

**COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND PEACE-BUILDING CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA:  
ISSUES FOR POLICY CONSIDERATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study seeks to examine Nigeria's security governance dilemmas and peace-building challenges during the enforcement of COVID-19 lockdown which was aimed at curbing the spread of pandemic. This is intended to bring to fore very fundamental lessons from the government's approach to peace-building and security governance during and after the lockdown in Nigeria and make policy recommendations. This was carried out using secondary sources such as print and electronic media reports, journal articles, and textbooks. The study finds that outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic heralded a turning point in the entire gamut of Nigeria's socio-economic and political life thus creating unwholesome uncertainties and fear across the country especially during the nationwide lockdown. It surmised that peace-building and security governance are veritable components of peace and stability in every known human society. However, challenges such as law enforcement lapses, and policy implementation usually arise and impede the peace-building process if not properly and promptly addressed. Recommendations include effective monitoring, evaluation mechanism and feedback mechanism, training and retraining of law enforcement agents in the art of modern-day policing, with emphasis on peace and conflict resolution techniques and effective palliative administration in times of crises.

**KEYWORD:** Covid-19 Pandemic, Peace-Building Challenges, Policy

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the outbreak of the deadly corona virus, code-named: COVID-19, came the imposition of compulsory lockdown which entails restriction of human activities in many parts of the world by the government of the affected countries (Okolie-Osemene, 2021). This state of affairs led to the constitution of COVID-19 lockdown and safety measure enforcement taskforce by the various states (Wright, 2020). States were compelled by the ravaging effects of the pandemic to declare state of emergency in the health sector in a bid to solve one of the worst health challenges that have befallen man. In agreement with this, the Peace Research Institute Oslo Report (2020) posited that 'states are responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by invoking the state of emergency – generally characterized by an expansion of the state power, allowing it to perform actions that it could not carry in times of normal politics'. The high rate of casualties or infections and deaths arising from the novel corona virus especially in countries adjudged to be medically and economically advanced exposed the main weaknesses of most world capitalist economies (Manderson and Levine 2020; van der Ploeg 2020). The pandemic has changed the entire gamut of the world such that lifestyle, working patterns as well as migration are now subjected to protocols, with home settings, relationships, institutions and governments adjusting from old norms to new normal.

COVID-19 outbreak heralded a turning-point in twenty-first century history such that there as new additions to popular lexicons/ vocabulary words like quarantine, contact tracing, social distancing, physical distancing, isolation, panic buying, emergency flights, evacuation, stock up, lockdown, community transmission, new normal, and staying safe, and so on. (Okolie-Osemene, 2021). However, lockdown stands out among these words due to its concomitant security governance issues. Survival became a major slogan as people had reasons to worry about the possibility of living a normal life without disruption of livelihoods as the world panicked about the safety of mankind based on health anxiety. This is reinforced by the fact that the pandemic is an invisible health issues that cannot be combated by the use

of security forces (Ookeditse, 2020). Thus, there was no much positive outcomes in preventing human fatalities especially in vulnerable areas given the inability of the healthcare sector in Africa to provide immediate and adequate control of the ravaging virus. According to Ayanlade and Radeny (2020), what started with the shutting down of schools and the hospitality industry quickly graduated to locking down major cities and towns across states especially in Nigeria (Emphasis added). This state of affairs resulted in high inflation rate and increasing cost of living affecting every class, segments and strata of the society, loss of jobs and increased poverty rate among both rural and urban dwellers (Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

In the words of Wright (2020), the weakness of governments in the era responsiveness to health emergencies was exposed by the centralization of state response to the virus as the pandemic stalled the operations of institutions, economic activities, recreational centres, businesses, and government programmes. According to Okolie-Osemene (2021), city dwellers faced enormous survival challenges when juxtaposed with those in rural communities because of the inconveniences that were engendered by the lockdown measures. As jobs were lost, businesses lost customers and the closure of hundreds of thousands of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) many urban dwellers were exposed to unexpected depreciation of economic buoyancy (Maritz et al. 2020).

