



The Challenge and Dynamics of Peacebuilding and Security Interventions in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined peacebuilding and security interventions in Rivers State from 2015-2023. Our objectives were to analyse the roles played by the State Government in promoting peace and ensuring security and safety of lives and properties in the state, ascertain the strategies employed to deal with sundry security challenges, and make appropriate recommendations based on our findings. As a qualitative study, we relied on secondary sources of data collection. Structural Functionalism and Democratic Theory of Peace were adopted as theoretical frameworks. Our findings showed that the Government of Rivers State formulated and implemented proactive, strategic, and effective peacebuilding and security interventions in the state, although with some constraints. To strengthen the security architecture in the state, the paper recommends, inter alia, financial, logistical, and other supports to security agencies, continuous public peace advocacy and education, and the incorporation of peacebuilding and security education into the education curricula of the state.

Keywords: *Peace, Peacebuilding, Democracy, Democratic Theory of Peace, and Security Interventions*

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Background to the Study

Peacebuilding and security interventions are central to political, economic and administrative governance, especially in democracies. Peace and security are, therefore, inevitable and pre-requisites for social order, justice, good governance and sustainable development in any civil society, including Rivers State. The absence of peace is definitely a reminder of the Hobbesian state of nature in political theory which was a state of lawlessness, chaos, violence and brutality; without government and leadership. It was characterised by war of all against all. According to Hobbes, 'man's life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. Peace is priceless and constitutes one of the universal, highest and cherished values and ideals of humanity. Whereas governments have a responsibility to ensure the security of lives and property of their citizens, the people themselves, also have a critical role to play. Accordingly, section 14 (2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), provides that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Peacebuilding and ensuring the safety and security of people and their property are, to this end, essential goals for both the government and the populace. It is impossible to overstate the crucial roles governments play at all levels in Nigeria's Federal System and democracy in order to promote peace, provide security, and protect people's lives and property as key components of the social contract with the people (Kalagbor & Harry, 2018). In the light of this, Section 11 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), states that "The National Assembly shall make laws for the Federation or any part therefore with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order and providing, maintaining and securing of such supplies and service as may be designed by the National Assembly as essential supplies and services". Similarly, section 4 (7) of the same Constitution vests the power to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the state or any part thereof in the House of Assembly of a state. This is also applicable to Rivers State. Consequently, the principal objective of this paper is to examine the challenge and dynamics of peacebuilding and security interventions in Rivers State, Nigeria, 2015 – 2023.

Statement of the Problem

Created in 1967, Rivers State is a major component and one of the thirty-six states of Nigeria's federation and the hub of crude oil and gas activities, producing nearly 40% of the country's oil and gas resources. To this end, Rivers State is referred to as the treasure base of Nigeria. Rivers State is economically viable, the second largest economy in Nigeria, next only to Lagos State. With a population of over five million, the state contributes significantly to Nigeria's oil revenue. It is, therefore, not out of place that Nigeria's security challenges will have implications for the State. In recent years, especially from 2013, Nigeria started experiencing upsurge in various crimes and criminalities such as kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, crude oil theft, cultism, separatist agitations, Fulani herdsmen attacks, Boko Haram insurgency and violence and terrorism, etc (Anya, 2019; Kalagbor & Sam-kalagbor, 2024). In fact, it is on record that, behind Afghanistan and Iran, Nigeria was ranked by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) as the third most insecure nation in the World in 2020 and ranked 144th out of 163 countries evaluated in 2023. Rivers State seems not to have fared better vis-à-vis the plethora of political and social conflicts, communal crises and other security challenges that the Government and people have been faced with. Like in other parts of the country,

noticeable security challenges in the state include armed robbery, widespread cultism, violence and killings; communal clashes leading to fatalities and destruction of properties, militancy, sea piracy, electoral violence and oil bunkering, etc. Some principal examples include a major clash between two rival cult groups, Dey-well and Dee-bam in Ogba/Egbema/Indoni Local Government Area in 2015, which claimed about sixteen (16) lives; cult group clash in Degema Local Government Area between the Greenlanders and Icelanders. In fact, reported fatalities due to cult violence were very high in the State in 2015. Unfortunately, due to the high incidence of political and communal violence, widespread cultism, killings, kidnappings and wanton destruction of property, etc; the traditional media had variously described Rivers State as “Rivers of War”, “Rivers of Blood”, “Rivers of Violence” and “Rivers of Insecurity”, especially at the end of the 2015 Presidential/National Assembly elections and the Governorship/ State House of Assembly elections respectively in the state (Agwanwo & Bello, 2019). A former Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, was quoted thus:

When I served as Governor of Rivers State, infants as young as two months were being abducted. I once oversaw a state that experienced unrest. First, they accused me of being involved in the kidnapping of Prof. Nimi Briggs, a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt and a well-known Nigerian. The next person they abducted was the late Chief Lulu Brigg's wife, along with other notable individuals, when I had just recently taken office. I got them out” (Premium Times, 2022).

Several persons at one point or the other had either been reported missing by their families or killed. On 30th April, 2021, in the wake of rising insecurity in Rivers State and killing of fifteen (15) security personnel, the immediate past Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, imposed a dusk to dawn curfew on human and vehicular movements from 8:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. and closed all land borders in the State. On 1st January, 2018, 23 innocent persons were killed in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area by a notorious cultist, kidnapper, murderer and members of his evil gang. The same group had on 14th December, 2014, tragically killed 32 persons in the same Omoku (Beredugo,2023). In terms of election violence, many lives had been lost (including serving NYSC members) and properties destroyed. One notable case was the shooting to death, of a Lecturer in Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, Dr. Ferry Gberegbe, by the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squard (F-SARS) led by Akin Fakorade during the governorship election on 9th March, 2019. It is worthy of note to state that in October, 2014, Mr. Okey Wali (SAN), a former National President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) was kidnapped by unknown gunmen. Also, on the 17th April, 2023, he was unlucky for the second time as he was kidnapped but released by his abductors fourteen days later. Unfortunately, two of Mr. Wali's aids were killed as a result of gunshots sustained during the incident (Thisday, 2 May, 2023). In response to the sundry security challenges in the state, the State Government under the leadership of the immediate past Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, had taken radical steps, adopted several strategies and measures to tackle the menace, restore and sustain peace and security, secure lives and property, provide good governance and sustainable development in the State, etc. Between 29th May, 1999 and 29th May, 2023, Nigeria experienced seven consecutive election

