THE IMPLICATIONS OF NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE ON COMMUNITY PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Paul Andrew Gwaza[1]
Omale Caroline[2]

ABSTRACT

In recent times, human communities in Nigeria have come under severe violent attacks by terrorists, violent extremists, and criminal groups bearing a number of taxonomy, such as unknown gunmen, terrorists, armed herdsmen, bandits, violent separatists, militants, cultists, etc. The array of violent attacks on communities has resulted in the wanton loss of lives, destruction of properties and public amenities, forced displacements, disruption of communal and family lives, and dislocation. At the core of these peace and security threats are struggles and contestations over access and control over natural resources, especially land, water, crude oil, forest, natural gas, precious metals, mineral, rocks, wind, power, solar energy, and animal resources. Although the most pronounced natural resource-related peace and security threats are connected to mineral resources, such as the Niger-Delta militancy and allegedly the armed banditry in the northwest geopolitical zone, the farm-herder violence, as well as the spiral insecurities across communities, relate to water, land, forest and animal resources. This article uses content analysis of secondary data on natural resource governance and community peace and security in finding that because most of the natural resources are located within communities, they expose them to violent conflict and insecurity incidents. It finds that the existing governance framework is not only state-centric and repressive but alienates the communities by

[1] **Paul Andrew Gwaza** is a Senior Research Fellow with the Directorate of Defence and Security Studies, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja
[2] **Omale Caroline** is a Research Fellow with the Directorate of Research and Policy Analysis, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja

employing extraneous and aligned approaches, thereby leading to the intractable nature of the conflict situation. It recommends that natural resource governance be context-specific, people-driven, and peace and security sensitive.

> *Since 1990, at least 18 violent conflicts have been fueled by the exploitation of natural resources such as timber, minerals, oil, and gas. Sometimes this is caused by environmental damage and the marginalization of local populations who fail to benefit economically from natural resource exploitation.*
>
> United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in commemoration of International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

INTRODUCTION

The intensity of empirical studies (Okoli, 2019; Maiangwa and Ahmadu, 2021; Bakut et al., 2022; International Crisis Group, 2017; International Crisis Group, 2018; International Crisis Group, 2020; Brottem & McDonnell, 2020; Conflict Armed Research, 2020) on the rising threats to communities' peace and security in Nigeria as occasioned by the violent activities of non-state security actors, such as terrorist, violent extremist and criminal groups indicate the concerns over the plights of the affected communities. A critical expression of these concerns is expressed in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 of 2017, which affirms,

> … its solidarity and full support for the conflict-affected populations of the Region, including displaced and host communities who are suffering from the ongoing security crisis, humanitarian emergency, and development deficits resulting from the violence by terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), and its solidarity with the respective Governments in their

efforts to address these urgent needs, while addressing adverse economic conditions.

While the resolution specifically identified Boko Haram and ISIL as the main threat to community peace and security, the changing trend has birthed several armed non-state actors such as unknown gunmen, terrorists, armed herdsmen, bandits, violent separatists, militants, cultists, etc. (Onuoha and Akogwu, 2022). It is revealing that the armed non-state actors often challenge the state's monopoly of power and violence in fragile state arrangements and complicate the situation because they serve both as a predatory and protective group. Indeed, the severity of their predatory activities was evident when armed bandits killed more than 2,600 people in 2021 alone and displaced several people, especially women and children. Since the commencement of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria in 2009, more than 35,000 people have been killed in northern Nigeria, and not less than 1.8 million civilians have been forcedly displaced (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2022). In addition, communities in the oil-rich Niger Delta region witnessed more than 351 and 416 violent conflict incidents in 2018 and 2019, resulting in the death of 546 and 1013 persons, respectively (Agency Report, 2020).

