

RESEARCH ARTICLE:

Dysfunctional State and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria: An Assessment of President Buhari's Administration (2015-2023)

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Abstract

Human rights violations remain a historical issue. Thus, exploring this concern amidst the dysfunctionality of the state is more alarming considering that political terrain could serve as a breeding and conducive atmosphere for further human rights violations. This paper explores the nexus between the dysfunctionality of states and its implications on human rights violations in Nigeria. Using secondary data and thematic analysis, we more specifically focused on human rights violation cases in the two terms of office of President Mohamadu Buhari (2015- 2023). The paper explored the state of dysfunctionality and the violation of human rights during this period. The findings show there were violations of socio-economic and cultural rights, freedom of the press, freedom of movement, right to peaceful demonstration, and freedom of gathering and association, in Nigeria during President Buhari's administration. The paper concluded that for citizens' rights to be adequately protected, the causal factors of a dysfunctional state must be addressed to avoid perverseness and continuous violation of human rights. Recommendations were made in favor of a newly negotiated social contract.

Keywords: dysfunctional state; fundamental human rights; human rights violation; social contract; Nigeria

Introduction

The issue of human rights and its violations remains a reoccurring phenomenon throughout the history of mankind. It started with the natural world and continued during the times of colonialism, military eras (in some histories), and now the modern democratic era (Ekpa, 2016; Hoffmann, 2016). One commonality in these human rights violations is the historical lack of behavioral restrains or legislative control as exemplified in Thomas Hobbes' postulation of life in the "state of nature" (Evrigenis, 2016; Forsyth, 2017). For context, Hobbes argues that life in the state of nature is characterized by a situation of lawlessness where might is right and identical to power (Curley, 2017). The implication of might over right would imply the violation of the rights of the "the powerless" as the powerful could act in any manner and not mind the consequences or implications to the powerless. The rowdiness of these circumstances in terms of continuous human rights violations influenced Hobbes' postulation that life in the state of nature was brutish, short, nasty, and poor (Živanović, 2013; Evrigenis, 2016; Curley, 2017). Despite a picture of a more acceptable picture of human existence in John Locke and J. J. Rousseau's descriptions of the state of nature, there was the commonality of numerous violations of civil rights at the time (Sasan, 2021). To this end, the motivation for orderliness and a binding agreement to perverse human rights and dignity cumulating in the formation of the state became a reality, and the requirement for a binding agreement that led to the creation of contemporary states and laws to control human behavior became inescapably required (Hamilton, 2013; Evrigenis, 2016).

Human rights violations and the Nigerian state experience have a lingering phenomenon that spans pre- and post-independence. Jauhari (2011) and Nwachukwu *et al.* (2014) gave several accounts of pre- and post-colonial human rights violations within the Nigerian state from privacy violations to land rights, issues of social and economic

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injustices, and gender-based violence, among others. At independence in 1960, there was a strong expectation that human rights violations would become a thing of the past under self-government (Osuji *et al.*, 2019). This hope persisted between 1960 and 1965 before it was dashed by the outbreak of the civil war that lasted from 1966 to 1970 (Aremu and Buhari, 2017). The level of human rights abuses committed during the Nigerian civil war and the subsequent military rule were enormous (Geddes *et al.*, 2014). The military era experienced total domination and reckless domination. There were several despicable acts such as the murder of unarmed individuals, detainment and capture of political opponents and critics, coups and countercoups, hollow promises for democratic transition, and other forms of inhumanities (Geddes *et al.*, 2014; Yagboyaju and Akinola, 2019).

