

Enhancing Africa's Internal Security Through Nonviolent Measures: An Analysis of Nigeria's Amnesty Programme

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Abstract

This paper stressed the need to enhance peace and internal security in Africa through non-violent measures and approaches with particular reference to Nigeria's amnesty programme. The study adopted the basic human needs theory as its theoretical framework and derived its data from secondary sources. Data collected were analysed using the qualitative method. The study revealed that conflict resolution through nonviolent measures such as disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) programmes have helped to enhance sustainable peace and internal security in most African countries including Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda etc. Further findings also show that the use of military force as a means of conflict resolution by some African states have helped to escalate and prolong conflicts in different parts of Africa. The need for good governance, rule of law and strict adherence to democratic principles by African leaders and states is also fundamental in the process of building peace, internal security and political stability in Africa.

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Background to the Study

Several factors account for the high rate of conflict in Africa which often degenerates into civil unrest and wars leading to the death of several citizens. These conflicts are often social, political and economic in nature. The best approach to conflict and its resolution remains a source of debate among scholars and state actors while some believe in nonviolent approaches others argue that conflict resolution through military force remains the best option. Thus, pre-conflict and post-conflict analysis of events with a view to adopting new strategies and approaches is necessary and fundamental. It will be recalled that prior to the proclamation of the amnesty policy in the Niger Delta region, pre-amnesty Niger Delta witnessed series of conflicts and violence between Niger Delta youths, multinational oil companies and the Nigerian state. The situation led to destruction of oil facilities and the kidnapping of expatriates and hostage taking of both Nigerians and foreigners. Ibaba and Arugu (2013), captured the mood of the pre-amnesty Niger Delta when they observed that militia groups' protest against the Nigerian state and the activities of oil companies operating in the area for deprivation, neglect and environmental degradation, confronted security forces, attacked oil company workers and randomly kidnap oil workers. The situation degenerated further with the militarization of the entire Niger Delta region by the Nigeria armed forces hence, prompting most investors and multinational oil companies to withdraw from the troubled region for security reasons. The situation in Niger Delta and other parts of Africa clearly revealed that terrorism and insurgency remains a major threat to peace and security at national, regional and global levels hence, studies into counterterrorism strategies especially nonviolent counterterrorism strategies will no doubt help to correct existing defects and gaps leading to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and other victims of conflict and war across the world. Thus, this paper interrogates the nature of conflict in Africa with a view to proffering new strategies and approaches that will guarantee sustainable peace, development and internal security.

Method and Scope of the Study

The concept of methodology according to Kaplan, cited in Obasi (1999), is to help in understanding in the broadest possible fashion both the products and the process of scientific investigation. Nachmias and Nachmias (1985), also see methodology as a system of unambiguous rules and procedures upon which the basis of an enquiry is formed and claimed knowledge evaluated. This study is therefore a descriptive study that relied on secondary sources of data. The basic human needs theory was also adopted as the theoretical framework to guide the study. Analysis was done using the qualitative method and content analysis.

Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis

The study adopted the basic human needs theory by John Burton in order to critically examine how internal peace and security can be guaranteed using nonviolent methods and approaches. This theory emphasis that the needs of individuals and groups must be accommodated in any decision making process because according to Burton (1997) fundamental human desires can impact our convictions and human attitudes negatively

or positively. Advocates of this theory argue that political violence and conflict does not appear in a vacuum but that there is usually a long history of violent contestations, group formation and increased hostile interactions within the state of other forces before violence becomes a more viable option. This clearly describes the Niger Delta conflict which initially started as a mere civil unrest which later escalated due to the nonchalant posture of the Nigerian government which resorted to the use of military force which was also counterproductive. In all, the basic human needs theory as applied in this paper clearly explains the fact that understanding the real causes of any conflict (basic needs and aspirations of the citizens) helps the state and the society to resolve such conflicts without much friction. The resurgence of violence and attacks on oil facilities by youths and militant groups in Nigeria's Niger Delta is a clear indication that the environmental and social needs of the Niger Delta people have not been met hence, the dialogue and engagement must continue. It is therefore important to add that the basic human needs hypothesis helps the government and policy makers to identify the basic needs, emotions and aspirations of all stakeholders in a conflict before negotiation and settlement. Proponents of the basic human needs theory include: Burton (1997), Sites (1973), Maslow (1943) and Galtung (1990).