Although the connection between the prevalence of armed banditry and artisanal gold mining in the northwest has been blurred, the spiralling armed banditry around communities where unregulated gold mining activities are taking suggests some levels of connection (Okoli and Ugwu, 2019; International Crisis Group, 2020). With regards to the Boko Haram terrorism in the northeast, Ayu (2014) has argued that Boko Haram was positioned to benefit the Republic of Chad and its co-conspirators because the Lake Chad Basin is alleged to have an estimated reserve of 2.32 billion barrels of oil, and 14.65 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, which flows underground across Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroun. It is alleged that Chad used 3D drilling to tag these natural resources within its territory and also in Nigeria in order to push up its production levels. Ostensibly, the Boko Haram insurgency is a contraption to delay exploration and production on the

Nigerian side of Lake Chad (Ayu, 2014; Igboin, 2022). Okoli (2019) notes that Boko Haram has also relied on cattle rustling as a major source of terrorism financing by controlling the sources, syndicates, networks, markets, routes, and transits of the nefarious activity. While the drying of Lake Chad has been associated with the failing socio-economic status of citizens and exposing them to violent extremism, the agricultural viability of the lake as a major source of fishing activity in West and Central Africa is increasingly being exploited for terrorism financing by Boko Haram and Islamic State of the West Africa Province (ISWAP). Onuh et al. (2021) noted that Boko Haram also relied on both licit and illicit business ventures, such as farming and fishing-related activities, to finance terrorism.

In contextualizing natural resources, Viko, Epu, and Mbumberem (2021) argued that they are deposits found on and beneath the earth's crust, including oil and gas, precious stones, etc. However, Okonkwo (2017) observed that they are raw materials that are extracted from the ground or soil and naturally embedded in the soil, which man can only modify for his benefit and use. They include fossil fuels, coal, oil, natural gas, gold, copper, iron, diamonds, and minerals. As the wealth on which human well-being and survival depend, the natural asset includes the land on which we live and grow our food and fibre; the water we drink and use to irrigate crops, generate electricity, and dispose of wastes; the atmosphere that envelops our planet; the fish in the ocean, the trees in the forest and all other animals and plants, wild and domesticated; ores, minerals, and fossil fuels; and energy of the sun that powers the biosphere (Boyce, 2014). Fundamentally, natural resources are the common heritage of all humankind, but they become natural assets when access to them is acquired.

The array of violent attacks on communities that have resulted in the wanton loss of lives, destruction of properties and public amenities, forced displacements, disruption of communal and family lives, and dislocation is closely related to the struggle over access to natural resources. While Okonkwo (2017) and Viko, Epu, and Mbumberem (2021) wrote on the natural resource-related threats to peace and security in the oil-rich Niger Delta region, Okoli (2019)

discussed armed banditry in the northwest, and Onuh et al. (2021) and Ayu (2014) analyzed the problem in the northeast with Boko Haram terrorism. At the core of the peace and security responses to these threats are legal and institutional (Abutudu and Musa, 2011; Okonkwo, 2017; Viko, Epu, and Mbumberem, 2021), which are both national and international. For instance, Okonkwo (2017) and Viko, Epu, and Mbumberem (2021) analysed the provisions of the Nigerian legal framework on the ownership and control of natural resources, especially the decision of the Nigerian Supreme Court in *Attorney-General of the Federation v. Attorney General of Abia State & 35 Others (No. 2) (2002) 6 NWLR (Part 764) 542* on the derivation principle, the ownership and control of natural resources. Although the Supreme Court decision settled the constitutional question at the macro level between the federal government and the 37 federating units, the most pressing challenge that this study focuses on relates to the micro-interpersonal and intergroup natural resource-related threats to peace and security, which have continued to post a threat to national, regional and international peace and security. Ladan and Nlerum (2021) examined whether Petroleum Industry Act 2021 would create a conducive environment, which implies an environment devoid of violent conflict, criminality, and insecurity for exploration and industrialisation in the Niger Delta region? They argue that the PIA provides an open, fair, transparent, competitive, accountable, and non-discriminatory regime for promoting good governance and best practices in petroleum regulation. Indeed, forests are currently a major threat in constituting a hindrance to counterinsurgency operations as well as safe havens and breeding grounds for violent conflict, armed banditry, terrorism, and illicit sources of terrorism financing (Albert, 2017). In response, proper forest governance should be prioritised by addressing the needs of the people living within the forests through the provision of relevant infrastructures, etc. (Albert, 2017). Maiangwa and Ahmadu (2021) called for effective community policing in