There are national, regional, and international laws and agreements in place to protect the citizens', economic, social, and cultural rights. However, there are recognized barriers that prevent the exercise of these rights (Ikpeze and Udemezue, 2023). According to Osuji *et al.* (2019) before colonial and during colonial periods, fundamental human rights were infringed on in modern Nigeria as they were under past military and colonial rules despite the newfound optimism in democratic rule. Kangdim *et al.* (2022) argue about the prevalence of human rights violations in the Nigerian polity and refer to it as the paradox of democratic governance in Nigeria. Democracy is to ensure the protection of human rights. However, the cases of domestic violence and gender-based abuses against women and men, kidnapping, trials without detention, and police brutality, among others, have become a more pronounced reality within the Nigerian polity (CP, 2018; Abiolu *et al.*, 2023). The immediate cause of the growing violation of human rights is attributed to bad leadership and disrespect for constitutional principles and the rule of law leading to a dysfunctional state system (CP, 2018; Eze *et al.*, 2023). Owing to the above postulation, this paper explores the nexus between the dysfunctionality of states and its implications on human rights violations in Nigeria. We more specifically focused on human rights violation cases in the two terms of office of President Muhammadu Buhari (2015- 2023). The paper explored the extent to which Nigeria's dysfunctional state contributed to a violation of human rights during this timeline.

In his book, "The Two Treatises of Government," John Locke, a 17th-century British theorist (1632–1704), wrote extensively on people's possession of "Natural Rights" (Locke, 1764; Ashcraft, 2013; Locke, 2013). Seagrave (2015) argues that according to Locke, these rights were given by "the divine" and thus cannot be refused by any man. According to Ije *et al.* (2021), Locke's philosophy held that all people were born with fundamental ethical freedoms, such as the right to life, liberty, and property, to which both positive and customary social laws had to adhere. For Locke, the entirety of this principle is embedded in the notion that "all men are created equal and have some unalienable rights" (Kaczor, 2023; Parker, 2023). This notion is applicable everywhere as a universal human right (Seagrave, 2015). According to Hasnass (2011), natural rights predate political liberties because they are inherent to every person and cannot be infringed on by anyone, including oneself. As a result, if these rights are upheld instead of suppressed, there is a chance that some degree of harmony and collaboration will be attained in societies across the world. Critiques of Locke's doctrine of natural rights such as Brian (2015) observe that cultural relativism or historicism is the source of the modern objective of the notion of right. According to him, there are dozens of human groups, each with its own set of traditions, morals, and values, therefore there cannot be a single set of human rights that apply to all. Additionally, he argued that individuals in various groups are influenced differently by their various cultural backgrounds (Hasnass, 2016). The foundation of human rights came from an agreement among fellow humans to meet everyone's needs, a person's liberties do not supersede the group's interest (Ije *et al.*, 2021). Although certain liberties are viewed as human rights in certain nations and are deemed unlawful in others, they are only considered as human rights provided, they do not result in social errors against mankind. However, the principles of social contract as espoused by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau is the application of human rights as natural rights and are protected by the laws of the state (Živanović, 2013; Evrigenis, 2016; Curley, 2017; Forsyth, 2017). This application is supported by the Nigerian constitution which recognizes human rights as natural rights (Hasnass, 2016). On this basis, an exploration of human rights violation cases in Nigeria is rightly placed as an effort to increase policy and research focus and reduce perverseness.

Dysfunctional State Conceptualized

The challenge of postcolonial state dysfunction has drawn prominence recently, from a scholarly and general viewpoint. According to Greffrath (2012), the growing propensity of certain developing states to submit to dysfunction is seen with some anxiety in a political global system where the presence of states is regarded to be inherently legitimate and even required for preservation of a global reputation. These types of cases of state dysfunction can be referred to as failed nations, fragile states, collapsed states, etc. in a variety of contradictory

ways (Caplan, 2013). Both the press and academics today frequently utilize the mentioned words. This paper shows that the theoretical underpinning and description of this phenomenon that it refers to as the dysfunctional state – so eliminating the myriads of ambiguous phrases described in the scholarship, such as failed states, have received relatively little scholarly attention to date. Both public and scholarly conversations use the phrase "dysfunctional state." For instance, in public discourse, functionality and effectiveness are frequently linked, and it is debated as to the degree to which states are inevitably dysfunctional as a result of operating less effectively than other systems of government (Grau, 2017). This perspective specifically relates to the sabotage of the state's processes and policy-making capabilities. Another example of how state arrangements may go wrong is the decline in the power of lawmakers and the increase in the power of bureaucracy (Peters, 2018). The emphasis is on a disturbance of the process function here as well. Others have brought out the deteriorating faith in political structures, which indicates a breakdown in the relationship between the political structure and the value system (Ermer, 2019). Strenger (2017) highlights the electoral success of populous parties (disruption of the process function), and the systemic disturbance caused by shallow political speech. This point will be expanded upon below as it affected the Nigerian state during the Buhari administration between 2015 and 2023 with a focus on its impacts on human rights.

