# Insecurity As A Global Phenomenon In The 21st Century: An Overview of Terrorism In Nigeria

**By**
**Umar Lawal Yusuf**
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Maiduguri

## Abstract

*This paper examined the issue of insecurity that became a global phenomenon in the 21st century. Insecurity has become a major social problem worldwide because many part of the world have peculiar insecurity situation. Data herein are secondary and obtained from content analysis. The objective of the paper is to explore the causes of insecurity as global phenomena and its solution in Nigeria. The study adopted the Failed State Theory to explain Nigeria's rising of insecurity and terrorism. The theory described that the inability of State to provide positive political governance to the citizens led to increasing insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria. The study recommended that the government should accept and implements policies and programs that would improve the quality of lives of the citizens. It also recommended that government should inculcate into the citizen's minds that patriotism is the cardinal principle of peace; they will do the right with or without supervision or fear of security agents.*

***Keywords***: *Insecurity, terrorism, Insurgency, violence, threat*

## Introduction

In many parts of the world, different kinds of insecurity exist, ranging from terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, and banditry to mention but a few. Insurgency and terrorism have become global concerns because they cause serious harm to many countries in the world. Scholars used the two-term interchangeably based on the fact that United Nations declared Nigeria's insurgents as a terrorist group when they used a car bomb explosion and attacked the United Nations Office on Friday, 26 August 2011, killing at least 21 and wounded 60 in Nigeria Haruna (2019). However, terrorism have become one of the most used concepts recently. Terrorism can destabilize governments, undermine civil society, jeopardize peace and security, and threaten social and economic development. Terrorism is commonly defined as violence targeting civilians to pursue political or ideological aims. However, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008:6) argued that terrorism is not monolithic but recognized as follows:

> *"criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes" and that such acts "are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them (p6)".*

This phenomenon bedevils the world of the 21st century, and hardly any country is immune to it. Haruna, (2019) and Ericsen (2010) have variously tried to understand and explain what constitutes terrorism. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in human experience. Those who chose to oppose states, kings, and princes have used violence throughout human history and interject fear into people. However, these outbreaks of violence can be differentiated from

what is termed terrorism. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States (U.S.), terrorism has increasingly become a new warfare tactic and a key security threat in Africa and globally (Accord, 2019).

As itemized by Global Terrorism (2017) cited in Concord (2019), a terrorist attack was viewed as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation", further points some of the components that should qualify an attack as "terror" in real terms. These components include that an event must be intentional; the event must comprise a certain level of violence or threat, including property destruction and violence against people; and the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks must be sub-national actors.

Before the terrorist attack in Nigeria first started in the northeast in Borno State at Maiduguri state capital and later metamorphosed to neighbouring Adamawa and Yobe state. They created serious psychological and physical harm, including killings of innocent people, security agents, preachers (Muslim and Christian) and traditional rulers. The terrorist attack affected the region socially, economically, religiously and politically. After a couple of times, the northeast terrorists attacked diffused to all over Nigeria. It also affected the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, though other African countries, such as Burundi, Somalia, and Central Africa, have their own set of terrorism. Still, some are similar to Nigeria while others have a different method of operation, but all toward instilling fear in people, forcing the constituted authority to accept their ideology, or dislodging the incumbent government.

In the 21st century, there are a marked increase in groups engaging in acts designed to maim, kill and devastate communities and groups of people, in many of the world, particularly in Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa. These groups use violence and the invocation of terror to achieve their purpose. They breed an atmosphere of fear and insecurity and sometimes promote the outbreak of conflicts. Against this background, this paper examine insecurity as a global phenomenon in the 21st century, particularly terrorism within Nigeria.

**Methodology**

This paper utilizes the descriptive method. It describes the nature of insecurity and terrorism as a global phenomenon. The study explores how these social problems can be reducing to minimal bearing in the current dispensation. Data herein are secondary, with some obtained from content analysis of various research. First, data were sourced from online databases from empirical studies and reports, followed by the desk review such as insecurity effects on global spaces and nefarious nature attacks by terrorist groups. Additionally, were sourced based on the researcher's observation.

**Concept of Insecurity**

Insecurity is a feeling of inadequacy (not being good enough) and uncertainty. It produces anxiety about goals, relationships, and ability to handle certain situations. This definition didn't cover major area of concerns such as psychological or mental insecurity. Adegbami (2013) stated that insecurity had become a hydra-headed monster that security agents around the globe, including Nigeria, appear incapable of handling vis some vis its multifaceted manifestations like bombing, kidnapping/hostage taking, destruction of property, and creation of fear, to mention but a few. This definition has captured that insecurity encompasses violence, loss of lives, destruction of properties, the uncertainty of mind, fear among the public and forcing constituted authority to change the policy or try to dislodge it.

