GOVERNANCE, TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE CHALLENGE OF INSURGENCY IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper does not focus solely on non-state actors which include individuals or groups using insurgency rather it will examine the broader factors driving insurgency in Delta State and how counter-insurgency strategies of state security architecture and traditional institutions can mitigate such behavior. Therefore, the paper will provide an extensive analysis of the sources of insurgency, consider response to such behavior and map out systematic, creative and nonviolent alternatives. The objective of this paper is to catalyze practical, policy oriented conversation amongst theoretical experts, practitioners, policy makers and civil society leaders in order to discern innovative and creative solutions to the major challenges of insurgency confronting Delta State in the twenty first century. The paper uses incident-level qualitative data from Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report on trends and patterns of insurgency in four different years in Delta State. It is a descriptive survey using data generated from secondary sources while contest analysis is used to analyze the data. The paper argues that considering the asymmetric nature of insurgency, the functionality of counter-insurgency does not depend solely on military solutions but also on political, economic and social actions by the traditional institutions with its skills and engagement to inoculate its domain against the virus of insurgency and violent extremism. The paper, therefore, concludes that traditional institutions of governance which reside with the revered kings and paramount rulers should be mainstreamed and integrated into the security architecture at the national, state and local government levels.
Keywords: Governance, Traditional Institutions, Insurgency, counter-insurgency, Delta State.

Introduction

Since the new millennium, the Nigerian state has been constantly confronted with conflicts, insurrection, insurgencies and terrorism. These conflagrations in form of community, ethnic, religion, civil dislocation and resource based conflicts have continued to threaten the internal security of the nation. (Jarikre, 2012:168).The trends and patterns of criminality, security and conflict dynamics and risks in Nigeria without exception of any geopolitical since 2015 indicates a variety of interrelated and overlapping risks and drivers at the local, state and regional levels. The spate of insecurity and threats to lives and properties in Nigeria has reached alarming proportions despite the increasing visibility of the Nigerian state security agencies and paramilitary agencies in the management of internal conflicts. Thus, Nigeria has been described as a 'killing field' with no fewer than 1351 people who died violently, across the country barely 10 weeks into the Year 2018 through herdsmen and farmers clashes, sectarian crises, communal clashes, Boko Haram insurgency, cult clashes, kidnapping, and ritual killings, among others (Odumakin, 2018). The state centered security and the primary referent of security which confined security within the ambit of state capacity to deter or defeat aggression with military and coercive force is politically inevitable. However, like the neo-realist and postmodernist theorists on security argued, the state has a primary role to play without unnecessarily isolating the non-state actors such as the traditional institutions of community governance, rather, they should set their hands in gloves to pursue national peace and security agenda. As Skalnik points out (2004), chieftaincies or kinship-based forms of governance have never ceased to be important, despite various attempts by states to do away with them.

The objective of this paper is three prong. The first is to map the trends and patterns of criminality, security and conflict dynamics and risks in Delta State. The second is to tease out government policies and programmes to prevent and address insurgency beyond the use of state coercive force. The third is to stimulate a clearer understanding of the collective wisdom of traditional institutions of governance for the prevention of insurgency, terrorism, and violent extremism, than any military / security outfit could offer. The paper uses incident-level qualitative data from *Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report on* trends and patterns of insurgency in four different years in Delta State. It is a descriptive survey using data generated from secondary sources while contest analysis is used to analyze the data.

Governance

As I have mentioned elsewhere (Jarikre, 2016) drawing from the works of Sahni (2003), Chazan (1992) and Hyden (1992), governance has social, political and economic components as different authors have defined the term as the most suitable and convenient for his purpose. The countless or extremely great number of definitions of governance entail the capacity to establish and sustain workable relations between individual actors in order to promote public good. Thus, governance ultimately entails conscious management of regime structure which correlates between political structures or institutions of state and the betterment of the citizenry (Falaiye & Okeregbe, 2016:153), to promote law and order, protect human rights, ensure rule of law and due process of law, provide for the basic needs and welfare of the people and the pursuit of their happiness (Galadima, 1998).

