

## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

Dr. Abdur-Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola\*

*Ph.D (London); London School of Economics and Political Science, (L.S.E) University of London; M.Phil. Political Science (Ibadan), M.Sc. Political Science (Ibadan), M.C.A Communication Arts (Ibadan), B.Sc. (Hons) 2.1 Political Science (Ibadan), P.G. Dip/C.P.E in Law/Legal Studies (U.N.L, London), P.G. Dip (Legal Practice) (APU Chelmsford, Essex, U.K), Dip/Cert with Distinction (Arabic and Islamic Studies) (Ibadan). Pioneer and former Head, Department of Political Science, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos.*

**\*Corresponding Author:** *Dr. Abdur-Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola, Ph.D (London); London School of Economics and Political Science, (L.S.E) University of London; M.Phil. Political Science (Ibadan), M.Sc. Political Science (Ibadan), M.C.A Communication Arts (Ibadan), B.Sc. (Hons) 2.1 Political Science (Ibadan), P.G. Dip/C.P.E in Law/Legal Studies (U.N.L, London), P.G. Dip (Legal Practice) (APU Chelmsford, Essex, U.K), Dip/Cert with Distinction (Arabic and Islamic Studies) (Ibadan). Pioneer and former Head, Department of Political Science, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos. Email: nusramurana@yahoo.co.uk*

### ABSTRACT

*Religion remains enormously influential in the construction and mobilization of collective identities. In the same vein, ethnicity seeks to influence the structure of power in a country and calls attention to perceived deteriorating material conditions, political deprivation or marginalization of its groups. Religion could serve, and has indeed served as an instrument of social harmony. Ethnicity could also serve, and has indeed served as a uniting and integrating weapon in deeply heterogeneous, plural, federal and divided societies to supplement and complement “unity in diversity”. Paradoxically, however, religion and ethnicity have also served as motivations for violence, conflicts, insurgency and counter insurgency. This is the situation in Nigeria, where it has been a problematic problem to achieve inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence. Nigeria’s return to democratic rule in 1999 has contributed to a noticeable upsurge in religious, ethnic and communal conflicts.*

*What factors are responsible for inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts in Nigeria? What warning signs can be identified to prevent and/or curb inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts? What changes are necessary and desirable with the present situation to avoid disintegration and fragmentation being threatened by religious and ethnic conflicts as Nigeria approaches another attempt at democratic rule consolidation in socio-economic and political conditions which are less propitious than on past occasions since independence.*

*This paper on inter-religious and inter-ethnic co-existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options, attempts to provide some answers within the limitations to which the author is exposed.*

**Keywords:** *Religion, Ethnicity, Conflicts, Violence, Unity, National integration, Inter-religious co-existence, Inter-ethnic co-existence*

### INTRODUCTION

*“... Nigeria today stands dangerously on the brink of the precipice of disaster. The geographical, economic and political entity which the British and Nigerians have built over the years is cracking so badly that there are now grave signs that it will sooner or later-perhaps sooner than later-collapse and shatter to pieces” (Jose, 1987:287).*

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria has witnessed little or no inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence since the country’s independence in 1960. It is no exaggeration therefore, to assert that unremitting efforts aimed at averting an imminent and looming possible collapse and the ominous signs that Nigerians? (If there are Nigerians) are increasingly becoming an exercise in futility. The “beginning of the end” as once observed, is

fast approaching as a result of lack of inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

We contend that the country is heading towards the road to “Kigali”. (Olayiwola, 2012). Religion and ethnicity are what shape and define (ethnic) identity formation in Nigeria. Deducing from the pattern of religious and ethnic identities, of say, two distinct groups, the closer an ethnic group’s link to a particular religious identity, the higher the level of religious significance in socio-economic and political matters, which eventually breeds intolerance and ethno-religious violence. All these lead to insecurity of lives and properties. An unfriendly security climate precludes both external and internal investment into the country. Inter-religious and inter-ethnic problems also compound the process of unity in diversity, economic growth, political stability and sustainable socio-economic development and transformation (Olayiwola, 2013, 2014).

The problem of unity in diversity is bound up with the location of power, that is, with the struggle between individuals and communities to control other individuals and communities within the country.

Most inter-religious disturbances usually develop into inter-ethnic conflict even where they began as purely religious or ethnic disagreement. There is a belief that those who share a common religious or ethnic identity have similar economic and political interests (despite class or other considerations), while those of different ethnic or religious groups are assumed to have divergent “secular” interests. Hence, the satisfaction of one community’s interests is seen as necessarily coming at the expense of another. (Hibbard, 2010).

Political actors of all stripes regularly manipulate religion, ethnicity (religious and ethnic identities) for political ends. The danger to the unity of Nigeria, lack of inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence during the civilian and military regimes as well as the re-appearance during the return to democratic rule has been a confrontation between the various religious and ethnic groups in the country. The differences underlying the threat to unity, inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence came initially from the different manner in which the British ruled the different sections of the country, from contrasts of temperament and outlook between the savannah and forest peoples, and from the difference in the pace of

social development of the different areas. It is these differences that have been capitalized on and exploited by the political elites. They have also played disintegrating and dysfunctional role in various elections, governance and governments in the country, thus seeming to confirm the “elitist” theory that democracy is a fraud. (Nigeria Opinion, 1965, Olayiwola, 2011, 2012).

Nigeria has demonstrated a very high propensity for inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts and lack of peaceful co-existence in the past five and a half decades and more. In more recent times, there has been a dramatic surge in inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts and the increasing proliferation of religious and ethnic militias. In spite of concerned efforts being made to curtail religious and ethnic wars in Nigeria, the problem has been on the increase. Religious and ethnic conflicts have persisted in all geo-political zones of the country.

The introduction of sections 38 (1) and 10 into the Nigerian Constitution, which have guaranteed freedom of religion and prohibited the declaration of state religion respectively, has done little to attenuate the frequency of religious conflicts, as state patronage and veneration of dominant religious groups have helped in heightening the underlying tensions and rivalry. Thus conflicts between Nigerian religious groups have often manifested in violent inter-religious violence. (the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

Also, lack of inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence crippled national integration in Nigeria. Under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), it stated that:

“The composition of the government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of person from a few States or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies. The composition of the Government of a State, a local government council, or any of the agencies of such Government or council, and the conduct of the affairs of the government or council or such agencies shall be carried out in such manner as to recognize the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the peoples of the federation”.

### POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

- The motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity, Faith, Peace and Progress.
- Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.
- For the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the State to
- Provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people goods and services throughout the federation;
- Secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation.
- Encourage inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin, or of different religious, ethnic or linguistic association or ties and
- Promote or encourage the formation of association that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or other sectional barriers. (Olayiwola, 1996, 2012, 2018)

Ali Mazrui (1972) identified five interrelated aspects of national integration thus:

- The fusion of norms and cultures (including the sharing of values, mode of expression, life and a common language);
- The promotion of economic interdependence;
- The narrowing of the gap between the elites and the masses, the urban and the rural area, rich and poor, etc. social integration;
- The resolution of emergent conflicts; and
- The sharing of mutual experiences so that people can discover that they have undergone some important experiences together.

National integration is a positive aspect. It reduces socio-cultural and economic differences or inequalities and strengthens national unity and solidarity, which is not imposed by any authority. People share ideas, values and emotional bonds. It is feeling of unity within diversity. National identity is supreme. Cultural unity, constitutional, territorial continuity, common economic problems, arts, literature, national festivals, national flag, national anthem and national emblem etc. promote national integration. National integration is a very broad statement. To achieve national integration, the

country has to pool resources, viz human, cultural, religious, scientific, natural etc to achieve oneness in all spheres of life of the citizens of the country, so that progress can be achieved. With the progress, the citizens can enjoy fruits of prosperity and happiness, living in harmony irrespective of the politics, creed, language, religion, ethnicity and cultural leanings professed by each one for them as individuals. National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different political parties, religions and regions, ethnic groups and speak different languages, we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation in Nigeria with inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence.

### NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

The problem with national integration in Nigeria is that people are made to feel like strangers in their fatherland; whereas as stated earlier, chapter II paragraph 15(2) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended states that:

Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, while discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.

Chapter II, paragraph 15(3) of the same constitution also states, inter alia, that “for the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the state to provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the federation, (b) secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the federation and; (c) encourage intermarriage among persons from different places of origin or of different religious, ethnic or linguistic ties. Many ordinary Nigerians have become woefully impoverished, traumatized and helpless in the face of unprecedented abuse by the consecutive reactionary governments and political leaders. Ethnic and religious considerations have replaced the traditional patriotic considerations in the governance of the country; pervasive corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. Nigerian leaders have failed to address the very real concerns of Nigerian masses. The leaders have lost touch with the Nigerian people and communities. Leaders lack the commitment and political will to serve the people. Nigerians get a rough deal from their leaders. These

failures of leadership and law enforcement have compounded the problem of lack of inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence.

A major feature of many recent conflicts has been the mobilization of ethnic, religious, linguistic or regional identities. Stewart (2000) terms these horizontal inequalities, arguing that they play a major role in causing violence. But it is not these identities themselves that are problematic. It is the way they are used as markers of economic, social and political exclusion – and how they are mobilized for political purposes and ultimately for war.

Ethnic cleansing is the most extreme manifestation, creating legacies of fear and hate that are enormously difficult to eradicate.

When ethnic patronage is built into military, police and security bureaucracies, it corrupts them weakens discipline, reinforces a sense of impunity, fosters public (and especially minority) distrust of the state itself. Bosnia is an extreme example, where the reorganization of military and security forces on largely ethnic lines, without an integrated command system, has perpetuated insecurity and made democratic control impossible. Another bad example was the genocide in Rwanda.

Conflicts invariably sow deep seeds of hatred, often greatly sharpened by ethnic mobilization, specially so at the many wars in which civilians have been deliberately targeted to gain control over territory and resources. Human rights have been violated almost as a matter of routine.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We have used a combination of theories of conflict, group theory, theory of ethnicity and the ethnicity of theory and a more nuanced theoretical framework for interpreting modern religious politics, inter-religious and inter-ethnic co-existence.

The continuing relevance of religion and ethnicity is explained. That religious politics occur within the ideological context of the nation – state and that religion is fundamentally intertwined with nationalist or communal identities.

In using group theory to explain inter-religious and inter-ethnic co-existence, we argue that religious and ethnic groups exist when men with shared interests organize, interact and seek goals through the political process. Bentley (1908) writes, “when the groups are adequately stated, everything is stated”.

Religious and ethnic groups are made up of individuals and relationships between individuals. These groups compete with other groups and try to gain “access” through group cohesion, organization, status, leadership, wealth and geographical distribution.

All groups try to achieve their objectives; all groups attempt to acquire power – to influence decisions in their favour and interests. Religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria are collections of individuals with shared attitudes and interests on the basis of which certain claims and demands are made upon governments and other groups in the society for the establishment and maintenance or enhancement of preferred values.

Inter-communal conflicts are conflicts among groups of people living together and sharing everything shared by several people. Conflict involves struggle over values and resources which are scarce (Anifowose, 1982). It could occur when two or more people want to do something that is mutually inconsistent. In some cases, conflict involves the elimination of an opponent or his neutralization. In other cases, conflict could be resolved through a number of other means. Theories of conflict are those theories which try to explain the issues of conflict. To start with, it is important to note that almost every other political theory explains conflict. But there are some theories which specifically attempt to explain conflict. The relevant theories here are psychological models. These are theories which explain political conflicts as the result of some psychological stress. Underlying the psychological model of conflict is the notion that the phenomenon arises from the interaction between the feelings of deprivation-frustration-aggression among individuals and groups in the society.

Several theories have been woven around this notion, including the *Frustration-Aggression theory* (Dollard *et al.*, 1939), *Relative Deprivation theory* (Ted Gurr, 1970), and the *Revolution of Rising Expectation theory* (Feierabend *et al.*, 1969). All the theories hold that conflict is the result of relative deprivation. There are three types of deprivation:

- aspirational deprivation – when values are constant but expectations are rising, e.g education and jobs in the Third World;
- decremental deprivation - values are decreasing but expectation remains constant, e.g inflationary periods;



- progressive deprivation – expectations start rising but values which have grown with expectation are rather falling e.g. the period immediately following a revolution

### LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

There can be no precise and agreed definition of religion. However, if the boundaries of religious belief are difficult to draw, the core territory is relatively easy to characterize. Religion is concerned with the worship of transcendent or supernatural beings whose existence is outside or above the realm of the normal which is moral and temporal. In its most historically important and ethnically demanding form, monotheism, as exemplified in the Islamic, Christian and Jewish religions, the religious concern is concentrated onto a single God who is Omniscient, the Creator of the Universe (McLean and Mcmillan, 2009).

The Nigerian state is composed of multi-ethnic nationalities or multi-ethnic groups. Also, with a population of over 180 million inhabitants, Nigeria has many religious groups (Olayiwola, 1991, 1992, 2012).

### ETHNICITY

There are theoretical and conceptual problems which touch on the fundamental nature of ethnicity. There is a claim that “ethnicity is connected to birth and blood but not absolutely so”. (Horowitz, 1985). A theory is a formal set of ideas that is intended to explain why something happens or exists. Six main attributes of ethnic community all of which capture the essence of ethnicity have also been put forward.

- a collective proper name;
- a myth of common ancestry;
- shared historical memories;
- one or more differentiating elements of a common culture;
- association with a specific homeland; and
- a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population. (Olayiwola, 2012)

In Nigeria, the fluidity or rather the conceptual confusion in the meaning attached to ethnicity and ethnic affiliations is something that comes out clearly. Otite (1990) has identified 374 ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, Otite qualified his classificatory schema with the

observation that “the unpredictable and incomprehensibly juxtaposition of changing socio-linguistic and socio-political variables in Nigeria, including the fact that many ethnic group members are found outside their natal or aboriginal or ancestral territories, had combined to obscure ethnic group identification and affiliation in the country. Iwaloye and Ibeanu (1997) used the following criteria to conclude that about fifty-six ethnic nations are identified in Nigeria based on:

- geographical space
- the relative size; and
- topographical continuity of language groups

Ethnicity is arguably one of the most powerful forces shaping political processes and the architecture of political institutions in contemporary Nigeria; since its influence, for good or ill, is undeniably present in the Nigerian society. Ethnicity is problematic for the Nigerian state because it raises vexing issues of justice, equality, minority rights, loyalty, citizenship, tolerance, freedom, self-determination and autonomy, which remain unresolved by the Nigerian State up till today. This may well be because of what Kymlicka and Norman (2000) describe as lack of the state autonomy and its manipulation to serve their particular interests by competing hegemonic ethnic groups in the state. This failure is a manifestation of a substantive problem, which ethnicity, with its focus on collective group rights, poses for the liberal theory of the state, thus aiding, abetting, complimenting and supplementing the seemingly insurmountable problems of lack of inter-ethnic and inter-religious peaceful co-existence.

**Co-exist** is to exist together in the same place or at the same time, especially in a peaceful way.

**Co-existence** is the state of being together in the same place at the same time.

**Peaceful** refers to not involving a war, violence or argument; quiet and calm; not worried or disturbed in any way and trying to create peace or live in peace; not liking violence or disagreement.

**Peace** is a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence a country or an area. (Hornby, 1997).

### Some Causes of Lack of Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria

There are several causal diagnoses of religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, but much of the

literature in this area pay premium attention to the underlying socio-political, economic, geographical, educational, cultural, developmental and governance factors that precipitate, not only religious and ethnic but violent conflicts generally. (Salawu, 2010).

Also, a cursory perusal of extant literature shows that government neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism, favoritism, religious bigotry, ethnic chauvinism are some of the predisposing factors of lack of inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence (Iwara, 2006).

Other factors and causes identified include fragility of the institutions of the state in terms of their ability, capability and capacity to manage diversity, corruption incorrigibility, rising inequality between the rich and poor, gross and blatant violation of human rights, environmental degradation, contestations over land, among a host of other germane causes.