Methodology

The paper adopted a mixed methods approach to address the research objectives. Here, primary and secondary data were simultaneously sourced and thematically analyzed (Plano-Clark, 2017; Creswell, 2021). Five respondents were selected across Nigeria using convenience random sampling methods in sourcing the study's primary and secondary data. To ensure their anonymity, pseudonyms were used to name and code the respondents as "participants 001 – 005 (Lahman *et al.*, 2023). The authors explored Nigeria's human rights infringements carefully by exploring participant knowledge and perception on Nigeria polity. According to Fusch and Ness (2015) and Saunders *et al.* (2018), the rationale for stopping after 5 respondents was to avoid data saturation as we noticed the repetition of data upon our attempt to increase the number of interviewees. The selection of this research approach was influenced by its exceptional attributes and professional contributions that aided in the endeavor to increase awareness of the significance of individual rights in Nigeria. Secondary data was sourced from books, publications, encyclopedias, newspapers, online sources, journals, periodicals, conference proceedings, and ready-made interviews. The primary and secondary data were then triangulated to induct meaning to the objectives of the study (Turner *et al.*, 2017; Kimmons, 2022). This technique aided in our ability to comprehend most broadly not only the result of scientific inquiry but also the entire procedure.

The Value of Social Contract for the Protection of Human Rights in Nigeria

New perspectives on the ideal of social contract theory have evolved to meet the diversity of Nigeria and the difficulties of being a contemporary society. (Abdulrasheed, 2021). The value of social contract theory adopted in this paper investigates how Nigeria can not only advance but also develop and grow more transparent and resilient in its social fabric in an environment where violation of human rights, and disagreements about justice, particularly over the principles of liberty and equality persists. Many thinkers concurred that the presence of the state was inextricably related to the agreement made by men. However, among the several political theories on the formation of the state is the social contract theory. Though, citizens agreed to cede part of their liberties and rights to the government in return for safety by general law and order, which is how the state came to be, this was not so in the case of the Nigerian state formation as the state was forced on people of different ethnic backgrounds whose consent were not formally sought before the union. The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates by Frederick Lugard in 1914 was for both economic balancing and administrative convenience of the colonial masters. This was the beginning of crises in Nigeria and has led to several insurgencies violating the human rights of the Nigerian Citizens (Ojo, 2014). Many political theorists have developed distinct conceptions of the natural state.

The philosophy known as the social contract theory was espoused by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. They held that the will of the citizens is the source of the state's authority. (Rosen and Wolff, 1999: 52). According to Thomas Hobbes, unless there is a shared authority to protect people from one another and outside dangers, "the state of nature," which John Locke also referred to as "the state of war," will remain a threat to humankind (Seagrave, 2015). In *Leviathan*, Hobbes began his political investigation by using his psychological theory to analyze human nature. He claimed that man is inherently self-centered and selfish. This inclination caused man to

act more based on his desires and appetites than his comprehension. This clarifies the natural state of affairs prior to the formation of society. Hobbes characterized the time as one of "every man against every man.". He saw that among the motivating factors in the natural world were unhealthy rivalry and a desire for prestige. Notable among Hobbes' observations on the state of nature is injustice and absence of rule of law. This is the order of day in Nigeria where government cannot uphold rule of law that will enhance the protection of human rights in the country. Hobbes believed that a man's existence in the state of nature is brief, harsh, impoverished, and isolated (Evrigenis, 2016). Hobbes thought that by appreciating the invaluable nature of peace and making every effort to get it, man can decide to put it above pride. Thus, he concluded that what people refer to as a contract is the reciprocal transfer of rights (Boucher and Kelly, 2003).