The World Bank (1989) conceived governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. Drawing from the works of Barkan (1992) and Srilatha (2003), Jarikre (2016) surmise that governance is concerned with the uncovering of viable regime forms as well as the degree of 'stateness, arguing that governance involves less in the way of administrative management and more in the way of political management. In this way, governance requires a high level of political management rather than mere administrative management but as the act and manner of managing public affairs, public institutions and decision-making. Ostensibly, through the process of governance, the link between the civil society and the state is given form and expression through the social contract to serve public interest whereby the constitution and the laws provide the legal framework of governance. Ordinarily, the constitution and legal framework determine the government and the governed. In viewing governance as the process of steering state and society towards the realization of collective goals, however, does highlights the dynamic but problematic and oftentimes contradictory relationship which exists between the state, citizens and society (Jarikre, 2016: 222).

In this sense, we can talk of good governance when we view it as a process of social engagement between rulers and the ruled in the political community whose parts are rule making and standard settings, while management of regime structures and outcomes are the results of the social pact.

Good governance is the process of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard for the rule of law. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific identified eight (8) major characteristics: It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in insurgency.

Insurgency is a condition of revolt against a government that is less than an organized revolution and that is not recognized as belligerency. It is a violent, armed rebellion against authority waged by small, lightly armed bands who practice guerrilla warfare from

primarily rural base areas (Fearon and Laitin, 2003;*Lewis, 2020; Kalyvas and Balcells, 2010)*, The key descriptive feature of insurgency is its asymmetric nature: small irregular forces face the state's large, well-equipped, regular military*(Kalyvas, 2006)*. Due to this asymmetry, insurgents avoid large-scale direct battles, opting instead to blend in with the civilian population (mainly in the countryside) where they gradually expand territorial control and military forces *(Kalyvas, 2006)*. Insurgency frequently hinge on control of and collaboration with local populations. An insurgency can be fought through counter- insurgency warfare, as well as other political, economic and social actions of various kinds. Due to the blending of insurgents with the civilian population, insurgencies tend to involve considerable violence against civilians (by the state and the insurgents) *(Kalyvas, 2006)*. State attempts to quell insurgencies frequently lead to the infliction of indiscriminate. For the purpose of this paper, insurgency in Delta State can be categorized into gang violence (clashes between rival cult gangs), organized criminality (including kidnapping, robbery, and piracy), communal conflict (including land disputes, farmer/herder clashes, and leadership tussles), political violence (including election violence and violent political rallies), and mob violence, as well as militancy/counter-insurgency.

The principal strategy for insurgencies is the use of violence within the context of direct, armed struggle in asymmetric modes of warfare for political claim making (Unal, 2016: Though insurgency and terrorism fall under the banner of asymmetric warfare and political violence, insurgency is different from terrorism without any analytical proscription (Johnston, 2018). According to Schemer (2004, 216), insurgencies may be understood to pose a much more serious threat to national security than terrors ever might. This is because insurgencies will naturally find traction in areas with enduring political tension which might be co-opted to support their claims to government. And such governance is largely intractable unless effectively addressed through measures (Schanzer 2017:48).

Traditional Institution
Traditional institution is a custodian of tradition, law and cultural heritage of the people and a repertoire of wisdom and knowledge with considerable socio-political and economic influence (Jarikre, 2019). The head of traditional institution is a king or paramount ruler who is the traditional head of an ethnic community whose Stool conferred the highest traditional authority on the incumbent since the time before the beginning of British rule."(Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Erediauwa II, (CFR), in a memorandum). In this sense, the traditional ruler was contrived as an executive traditional ruler and saddled with exercising the executive role before the creation of the Nigerian State following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria and the Colony of Lagos on the 1st January, 1914 by the British Colonial Office. When the British colonial administrators assumed administrative control of its colony, it did not jettison the existing traditional political institutions rather they adopted an indirect rule system of government based on traditional rulership. Suffice it that despite the sundry reasons for adopting the indirect rule system by the British Colonial administration, it is essentially important here to acknowledge the potency and efficacy of the age-long and well tested traditional political institutions of governance in our communities.