Other factors are mutual fears and suspicions among Nigerian religious and ethnic groups, competitions for the control of resources, governmental decisions that are considered by the various groups as unfair, unjust and onesided, the deliberate manipulation of religious and ethnic identities, biased media reportage, the perceived partisanship of the security agencies, the perceived unfair, unfree, and incredible electoral system, revenue allocation and census controversy, unemployment and lack of adequate attention being paid to early warning signals of inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We have discussed inter-religious and inter-ethnic co-existence in Nigeria. We reflected on religion, ethnicity and causes of inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence and conflicts. We argued that all the various efforts made by successive governments, groups and agencies including all the reports of National Conferences of 2014, 2005, 1995, 1994, 1987, 1977, 1976, 1958, 1957 to mention just a few have proved abortive and an exercise in futility. To achieve inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence, we make the following recommendations:

There is a need to criminalize deliberate manipulation of religious and ethnic identities As Elaigwu, (1996), observes:

“There are instances when politicians, traditional and religious leaders deliberately

manipulate ethnic and religious identities of groups. There are enough evidences to show that quite a number of ethno-religious conflicts are caused by politicians and political leaders. The level of hypocrisy among our political leaders is nauseating. Some of these politicians have no constituencies from which to demonstrate their relevance except through their narrow ethnic and religious groups. Without being religiously judgmental, they are not genuinely religious in their actions and faith – whether they claim to be ‘born again’ (or is it ‘born against’ God). Their personal lives do not show that God has a place in them. They exude religious bigotry and ethnocentrism with demonstrable arrogance. They symbolically use churches and mosques as their theatres of operations in the day time, while consulting *babalawos*, *cultists* and/or *juju* men or even ritualists at night. It is important that they maintain this semblance of *churchianity* and *mosquianity*, bereft as these may be of the core values of Christianity and Islam. This is because it is their lifeline for survival. They pollute the minds of young children with their bigotry and copiously exhibit ethnocentric arrogance. Many of the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria (especially in Northern Nigeria) are generated or exacerbated by this group. Since no commission of inquiry ever punishes them, they hide behind their ethno-religious curtains as untouchables – constantly brewing and dispensing new forms of violence. Genuinely religious people respect the ways of life of others and treat human lives with care and dignity. They know that since they did not create, they should not take the lives of others”.

- There is a Need for the Development of Early Warning Signals on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Co-existence. All governments must establish active Conflict Management Units, to help provide proper information, identification, interpretation of conflicts and provide policy options, from which appropriate responses can be undertaken. This also involves training appropriate staff for these units. Such units should embark on socialization with all its agencies the family, peer groups, media, the schools, the governments, education, mobilization, information-dissemination and effective communication in all ramifications – political, interpersonal group etc.
- There is a Need for Mutual Respect and Recognition of Claims of Others on Religion and Ethnicity. Many of the conflicts we have

witnessed emerged from the lack of mutual respect for one another. We cannot all be the same. We must realize that even within a single religious and ethnic group, there are differences in perspectives and opinions.

- Also, we must be able to dialogue with one another, no matter how difficult. We should respect and recognize the claims of others in a competitive context even if we disagree with the nature of such claims. Non-recognition of claims generates major conflicts which often mobilizes ethnic and religious loyalties. We must accept the reality that while it is necessary to create “unity in diversity”, we must identify and respect our differences – “diversity in unity”.
- There is a Need for the Improvement of the Economy and Management of Unemployment. Conditions of life are currently very hard for the average Nigerian. Eating poses a real problem, democracy of the stomach not to mention taking members of your family to hospitals. Many families can no longer pay school fees. There are no jobs for even those who have graduated from secondary schools, Polytechnics and Universities. There is a large army of the unemployed, ready to be used for odious jobs which bring in some income. Armed robbery, political thuggery, banditry and other forms of crimes have virtually been “legitimized” by the logic of the imperatives of survival.
- We must therefore address the issue of the economy, poverty and how to check and manage unemployment if we are to effectively manage conflict, inter-religious and inter-ethnic co-existence.
- There is a Need for the Establishment of Framework for Constant Dialogue and Understanding. Perhaps one area of urgent action is the need to establish frameworks for **constant dialogue and understanding among traditional leaders, religious and ethnic groups** within each state, as a first step. This is important because violence can easily spill across borders of either local government of states. The second step is a national forum for dialogue. The current forums for religious and traditional leaders in Nigeria can be prodded to become more proactive, with branches at each state and local government level.
- There is a Need to Address the Issue of Citizenship, Indigeneship, Nationality and be

strongly looked into in a way that one should be a Nigerian rather than being a native of a particular state as it is as at present. Why should it be more possible for an alien to naturalize and enjoy full citizenship rights anywhere in Nigeria than a Nigerian living outside his place of origin?

- This issue of citizenship, indigeneship, nationality, settler matters, migration etc has become a problem all over the country. In spite of the rhetorics about Nigerian citizenship, all Nigerian recognize that there is indigeneship. We recommend an amendment to sections 25-32, part 1, item 9 of the Constitution.
- There is a Need for the Mass Media to be Religiously and Ethnically Responsible in their Reportage. Section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), Chapter II on Fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy explains the obligation of the mass media thus:

*“The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people”.*(Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999).

The mass media are very powerful instruments for information dissemination, education of masses and interest articulation and aggregation of religious, ethnic and other groups perceived interests. They can be powerful weapons of nation-building and nation-destruction.

The way the mass media report religious and ethnic events, the level of sensationalism, the manipulation of data on inter-religious and inter-ethnic co-existence to achieve particular objectives and the level or lack of self-censorship are directly relevant to the escalation or dampening of religious and ethnic conflicts.

In a democratic society, the mass media are expected to play the following roles:

- To convey information to the people with a view to letting them know how the mandate they gave their representatives is being discharged.
- To provide a forum through which the governed could react to government policies and activities;

- To assist in the articulation and pursuit of national interest;
- To monitor the performance of government with a view to preventing their deviation from clearly stated objectives;
- To assist in setting an agenda of priorities in the social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation
- To function as an agent of modernization; and
- To provide informed criticisms on viable alternatives, among a host of others (Olayiwola, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016)
- Since peaceful coexistence between religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria can best be achieved within the framework of national unity and in view of the fact that religious ill-feeling is invariably exacerbated by ethnic tension where the division between the religious communities runs along ethnic lines, efforts towards achieving national integration as well as a sense of participation and belonging should be sustained and intensified.
- Given the widely accepted belief that poverty breeds social unrest, including religious and ethnic disturbances, efforts aimed at achieving quick economic recovery and self-sustained growth as well as narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor and between the developed and less developed areas of the country should be intensified.
- There is a need for True Federalism with all its trappings in a Multi-ethnic and Multi-religious Country like Nigeria. Also, transparency, accountability and good governance are of paramount importance, leadership must be responsible in all its dealings with the populace. In addition, the guarantee by government of the issues of environmental security, prudent resource management and control, corporate liability in terms of social, political and economic security as well as group cohesion.
- Also, needed is an orientation of the leadership and the populace to the history of our ancestors and their inter-group relation with each other in the past. This orientation also should be deliberately inculcated in school curricula so as to save the younger generation of Nigeria.
- There is a need to teach history and government as subjects in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to educate and disabuse people's minds on the lingering and continuing unabated evil effects of colonialism and imperialism with all their types political, economic, military, cultural, communication etc, British colonial administration encouraged communal sentiments among Nigerians. It seized every available opportunity to spread the myth and propaganda that they were "separated from one another by great distance, by difference of history and traditions and by ethnographical, racial, tribal, political, ethnic, social and religious barriers" (Nnoli, 1978:112-113).

We submit that if these recommendations are favourably considered and implemented, Nigeria will stop to witness unhealthy inter-ethnic relations as well as inter-sectional and inter-religious disharmony.

