



Political Corruption and Nigeria’s Security Crises

Okene, Nelson V.C^{1*}, Arthur Paul Jaja²

¹Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Science, University of Port Harcourt

²Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Port Harcourt

<p>Abstract: There is no development problem in Nigeria that is as recurrent and problematic as corruption. Its pervasiveness and intractability as well as the danger it poses to the wellbeing of Nigerian citizens especially the ordinary Nigerians make corruption a topic that will continue to attract scholarly debate and policy attention. Since the advent of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, hitherto long nurtured but suppressed feelings of neglect, marginalization, discrimination and domination by aggrieved sections of the society against the Nigerian state have burst in the open; and the political space have been flooded with separatist movements, calls for resource control/restructuring of the polity. This has secretly given vent to emergence of ethnic militias, escalation of youth restiveness, kidnapping and hostage taking which pose a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. The study examined the role of political corruption in Nigeria. This study adopts the rentier state theory as its framework of analysis; it relies on secondary data and situates corruption at the centre of political instability in Nigeria. The paper argues that the clamour for restructuring Nigeria, separatist agitations and crisis of governance in country are direct responses to social injustice and the obstacles imposed on the nation’s development through acts of corruption. Thus, the study recommends among others that corruption should attract severe penalty which should act as deterrent to perpetrators of corruption in Nigeria.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Review Paper</p>
	<p>*Corresponding Author: Okene, Nelson V.C Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Science, University of Port Harcourt</p>
	<p>How to cite this paper: Okene, Nelson V.C & Arthur Paul Jaja (2026). Political Corruption and Nigeria’s Security Crises. <i>Middle East Res J. Humanities Soc. Sci.</i>, 6(2): 50-57.</p>
	<p>Article History: Submit: 21.02.2026 Accepted: 23.03.2026 Published: 26.03.2026 </p>
<p>Keywords: Political Corruption, Rentier State Theory, Nigeria, Restructuring, Separatist Agitations, Governance Crisis, Social Injustice.</p>	
<p>Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p>	

INTRODUCTION

After many years of political upheaval occasioned by authoritarian regimes, democracy returned to Nigeria in 1999, which symbolizes another historic political landmark in the country. However, the phenomenon of corruption has remained the nation’s biggest challenge. The rate of corruption is so alarming that late President Muhammadu Buhari once declared if ‘Nigeria does not kill corruption, corruption will kill Nigeria’. This attests to the level of corruption in the country. Pervasive corruption has not only eroded public trust, fairness and justice in the country but also undermines the legitimacy of government as it hampers effective delivery of public goods and services (Lawal, 2007). This has been emphasized by Osah, Osundina, Ayi, Nwokoha and Chioma (2004) when they assert that:

By diverting scarce resources intended for development, corruption also makes it harder to meet fundamental needs such as those of food, health, and education. It creates discrimination between the different

groups in society, feeds inequality and injustice, discourages foreign investment and aid, and hinders growth. It is therefore a major obstacle to stability and to successful social and economic development.

The import on this on the polity, is that ‘politics as the pursuit of the res publica to advance the socio-economic needs of the people has been relegated to the secondary consideration (Jinadu, 2016:15). But as emphasized by social contract theorists, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau government is a contract between ruler and the ruled, consequently when and where government reneges on the social contract, it may lead to a conflict situation in the polity (Johari, 2003). In other words, the contract collapses, when government fail to meet the basic needs of the people, often leading to anarchy.

Corruption tends to vitiate rules and basis of public and political conduct; consequently, social justice is unlikely to be associated with high incidences of corruption in society (Mansah, 1996). This stems from

the fact that corruption is an act of deviation from accepted standards of behaviour in the country and it does not only impinge on efficiency and fairness in the society but undermines democracy and good governance (Rose, 1978). In Nigeria corruption has not only been identified as the bane of development but it is also the source of inequality in the distribution of wealth and administration of justice in the nation (Musa, 2019).

Societies all over the world frown at corruption as social set back. In Nigeria section 15(5) of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulates that the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power, the import of this is that corruption is an obstacle in the wheel of development of the country. It tends to sway the mind of public officers away from the welfare and aspirations of their people by giving primacy to personal benefit, and it also exacerbates social injustice and conflict in the society. The pervasiveness of corruption has not only given vent to the paradox of 'poverty in the midst of plenty' but it has also aggravated the crises of development; undermined service delivery and heightened insecurity and political instability in the country.