Conceptual Analysis

Conceptual analysis helps to give direction to any study or investigation hence, relevant and related materials were examined. In a press statement titled "Go sin no more" published in The Week Magazine of 6th July 2009, Nigeria's former president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua proclaimed amnesty to agitators and youths in the Niger Delta region as part of measures to secure peace in the Niger Delta region. The full text of the amnesty policy statement reads:

"Pursuant to Section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria whereas the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria acknowledges that the challenges of Niger Delta arose mainly from the inadequacies of previous attempts at meeting the yearnings and aspirations of the people, and have set in motion machinery for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta states: whereas certain elements of the Niger Delta populace have resorted to unlawful means of agitation for the development of the region including militancy thereby threatening peace, security, order and good government and jeopardizing the economy of the nation: whereas the government realizes that many of the militants are able bodied youths whose energies could be harnessed for the development of the Niger Delta and the nation at large. Whereas the government desires that all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in militancy in the Niger Delta should return to respect constituted authority and whereas many persons who had so engaged in militancy now desire to apply for an obtain amnesty and pardon. Now therefore, I, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, after due consultation with the Council of States and in exercise of the powers conferred upon

me by the provisions of section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, make the following proclamation: I hereby grant amnesty and unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta. The pardon shall take effect upon the surrender and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition and execution of the renunciation of militancy forms specified in the schedule hereto, by the affected persons at the nearest collection centre established for the purpose of government in each of the Niger Delta State: The unconditional pardon granted pursuant to this proclamation shall extent to all persons presently being prosecuted for offences associated with militant activities: and this proclamation shall cease to have effect from Sunday, 4th October 2009”.

This nonviolent policy action was accompanied with a clearly defined disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme which served as a peace building measure. While making a case for nonviolent conflict resolution strategies, Jones and Libicki (2008) argued that military force had rarely been effective in defeating terrorism and the reliance on conventional military force had often been counterproductive hence, he added that a military solution will not solve a political problem. On the contrary while citing the case of Afghanistan, where the Unites States military operation was successful in denying Al-Qaeda freedom of movement by removing pro-al-Qaeda regime from power, Smith (2007:6) argued that a properly deployed army can in the short term deny a terrorist group or individual the environment to operate. In his words: while long-term military campaigns have been faced with challenges, a short-term well defined military mission could be effective in mitigating the threat of terrorism” (Blyth, 2013). The appropriate counterterrorism strategy to adopt remains a source of debate among scholars in the field of conflict resolution. In his work “we need nonviolent counterterrorism strategies” Niemela (2012) added his voice to the debate on counterterrorism strategies when he stated categorically that all violent counterterrorism intervention policies have completely failed. In his words: we are sowing and reaping perpetual tragedy with this violence machine and the only people benefiting are sitting on top of a mountain of cash in the conflict industry hence, it is time for a major shift in the conflict management strategies.

While expressing the need for states to adopt nonviolent counterterrorism strategies he asked rhetorically “can we finally start listening to the numerous scholars and studies with scientifically supported strategies for nonviolent counterterrorism? To discourage insurgency and terrorist activities he urged states to adopt nonviolent conflict resolution strategies by investing massively in social and economic development initiatives in any region in which terrorist groups are engaged. This position if adopted and implemented will help states to deprive terrorists of avenues to recruit new and intending members. This is a fact because the situation in Northeast, Nigeria clearly revealed that the less privileged children popularly called Almajiris constitute the vulnerable group from

which the Islamic sect (Boko Haram) recruited most of their members. The call for states to adopt more proactive nonviolent counterterrorism strategies by investing massively in education, social and economic development initiatives made by Niemela (2012) is therefore, a step in the right direction. However, according to the United Nations (2005) report, about 25 African countries are engaged in armed conflict or were experiencing political crises. While commenting on the Niger Delta conflict and the shortcomings in the amnesty programme, Sarowiwa, 1995 cited in Ikporukpo (2011) captured the plight of oil producing communities and stated thus: the Ogoni are embattled and imperilled since oil was discovered in the area in 1958, they have been the victims of a deadly ecological war in which no blood is spilled, no bones are broken and no one is maimed. But people die all the time. Men, women and children are at risk; plants, wildlife and fish are destroyed, the air and water are poisoned and finally the land dies. Today, Ogoni has been reduced to a wasteland (Sarowiwa, 1995:p. 131). The Kaiama declaration of 1998, the Ogoni bill of right and several other agitations in the Niger Delta led to the following interventions by the colonial and Nigeria governments respectively:

1. Establishment of the Willinks Commission in 1957
2. Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) in 1960
3. River Basin Development Authority (RBDA) in 1970
4. Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992
5. Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000
6. Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs in 2008 etc.