Nigeria, the giant of Africa (one out of every four Africans is a Nigerian) will stop to be plagued by ethnic, religious, regional identities and socio-politic economic crises which had resulted in the bloody civil war from 1967 – 70, in which over a million lives were lost and properties destroyed. In the same vein inter-religious and inter-ethnic peaceful co-existence which had suffered from the hands of insurgents and counter-insurgents since independence till the present time, 2018, will be drastically curtailed. The consequences of inter-religious and inter-ethnic lack of peaceful co-existence in Nigeria have included loss of lives and properties, increased number of displaced persons and increased sense of insecurity.

There were/are also associated feelings of uncertainty, higher disposition to conflict and violence, potential for recurrence of conflict due to heightened sense of distrust, prejudice and vengeance among members of same religious, ethnic and/or opposing groups. In the words of Sule, 1996 one solution to cure religious and ethnic conflicts is to be constantly aware of the fact that:

"In this country, all of us need one another. Hausa need Igbos, Igbos need Yorubas and the Yorubas need the Northerners. Everyone has a gift from God. The Northerners are endowed by God with leadership qualities. The Yoruba man knows how to earn a living and has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo is gifted in commerce, trade and technological innovation. God so created us



individually for a purpose and with different gifts. Others are created as kings, servants, teachers, students, doctors – we all need each other. If there are no followers, a king will not exist; if there are no students, a teacher will not be required, etc. the world knows that Nigeria is a vast and gifted country. If we are allowed to live in peace with one another we will definitely become a great nation, a great influence in the world”. (Ayoade, 1997, *The News*, 8 April, 1996:15).

### REFERENCES

- [1] Abimbola, J.O. et. al. (2012). “Domestic Terrorism and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, Issues and Trends: A Historical Discourse”. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society*. Vol 4, September, 2012.
- [2] Anifowose, R. (1982). *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*. (Enugu: Nok Publishers).
- [3] Bentley, A.F. (1908). *The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- [4] Dollard, J. et. al., (1939). *Frustration and Aggression*. (New Haven: University Press).
- [5] Elaigwu, J.I. (2005). “Crisis and Conflict Management in Nigeria since 1980” in Yakubu, A.M. et. al. (eds.). *Crises and Conflict Management in Nigeria since 1980*. Vol. 1 (Kaduna: Nigeria Defence Academy, 2005).
- [6] Feierabend, I.K. et. al., (1969). *Social Change and Political Violence: Cross-National Patterns*. (Washington, D.G., US Government Printing Office).
- [7] Guichaous, V. (2007). “Who joins Ethnic Militia?” A Survey of the O’odua People’s Congress in South Western Nigeria”. (Oxford: CRISE University of Oxford, 2007).
- [8] Gurr, T. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- [9] Hibbard, S. W. (2010). *Religious Politics and Secular States*. (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press).
- [10] Hornby, A.S. (1997). *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- [11] Horowitz, D. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. (Berkley: University of California Press).
- [12] Iwara, U.E. (2006). “Religious Violence in Nigeria. Causes and Consequences”. *Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy*, 8(2), pp. 153 – 157.
- [13] Jose, B. (1987). *Walking a Tight Rope: Power Play in Daily Times*. (Ibadan: University Press Ltd, 1987).
- [14] Kymlicka, W. et. al., (2000). *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- [15] Larab, T. A. (2010). “Democracy and the Rise of Ethnic Militias in Nigeria from 1999 to 2009”. Implications for National Integration and Security” in Mangut, J. et. al., (2010) *The Fourth Republic and National Integration in Nigeria, 1999-2009*. (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2010).
- [16] Mazrui, Ali (1972). “Pluralism and National Integration” in Kuper, L. et al. (ed) (1971) *Pluralism in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- [17] Nigerian Opinion (1965). “The West and the Nation” (Ibadan, Nigeria Current Affairs Society University of Ibadan, 1965, p. 2).
- [18] Obi, C. (2006). *Youth and the Generational Dimensions to Struggles for Resource Contrail in the Niger Delta*. (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006).
- [19] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1984) *A Detailed Introduction to the Elements of Government*. (Ibadan: Board Publications Ltd., 1984), pp 1-84; Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- [20] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1987) “Islam and the demise of the First and Second Republics in Nigeria, A Functional Approach”: *The Islamic Quarterly* (London) Volume XXXI, No. 4, 1987, pp. 259-267; London, United Kingdom.
- [21] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1990) “Nationalism and Nation-Building in Islam” *The Islamic Quarterly*, London, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, 1990, pp. 101-111; London, United Kingdom
- [22] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1991). “Democracy in Islam”, *Islamic Culture* (India and Pakistan) Vol. LXV, No 2-3, April-July, 1991; pp. 63-83; Islamabad, Pakistan and India.
- [23] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1991). *Political Communication: Press and Politics in Nigeria’s Second Republic* “Africa Media Review”, (Nairobi: Kenya) Vol.5, No. 2, 1991, pp. 31-45 East Africa.
- [24] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1993). “Interpersonal Communication, Human Interaction and Sociatal Relationships in Islam: Africa Media Review. 1993 (Nairobi: Kenya) Volume 7, No. 3; pp. 91-105; East Africa.
- [25] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1995). “Communication, Population Child Development/Survival in Africa: An Islamic Communication Perspective. *The Islamic Quarterly*”, London Volume XXXIX, No. 3, 1995; pp. 154-166; London, United Kingdom.
- [26] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1996) “Political; Communication in Nigeria” in D. Paletz Ed (chapter 3) *Political Communication*

- in Action (New Jersey U.S.A. Hampton 1996). Pp. 55- 72; U.S.A.
- [27] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011). "Democratization, Good Governance and Education; A Comparative Study of Political and Social Issues in Education in Two Local Government Councils in Britain and Nigeria, Journal of Education and Policy" Review, vol. 3, December 2013, pp. 18-44.
- [28] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011). "Human Rights, Human Wrongs and the Rule of Law: Analysis and Action" Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy. Vol. 3 December, 2011, pp. 58-75.
- [29] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011). "Political Communication and Radio Broadcasting: The Impact of Ownership and Control on News Production in the Ibadan B.C.O.S. Journal of Business and Organizational Development Vol. 3,, December, 2011, pp. 9-20
- [30] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011). Development and Political Issues in a Democratizing Society: The Nigerian Example. Journal of Management and Corporate Governance. Vol. 3, December, 2011. Pp. 1-21.
- [31] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012) "Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in the Social Sciences; Reflections and Analysis" Journal of Arts and Strategic Studies, Vol.4, June 2012, pp. 1-7.
- [32] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012) "Social Science Education for Self Reliance" Journal of Education and Leadership Development, Vol. 4, June 2012, pp. 13-18
- [33] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012) "The Impact of Islam on the Conduct of Nigerian Foreign Relation, The Islamic Quarterly, First Quarter 1410/1989, The Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road. London, NW8 7RG. Pp. 17-33"
- [34] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). "Communication and Democratic Political Participation: An African Perspective". Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society. Vol. 4, September 2012, pp. 30-49.
- [35] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). "Leadership, Democracy and Federalism in Nigeria: Reflections on June 12 Democracy Day and Holiday Celebration Journal of Education and Human Development," Vol. 2, Number 2, 2012 pp. 47-74.
- [36] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). "Of Communication, Politics and Political Communication: Suggestions on a National Communication Policy for Nigeria". Journal of Social Sciences and Policy Review. Vol. 4, September 2012, pp. 12-29.
- [37] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). "Religious Issues in a Democratizing Society: An Islamic Perspective "Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society Vol.4, June, 2012, pp. 99-114.
- [38] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). "Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives of Federalism: The Possible Contribution of Federal Structures to a Resolution of Contemporary Political Problems and Contending Issues in Nigeria". Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy. Vol. 4, June 2012, pp. 73-103
- [39] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). Federalism, Ethnic Politics, State and Religion in Nigeria Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society, Vol.4, March 2012, pp. 1-22
- [40] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2013). "Media and Security in Nigeria". European Journal of Business and Social Sciences. Vol. 2. Number 9, Decmeber, 2013, pp. 20-38, Zurich: Switzerland.
- [41] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2014) "Issues in democracy and Sustainable Transformation" in Europe Journal of Research in Social Sciences, Vol.2, No 4, pp. 37-58; Birmingham, United kingdom.
- [42] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2014) "Mass Media of Communication and Environmental Problems: Islamic Religious Communication Solution Perspective" in International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection Vol.2, Noo. 4 pp. 1-18; Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- [43] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2014). "A Comparative Political Analysis of Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria and Britain" Journal of Political Sciences and Public Affairs, Vol. 2, Issue 4, December, 2014: pp. 1-9, Foster City, United State of America, USA.
- [44] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2014). "Comparative Analysis of Local Government Administration in Nigeria and Britain". SIPAS-Studies in Politics and Society. (A Journal Publication of the Nigeria Political Science Association) Vol. 2, Number 1, June 2014. Pp. 209-241.
- [45] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2014). "Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria" in European Journal of Business and Social Sciences. Vol. 2, Number 9, December, 2013, pp. 1-19; Zurich: Switzerland.
- [46] Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2016) "Political Communication in the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria: The Oyo State Experience – "The Wild. Wild West" Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism, Vol 6. Issue 5, 2016, pp. 1-8. Also, Published in International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol.4, 2016, pp. 85-106.

## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

- [47] Onuoha, F.C. (2012). "The Audacity of the Boko Haram, Background, analysis and Emerging Trend" Security Journal. 25, pp. 134-151.
- [48] Otite, O.C. (1990). Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnicity in Nigeria. (Ibadan: Shaneson Ltd.)
- [49] Salawu, B. (2010). "Ethno-religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies". European Journal of Social Sciences. 13(3), pp. 345-353.
- [50] Ya'u, Y.Z. (2007). "The Politics of Security Decision Making: The Case of the Hisbah in Kano State, Case Study". (London: S.D.C. Kings College, 2007). p. 6.

### APPENDIX A. Selected Cases of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria May 1999 to March, 2018

S/N	DATE	LOCATION	NATURE OF CONFLICTS AND PRINCIPAL ACTORS
1	May 31, 1999	Warri, Delta	Violent clash between the Ijaw and Iteskiri communities which has its roots in the grievances harboured by the <i>Olu</i> of Warri and his subjects over the recognition of new Kings in Warri by the Military Administration.
2	July 2, 1999	Sagamu, Ogun	A violent ethnic clash between Yorubas and the Hausa/Fulani residents. The News magazine attributed the crisis to the OPC.
3	July 22, 1999	Kano, Kano	Hausa/Fulani youth took vengeance on the killing of their kith and kin in Sagamu. Their target was the Yoruba community.
4	August 4, 1999	Arobo, Ondo	A violent clash between two feuding communities, the Ijaw and Ilaje communities of Arobo, Ondo State.
5	October 5, 1999	Port Harcourt, Rivers	Violent clash between the Eleme and Okrika communities over traditional and legal titles to the stretch of land where Port Harcourt refinery is located.
6	October 19, 1999	Ajegunle, Lagos	It reported to be an extension of the Arobo-Ijaw/Ilaje crisis, which started with kidnap of an Ijaw man. It later became a fracas between the Ijaws and OPC.
7	October 21, 1999	Aguleri-Umuleri, Anambra	A violent communal clash between two neighbouring communities of Aguleri and Umuleri. It is linked to the April 4, clash which resulted from an orgy of hatred and vengeance.
8	Nov. 8, 1999	Odi Killing, (Bayelsa)	Youth group associated with <i>Egbesu</i> youth kidnapped and killed policemen in revenge of the killing of their members, The Ajegunle/Ijaw/OPC crisis also heightened the restive Ijaw community. The town received a shelling and bombardment with artillery from soldiers.
9	Nov. 16, 1999	Isoko, Delta	A bloody communal clash between Oleh and Olomuro communities over sharing of used pipes from Oleh-Olomuro flow station.
10	Nov. 26, 1999	Port Harcourt, Rivers	An extension of hostility between the two neighbouring communities of Eleme and Okrika.
11	Feb. 2000	28, Kaduna, Kaduna	Kaduna city exploded in violence as Muslim and Christian extremists and other hoodlums clashed over the proposal to introduce Sharia.
12	Feb. 28, 2000	Aba, Abia	The riot which began in Aba, as a reprisal to that of Kaduna, which later spread to other Eastern states.
13	March 10, 2000	Ife-Modakeke, Osun	Communal killings between Ife and Modakeke communities of Ijesha. This was a fresh hostility after a long truce. It is believed to have a history of ancestral rivalry, which became heightened by local Government Council creation and the tussle over the location of the Headquarters of the new LGC.
14	March 18, 2000	Port Harcourt, Rivers	A communal hostility between the Eleme and the Okrika communities which degenerated claiming several lives.
15	April 2000	Gokana, Rivers	A bloody encounter involving six communities in Gokana LGA of Rivers State
16	April 14, 2000	Agyragu, Nasarawa	Communal clash that started with a protest against the location of Local Government Council Headquarters. The militant youth group started the riot and later took to the streets killing and destroying.
17	May 4, 2000	Ife- Modakeke, Osun	Another round of hostility between the two warring communities.
18	May 16, 2000	Akaasa-Igwama,	A bloody ethnic encounter between the Akaasa and Igwama communities.
19	June 5, 2000.	Bayelsa Olowo, Ondo	A violent clash between supporters of two lineage groups over the succession of the Owo Stool. The tomb of Pa Ajasin (a respected Yoruba leader) was destroyed in the conflict.
20	July 2000.	Tsagari, Kwara	Clash between Tsagari and Share communities of Kwara state, which claimed several lives.
21	September 8, 2000.	Kaltungo, Gombe	A religious violence that was sparked off by the presence of the state's Sharia implementation committee.

## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

22	October17, 2000.	Ilorin, Kwara	A faceoff between the militant members of OPC and Hausa/Fulani community over supremacy of Emirate system in the state.
23	October18, 2000	Lagos	Violent clashes between the militant OPC and Hausa residents in Ajegunle, which escalated and spread to other parts of the city recording heavy casualties. It was gathered that the clash might have been a spillover of Ilorin crisis.
24	October21, 2000	Minna, Niger	Violent ethnic crisis erupted after the OPC assaults in Kwara and Lagos states.
25	October22, 2000	Owaale-Olukare, Ondo	Hostilities between Owaale and Olukare of Ikare over Obaship.
26	December 2000	Hadejia, Jigawa	A sectarian disturbance that was caused by a debate between Muslims and Christians in Hadejia (Jigawa). There was wanton destruction of worship places.
27	June28, 2001	Azara, Nasarawa	An ethnic conflict between the Tiv and the Azara indigenes. It started with gruesome killing of an Azara traditional leader, and later spread to the Tiv village, with the Tiv community on the defense.
28	September 2001	Jos, Plateau	A violent ethno-religious crisis between the Muslim/Hausa-Fulani and Christian/Indigenes. The subject of discord between Jasawa Development Association and Plateau Youth Council was over political appointment in Jos North LGC
29	September 15, 2001	Onitsha, Anambra	A reprisal killing of Northerners in Onitsha after the Jos crisis in which several Igbos were victims
30	October 13, 2001	Rivers	A chieftaincy crisis, which snowballed into (clan) violence that, claimed several lives and destruction of properties.
31	October12, 2001	Kano, Kano	A peaceful anti-American protest over the bombing of Afghanistan turned violent, taking ethnic and religious tone. It degenerated into uncontrollable violence, which claimed lives and damaged properties and places of worship.
32	October29, 2001	Taraba, Benue and Nasarawa	Ethnic clashes between Tivs and Jukun/Fulani, which was extension of the May 2001 clash and could be linked with the protracted dispute between both sides. Newswatch reported that 16 soldiers were killed which later led to the gruesome revenge on the Tivs, by the Nigeria Army.
33	November 2, 2001	Gwantu, Kaduna	A clash that started on a political ground (over the relocation of LGC Headquarters) later took on ethno-religious dimension. Several places of worship were destroyed.
34	December 30, 2001	BarikinLadi, Plateau	A violent communal conflict in Vwang district between the indigenes and non-indigenes exploded at the backdrop of the September 7, 2001 Jos crisis. It started when an illegal group of 40 men attacked the District Head of Vwang. It also had religious colouring.
35	Jan. 18, 2002	Awe, Nasarawa	A renewed communal clash between two indigenous communities in Awe LGC of Nasarawa State. The cause was not certain but two people were killed and several others injured.
36	February 12, 2002	Idi-Araba, Lagos	An inter-ethnic violence between the Hausa resident community and the Yoruba in Idi-Araba. It started on the trivial accusation of a Yoruba man being manhandled but later escalated and took on ethnic line.
37	March 25, 2002	Ikom, Cross River	A fresh hostility erupted at Ikom when Ofara Natives launched a revenge attack against their Nselleneighbours, killing ten people in the process.
38	March 2002	Ika, Akwa-Ibom	The Punch reported an inter-communal war in Ika LGC. Hundreds of lives were said to be lost.
39	May 2, 2002	J05, Plateau	Another mayhem that followed PDP ward congress but later took an ethno-religious colour.
40	May13, 2002	Bori, Bayelsa	A communal clash in Ogoni land over the ownership of Bori town between the Yeghe people and the Zappa community
41	May27, 2002	Bassa, Plateau	An ethnic clash between the Hausa/Fulani and the Igrigwe indigenes, which was said to be a reprisal attack.
42	June 2002	Isoko, Delta	A clash between youth of Ozoro and Okpaile communities in Isoko. The Punch reported that five people were found dead and more injured.
43	June 2002	Yetwa-Shendam, Plateau	A religious-cum-ethnic fracas between the native people (predominantly Christians) and Hausa settlers (predominantly Muslims). This violence extended to about 14 LGCs in Southern Plateau.
44	July 2002	Wase, Plateau	The Yelwa-Shendam riots spilled over to Wase.
45	January	Abotse, Edo	Conflict over land ownership: irate youths protested against strangers