circles and transitions to democracy at both the federal and state levels, including Rivers State. Consequently, the focus of this paper is to examine peacebuilding and security interventions by the democratically elected Government of Rivers State from 2015 – 2023.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted Structural Functionalism and Democratic Peace Theory as the theoretical framework of analysis. With respect to Structural Functionalism, some of the principal assumptions include that social stability, cooperation and orderliness are necessary in society; every structure in society performs specific functions relevant to the survival, social order and growth of the society (Nwaorgu, 2002). Ake (1979) notes that such functions may be manifest (intended) and latent (unintended). In political theory and analysis, the legislative, executive and judicial organs of government constitute political institutions or structures which perform specific functions. In this context, the Government of Rivers State exemplifies a political structure in Nigeria's federalism and is charged, among others, with the responsibility of promoting peace, security, and sustainable development of the people and the state. Some notable proponents of structural functionalism include August Comte, Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton. In Political Science, Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, among other, are outstanding (Haralambos and Holborn; 2008, Kalagbor, 2001).

Essentially, the Government of Rivers State constitutes a tier or level of government in Nigeria's federation, with constitutional powers and responsibilities, including the promotion of peace, order, security and good governance. To this extent, therefore, the theory of Structural Functionalism is relevant as a dependable theoretical framework for this study.

Democracy is gradually becoming a global aspiration, vision and governance model for many countries in the world. It is a representative government by the people. In democracy, power is presumably vested in the people. Literally, it is rule by the people (Grugel, 2002; Lipset, 2016). Generally, democracy is characterised by popular consent and participation in politics and governance; popular sovereignty, rule of law, multipartyism; free, fair and regular elections; majority rule and minority rights. Others are fundamental rights, political equality and the independence of the judiciary (Ajibola, 1991). Levitsky and Ziblatt (2019: 2, 20) call political parties "democracy's gatekeepers" and "the courts being one of the "institutional buffers of democracy". Ihonvbere (2023:4) avers that "a democratic country should work on the domestication and institutionalisation of democratic tenets". This is in order to evolve the desired democratic culture which is relevant for the recruitment of true democrats, transformational leaders and sustainable development.

The Democratic Peace Theory holds that there is the likelihood that matured or advanced democratic governments and institutions have the capacity and capability to make good laws, formulate and implement policies and interventions capable of promoting true peace, order, social cohesion, good governance and sustainable development in society. This in turn has the potential to reduce the occurrence of war, violence, hostilities, etc. Immanuel Kant ("Perpetual Peace", 1795) represents the principal democratic peace theorist. He believed that democracies are less warlike and not likely to go to war with each other (dyadic explanation).

However, a democracy may likely go to war with a non-democratic state (monadic explanation). President Woodrow Wilson of the United States and Harry S. Truman also embraced the theory. Other theorists are Bruce Russel, R.J. Rummel, Jack Levy and Micheal Douyle, etc. The major premises or assumptions of the theory are:

1. In democracies, populations will restrain elected leaders from going into war or encouraging violence because of the consequences in terms of human life and financial implications (structural explanation);
2. Democracies have institutional mechanisms for dispute settlement and conflict management both in domestic and international politics;
3. Democracies have inherent political culture of negotiation, conciliation, consensus and compromise, because democrats believe that violence is not an appropriate means of resolution of conflicts (normative explanation);
4. People in democracies are believed to be more reasonable, understanding, tolerant, sympathetic and empathetic of people in other democracies; and,
5. The legislature has the power through checks and balances to prevent an aggressive or belligerent leader or government from moving a country to war (Rosato, 2023; Ogbonna & Ogbonna, 2021). Citizen's support and legislative approval are strong and required in democracies.

To support the above assumptions, President Hilary Clinton of the United State of America was quoted in 1994 to have stated that, “ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and build a durable peace is to support the advancement of democracy elsewhere (democratic universalism). “Democracies don't attack each other”. Also, President George W. Bush stated that “...democracies don't go to war... I've got great faith in democracies to promote peace”. However, this theory has been criticised by some scholars such as Alexander Hamilton and Rosato. There is available evidence that some democracies have engaged in wars although the percentage is very low. There is no guarantee that democratically elected governments or leaders will promote and pursue peace agenda. Although, Democratic Peace theory is a theory in international relations and politics, it can also be used as in the instant case as available theoretical tool, to analyse the role of government in peacebuilding and security engagements in a democracy in Rivers State.

Conceptual Clarifications and Analysis

The following are conceptually and operationally defined within the context of this paper, namely: Peace, Peacebuilding, Security and Security Interventions. Relevant theories and extant illustrations will also be minimally discussed to reinforce understanding and appreciation of the conceptual clarifications and analysis.

Peace

The term “Peace” is variously and collectively derived from the French word “pais”, Anglo-French word “pes” and Latin “pax”, meaning harmony, agreement, tranquillity, treaty of peace, compact or absence of hostility. Peace is a key concept in Social Sciences and span many religious, social, cultural and political studies. Johan Vincent Galtung, a Norwegian Sociologist, is acclaimed as the first scholar to introduce the concept of peace being a “social

goal” into academic literature. There is a presumption by many scholars that the meaning of peace is self-evident. To a very large extent, peace signifies the absence of conflict, chaos, dissension, violence or suspension of hostilities or war (Darity, 2008; Ogbujah & Egobueze, 2023). It depicts concord, harmony and placidity. Achieving enduring peace in families, communities, and nation-states requires tackling causes of ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, crimes, violence, conflicts, socio-economic inequality, exploitations, oppression and marginalization in society, etc. These underscore one of the principal objectives of the United Nations, which is maintenance of international peace and security. Sustainable Development Goal 16 centres on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and is concerned about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. No wonder the United Nations declared 21 September each year as the International Day of Peace around the world. Given its global consideration and appeal, one of the largest service or humanitarian organisations in the world, Rotary International makes peace a cornerstone of its mission. It is also committed to creating, supporting and sustaining peaceful environments as well as peacebuilding efforts across community's world over. In Psalm 34:14, the Bible enjoins Christians to “turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” and “live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus is referred to as the “Prince of Peace”. Jesus was quoted to have often used “shalom” (peace be unto you) as a form of greeting (John 20:10). God is also called “Shalom”, “the Lord of Peace” (Jude 6:24). “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). For Christians, peace is a gift and one of the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23). The Dove and olive branch are regarded as symbols of peace, while the blue colour generally symbolises peace.