Citing Courson (2011), Ibaba and Arugu (2013), corroborated the above position and added that the community oil was a major factor responsible for violence and insurgency in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. In their words: Oil related conflicts which transformed into insurgency were triggered by the interface of grievances, greed and quest for survival. In their work "preventing the next insurgency; highlighting the risk to violence in post-amnesty Niger Delta", they contended that the conflict in the Niger Delta can be better understood if it is studied from the following perspectives:

Intra and inter community conflicts, Inter-ethnic conflict, community-oil company conflict and community-state conflicts. While blaming the Nigerian government for allowing the crisis in the Niger Delta to escalate Ibeanu, (2008) stated categorically that the consequences of government inaction is youths restiveness, militancy, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, oil theft and other forms of criminality and violent confrontations. He added that the inability of the Nigeria state to address genuine demands of the Niger Delta people stimulated long years of clashes and confrontations between several youth groups and security agencies as well as oil multinational oil companies (MNOCs). In his words: With the return of democracy in 1999, the military approach to containing the unrest exacerbated the already hostile security condition in the area leading to loss of human lives, oil and increased environmental devastation etc. Also commenting on the consequences of the Niger Delta crises Ibeanu, (2008) and Okonta, (2005) lamented that between 1999 and 2005, oil losses amounted to 6.8 billion dollars and that a subsequent report prepared by a 43 persons government commission released in late 2008 indicated

that in the first nine months of 2006, the Nigeria government lost a staggering 23.7 billion dollars in oil revenue due to militant attacks and sabotage (Joab Peterside, Porter and Watts, 2012). Ibeanu (2008) and Okonta (2005) also maintained that between January 2006 and the summer of 2009, over 400 expatriate oil worker hostages were taken while maritime piracy equally increased. In their words: between 2005 and 2009, there were over 12,000 pipeline vandalism and over 3,000 oil spills. Over 1 million barrels of output were short-in as a result of deepening insurgency and by the summer of 2009, output fell to around 1 million barrels per day. 124 of 174 oil fields were shut, Shell's western operations were closed and Nigeria as a consequence fell from its perch as the largest producer (Joab Peterside, Porter and Watts, 2012:8). Consequently, Ironbar and Itari (2019) admitted that, "conflicts saturate local and international news".

While appraising the character and nonchalant posture of the Niger Delta states and political elites Ibeanu (2008) reaffirmed his earlier position and described the Niger Delta region as a paradox. According to him, "it seems that every development strategy that has been developed for the Niger Delta has paradoxically under developed the region". Despite the huge budgetary allocation including the 13 percent derivation fund released to Niger Delta states on a monthly basis, scholars have continued to wonder why poverty still persist in the Niger Delta region.

Analysis Showing the Impact of Nonviolent Conflict Resolution Measures and Approaches

According to United Nations (2005) report, about 25 African countries were engaged in armed conflict or were experiencing political crisis. The report also noted that the following African countries have experienced UN/AU-led disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes: Angola, Burundi, The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra-Leon and Zimbabwe. Available records and statistics also revealed that seven (7) African countries in the Great Lake region benefited from the multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) with a target of 400, 000 combatants under the sponsorship of the World Bank and thirteen (13) other donors which included twelve (12) European countries and the European Union (EU). It is on record that the MDRP project started in 2002 and closed in June 2009 with about 300,000 ex-combatants demobilized and 232, 000 ex-combatants reintegrated hence, indicating that a total of five hundred and thirty-two thousand (532, 000) ex-combatants from seven (7) African countries were demobilized and reintegrated through nonviolent DDR schemes sponsored and coordinated by external partners. This no doubt implies that the success of any nonviolent counterterrorism strategy depends on the cooperative behaviour of states and in the willingness to abide by international rules, laws and conventions. The tables below show European Union's assistance to poor African countries.

Table 1: EU Assistance to the Sahel Countries

Country/region	Ongoing (in million £)		Programmed (in million £)		Proposed additional resources (in million £)	Total (in million £)
	Country programmes	US	10 th EDF	US		
Niger	39.9		42.2		91.6	173.7
Mali	202		38	4	50	294
Mauritania	21.25	1.2	22		8.4	52.85
West African region		13.7	66	6		85.7
Total	263.15	14.9	168.2	10	150	606.25

Source: 9th and 10th EDF, budget lines and thematic programmes published 10th May, 2010

Table 2: EU Assistance to the Maghreb Countries

Country region	Ongoing (in million £)	Planned (in million £)	New resources	Total
Algeria	99		N.A	99
Libya	24.5		N.A	24.5
Morocco	70		N.A	70
Total	193.5		N.A	193.5

Source: 9th and 10th EDF, budget lines and thematic programmes published 10th May, 2010

Apart from assisting poor African countries as reflected in the above tables, the European Union and other external development partners have also invested huge financial resources in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants and victims of war and insurgency in different parts of Africa. The data in the table below clearly affirms this position.

