

Religion and Political Violence in Nigeria: Secularization or Colouration?

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Abstract: One of the most intractable elements in the governance of Nigeria as a country is the pervasiveness of religion and political violence which have continually posed a serious threat to the corporate existence and unity of the country. Contemporaneously, this has seemingly defiled all mechanisms to the extent that the spate of religion and political violent attacks on the innocent Nigerian citizens, are on the increase. Consequent upon the ding dung song of secularity of Nigerian State, religion and political violence have remained a major debilitating factors facing Nigeria since independence in 1960. This paper juxtaposed religion and political violence as a challenge to sustainable democracy in Nigeria. To investigate the menace and escapade of religion and political violence, this study adopted documentary method in the gathering of data while the content analytical technique was used for data analysis. The theoretical framework that anchored the study is Fragile State Theory. We argued that religion has lead to the polarisation in the country's politics to the extent that violent contestation of identity of Nigerian state is the order of the day. We also argued that the notion of Nigeria being a secular state is a mere window dressing since Nigeria is fast developing an extremist vortex of religion that is aggravating religious and political intolerant society.

Keywords: Religion, Politics, Violence, Secularization, National Identity, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Among the key factors that have greatly shaped the thinking of scholars about the concept of religion and politics essentially in relation to the state is the ideation of the Westphalian state system [1], [2]. Indeed, the interaction of religion and politics is often viewed through the prism of state-church relationship. This is because the issue of democratization and the contributions of religious organizations to its process remains a core theme in the discussion regarding the role of religion in developing countries [3].

Essentially, [4] maintained that religious and faith communities have contributed greatly to post-conflict peace building, but, [5] observes that it would be an error to ignore the influence of religious ideologies in violence in regions such as Africa and Asia. Scholars like [6] have identified primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism as the main approaches to analyzing the influence of religion on politics, particularly political violence. They further argue that from the primordial point of view, the embeddedness of nations in civilizations will be the most important determinant of world politics in the twenty-first century. Again, from the perspective of instrumentalists, the relationship between religious and violence is a spurious correlation that is the result of growing economic, social and political inequalities in and between nations; and from the perspective of constructivists, social violence are embedded in cognitive structures such as ideology, nationalism, ethnicity and religion; where religion acts as an intervening variable between a given violence and the choices of violence behavior [7].

A little journey down the memory lane of political activities in Nigeria reveals that religion and political violence is no novel concept. Historically, right from the 1929 Aba women riots to the Northern-southern political clash of 1953, it has always been rivalry and hostility through the elections, culminating in the intermittent coup d'états in post independent Nigeria. One cannot readily lose sight of the crude and obnoxious strategies employed on the course of carrying out political activities in Nigeria. The uniqueness of the political man is such that he thinks his thoughts, expresses his desires and implements his convictions.

Contemporaneously, Nigerians are living in a political firmament which is torn by strife and divisions. Nigerian citizens are living under the shadow of a possible world conflagration which, with its present technology, invented by men, could exterminate the greater part of the human race in a few hours [8].

In the developing democracies of the world especially Nigeria, the social fabric is severed apart by religious and political violence. In points of fact, Nigerians are witnessing religious and political violence clothed in the garments of calamitous wars which have claimed the lives of many innocent men, women and children and left the country morally and physically bankrupt. Convincingly, it is evidently clear that it is this political violence witnessed in the colonial era and immediately after the Nigerian independence that led to the

collapse of the first Republic and the military took over in 1966 and the subsequent Nigerian 30monthscivil disturbances that ended in 1970.

Since then, a lot of religious and political violence have raged on in Nigeria, criss-crossing the second republic and even after the disengagement of the military from Nigeria body politics in 1999. Cases of religious and political violence are interminable but, mention must be made on the following; the Agbekoya revolt of 1968-1969, the July 10, 1981 Kano riots, the Ondo post-Election violence 1983, the Zangon Kataf crisis of 1992, the Ugep-Idomi war of 1992, the June 12, 1993 election violence, the TIV- Jukun conflicts of 1997, the Mangu-Bokkos conflict of 1995, the Ife-Modakeke crisis of 1997, the Reinhard Boonke riot of 1991, the 1995 Tafawa Bewlewa crisis in Bauchi state, among others.

The mindless carnage unleashed in some quarters of the country during the military junta in the name of religion and politics did not go down well with Nigerians. Yet, the eight years of Obasanjo administration were not left out in the same religious and political violence as the country witnessed the formation and activities of ethnic militia groups across the geo-political zones viz' Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC) for the North, O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) for the South-west, the Igbo Progressive Congress (IPC) for the South-Eastern areas, the Egbasu of the Middle-Belt coupled with Chikolo Movement of the Niger Delta, are not applaudable signs of non-violence co-existence [9]; [10]. The Yar'Adua administration, which began in May, 2007, was gripped with an avalanche of one form of violence or the other. Notable among these are the Niger Delta Saga spearheaded by the movement for the emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND).