The study uses content analysis of secondary data on natural resource governance and community peace and security to examine the implications of natural resource governance on community peace and

security in Nigeria. It identifies and analyses three core peace and security threats: Boko Haram terrorism, armed banditry, and the Niger Delta militancy, which indicate that the existing governance framework is state-centric, repressive, and alienates communities. The study finds that such interventions are regarded by the communities as extraneous and aligned, thereby sustaining the intractability of violent conflict. While recommending that natural resource governance should be context-specific, people-driven, and peace and security sensitive, the study is divided into seven subheadings. Apart from these introductory remarks, the second part examines the nature of natural resource governance in Nigeria. Part three deals with natural resource-related threats to peace and security in Nigeria. The third part discusses the implications of the threats on communities in Nigeria, especially where Boko Haram terrorists, armed bandits, and militants are operating. The fourth part highlights the response mechanisms: legal and institutions, national and international, and governmental and non-governmental. In part six, the study provides the strategic action to mitigate the impact of the threats on communities' peace and security by way of recommendations. Finally, the study concludes with part seven by way of a summary and climax of relevant findings and recommendations.

NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

It should be noted from the onset that two main factors determine and influence natural resource governance in Nigeria. The first is the rent-seeking mentality of the political elites which is amplified by the notion of the resource curse, which focuses on the utility of natural resources in explaining the causes and dynamics of violent conflict, insecurity, and criminality (Obi, 2014). The second is influenced by the former, which is the pervasive illegality that characterizes natural resource governance because of the weak regulatory capacity of public institutions structured to serve very narrow individual and primordial interests.

There is no denying the fact that since the discovery of crude oil and gas in commercial quantity in 1956 and the oil boom of the 1970s and 1990s, Nigeria has jettisoned and abandoned other sources of

revenue, including agricultural and industrial sectors, to rely exclusively on oil. Thus, oil constitutes about 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange revenue and has been the mainstay of Nigeria's national economy and annual national budget since the return to democratic governance in 1999 until now, as it fluctuates based on the prices of oil and gas in the international market. In fact, international conflicts, such as the Kuwait-Iraq, US invasion of Iraq, ISIS terrorist activities in the middle-east, the Arab Spring, and the Russian-Ukrainian war, have all negatively or positively impacted the implementation of annual budgets in Nigeria.

That Nigeria's oil and gas wealth has not translated into sustainable development, peace, and security for the affected communities in the Niger Delta region, even as poor government performances are demonstrated in the inability of the ruling elites to diversify the economy and guarantee freedom from fear, want and human dignity continued to generate youth restiveness and rising discontents. Moreover, with annual infant mortality standing at 16,000 yearly, and 1,000 persons killed annually, oil and gas exploration in the Region has damaged the ecosystem as it has led to a 60% reduction in household food security, heightened crime, and poverty rate because of the unwholesome practices.

Indeed, across communities in the Niger Delta region, the expectation has been that passing the Petroleum Industry Act would usher in a new order of peacefulness and responsiveness in natural resource governance in the oil and gas sector. The debate over the passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill has been going on for a decade and spanned the life of four consecutive administrations because it was first introduced during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, reintroduced during the administrations of late President Umaru Musa YarAdua, President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari. The Buhari administration signed the Bill in his second term with far-reaching adjustments from the earlier proposed 10 percent Host Community Development Trust Fund (HCDTF) to 3 percent, even when Deputy Senate President Omo-Agege pleaded that the oil-producing communities were hoping for 5 percent. While

National Assembly members from the South-South geopolitical zone pleaded for an upward review of the percent, Senator Ahmed Baba Kaita (Katsina North) argued that the GMD, NNPC, and Mele Kyari had informed the Senate that 3% should be an ideal contribution to the Host Communities Trust Fund (Amodu, Usigbe, and Akintola, 2021). That the PIA is proposing 3 percent on HCDTF in the face of decades of irresponsible oil and gas exploration activities in the Region definitely shows the rent-seeking disposition of the ruling elites in natural resource governance.