Mapping Insurgency and Violence Profile of Delta State
The political economy of conflict in Delta State is inextricably linked with the political economy of conflict in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta area contains vast reserves of oil and gas, which play an important role in the Nigerian economy. Delta State is one of the core Niger Delta States situated in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The entire land mass of the state is 17400sq kilometers and 40% of it is located in the riverine terrain. (Jarikre,2016; 42). The state comprise of 25 Local Government Areas. It has a vast reserve of oil and gas which constitute a significant portion of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Despite the enormous national wealth generated from oil and gas exploitation in communities of the Niger

Delta, there is an overwhelming index of excruciating poverty, unemployment, impoverishment (Okoh 2007:92), pollution and environmental degradation, deprivation and repression. Consequently, frustration amongst oil producing communities, gives rise to violent conflicts which have perpetuated a culture of violence that has grown into a major insurgency (Asuni, 2009:3). Since the Federal Government proclamation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) for militants in the region, the security landscape has undergone significant changes. But since 2015, the stability brought about by the PAP has been eroded by a new wave of insurgency in the form of political competition, cultism, criminality, piracy, election violence, communal conflicts, herder and farmers clashes, kidnapping and an increase in small and light weapons.

In mapping the incident level of insurgency in Delta State, this section will profile the incidents of insurgence using the Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta (PIND) conflict and security risk for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. The profile of insurgency in Delta State is preponderantly gang violence (clashes between rival cult gangs), organized criminality (including kidnapping, robbery, and piracy), communal conflict (including land disputes, farmer/herder clashes, and leadership tussles), political violence (including election violence and violent political rallies), and mob violence, as well as militancy/counter-insurgency.

Criminality

Criminality was widespread in the state during the period, especially in Ethiope East, Oshimili North, Aniocha North, Ughelli North, Warri South, Udu, and Sapele LGAs. Criminality in Delta during the period related mainly to armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom and killings for ritualistic purposes. In April, for instance, bandits reportedly attacked a policeman at a security checkpoint and made away with his weapon in Asaba, Oshimili North LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2019). In September, an Okada rider (commercial motorcyclist) was reportedly killed for ritualistic

purposes in OriaAbraka community, Ethiope East LGA. Separately, in September, a lawyer was reportedly abducted by gunmen along the East-West Road in Ughelli North LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

Criminality was prevalent in Delta during the year 2020, particularly in Ughelli North, Oshimili North, Udu and Ethiope East LGAs. Criminal violence during the period involved mainly robbery, kidnapping, armed clashes and killings for ritualistic purposes. In January, for instance, the wife and son of a clergyman were reportedly killed by hoodlums in Ovwian, Udu LGA. In February, gunmen reportedly killed three policemen at a security checkpoint along Ugbolu-Illah road, Oshimili North LGA. In September, a young girl was reportedly killed and some of her body parts were removed for ritualistic purposes in Obiaruku, Ukwuani LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

Several incidents of criminality were reported in Delta, especially kidnapping for ransom and gun violence. Criminality was a key security issue in the state, especially in Ughelli North, Ughelli South, Uvwie, Isoko South, Ika North, Ndokwa East, Udu, Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Oshimili South, Oshimili North, Sapele, Ethiope East, Isoko North, Warri South, Okpe and Burutu LGAs. For instance, kidnappers reportedly abducted a policeman in Ika North in January, a medical doctor in Ughelli North in April, and five siblings in Okpe LGA in June. Gun violence was also prevalent in the state during the period. In April, for instance, two policemen, including an inspector, were reportedly shot dead by herdsmen in Ughelli North LGA. Separately, in May, an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ASP) was reportedly killed by gunmen in Ughelli North(Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