Similarly, the Goodluck administration that began in May, 2011 was greeted with the monster called Boko-Haram especially in the North-East geo-political zone of the country, which has taken a staggering dimension that seems intractable. The Buhari administration that came in May, 2015 inherited the Boko Haram monster with the arrival of Fulani Herdsmen and Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) which culminated into the political massacre and the invention of military combatant tactics of Operation Python Dance, Operation Crocodile Smile 1&2, Operation Lafiya Dole, Operation Sharan Daji, Operation Awatse, Operation Shirin Harbi, Harbin Kunama 1&2, and Operation Dokaji.

It is based on the above conceived realities that the cardinal objective of this paper is to investigate and unravel the degree of religious and political violence in Nigeria with a view to determining its implication on the Nigerian state and the fledgling democracy. In doing this, the paper is divided into four sections, section one captures the general introduction, section two dealt with the conceptual dissection of religion and political violence with causal diagnoses of religious and political violence. Section three ventured into theoretical foundation and methodology employed in the study. Section four focused on data presentation, analysis and discussion while section five wrapped it up with conclusion.

II. CONCEPTUAL DISSECTION OF RELIGION AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Religion

Not only are social scientists hardly in agreement on a common definition of any concept but the nebula nature of the concept of "Religion" further exacerbates the problem of its conceptualization. In the face of this difficulty, attempt would be made to explore the meanings and dimensions of the concept of religion since the need for a definition of concept has been emphasized by [11] when he stated thus;

In science, including social science, a word is only a kind of noise unless we sooner or later use it to lead to a procedure that will tell us whether or not certain event or fact belongs under the word. The meaning of a word is defined by its limits by knowing what does not belong under it as clearly as what does. Any word that could include everything and anything has no place in science.

Deutsch's postulations above made [12] to conceptualize religion as a form of animism which originated to satisfy man's intellectual needs to make sense of death, dreams and visions. This definition is precisely an offshoot of Taylor's theory of "Animism" where he supplied answers to two philosophical questions viz: what is it that makes the difference between a living body and a dead one? What are those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions? [13] opined that religion is the opium of the "masses". Implicitly, this explains the emotional attachment by believers of such religion. Apparently, the emotional attachment is the basis for strong even violent resistance at the instance of any threat to undermine the religion [14]. [15] aptly noted that religious indoctrination influence people's reaction, attitude or ideological stance even in the largest society based on the emerging patriotic favour for these religious groups. [16] corroborates Oji's position by stating thus;

Religion is a potent factor for peace and it should be practical to let the nation grow, overcome differences and service. The true practice of the tenets of our religions will make Nigeria to build a nation where peace and justice shall reign.

[17] sees religion as that which reflects the efforts by fallen man to re-establish contract with his creator. Kukah's definition is pigeonholed within the context of set of rituals by which the human being relates with the higher being.

In the context of this discuss, religion can better be defined as the belief in the existence of a supernatural ruling power, the creator and controller of the universe, who has given to man a spiritual nature which continues to exist after the death of the body. Put differently, religion is a systematized worship based on “faith” as an end product of belief for which a supernatural being is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscience and as such has control over man. Unarguably, all these definitions of religion are anchored on the ways, methods and approaches through which people relate with their God which is guided by faith. In this dimension, “means” is a form of ritual which is sacred or non-sacred and it is the foundation of faith for such religion [18].

Essentially, religion is one of the social phenomena that are presently wooing wider concern in most democratic societies like Nigeria. This is largely due to the avalanche of ethnic nationalities and the proliferation of churches within the federation which had in the past practiced independent religions, until the adumbration of western religion through the activities of trans-salvation and coastal merchandise. It should be noted however, that in Nigeria, three major religions exists viz: African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. But the dominant of these three are Christianity and Islam.

Political Violence

At a glance, political violence as a social science concept would seem to be a term everybody understands. But the concept has proved to be both complex and dynamic, continuing to be interpreted and defined in a multiplicity of ways. Nevertheless, political violence can safely be looked upon as the use of force, which is prohibited by the state in order to achieve political ends. Implicitly, political violence subsume such other forms of violence as religious violence, domestic violence and structural violence, among others, since in one way or the other they may result in acts prohibited by the state [19]. [20] partly alluded to the conception of political violence when he referred to it as:

Any resort to violence within a political order to change its constitution, rules or policies or a violent conflict between parties or group subject to a common authority and of such dimension that its incidence will affect the exercise of authority in the society.

Scholars like Leiden and Schmitt, Gurr, Okanya, were more specific and definitive in the examinations of the concept. For instance, [21] posit that political violence represents a disturbance to the political equilibrium of a state, a breakdown of its political system. Similarly, [22] conceives political violence as:

All collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors including competing groups as well as incumbents or its policies.