Since 1999, corruption has become one of the recurrent issues plaguing economic, social and political engineering in Nigeria. The study therefore seek to address the following issues; the impact of corruption on service delivery and development in Nigeria, the concomitant reaction by the people to the state of affairs and its implication on the unity and political stability of the country.

Corruption

Corruption as a concept is surrounded by scores of ideological complexities, defining it becomes a labourious intellectual task, especially to situate it within a divergent political climate. Despite all these complexities, corruption is considered by the World Bank (1977) as misuse or abuse of power, funds or administrative position for private gains. This tends to explain accumulation or diversion of public wealth for private advantages. However, in the political context, it entails diversion of or misuse of public funds for personal aggrandizement. In a similar direction, Heidenheimer *et al.*, (1993), opines that political corruption is any transaction between private and public sector through where collective goods are illegitimately converted into private pay offs. This definition tends to implicate the government and its agencies in corruption schemes.

Drawing from the above, corruption can be said to take place when those appointed or elected into leadership takes undue advantage of their position in the public sector. However, it should be noted that corruption is not solely a political phenomenon as it encompasses the economic and social sphere of life. Corruption also aims at enriching layers of society and

influencing the distribution of income and wealth in general (Klavaran 1998, Ogundiya, 2014). Corruption assumes forms which vary from one society to another, and it can be classified according to the scale. In Nigeria, grand corruption and petty corruption have been identified as the most conspicuous and familiar type of corruption (Ike, 2009). Grand corruption refers to corruption that usually involves bureaucrats and politicians who are involved in decision making and the allocation of resources. While petty corruption refers to common criminal activities by policemen, customs officers, judicial officers, and the like.

Adeagbo (2015), on the other hand has classified corruption into entrenched corruption, bureaucratic corruption and political corruption. Entrenched corruption is the type of corruption that is well organized and embedded in both political and social life of the people, that helps to sustain it. This type of corruption is pervasive, organized and monopolistic. Bureaucratic refers to public sector corruption. It occurs when bureaucratic functionaries take bribes from their public clients and practice extortion on a regular basis. While political corruption basically refers to the use of political power for financial gains. It also includes bribery, extortion, election fraud, abusive patronage, and official intimidation of opposition groups; as well as receiving gratification for giving assistance with regards to contract (Ukwaba, 2008). Political corruption is also known, according to Ogundiya (2019), as misallocation of resources, manipulation of government procedures, rules and regulations by reconfiguring the ethical standard of the state by political offices holders.

Despite its obvious disadvantages to society, some scholars argue that corruption is beneficial to development as it acts as a lubricant that greases bureaucratic bottleneck (Robinson 1998). However, recent findings by the World Bank (2022) reveal that corruption is antithetical to development in all societies. It destabilizes the polity and may lead to social disharmony or even revolution (Ike, 2019). In Nigeria, the coup plotters in the military take-over of 1966 and 1983 cited corruption as a major reason for the overthrow of the civilian regimes. Apart from hampering the effective delivery of public goods and services, corruption upsets ethnic balance and creates problems of national integration in developing countries. Especially where a corrupt but popular ruler from an ethnic group is replaced (Ike, 2019). This may upset an ethnic equilibrium be leading to possible revolution by the cohorts or to ethnic killings and genocide.

A careful study of the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (1999 – 2003), revealed that Nigeria has consistently failed in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Report (TICPR), Nigeria was the most corrupt country in the world in four different years (1999, 2001, 2002 and 2003). Again, Nigeria came third and fourth most corrupt

country in 2004. Nigeria's corruption perception index has remained on a very high level, despite the decline in 2008, the ranking remains very poor. In 2009, Nigeria scored 25 points in Corruption Perception Index (CPI), ranked 146 out of 180 countries assessed. In 2023, Nigeria marginally improved in the CPI score from 24 points in 2022 to 25 points in 2023. Although one point improvement over the period may need to be acknowledged, this does not appear salutary at all. Out of 180 countries surveyed Nigeria was ranked 145, scored 25 out of 100 points and thus very much in the committee of countries with very high incidence of corruption in their national life. (Transparency International 2023 & NBS, 2023).

The plural nature of the society and the uneven division of the country into three regions, the North, West and South by the colonialists reinforces corruption in Nigeria. The asymmetry division of the country where the northern region was larger in population than the eastern and western region combined as well as the domination of the three major ethnic groups, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo respectively both in their regions and nationally laid the basis for disunity, mutual distrust and pervasive corruption in the country. As rightly pointed out by Ikpeze, Soludo and Elekwa (2018) that fear of domination which transcends the ethnic nationalities, is the basis not only for corruption but fragile peace, disunity and underdevelopment in Nigeria. Omatseye (2012), amplified this when he states that corruption becomes more entrenched where governance is plagued by ethnic and sectional considerations.