Gang Violence

Gang violence was a key conflict risk and security issue in Delta State during the year. Nearly 60 persons were reported killed in gang and cult related violence during the period. Gang violence during the period was driven mainly by

supremacy battles among rival cult gangs and general criminality, particularly in Ughelli North, Oshimili North, Warri South, Ethiope East, and Udu LGAs. In April, for instance, three persons were reportedly killed during a clash between rival cult gangs at a bar in Agbarho, Ughelli North LGA. In August, nine persons were reportedly killed during supremacy battles among rival cult gangs in Ibusa, Oshimili North LGA. In September, two people including a 14-year old male pupil were reportedly killed during a clash between two rival cult gangs at Lower Erejuwa, Warri South LGA. The pupil was killed by a stray bullet during the incident. Between October and December, over 15 persons were reportedly killed in a series of armed clashes reportedly involving Aiye, Arrow Baga, Black Axe, Eiye and Mafia cult gangs in the State. In October, for example, four persons were reported killed during a clash between rival cult gangs in Abraka, Ethiope East LGA. In November, seven residents were reportedly killed and several others injured during clashes between rival cult gangs at different locations in Ughelli town, Ughelli North LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

Communal Violence and Herder/Farmer Conflict
In 2017 Dozens of people were reported killed in the state in herder/farmer conflict, as well as in communal conflict relating to land disputes and leadership tussles. Several people were reported killed in clashes between herders and farmers in Ethiope East, Ukwuani, Ughelli North, Ndokwa East, Oshimili North, and Aniocha South LGAs. In October, for instance, herders reportedly attacked a community, killed six residents and destroyed crops in Oshimili North LGA. Also, communal tensions over boundary disputes and leadership tussles were key conflict issues during the period, particularly in Warri South-West, Warri North, Udu, Ukwuani, Ughelli North, Aniocha South, Isoko South, and Ndokwa West LGAs. During the year, many people were killed and others abducted in renewed clashes over a boundary dispute between Aladja, an Urhobo community in Udu LGA and Ogbe-Ijoh, an Ijaw community in South-West LGA. Separately, five

were reportedly killed and several others declared missing during clashes over a leadership tussle in Ugborodo community, Warri South-West LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2017).

Communal violence was widespread in the state during the year, driven mainly by herder/farmer conflict, as well as in communal conflict relating to land disputes and leadership tussles. Several people were reportedly killed in clashes between farmers and herders in Ethiope East, Ughelli North and Oshimili North LGAs. In February, for instance, two residents were reportedly killed and some houses destroyed during a clash between herders and farmers in Effurun-Otor community, Ughelli North LGA. Also, communal violence over boundary disputes caused many fatalities in the state during the period, particularly in Warri South-West and Udu LGAs. In October, for example, militias allegedly from Aladja community in Udu LGA reportedly killed a man in Ogbeh-Ijoh community in Warri South-West LGA. The incident was reportedly connected to a longstanding conflict over a boundary dispute between the two communities(Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020).

There was an increase in incidents of communal conflict in Delta State in 2020, compared to 2019. Several incidents of communal conflicts were reported in the state during the year, especially in Ughelli North, Isoko South, Isoko North, Oshimili North, Aniocha South and Ethiope East LGAs. Communal violence caused over 90 fatalities during this period, driven mainly by communal tensions over land and boundary disputes, leadership tussles, as well as herder/farmer clashes. In January, for instance, two residents were reportedly killed and several others injured during a leadership tussle in Agbarho town, Ughelli North LGA. In February, 10 farmers were reportedly killed in a series of attacks by herdsmen in Uwheru and other communities in Ughelli North LGA. In October, nine residents were reportedly killed during a clash over land ownership and boundary dispute between two communities in Oleh and Ozoro

towns in Isoko South andIsoko North LGAs, respectively (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2019; 2020).