In the same vein, [23] in a seminal work founds agreement with Gurr when he sees political violence as:

A considerable destroying use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the politics, systems, territory of government and hence also directed to changes in the lives of individuals within societies.

As aptly noted by [24], for violence to be described as political, the issue that precipitates such act must be politically relevant when such groups, in carrying out the act begin to attack the political regime and its actors, or inhibit the exercise of the authority of the state.

Thus, political violence is the acts of descriptions, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation and/or effects that have political significance that tends to modify the behavior of others in a bargaining situation; that has consequence for political system. Essentially, after considering the submissions of other scholars like [25], [26], [27], [28], [29], etc [30] concluded that it is outside the constitutional ambit of individuals to use force which inhibits the exercise of the state authority.

In the context of this discuss, political violence can therefore be conceptualized as the exercise of physical force by intervals or groups of persons to inflict injury or influencing the political process. Acts such as riots, arson, political assassination, rebellion, and coup d’etat are subsumed under political violence.

Causal Diagnoses of Religious and Political Violence

Religions and political violence by their very nature are beyond any simple causation. [31] writing on the causes of violence concludes that:

There is no simple cause, which is more or less potent, in fact usually, there are multiple causes and important contributing conditions rooted in historical relationship and brought to violence by a variety of catalyts. Each conflict has been unique.

Consequently, there are competing themes in the systematic inquiry into the causes of religious and political violence but the major foci or emphasis of some of the recurring explanatory factors which are political, economic, religious or social in nature would be systematically discussed.

To a considerable degree, [32] argues that the quest for political power is driven by human desire for domination. Political power especially in modern states is no longer seen as the preserve of any given elite class but people imbued with that will aspire to positions of power based on the calling of the master. From the ethno-cultural point of view, group power is used not for egocentric interest but for the advancement of the interests of

a particular group because of their privilege position in the political dispensation to the displeasure of others, hence creating a room for striking by the other group in form of political violence.

Political violence can occur as a corollary of breakdown of consensual norms and the inability or unwillingness of the agencies of social control to restore those norms. The centrality of this thought is that, political violence flows directly from the political system and is likely to occur when: there are cases of political alienation. The ruling elites lack the cohesiveness to exercise their reform. They lack legitimacy. There are such things as large-scale changes in social structures and process when such trends as industrialization, urbanization or modernization are experienced, then new classes or groups with conflicting interests are created.

[33] finds agreement with the expression that social change facilitates political conflict which is manifested by violence. Similarly, failure of the justice system contributes significantly to political violence. A situation where politicians who have been indicted for electoral violence in the past are still working freely tend to promote impunity among the political class, who have developed the mindset that they can get away with violent acts during the electioneering period.

Lack of internal democracy in political parties is another cause of political violence. Nigerian political parties have failed in their primary duty to re-orientate politicians within their fold on the need to play by the rules. For this reason, political violence is consciously or unconsciously encouraged at the party level. [34], argued that when intra-party democracy which ordinarily entails a situation that party primaries are conducted through laid-down rules and procedures in a transparent, free and fair process are ignored, violence of varying magnitude and intensity, become inevitable. Again, unemployment, corruption, misinterpretation of politics, lack of democratic culture and inadequate security obviously contribute to political violence in Nigeria.

Essentially, religious intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism are the factors or sources of religious violence in Nigeria because they constitute the fulcrum upon which other sources of religious violence rest. Furthermore, obstructive and disruptive modes of worship trigger off religious violence in Nigeria. Both churches and mosques have a tradition of erecting large and extremely noisy loud-speakers within and outside their worship centers and at times organizes mass crusades and revivals on public high ways thereby causing obstruction on these high ways especially on Fridays for Muslim dominated areas. This is infact, a demonstration of religious arrogance and insensitivity.

Other sources of religious violence can be mentioned thus; Disparaging preaching and stereotyping, proselytizing [35], Government patronage, religious preferentialism and marginalization, sensationalism in media reportage, and the use of religious symbols [36], [37]; [38]; [39]; [40]; [41]; [42]; [43]. The above mentioned factors are indeed the major factors responsible for religious violence in Nigeria among others.

III. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This study is anchored on the fragile state theory. The major assumption of the fragile state theory is that prolonged instability/crisis in any state structure or institution of the society that arises from ethnic differences, consistent manipulation of state resources by power wielders, undemocratic regime or social policy failure, if unabated, can predispose the state into a volatile situation that creates avenue for further manipulation of those weaknesses by internal and external forces. Ipso facto, understanding state fragility means understanding when weaknesses exist unabated in a state institution or essential structures of the society. The fragile state theory is associated with scholars like [44] [45], [46].