Hobbes claimed that such a contract might be implied or expressed. A strong government is necessary to keep out anyone who would try to violate the agreement. By giving all their power and might to one man or group of men, who will manage their affairs in line with their surrendered wills. The Leviathans aim to focus their efforts toward greater good. This is what Nigerians do each time they vote for their leaders periodically to protect their rights. Unfortunately, there have been increased cases of human rights violations in the country as the Nigerian leaders including the regime of President Buhari have not been able to show capacity to protect the Nigerian citizens. The Nigerian citizens are expected to vote for powerful leaders who will be able to keep the country united and preserve citizens' rights. Even in the absence of a formal contract, Kant argued that the idea of a social contract is significant (Rosen and Wolff, 1999: 52). This is frequently the outcome of a subconscious recognition created by a stated or unwritten constitutional agreement that demonstrates the state's obligation to its citizens and vice versa. Examples of these social contracts are the American Declaration of Independence, which outlined peoples' fundamental liberties, independence, and the right to change any government that does not carry out the will of the citizens as well as the British Bill of Rights, which was passed in 1639 and outlined the rights of British citizens. The indisputable rights of the French people are also highlighted in the French Declaration of Human Rights, which is modeled after the American Declaration of Independence. It is also possible to argue that a social contract between the people and the government is implicitly reaffirmed every time political leaders renew their mandate at election time.

The idea of the social contract comes to regulate citizens' relationships with the state (represented by the government), permitting peace and unity to exist among the two. Additionally, it makes it possible for leaders to answer the people, and ipso facto creates a culture of focused leadership and sound governance, which paves the way for leaders and people to be patriotic about the new state. Such patriotism is both required and necessary for the establishment of states, particularly, in plural states like Nigeria where socioeconomic divisions are deeply ingrained. If Nigeria is redefined and negotiated around the idea of equal citizenship for all people, regardless of their class, religion, or ethnic background, then there is hope for human rights protection. The need for human right protection highlights the importance of projecting and practicing citizenship equality as the cornerstone of a valid social contract that can be used to build holistic patriotism in the nation. Fundamental human rights, protected by Chapter 4 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution as amended, are a set of privileges that are automatically and deliberately accorded to individuals (human beings and corporate entities) for the fact that they are humans (CP, 2018). These rights and privileges are guaranteed by the Constitution and should not often be rejected by either an individual or the state. They are seen as basic, fundamental, obligatory, inalienable and are universally recognized (Donnelly, 2013; Igwe *et al.*, 2019). Nigeria, as a signatory to the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, implies that the Nigerian state is expected to uphold and protect the rights of individuals and prevent rights violations within her territory (Ifejika, 2021). It also provides victims of human rights abuse the opportunity for redress (Ada, 2013; Ojiakor and Ugwuja, 2020). Nevertheless, while these redresses are feasible, the Nigerian constitution also permits the limitation, suspension, or denial of an individual's basic human rights under special circumstances (Arinze-Umobi, 2020; Nwogu and Okonkwo, 2022).

It is important to note that Nigeria, like other African states, is the result of colonial state creation (Patrick *et al.* 2021). Human rights protection, equitable government, a sense of belonging, and progress in the broadest sense were all negatively impacted by the colonial interruption of Africa's organic state formation through the imposition of an alien state structure (Jauhari, 2011). The negative effects of the postcolonial state are evident in the high frequency of human rights violations that push the country to the brink of collapse. Nigeria has had alternating periods of military and civilian government since gaining its independence. Nigeria's military dictatorship came to represent totalitarianism. Following each military takeover, the government suspended the constitution and with it, its responsibility to the people. The institutional inability to uphold people's rights came to define civilian

government. The civilian leaders falsified elections, violated the right to free speech, and engaged in extrajudicial and illegal killings to maintain their position of authority (Jauhari, 2011). Since 1999, this perversity has become more evident in terms of the state's fundamental, integrating, and prestigious essence. To take one example, the Nigerian state has fallen short of its basic obligations in maintaining internal law and order, safeguarding its citizens from external aggression and existential threats like terrorism, and providing essential amenities and vital services. This has long-term effects on Nigeria's ability to protect human rights. By mishandling the national question in Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari's regime has not made things better by his actions, inactions, and body language when it comes to preserving human rights. In fact, it has intensified to the point that members of the political elite called for Nigeria to be restructured in the national conversation (Babalola, and Hakeem, 2019). Essentially, requests to address the issue of human rights in the nation have gotten worse because of a combination of government shortcomings in both its primary and integrative functions.