A very instructive manifestation of the rentier mentality of Nigeria's natural resource governance is reflected in the PIA, 2021, which provides that 30 percent of the profits of the NNPC Ltd will fund a new entity to finance exploration in other basins in the country, which is suspected in Southern Nigeria (Nwuke, 2021). For instance, the GMD of NNPC argued that the North will benefit from the PIA since "new crude oil deposits are being discovered in the region and the funds derivable from exploration would propel more discoveries in the North." Vigorous oil prospecting exists in the Chad Basin, the Sokoto Basins, Benue Trough, and the Bida Basins. However, some multinational oil exploration companies have expressed deep reservations about the presence of hydrocarbons in commercial quantities in such areas (Amodu, Usigbe, and Akintola, 2021). Therefore, one would have expected to see a significant provision in the PIA on the diversification of the revenue from the oil and gas sector to other critical sectors of the national economy than reinvesting into speculative ventures that the 30 percent is intended to achieve with the Frontier Exploration Fund (FEF).

Equally instructive is the politics of gold ore mining in the northwest geopolitical zone and its connection with armed banditry, especially in Zamfara State. As noted earlier, Nigerian gold has been illegally traded by international traders allegedly behind armed groups in the conflict theatre, even as arms are exchanged for gold (Gwaza, 2020). The illegal logging activities in Taraba, Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau, and Adamawa States have placed a new demand on the land by international stakeholders who scantly respect the country's laws

and regulations (Gwaza, 2020). The presentation of gold bars to President Buhari at the State House by the Governor of Zamfara State generated a heated debate over the ownership of the mineral deposit. This action raised questions as aptly captured by the Deputy Senate President (Editorial, 2020),

> The gold bar was presented for sale to the CBN. Our (Niger Delta) people are beginning to wonder who owns this gold that is being sold to the CBN. They don't sell oil in any of the Niger Delta states. We believe that whatever revenue ought to come from that transaction belongs to the entire country and not to the state government

The foregoing provides insight into the rent-seeking attitude of the political elites in choosing and implementing laws and regulations to sort narrow vested interests against the collective interest of the citizens. This is critical because Zamfara State has been in the national and international media for the wrong reasons, even as the rising activities of armed bandits, which were proscribed as terrorist organisations, continue to threaten national and regional security. In fact, banditry has resulted in the disruption of communal harmony, the death of many innocent persons, rising crimes and poverty, and broadened the spectrum of human rights abuses and humanitarian crises, especially forced displacements, sexual and gender-based violence, hunger, diseases, illiteracy and ignorance, destitution, palpable fear, and miserableness.

Although the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 has unbundled the humongous oil and gas public enterprise, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) into NNPC Limited, Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission (NURC), and Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), as well as other inchoate operations under the HCDTF and the Frontier Exploration (Ladan and Nlerum, 2021; Umenweke & Chukwuma, 2021), but it is yet to be seen whether the PIA would deliver to the oil producing communities the much expected gains. Nwuke (2021) raised concerns over the challenge of interpretation and imprecision in the law

regarding the place of HCDTF and existing community levies, such as the Niger Delta development levy and the definition of "frontier basin" and host community. While there are concerns over capacity in the newly introduced aspects of the PIA, the lingering disagreement between northern and southern politicians has continued to raise suspicion and generate anger in the Niger Delta region. There may also be tensions over revenue sharing between the federation and its constituent states and local government areas because of the reduction in taxes and royalties. The politics of appointments into the boards of the unbundled organisations still resides in the President, which Senator Ifeanyi Ararume is currently challenging the powers of the President to remove him as non-executive Chairman of NNPC Limited as well as seeking the Federal High Court to award the sum of 100 Billion Naira for the wrongful act (Ochojila, 2022). Importantly, he prayed to the court for,

> A declaration of this Honourable Court that by the provisions of Section 63(3) of the Petroleum Industry Act, 2021, the 1st defendant (President Buhari) cannot lawfully remove the plaintiff (Senator Ifeanyi Ararume) as the non-executive chairman of the 2nd defendant (NNPC Limited) for any reason (s) whatsoever outside the conditions specifically listed in the said Section 63(3) of the Petroleum Industry Act, 2021.

Apart from the high stakes that characterized the competition into political offices in rich natural resources states like the Niger Delta region, the recent revelation over the mismanagement of the over 9 trillion 13 percent derivative allocation (Ijediogor, 2022) by Governor Nyesom Wike of River State shows that the 3 percent HCDTF may likely go the same way. The rising spike of corruption among the elites is manifested in the inability of the Federal Government to audit the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the continuous instability that trailed the management of both the NDDC and the Office of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme (Nwikinaka, 2020). The regime of corruption has continued to widen the inequality gap as the majority of the Niger Deltans live in poverty amidst an arrogant display

of opulence by a class that would stop at nothing to sustain their firm grip over political power.