Fragile state theory is germane and relevant to the current study simply because when a state fails to demonstrate structural capacity to adopt and manage perceived socio-political crisis in any vital state organ/area, or fails to reasonably demonstrate legitimacy, monopoly of use of power and institutionalize law and order for the harmonious existence of its units, it become vulnerable to escalators of major conflict who would take advantage of the situation for political and economic eldorado. The picture painted here does not only disrupt socio-political order but gives opportunity to religious and political leadership to establish their beehive in such state or region. This is seemingly so because of absence of law and order and state's inability to control its political milieu, citizens and resources. Similarly, the theory is apt for this study because it not only exposed to the internal and external conditions that gave impetus to the fire-spread religious and political violence and governance failure in Nigeria, but the factors that sustained and fueled the spread of religious and political violence in the governance system of Nigeria, which is the essence of this study.

Violence howbeit, established the critical issues in fragile state framework and in relation to understanding the conditions that promoted the deepening fragility of Nigeria as a sovereign nation and the spread of religious and political violence, it becomes crystal evident that the sustained use of old faces that refused to disappear in politics and the repressive regime in power with absence of legitimate central government to coordinate state affairs due to decades of deepened political inclination were instrumental in engineering religious and political violence that produced nothing but violent youths that have no tomorrow.

Essentially, the propositions of this framework shall be instrumental in guiding this study in analyzing and understanding the nexus between religious and political violence that made Nigeria a fragile state.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Documentary design was employed in the study. Data were elicited from documentary instruments especially from secondary sources through the review of relevant texts, journals, official publications, newspapers, direct observation, media commentaries and scholarly writings on religious and political violence in Nigeria and internet materials. The study employed content analytical methods wherein data collected through secondary sources were analyzed. This approach was germane because it ensures gaining insight from the analysis of religious and political violence and Nigeria's governance conundrum in recent times. Ipso facto, the content analytical technique was relied upon to evaluate the data generated in the course of this study. For all intent and purposes, content analysis is a research technique adopted primarily for objectivity, systematization and qualitative analysis and interpretation of information.

V. FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

Nigeria has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity over the past decades arising from the carnage activities of religious and political gladiators. Essentially, fragility of the institutions of the state in terms of their ability and capacity to manage diversity, corruption, rising inequality between the rich and poor, gross violation of human rights, contestations over land, inter alia, are the underlying factors of religious and political violence in Nigeria [3]. It should be noted that the failure of governance is responsible for the recurring sectarian violence in Nigeria.

Unarguably, the Nigerian state is confronted by a plethora of inconsistencies and tension of various proportions due to incompatibility of individuals and group interest in political succession and allocation of the prerequisites of office. Thus, the tension in political succession and sharing of the paraphernalia of office sometimes snowballs to religious and political violence, which to a large extent has led to serious threat to democratic survival and consolidation. This is so because Nigeria has suffered coups and countercoups, crisis of revenue allocation, state creation, power-sharing, civil war, politics of bitterness and intolerance, marginalization of minority ethnic groups, separatist agitations, incompetent leadership, corruption, inter-communal conflicts, [26]. The resultant effect of these struggles is the bifurcation and altercation ravaging the country in form of religious and political violence with devastating consequences on lives and properties of Nigerian citizens. Table I and II below showcases the trends of religious violence in Nigeria especially in the forth republic and selected cases of killings connected to political violence in Nigeria from 1966-2019 respectively.

Table I: Trends of Religiously-Induced Bloodletting violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2019

S/N	Date	State(s)	Nature	Victims
1.	1 st July, 1999	Ogun	Violent clashes between Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Sagamu, Ogun State	The crisis originated from the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
2.	22 nd July, 1999	Kano	Reprisal to the Sagamu crisis above.	The causality figure was not reported.
3.	20 th 1999	Dec. Kwara	Muslim fundamentals attacked and destroyed over 14 churches in Ilorin.	Properties worth several millions of naira were destroyed and an unspecified casualty reported.
4.	21 st – 22 nd Feb. 2000	Kaduna	Riots over the introduction of Sharia.	An estimated 3000 people died.
5.	28 th Feb. 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 persons were killed.
8.	7 th -17 th Sept. 2001	Jos	A religious riot between Muslims and Christians in Jos. Mosques, churches and several properties were damaged or torched. The clashes started on September 7 th and lasted nearly two weeks, ending on September 17 th .	The riot broke out when the Islamic Brigade attacked a woman who attempted to cross a public high-way barricaded by Muslim worshippers on Friday. Over 300 people were killed.
9.	16 th Nov.	Kaduna	The Miss World crisis in which	The crisis was triggered by an article

