced resources management and value appropriations. Sustainable development is all about ensuring a strong, healthy, safe, neat and just society both in the present and in the future.

The relevance of the SDGs is enormous, and it projects a timely look at the level of human deprivation, gender inequality, climate abuse and their effects, and most importantly, undermining the future in the exploration and exploitation of today's human, mineral, solid and other material resources. MDGs succeeded in halving the number of people living on less than \$1.25 per day. About 836 million people, mostly in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan. 5, still lived in extreme poverty at the end of the programme in 2015. More so, about 10% of the global population (795 million) is undernourished. Children are more disposed to the adverse effects of the global development problem. Therefore, undermines every effort to address global socio-economic and security issues (ICLEI, November 2015). ICLEI (November 2015, p. 5) asserts that most of the world's hungry people still live in rural areas where agriculture is a main rural employer. The worrisome thing is that this wonderful and timely target set by the United Nations to salvage humanity and preserve future lives seems to navigating out of track by the 2024 programme progress evaluation. SDGs achievement is in peril as progress has come to a halt or been reversed across multiple fronts (Sachs, Lafortune & Fuller, 2024). The continuous effects of COVID-19, aggravated and unresolved conflicts, climate shocks and economic turmoil, nationalistic diplomacy among nations have continued to set back SDGs, especially in the developing countries. Sequel to this, assessment made by the United Nations (2024) and FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2023) shows that more than 23 million people were pushed into extreme poverty and over 100 million more suffered from hunger in 2022 compared to 2019. Since 2020, some of the critical sustainable development goals have veered off the track, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). As of 2022, the underaged children that were stunted as a result of malnutrition were about 148.1 million and 45 million were wasted, and overweights were 37 million, therefore making an end to stunted growth, waste and overweight by 2025 a mirage. This is more worrisome in poor and vulnerable countries (Sachs, Lafortune & Fuller, 2024). They further concluded that by the end of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030, 600 million people will still suffer from hunger and be undernourished globally (p ix).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Systems theory is a theory developed in the 1930s and amplified up to the 1970s through the works of many scholars. It has many stripes and is applicable in many disciplines. from the biology perspective, Ludwig von Bertalanffy developed General System Theory. While Walter B. Cannon, Walter Pitts, Warren McCulloch, advanced it from physiology, and Claude Shannon, Norbert Wiener, William Ross Ashby, propounded it from an information and cybernetics perspective. David Easton also adopted systems theory to analyse the political process and its inter- and intra-dependence. System theory argues that in a system, things are interrelated and interdependent and therefore nothing in a system can function on its own without assistance from the other, and affected or functions undermined if the other interconnecting units are not healthy (Heil, nd,) in other words nothing can be explained by isolating a component of system. Laszlo and Krip (1998) assert further that each subsystem of the system maintains its boundaries even when it interrelates with others and depends on them for its effective function. In other words, that boundary does not make it autonomous, but it gives it a distinct character and characteristics as an entity (subsystem) in the system. As it is in the human body or

automobile components. Each need another to function, and each is still unique in its function. Conclusively, a system is a divisible whole, but functionally, it is an indivisible unity (Laszlo & Krip, 1998). As regards this work, systems theory helps us to understand how the social system of security and food production (hunger) and poverty are interrelated. The failure of any affects the output of the other. In this instance, failure in the provision of security in Nigeria is obstructing the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 in the country. Insecurity as regards to Boko Haram, ISWAP, Bandits and other Terrorist organization especially in the North-East, North-Central and North-West, and activities of herdsmen, bandits, kidnappers, Unknown Gunmen in the North-East, North-Central, South-West, South-East has stopped farmers from engaging in farming activities therefore leading to food shortage and high cost of little ones available. Farmers in some areas have been forced to pay heavy taxes to the terrorist groups and bandits to have access to their farms thereby adding to high cost of food items; Many other places, villages and farm settlement are being destroyed, forcing farmers to relocate to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps, where they are no longer engaged to food production. This adds to hunger and poverty not only for the farmers but nationally.