Political and election violence

Political and election violence caused many fatalities in the state during the year, particularly in Ughelli South, Uvwie, Sapele, and Ethiope West LGAs. Incidents of political violence in the state during the period included clashes between supporters of political parties, violent political rallies and electoral misconduct. In February, for example, a Special Assistant to the Delta state governor was reportedly assassinated in Ekpan community, Uvwie LGA. In March, thugs reportedly attacked a voting center, killed two voters and hijacked voting materials in Oghara community, Ethiope West LGA. Separately, in March, gunmen reportedly killed a man at a voting center in Iwhrekan community, Ughelli South LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

Vigilante and Mob Violence

Several incidents of vigilante and mob violence were reported in Delta State during the year, especially in Ethiope East, Sapele, Udu, Uvwie, and Ughelli South LGAs. In April, for instance, two robbery suspects were reportedly killed by vigilantes in Okpara-Inland, Ethiope East LGA. In November, two robbery suspects were reportedly burned to death by a mob in Ovwian town, Udu LGA. In December, a man was reportedly burned to death by a mob over alleged killings for ritualistic purposes in Otokutu community, Ughelli South LGA. The suspect was reportedly caught with human skulls(Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2018; 2019).

Many incidents of vigilante and mob violence were reported in Delta State during the year, especially in Ughelli North, Warri South, Oshimili North and Uvwie LGAs. In April, for instance, two residents were reportedly killed by local vigilantes in Evwreni community, Ughelli North LGA. In November, two robbery suspects were reportedly lynched and set ablaze in Effurun town, Uvwie LGA. Also, in November, a 13-year

old boy was reportedly shot dead by a member of a local vigilante group in Ibusa community, Oshimili North LGA. In December, a mob reportedly lynched and burned three robbery suspects in Emebiren and Eburu communities, Warri South LGA (Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

Human Rights Violations in Delta State

Incidents of human rights violations in Delta State during the year were mainly related to abuses by security forces, sexual violence, and killing for ritualistic purposes. Several incidents of human rights violation were reported in the State during the period, especially in Warri South, Udu, Bomadi, Oshimili North and Oshimili South LGAs. In March, for instance, 7-year old twin boys were reportedly killed by an 18-year old man who removed their body parts for money-making rituals in Oko-Ogbele, Oshimili South LGA. In April, a 16-year old girl was reportedly abducted and raped by two men in Asaba, Oshimili South LGA. In June, a 12-year old girl was reportedly drugged and raped by a 38-year old man in Sapele town Sapele LGA. In April, a commercial driver was reportedly shot dead by a soldier at a security checkpoint in Ubeji, Warri South LGA. In October, a young man was reportedly shot dead by operatives of the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Ughelli town, Ughelli North LGA.

Several incidents of violent protests were reported in Delta State during the year. In August, for instance, a 23-year old boy was reportedly killed by a stray bullet fired by security operatives during a protest over alleged police brutality in Ozoro town, Isoko North LGA. In October, a young man was reportedly shot by operatives of the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in front of a hotel in Ughelli town, Ughelli North LGA. The incident sparked off violent protests against police brutality in the State. In October, for example, a policeman was reportedly killed and another sustained gunshot injuries during a clash between security operatives and 'End SARS' protesters in Otovwodo community, Ughelli North LGA. A raffle belonging to one of the policemen was reportedly stolen and vehicles

destroyed during the incident(Foundation for Partnership Initiative for Niger Delta, 2020).

The mapping of trends and patterns of conflict risk factors and incidence of violence and the related pressures on peace and stability in the Delta State is largely drawn from the annual reports of the Niger Delta by the foundation of Partnership Initiative for the Niger Delta. The copious reference to the report is not gratuitous rather it brings to the fore opportunity to proactively articulate creative solutions by our revered stakeholders.

The Relevance of Traditional Rulers in the Face of Insurgency in Delta State
Over the years of my community development, security and peacebuilding research, I have learned that African traditional institutions (revered kings and majesties) in their capacity as community and kingdom leaders are far more sophisticated than any outsider (including any military / security agency) in thinking through the causes of insurgency, terrorism, and violent extremism and how to respond to it in terms of security and peacebuilding. Unequivocally, and without fear of contradiction, the military/ security leaders more than anyone understand that there is not a military solution to insurgency in the Niger Delta.