	2003		taking over their lands.
46	January 31, 2003	Warri, Delta	Renewed hostilities between the two feuding communities Urhobo and Itsekiri. Several lives were lost including police officers.
47	March 2003	Langtang North, Wase and Kanam LGC Plateau	Fresh ethno-religious conflicts in the three neighbouring LGCs of which is an extension of the crisis in southern Plateau.
48	March 17, 2003	Warri, Delta	Continued hostilities that led to the death of over 100 people and the sacking of 20 towns by suspected Ijaw militia.
49	May 2003	Inyimagu/Agbaja, Ebonyi	Communal clash between fuelled by cultist rivalry.
50	May 2003	Warn, Delta	Ethnic clashes between Ijaw and Itsekiri over the former's agitation for political autonomy.
51	June 2003 to March, 2018		Religious and ethnic crisis in all the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

**Source:** Adapted from Elaigwu with additions and modifications by the author. The dates are by no means exhaustive

**APPENDIX B. Ethnic Militias in Nigeria**

**Brief Considerations of Some Ethnic Militias in Nigeria**

The return to democracy in 1999 opened the floodgates for the proliferation and rise of ethnic militias in Nigeria. The heightened scenario of ethnic and religious fervor across most of the thirty-six states of the federation has threatened the threshold of national integration and the security of the nation state called Nigeria. The brief consideration here is in terms of the most prominent ones that the searchlight has focused on, but identification of others will also be documented.

**O’odua People’s Congress - South Western Nigeria (OPC)**

The organization named after the traditional mythological ancestor of the Yoruba nation can be acclaimed as one of the largest single ethnic militia, its existence is traced to 1994. Established under circumstances that can be clarified as frustrated promises of democratic transition and fierce opposition to repression under the military. The organization’s official objectives are as set out in its constitution and documented hereunder by Yvan Guichaoua, (2007).

To identify with one historical and cultural origin with a view to re-living the glory of our past for the purpose of posterity to educate and mobilize the descendants of Oduduwa for the purpose of the above; to integrate the aspirations and values of all the descendants of Oduduwa into a collective platform of an O’odua entity; to monitor the various interests; {...} to further the progress of O’odua civilization by protecting and promoting our values, mores and the integrational transmission of same.

Believing in the same objective though differing in ‘modus operandi’, the organization in 2003 became factionalized, with majority of supporters of both factions concentrated in the heart of Yorubaland. They have also been linked from 1999 till around 2007 with most of the clashes of ethnic colouration in the south-west geographical region.

**Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra South Eastern Nigeria (MASSOB)**

The establishment of this organization in 1999 is to resurrect the secession of the Eastern of Nigeria part comprising mainly the Igbo speaking states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo as independent and a sovereign nation. The resurrection of this idea though the instrumentality of MASSOB (as an ethnic militia group) is anchored on these reasons as adduced by its leaders;

The exercise of self-determination is a direct expression of the will of the people of Biafra. It is an ongoing process that began in 1966 after the genocidal pogrom and ethnic cleansing exercise directed against all the people of eastern Nigeria culminating in the declaration of the sovereign state of Biafra in 1967 when Biafra was forced to separate from Nigeria ... since 1970, Biafra has tried acquiescence to accommodate and be accommodated by Nigeria in the illusory thinking that this would bring reprieve from Nigeria’s harsh treatment and presentation and maintain peace. However, Nigeria remained relentless in its total suppression and denial of the basic human rights of Biafrans.(MASSOB, 2008)

As part of the actions taken in the light of this perceived marginalization, the organization filed a petition to the UN and issued as Biafran Bill of Rights. By 2000, MASSOB started singing the old Biafran anthem and hoisting of the Biafran flag in the southeast as well as forcing traders to transact business using the Biafran currency (Agbaje, 2003). This movement since the return of democracy rekindled the traditional loyalty of the ethnic type and the mixed nostalgia of the Biafran war.

N.B. MASSOB has now been outlawed as a terrorist organization by government.

### *Arewa People's Congress and the Hisbah Group of North Western Cum North Eastern Nigeria (APC)*

The emergence of this organization in 1999 was as a result of the activities of OPC in the Southwest region of Nigeria. The organization at establishment made known its intention to safeguard and protect northerners' interests all over the country and against violence in other parts of Nigeria. The import of this mandate from an implied understanding was virtually retaliation in the north for all perceived attacks on Northerners in other parts of Nigeria. The Hisbah Group in the Northern part is a group of youths established by virtue of the implementation of sharia - They serve as a kind of Islamic police, saddled with the responsibility of implementing strict adherence to the terms of sharia. In substantiating their establishment, Ya'u (2007) submits thus:

In Kano state for instance, the report of the Shura committee set up by the State government formed the basis for the bill that was sent to the State House of Assembly without subjecting the bill to any form of public hearing, the House hurriedly passed the Hisbah bill establishing the Hisbah Group as the official enforcement organ of the sharia penal code in 2000.

### *Some Key Militia Groups Found in Other Geopolitical Zones*

#### *Ijaw Youth Council (Iyc) – South - South Nigeria*

The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) is a youth led movement that emerged and came into existence on 11 December 1998 at Kaima, the birthplace of Isaac AdakaBoro, the hero of Ijaw resistance. The youths drew up a declaration. Significantly, the IYC resolved in the Kaiama declaration that; "all land and natural resources (including mineral resources within the Ijaw territory)

belong to Ijaw communities and are the basis for our survival". Obi (2006) identifies clearly their refusal to recognize all undemocratic decrees that robbed them of their rights of ownership and control of lives and resources, which were enacted without their participation and consent. They also launched operation climate change against oil companies operating in the Niger Delta. The Ijaw youth movement has been engaged in propagating the ideology of radical ethnic nationalism.

#### *The Niger Delta Avengers*

#### *Egbesu Boys and Niger-Delta People's Volunteer (NDPVF)*

The Egbesu metaphor and belief is established in the Ijaw god of war and justice - *Egbesu*. It served as the militant and military wing of the Ijaw Youth Council adopting guerilla style operations against the military and active throughout the Niger Delta with respect to the NDPVF. It has been observed that:

They are linked to organized crime, including bunkering (looting of oil from pipelines and installations); and are armed with relatively sophisticated weapons, including machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. Thus, behind the reformist rhetoric, the violence in the Delta is becoming privatized, interlocking with corruption and electoral politics, including the deployment of militias by state governors to intimidate opponents.