Since natural resource governance refers to the norms, institutions, and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over natural resources are exercised, especially how decisions are taken and how citizens participate in and benefit from its management – women, men, indigenous peoples, and local communities (springer, 2021), the character of the ruling class would determine whether the resource will benefit few or majority of the citizenry (Eze, 1987: 9). This brings us to the conversation on the pervasive illegality that has characterized natural resource governance, which is informed largely by the weaknesses of relevant regulatory public institutions that are so structured to serve very narrow individual and primordial interests. For example, we have demonstrated that the decades of oil and gas exploration in the Niger Delta region has impoverished the host communities and enriched a few elites and international multinational corporation because of the rent-seeking disposition of Nigeria's petrostate to natural resource governance.

In this study, two issues will be raised to demonstrate the foregoing point, that is, the pervasive illegality that characterizes natural resource governance in Nigeria. The first deals with the monumental and unacceptable incident of oil theft that has been going on in the Niger Delta region, allegedly with the connivance of relevant state institutions. It is reported that the country is losing over 750,000 barrels of crude oil daily, worth over $700 million monthly, to oil theft that involves local and international cartels (Okungbowa, 2022). The second relates to illegal mining across the country involving foreign nationals and companies, as indicated by the Executive Governor of Zamfara State and the Federal Ministry of Mines and Steels (Gwaza, 2020). Beyond the illegal gold mining in Zamfara State, numerous prohibited mining activities occur across communities in the country that have continued to endanger the lives of citizens from Osun, Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Taraba, and several other states.

NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

The notion of peace and security has attracted both national and international attention, starting with the United Nations in 1945, through the 1994 Report of the United Nations Development Programme on Human Security to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as fostering a just and inclusive society which guarantee freedom from fear, want, violence and eliminating activities that are humiliating to the human person (Gwaza, 2022: 36-39). Within the preceding context, therefore, the community's peace and security entails any activity that would foster inclusivity, and justice and guarantee freedom from fear, want, violence, and human dignity within the human settlement. Therefore, in assessing the relationship between natural resource governance and community's peace and security in Nigeria, the case of the Niger Delta, northwest and north-east will be amplified to determine whether the standards of; fostering a just and inclusive society, guaranteeing freedom from fear, want, and violence and eliminating activities that are humiliating to the human person are achieved?

An enduring character of natural resource governance in Nigeria is the apparent poverty, destitution, underdevelopment, diseases, and hunger amidst plenty that are symptomatic of decades of state neglect that have led to frustration, especially among the unemployed youths. It is trite that when a group of people begins to feel deprived owing to certain inert or economic considerations, they will develop a deep sense of injustice and discontent, resulting in distrust of the state or state arrangements. This is because they perceived that the state or state arrangements have systematically nurtured such structural inequality to deliberately obstruct their chances for legitimate progress and development. Indeed, when the individuals or groups that strongly feel cheated and denied are shocked by the social stratification, their natural reaction is the resort to actions and inactions that are anti-state, which are in the form of unrest, crimes, etc. Indeed, across communities in Nigeria are teaming a number of young people that are aggrieved with the perception of enduring unjustness and marginalization, which

apparently is Horizontal Inequalities (His). Horizontal Inequalities exist between culturally defined groups over ownership of assets, access to a range of services, distribution of political power and opportunities, and recognition and hierarchy of status (Langer, Mustapha & Stewart, 2007). The debate over the passage of PIA points to the apparent perception in the Niger Delta region of a grand conspiracy by a section to unequally deprive them access to the benefit of oil and gas from the Region, especially since a paltry 3 percent is allocated to the HCDTF while 30 percent to the Frontier Exploration Fund (Nwuke, 2021; Amodu, Usigbe and Akintola, 2021) that has already commenced in some northern state. As indicated earlier, the anger of the Region was expressed when the Zamfara State Governor presented Gold to the President, which was immediately perceived to mean the Federal Government was encouraging the state to keep the proceeds. While the elites continued to bicker over access to these resources, communities across that country are wallowing in poverty, which the World Bank (2022) observed that as many as 4 in 10 Nigerians live below the national poverty line, especially in the North, where they lack access to education, electricity, safe drinking water, and improved sanitation, etc. Sadly, the report additionally asserts that hard-working Nigerians would not exit poverty with jobs as just 17 percent of workers hold the wage jobs best able to lift people out of poverty even as most workers are engaged in small-scale household farms and non-farm enterprises. More worrisome is that Nigeria's wealth inequality score is 35.1, which is the 11th in West Africa that consist of fifteen countries (Uduu, 2022).