Insecurity is detrimental to the general well-being of the people with its resultant effects of illnesses, low life expectancy, low quality of life and even death. In the economy, insecurity has led to the destruction of businesses, properties and equipment, relocation. Insecurity is a major concern for everybody around the globe, Africa and Nigeria in particular, and this has created a lot of fear and uncertainty in many societies. In the case of Nigeria, every region in the country is battling various challenges of insecurity (Abdullahi, 2022).

**Concept of Terrorism**

Terrorism has become a global concern because it causes serious damage to many counties around the world. However, the definition of terrorism is usually complex and controversial because of its inherent ferocity and violence. Historically, Jenkins (2022) posited that terrorism, the term in its popular usage, has developed an intense stigma. It was first coined in the 1790s to refer to the terror used during the French Revolution by the revolutionaries against their opponents. Further, in his words, terrorism in this usage implies an act of violence by a state against its domestic enemies. However, since the 20th century, the term has been applied most frequently to violence directly or indirectly aimed at governments to influence policy or topple an existing regime.

Terrorism involves the use or threat of violence and seeks to create fear, not just within the direct victims but among a wide audience. Attention needs to be drawn to that there have been some definitional differences in the use of the term terrorism and act of it between countries around the globe. Historically, Europe witnessed terrorist acts and used the term for a long period. Viewing terrorism itself as Delpechm (2002:7) put it:

> *"In March 2002, only a few months after the most spectacular terrorist operation in history, Europe witnessed the unexpected return of a more conventional phenomenon. The assassination of Marco Biagi, an adviser to the Italian employment minister, was claimed by the Red Brigades, whom many thoughts had disappeared in the mid-1970s. This killing, which was the second carried out by the group in the last few years, revealed the existence of a new generation of 'conventional' terrorists using the call sign and the prestige of their predecessors".*

As stated earlier, the term terrorism has been coined and identified with Europe. However, the African continents were not immune from the terror attacks. As Mroszczyk and Abrahms (2021) remark:

> *"Terrorism on the continent of Africa has been rising sharply over the decade. Non-state (terrorist groups, militias, rebel groups, etc.) have increasingly targeted civilians in their campaigns of violence. From Somalia to Mali and Nigeria to Mozambique, the continent has repeatedly witnessed horrible acts of violence targeting its civilian populations".*

As the U.S. Department of Defence has pointed out, "terrorism is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. This definition covered the idea because it captured fear that the actor would inculcate into the victim's mind. They also forced the government or society to change their political, religious or ideological policies.

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## International Terrorism

The issue of terrorism is a blindfold; it doesn't space any developed, developing or underdeveloped country. Despite the advanced technology reached by European countries, they were not immune from the acts of terrorists. Terrorism has brought back the perspective of making the lives of Europeans "nasty, brutish, and short". Terrorist groups attacked the socalled developed nations, such as America and France. In France and across Europe, terrorism is one of the main concerns of citizens and policymakers who have previously focused on more traditional security threats.

Terrorism and its acts have been known in Europe for quite a long time. As European experts, they identified an 'international' generation with no specific territorial base, whose members were trained in Afghan camps before settling in Europe to plan attacks. Europeans have thus gained much useful knowledge regarding the fight against international terrorism, and hence many opportunities for cooperating with the Americans on intelligence and justice. Following 11 September, often discreet instances of this cooperation have been far more balanced than in the military sphere. One of Washington's most obvious mistakes in the diplomatic handling after 11 September was the incapacity to use or to maintain the huge capital of sympathy that emerged in Europe following the attacks. Finally, the Europeans had known for some years of the terrorists' interest in weapons of mass destruction, particularly biological or chemical, and the existence of specialized camps in Afghanistan for studying them, particularly the one at Deruta.

Terrorism, as pointed out earlier, is not a new phenomenon in human experience. Those who chose to oppose states, kings, and princes have used violence throughout history. However, according to the United State Institute of Peace, violence in opposition to a government is often targeted against soldiers and those who govern. Terrorism, however, is characterized by the use of violence against civilians, with the expressed desire to cause terror or panic in the population (UNIP). It further restated that: *".... terrorism is not unique to the 20th and 21st centuries. Terrorism existed in 18th-century revolutionary France during the reign of terror and among the Zealots of Palestine in opposition to Roman rule some 2000 years ago.*

*Today, terrorist activity can be found in Israel, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and the United States, to name a few".*

Among the Western countries, the most powerful militarily, economically, politically, socially and technologically, the United States of America USA had suffered from the attack of the terrorist group in the region. As revealed by the UNFPA (2019), the suicide attacks began when a passenger jetliner, hijacked en route from Boston to Los Angeles, slammed into New York's World Trade Centre at 8:45 a.m. About 18 minutes after the first crash, a second plane, United Airlines flight 175, also originating in Boston and bound for Los Angeles, with 92 crew and passengers struck the south tower. The action was well-executed; authorities concluded that the hijackers had their pilot aboard. Due to those attacks, the U.S. government initiated a war against terrorism.