Thus, in a multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria where politics has been 'ethnicized', the rivalry among the diverse ethnic nationalities for scarce political resources has accentuated corruption and ethnic conflicts which have become a threat to the unity and stability of the country (Omodion and Aliu, 2013). It should be noted that the competition by ethnic nationalities to have a fair share of the national cake has pushed persons or individuals from different ethnic groups who occupy public office to view such appointments or office as an opportunity for their people or ethnic group. Consequently, such public office holders usually try to subvert public policies and laid down procedures to favour their people as well as loot enough resources to favour their kinsmen (Ogundiya, 2014). These favours are often appreciated by award of chieftaincy titles, and when such people who extend such largesse to their communities are caught and are tried for corrupt practices; their kinsmen / tribesmen do not only rally support for them but perceive them to be victims of ethnic cleansing or witch-haunt and by extension tacitly encouraging corruption in the society.

Political instability in Nigeria refers to the recurring challenges of governance characterized by weak institutions, corruption, electoral violence and policy inconsistencies that have undermined democratic

consolidation since the return to civilian rule. Following the end of military era in 1999, Nigeria transited into democratic phase expected to foster political stability and development, however, the persistence of issues such as ethnic conflicts, ethno-religious conflicts, insurgency, poor leadership, and weak institutional capacity has continued to threaten national cohesion. As Huntington (1968) and Ake (1975) argue political instability arises when institutions fail to manage social change and maintain legitimacy. Dudley (1976), refers it to those changes of political variety within a society. It encompasses the use of threat of political violence, the susceptibility of the political system to military takeover, disintegration, warfare, riots, militancy, revolution, ethnic or religious conflict, abhorrence to the rule of law, arbitrary change and implementation of rules and political repression (Adelge, 2005).

It has been noted by Nwobashi (2010), that political systems are stable when the political institutions and processes are seen to be legitimate, when decisions of government are based on rule of law, equity, fairness and justice, and the wishes of the people are respected and all forms of discriminations on the basis of socio-cultural imperatives are avoided. However, in this study political instability refers to threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria and the country's democratic enterprise which continue to hinder effective governance and sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of analysis that underpins this study is Rentier State Theory (RST). The Rentier State (RST) developed by Mahdavy (1970), and expanded by Beblawi and Luciani (1987), explains how states that derive substantial revenue from external rents such as oil tend to develop weak institutions, limited accountability and elite-driven politics and misgovernance. The Economist Beblawi (1990) defines a rentier state with the following characteristics, in such a state: a rentier situation dominates the government's revenue structure in which (i) rents are acquired from foreign sources, (ii) they accrue directly to the government and (iii) very few citizens are usually participants in the rent generating business with the majority only being beneficiaries of distributions.

Klas (2008) has pointed out that the fiscal situation in a rentier state is characterized by a dual capacity; the ability to generate revenue or draw sizeable rents from external sources and subsequently to discriminately distribute this wealth internally. This tends to perpetuate strong states and weakens civil society groups because the rentier state provides substantial funds that are easy to misallocate and invites little public scrutiny (Klas, 2008). He further notes that an embezzling politician once he assumes office counteracts demands for transparency and eventually patronage becomes the game. This stems from the fact that large rents make the state a prize to be possessed

rather than a forum for consensual rule, they also constitute a significant incumbency advantage by providing the means to maintain hold on power (Gana, 2006). The state under such circumstances apart from being characterized by arbitrariness and corrupt tendencies reduces political reforms and democracy to privileges that could be dispensed by the 'benevolent ruler' (Gana, 2006).

It should be noted that Nigeria is a major producer as well as exporter of crude oil in the world. Over 70% of government revenue is derived from the sale of crude oil which accrues directly into the coffers of the federal government, and this invariably makes the state an agent for the collection of petro-dollar rents with which it feeds the rapacious elite to the detriment of the masses (Ibiam & Itumo, 2014). What is emphasized here is that access to power has provided officials with access to resources and the theft of such resources go unpunished (Joseph, 1994). Those in control of state political structures depend on selective graft, gratifications, percentage cuts, kickbacks, contract inflation to perpetuate self in power, Gaddis (as cited in Ibiam & Itumo, 2014, p.157). They further note that these acts have elevated corruption into a state craft and it debilitates development and aggravate problems such as lack of essential infrastructure and social services which reinforces poverty and cause citizen's resentment and agitation for change. Consequently, having labored and suffered for decades under this state, configured to the benefit of the ruling elite, the Nigerian masses have come out strongly to demand a revisit of the nature and functions of the state, in what is generally referred to as 'restructuring'.