Irrespective of the universal importance and benefits of peace to society, Mussolini in justifying fascism, advocated the use of violence; glorified war and denounced peace”. Ipso facto, peace is the language and slogan of weak states (Mahajan, 1988: 776,780). A one-time President of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan stated that “peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means”. Similarly, a former President of South Africa and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace, Nelson Mandela remarked that “peace is not the absence of conflict: peace is the creation of an environment where all can flourish, regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, gender, class, caste or any other social markers or difference”. Albert Einstein equally argued that peace is not only the absence of war, it includes the presence of justice, law, order, and government (Vesilind, 2005). Martin Luther King Jr; also emphasized the necessity of the “presence of justice” in the definition of peace. True peace cannot be achieved without substantial justice. Pope Paul VI once noted that “if you want peace, work for justice”. This means that peace and justice are inseparable and mutually inclusive. On his part, Sathanama argues that peace is “the absence of war or other hostilities; freedom from quarrels and disagreement; harmonious relations; public security and order and inner contentment; serenity: peace of mind”. He contends that the golden rule to achieve true peace on earth, among others, is to make peace number one priority, and seek inner peace.

Throughout political history, peace has not necessarily been achieved through peaceful means, but enforced by states possessing superior military prowess and victors of war,

effectively deploying tools of violence and coercion to achieve political ends. Some states have combined it with a high level of efficacious diplomatic and negotiation skills, where applicable. Peace can be attained by a number of means, namely: through power politics or coercive power and apparatus of the state; application of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms; non-violence or will power and passive resistance. Mahatma Gandhi believed that true peace can only be achieved in the world through non-violence. Other means are transformation through education, cultural change and spirituality anchored on the power of love (Funk & Gandhi, 2002). It is remarkable to note that in the Third Generation of Human Rights, Peace is classified as a right: Thus, there is human right to peace. This right is recognised individually and collectively. Peace can hardly be achieved in its true sense without the recognition, respect and protection of the right to peace and peaceful coexistence of people. Above all, peace is imperative for sustainable development. Stressing the importance and nexus between peacebuilding, security and development, Annan (2005) acknowledged that “there will be no development without security and no security without development”; just as peace, security and social stability are preconditions for development in any society.

Types of Peace

Ercoskun (2021), referring to Galtung's classification, identified two major types of peace: Negative Peace or actual peace and Positive Peace, meaning that peace is like a coin that has two sides. Negative Peace is used to describe the absence of personal violence or fear of violence; war, conflict, hostility, disturbance, struggles, agitations, disagreements, social disorder or anomie, etc. On the other hand, positive peace is defined as the absence of structural violence or social justice; the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. Meererk (1989:16) defines positive peace as “a state of tranquillity, calm, repose, quietness, harmony, friendship, amity, concord, peaceful or friendly relation, public order, pacification, spiritual content, reconciliation, serenity, security, social justice and bliss”.

Another category of peace is referred to as “Just Peace”. Different from the doctrine of “Just War” (*bellum justum*) first developed by Thomas Aquinas, Just Peace describes the process whereby both enduring peace and social justice are attained. In other words, true and sustainable peace can only be achieved if, and only if, it serves the interest of justice. In this regard, it may be legal justice (i.e. “justice according to law and law according to justice”); political justice (i.e. justice that guarantees the powers of government and the rights of the governed, predicated on the sanctity of the rule of law) and social justice which provides equal social opportunities and rights to all the people (Mahajan, 1988). This means that peace can be unjust when it does not serve the interest of justice in society. Additionally, peace can be categorised into Spiritual Peace or peace with God; Relational Peace or peace with others and Emotional or Inner Peace (i.e. peace within ourselves which is also known as Internal Peace). Furthermore, External Peace is peace that physically occurs in homes, families, communities, nation-states or globally. It has been stressed that internal peace substantially determines and influences external peace and vice versa. Other dimensions of peace can equally be personal, interpersonal, organizational, communal, national, regional and international.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a multidisciplinary approach and continuous practical efforts to achieve true and sustainable peace. There appears to be absence of a generally acceptable and all-embracing definition of Peacebuilding. The term “Peacebuilding” was coined by the foremost peace studies scholar, Johan Vincent Galtung in 1975. He emphasised the need for the institution of the culture of peace. The term was eventually popularised in 1992 by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Instructively, Peacebuilding is a variety of efforts, measures and actions taken in order to reduce the possibility of conflict(s) escalating or deescalating; address immediate and remote causes of conflict(s), resolve existing conflict(s) or disagreement(s) peacefully and to provide the concrete foundation for maintainable peace and development. It is also a process that involves peace education, dialogue, violence prevention, conflict management and resolution as well as post-conflict reconciliation. Successful peacebuilding efforts and activities create a supportive environment for enduring and self-sustaining peace, genuinely ensure reconciliation of parties, prevent resumption of conflict or hostility, ensure effective integration of parties into society; encourage compliance with the rule of law, established code of conduct and peace agreement (Okoye, et al., 2021). For Peacebuilding to make the desired impact, it must be purposeful, strategic, transparent, credible, impartial, inclusive and devoid of politicisation.

