

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: JOS CRISIS ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The security challenges in Nigeria informed this study titled “Conflict Management and National Security in Nigeria: Jos Crisis in View”. The study examined the effect of Jos crisis management mechanism on national security in Nigeria. The research works methodology adopted descriptive and Field survey method for collection data from primary and secondary sources, through unstructured interviews and archival materials respectively. Data collected were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage which were presented with the aids of tables and charts. The paper work established that there is a direct, strong and sufficient relationship between conflict management and national security in Nigeria. It also revealed that there are some challenges militating against the management of Jos crisis to enhance national security in Nigeria. Some of the identified challenges include poor crisis monitoring and intelligence gathering, insufficient public support and poor governance. Others are logistic constrain and non-implementation of Commission of Inquiry reports. The prospects identified were; media parley, re-constituted plateau state inter-religious council for peace and harmony and re-structured operation SAFE HAVEN and Operation RAINBOW. The strategies proffered to mitigate the challenges include effective intelligence gathering and monitoring, confidence building measures and political will. Others are logistics support and implementation of the reports of Commissions of Inquiry. It was recommended that Plateau State Government should mobilize the vigilante and the neighborhood watch in the communities by establishing a Joint and Multi-Agency Headquarter for effective intelligence network and early warning on the Jos crisis. The study also recommended that Plateau State Government should establish a periodic expanded security meeting with major Civil Society Organizations and International Humanitarian partners for security update in the warring communities. The Defence Headquarters should also embark on Quick Impact Project and periodic medical outreach services to less privileged

communities for confidence building and public support to security agencies. It is also recommended that Defence Headquarters should constitute a committee drawn from all security agencies involved in the management of the Jos crisis to workout logistic requirement for operation SAFE HAVEN and RAINBOW for replenishment. Finally, Plateau State Government should liaise with the Federal Government of Nigeria to constitute a panel to review the various recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry for implementation.

Keywords: Conflict Management, National Security, Crisis, Plateau State, Multi-Agency, SAFE HAVEN and Operation Rainbow.

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental problems bedeviling developing countries is the increasing spate of ethnic and communal conflicts. In Jos, the spate of ethnic conflicts has led to loss of lives and property worth billions of Naira. It has also affected political and socio-economic development of Plateau State and by implication Nigeria. These security challenges informed this study titled “Conflict Management and National Security in Nigeria: Jos Crisis in View”. The desire of every nation is the promotion of the well-being of its citizenry. This is achieved by the maintenance of order in the society and the promotion of the interest of the citizens through the maintenance of a system of political, economic and social equilibrium in the society. In the desire to attain these goals, there are also various interests amongst other actors which often result in conflicts.

The nature of these conflicts will depend on the interest of the actors and the conflict intervention mechanisms adopted for the resolution of the crisis. One of the crisis intervention mechanisms is conflict management with its attendant implications on national security.

Conflict management connotes actions taken to avoid or control conflicts for the sustenance of peace and security while promoting a satisfactory resolution of the conflict. The management process involves proactive and reactive measures. The proactive measures entail the early warning mechanisms put in place to prevent the occurrence of conflicts and when they erupt, are resolved satisfactorily. The reactive process deals with violent conflict when it breaks out, during which necessary measures are undertaken to restore normalcy. The

effective management and resolution of any conflict depends on the cooperation of parties involved and the intervention mechanism put in place to achieve peace to enhance national security.

National security entails the ability to preserve the physical integrity of a nation for effective protection of lives and property, as well as the freedom of individuals to pursue and maintain legitimate aspirations and national objectives. This also involves measures taken by a state to ensure its survival, as well as the protection and wellbeing of its citizens despite varying interest. Therefore, nations develop conflict management strategies to maintain peace for enhanced national security.

Jos (the tin city) is a cosmopolitan city and capital of Plateau State, popularly known as the home of peace and tourism in Nigeria. Plateau State with a population of 5.5 million was created on 3 February 1976. It is located in the middle belt region of Nigeria and occupies a scenic plateau environment. The state has 17 LGAs amongst which Jos is the state capital.¹ Plateau has a good agricultural soil and grazing land for cattle rearing and

endowed with some solid minerals. The discovery of large deposit of tin in Jos in 1902 ranked Nigeria the 6th largest producer of tin in the world.² The conflict in Jos is deeply rooted in the historical process by which the city emerged and developed. Within this context, patterns of migration and inter group relations, in addition to the decisive role of tin mining under colonial administration all combined to shape the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political life of the people living in the area.³ There are 3 main ethnic groups, the Birom, who embraced Christianity from the European missionaries. They are widely attested to have inhabited the area prior to the advent of the missionaries in the early Twentieth century. Other ethnic groups, especially the Hausa/Fulani mainly Muslims, were largely brought into the area for tin mining activities by colonial masters in the early 1920s while the fertile land attracted pastoralist for cattle grazing.ⁱ The people of the area have largely coexisted peacefully, until the early 1991, when the then Military Government of President Ibrahim Babangida created the Jos North LGA. The political

control of Jos North between the Birom and the Hausa/Fulani became the major source of conflict in Jos. This power tussle led to various crises threatening national security.