Case Study of Corruption in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the state plays a dominant role in the socio-economic development of the country and this is largely responsible for official corruption in the country as access to state power has been central to the existence and wealth of the political leadership based on crass corruption. Since the advent of civil rule in 1999, national dailies have been inundated with tales of corruption cases especially in the public sector by government officials. This has continued unabated for more than two decades. Transparency International (TI) has continually rated Nigeria as one of the poorest and most corrupt nations in the world.

Some of the notable corrupt scandals chronicled by Elekwa, Eme and Okwonkwo (2009) include the 'tenure amendment bribe allegation' in which a member of the House of Representatives, Olusola Adekeye reported that the Presidency was at the verge of bribing each member of the House of Representatives with the sum of N70 million to vote in favour of tenure elongation. The 'Budget Bribe scandal' in which President Obasanjo sacked his Minister of Education, Fabian Osuji who was alleged to have offered bribe to the then Senate President Aldophus Wabara to increase

the budgetary allocation to the ministry of Education which had suffered underfunding for some years. It should be noted that this incident led to the resignation of Wabara as Senate President. Other corruption cases recorded by Elekwa *et al.*, (2009) include the NITEL-PENTASCOPE management scandal; the 'MISSING MT AFRICAN PRIDE' and the 'SOLGAS and AJAOKUTA STEEL SCANDAL'.

Other corruption cases recorded by Ciboh (2010) are N2.4 billion contract scams for purchase of 380 Peugeot cars for House of Representatives Committees and the N557 million arms scandal involving a former Inspector general of Police, Sunday Ehindero and the embezzlement of over N60 million at the National Institute of Policy and strategic Studies Kuru. The N214 million scandal involving prominent civil servants over the National Identity Card project.

The Muhammadu Buhari administration that came to power in 2015 has unraveled many corruption scandals. Prominent amongst them is the 'Dasuki Gate Scandal' in which money earmarked for security and defense operations was diverted to settle prominent politicians in the country. Sambo Dasuki, former National Security Adviser (NSA) under President Jonathan is accused to have allegedly stolen more than \$2.4 billion meant to purchase weapons for the military to fight Boko Haram insurgency in the north eastern part of the country. Dasuki has been accused of awarding phantom contracts to buy 12 helicopters, 4 fighter jets, bombs and ammunition worth \$2.4 billion that were never supplied (Fadeyi, 2015). He is also alleged to have caused the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to transfer \$145.6 million to a company with accounts in the United States, Britain and in West Africa for unknown purposes and without contracts. Also, that the CBN transferred funds to individuals and companies on the say-so of Dasuki without detailed tenders.

Other prominent corruption cases reported in the media include the defense sector scandal that involved former chief of Air Staff, Air Marshall Umar Dikko that has been accused of misappropriating \$15 billion meant for procurement of arms. Details of the charges against Umar include payment of N4, 402,689,569.41 for unexecuted contracts and the procurement of two used Mi-24V helicopters instead of the recommended Mi-35M series at N136, 944,000.00. Four used Alpha-jets for NAF at \$7,180,000.00 funded by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA); and the cannibalization of engines from NAF fleet to justify procurement of jets and excessive pricing of 36D6 Low Level Air Defense Radar at \$33 million instead of \$6 million per one (Alli, 2016).

Money earmarked for critical infrastructure in certain parts of the country has not been spared. The management of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has revealed that money

earmarked for critical infrastructural facilities in the region was misappropriated. Under the management headed by Nsima Ekere, it was alleged that over N200 billion meant for projects in the region were mismanaged by the NDDC. In reaction to this development, the new management of NDDC has cancelled over 600 projects that were awarded under his predecessor. It was discovered that some of the contracts were awarded but contractors did not report to site. Some collected advance payments for the execution of the job with zero work done (The Nation, July 21, 2017).

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) recovered N47.2 billion and \$487.5 million in cash and properties from Diezani Alison-Madueke, former Minister of Petroleum under President Goodluck Jonathan (Onyeji, 2017). It has been alleged by the Buhari Media Support Group (BMSG) that the stolen money is enough to complete the Lagos-Kano rail projects and the Lagos-Calabar rail lines as well as agricultural projects that could generate employment for many Nigerians.