Furthermore, Abraham Maslow's Theory of Needs (1943) was also added as a theoretical guide to this work. The theory proposes that human beings have different levels of needs, which must be fulfilled in a particular order for individuals to reach their full potential. The theory outlines five hierarchical levels of needs: Physiological Needs (food, water, shelter, sleep, physical health); essential for human survival, Safety Needs; (security, stability, protection, law and order, freedom from fear, necessary for feelings of safety and stability) Love and Belonging Needs (social connections; relationships, love, acceptance, belonging, crucial for emotional well-being and social integration, esteem needs) Esteem Needs (recognition, respect, achievements, confidence; important for personal growth and self-respect, Self-Actualization Needs (realizing one's full potential, personal growth, creativity, fulfilment) The highest level of human need focuses on self-actualization. The basic assumption of the theory is that human beings have universal needs. Needs are timeless and culture-independent. Individuals strive for self-improvement to overcome these needs. If these basic needs are not attained, other social fabrics will be affected, and the development of man will be difficult. Therefore, anything that threatens the accomplishment of these needs should be addressed with utmost attention. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, going by the proposition of this theory, will be very difficult if basic needs of man, such as hunger and poverty, and insecurity, which by the hierarchy of Maslow are numbers 1 and 2, are not addressed. By Maslow's proposition, these needs work like a system. Attainment of one leads to the next one. The one at the peak is dependent upon the satisfaction of the base. There cannot be self-actualisation if Physiological needs, Safety needs, and Esteem needs are not met. Physiological needs (hunger and poverty) among Nigerian citizens have compelled many to join terrorist and banditry groups, deteriorating insecurity as a result of this has contributed to food shortage, destruction of business premises, facilities and activities, and other critical national infrastructures. The prevalence of insecurities in the world exacerbate poverty, with 736 million people living in extreme poverty, struggling to meet basic needs (World Bank, 2020). In 2020, food insecurity affected 820 million people worldwide, hindering economic development and poverty reduction (FAO, 2020). Maslow's theory emphasises that unmet physiological needs hinder progress toward higher-level needs. Safety needs, including security, shelter, stability, and protection, are critical. Insecure environments, such as conflict zones or areas with high crime rates, perpetuate poverty and hunger (UNHCR, 2020).

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Many factors have been argued by different scholars and stakeholders to be responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. Among them includes:

1. **Unemployed teeming youth population:** The Nigerian population is dominantly youth. A lot of these youths lack access to education, while others lack access to quality education. The implication of this situation is a lack of the necessary skills for job creation and entrepreneurship among the youth. The government, on its part, has not done enough to change this scenario. Every year, about 3.5 million Nigerian youths enter the labour market, where there are no jobs, and many others are already in the market without jobs, or underemployed. To survive this condition, many youths become vulnerable to any means of meeting daily bread, achieving a better life and accomplishing life dreams. This includes involving security-threatening activities such as banditry, kidnapping, ritual killing, cybercrime, and terrorism (Ogbu & Chukwuemeka, 2024). 87 million Nigerians live in poverty (UNDP, 2020). This has created a fertile ground for extremist groups to recruit members. Terrorist groups such as ISWAP, Boko Haram and Banditry syndicates recruit youth to perpetrate all manner of crime against the state and pay them stipends. Because there is no alternative for them to survive, they easily succumb to this, even against their wishes, just to survive.
2. **Religious ideology that encourages religious domination of other religions and forceful advancement.** Some sects of the Islamic religion encourage the killing of what they call infidels to advance the Islamic religion. Anyone who excuses this is seen as a faithful Islam and will be entitled to some comfort and virgins in heaven. To fulfil this religious obligation and to be seen as a faithful member of the faith, many youths indulge in this. In recent times in Nigeria, there is an argument about killing the Christian minority and forcing the conversion of others to the Islamic religion by some fundamentalists. This ideological drive encourages terrorism and gives willing yielding to the unemployed youths a way to make their lives meaningful.
3. **Corruption:** Nigeria ranked 149 out of 180 in terms of corruption perception (Transparency International, 2022). Corruption deprives the citizens opportunity to basic infrastructures for better living as the political class embezzles the resources provided for them. Its destabilisation effect on the economy and socio-political system has led to unnecessary agitation, destruction, tension and criminality. Corruption erodes the availability of basic amenities, weakens state institutions, encourages bad governance, etc. The frustration it creates among Nigerian youths who are aware of the abundance of resources in the hands of the political class but are subjected to poverty makes them to lack patriotism and support any organisation that rises against the state.
4. **Weak Security Architecture and divided security operations and loyalty.** Nigeria's security system has been made an instrument of the ruling class against any opposition. This has affected their orientation and operation, and their inability to meet certain emerging security concerns. The government has not also lived up to its expectation to provide the necessary funding and logistics to make it effective as a way to manipulate their operations and make them submissive to the ruling class and their associates. Nigeria's security system is seen as very poor in terms both personnel, training and equipment. The officers are poorly trained and remunerated. As a result, the required expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges. Criminals have taken advantage of these shortcomings to perpetrate crimes. Equally serious concern is the commitment of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general