	2002			Muslims attacked Christians in churches.	authored by Isioma Daniel in This Day newspaper, alleging that Prophet Mohammed would have loved to have the girls. Over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed.
10.	8 th June, 2004	Adamawa		Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Nuwan town	Caused by the location of the town's central Mosque close to Bachama paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed.
11.	18 th Feb. 2006	Borno		Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri	The riot was caused by the Danish cartoon on Prophet Mohammed, in Jyllands-Posten newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed; over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalized.
12.	22 nd March, 2007	Gombe		Muslim pupils killed their teacher, Mr. 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 th Nov. 2008	Plateau		Religions 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 religions. Over 700 people killed and thousands internally displaced.
14.	21 st Feb. 2009	Bauchi		Ethno-religious conflict at the Makama New Extension.	Over 11 people were killed, more than 400 houses burnt, and over 1,600 families displaced.
15.	26 th -30 th July, 2009	Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Yobe		Religions violence unleashed by the radical Boko Haram sect on Christians.	Over 700 persons killed, 3,500 persons internally displaced, 1,264 children orphaned, over 392 women widowed, and several properties destroyed.
16.	29 th 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 th -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 th March, 2010	Plateau		Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christian dominated villages of Dogo Nahawa, Shen and Fan in Jos.	Over 500 people mainly women and children were killed.
19.	17 th March, 2010	Plateau		Suspected Fulani militia men attacked residents of Biye and Batem in Jos.	13 persons killed.
20.	11 th April, 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 official 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 nd May, 2010	Plateau		Murder of three (Muslim) Fulani herdsmen at Tusung village in Barkin Ladi Local Government Plateau state.	The attackers were alleged to be Berom Christin youths. It was ethno-religious.
22.	22 nd 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 th July, 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 th Aug. 2011	Plateau		Clashes between Muslims and Christians at Rukuba road and Farin 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 th June,	Police		Suicide bomb attack at the Police	Authorities said 6 persons were killed and

	2011		Headquarters, Abuja.	Headquarters, Abuja by suspected Boko Haram Islamist whose ideology is framed around religion (Wahabism).	73 vehicles destroyed.
26.	26 th 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 th 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 th -6 th Jan. 2012		Gombe	Gunmen stormed a Deeper Life church in Gombe, shooting indiscriminately at worshipers. The Boko Haram Islamist sect claimed responsibility for the shooting.	6 persons were reportedly killed while many others were injured.
30.	5 th -6 th 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 Islamists sect to Southern Christians living in the North to leave.	22 persons were reportedly killed; a dozen others were injured.
31.	11 March, 2012		Plateau	St. Finbarr's Catholic Church Jos.	11 casualties recorded.
32.	30 th June, 2012		Bauchi	Bombing of Church	15 persons were killed, while others were reportedly injured.
33.	17 th Aug. 2012		Kogi	Gunfire at Deeper Life Church	19 persons killed, properties destroyed.
34.	4 th May, 2013		Taraba	Fight between Christian and Muslim groups during funeral procession.	39 th reported dead and man injured.
35.	11 th Aug. 2013		Borno	Gunfire at Mosque	44 persons were reportedly killed while many were injured.
36.	February 2014		Zaria Kaduna	Attack on Salafiyah	Sheikh Muhammad Auwal Adum Albari was reported killed.
37.	11 th February, 2014		Konduga, Borno State	Attacks by Islamists militants.	39 persons killed, a Mosque and more than 1,000 homes were razed to the ground
38.	24 rd June, 2014		Kano	Blast attributed to militant group Boko Haram	Over 200 people were killed in a bomb blast.
39.	12 th -17 th Dec. 2015		Zaria Kaduna state	Nigerian Army opened fire on the Shiite minority.	700-1000 persons were reported killed, while many sustained injuries.
40.	August 2016		Onitsha Anambra State	Nigerian security operatives.	Over 80 Biafran protesters agitating for the secession of the Biafran region from Nigeria were killed. While over 400 others were arrested, detained or imprisoned.
41.	19 th October, 2018		Kaduna State	Christian Adaras and Muslim Hausa youths clashed.	55 persons killed and many properties damaged.
42.	25 th Jan. 2019		St. Ignatius Catholic Church Mbalom, Benue State	Attack on Catholic Faithful attending morning mass.	2 priest and 17 parishioners' dead.
43.	14 th April, 2019		Akwanga L.G.A.	Invasion of Kochum-Numa, Andaha village by Fulbe speaking Fulani	17 people massacred, several others sustained various injuries.

			Nasarawa State	Herdsmen.		
44.	19 th April, 2019		Tse-Aye and Tse Ngibo, Ikurau Tiev in Katsina-ala L.G.A Benue State.	Attack on worshipers on Friday service by hoodlums.	Good	Eleven people were killed and many uncounted persons were seriously injured.
45.	17 th March, 2019		Adara chiefdom Southern Kaduna	Attack by the Fulani militia on Christian communities		120 people killed, houses and many others injured.