The domestic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is still being felt by Nigerians. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020, when the nation's index case was reported, most Nigerians were oblivious of what the country was to face not until the Presidential Taskforce issued guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and management did they come to terms with the situation of things. The whole scenario portrayed a people caught in the web of impromptu change of lifestyle as the compulsory lockdowns changed the pattern of daily life. Hitherto normal lifestyle of waking up and going out in the early hours of the day to hustle became a thing of the past as people faced the new normal of working from home, observing the various safety protocols in areas of relationship, hygiene, communication, feeding, health, etc. Okolie-Osemene (2021) observed albeit sadly that the lockdown in Nigeria did not only take Nigeria

off the streets but also restricted them to their homes and neighborhoods with little to do in public spaces. With the impact of the pandemic on socio-economic activities which also changed life on the street across the country, it became clear that people needed to protect themselves.

Expectedly, the pandemic engendered some security concerns, however, there is dearth of adequate studies examining the security governance initiatives during lockdowns in Nigeria. This study therefore examines the COVID-19 pandemic and peace-building challenges in Nigeria with a view to proffer issues for policy consideration. Hence, it examines Nigeria's security governance dilemmas occasioned by the enforcement of lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 in many parts of Nigeria with emphasis on the actors, challenges, resilience and threats of incidents and practical lessons. Nigeria's security governance problems manifested as a result of the rare nature of happenings that led to lockdown in times of counterinsurgency and other stability operations caused by the activities of non-state armed groups in some parts of the country.

### **Conceptualization and Literature Review**

#### **Security Governance**

Like other concepts in the field of social sciences, peacebuilding is subject to variegated definitions and opinions about what it entails and involves. Johan Galtung who is the major proponent, called for the creation of peacebuilding structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the "root causes" of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution (Galtung, 1976). Thus, the concept of peacebuilding became a popular and accepted within internal organizational, regional, sub-regional and bi-national organizations as well as states following Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report, titled 'An Agenda for Peace'. The report portrays peacebuilding as action to solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict. The Brahimi Report (2000) laid credence to the above definition when it stated that peacebuilding refers to "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations

something that is more than just the absence of war.” That is to say that peacebuilding encompasses activities aimed at engendering and sustaining peace. To the United Nations (1992) “Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Therefore, peacebuilding involves strategies that must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the affected country, hinged on national ownership, and should consist of a set of prudently prioritized, sequenced, as well as a set of action-plan targeted at attaining the set goals.

On the political context, the initial post-conflict period (immediately after violent conflicts) in most countries is characterized by significant insecurity and political uncertainties that require adequate attention to control. According to the United Nation (1992) peace processes can advance, but they also often suffer periods of regression and deterioration. In West Africa, several countries have at one time or the other been governed by transitional political arrangements (Military or Interim National Government) until after the first post-conflict elections, when the executive and legislative arms of government are properly constituted through competitive elections.

However, it is assessed, peacebuilding is primarily a national challenge and responsibility that calls for the full attention of every national government. It goes beyond the government to include the support and efforts of the citizens to achieve peacebuilding across the world. Hence, the citizens of the affected countries where peacebuilding is underway have a duty to lead the process, with support from the governments (expected to lay the foundations of lasting peace in the society). Therefore, for the peacebuilding efforts to yield results, national ownership is critical. National capacity development must be central to all international peacebuilding efforts from the very start, as part of the entry strategy, not the exit (UN, 1992). Indeed, a core objective for peacebuilding is to reach as soon as possible the point when external assistance is no longer required, by ensuring that all initiatives support the development of national peacebuilding capacities. This is a challenge, especially in the early

days when peace is fragile and national capacity is often displaced and severely limited. Nevertheless, peacebuilding must focus proactively on (re)building national capacity, otherwise peace will not be sustainable. To support this effort, a collective assessment of existing capacities should be conducted early on.

The strategic peacebuilding paths consists of three main components are further broken down into paths. They include:

**Structural and Institutional Change and Development;**

- a. Law; Advocacy and solidarity;
- b. Dealing with trans-national and global threats;
- c. Development; and
- d. Education.

**Justices and Healing**

- a. Restorative justice; and
- b. Transitional justice.