Unlike most theoretical experts, policy makers, civil society, foreign donors, and international non-governmental organizations as well as military / security agencies, our revered kings and majesties have a variety of other capacities, they understand the language, the regional politics and economic, history, the culture and religious tension and how to get things done. They are supernaturally endowed and their resources draw from natural, local and international opportunities. But the most important resources they have that the politicians, policy makers, commoner, foreigners and v lack is trust and legitimacy based on their revered position next to God, primordial allegiance to the crown by the subjects, previous works and reputation. Our revered kings and traditional rulers in their problem solving skills and engagements are like

vaccine, inoculating the community and kingdom against the virus of insurgency, militancy and violent extremism.

African traditional institution governance traditional rulers understand so well that security does not land in a helicopter, rather, it grows from ground up (where they reign). Perhaps, this explains why the state government has put together the state and local government traditional councils and meetings for interaction in order to tap on the wisdom and capacities of our revered kings to respond to insurgence, terrorism and violent extremism as well as sundry social disorder and challenges. There is, therefore, the need for continuous constructive engagement to build synergy between government, security agencies and the revered kings to find workable solutions not only to prevent but to address the sundry issues of insurgency - gang and cult violence, organized criminality, land disputes, farmer/herder clashes, and leadership tussles), and political violence, beyond the use of military force.

Considering the spate of insurgency and the overwhelming inability of state security agencies to provide counterinsurgency and government alternate solutions, it brings to the fore the issues of modalities for integrating traditional and modern conflict management strategies in Nigeria (Okonkwo, Onuigbo & Ekekwe, 2019). Ostensibly, proffering workable solution by mainstreaming and integrating traditional institutions of governance into the security architecture at the national, state and local government levels will crystalize into a multi – dimensional measures to address insurgency. Thus, for traditional rulers to participate meaningfully on matters of security in the country, there is the need for them to be re-positioned so as not to just serve as agents of conflict resolution but also as security managers and agents of counter-insurgency which they were before their constitutional exclusion (Okonkwo, Onuigbo, Eme&Ekekwe, 2019).

To ensure extraordinary and sustainable success over the asymmetric warfare through its

counterinsurgency operations, government should evolve new innovations which is predicated upon constructive engagement to tap into the local capacity, knowledge, and experiences of the traditional rulers. This has become imperative because they are (traditional leaders of people) impacted by government policies and should ideally have a voice in shaping such policies of developing state security architecture for counterinsurgency.

Governance in the Face of Insurgency in Delta State

The concept of governance is understood in a variety of ways by different people, its definition often depends on the goals to be pursued, the actors involved and the socio-political context which these goals are to be achieved. However, good governance implies that the exercise of the vested authority is accountable, transparent, predictable, participative and dynamic. To examine good governance in the face of insurgency in Delta State, the paper will critically discuss it in the context of the activities and programmes of three governance structures: the Delta State Advocacy Committee Against Vandalism of Oil and Gas Facilities headed by the Deputy Governor, the office of the Special Adviser on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution and Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in the state.

Delta State Advocacy Committee Against Vandalism of Oil and Gas Facilities

In 2016, the region witnessed resurgence of militant activities when the Niger Delta Avengers emerged as the most dreadful militant group in the history of conflict trajectories to contest Buhari's Government reprehensible marginalization (Jarikre, 2017). The Niger Delta Avengers appears to echo the agenda of MEND, as a geopolitical organisation struggling for a greater part of oil revenue for the impoverished region. To this end, the Delta State Government led by Sen. Ifeanyi Okowa setup a Delta State Advocacy Committee Against Vandalism of Oil and Gas Facilities in 2016. The committee was headed by the Deputy Governor, His Excellency, Deacon Kingsley Otuaro. Other members of the