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Table 2: Selected cases of Killings connected to political Violence in Nigeria 1966-2019

S/N	DATE	PLACE OF INCIDENT	VICTIMS
1.	15/01/1966	Ibadan, Oyo State	Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola-Premier of Western Nigeria region
2.	15/01/1966	Kaduna State	Alhaji Sir Ahmedu Bello- Premier of the Northern Nigerian Region
	15/01/1966	Military Coup	Festus Okotie-Eboh-Minister of Finance during the administration of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa
3.	15/01/1966	Near Lagos State	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa-1 st Prime Minister of Nigeria
4.	29/07/1966	Counter Coup	Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe aguiyi Ironsi-First Nigerian Military Head of State
5.	13/02/1976	Lagos State	Murtala Rufai Ramat Muhammed-Military Head of State, Federal Republic of Nigeria
6.	1982	Agba in Ishielu, Old Anambra State	Rev. Nwafor-Member House of Assembly Representing Ishielu L.G.A.
7.	19/10/1986	Lagos State	Dele-Giwa-Co-founder of Newswatch magazine and a Nigerian Journalist.
8.	5/5/1994	Lagos State	Babatunde Elegbede
9.	19/06/1994	Gbagada/Owonshoki expressway in Lagos State	Vice-Admiral Muftau Adegboke Babatunde Elegbede-Chief of Nigeria's Defence intelligence Agency
10.	March, 1995	Lagos State	Lekan Owolabi
11.	11/06/1995	Lagos State	Captain Tunde Ashafa
12.	06/10/1995	Lagos State	David Izegwere
13.	December, 1995	Lagos State	Kayoed Awosanaya
14.	January, 1996	Lagos State	Tajudeen Abiola (Mrs)
15.	08/04/1996	Lagos State	Alhaji Sama Kano
16.	22/05/1996	Lagos State	Admiral Olu Omotechinwa
17.	June, 1996	Lagos State	Irene Obodo (Mrs)
18.	04/06/1996	Lagos State	Alhaji Kudirat Abiola
19.	15/06/1996	Lagos State	Chief Adejola Balogun
20.	19/09/1996	Lagos State	Esther A. Tejuoso (Mrs)
21.	14/11/1996	Ibadan, Oyo State	Alhaji Suliati Adedeji
22.	December, 1996	Lagos State	Toyin Ovagoruwa
23.	Sept, 1998	Lagos State	Engr. Adesoji A. Dina
24.	31/01/1999	Lagos State	Patrick Okoye
25.	09/09/1999	Nkanu East LGA, Enugu State	Sunday Ugwu-Elder brother to Nwabueze Ugwu, a legislator representing Nkanu East LGA.
26.	15/02/2000	Anambra State	Igwe Francis Nwankwo
27.	June, 2000	Lagos State	Nicholas Okhuakhua
28.	Sept, 2000	Lagos State	Mohammed Shuaibu
29.	17/10/2000	Onitsha, Anambra State	Obatou Mumbo
30.	5/11/2000	Ondo State	Idowu Braimoh
31.	4/12/2000	Benin, Edo State	Joseph Osayande
32.	10/12/2000	Lagos State	Chief Layi Balogun