Nigeria has experienced many internal conflicts over time with increased frequency after the advent of democracy in 1999. The conflicts include the ongoing insurgency in the Northeast and the escalating youth militancy in the Niger Delta region. Others are the agitations for secession in the South-East region by Indigenous Peoples of Biafra and the Farmers/Herders conflict. It is estimated that about 45,600 people have been killed as at 2022 due to persistent political and sectarian violence in Nigeria since 1999.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, 3.5 million people were forcibly evicted from their homes as a result of these conflicts.ⁱⁱⁱ Other conflicts are the protracted clashes in Sardauna Local Government Area (LGA) between the Fulani and Mambilla ethnic groups in Taraba and the reprisal attack in Jos by the Hausa-Fulani on the indigenes. Some of these conflicts have arisen due to the dynamics of ethnicity.^{iv} Security in Jos North had been undermined by continuous reprisal attacks and revenge killings thereby threatening national security.

^{iv} Communal crises between Riyom and

Bassa locals attacks also contribute immensely to the insecurity within the zone.

Plateau State is a replica of the Nigerian state with its ethnic and religious diversity hosting the 3 major indigenous ethnic groups; the Anaguta, Berom and Afizere (ABA) while the Hausa/Fulani, Yorubas, Urhobos and Igbos form the dominant minority groups.^v The political control of Jos North LGA between the Birom and the Hausa/Fulani minority is the crux of the matter in the conflict in Jos.^{vi} This crisis is rooted in historical antecedents and has created the politics of identity with the preponderance between the Birom and the Hausa/Fulani with adverse effect on national security.

The protracted conflict led to the establishment of a permanent Special Task Force (STF) nicknamed Operation SAFE HAVEN, on 21 January 2010 by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) as a conflict management mechanism. The main objective of the outfit was to restore and maintain law and order in aid of civil authority for enhanced security within Jos and its environs. However, reprisal attacks and killings from both parties to the conflict set in motion a circle of violence and insecurity that is unabated, despite deployment of the

military to restore law and order.^{vii} The conflicts have created tension, thus undermined the effective management of the crisis and threatened national security. Consequently, there is the need to develop an adoptive conflict management model that would arrest the situation so that it does not deteriorate further. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to appraise the effect of the conflict management mechanisms in the Jos crisis on Nigeria's national security, in order to find options for the prevention of such conflicts. The researcher is motivated by the desire to contribute to the process of finding lasting solution to the recurring crisis in Jos to enhance national security. The researcher noted that the prevalence of conflict in Jos has become a major concern for the well-meaning Nigerians considering the impact on the security as well as the economy of the nation.

Effects of the Management of Crisis on Nation Security

This section highlights the effects of the management of Jos crisis on national security in Nigeria. These include economic growth, restoration of law and order, inter-agency collaboration and ethno-religious and communal harmony. Challenges Militating

against the Management of crisis for enhanced National Security

The challenges militating against the management of Jos crisis for enhanced national security in Nigeria are poor crisis monitoring, response and intelligence gathering, insufficient public support, poor governance, logistic constrain and non-implementation of COI reports.

Prospect of the Management of Crisis to enhance National Security in Nigeria

This segment discusses the prospects of the management of the Jos crisis for enhanced national security in Nigeria. These include media parley, Plateau State Inter-Religious Council for Peace and Harmony (PIRCPH) and operations SAFE HAVEN and RAINBOW.

Conclusion

The overview of the management of the Jos crisis revealed a number of issues which raised some challenges for which answers were proffered by way of strategies for effective management of the Jos crisis for enhanced national security. These issues are early warning mechanism, public support, and political leadership. Others include logistic support for security agencies and committee of inquiry (COI). An appraisal of these issues indicates that the structures and

logistic support for security agencies for early warning mechanisms and proactive measures are inadequate for effective management of the crisis. It also identified that the lack of political will by leaders and its inability to implement the recommendations of the COI as a setback in the effective management of the Jos crisis for enhanced national security. Furthermore, the required public support for security agencies for effective management of the crisis is inadequate due to perception of being bias.

Also identified the effects of conflict management in Jos crisis on national security in Nigeria. These include economic growth, restoration of law and order, inter-agency collaboration and inter-religious and communal harmony. All the identified effects have positive influence on the community and national security in Nigeria. However, the challenges linked to the issues in the Jos crisis are poor monitoring and intelligence gathering, insufficient public support, and poor governance. Others include logistics constrain for security agencies and non-implementation of recommendations of COI. These challenges hindered effective management of the Jos crisis. Consequently, the identified prospect to mitigate the

challenges for enhanced national security in Nigeria. These prospects are media parley, Reconstituted Plateau State Inter-Religious Council for Peace and Harmony, and re-structured operation SAFE HAVEN and RAINBOW.

Drawing from the prospects the research proffered strategies to mitigate the challenges for effective management of the Jos crisis for enhanced national security in Nigeria. Media parley will mitigate the challenge of poor crisis monitoring and intelligence gathering through enlightenment on the activities of the security outfits to enhance public cooperation for information sharing for proactive management of the crisis.

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