As indicated by the World Bank (2022), a significant percentage of Nigerians are living in poverty even before the Corona Virus pandemic outbreak, with over 2.5 million persons forcefully displaced by the Boko Haram terrorism ravaging Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Indeed, communities in the Region have witnessed an increasing denial of access to sources of livelihood, including farmlands, fish areas, markets, and other economic transactions, consequently constituting the main threat to food security.

The rising level of poverty has pushed many people into illegal mining activities with threatening implications for their health and community well-being. For instance, artisanal illicit gold mining in some communities across Zamfara, Osun, and Niger States have resulted in land degradation, destruction of vegetation, erosion of soils, degrading water quality as well as soil contamination that is passed to human through the food chain, leading to slow growth rate in plants and respiratory problem, liver and kidney damage in man. It must be appreciated that community poverty is both the cause as well as the effect of the insecurity and violent conflicts in the country. Indeed, the escalation of violence has claimed thousands of lives over the years, even though there is no reliable data on the fatalities given that the violence mostly occurs in remote communities with little media coverage and security presence. The International Crisis Group (2020) notes that between 2011 and 2019, about 8,000 people were mostly killed in Zamfara state. In addition, hundreds of thousands of people were displaced within and outside the country, with most of them living in very appalling conditions, irregular and inadequate food distribution, crude shelters, and poor health and sanitation services. The politics of displacement is that most states are refusing to open up and officially recognise IDP camps, especially in Zamfara and Katsina states, where IDPs are staying in improvised camps or scattered within communities.

The gender dimension of the community peace and security is that while men are kidnapped, killed, and robbed of their possessions; women are exposed to all manner of sexual and gender-based violence, including forced marriages in the North. Indeed, thousands of women are abandoned, widowed, and left to fend for their families. The natural resource-based violent conflicts have also taken their toll on children, with many being killed and maimed and denied access to education, health, food, water, and other humanitarian assistance. This is even as non-state armed actors destroy dilapidated public infrastructures across communities while public resources meant for development are used for policing, military and humanitarian services. It is alleged that some of the schools, roads, health centres, markets, and other public facilities constructed for public use are languishing in inaccessible

communities because of the operations of armed bandits, terrorists, separatists, militants, and other criminals.

The threat has resulted in weakening existing response initiatives and delegitimising the capacities of relevant institutions to intervene effectively in restoring peace and security within communities. Public and private peace and security structures and initiatives, including the traditional and religious, have been rendered ineffective as some stakeholders were severely implicated in perpetrating acts that threaten their communities' peace and security. In Zamfara State, for instance, about thirteen traditional rulers have been dethroned for allegedly participating in the activities of armed bandits, including the Emir of Maru, Abubakar Cika Ibrahim, and the district head of Kanoma, Ahmed Lawal, especially in sharing the proceeds of kidnapping (International Crisis Group, 2020). Contrariwise, some traditional rulers were terrorised by armed bandits for allegedly assisting the state and the security agencies in their counterterrorism operations (International Crisis Group, 2020).

RESPONSE MECHANISMS FOR MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED COMMUNITY PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

The responses to natural resource-based peace and security in communities in Nigeria are multi-dimensional ranging from constitutional, statutory, bureaucratic, military, and law enforcement, and several interventions by governmental, non-governmental, and international organisations (Bakut, Okafor & Gwaza, 2021). To be sure, they are largely state-centric, repressive, and alienated from the communities because of their extraneous content and approach, which have led to the conflict's intractability. The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2003) observed that the state-centric approach is one-dimensional and follows the deployment of security, distribution of relief materials, setting up of fact-finding bodies, ceremony for the submission of reports, and the dumping of the reports in state archives. Notably, organized Civil Society has been involved in several interventions that are aimed at protection, monitoring, advocacy,

socialization, social cohesion, intermediation and facilitation, and service delivery (Kew and Obi, 2010), which are in the form of conflict management, peace education, training, conflict mediation, early warning systems and post-conflict reconstruction (Ibeanu, 2006).