As a relatively recent term, the Report of the United Nations Peace Operations (2000), defines Peacebuilding as the “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”. In like manner, the United Nations Secretary-General's Policy Committee (2007) defined Peacebuilding as “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 sustainable development”. There are marked differences between Peacebuilding, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping. Peacebuilding may at times overlap with peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Peace-making involves stopping an ongoing conflict; peacekeeping is aimed at preventing resumption of hostilities, while peacebuilding takes place before the commencement or at the end of the conflict or hostility (i.e. pre or post conflict activities). However, it is germane to emphasize that peacebuilding can take place at any stage of a conflict or hostility. Peacebuilding equally includes disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rebuilding or strengthening governmental, economic and civil society institutions to facilitate and achieve enduring peace globally. The four main areas of peacebuilding are preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. In sum, the Canadian government appears to have provided a more comprehensive view and definition of peacebuilding thus:

The endeavour to increase the possibility of internal peace and reduce the risk of violent conflict is known as peacebuilding. The main objective of peacebuilding is to increase a society's innate ability to resolve conflicts amicably. Building human society—a term that encompasses democratic government, human rights, the rule of law, sustainable development, fair resource distribution, and

environmental security—is the ultimate goal of peacebuilding. There are unique and difficult obstacles in the way of achieving this aim in nations where there is civil unrest. In addition to numerous post-war activities, peacebuilding may encompass conflict resolution and prevention. Instead than emphasising the military or humanitarian components of a war, it focusses on its political and socioeconomic backdrop. In order to solve this issue, it looks for ways to institutionalise the settlement of disputes amicably. Local efforts to establish a lasting peace should be complemented by outside assistance for peacebuilding, not the other way around (Debiel & Klein, 1988:35).

Security

Security is critical to the life and sustenance of individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and states. The concept of security is not only used in different senses and contexts, it is also subjected to various definitions and operational interpretations. In generic terms, security means protection from or against potential threat, hostility, harm, danger, fear, anxiety, attack, violence theft, vandalism or death, etc. It is also understood as safety and all measures adopted to guarantee the safety of lives and property. Security is a feeling, perception and a reality. Previously in international relations, the traditional notion of security was mainly on the application of military force by states, especially in the defence of their citizens, prosecution of wars, protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Nevertheless, over time, the contemporary idea of security became dominant. It encompasses areas such as human security, biosecurity, energy and resource security and health security. Others are information technology (IT) security, cybersecurity, financial security, investments and assets security, etc. Yet, an area which is becoming attractive and a source of concern to researchers, especially with respect to issues surrounding democracy in developing countries is election security, administration and management. In the words of Buzan (1991:1), “Security is taken to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile.

From an international security perspective, the UN's definition of security can be summed up as "freedom from fear, freedom from want, and dignity." This emphasises the preservation of world peace and security, one of the fundamental goals of the United Nations. Thus, human security is defined as "...safety from chronic threat such as hunger, disease, and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life—whether in homes, jobs, or communities" (UNDP Report, 1994:23) in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report. Because enhancing the security of a people may bolster the legitimacy, stability, and security of a state, the UN's concept of human security is people-oriented and an endeavour to humanise security (Debiel & Klein, 1988). Human security is security for people, not for regions, and for development, not for weapons. Economic security, food security, health security, and environmental security are the seven pillars or elements of human security that were highlighted in the UNDP report. The others are political, communal, and personal security.

Security Interventions

An intervention is a specific action taken to improve or address a problem or given situation. In the context of this paper, Security Interventions are deliberate and planned policies, reforms, decisions, actions, projects and programmes undertaken by government to stimulate and support the promotion of effective security that guarantees the safety or protection of lives and property of the people. Such interventions can be both preventive or therapeutic (curative or corrective); direct or indirect, divine, one-off, short-term or long-term. In terms of functions, interventions may take the form of education and training, incentivisation, persuasion, advocacy, legal reforms and enablement, etc. Enablement intervention is the provision of support not covered by other intervention lines, initiatives and strategies in order to enhance the capacity for peak performance. Consequently, security interventions refer to specific actions, responses and strategies deployed by government to improve and facilitate effective and efficient security with the overall aim of filling existing security gaps and ensuring optimal protection of lives and property of the people. It involves security and legal reforms, provision of financial and logistical support; humanitarian and other enablement's to security agencies and personnel.

Peacebuilding and Security Interventions by the Government of Rivers State

Referring to the Government of Rivers State, Onuchuku and Mmom (2023:140) have submitted that:

In the area of security, the state government was able to cooperate with relevant security agencies to address most of the security threats that plagued the state before 2015...the tremendous support given to the federal security agencies reduced crime and criminality to the barest minimum, thus making Rivers State one of the safest states in the country for investment, living and bringing up children for a better society.

Some notable, pragmatic and strategic peacebuilding and security interventions were conceived, initiated and implemented by the democratically elected Government of Rivers State under the leadership of the Governor, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, from 2015-2023. They included the following:

Provision of Logistical, Technical and Material Support to Security Agencies

Security agencies in the context of this paper include the Nigeria Police as the lead security agency in the country; Military, Airforce, Navy, Civil Defence Corps and Department of State Services (DSS), etc. In a bid by the Government of Rivers State to ensure peace and security of lives and property of people in Rivers State, the state government provided financial, logistical and technical support to the various security agencies such as:

- a) Bought and handed over 140 patrol vans equipped with communication gadgets to the security agencies;
- b) Provided logistical support for the security agencies for effective daily operations in the state;
- c) Directed the Local Government Councils to provide 46 patrol vans to the security agencies;

- d) Purchased and donated six gunboats to the Nigerian Navy to patrol the waterways to stem piracy;
- e) Procured and donated an advanced security device to the security agencies for tracking the location of criminals and kidnapped victims;
- f) About 150 CCTV cameras were installed in strategic places across Port Harcourt and connected to the centre to keep the city under surveillance radar on a 24-hour basis (Onuchukwu & Mmom, 2023:141); and,
- g) Acquisition and allocation of a parcel of land in Omuma Local Government Area to the Nigerian Army to facilitate the take off and operationalisation of the 6 Division, Nigerian Army; donation of some Hilux vehicles and buses to expedite the operationalisation of the new Division in the state (Beredugo, 2023).