This high level of profligacy, fraud and looting of the national treasury has deleterious impact on the country's socio-economic development. It is ironic that the country is a major producer and exporter of crude oil in the world but the level of poverty of her people stands in contrast to the country's oil earnings. Statistics from the World Bank indicate that apart from India which is ranked number one in the world with 33% of the world poor, China is ranked second with 13% of the world poor followed by Nigeria with 7% of the world poor (Omoh, 2014.). Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2018, 2019, 2023) figures suggest that poverty rate is on increase in Nigeria. It rose from 54.4% in 2004 to 69 % in 2010. Statistics from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) show that poverty rate in 2016 stood at 62.6% meaning that about 112 million of the country's 167 million (2016 estimate) lived below poverty level (Vanguard, 18 Oct. 2016). The aftermath of this as noted by Igbuzor (as cited in Ezeani, 2017, p.5, Ogunidiya, 2019) Nigeria which hitherto used to be one of the richest countries in the World in the early 1970's had retrogressed to be one of the poorest at the threshold of the twenty first century. Pervasive corruption in Nigeria has also exacerbated unemployment in the country. In fact, the rate of unemployment has continued to rise since the return to democratic rule in 1999 revealed that poverty rate rose from 60.5m in 2018 to 97.3 million in 2019. In 2023, the number of the poor slightly reduced from 97.3m to 87million people. Despite the reduction it also indicates that substantial number of people in Nigeria are enmeshed in poverty (NBS, 2024). World poverty clock (2024) indicates that poverty rate increased from 87million in 2018 to 93.7million people who are extremely poor and living below the international poverty line of \$1.90dollar a day in 2019; in 2021, the number grew from 93.7million in 2019 to 95million in 2021; in 2023 the number of poor

increased from 100million in 2022 to 104millions. Indicating that the number of poor increased to 24million between 2018 and 2023 when Nigeria's poverty rate rose from 40% in 2018 to 46% in 2023 (World Poverty Clock 2023).

Corruption and Political Instability in Nigeria

Corruption has done great damage to the country. It has eroded trust, fairness and justice in Nigeria and this has precipitated political instability. The endemic political violence, ethno religious conflicts and terrorism rife in Nigeria is largely a function of unemployment and poverty perpetrated by acts of corruption. Arguably, it has been observed by the Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme an initiative funded by the British government (cited in The Economist, Sept, 12, 2014) that though poverty and unemployment does not directly cause violence, it tends to increase an individual's vulnerability to being mobilized by rebel movements and urban gangs and political buccaneers. Hence in Nigeria, the greatest challenge to stability and national security is the large army of poor and unemployed people (Akwaru, Enwuchola, Adekunle & Udaw, 2003).

It should be noted that Nigeria is a major producer and exporter of crude oil in the world. Billions of oil revenue has been produced by the state since oil exploration and prospecting began in the country in the early 60's but these billions of dollars of oil revenue have not translated into an improvement in the socio-economic life of Nigerian citizens. Rather the country exemplifies the paradox of "poverty in the midst of plenty" as the leadership is mainly pre-occupied with the desire for personal aggrandizement. The import of this is that the citizens lack basic necessities for human existence. The inability of the government to utilize public funds to provide for the basic needs of the citizens has generated insecurity in the country.

There is therefore a nexus between poverty and the anger and resentment against the Nigerian state. The restiveness in the Niger Delta region of the country and the concomitant demand for resource control for instance are a response to the neglect and underdevelopment of the region caused by corrupt leadership. It has been pointed out by Donasco (2014) that the crisis in the region emanated from several factors which include environmental pollution and despoliation in the region and pervasive poverty and underdevelopment in the region. In fact, several years of oil exploration and production by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU), Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), Texaco Overseas Petroleum Company of Nigeria Unlimited (TOPCON) and others have led to environmental pollution and despoliation of the Niger Delta area. However, the government has reneged on its constitutional responsibility to look after the welfare of the people of the region by failing to stop the annihilation

perpetrated by the Multi-National Oil Companies under the guise of doing business. This is at variance with global best practices where MNOCs are compelled to clean up the spill and compensate the communities. Also, several billions of dollars of oil revenue that the federal government has realized from oil prospecting from the Niger Delta has not impacted positively on the lives of the people. Rather, as observed by Donasco (2014), the political leadership has succeeded in looting and pilfering the oil wealth generated by the region while the people and the entire citizenry live in perpetual poverty.