**Terrorism in Africa**

The resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government; the expanding threat of terrorism and violent extremism across the continent, including the influx of foreign terrorist fighters, private military companies and mercenaries, the proliferation of armed groups, as well as transnational organized crime, continue to negatively impact the peace, security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of African states (https://au.int/en, 2022).

On the African continent, terrorism has continued to affect people's fundamental human rights, directly and indirectly, contributing to high numbers of people being forcibly displaced from their residences or countries. Currently, Africa, particularly the eastern, northern and western regions, has witnessed a rapidly growing trend of terrorist activities. This growth is demonstrated by the number of terrorist attacks and countries affected. Many African countries were affected by terrorist attacks, but the magnitude differed. The most prominent terrorist groups creating a terror impact in Africa are Al-Shabab of Somalia and Boko Haram of Nigeria. Terror activities on the continent have contributed to mass displacements of the civilian population. This growing tendency of terrorist attacks, which has resulted in the increased movement of people across borders, remains a major security challenge for policymakers in Africa Concord (2019). Viewing the African tragedy of terror attacks as Abioye (2019:1) put it:

> *"These acts, perpetuated by different groups under different guises, have one thing in common: the invocation of a sense of terror and horror in people. In Africa, the situation is the same. Events in countries in and around the Horn of Africa, East Africa, Mali, Kenya and Nigeria, to name a few, speak to the rise in events of this nature that leave a trail of loss of life and property and destruction in their wake".*

**Nature of Insecurity and Terrorism in Nigeria**

Nigeria's insecurity is on the increase. Insecurity has taken different forms in several parts of the country; armed robbers have taken position within the southwest, cross-border bandits and Boko Haram operate smoothly in the north, while kidnapping issues are widespread in the northwest and south-south Chukwuemaka (2022). He further stated that insecurity and terrorism have been major challenges for the Nigerian government lately, leading to the loss of life and the destruction of properties. He further points out that this:

> *"Nigeria is among the world's most terrorized countries. The rate at which evil is growing in the country and the ruthless manner in which the lives of innocent people are being wasted are worrying. In addition, citizens are burdened daily with emotional and psychological trauma due to the death of their loved ones who have fallen victim (Chukwuemaka, 2022)".*

According to Ibenegbu and Simwa (2022), the Nigerian government has recently faced significant difficulties due to insecurity and terrorism. Among these serious insecurities are bombings, to control sporadic shootings of unarmed civilians, the bombing of Churches, Mosques, and police stations, the bombing of Schools, and markets, abduction of young girls and women, rape, armed robberies, political unrest and murder, among others.

## Causes of Insecurity and Terrorism in Nigeria

All terrorism is insecurity, but not all insecurity is terrorism. Terrorism is one of the numbers of insecurity affecting the people and government of Nigeria. Numerous insecurity and terrorism are increasing, and the causes that led to their emergence are also numerous. To buttress this point, Chukwueka (2022) has identified some fundamentals causes of insecurity

in Nigeria as follows: bad governance, poverty, terrorism/kidnapping, weak judicial system, corruption, unemployment, poor security network, porous border, and ethnicity/religious differences as the major problem that brought about the increase of insecurity in all the regions in the country. He further reiterated that political and religious leaders in Nigeria's geo-political zones sometimes use sentiment to divide, achieve and maintain their political positions.

Ibenegbu and Simwa (2022) stated that a lot of things had been found as the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of this, they listed some factors responsible that causes the insecurity in the country thus: such as unemployment, corruption, imbalance, weak judicial system, open borders, a high influx of arms, narcotics, slavery, criminal situation and terrorism as the major ingredients source the insecurity in Nigeria. In addition, they stated that when people are insecure, it can lead to numerous other things. Among others, people may find it difficult to trust one another.

A variant view is that of Adegbami (2013), who stated that the power shift from the northern hegemony to a minority geo-political zone of south-south is at the top in the list of issues that instigate groups and individuals against the interest of the state. He further stated that other matters of concern include intra/inter-party rancour, porous boundaries, unemployment, jobs racketeering and illiteracy.

## Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the failed state theory because State failure theory blames the act of terrorism and insecurity on the failure of the State to carry out its basic function. In this view, insecurity, violence or terrorism is an offshoot of a failed State. As Eriksen (2010) noted, the proponents of

this theory are William Zartman and Rotberg. According to Zartman (1995), a State has collapsed when the basic functions of it are no longer performed. In other words, a State has collapsed when it is no longer able to provide the services for which it exists. Zartman sees a failed State as a situation that can no longer function properly and provide for its citizenry's basic needs.

On the other hand, Rotberg (2003) described State failure as the inability of states to provide positive political goods to their citizens. From both perspectives, a State has an obligation to its citizenry. When it fails to meet this obligation, it loses the legitimacy given to it by the citizenry. Piazza (2008) argued that failed States have contributed to terrorism because they cannot control and protect their borders. Therefore, machinery and arms could easily come in and go out of the state.

Based on the theory of the failed State, they argued that the rise of insecurity, such as kidnapping, pipe vandalism, arm robberies, cultism, insurgency and terrorism, in Nigeria is the reaction of the citizenry to a failed State. Members of the *Boko Haram* sect and other insecurity are reacting to the state's inability or failure to meet its basic obligations. When we look at the rate of poverty and unemployment, corruption, and porous border, it becomes plausible to say that the Nigerian state has failed. So, it precipitated terrorism, and the best way to curb or end terrorism is to strengthen the condition to meet obligations.

A critical look at this theory would reveal that it properly explains Nigeria's rise in insecurity and terrorism because terrorist group seeks to express their anger against the State for its failure to carry out its responsivities. Its problem is truly a failed State. Every region has peculiar insecurity; northeast terrorism, northwest armed banditry and kidnapping, north central harder Famer and religious bigotry, southeast agitation of Biafra by IPOB, southsouth, pipe vandalism and southwest kidnapping and armed robbery.

This theory explains the nature and sources of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria coupled with a solution because if the Nigerian government is interested, they have to carry out the constitutional responsibility to provide what is required by the citizens. Because the rising insecurity and terrorism across the world and Nigeria, in particular, was a result of the failure of some of the States to do the needful.

**Solution to Insecurity in Nigeria**

Scholars like Chukwuemeka (20 13) and Ibenegbu and Simwa (2022) have conducted research and came up with beautiful findings; if implemented, the menace of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria would be controlled and reduced to a minimal level. Chukwuemeka (20 13) argued that the government should intensify efforts to recruit, train and deploy adequately equipped customs and immigration personnel across borders. In addition, the government needs to invest in more effective security technologies, which will benefit border security. He further listed other solutions:

- human and infrastructure development,
- leadership development,
- good governance, economic development,
- elimination of corruption, building a proactive law enforcement agency,

- proper security training and equipment,
- appropriate education for all, and improving the criminal justice system.

Based on this, there is need for Nigerian government to come out with program which our teeming youth would be engaged and keep them away of idealness. This will assist to curb the menace of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria based on the slogan that says an "ideal mind is the devil's workshop''.

If what was identified as the solutions to Nigerian insecurity and terrorism will be accepted and implemented with all sincerity. Honestly, insecurity and terrorism will be handled and controlled by Nigerian security agents. Because Nigeria has the workforce, what Nigeria lacks is political will, well equipment, police and military with new technological gadgets and motivation to work. Another issue is the citizens should assist the security agents with necessary information visas via the security should work proactively with utmost confidentiality to the informant's identity. However, patriotism is the cardinal principle of controlling the citizens; they will do the right with or without supervision or fear of security agents. Apart from the above-suggested solutions to eradicate insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria, the government should accept some findings brought by the researcher if really government interested in fighting the menace of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria. However, this paper reveals the government's refusal and failure to implement what the indigenous scholars have been finding out, making Nigeria spend a huge amount of money on security without noticeable results. Therefore, the government should put politic aside and listens to experts.

## Conclusion

Based on the literature reviewed for the study, it is concluded that terrorism is not so rampant as it existed recently in many parts of the world and Nigeria. It returns full force in the recent time and becomes a global phenomenon. A lot of research was conducted by government, Civil Societies Organizations, academia and they suggested recommendations and solutions, but most leaders don't pay attention to the expert's viewpoint. What led to insecurity and terrorism became a global phenomenon that every country was not immune from one form of insecurity or the other in this dispensation. The study utilizes Failed state theory to explain

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the State's failure that led to the increase of the menace of insecurity and terrorism worldwide, particularly in Nigeria.

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