security. Concerns have been expressed where security personnel abandon national interest for ethnic or religious interest by sabotaging the efforts of the government in achieving national security. Many of the soldiers fighting the insurgency in the northeast of the country have, on some occasions, been ambushed and many killed by the Boko Haram fighters as a result of information leaked to them by those who are supposed to fight them (Eme, 2018).

5. Porous border: Nigeria's borders are not adequately governed due to a lack of manpower, equipment and intelligence, leading to illegal inflow of weapons, criminals and terrorist network groups. Northern Nigeria is in protracted security challenges as a result of inflow of arms and criminals from its neighbouring countries like Chad, Niger, Mali and other countries especially within Sahel region (Edeko (2011). It gave room to the recruitment of the teeming unemployed youths into criminal gangs, provided them with arms of all magnitudes, drugs and training (Adeola & Olayemi, 2012).
6. Marginalization and social injustice: some zones like the South-East and South-South have been consistently agitating against marginalization in the appropriation and sharing of the state resources. This led the emergence of separatist groups like Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign of Biafra (MASSOB), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), etc. in the South-East. They demand for justice, inclusion and succession from the Nigerian state. In the Niger Delta region, so many militant groups have emerged demanding for government presence in the region. They accused the government of exploiting the oil in the region, polluting their environment and destroying their sources of livelihood through oil spillage, gas flaring and waste. And the proceeds of these activities are used to develop other zones of the country without any meaningful presence of government projects in the region to cushion the effects of the damages they undergo. The activities of these groups have contributed to some of the security challenges facing Nigeria state. They have at one point or another taken arms against the state, which have adversely affected the development trajectory in Nigeria.

INSECURITY AND ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ONE AND TWO

Insecurity, which is an absence of security affects every aspect of human lives especially activities geared towards production either on the lands, waters, or in the industries or in the offices. Stability of an economy is hampered whenever insecurity becomes a protracted experience of any given society. This situation contributes to hunger and poverty. The importance of hunger and poverty to development and its sustainability made the United Nations (UN) in its effort to address human challenges, such as alleviation of Hunger and Poverty first and second goals among 17 goals it intends to achieve between 2015 to 2030. Without the achievement of these two cardinal goals, the attainment of the other 15 goals is very uncertain. Maslow advocated that except the basic needs of man are met, advancing and attaining other needs and goals are difficult. In Nigeria, insecurity has affected efforts by individuals, communities, the government and international agencies to address hunger and poverty. Insecurity created a state of fear, suspicion, confrontation and destruction of lives and properties among once peaceful communities. Adekoya (2021) argues herder-farmer crisis induced fears and instability in the system that adversely affected food prices, pushed many people, especially farmers and food dealers, to joblessness, hopelessness and poverty. Likewise, those who deal in food produce have a shortage of supplies, little available is expensive, which many of them cannot afford, invariably pushing them out of business. The entire populace feels it is harder due to the unavailability of food items or the high cost of available ones. Hunger is

exacerbated by these. The effort to attain basic physiological needs for food income of many Nigerians, especially the low and middle classes, is affected. Hunger and poverty must be increasing day by day.

In the North East and North Central, many farmers are displaced from their indigenous settlements, rising from the activities of herders, bandits and terrorist groups in the regions. They are settled in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps across various areas of the region. Babagana (2019) reveals that insecurity has made farmers abandon their farming activities as long as one (1) to three (3) farming seasons because of the fear of being attacked and killed in the face of ravaging insecurity coming from diverse fronts in their community. One of the critical ways insecurity affects the drive to end poverty and hunger is through the destruction of farmlands. The Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, farmer-herder conflicts, and banditry in the Northwest have led to widespread destruction of farmlands, displacement of farmers, and loss of livelihoods (International Crisis Group, 2020).