Within months, Governor Wike's efforts in providing adequate logistical support for the security agencies started bearing positive results and have continued to bear incredible results in the state. Security agencies went after criminals, including the destruction of their hideouts in Rumuolumeni, Nkpogu and Eagle Island. The consequence was the dramatic reduction of the rate of crime across the state and Port Harcourt city became a major national and international conference destination because of the prevailing peace and security. Furthermore, nightlife once again returned to Port Harcourt city with its contribution to the economy of the state (Mid Term Progress Report, 2015-2017, of the Administration of Nyesom Wike).

Financial Support to Families and Victims of Insecurity

- i. The state government, donated the sum of 200 million Naira only to the children of the deceased lecturer, Dr. Ferry Gberegbe who was killed by the police during the 2019 governorship election in the state. In accordance with the promise the Governor made to the family of the deceased. The amount was for the scholarship of the four children of the deceased. Similarly, the government donated the sum of ₦30 million to the family of three police officers who died while performing their duties in the state. Police Inspectors Isaac Isodje, Saviour Udeh, and Ebenezer Edward were murdered while conducting a search and stop operation. They worked for the State Command's Diobu Division. While presenting the cheques to the relatives of the deceased with the blessing of the governor, the State Commissioner for Information and Communications pointed out that the action was Governor Wike's way of showing commitment to making sure the families of policemen who died while serving the state were not left in poverty.
- ii. Former Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, led members of the Executive Council on a condolence visit to the Rivers State Police Command. The Governor also commiserated with the families of the Officers who lost their lives in a senseless and mindless attack by hoodlums suspected to be members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and donated the sum of ₦20 million only to each of the family of the victims to ameliorate the pains occasioned by the death of their bread winners.

Formation of Neighbourhood Safety Corps Agency

In 2018, the Rivers State Government established the Rivers State Neighbourhood Safety Corps Agency (RIVNESCA), popularly known in the state as the “Neighbourhood Watch” through legislation, with the principal function to operate as a community-based intelligence agency aimed at encouraging and consolidating the synergy between security agencies and communities. Dr. Mike Uche Chukwuma was appointed the pioneer Director-General and Chief Executive Officer during the inauguration of the Board, the former Governor of the state, Nyesom Wike said, the agency was central to the provision of security in the state. Members of the Board include:

1. Chief Casca Ogosu – Chairman (He was later replaced by Brigadier General Dick Ironabere)
2. Mr. Dennis Amachree – Member
3. Prof. Emenike Wami – Member
4. Mr. Anthony U. Ogurumba – Member
5. Mrs. Victoria Chikeka – Member
6. Barr. Nna Omereji – Secretary/Legal Adviser

Unfortunately, the Agency did not effectively take off to discharge its mandate due to the disagreement between the Federal Government and the Rivers State Government over its establishment and operations. This resulted in the disruption of the training of the Agency's personnel by the Nigerian Army. The interference and opposition of the Nigerian Army to the establishment and operation of the Agency can best be described as political, especially considering the fact that a similar security outfit in Lagos State known as the Lagos State Neighbourhood Safety Agency was allowed to function by the Federal Government. This development was a setback to the fight against crime and criminality in the state.

Launching of Rivers State Security Trust Fund

Still in a bid to protect security of lives and property in the state, the Rivers State Government in January, 2020, launched the Rivers State Security Trust Fund (RSSTF). This was primarily intended to mobilise funds to support and strengthen security and security agencies in the state, thereby contributing to peace building which is necessary to attract investments and boost the economy of the state. In this regard, all major companies operating in the state are required to contribute to the security fund (Akasike, 2020).

Launching of Operation Sting

To reinforce the security architecture in the state, the government, established a new state security outfit with the pseudonym “Operation Sting” to address security issues in the state. The state government would completely fund the operation in order to combat criminal elements and lower crime and criminalities throughout the state. Under Operation Sting, significant actions were taken to increase the logistical and operational competence of the civil and armed security services. During the launch of the outfit, eight (8) armoured equipped gunboats and 76 patrol/operational vehicles with communication devices were provided for take-off of the outfit to tighten coastal security and guard waterways from criminal activities in the state. These included 450 hand-held mobile radios that will boost communication among

security personnel and close the enormous gaps in intelligence gathering; two Armoured Personnel Carriers for Police fast response activities, etc. To improve the command and control structures of the initiative and to ensure efficient coordination and synergy between the state headquarters, the LGAs, and the communities, the state government created operating bases in all the 23 local government areas. All security and emergency services providers were linked to the Central Call Centre for the benefit of the public. This will help to provide effective interventions in times of security distress or emergency situations. The Rivers State Government also established a fund to take care of the families of the security personnel should they become ill or injured. (Punch, 27 July, 2019).

Establishment of Police Tactical Operations Centre

The creation of the Police Tactical Operation Centre (PTOC) was another innovative move made by the Rivers State Government under the direction of the state Governor, Nyesom Wike, to uphold peace and security. The PTOC is used as a base for information and intelligence gathering as well as specialised deployments to combat crimes such as armed robbery, abduction, and other violent crimes. The PTOC is designed with a specific focus on trends of crime in the state. At the inauguration of the Police Tactical Operations Centre, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) remarked that Police Officers posted to Rivers State were privileged to have access to top-notch working tools and a welcoming environment. According to the IGP, the Rivers State government has taken the lead by showcasing E-policing-enabled tools and facilities that would enable tracking, patrolling, raiding, and stop-and-search operations without the need for a vehicle, while the Nigeria Police are considering adopting E-policing tactics. Additionally, Government provided an armoured personnel vehicle, two pickup-based gun trucks, weapons and ammo specifically designated for the specification location to support the tactical action team. The impact made at the corporate level was that, the Police Tactical Operations Centre established by the Wike administration is the first in the country. Out of the 13 Tactical Teams in Rivers State, three are stationed in the centre, including the anti-cult, anti-kidnapping, and C4i teams (Ofiebor, 2023).