In the fourth Republic, there are some improvements in the content and context of the response mechanism, especially with the passage of the relevant laws such as the Niger Delta Development Commission Act, 2000, the Allocation of Revenue (Abolition of Dichotomy in the Application of the Principle of Derivation) Act of 2004, Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010, the Petroleum Industries Act, 2021 (Viko, Epu, and Mbumberem, 2021). Fundamentally, Section 1 of the Land Use Act 1978 vests all the land under the control and ownership of the state governors to hold in trust for the communities, except where they are taken for a public interest, health, or purposes. By another twist, the right of control, exploration, and administration of mineral resources is vested in the Federal Government by virtue of the combined reading of the Petroleum Act, the Territorial Waters Act, the Exclusive Economic Zone Act, and the Land Use Act 1978 (Viko, Epu and Mbumberem, 2021).

Recently, there have been some maverick suggestions for amnesty to be granted to terrorists, bandits, and insurgents as it was granted to the Niger Delta militants. In furtherance to this, some state governors have gone ahead to grant amnesty to bandits and armed non-state actors for them to surrender their arms and turn a new leaf. In addition, the Federal Government has opened the Operation Safe Corridor in Malam Sidi, Gombe State, to accept, disarm, demobilise, and rehabilitate the repentant Boko Haram terrorists.

STRATEGIC ACTION TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF NATURAL RESOURCE-RELATED PEACE AND SECURITY THREATS ON COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA

It is critical to note that the action for mitigating the negative impact of natural resource-based peace and security threats on communities in Nigeria should be context-specific, people-driven, and peace and security sensitive. Therefore, it is proposed that every intervention

should endeavour to foster a just and inclusive society, guarantee the freedom of people within their communities to freedom from fear, want, and violence, and eliminate activities that humiliate human persons.

There is a need for every intervention initiative, especially governmental and non-governmental, to be geared towards the entrenchment of equal access to education, respect for human rights and gender equality, nondiscrimination against women and girls, guarantee access to justice and legal identity, eradication of corruption and bribery, tackling organized crimes and stolen public assets, respect for labour rights, and equal opportunities. Therefore, citizens should be granted access to information, empowerment of women to participate in leadership and decision-making, respect for citizenship rights, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of public institutions, institutionalized poverty eradication, migration policies, and equitable trade, among others.

Additionally, it is important for relevant stakeholders to work towards addressing the prevalence of structural, physical, sexual, and psychological violence, which has resulted in apprehension, food insecurity, and sustenance of the vicious cycle of the culture of violence within communities in the country. Thus, the culture of peace should be promoted as an integral approach to guarantee freedom from violence and fear by promoting education for peace, sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament. We cannot overemphasize the fact that education has the potential for the promotion of the ideals that transform citizens' orientation to imbibe the value of peace, tolerance, equality, and respect as well as to be equipped with skills and education needed for the peaceful resolution of disputes and the rejection of injustice, intolerance, discrimination, and hate.

CONCLUSION

The study reviewed the nexus between Nigeria's natural resource governance and community peace and security. It argued that the latter is informed by the rentier mentality of the political elites in influencing public policies and programmes, including enacting laws such as the Petroleum Industry Act 2021. For instance, the PIA provided a paltry 3 percent for the Host Community Development Trust Fund while 30 percent for Frontier Exploration Fund, which cannot immediately address the growing agitations in natural resource-rich communities. The study also observed that irresponsible natural resource governance has left the communities poorer, causing frustration and resulting in violence. The natural consequence of rising insecurity in these communities is violating citizens' freedom from fear, want and human dignity, especially because of the unacceptable killings, displacements, destructions, and social dislocations. Reviewing the existing frameworks for mitigating the negative consequences on communities shows that the response mechanisms are state-centric and align with the people. The study recommended the entrenchment of the culture of peace as a strategic action to be mainstream in intervention initiatives by both governmental and non-governmental organisations at policy and programme levels.

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