Hence, the violent protests perpetrated by the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP); the Ijaw National Congress (INC); the Niger Delta Force (NDF); the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA); the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF); Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and others are in part a response to corruption in high places which has given vent to neglect of environmental issues, rising unemployment, infrastructure decay, lack of basic amenities which beset the people (Donasco, 2014). These have triggered violent protests by the youths who are aggrieved and radicalized by the activities of government and oil firms that have failed to provide good roads, water, light, schools and hospitals. Thus, when government fails to address the demands of the people, the only way the people can get the attention of the government is by being militant.

The pro-Biafra agitation championed by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Ralph Uwazurike and Nnamdi Kanu respectively in the South East zone of the country is deeply rooted in corruption which has given vent to marginalization. The Southeast, like much of the country, as pointed out by Obasi (2015), suffers from deficient and dilapidated infrastructure and widespread youth unemployment since the end of Nigeria/Biafra Civil War in 1970. The grievance of the people is that "Igbos have not been reintegrated into the Nigerian State since the end of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War" and South East is not getting a fair share of federal appointments, social infrastructure and economic development (Adangor, 2017, p. 9). But as pointed out by Adangor, in as much as the perennial neglect of the Igbos by the federal government cannot be seriously contested, this is not peculiar to the South East geo-political zone as other geo-political zones too cry out for marginalization in the country.

Adibe, Akinyemi and Ahmadu-Suka (2014) have pointed out that these agitations will fizzle out when the political elite in Nigeria become more patriotic and more nationalistic and begin to govern with a sense of justice, equity and fairness and use resources for the benefit of the ordinary people. They emphasize that in a situation where Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and material resources and we are all talking of bad

roads, poor electricity, lack of water supply and other such public utilities, the agitations will continue.

The lingering Boko Haram insurgency which has claimed so many lives, loss of property and threatened the corporate existence of the country over the past seven years cannot be detached from poor governance exacerbated by corruption. As succinctly pointed out by Musa (2017), corruption is the bane to inequality in wealth distribution and injustice in society which the Boko Haram use as a pretext to convince individuals to subscribe to their ideology. This has been underscored by human needs and poor governance theorists, that the primary cause of the protracted conflicts in Northern Nigeria is the quest to meet their unmet needs (Alozieuwa, 2013; Adibe, 2014).

Despite a per capita income of \$2,700 and an impressive GDP rate for over a decade, the north has one of the poorest populations in Nigeria and the North East where Boko Haram operates has the largest concentration of the "wretched of the earth" (Adibe, 2014). Granted that the groups' motive and grouse is not easy to decipher, but the groups' adopted name, membership and activities suggest that it is bad governance accentuated by corruption exemplified by unemployment, mass poverty and the inability of many able-bodied youths to realize their aspirations that has pushed them to resist the unfairness of the state to them (Alozieuwa, 2012). This can be gleaned from the groups adopted name of "Boko Haram" which literally means western education (civilization) is sin. Viewed against the background of corruption and poor governance, the International Crisis Group has warned that crisis may likely prevail in Nigeria and this will threaten the legitimacy of the government, and the panacea is that the Federal Government should work towards improving the issue of bad governance, reducing corruption and lack of transparency that constitute the core grievances of militant and separatist groups in the country (Ijiomaye, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Corruption has exacerbated the crisis of development, undermined service delivery and heightened social insecurity and political instability in Nigeria. This has waned the legitimacy of the government and contributed to the rise of groups that embrace violence and reject the authority of the state. The agitation for resource control and true federalism or 'restructuring'; separatist movements spearheaded by ethnic militia such as MASSOB, IPOB, OPC, IYC and a host of others are a response to rising spate of marginalization, unemployment, starvation, frustration and the yawning gap between the rich and the poor exacerbated by corruption. The multi-ethnic nature of Nigeria and the attendant ethnicization of politics and the ensuing rivalry among the diverse ethnic nationalities for scarce political and economic resources has accentuated corruption and ethnic conflicts which posed a threat to

the unity and stability of the country. The prevailing practice in the country is that once an individual gets access to public office such as the Presidency, he regards such an office as an opportunity for his ethnic group thereby marginalizing other groups in appointive positions such as heads of boards, parastatals and agencies. Equally in the award of contracts, preference is given to individuals from his ethnic group. Former President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari was accused of lopsided appointments favouring the Hausa/Fulanis from the northern part of the country against the other ethnic groups in the country. The same accusation has also been levelled on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This has fueled a feeling of marginalization amongst some ethnic groups in the country particularly the oil producing communities who have felt that they are not getting a fair share in the distribution of the 'national cake' that they have baked through the crude oil that is being extracted from their soil that has triggered agitations for resource control, true federalism and restructuring in the country.