The Re-Launch of C4i

The Rivers State Government re-established the security unit known as C4i in April 1, 2021, at the Government House in Port Harcourt as an extra phase in the solid, practical plan and all-encompassing approach to reinforce the security architecture of the state. As an inspiration for the staff of the re-launched C4i, the state government supplied 200 bulletproof vests and helmets in addition to 29 operable cars as part of their goal of bringing crime and criminalities in the state down to the lowest possible level. The security force consists of 200 members of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and 400 police officers, all of whom have received thorough training in their respective fields to ensure effective performance of their jobs. (Thetideneonline, 2021).

Formation of Official Security Planning and Anti-Crime Control

According to Official Security Planning and Anti-crime Control (OSPAC), the local security group in Rivers State's Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area contributed to the fight against security in the state. Like any other human civilisation, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni

Local Government Area (ONELGA) is prone to crimes like robbery, arson, homicide, rape, vandalism, harm, and kidnapping of children. However, the formation of the informal security organisation tasked with protecting people and property was brought on by efforts to reduce crime in the state. The Official Security Planning and Anti-crime Control (OSPAC), an indigenous security organisation, was established in the local government area in 2017 with the goal of restoring peace, security, and a conducive environment for its residents. The members of the security outfit still implement a number of strategies to bolster their efforts in the struggle against crime and criminality in the state and, in particular, ONELGA. OSPAC's success in ONELGA in reducing crime encouraged its expansion into other local government areas in the state with the aim of reducing insecurity. Members of the organisation are expected to get some financial support from the federal, state, and local governments, as well as multinational oil firms operating in the region. Since this is not possible, the Official Security Planning and Anti-Crime Control (OSPAC) derives its funding from voluntary organisations and individuals who value their services. The ability of OSPAC to carry out its duties depends on its cooperation with official security agencies, public support, organisation structure, and adherence to norms governing the group. (Ebiede, Bassey & Asuni 2017; Onwuzor, Okorobia & Okoroafor, 2020).

Peacebuilding, Peace and Security Education

Through various consultations and engagements with the people, the state government embarked on concerted and aggressive peacebuilding, peace and security education of the residents and people of the state, through the media, traditional rulers, civil society organisations, Community Development Committees (CDCs), youth bodies, women and market associations and student unions, especially in tertiary institutions. The Ministry of Youths as part of youth development programmes embarked on sensitisation and enlightenment of the youths on the benefits of peace, peaceful co-existence and consequences of insecurity. Similarly, the government equally encouraged members of various cult groups, criminals and kidnapers to embrace peace and desist from acts and activities capable of leading to insecurity of lives and property of the people in the state.

Provision of Roads and Electricity Infrastructure

The state government between 2015 and 2023 undertook the provision of massive infrastructure and rural electricity in many communities in the state. This included flyover bridges and roads in Port Harcourt and all the twenty-three local government areas of the state. Internal road networks were also conceived, constructed and commissioned by the government in many rural communities. Street lights were equally provided, especially in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas. The roads and flyover bridges facilitated free human and vehicular movements by the people and residents of the state. The streets were also well lit at night. The obvious implication is that security personnel could now access roads which hitherto inaccessible. Security patrols at night also became possible and unhindered. Onuchuku and Mmom (2023: 113) claim that the intervention of Wike's administration in the area of road as at December 2022 covered 556.63km new roads, 304.10km rehabilitated roads, 447.90km drains, 6.70km flyover bridges and 87.265km dual carriage ways. Furthermore, Nyesom Wike's uncommon strides in infrastructural

development of the state is vividly captured by Osagie (2023:59), thus:

Recognising that Rivers State is essentially a one-city state – Port Harcourt, his blueprint for development was simply to provide the basic infrastructure of road access to the communities, improved health services and electricity. And for Port Harcourt, besides, infrastructure, he expanded the city's liveable space through dredging and small towns development, unlocking the major bottlenecks at traffic intersections and junctions through bridges and flyovers and the provision of world class medical facilities... aside from unprecedented urban renewal, Wike's administration took infrastructure to the peri-urban and rural areas; including the opposition communities. A look at his eight-years leadership in Rivers State shows far reaching achievements in critical sectors: infrastructure, healthcare delivery, education, the bureaucracy, security and sustaining the image and integrity of Rivers State and its people.

Amnesty Programme

Rivers State was well-known for its violent gangs and widespread cultism, particularly among young people. There were competing cult organisations and activities in each of the state's twenty-three local government areas. The communities suffered the terrible effects of their destructive influence. They posed a serious danger to the people's political, religious, and socioeconomic lives. In addition to being used by powerful politicians and political parties as political thugs to carry out different forms of election fraud and violence, they also engaged in a fight for dominance that led to deaths and conflicts amongst cult groups. Some of the group members committed horrible atrocities and criminalities across the state using cultism. Kidnapping became a lucrative tactic used by cult groups to exploit and survive; police and other security officials became targets of cult assassinations and assaults. With reckless abandon, police cars and stations were destroyed and set on fire. Therefore, the state administration implemented the Amnesty Programme in an effort to stem the flow of cultism and its related negative effects on crime and instability in the state. The program's objectives were for the government to pardon or provide amnesty to all cult members, criminals, and militants who had turned to religion; via different programs for skill development and empowerment, these individuals would then be reintegrated into society. The Governor established the Rivers State Amnesty Committee to oversee the program's execution and named Sir Ken Chinda as his Special Assistant on Amnesty Program to ensure efficient coordination. The Committee was composed of representatives from the relevant security agencies. By November 2016, over 22,430 militants and cult members had accepted the program, given up violence and criminality in the state, and received official amnesty. Additionally, they turned over various weapons, ammo, and explosives to the authorities (Ebiede & Asuni, 2017).

Commenting on the programme, the Governor in a State Address and Two Years Progress Report on 29th May 2017, confirmed and stated that:

We have supported the security agencies with logistics, vehicles and other equipment to fight crime and secure lives and property throughout the State. Our administration's amnesty programme has been successful. Over 22,430 cultists

accepted the amnesty and surrendered above 911 assorted arms, 7661 ammunition, and 147 explosives. The programme has reduced cultism, violence and bloodletting among youths in our communities (Beredugo, 2023).