**Violence Prevention, Conflict Response and Transformation**

- a. Dialogue/conflict resolution strategies;
- b. Non-violent social change;
- c. Humanitarian action;
- d. Government and multi-lateral efforts; and
- e. Trauma healing

An inclusive peacebuilding process involves many actors. The key to effective peacebuilding lies in some common strategies such as nationally owned strategies, with clear priorities against which the international community and national partners can allocate resources. A common strategy should be:

- i. Nationally owned, derived from an inclusive planning process, with many and diverse stakeholders consulted as the strategy is developed; and

- ii. Based on an assessment of the country's situation (e.g. through a Post-Conflict Needs Assessment or Strategic Assessment) including analysis of conflict drivers and risk.

### **Security Governance**

Security governance states that the safety needs of the people in every human society must receive adequate attention (Okolie-Osemene, 2021). Issues relating to security have been shown to receive a large chunk of attention from both government and the citizens in all known human society irrespective of the existing security situation because no one is safe in a state of insecurity (Veen, 2014). Security provisioning and budgeting has continued to top government priorities in both developed and developing countries of the world (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Veen, 2014). This is reinforced by the fact that no government and society thrive under war or escalating insecurity. Therefore, security and defense policy makers and executors have continued to emerge and evolve with the legal mandate to safeguard the society through agencies such as the police, military, and para-military agents whose duty focuses on human/national security (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Ashkenazi 2013). According to Donais (2017), accountability inherent in security provision emphasizes not only the effectiveness of security forces but how accountable they are to the state and its citizens, usually reinforced by security governance within the rule of law framework. Ehrhart, Hegemann, and Kahl (2014) in consonance with Webber et al refer to security governance as “coordinated management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities, the interventions of both public and private actors (depending upon the issue), formal and informal arrangements, in turn structured by discourse and norms, and purposefully directed toward particular policy outcomes”.

Security governance refers to the comprehensive management in which the government of a country in synergy with government of the components of the state as well as other actors to ensure peace and security in the state. Okolie-Osemene (2021) sees it as a “combination of formal and informal structures among interdependent but autonomous actors

operating beyond formal hierarchies; and a tendency toward cooperative bottom-up implementation rather than top-down command and control". This involves more of government agents and action than the involvement of non-state actors such as the civil society organizations (CSOs). The ultimate objective of security governance is to curb insecurity (which includes criminal violence, political violence and any situation that inhibits government's quest to ensure an equitable and just society through a strict adherence to the rule of law.

The weakness of security governance in the society manifests in armed violence and the proliferation of small and light weapons as well non-state armed groups. However, when the security governance is effective, it dismantles the structures grease the wheel of crime and criminality and also discourage the formation of criminal groups. Therefore, it is by effective security governance system that the state guarantees safety by preventing and punishing the activities of criminals and troublemakers. When government is pro-people in its developmental policy and plans, crime is reduced to its barest minimum especially through education and vocational skills.

### **COVID-19**

Otherwise known as coronavirus, the COVID-19 pandemic is a contemporary and an ongoing global pandemic which emerged in 2019 and is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei province of China in December 2019. However, every effort at containing the virus within Wuhan and other cities in around Hubei province proved abortive as it quickly spread to other parts of mainland China and around the world (Zoumpourlis, et al, October, 2020). On January 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and a pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The outbreak was worsened as multiple and dominant variants (such as Alpha, Beta, and Delta) of the virus emerged spread to several countries since 2021 (Ma, 2020). Following the emergence of these virulent variants, more than 245 million



cases and 4.97 million deaths were confirmed as at 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021, making it one of the deadliest pandemics that have confronted humanity.

The deadly COVID-19 symptoms range from none to life-threatening. Severe illness is more likely in elderly patients and those with certain underlying medical conditions. Transmission of COVID-19 occurs when people breathe in air contaminated by droplets and small airborne particles. The risk of breathing these in is highest when people are in close proximity, but the virus can transmit over longer distances, particularly indoors and in poorly ventilated areas. Transmission can also occur, rarely, via contaminated surfaces or fluids. People remain contagious for up to 20 days, and can spread the virus even if they do not develop symptoms.