Dysfunctional State and Human Right Violations in Nigeria

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo while describing Buhari's presidency opines that:

"... since independence, Nigeria has not been divided as it is today, not even during the civil war, and what is wrong, it can be put in one sentence, is essentially the mismanagement of diversity springing from bad governance" (Obasanjo, 2019).

Participant 001 drew attention to Nigeria's governance problems during Buhari's rule, drawing comparisons to historically similar countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, China, and the United Arab Emirates. The participant highlighted Nigeria's lack of strong leadership and blamed its economic woes on the country's reliance on imports. Additionally, the participant said that Nigerian agitations for self-determination are a sign of governmental failure. Successful government was found to be largely dependent on visionary leadership, especially during Nigeria's time of regionalism says participant 001. He stated further that:

"If the Nigerian State is functioning as it ought to, I would not have championed the struggle for the self-determination of Yoruba nation, and I believed that several nations agitating for liberation at the moment within Nigeria would not have done so." (Participant 001).

In addition, he stated that:

"The initial devotion of Nigerian individuals towards their ethnic groupings is a symptom of state failure. According to him, I envision the Yoruba nation and other countries within the Nigerian state splitting away sooner than before" (Participant 001).

He opined that under Buhari's leadership, citizens' rights were horrendously violated and treated like slaves. He claimed that several sections and ethnic groups in Nigeria, including Yoruba, were close to achieving freedom in terms of self-determination. He said that Niger Delta and Biafra had participated in the freedom war and were in communication about how to secede from Nigeria. He expressed that due to the breakdown of law and order, the southern ethnic groups in the country are determined to secede. Participant 002 discussed the level of insecurity in Southwest Nigeria and the catastrophic effects it is having on residents' rights as a result of the dysfunctional state of the nation under Buhari's rule. Citing his view on insecurity in Western Nigeria, he posited that:

"We are not safe anywhere; we cannot go anywhere or sleep quietly. What have we done? Are we enslaved? We didn't do anything wrong by being here; rather, we just picked the wrong leaders, and we have had enough" (Participant 002).

However, Participant 004 shared the expression of a respondent in a study by Olasupo and Isike (2021) expressed that: *"I am not pleased, and I suppose the over two hundred million Nigerians are not satisfied with the situation of affairs in the nation" (Participant 004).* He noted that the manner President Buhari's leadership has allowed herdsmen and Boko haram terrorist groups to kill and kidnap Nigerian civilians across the nation. He claimed that it is currently impossible to ensure the safety of people and their property in Nigeria, which is a grave violation of their human rights.

Because of internal strife, he questions Nigeria's efficacy. He thinks the history of British colonialism makes government more difficult. Therefore, he does not find President Buhari's violations of human rights shocking.

He continued,

“The ruling class that are profiting from the nation's current dysfunctional state does not have an interest in the growth of the nation, nor intervention in schooling, a flourishing and effective economy, facilities, effective health sectors, and so on due to their interests. Because of the independence that each region will have under the new political arrangement, restructuring can be used to encourage competitiveness among the regions, but these ruling classes have thwarted every attempt to do so” (Participant 004).