Advocacy

The politicalization of security was strongly resisted by the Rivers State Government. The governor's noteworthy advocacy comments, which demonstrate the government's unshakeable dedication to peacebuilding and the advancement of security and protection of people's lives and property, are as follows:

- i. Publicly denouncing in a state-wide broadcast on September 15, 2017, the intentional undermining of the state's security framework through the criminal activities of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and the attack on Nigerian nationals residing in Rivers State, especially in Oyigbo, by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).
- ii. His Excellency, Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, made a statewide broadcast on the threat of cultism in Rivers State on November 22, 2022. "Therefore, we shall spare no effort to deal appropriately with anyone who decides to disturb peace and security in our neighbourhood with cult activities and associated violence and killings."
- iii. "I want to reaffirm that we are fully committed to the shared covenant for a new, secure, and prosperous Rivers State, and we have no intention of compromising our resolve to accomplish all of our goals towards advancing our security, progress, and prosperity before the end of our administration. For the sake of the state's development and the welfare of its people, the government and security services have worked tirelessly to establish the current condition of peace and security, which we are resolved to maintain. His Excellency, Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, made the following statement on August 7, 2022: "We will not allow any political party to threaten the safety and security of lives and property. We will not allow any politician, regardless of his previous or present position, the chance or opportunity to upset the prevailing peace and security in Rivers State."

Youth Employment and Empowerment

Youth employment and empowerment constitute key elements of human security and peacebuilding. The Government through the Ministries of Youths, Employment Generation and Works facilitated the employment of many Rivers youths through various government projects, programmes and activities. Some parastatals and agencies such as Rivers State University, Nkpolu Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt; Ignatius Ajuru University, Rumuorlumeni; Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt; Kenule Beeson Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori, and Rivers State Basic Education Authority upon approval by the state government, engaged the services of many youths in the state, although one of the institutions is yet to complete the recruitment exercise. The government also approved and directed the Rivers State Civil Service Commission to employ 10,000 youths into the State's Civil Service. The overriding purpose was not only to reduce youth employment in the state. It was also intended to productively and creatively engage the youths, discourage them from indulging in crime and criminalities, which have implications for peace and security in the state.

Legal/Judicial Reforms, Judicial Officers Welfare and Education Support

Effective peacebuilding and security interventions need judicial and legal changes, improvements to the wellness and well-being of judicial officials, and strong support for ongoing legal education. The authority to enact legislation for maintaining the state's peace, order, and good governance rests with the Rivers State House of Assembly. During the research time, the Assembly enacted many legislations into law with the primary goals of advancing peace, peacebuilding efforts, and the preservation of state citizens' lives and property. As the head of the state's executive branch, the governor is authorised by law to appropriate funds for financial, logistical, material, educational, and other supports to relevant security agencies and public institutions in the state. In addition, the state government, acting as a responsible and responsive institutional partner with security agencies, has enacted laws to carry out legal reforms. Several legislative measures have been implemented to improve the management of criminal justice and guarantee its delivery. These include the Rivers State Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2015, the Rivers State Judicial Officers' Housing Scheme, Law, 2021, the Rivers State Judicial Officers Law, 2021, and the Rivers State Neighbourhood Safety Corps Law, 2018. Others include the Rivers State Kidnap (Prohibition) (Amendment) Law, 2018 and the Rivers State Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, 2020, among others. The Rivers State Secret Cult and Similar Activities (Prohibition) Amendment Law No. 6, 2018 stipulates the death penalty for any cultist who kills during cult clashes or activities and life imprisonment for any apprehended cultist. In 2017, the administration also established a Commission to evaluate Rivers State's current laws and bring them into compliance with the state's development strategy and modern legal requirements.

In addition to granting the state judiciary a high degree of financial autonomy, the state government constructed, outfitted, and gave all State High Court judges in service with adequate official housing. Judges who chose to give up their official quarters in exchange for a different kind of financial compensation were compensated appropriately. The state government constructed and delivered a new building complex for the Federal High Court and the National Industrial Court's Port Harcourt Divisions, respectively. The state government rebuilt the Court of Appeal Complex Port Harcourt Division. Judges of the State High Court, including those of Rivers heritage working in the Federal Judicial Service, were given official cars (SUVs) to improve their comfort and mobility. Official automobiles were also provided to magistrates. The Nigerian Chief Justice also oversaw the construction, furnishing, and commissioning of a brand-new magistrate complex. All of these actions were taken to realign the state's judiciary in order to provide citizens with better, more rapid, and efficient legal services; to fortify the judiciary's independence; and, most importantly, to ensure peace, security, and long-term, sustainable development within the state.

The Bar was included as well. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) House (Bar Centre) was constructed, equipped and given to the Port Harcourt Branch by the state government. It also provided financial assistance for its members to attend the NBA Annual General Conferences. The state government's commitment to the judiciary include the advancement of ongoing legal education. In addition to constructing, finishing, and furnishing two hostels

with a capacity of 900 students each and a 1500 student auditorium at the Nigerian Law School's Yenagoa Campus in Bayelsa State, the government also constructed, fully furnished, and delivered the best law school in Nigeria, the Dr. Nabo Graham Douglas Campus of the Nigerian Law School in Port Harcourt. The school personnel received equal accommodations in addition to a take-off grant. The Rivers State University, Nkpolu Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt Faculty of Law likewise received similar and other help and assistance. The state government provided 200 million naira to complete the NBA's national secretariat in Abuja, according to records that are currently available. Additionally, seven local branches of the NBA in the state—Okehi, Omoku, Okirika, Ahoada, Bori, Degema, and Isiokpo—were each given 50 million naira to support the construction of their secretariats. In order to lessen members' transportation difficulties, it also gave each local chapter and FIDA a 32-seater Hiace bus (Beredugo, 2023).