There are also other groups in their own rights, which became prevalent from the year 1999 for the fight for resource control.

#### *Bakassi Boys - South Eastern Nigeria*

The organization whose roots can be traced to Abia state came into being in 1999 and is prominent in states like Anambra and Imo. It was applauded initially in its containment of armed robbery in Onitsha. Inasmuch as people appreciated their activities in crime control, their limitless powers and indiscriminate execution of suspected criminals became a source of insecurity to the people. The use of the Bakassi boys by politicians against perceived opponents with no regards for due process brought them under serious scrutiny and criticism.

#### *Ethnic Militia Groups of North Central Nigeria*

The North Central part of Nigeria popularly known as the Middle Belt area has been

identified to be prone to two basic typologies of conflicts;

- Religious/Ethnic conflicts which overlap because of the coincidence of the identification of particular ethnic groups with specific religion and
- Land/boundary disputes due to improperly demarcated boundaries between communities, local government areas and states. Similarly, there have been conflicts between farmers and cattle rearers over the use and ownership of land. (National Institute, 2003).

There also exist a myriad of causes, which have been given various kinds of interpretations, but these two form the crux on which they all revolve. Like their counterparts in other parts of the Nigerian state, their backbone are the youths and though such movements existed within the Middle Belt region before the return to democracy, their proliferation became more prominent and devastating from 1999. It is worth noting that in terms of organization and finance, the militia groups of the North Central cannot be compared with those of the other parts of Nigeria. Theirs is one that emerges spontaneously during crisis and also disappears at the end of such crisis. They are basically manned by youths, partly sponsored by communities and individuals who believe in their course of action.

**A Research Report of NIPSS**

(2003) identified groups in this category to include the following as militia groups;

- The Udawa (Fulani cattle rearers)
- Tiv Youth Militia
- Tiv Youth Organization variously referred to as Mbatian Youth, Agar Youths and Sankara Youths
- Lafia Youths in Lafia local government area of Nasarawa state.
- Awe Progressive Forum in Awe Local Government Area of Nasarawa State
- Mada Youth Movement in Akwanga Local Government of Nasarawa State
- Egbua Youth Movement of Toto local government area of Nasarawa state
- The Plateau Youth Council in Plateau state.
- The Berom Youth Council in Plateau state.
- Jukun Militia
- KutebMifitia
- Fulani Militia; and
- Mambila Militia

} All in Taraba

**Source:** Adapted from Larab, 2010 and modified by the author.

In as much as the writer here does not agree out rightly with the classification of some of these groups as militia, it will be agreed that they serve as rallying points of mobilization in conflict times and for the protection, so called, of their various interests.

**APPENDIX C. Major Incidents of Boko Haram Attacks Since 2009 Up Till Date**

Date	Causalities
July 26, 2009	Boko Haram launches mass uprising with attack on a police station in Bauchi, starting a five-day uprising that spread to Maiduguri and elsewhere
September 7, 2010	Boko Haram attacked a prison in Bauchi, killed about five guards and freed over 700 inmates, including former sect members
October 11, 2010	Bombing/gun attack on a police state in Maiduguri destroys the station and injures three by the group
December 24, 2010	The group carried out a bomb attack in Jos killing 8 people
December 28, 2010	Boko Haram claims responsibility for the Christmas Eve bombing in Jos that killed 38 people
December 31, 2010	The group attack a Mammy market at Army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja, 11 people died
April 1, 2011	The group attacked a police station in Bauchi
April 9, 2011	The group attacked a polling centre in Maiduguri and bombed it
April 20, 2011	A bomb in Maiduguri kills a policeman
April 22, 2011	The group attacked a prison in Yola and freed 14 prisoners
April 24, 2011	Four bombs explode in Maiduguri, killing at least three
May 29, 2011	Bombings of an army barracks in Bauchi city and Maiduguri and led to death of 15

## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

	people
May 31, 2011	Gunmen assassinate Abba AnasIbnUmar Garbai, brother of the Shehu of Bomb, in Maiduguri.
June 1, 2011	The group killed Sheu of Borno's brother; Abba El-kariemi
June 7, 2011	A team of gunmen launch parallel attacks with guns and bombs on a church and police stations in Maiduguri, killing 5 people.
June 16, 2011	Bombing of police headquarters in Abuja, claimed by Boko Haram. Casualty reports vary.
June 26, 2011	Gunmen shoot and bomb a bar in Maiduguri killing about 25 people
August 16, 2011	The Bombing of United Nations Office in Abuja, killing over 34 people by the group
December 25, 2011	Bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, killing over 46 people
January 6, 2012	The Sect attacked some southerners in Mubi killing about 13 Igbo
January 21, 2012	Multiple bomb blast rocked Kano city, claiming over 185 people
January 29, 2012	Bombing of Kano Police Station at Naibawa Area of Yakatabo
February 8, 2012	Bomb blast rocked Army Headquarters in Kaduna
February 15, 2012	KotonKarife Prison, Kogi State was attacked by the sect and about 119 prisoners were released and a warder was killed.
February 19, 2012	Bomb blast rocked Suleja Niger State near Christ Embassy Church, leaving 5 people seriously injured
February 26, 2012	Bombing of Church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos leading to the death of about 2 worshippers & about 38 people sustained serious injuries.
March 8 2012	An Italian, Franco Lamolinara and a Briton, Christopher McManus, who were Expatriate Staff of StabilimVisioni Construction Firm were abducted 2011 by a splinter group of Boko Haram and were later killed.
March 11, 2012	Bombing of St. Finbarr's Catholic Church, Rayfield, Jos resulting in the killing of 11 people and several others wounded.
April 26 2012	Bombing of three media houses (Thisday Newspaper in Abuja killing 3 & 2 security officers & injured 13 people; Thisday, the Sun & the Moments newspapers in Kaduna killing 3 persons & injured many others
April, 29, 2012	Attack on Bayero University, Kano, killing 13 Christian Worshippers, a senior non-academic staff & two Professors
April 30, 2012	Bomb explosion in Jaliogo, claiming 11 persons and several others wounded.
2012-2018	Killings of thousands of people

**Source:** *Punch* 17, June, 2011, *Punch* 27, February, 2012, *Punch* 23, February, 2012, *Guardian* 20 February, 2012, *Guardian* 12, March 2012, *Nigerian Tribune* 30, January, 2012 as well as adapted from Abimbola et. al. 2012 with modification by the author.

### APPENDIX D. Some Cases of Religious Violence in Nigeria 1999-2018

No	Date	State(s)	Nature	Remarks
1	1 Jul. 1999	Ogun	Violent clashes between Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Sagamu, Ondo state,	The crisis originated from the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
2	22 Jul. 1999	Kano	Reprisal to the Sagamu crisis above,	The casualty figure was not reported.
3	20 Dec. 1999	Kwara	Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 churches in Ilorin	Properties worth several millions of naira were destroyed and an unspecified casualty reported.
4	21-22 Feb. 2000	Kaduna	Riots over the introduction of Sharia	An estimated 3000 people died
5	28 Sept. 2000	Abia	Religious riots in Aba and minor disturbances in Umuahia	Over 450 persons killed in Aba, Abia state, as reprisal for the Kaduna crisis
6	8 Sept. 2000	Gombe	The Kaltungo religious crisis	The crisis erupted over the implementation of Sharia in the state
7	12 Oct. 2001	Kano	Religious riot in Kano	In protest to US invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden. Over 150 person were killed
8	7-17 Sept.	Jos	A religious riot between Muslim and Christians in Jos. Mosques,	The riot broke out when the Islamic Brigade attacked a Christian woman who



## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

	2001		churches and several properties were damaged or torched. The clashes started on September 7 and lasted nearly two weeks, ending on September 17.	attempted to cross a public high-way barricaded by Muslim worshippers on Friday. Over 300 people were killed
9	16 Nov. 2002	Kaduna	The <i>Miss World</i> crisis in which Muslims attacked Christians and churches	The crisis was triggered by an article authored by Isioma Daniel in <i>This Day</i> newspaper, alleging that Prophet Mohammed would have loved to have the girls. Over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed
10	8 Jun. 2004	Adamawa	Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Numan town	Caused by the location of the town's Central Mosque close to Bachamaparamount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed
11	18 Feb. 2006	Borno	Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri	The riot was caused by the Danish cartoon on Prophet Mohammed, in <i>jyllands-posten</i> Newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed; over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalized
12	22 Mar. 2007	Gombe	Muslim pupils killed their Christian teacher, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Olusesan	The pupils claimed that their teacher desecrated the Qur'an while attempting to stop a student from cheating in an examination hall
13	28 Nov. 2008	Plateau	Religious violence between Muslims and Christians in the city of Jos	The crisis which was triggered by the controversial results of a local election later turned religious. Over 700 people killed and thousand internally displaced
14	21 Feb. 2009	Bauchi	Ethno-religious conflict at the Makama New Extention	Over 11 people were killed, more than 400 houses burnt, and over 1600 families displaced
15	26-30 Jul. 2009	Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Yobe	Religious violence unleashed by the radical Boko Haram sect on Christians	Over 700 persons killed, 3500 person internally displaced, 1264 children orphaned, over 392 women widowed and several properties destroyed
16	29 Dec. 2009	Bauchi	Religious violence unleashed by the Kala-kato sect on Christians	Over 38 persons killed; about 20 suspected members of the sect arrested; and over 1000 people internally displaced.
17	17-20 Jan. 2009	Plateau	Resurgence of religious crisis in Jos.	Police announced at least 320 killed, but aid workers and local leaders place death toll at over 550. Over 40 000 persons displaced.
18	7 Mar. 2010	Plateau	Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christian- dominated villages of DogoNahawa, Shen and Fan in Jos	Over 500 people - mainly women and children - were killed.
19	17 Mar. 2010	Plateau	Suspected Fulani militia men attacked residents of Biye and Batem in Jos	13 persons killed
20	11 Apr. 2010	Plateau	Attack on a Christian village of Berom stock, some 30 kilometres south of Jos, by suspected Fulani herdsmen	The attackers targeted the homes of some officials in Kura Jenta, in reprisal to the killing of about 150 Fulani Muslims, who were allegedly killed and dumped in wells on 19 January 2010. No life was lost but 3 houses and 6 vehicles were torched. This violence was ethno-religious
21	22 May. 2010	Plateau	Murder of three (Muslim) Fulani herdsmen at Tusung Village in BarkinLadi Local Government, Plateau State	The attackers were alleged to be Berom Christian youth. It was ethno-religious

## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

22	22 May 2010	Plateau	Attack on some Christians, who were returning from their place of worship along Bauchi road in Jos.	Reprisal attack by Muslims over the killing of 3 Fulani Muslims. At least 1 person died while many were injured.
23	17 Jul. 2010	Plateau	Muslim Fulani herdsmen launched an overnight attack on a Christian village, Mazah, north of the city of Jos.	About eight people were reportedly killed, including the wife, two children and a grandson of a Pastor. Seven houses and a church were also burned during the attack
24	29 Aug. 2011	Plateau	Clashes between Muslims and Christians at Rukuba road and Farm Gada in Jos during the Ramadan prayers.	No less than 20 persons were killed, 50 injured, over 50 motor vehicles and 100 motor cycles were torched.
25	16 Jun. 2011	Police Headquarters, Abuja	Suicide bomb attack at the Police Headquarters, Abuja by suspected Boko Haram Islamists whose ideology is framed around religion ( <i>Wahabism</i> ).	Authorities said 6 persons were killed and 73 vehicles destroyed.
26	26 Aug. 2011	UN House, Abuja	Suicide bombing at the UN House, Abuja by suspected Boko Haram Islamists.	23 persons (11 UN personnel and 12 non-UN personnel) were killed.
27	5 Nov. 2011	Potiskum, Damaturu and Maiduguri	Coordinated attacks on churches and police stations by suspected Boko Haram Islamists.	More than 90 persons were reportedly killed, several churches and police stations torched.
28	25 Dec. 2011	Madala, Niger state, near the FCT	The bombs were alleged to have been planted at the Church's parking lot,	At the last count, 45 persons were killed. Some died instantly, others from injuries sustained from the explosion. Over 80 others were receiving treatment for various degrees of injuries.
29	5-6 Jan. 2012	Gombe, Gombe State	Gunmen stormed a Deeper Life Church in Gombe, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers. The Boko Haram Islamist sect claimed responsible for the shooting	6 persons were reportedly killed while many others were injured
30	5-6 Jan. 2012	Mubi, Adamawa state	Suspected Boko Haram militants stormed a gathering of Igbo Christians and shot sporadically, killing over a dozen and injuring others in apparent execution of an ultimatum given by the Boko Haram Islamist sect to Southern Christians living in the North to leave	22 persons were reportedly killed; a dozen others were injured.
31	Feb. 2012 to March 2018		Boko Haram killings of thousands of people, Muslims and Christians and the abduction of Chibok girls April, 2014 and Dapchi girls February, 2018	

**Source:** Adapted from Onuoha 2010 With Additions and Modifications by the Author. The Date are By No Means Exhaustive.

### PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR DR ABDUR-RAHMAN OLALEKAN OLAYIWOLA, PH.D (LONDON)



Dr. OLAYIWOLA was trained at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where he obtained Dip. Cert. with distinction in Arabic and Islamic Studies,

B.Sc. Hons. 2.1. (Second Class Honours Upper Division in Political Science), M.Sc. also in Political Science; M.C.A (Professional Degree of Master in Communication Arts; M.Phil; in Political Science, Ibadan). He was also trained in Britain where he obtained P.G. Dip. (Legal Studies)/C.P.E. (Law); (UNL, London, United Kingdom); P.G. Dip. (Legal Practice); (APU, Chelmsford Essex, United Kingdom); P.S.C.

## Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options

(Altior, Cardiff, Wales); Ph.D. (London); London School of Economics and Political Science (L.S.E), University of London.

The Foundation/Pioneer Head of Political Science and Senior Lecturer in Political Science, Head, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Lagos State University (LASU), Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria, Dr OLAYIWOLA was born at Elelu Village, Ibadan, in Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

A Lawyer/Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales and Commissioner for Oaths, Dr. OLAYIWOLA was the first black African Muslim Councillor to be elected in 1994 for the first time in the then PECKHAM Liddle Ward in the Constituency of Camberwell and PECKHAM, London Borough of Southwark, Britain for the first time since 1835. He also served as a Councillor in Chaucer Ward in the North Southwark and Bermondsey Constituency of the same Borough. He was the Chair of Under 8's Committees on Education, Leisure and Social Services: Chair of Licensing and Chairman Borough and Bankside Community Council, London Borough of Southwark, United Kingdom. He was a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPC) for the British Parliament/House of Commons.

### Dr. Olayiwola's Areas of Specialization Are

- Comparative Government and Comparative Politics;

- Political Communication, Cybernetics, Political Education and the Nexus between Politics, Communication, the Mass Media, the State, the People, the Society and the Political Nuances of Communication in all their ramifications in the Political Arena;
- Constitutional Law and Human Rights;
- Criminal Law and Human Rights;
- Civil Law and Human Rights;
- Islamic Law, Human Rights and Islamic Political Explanation
- Politics, Islamic Religion and the State with my facility in Classical Arabic Language
- British Practical Grass Root Local Politics and Legal Practice.
- The Theory and Practice of English Political and Judiciary Systems

Dr. Olayiwolahas published papers in numerous professional journals, books, monographs and presented papers at many national, international, continental and intercontinental conferences and world congresses. He is a member of many academic and professionalbodies societies and associations. Dr. Abdur Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola is the editor-in-chief of many reputable journals and reviewer of journal articles, papers and manuscripts.

**Citation:** Dr. Abdur-Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola, "Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Co-Existence in Nigeria: Reflections and Policy Options", *Annals of Journalism and Mass Communication*, 1(2), 2019, pp. 23-41.

**Copyright:** © 2019 Dr. Abdur-Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.