### **COVID-19, Peacebuilding and Security Governance in Nigeria**

Nigeria was already overwhelmed with security challenges such the book haram terrorism, banditry, militancy, armed robbers, and kidnapping prior to the outbreak of the dreaded COVID-19 virus. However, the security situation was worsened as the pandemic created economic instability and the living standards of the people plummeted. According to Okolie-Osemene (2021), the security governance system prior to the pandemic created relative peace across the country with the exception of the states affected by insurgency and banditry. Therefore, peacebuilding efforts and security governance is not responsible for the imposition of lockdowns or restriction as people enjoyed the freedom of movement until the outbreak of the corona-virus and its concomitant lockdowns. With the outbreak of the pandemic and the resultant lockdown, came the involvement of the Police and other paramilitary agencies in the enforcement of the lockdown and contact tracking to check or contain the spread of the virus by identified persons who have come in contact with those who have tested positive to the virus (Ibrahim, Ajide, and Julius 2020; Wong 2020). They were also involved in ensuring a reduction in social and religious gatherings in schools and Churches and Mosques as well as other social programmes in the six geo-political zones and thirty-six states of the federation and the FCT (Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

The virus started spreading in Nigeria following the report of the index case in Lagos on 27 February 2020. Hence the need to adopt preventive measures and contain the spread of the COVID-19. This led to the imposition and implementation of lockdown in two separate ways viz. Intra-city and inter-city enforcement phases. The President of Nigeria with powers under the Quarantine Act 1926 which enacted to quarantine people and areas with infectious diseases, issued the COVID-19 Regulation 2020. The government further directed security agencies to be cautious and tactful in the lockdown enforcement (Oseghale 2020). This is based on the need to protect human rights during law enforcement. The two phases of COVID-19 lockdown enforcements by the police and other security agencies are discussed below:

- i. Intra-city Restrictions Enforcements:** - The phase of enforcement restricted people to their streets and within few kilometers from their homes. The federal government declared the first phase of the lockdown on 27 April 2020 with effect from May 4 to 17 for a two-week period, it was however extended from 18 May to 1 June 2020, and by 15 July 2020 (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Ibrahim, Ajide, and Julius, 2020).
- ii. Inter-city Enforcement:** - Under this phase of the lockdown prevented people from travelling from one city to another or other states. At the expiration of the first phase of the lockdown, the rate of infection was abating but the government in its wisdom decided on the second phase of gradual easing of the COVID-19 lockdown and edged towards ending the lockdown. This phase was quickly followed by the imposition of a nationwide curfew between 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Federal government policy decision on the lockdown was hinged mainly on the restriction on inter-state commuters' movements as well as the shutting down of both public and privately-owned institutions. It saddled law enforcement agencies with the mandate to monitor compliance and enforce physical distancing and border closure across the country (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Falaye, 2020). Thus, only security agents, health personnel, media professionals and other essential service providers were permitted to operate within the

COVID-19 protocols. The military, paramilitary, the police, civil defence, task forces in different states are the major stakeholders/security actors involved in the security governance during lockdown enforcements. According to Okolie-Osemene (2021), the use of road blocks and increased stop and search in many cities created an atmosphere of negative peace, which is the type of peace that generates the perception of problem and the peace guaranteed by coercive instrument of the state. Such security measures rather increased stop and searches, thus portraying a state of emergency and limiting the exercise of peoples' rights. This created a scenario of excessive use of force by security forces at the various road blocks and the implementation of restrictive measures to contain COVID-19 spread and community infections (Iweze, 2020).

This state of things was further intensified apprehension among the citizens by the Regular Street and community patrol by policemen during the lockdown.

Irrespective of the actual or perceived threats to peoples' rights and peace and security in the society, the security governance system during the COVID-19 lockdown significantly reduced infection rate and saved lives of many Nigerians. Aside saving people from the deadly COVID-19, the enforcement system saved people from road accident-related deaths due to the inter-state travel restriction. This is true considering the number of accidents that occur on Nigerian roads especially along the ever-busy highways like Lagos-Ibadan, Lagos-Sagamu-Benin-Asaba, Enugu-Aba-PH highway, Lokoja-Abuja-Kaduna etc. (Okolie-Osemene, 2021). The enforcement of lockdown especially through mounting road blocks by the security agents further reduced criminal activities especially on highways as every vehicle spotted on the highways were subjected to stop and search. Everyone on any form of assignment of journey was expected to present their identity cards to prove that they are either on essential duty, security agent or needs medical attention.