Corruption generally is a deviation from the norm, and it feeds inequality and injustice, the harbingers of political instability. Defects in the governance mechanism characterized by lopsided appointments, mismanagement of public resources, poor service delivery, unemployment and poverty are precursors to instability. There is need for the federal government to work assiduously to stem corruption and channel the states' resources to create jobs, provide infrastructural facilities as well as social security programmes for the masses. Corruption should attract severe penalty to deter culprits because of its harmful impact on the nation's development. The federal government should devolve more powers and resources to the states and the local governments to take care of the social needs of their people. Also civil society groups should wake up from slumber and actively demand accountability from those in leadership positions.

REFERENCES

- Adangor, Z. (2017). Separatist agitations and the search for political stability in Nigeria. *Donnish Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, 3(1), pp. 1–017.
- Adeagbo, M. (2015). Corruption: The bane of national development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment* 6(2), pp. 18–25.
- Adibe, J. (2014, May 6). Explaining the emergence of Boko Haram (web log post). Retrieved from <https://www.brookingsedu/blog/Africa> in focus 2014/05/06
- Adibe, T; Akinyemi, K & Ahmadu-Suka, M. (2017, Sep.30). Why agitations and separatist demands refuse to die. *Daily Trust*. Retrieved from <https://www.pressreader.com>nigeria>
- Adilije, C. (2005). Instability in Nigeria's quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. In W. Alli (Ed.) *Political Reform Conference, Federalism and the National Question in Nigeria* (pp.384–405). A publication of Nigerian Political Science Association.
- Akwara, A; Enwuchola, B; Adekunle, S, & Udaw, A. (2013). Unemployment and poverty: Implications for security and good governance in Nigeria. *IJPAMR: International journal of Public Administration and Management Research* 1(2), pp. 1–11.
- Alli, Y. (2016). \$15b: EFCC to arraign ex-Chief of Air Staff today, *The Nation*, Vol.11, No.3575, pp. 7.
- Alozieuwa, S. (2012). Contending theories on Nigeria's security challenges in the Era of Boko Haram Insurgency. *Peace and Conflict Review* 7(1). Pp.1–8. Retrieved from www.review.upeace.org.
- Anyanwu, J. C. (2014). Accounting for poverty in Africa: Illustrations with survey data from Nigeria' Working paper services No.149 African Development Bank.
- Beblawi, H. (1990). The rentier state in the Arab World. In G. Luciani (Ed.) *The Arab State* (pp.85–98), London: Routledge Croom Helm.
- Ciboh, R. (2010). An evaluation of newspaper reports on corruption in Nigeria (2000–2006) unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Donasco, C. (2014, August, 12). Using frustration aggression theory to explain the conflict in the niger delta and the federal government of Nigeria' retrieved from chrisdonaso.blog.com on 12/8/2018
- Dudley, B. (1982). *Introduction to Nigeria Government and Politics*, London: The Macmillan Press.
- Echikwonye, B. (2011). Political stability and extra-parliamentary carpet crossing in Nigeria's first and second republics. *Nigerian Journal of Political and administrative Studies*, 2(2), pp. 148–157.
- Elekwa, N; Okechukwu, I; & Chijioke, I (2009). 'Corruption in Nigeria: The National Assembly experience, 1999–2006. In T. Edoh, T. Wuam (Ed.) *Democracy, Leadership and Accountability in Post-Colonial Africa, Challenges and Possibilities: Essays in honour of Professor, Akase, Paul Sorkaa* (pp.214–239). Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- Ezeani, E. O. (2017). Presidential address delivered at the 5th annual conference of the Nigerian political science association, South East Zone on Nov.13–15, Uturu, Abia State University.
- Fadeyi, R. (2015, Nov. 18). \$2.9 billion arms deal: Buhari orders arrest of Dasuki, others. *National Mirror*, Vol. 5, No. 1246, p. 2.
- Fagbemi, O. (2007). Corruption and political instability in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 1(2), pp. 028–037. Retrieved on 12/8/2018 from <http://www.academicjournals.org/ajpsir1996-0832>
- Gana, A. (2006). Electoral reforms and sustainable democracy in Nigeria. A paper prepared for the