In the North East, Boko Haram has systematically targeted farmers, destroying their crops and livestock, and forcing them to abandon their farmlands (HRW, 2019). Some of the communities have been conquered and are under the control of the bandits and terrorist groups. Every attribute of state governance is implemented in the conquered territories, although in an unstructured manner. They pay taxes to them, take orders from them and submit at will every instruction to enjoy security if otherwise, they will be executed and their properties destroyed (Okoli, Aina & Onuoha, 2024). This has resulted in significant declines in agricultural production, exacerbating food insecurity in the region. In the North West, banditry and kidnapping have become rampant, forcing farmers to flee their farmlands and seek refuge in urban areas (Fadare, Akerele, Mavrotas, & Ogunniyi, 2019). The destruction of farmlands has led to food shortages, increased poverty, and malnutrition. Farmer-herder conflicts have also destroyed farmlands, particularly in the Middle Belt region (International Crisis Group, 2020). These conflicts have resulted in the displacement of thousands of farmers, loss of livelihoods, and decreased agricultural productivity. Agriculture is a critical sector of the Nigerian economy, accounting for approximately 25% of its GDP (CBN, 2020). Insecurity has significantly led to a decline in agricultural production, particularly in staple crops such as maize, rice, and wheat (FMARD, 2020). This has resulted in increased food prices, exacerbating poverty. The government is under pressure to handle foreign exchange reserves due to a significant increase in the food import bill (CBN, 2020). Women, in particular, have been disproportionately affected by the destruction of farmlands (UN Women, 2020). Women farmers are critical to Nigeria's agricultural sector, but insecurity has forced many to abandon their farmlands and seek alternative livelihoods. Children have also been affected by the destruction of farmlands, with many forced to drop out of school to support their families and some families unable to pay their children's school fees as a result of the destruction of their means of livelihood (UNICEF, 2020). In 2020, about 1.8 million children were out of school in Bornu, Adamawa and Yobe. While as of 2021, 600 schools in the North-Western states of Sokoto, Kano, Niger, Katsina, and Zamfara were forced into closure for fear of attacks and abduction of pupils and staff. Likewise, in South-East Nigeria, every Monday since 2021, schools and businesses have been shut down on the order of the IPOB separatist movement. Every human activity is put to a halt due to fear of attack by the armed group of the separatist movement (Nwachi, 2023; Nwagbo & Ofoke, 2024; Nwagbo & Ofoke, 2025). The loss of educational opportunities perpetuates poverty and undermines Nigeria's human capital development. This in return exacerbates the

precarious security situation of Nigeria. Many children will grow up unprepared to face their future, therefore get more frustrated and aggressive against the state.

Table 1: Conquered Communities by Bandits and Terrorist Groups and Taxes Paid

S/N	Community	Amount Imposed	Bandit Leader/Gang Responsible	Community Response	Remarks
1	Forty villages in Sabon Birinin, Local Government, Sokoto State	Between 1 and 2 million naira was imposed on each of the villages for access their farmlands for harvest	Bello Turji	The complied without resistance	Each household in the affected villages was levied N5, 000
2	Four communities in Birnin Gwari Emirate, Kaduna	12 million naira for protection	Unspecified	They complied without resistance	Bandits threatened to raid the villages if they fail to comply
3	Nine communities in Bakkuyum Local Government Area of Katsina State	24 million naira for protection	Unspecified	They complied without resistance	These villages had suffered series of attacks hitherto
4	Gurmana, Manta, Bassa/Kukoki communities in Shiroro Local Governments	As much as 2 million naira for protection	Unspecified	They complied without resistance	Other items, including motorcycles were also demanded by the bandits
5	Tashar Biri village in Yatumaki community in Dan Musa Local Government Area of Katsina State	30 million naira as a compensation for the death of Dankarami	Bandits allied to Dankarami	Most of the residents deserted their village for fear of being attacked	Dankarami was killed by military air strike in Tashar Biri

Source: Okoli, Aina and Onuoha (2024)