This continued until the mother of all protests in Nigeria's recent history – the End-SARS Protest that lasted for close two months and saw security agents as the prime targets of the mass revolt against alleged police brutality and perversion of justice in the country. There

were allegations of violent enforcement of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions by security agents in major cities of the country such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu and Ibadan. It was alleged that wanton extortion of motorists, violation of human rights, etc. in these cities.

### **Challenges of Peacebuilding and Security Governance in the COVID-19 Lockdown Era**

The negative effects of the pandemic on urban dwellers was and remained enormous as people especially those living slums had to grapple with lack or scarcity of basic needs such as food, water, etc. healthcare services became the exclusive reserve of the rich (Okolie-Osemene, 2021; Wright 2020). In Abuja and Lagos for instance, it took the benevolence of some economically comfortable Nigerians to sustain most poor families during the lockdown. Realities on ground revealed the weakness of government to adequately cater for the food, pipe-borne water and sanitation need of Nigerian as the little that were made available could not go round in their small quantity. This informed the assertion made by Omigbodun (2020) that strict lockdown is inimical to poor people in crowded settlements as it is capable of engendering a conducive environment for civil disorder to thrive. This is reinforced by the growing class inequality and in the face of job loss and declining living condition of people as was experienced in Nigeria. While the rich prepared for the lockdown because of their enormous financial strength, the poor were unable to stock adequate food stuff, drugs, sanitary materials, etc. as a result of their meager resources. Artisans and daily earners were the worst hit by the lockdown as their daily survival depended on their daily earnings that were stopped once government imposed the lockdown.

Sequel to this state of affairs, the urban and rural poor could no longer cope with the attendant economic hardship that came with the lockdown and rebelled against the government order restricting movement and started moving out in search for means of survival. Robberies, burglary, and theft were reported across Nigeria, especially in some parts of Lagos State, Rivers, Ogun, Abuja and Enugu state. There were several cases of rape, sexual harassments and defilement of minors in major cities of Nigeria (Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

There were also reported cases of compromise against security agents as they extorted money from motorists or citizens were either on essential duty, seeking medical attention or businessmen who continued to ply their trade unabated during the lockdown. According to Ogu-nyemi, (2020), security forces that were always collecting bribe from motorists on federal highways, the lockdown inhibited their business and pushed them into demanding higher settlement from the few vehicles that plied the highways. It was also alleged that while movements from south to northern Nigeria were restricted, there was an influx of Northerners into southern Nigeria. This was seen by the people as a deliberate move by security agents in connivance with some people in government to move insurgents and bandits down south (Okolie-Osemene, 2021).

The enforcement of the imposed lockdown recorded violation and abuse of human rights and violence in some parts of the country as some security agents asserted their authority to restrict peoples' movements. Some fatalities were recorded in some states of the federation. For instance, about five persons were reportedly by law enforcement agents and the youths rioted and burnt down a police station at Ebem Ohafia in the process (Ugwu, 2020). It was alleged that a young man was also killed in Enugu by the police during the enforcement of the lockdown. The period before the #EndSARS protest that locked saw security agents being subjected to threat to their lives.

### **Lessons learned on COVID-19 and security governance/ Recommendations**

The COVID-19 lockdown security administration and peacebuilding process presented a number of decipherable lessons. From the Nigerian experience, the following lessons offer themselves:

- i. There was little or no mechanism to monitor the activities of security agents on the field during the enforcement of the lockdown. Therefore, these agents were free to enforce the lockdown in their own terms and conditions as the attention of the government placed premium on the restricting movement and oblivious of human right and security implications of the security forces on the field. Hence, there is the

- need for effective mechanism to be instituted by a joint-task force of the security forces in Nigeria to monitor and evaluate the activities of security officials on the field in future engagements to forestall right abuses and a relapse of the fragile peace of the nation.
- ii. The End-SARS protest that shoot the nation in the last quarter of 2020 was bolstered by the negative effects of the COVID-19 lockdown which saw people losing their jobs and means of livelihood. At the time the protest commenced were already hungry and angry and were just looking for outlets to let out their frustration on the government. The alleged conducts of some security officers during the enforcement of the lockdown made matter worst. Therefore, there is the need for a functional early warning and response system to be developed to gauge public feeling (whether the public is happy or angry with the system). This will help to avoid public revolt against agents of government and inhibit unexpected circumstances that would warrant the restriction of movement of the people or confinement of law-abiding citizens within their homes.
  - iii. The alleged compromise of security officials who were saddled with patrol and stop-and-search on the roads to avoid inter-state movement sabotaged the main purposed which the lockdown sought to achieve. The poor enforcement of travel restrictions jeopardized the desired expectations of preventing the spread of the COVID-19 which greatly undermined the efforts of the Federal Government to contain the virus. This situation resulted in inter-state transmission of the virus as those with the wherewithal moved about freely with the aid of compromised security agents.
  - iv. The palliative distribution was poorly administered by both the federal government and the various state governments. The concentration at city-centres to the detriment of urban and rural poor who dwell in slums and satellite communities generated so much bitterness and disappointments among the masses who were confined without adequate provisions for their basic needs. This heightened the temptation of people