Committee are Dr. Chris Ekiyor (Secretary), Hon. Asupa Forteta (Member), Barr. Bosin Ebikeme (Member), Hon. Kelly Pinawou (Member), Chief Boro Opudu (Member), Hon. Mofe Pirah (Member), Hon. David Tonwe (Member), Chief Dan Ekpebide (Co-Opted Member) and Mr. Smart Asekutu (Co-Opted Member). The methodology of achieving the task of the committee largely relied on the assistance and support of traditional rulers in the creek communities and kingdoms where the dreadful militant groups operated. The constructive engagement of the leadership of NDA (dreadful militant groups) by the government advocacy committee to resolve some contentious issues brought about the cessation of hostility and restoration of production activities in the oil and gas industry.

Office of the Special Adviser on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

Through the office of the Special Adviser to Governor on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, the state government had successfully addressed over 85 percent of more than 300 conflicts in recent times. Prominent among them is the communal feud between Aladja and Isaba communities in Udu and Warri South Local Government Areas of Delta State. In addition, the office had also embarked on vigorous advocacy peace works through workshops to promote ethnic and communal harmony.

Delta State Advisory and Peace Building Council

Delta State Advisory and Peace Building Council made up of eminent personalities including traditional rulers of the state extraction came into existence in the year 2000 but was reinvigorated in tandem with the SMART Agenda in 2015. The responsibilities of the council include among others; studying the general socio-economic situations in the state and render advise, carrying out in-depth studies and rendering advice on issues, which can strengthen harmonious relationships with the Federal Government and other States in the Federation; study the causes of conflicts among the various communities in the

State and advise on measures to effectively mitigate them, and advise on appropriate peace building mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the various peace programmes of government. The Council has been fulfilling its mandate efficiently and effectively, accordingly.

Delta State Human Rights Protection Committee

Soon after the "ENDSARS" protest in 2020 by youths in the country against police brutality and other issues, the State government as a responsive and proactive measure, constituted a Judicial Panel of Enquiry to investigate complaints of police brutality and extra-judicial killings in the state. As part of the panel's recommendation, the state government inaugurated the Delta State Human Rights Protection Committee. The committee has the State Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa as the Chairman. Members of the Committee include Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Isaiah Bozimo; Comrade Ifeanyi Egwunyenga, Commissioner for Youths Development; Solicitor-General/ Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Mr Omamuzo Erebe and the Commissioner of Police in the state. Others are Representative of the Youths, Mr Harrison Gwamnishu; Representative of Civil Societies Organisations, Comrade Israel Joe; Representative of Nigeria Bar Association, Dr Jonathan Ekpenisi; Representative of National Human Rights Commission, Mr Alpheus Ngwu and Permanent Secretary, Directorate of Political and Security Matters, Mr Theophilus Aguonye, who will serve as Secretary. The mandate of this all-important Committee is to ensure the protection of the rights of our citizens in this state. In addition, the state government was paying the compensations recommended not because it could return the peace of the people and their joy but because the state want to be part of the pains that the people had suffered and to show a sign of love to the families of the victims. Suffice it that the committee is vigorously interfacing with the leadership of the Nigeria Police Force to ensure punishment on indicted officers.

Conclusion

Over the years of my community development,

security and peacebuilding research I have learned that African traditional institutions (revered kings and majesties) in their capacity as community and kingdom leaders are far more sophisticated than any outsider in thinking through the causes of insurgency and how to respond to it in terms of security and peacebuilding. The argument for a special role for traditional rulers in our constitution should not imply an abandonment of the democratic system of government. What it means is that traditional structures should be accommodated and made to operate with modern democracy in such a way that they reflect and mutually reinforce each other. Traditional rulers should be encouraged to monitor activities in their immediate domains. In most communities, traditional rulers still have a lot to say in the security management of such areas. There is a need to revive the traditional security institutions which used to support governance in the past. However, these may have to be modified to suit the dictates of civility. For instance, traditional rulers should be made to participate actively in the selection of beneficiaries of government empowerment programmes such as STEP and YEGEP and, should not be the exclusive preserve of the political class.

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