There has also been a widespread disruption of economic activities with negative effects on production. Adekoya (2021) and Nwagbo and Ofoke (2025) state that the business environment has been disturbed by insecurity and coupled with the poor state of the critical infrastructure, foreign direct investment to Nigerian the economy has reduced drastically. The extent of the nation's instability, which makes it unsafe for business owners and farmers to do their business, has discouraged investors from the economy. Attraction and growth of investment are hampered by insecurity and poor governance. Investors are not attracted where they cannot recoup the capital invested in the business within a calculated time frame. These businesses could have provided many job opportunities for the teeming populace of the country, made the business owners happy, and generated revenue for the government. The effect of insecurity on the economy of Nigeria affects economic growth by drying out investment, increasing unemployment and reducing government revenue, among others. Insecurity has continued to scare economic activities and disrupt government programmes. It dissuades investors from investing, thereby preventing the creation of job opportunities that

would have offered the unemployed jobs. The direct implication of this is that many Nigerians are falling into a poverty cycle.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on December 17, 2024, revealed the outrageous level of insecurity in Nigeria, which highlights in concrete terms how poverty and hunger are consolidated. According to the report, about 614,937 Nigerians were killed in one year (May 2023 to April 2024), of which 335,827 were rural dwellers. This figure outnumbered global concerns on the Israeli war in Gaza, where about 40,000 had died, and the Russian onslaught in Ukraine, where about 57,500 had been killed as of December 2024. NBS release established that most of the deaths at the hands of bandits and terrorists occurred in the rural areas, due to a lack of adequate security coverage and a lot of ungoverned spaces. The report shows that out of 2.2 million abducted, 1.7 million were rural dwellers, and N2.2 trillion has been paid as ransom during the period. A further breakdown shows that North West recorded 206,030 killings, followed by the North East with 188,992, and the South West experienced 15,693 killings. Of the 2.2 million kidnapped, 1,668,104 persons were kidnapped in rural areas. The North West had kidnapping cases of 1,420,307, the North Central had 317,837, and the South-East had 110,432 abductions. Out of the N2.2 trillion paid as ransom for the kidnapped victims, the North West paid the highest of about N1.2 trillion, and the South East was the least with N85.4 billion. Amidst this, more than 2 million people were displaced (GlobalUpfrontnews, Dec. 28, 2024, Dec 18, 2024). Many businesses have been closed down after payment of a ransom to rescue family members. Likewise, families thrown into deep poverty after selling their assets and borrowing money even from banks at an unaffordable rate to pay ransom to the bandits and terrorists to release their family, religious or community members in captivity. The Nigerian government has queried these statistics and the process of arriving at this conclusion by the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (Prime Times, December 25, 2024). There has been a persistent insinuation of under-reportage of atrocities and terror committed in the bandit-controlled communities, especially the northern part of the country. The inability of the media to do this can be explained from different perspectives, which include inability to access the dangerous terrains controlled by the bandits, fear of possible tracing and hurting of the media by the groups or their sympathizers if the reportage is contrary to the ideology of the terrorist group(s); and government dislikes of such frequent reportage of such consistent act of terror against the state which is considered as an affront to the national image and demonstration of failure by the leadership of the state. The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, seriously discouraged the media from reporting the activities of the terror groups because it is giving them undue popularity against the state (GlobalUpfrontnews, May 8, 2025). Amidst this controversy, the acknowledged fact remains that insecurity poses tremendous challenges to socio-economic and political activities in Nigeria, which includes drives toward the attainment of SDGs 1 and 2.

On 12 January 2025, 40 farmers were killed in Dumba, Borno State. In the third week of April 2025 alone, about 183 persons were killed in agrarian communities in Benue and Plateau States. This gives about 106 farmers killed in Plateau and 77 farmers killed in Benue states. (GlobalUpfrontnews, April 28, and April 30, 2025). Food production in a developing country like Nigeria is done in the rural areas. The Northern Nigeria, especially Plateau and Benue states are food production base of Nigeria. Deliberate attack on farmers and destruction of the food chain by the terrorist groups is targeted at disrupting food supply to destabilise socio-economic system of Nigeria.