Table 3: Comparative analysis of Angola and Nigeria disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme

		Angola	Nigeria
DDR Features			
	Period under review	01/09/2003	01/03/2010
	Nature of actors	UNITA Soldiers/ex-combatants	Environmental activists/ex-agitators
	Population	91,127 ex-combatants registered	30,000 agitators registered
	Setting	35 Quartering areas setup for the project	Only in 1 Quartering area in Obubura but disarmament don in different locations
	Type of Offer	General amnesty to all UNITA Soldiers in 2002 after the death of their leader	Amnesty to all who signed up
	Registration	Reception for both UNITA Soldiers and dependants	Reception to only ex-agitators
	Dependants	288,756 Family members registered	None
	Admittance to National Force	5,000 Integrated into National Army	None
Reintegration	Training Types	Vocational training	Yes
		Traditional apprenticeship and on the job training	Yes
		Community works access to tool kits	Yes
		Micro business training, advisory services and micro credit	Yes
		None	Academic trainings for degree qualifications
	Implementation Agency	Ministry of Ex-combatants and motherland veterans and IRSEM managing the DDR project	OSAPND
Duration and Speed		Between 2003 and 2005 over 20,000 ex-combatants benefiting from Reintegration	11,700 have received reintegration packages between 2010 and 2013
Funding		Donor and National Government Funding; received USD522, 950,865 from MDRP and UNPP as of July 2008	Only Nigeria Government Funding USD514,233.064 - 89.72 spent till date
Ministry		Ministry of Ex-combatants and Motherland Veterans	Ministry of Niger Delta (but not managing the DDR project)
Stipends		None	USD \$400 monthly
New Trend		None	Introduction of training opportunities for 1,000 people from the conflict impacted communities

Source: Adapted from Abazie, 2014

Analysis showing the impact of nonviolent conflict resolution measures and approaches is expressly stated in the above table. It shows that Angola's DDR programme was national in scope involving UNITA soldiers and over 90,000 ex-combatants while the DDR programme in Nigeria was limited to the Niger Delta region with a total of 30,000 ex-combatants. In the area of funding, the DDR programme in Angola was funded by the Angolan government with the active support of external donor agencies such as the

Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which released a total of \$22, 950, 865 USD as at July 2008. In the case of Nigeria, only the Nigeria government through the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (OSAPND) funded the DDR programme and released the sum of \$14,233,064,89.72 USD (Abazie, 2014). In the same vein, a special ministry known as the ministry of ex-combatants and mother land veterans led the whole process in Angola while in Nigeria; the DDR project was domiciled in the presidency. However, a crucial aspect of the DDR programme in Angola revealed that trainees were not exposed to allowances or financial inducements during the training and reintegration period but in the case of Nigeria, militants were given the sum of N65,000 (400 USD) monthly before and during the training and reintegration exercise. After studying the DDR programme in Nigeria and Angola Abazie (2014), concluded that the commitment of local actor's involvement in the DDR process will minimize the issue of duplication and surrogates hence, the interveners will be able to identify such issues quickly than external actors. In the words of MacGinty (2010:402) local actors are capable of influencing the extent to which peace might be hybridized since they can resist, ignore, subvert or adopt liberal peace intervention programmes. The tables below further revealed that Nigeria's amnesty policy in the Niger Delta helped to resettled over 20,000 combatants and ex-militants back to civil life hence promoting internal peace in the Niger Delta and in the process stabilizing the economic activities in the Niger Delta region.