33.	19/08/2001	Port Harcourt, River State	Monday Ndor
34.	23/08/2001	Ebonyi State	Onyebuchi Ede
35.	23/08/2001	Ebonyi State	Chibueze Idah
36.	23/08/2001	Ebonyi State	Ogbonna Odimbaiwe
37.	23/08/2001	Ebonyi State	Ifeanyi Nnaji
38.	20/12/2001	Ile-ife, Osun State	Odunayo Omobolance Olagbaju
39.	21/12/2001	Ile-Ife, Osun State	Odunayo Olagbaju-Member, Osun House of Assembly
40.	05/03/2001	Okene L.G.A., Koji State	Momoh Lawal-Former Chairman Okene L.G.A. relation.
41.	23/12/2001	Bodijia, Ibadan Oyo State	Chief Bola Ige- A sitting Attorney General of the Federation/Minister of Justice
42.	29/08/2001		Victor Nwankwo-Younger brother of Arthur Nwankwo and Founder Eastern Mandate Union (EMU).
43.	April, 2002	Calabar, Cross River State	Eyo Eyo
44.	18/04/2002	Lagos State	Ifeanyi Igbokwe
45.	09/05/2002	Bauchi State	Musa Dayo
46.	26/05/2002	Nsukka, Enugu State	Christopher Ogbonna
47.	11/06/2002	Cross River State	Maria-Theresa Nsa
48.	25/11/2002	Lagos State	Dele Arojo-PDP guber aspirant
49.	20/10/2002	Enugu State	Chimere Ikoku-Former VC, UNN
50.	01/09/2002	Onitsha, Anambra State.	Chief and Mrs. Barnabas Igwe-Chairman, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) and his wife Abigail Igwe
51.	15/08/2002	Aiyetoro, Kogi State	Alhaji Ahmed pategi-Kwara State Chairman, PDP.
52.	13/08/2002	N/A	Janet Oladepe –PDP leader in Odigbo LGA
53.	December, 2002	N/A	Alhaji Isyaku Muhammed, UNPP National Vice Chairman, North West.
54.	07/01/2002	Abuja	Mrs. S.A. Awoniyi
55.	08/02/2003	Owerri, Imo State	Ogbonnaya Uche-ANPP Senatorial Candidate for Orlu
56.	13/02/2003	Imo State	E. Emenike
57.	22/02/2003	Owerri, Imo State	Theodore A. Agwatu- principal secretary to the Governor of Imo State.
58.	05/03/2003	Abuja	Dr. Marshal Harry
59.	17/03/2003	Deba (Umaltu)	Bala Mai-Haice
60.	21/06/2003	Ibadan, Oyo State	Ajibola Olanipekun
61.	March, 2003	UCH Ibadan	Mrs. Emily Omope-An AD woman leader
62.	23/02/2003	Maiduguri, Borno State	Hon. Inuwa Kubo-Speaker, Borno State House of Assembly Escaped assignation attempt.
63.	06/04/2004	Delta State	Dikibo Aminasaori-PDP Deputy National Chairman
64.	04/03/2004	Benue State	Andrew Agom-A member of PDP Board of Trustees and former boss of Nigeria Airways.
65.	16/07/2005	Ibadan, Oyo State	Lateed Olaniyan
66.	11/08/2005	Benin, Edo State	Peter Eboigbe
67.	15/05/2005	Gbongan	Alibi Okoju-A leading financier or Oronmiyan group, a socio-political organization.
68.	22/12/2006	N/A	Godwin Agbroko-Chairman Editorial Board ThisDay Newspaper
69.	2006	Ekiti State	Dr. Ayo Daramola-Former world Bank Consultant and PDP guber aspirant in Ekiti State.
70.	July 27, 2006	Dolphin Estatehome Ikoyi, Lagos State	Anthony Olu Funso Williams-Lagos PDP guber aspirant
71.	17/08/2008	N/A	Abayonmi Ogundeji-ThisDay Journalist
72.	20/09/2009	Lagos State	Bayo Ohu-Guardian Newspapers Journalist who was working on the certificate forgery story of customs controller general, Abdullahi Dikko before his murder.
73.	03/01/2009	Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State	Kehinde Fasubaa-Former Ado-Ekiti LG Chairman
74.	25/01/2010	Ota around Government University, Ogun State	Dipo Dina-AC guber candidate in 2007
75.	21/11/2011	Port Harcourt, Rivers State	Charles Nsiegbbe-Political associate of River State Governor Rotimi Amaechi
76.	2011	Ndieze-Echi, Ezzainyimagu Izzi L.G.A., Ebonyi State.	Mrs. Calistus Njoku-Wife to a one time Chairman of Abakaliki L.G.A in the Old Anambra State.
77.	July, 27 2015	Benue State	Pa Atoza Ihindan-PDP Chieftain
78.	20/03/2015	Akwa Ibom State	Rt. Hon. Okon Uwah-Former Speaker of the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly.
79.	May, 2015	Plateau State	Samuel Doro-A well-known Politician and APC Chairman in Barkin Ladi LGA

80.	August, 2015	Akoko Edo, Edo State	Captain Samson Amineshi
81.	10/04/2015	Imo State	Ugonna Omereonye-PDP Youth leader
82.	2015	Ezzagu Ishielu LGA Ebonyi State	Emeka Nworie-A young politician and PDP Chairman, Ishielu LGA
83.	2015	Ijebu Ode Ogun State	Chief Alimot Shadia kareem Owogold
84.	28/03/2015	Osun State	Yomi Ademla-Prominent PDP Stalwart in Ikirun-Ifelodun LGA
85.	16/07/2015	Lagos State	Shalewa Daramola-APC Chieftain
86.	2015	Aliero, Kebbi State	Alhaji Ibrahim Lemi
87.	02/07/2016	Oyo State	Gideon Aremu-Oyo State Legislator.
88.	27/04/2017	Oshogbo Osun State	Isiaka Adeleke-Former Governor of Osun Stat and two time senator representation Osun West
89.	18/12/2018	Tudu-uku along Gigata Abuja Keffi Road	Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh- Former Chief of Defence Staff.
90.	17/02/2018	Nwofe Primary School, Izzi L.G.A.	Elias Nwankwegu (Okirika) PDP Stalwart in Izzi L.G.A. of Ebonyi State
91.	05/10/2018	Onueke, Ezza South L.G.A., Ebonyi State	Mary Innocent-APC Supporter/Member
92.	05/10/2018	Onueke, Ezza South L.G.A., Ebonyi State	Ifeanyi Akwule-APC Supporter/Member
93.	15/02/2019	Ndi-ofutu, Ndieze, Izzi L.G.A. Ebonyi State.	Pius Nwamgbebor-party supporter
94.	16/02/19	Bendeghe Ekiem Community in Etung L.G.A., Cross River State	Ayuk Ogar -Ward Chairman PDP
95.	18/02/19	Anyigba, Kogi State	Suleiman Sule-APC Stuanch Supporter
96.	19/02/19	Ngor Okpala Council Area, Imo State	Ifeanyi Ozoemena-Chairman APC in Logara/Umuohiagu Ward in Ngor Okpala Council Area.
97.	19/02/19	Ohimini L.G.A. of Benue State	Boniface Okoloho-Chairman APC Ohimini L.G.A.
98.	23/02/19	Amagu, Ikwo L.G.A., Ebonyi State	Igwe Ukwu-Party Supporter
99.	23/02/19	Amagu, Ikwo L.G.A., Ebonyi State	Egbe Oruke-Party Supporter
100.	09/03/19	Oyo Central Senatorial Constituency Ibadan.	Temitope Olatoye-A Senatorial Candidate for Oyo Central Senatorial Seat and under Action Democratic Party ADP and Former member House of Representatives.