The implication of the scary security situation in Nigeria, as analysed by the NBS, was underscored during the 2025 Spring meeting in Washington by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It pointed out that the poverty level in Nigeria is estimated to be 47%. This is based on a 2.15-dollar income per day. This was against 38.8%. (87 million Nigerians) In 2023, while in 2024, 106 million Nigerians were living in poverty, showing 15% of the global extreme poverty population. The meeting said it will be gloomy in the years ahead as 56% of Nigerians will be under poverty by 2027, except there is a drastic economic measure put in place before then, but measures and reality on the ground give no hope (Globalupfrontnews). In 2022 Global Hunger Index placed Nigeria as the 10th hunger-ravaged country globally; in 2023, it was the 22nd country classified as a hunger hotspot in the world. This is related to the World Bank Food Security Update Report of 2024, which stated that the number of people facing food shortage increased in 2023 by 28% and by 2030, about 64% of the Nigerian population may go hungry (Globalupfrontnews, 25 March 2025). Insecurity disrupts agricultural production, displaces communities and deters investment, especially in Northern Nigeria, where poverty is severe. Insecurity has made it so that the farmers are not able to go to their farms to produce food for consumption, and the proceeds from it would have been used to take care of their basic needs and their children's future concerns. Mr. Peter Obi, a former Governor of Anambra State, during a presentation at Johns Hopkins University in the United States, alleged that Nigeria has more people under poverty than China, India and Vietnam combined (Globalupfrontnews April 25, 2025), invariable establishing that Nigeria is in a state of complex multiple poverty.

CONCLUSION

The sustainable development goals, especially goals 1 and 2, are designed to ensure that the basic needs of people of different colours, ages and genders are taken care of while they pursue higher needs for self-satisfaction. Achieving this has proven difficult due to various global challenges like insecurity, conflicts, pandemic, climate change, economic meltdown, ethno-religious ideological clashes, etc. Nigeria's socio-economic system has been adversely affected by insecurity. Many people have been thrown into poverty and hunger, especially in the rural and suburban areas, which has made food production and distribution difficult. Farmers are killed, maimed, displaced, and their farms destroyed by terrorist groups operating in the Northern part of Nigeria. This region produces most of the food, especially cereals, roots, vegetables and meats consumed in the country. The national food supply is disrupted, leading to national hunger and malnutrition. In other regions like South-East and South-West, South-South separatist groups, bandits, and pipeline vandals disrupt business and other socio-economic activities that add to hunger and poverty as they affect people's means of livelihood and the government's means of income. It was on this, the World Bank (2020) emphasised the importance of addressing insecurities to achieve SDGs. The pathetic aspect of the insecurity in Nigeria is that the security forces have been overstretched and demoralised due to the protracted nature of Nigerian security challenges. It is also underfunded, which undermines the proactiveness of the security architecture, the welfare of the security personnel and the procurement of modern military equipment to curb insecurity. This has made most parts of the country, especially the rural areas, unsecured, giving the terrorists, bandits and kidnappers free hands to operate in the governed areas, leading to killing, displacement of farmers and destruction of their farmlands and equipment. There is a lack of basic infrastructures to stimulate economic growth and youth unemployment, which push many into poverty and

destabilization of sustainable processes. Attainment of SDGs 1 and 2 is seriously undermined by this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To curtail insecurity in Nigeria, especially in the Northern zones that predominantly engage in food production (food basket of the nation). This can be done by paying greater attentions to the Nigerian borders with other states in the Sahel region especially Cameroun, Niger, Chad etc. which is operation route of some transnational terrorist networks. Most of the security challenges of Northern Nigeria are anchored on extremist Islamic fundamentalists that flow from her neighbouring countries through routes as far as Libya. Some of these fundamentalists gain radicalisation and sponsorship from ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and ISSP (Islamic State of Sahel Province). This is predominant due to porous borders and ungoverned spaces around the region.
2. There is a great need to revisit the security architecture of Nigeria to improve its structural formation and operation by establishing a state security system that has better knowledge of the terrain. Also, to equip the Nigerian security formations with modern operational equipment and improve the welfare and training of the officers as a way of motivating them.
3. Youth unemployment must be curbed through investment in the critical infrastructure, like roads, power, schools, health and social justice. This will help to engage the teeming unemployed youths who fall prey and are lured into activities that constitute security threats.
4. International Development Institutions should engage the Nigerian government in ensuring the implementation of programmes and projects that will end hunger and poverty, especially in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and technology.

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