Table 4: Components of the Federal Governments Amnesty Programme

DISARMAMENT	DEMOBILIZATION	REINTEGRATION
Duration: August 6-October 4, 2009	Rehabilitation Duration: 6-12 months	Duration: up to 5 years
Key Activities * Collection of Arms and Ammunitions, explosives etc.	Key Activities * Ex-militants report to camp * Verification and documentation * Transformational training * Peace building and conflict resolution * Counselling * Career guidance * Wellness assessment * Reintegration classification * Education and vocational placement * Graduation and Demobilization	Key Activities * Knowledge and skills acquisition * Financial empowerment * Placement programmes * Microcredit * Education * Reconciliation with local community * conflict resolution framework/mechanism * Monitoring and Evaluation * Exit of Amnesty
Key Enabler Disarmament camps Massive campaign	Key Enabler Transformational training centres rehabilitations camps	Key Enabler Partnering government agencies, NGOs and private organizations, OGIS tracking and Support framework

Source: Adapted from Arugu and Okoye (2014:p.80)

Table 5: Demography of amnesty participants and the total number of beneficiaries

S/N	States	Male	Female	Registered	Summary of Total Amnesty Beneficiaries
1	Akwa Ibom	155	8	163	1 st phase 20,192
2	Bayelsa	6,900	61	6,961	2 nd phase 6,166
3	Cross River	159	1	160	3 rd phase 3,600
4	Delta	3,361	-	3,361	
5	Edo	450	-	450	
6	Imo	297	3	300	
7	Ondo	1,198	2	1200	
8	Rivers	6,958	39	6,997	
9	NDDC	571	19	600	
	Total	20,049	133	20,192	30,000

Source: Adapted from Arugu and Okoye (2014: pp. 82). The Punch Newspaper, 20 December 2012, Premium Times 24 December, 2012 And Africa Today November, p.19, 2009).

In the light of the above analysis, it is obvious that nonviolent conflict resolution measures and approaches through DDR helped in carryout effective post-conflict analysis and reintegration of ex-combatants and agitators back to civilian life and in the process prevent a spread and re-occurrence of such conflicts. Thus, the role of the United Nations Development Programme, and regional organizations in the promotion and entronement of peace and internal security through nonviolent measures and approaches can therefore not be overemphasized. The Multi-country Demobilization and Re-integration Programme (MDRP) carried out by the World Bank and European Union countries involving seven (7) African countries no doubt led to the demobilization and reintegration of over eight hundred thousand (800,000) ex-combatants who turned-in their arms and returned to normal civilian life hence, promoting peace, stability, internal security and nonviolence across the world.

Conclusion

The study examined the need to enhance Africa's internal security through nonviolent measures and approaches and observed that there is need to review and re-appraises conflict resolution methods and strategies in Africa. In the same vein, the study observed that in Nigeria and other countries where Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration (DDR) have been successfully conducted several ex-combatants and victims of war have been resettled and integrated into the society hence, creating peace and internal security in the community/society. The implementation of nonviolent conflict resolution strategies in the form of amnesty policy in Angola and Liberia also helped in re-channelling the energies of warlords to productive resources. The paper therefore maintain that the adoption of nonviolent conflict resolution measures and approaches by African states and leaders will help to promote and enhance internal peace and security in the continent as reflected in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will no doubt help to improve nonviolent conflict resolution measures and approaches in Nigeria and Africa as a whole:

1. Budgetary allocation to peace and civil issues should be increased in Africa to ensure that emphasis is placed on massive development and education rather than the purchase of arms and ammunitions. Institutions of government should also be strengthened in order to promote rule of law, good governance and democratic ideals.
2. The renunciation of violence oath taking by all ex-combatants during the disarmament and demobilization process should be enforced by the government in order to track those who have returned to armed struggle in the creeks.
3. Nonviolent conflict resolution measures, approaches and strategies should be introduced as part of the education curriculum in Africa in order to inculcate the culture of peace in the heart and minds of African youths and children at all levels. Thus, the understanding of nonviolence is a panacea for peace at an early stage will help to produce what is now called de-radicalization and counter-radicalization of citizens who had earlier been briefed and misinformed (radicalized) by extremist or terrorist elements.
4. To effectively combat insurgency and terrorism: countries should adhere strictly to international protocols and principles such as the 1999 Algiers Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy which calls for a holistic inclusive approach to counterterrorism.
5. The amnesty policy should be institutionalized through the establishment of an amnesty, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commission or ministry to oversee post-conflict resettlement issues in Nigeria. The current practice whereby the amnesty policy is coordinated by the office of the special adviser to the president on Niger Delta Affairs is full of inconsistencies and contradictions.
6. Rather than place emphasis on the welfare of ex-militants, the ongoing amnesty programme should be reviewed to accommodate the core issues that triggered-off the crisis in the Niger Delta hence, issues such as environmental degradation, infrastructural development and equal participation in the oil and gas sector should be placed at the front burner.
7. There is also need for Nigeria and African countries to carry out a comprehensive and integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme to ensure that ex-combatants do not constitute security threat to the society.

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