Inauguration of Rivers State Multi-Door Court House (RSMDC)

One of the peacebuilding techniques called Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) aims to resolve conflicts in a way that is both durable and conducive to real peace and security. The Rivers State Multi-Door Court House (RSMDC) was established by the Rivers State Multi-Door Court House Law, 2019 and functions concurrently with ordinary litigation. The RSMDC is an ADR facility with a court connection that receives full funding from the Rivers State government. In 2021, Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike officially opened the RSMDC to serve the needs of businesses and investors in the state for conflict resolution. In essence, the multidoor courthouse system was established to regulate, encourage, and strengthen the alternative dispute resolution mechanism in the state. The RSMDC offers prompt and affordable ADR services while also assisting in the decongest of the court system. It also aims to enhance the state's administration and dispensing of justice. The RSMDC offers a variety of choices, such as early neutral assessment, mediation, arbitration, and hybrid procedures.

Constraints on Peacebuilding and Security Interventions in Rivers State

In Rivers State, there are significant obstacles to long-term security and peacebuilding initiatives. Security items like weapons, ammunition, explosives, defence, military (Army, Navy, and Air Force), including any other branch of the Armed Forces of the Federation, police, and other security services established by law, as well as any matter incidental or supplementary to any matter mentioned therein, are prominently listed on the Exclusive Legislative List by the relevant provisions of the Second Schedule to the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended). It follows that the state governments of Rivers and other states are unable to enact laws pertaining to such matters. This poses a difficult constraint on the ability of the Rivers State Government to carry out drastic security reforms, initiatives, and interventions that are meant to improve the operational or enforcement capabilities and efficacy of pertinent security agencies in safeguarding the lives and property of the state's citizens. Even worse, the President "shall be the Head of State, the Chief Executive of the Federation, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation," according to section 130(2) of the Constitution. This implies that, even with regards to state security issues, all of the service chiefs are answerable to and under the

supervision of the President.

Furthermore, according to section 16 of the Third Schedule to the Constitution, state governors are not allowed to serve as members of the National Security Council (NSC). Although the governor does not have the constitutional authority to operate in that role, he or she is the state's nominal chief security officer. This places further limitations on his ability to effectively handle basic security issues in the state and may reaffirm the argument for the creation of "state police" in accordance with the real federalism concept. It doesn't seem like the governor's use of the "security vote," which some academics claim is unlawful and a breeding ground for corruption, has done anything to address security issues in the state. Despite being members of the State Security Council, the state's commissioner of police and service commanders do not follow the governor's instructions or commands on security-related topics. Although they report professionally to the military chiefs, who report to the President, they have administrative accountability to the Governor.

The Governor, Nyesom Wike, publicly admitted and acknowledged this legal and constitutional lacuna in a Public Lecture he presented at the National Institute for Security Studies, Kuro, Jos, on 28 September, 2021, titled: "Governance, Security and Sustainable Development in Africa: Nexus, Challenges and Prospects – The Rivers State Experience". He succinctly put it thus:

The absence of legal or constitutional oversight authority over the management and control of sub-national security commands, particularly the police, continues to obstruct the efficient coordination and execution of state security policies and strategies, even though elected governors are regarded as the chief security officers of their states. Notwithstanding the structural difficulties presented by the federal security architecture, we acknowledge that maintaining the safety and security of Rivers State and its citizens is a duty we must do for the sake of both our state and our nation (Beredugo, 2023:512).

Conclusion

This paper has carefully explored the challenge and dynamics of peacebuilding and security interventions in Rivers State, 2015-2023, heralding a periodization of eight years of democracy in the state. Its findings revealed that peacebuilding is critical to lasting peace, security and sustainable development of both the people and the state. To this end, the government of Rivers State under the dynamic, visionary, purposeful, people-oriented and transformational leadership of the Governor, Nyesom Wike, conceived, conceptualised, formulated, initiated and implemented notable, strategic and pragmatic peacebuilding and security interventions in the state. Such interventions were the provision of logistical and material supports to relevant security agencies in the state; financial support to families and victims of insecurity; formation of Neighbourhood Safety Corps Agency; launching of Rivers State Security Trust Fund, Operation Sting and the establishment of Police Tactical Operations Centre. Others include Re-launch of C4i, formation of Security Planning and Anti-Crime Control outfit; advocacy engagements; peacebuilding, security and peace education; provision of roads and electricity infrastructure; Amnesty Programme; youth employment and empowerment; inauguration of the Rivers State Multi-Door Court House;

legal and judicial reforms, enhancement of the welfare of judicial officers and robust support for continuous legal education.

The paper identified some fundamental constraints on effective implementation of sustainable peacebuilding and security interventions in the state, especially the lack of constitutional or legal oversight powers by the governor over the control and management of state security commands, with particular reference to the police. The paper, therefore, inevitably concludes and contends that to put Rivers State on a firm pedestal for sustainable development, including a strong democratic governance, political stability and progress, requires the political leadership of the state to, among others, institutionalise and fully integrate peacebuilding into its governance structure and processes, localise and make humanisation of security a top priority on the public policy agenda of the government of Rivers State,

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Rivers State Government should create more employment opportunities for the people, especially the youths in order to reduce poverty, discourage indolence, crimes and criminalities in the state. This calls for youth entrepreneurship and empowerment programmes and public-private partnerships and collaborations;
2. scale-up investments in human security and build strong, independent, efficient and effective public institutions to drive public policies, initiatives, programmes and projects on peacebuilding and security. There is the need to establish Rivers State Peacebuilding Commission;
3. increase logistical, material and financial support to relevant security agencies in the state;
4. peacebuilding, security and peace education should be integrated into the education curricula in the state, especially at the Basic and Post-Basic education levels. This will help to ingrain early in the lives of youths the philosophy, virtue, values and culture of peace, peaceful co-existence and social, legal and political justice;
5. artificial intelligence (AI) and sophisticated information technology infrastructure should be provided by government for security agencies in the state, especially for the police as a critical intervention. This will greatly enhance security by automating threat detentions, analysing patterns and facilitate rapid response capabilities of security personnel; and,
6. it is imperative to remove the legal constraints on peacebuilding and security interventions in the state through appropriate constitutional amendments. Such amendments should confer on the state Governor legal oversight powers over the control and management of the state security commands, especially the police, being the principal law enforcement and lead internal security agency in the state.

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