- Advisory Committee on Political Affairs, the Presidency, Abuja.
- Gauba, O. P. (2007). *An Introduction to Political Theory*. New Delhi: Macmillan India.
 - Ibiam, O. & Itumo, A. (2014). A rentier state and the predatory elite: The dilemma of Nigerians. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS)*, 6(1), pp. 154–162.
 - Ijtemaye, L. (2014, August). Boko Haram and political instability in Nigeria. Retrieved from secgovernancecentre.org/2014/07/backgrounder on 15/8/2018.
 - Ike, D. (2009). Corruption and its impact on the economic development of Nigeria. Public lecture, College of Business and Social Sciences, Covenant University, Ogun State, April 17.
 - Ikepeze, N., Soludo, C. & Elekwa, N. (2009). Nigeria: The political economy of the policy process, policy choice and implementation. *International Development Research Centre*. Retrieved from <http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-71263-201-1-do-topic.html> on 16/8/2018.
 - Jinadu, L. A. (2016). Framing the national question: A human security approach. In E. George-Genyi (Ed.), *The National Question and Development in Nigeria* (pp. 3–30). Abuja: Donafrique Publishers.
 - Johari, J. C. (2003). *Contemporary Political Theory: New Dimensions, Basic Concepts and Major Trends*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.
 - Joseph, R. (1987). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - Jost, J. & Aaron, C. K. (2010). Social justice: History, theory, and research. *Handbook of Social Psychology*. New York: New York University Press.
 - Klas, N. (2008). Bad wealth: Restating the relationship between natural resources abundance and democracy. Bachelor's Thesis in Political Science, Goteborg University.
 - Klaveren, J. (1990). The concept of corruption. In J. Heidenheimer et al. (Ed.), *Political Corruption: A Handbook*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
 - Lawal, G. (2007). Corruption and development in Africa: Challenges for political and economic change. *Humanity and Social Science Journal*, 2(1), pp. 1–07.
 - Mensah, E. (1986). Methodological problems in the study of corruption. In F. Odekunle (Ed.), *Nigeria: Corruption in Development* (pp. 165–176). Ibadan: University Press.
 - Musa, U. (2017). New wars in north eastern Nigeria: Towards overcoming the challenge of sustainable peace-building. In S. Ibrahim; O. E. Tagban; A. O. Ahmed & C. C. Osakwe (Ed.), *Defence, Security, Economy and Development in Nigeria*, Vol. 2 (pp. 280–288). Kaduna: Bahiti and Dalila Publishers.
 - Nwekeaku, C. (2010). The media and war against corruption in Nigeria. *Proceedings of International Bi-Lingual Conference on Research Development*, 1(1), pp. 203–216.
 - Nwobashi, H. (2010). Ethnic separatist agitations: Implications for political stability in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political and Administrative Studies (AJPAS)*, 5(1), pp. 68–83.
 - Obasi, N. (2015). Nigeria's Biafran separatist upsurge. Retrieved from crisisgroup.org/Africa/Nigeria/2015/12/04 on 18/8/2018.
 - Olawoyin, O. (2018, Feb. 22). Perception of corruption worsens in Nigeria – Transparency International report. Available at www.premiumtimesng.com
 - Omatseye, S. (2012, Dec. 13). Disappointed vultures. *The Nation*, December, p. 18.
 - Omodia, S. & Aliu, M. (2013). Governance and threats to national security in emerging democracies: A focus on the Nigerian Fourth Republic. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 36–43.
 - Omodia, S. (2012). Political leadership and national security in the Nigerian Fourth Republic: A discourse. *African Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(4), pp. 90–96.
 - Omoh, G. (2014, April 11). Nigeria third on world poverty index: World Bank. *Vanguard News*.
 - Onyeji, E. (2017, August 10). Loot recovered so far from Diezani “a tip of the iceberg”. Available at www.premiumtimesng.com
 - Osah, G., Osundina, O., Nwokocho, C. & Chioma, P. (2014). The political economy of corruption and leadership in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*, 2(8), pp. 1–7.
 - Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University.
 - Robinson, M. (1998). Corruption and development: An introduction. *European Journal of Development Research*, 10, pp. 1–14.
 - Rose-Ackerman, S. (1978). *Corruption: A Study in Political Economy*. New York: Academy Press.
 - Ukwaba, I. E. (2002). Political corruption in Nigeria: An assessment of the first, second and fourth republics. In C. O. Ugwu (Ed.), *Corruption in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 29–49). Nsukka: Chukka Educational Publishers.
 - Usman, B. (2000). Political economy and political stability in Nigeria in the early 21st century. A paper presented at the workshop on the survival of democracy in Nigeria, Royal Tropicana Hotel, 27th September.
 - World Bank (1997). *Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank*.