- engaging in criminality or flouting stay-at-home orders, especially with the excuses of going to purchase foodstuffs and other items for family consumption. Rumors of the lockdown came with serious inflation as the cost of food items skyrocketed and robbed the mass of citizens the opportunity of enjoying three-square meal per-day.
- v. The lockdown was the first of its kind in Nigeria and appeared strange to many who did not see reasons why they should be restricted to their homes and streets. Furthermore, there was a very poor management of the sensitization programme prior to and within the lockdown. Rural dwellers were almost left behind in the sensitization programme as most of these programmes were in English language which most rural dwellers are not acquainted with. Thus, sensitization programmes for such important national issues should broadcast in both English and indigenous languages of the people to enable them have a grasp of the issue.
- vi. Finally, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution has enormous duty to in partnership with relevant government security agencies and institutions run regular training programmes on peace and conflict resolution as well as security administration to improve policing in Nigeria as reduce abuse of power.
- vii. The impact of COVID-19 in Nigeria is both good and bad. Good in the sense that everybody, from government to the people on the streets, realized the importance of health. A lot of private sector people also recognized that there is need for the nation's health system to work. However, the nation's health sector continues to suffer neglect in all ramifications, ranging from inadequate funding, dearth of eminently qualified experts, brain-drain in the sector, poor condition of service for medical experts, to incessant strikes by medical personnel. One would have expected that the Federal and State Governments to take the sectors after the COVID-19 experience which exposed the weaknesses and the unpreparedness of the sector in Nigeria. But that is yet to be seen and felt across the length and breadth of the country.

## **Conclusion**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic took the world by storm and changes the way and manner countries and individual view and think about their socio-economic and political life thus creating unwholesome uncertainties and fear across the world forcing countries to close their borders and impose lockdowns. This study examined the peace-building and security governance as veritable components of peace and stability in every known human society especially during the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria. There were reported cases of challenges such as law enforcement lapses, compromise, abuse of peoples' rights, etc. during the enforcement of the lockdown. These challenges impeded the peace-building process during the period under review. Nigeria's security governance dilemmas and peace-building challenges during the enforcement of COVID-19 lockdown were not peculiar to Nigeria but similar to other Third-World countries during the peak of the pandemic. It also brought to the fore fundamental lessons from the government's approach to peace-building and security governance during and after the lockdown in Nigeria and made the following recommendations:

- i. Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (and feedback mechanism) should be put in place to ensure that the activities of security agents in field operations during periods of emergency and restrictions of movement are adequately monitored to avoid a relapse of security;
- ii. Effective training and retraining of law enforcement agents in the art of modern-day policing and on peace and conflict resolution techniques. This will enable them bring professionalism and finesse to police service and reduce cases of harassments, extortions, right abuses, etc. regularly levelled against security agents in Nigeria;
- iii. The need for the National Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution and similar institutions to collaborate with the National Orientation Agency to carry out regular sensitization programmes to educate Nigerians (security forces inclusive)



on their rights, conflict resolution strategies, and to disabuse the minds of Nigerian on the erroneous notion that *security agents are bad and should be resisted at all times*. This will help reduce the number of attacked on security agents as witnessed in 2020 before, during and after the End-SARS protest.

- iv. There is also the need for effective palliative administration to avoid a repeat of what happened across Nigeria in 2020 when hungry masses took laws into their own hands to attack warehouses (private and public) and looted goods to assuage their hunger. The federal ministry of humanitarian affairs whose responsibility should learn this scenario and ensure direct and timely distribution of palliatives in future.

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