Source: Compiled by the Authors.

Tables I and II above indicates that major deadly attacks in Nigeria has revolved around religious and political violence across the country. It is evidently clear that the fragility of Nigerian state indeed encouraged the bizarre mesmerism in the system. Paradoxically, Nigerian leaders have to a large extent, provided a fertile ground for the aggression that has triggered off this form of religious militancy that has continued to threaten the country, which has inevitably created instability, insecurity, political violence and restiveness in all the nooks and crannies of the Nigerian state.

Implications Of Religious And Political Violence On The Nigerian State

The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria section 38(1) provides that; every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. The constitution further prohibits the federal and state governments from adopting a state religion, prohibits religious discrimination, and provides for individual freedom to choose, practice, propagate, or change their religion. In spite of these constitutional provisions, Nigeria is increasingly bedeviled with religious and political divide. More often than not, people have very strong feelings about their own religion and oppose those of others. These types of feelings that lead to clashes between different sects and such occurrences have devastating effects on our unity and prove to be a hindrance to our progress as a nation.

Importantly, the process of construction of national integration takes different dimensions depending on which specific historical variable that dominated the sub-national communities to emerge as the nuclei of solid national political and economic organization. As noted by [22] that Nigeria is made up of over 250 ethnic

groups with their peculiarities of language, culture, practices, and attitudes, the Lugardian contraption at amalgamation in 1914 which divided Nigeria into North, South and East seems to be a colossal mistake as these diverse ethnic groups were bound together without objective assessment of its futuristic implications. Since this historic formation in 1914, efforts of different kinds were made by successive regimes to broker unity in the country but to no avail.

Ultimately, the pre and post independent constitutions of Nigeria including the doctrine of necessity called the 1999 constitution recognized the multifarious ethnic nature of the country, and made provisions for the unity and indivisibility of the country vis-à-vis the citizens' fundamental rights, the separation of powers among the three arms of government and the rule of law, formation of political parties as one of the instruments of national integration which the membership should cut across ethnic as well as religious and primordial boundaries. Unfortunately, all of these constitutional provisions, ethnic cleavages, intra class competition, state consciousness, struggle for resource control, religious violence, inter and intra party crises, among others still ravage the country. Apparently, it is the brining together of several hundreds of ethnic, linguistic, cultural groups and communities with different religious backgrounds which then had attained different levels of economic and political development by the colonialists that put Nigeria into this present religious and political quagmire .

Contemporaneously, the Nigerian ruling class inherited this state structure without any form of modification or moderation. Obviously, they rather become so preoccupied with the use of the state paraphernalia for accumulating surplus which resultant contradiction is the institutionalized myopic and visionless ethnic centered leadership with separatist and particularistic political cum religious outlook.

Certain ideals and principles like democracy, secularism, and social quality that are guaranteed under fundamental rights that tended to promote national unity were dashed away. The recognition of secularism of Nigerian state would have ensured that each citizen of the country has the right to practice his or her religion and exercise his or her civic responsibility freely but that was not to be.

From the goings-on, it has been established that the Nigerian nation was fashioned not in the overall interest of sub-national communities rather as a service centre of the departing imperial political community. For this reason, the emergent indigenous leadership compounded the situation by monopolizing ethnic and regional values against entrenching a national political community devoid of religious and political violence.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this attempt, efforts have been made to examine the pervasiveness of religious and political violence which has continually posed a serious threat to the corporate existence and unity of the country. It is evidently clear from pandemonium that the Nigerian state has been enveloped by the menace and escapade of religious and political violence which to a large extent, constitute a major challenge to the governance system of the country.

Indeed, it has brought a very serious disenchantment and disunity in the nation's political firmament and democratic engagement. The paper clearly demonstrates that religious and political violence has lead to the polarization in the country's politics to the extent that violent contestation of identity of the Nigerian state is the order of the day. Similarly, the paper concludes that the notion of Nigeria being a secular state is a mere window dressing since Nigeria is fast developing an extremist vortex of religion that is aggravating religious and political intolerant society.

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Joseph Okwesili Nkwede. " Religion and Political Violence in Nigeria: Secularization or Colouration?". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. vol. 24 no. 11, 2019, pp. 32-44.