While discussing Nigeria's dysfunctional status, John Campbell, a former US ambassador to Nigeria, said that Nigeria is nearing irrelevance (Rotberg and Campbell, 2021). Speaking on behalf of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), John Campbell, founding head of the Harvard Kennedy School's Programme on Intra-State Conflict and president emeritus of the World Peace Foundation, stated that Nigeria is in its terminal stages of collapse at the moment. This revelation was disclosed in the US report that John Campbell and Mr. Robert Rotberg delivered (Campbell and Rotberg, 2021). Nigeria has demonstrated all the characteristics of a failing state, including its inability to uphold its commitment to safeguarding people and their property and its emergence of widespread conflict and insurgency. As a result, the country has progressed from its initial state of fragility to total dysfunction (Campbell and Robert, 2021). President Muhammadu Buhari also acknowledged that his leadership had no control over the incidences happening in the nation. The experts claim that the Nigerian economy, which was the biggest in Africa and shortly before was second only to South Africa in terms of size in Africa. Nigeria's malfunctioning state makes it very difficult for it to perform an advisory duty in ensuring African security and stability. In addition, as reported by Campbell and Rotberg (2021), the difficult-to-contain Boko Haram insurgency, Jihadism, and herdsmen conflicts have left consequences on the security situation in Nigeria and the entire West African region. In line with political thoughts, the government's incapacity to defeat the Boko Haram insurgency is more evident in its slide to a dysfunctional state (Campbell and Robert, 2021). As a result of the differences that are unresolvable in Nigeria's dysfunctional state, they argue that Nigeria has come to a point of collapse where property and lives are no longer safe in several regions of the nation since there is no longer regard for human rights.

On June 10, 2021, President Buhari admitted Nigeria's high rate of joblessness and degree of insecurity. He described the various measures that the government had taken to stop this threat and listed several economic initiatives to help unemployed youths as well as the replacement of the Army, Police, and Air Force Chiefs as part of the strategies and steps taken to address the issues and effects of instability (Arise News, 2021). Agbakoba (2019) claims that Nigeria is failing, as the worldwide ranking of weak states confirms this. He noted that the country ranked 14th from the bottom, out of 200 nations by the Fragile States Index 2020, a global index of fragile states (The Sun, 2019). Also, Wole Soyinka opined that the call for self-determination grew louder under President Buhari's leadership and feared the country might not be able to commemorate another Democracy Day due to incessant bomb attacks at previous celebrations (Arise News, 2021). Abduction has become common in Nigeria, reflecting the country's deteriorating state. The establishment of Amotekun in the southwest was due to dissatisfaction with the government's failure. Activists have highlighted the dysfunction during Buhari's tenure, leading to increased human rights abuse. Addressing the dysfunctional aspects of the state will determine Nigeria's ability to uphold the rule of law and reduce violations. The examples of human rights violations under the Buhari administration caused by the dysfunctional state of Nigerians are detailed in the next section.

Human Rights Violations, Dysfunctional States, and the Buhari Administration

Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2015 on the mantra of upholding the rule of law, fighting corruption, and ensuring security. However, his administration committed multiple violations of the rule of law including assaults on the press and non-violent demonstrators, including the abuses of numerous other human rights (Azuakor, 2019; Silas and Barth, 2021). The tenure was marked by an array of economic, social, and cultural rights violations, court orders being disobeyed, a crackdown on defenseless Nigerian youths, and several assaults on the media among others (Silas and Barth, 2021). During his term in office, tens of thousands of civilians suffered from various insurgencies, including deaths, injuries, kidnappings, and displacement. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, there had been 34,972 fatalities in Nigeria as of President Buhari's taking office on May 29, 2015. Since then, as of May 16, 2023, the death toll has increased to 98,083 (Vanguard, 2015). Due to the breakdown of law and order under his government, there was an extremely high level of insecurity that led to human rights violations.

Economic rights violation

The inadequate infrastructure and facilities, insecurity, and unpaid salaries, workers, medical professionals, teachers, civil servants, and other public servants have engaged in a series of strike activities, demonstrating that they are facing economic hardship (Ogunde, 2019). Nigerian workers' incomes and salaries violate their right to a decent living, making it impossible for them to lead fulfilling lives (Ogunde, 2019). Thus, the Minimum Wage Repeal Enactment Bill, which increased the minimum wage from 18,000 naira to 30,000 naira (83 dollars) in 2019, was signed into law by the government. Although, Nigerians welcomed this decision, given the current state of the economy and high cost of living, the minimum wage is still insufficient to ensure an adequate standard of life in the country. The workers' needs and demands are often not addressed. There was a deep rise in industrial actions during President Buhari's administration. (Sahara reporters, 2021). The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) began a strike in 2020, and it took more than nine (9) months. Among its other requests, the ASUU sought adequate funding of education, and reconstruction of school facilities throughout the nation and improved wages. Since the beginning of 2021, the number of industrial actions has increased alarmingly (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

The Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) in 2020, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in 2020, the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) in 2020, and the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) in 2020 and 2021 are among the other strike actions that demand legislation for favorable conditions of service and development in every industry (ITUC-Africa, 2020, Chima, 2021). President Buhari's administration made promises about economic reform and security that nearly reached the respect of economic rights, his actions and inaction on the violations of these rights run counter to his goals and commitments. According to a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the 35 years of development that the nation made had been erased in just five years (Akpan, 2021). Nigeria was placed 150 out of 157 nations in the World Bank Human Capital Index 2020 (Adebayo, 2023). The ranking demonstrates the significant developmental challenges facing the nation, which stem from the government's incapacity to establish robust and efficient institutions, diversify the economy, lessen reliance on oil, mitigate poverty, close the gap between the distribution of resources and inequality, and quell political and social tensions, and increased inflation that has negatively impacted on the welfare of the Nigerians (Adebayo, 2023).

Social rights violation

Section 2(d) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and Articles 9–12 of the ICESCR recognize that everyone has the right to social security, which involves the safety and support of the family as well as the right to a suitable means of living, that offers the right to food, housing, medical treatment, clothing, and social services (ICESCR, 1966: 3-4). The government is committed to developing a "social welfare program" which aims to strengthen families. The initiative intends to provide 25 million of the poorest and impoverished households with at least 5,000 naira. However, the programs require that these families provide proof of immunization and that their children be enrolled in school-are merely words, with little to no action taken to fulfill them (Vanguard News, 2015). In 2015, President Buhari promised to give top priority to drastically lowering the rate of baby and mother deaths to a level that is satisfactory to the World Health Organization. Additionally, he promised to raise the number of doctors in Nigeria to 50 per 1000 people, up from the previous 19 physicians per 1000 people (Vanguard News, 2015). To raise the caliber of these federally funded hospitals, the administration pledged to extend longevity and to build all federal hospitals in the nation to world-class standards between 2015 and 2019. In addition, he promised to offer free prenatal care to all expectant mothers and free medical treatment to all infants, school-age children, and senior citizens (Vanguard, 2015). Despite the allure and optimism of these vows and commitments, the situation of the family, the healthcare system, and the nation remains poor. The degree of corruption and instability in the nation has destroyed and violated the family's entitlement to support and safety. The nation's rising rates of violence, kidnappings, and insecurity have resulted in the "unjust denial" of close family members' lives, and the kidnapping of teachers, schoolchildren, and their families has become the norm and is still going strong (Verjee, and Kwaja, 2021). Everyone is impacted by the security issues that are pervasive in society, including the vulnerable individuals who the government has pledged to safeguard.

According to ICESCR, housing is a basic human need that states should provide for their populations. Nigeria is not alone in experiencing the worldwide housing shortage (Moore, 2019). The nation's housing shortage is becoming worse as a result of state governments forcibly evicting residents, particularly in urban areas, to make room for the construction of opulent, overpriced roads and homes. Some of the other factors include the ongoing demand for housing, the insurgency/violence that has led to the wrongful eviction of individuals from their houses, and a lack of precise statistics that accurately represent the nation's population to help the government create

housing laws. The Nigerian Constitution (1999) mandates that the government provide free, open, and affordable education at all tiers without regard to race or class. Despite the emphasis on these rights in these provisions, both state and non-state actors flagrantly violate and disrespect the right to education. Notwithstanding the promises for educational reform, the nation's educational system, particularly in the public sector, remains in a state of disintegration and collapse (Ighoshemu, and Ogidiagba, 2022). The physical infrastructure is deteriorating, and educators are discouraged by their inability to impart knowledge due to salary delays, poor physical conditions of schools, a lack of teaching materials, inadequate funding (just 7% of the total budget was allocated to the education sector in 2018 compared to UNESCO's advocated 15%–20%; Premium Times, 2018), and oversight of the education industry. Nigeria has the largest percentage of unschooled children in sub-Saharan Africa and is among the top nations around the world (Premium Times, 2021). The report also blamed the education industry's deterioration on the teachers' and lecturers' strikes across all educational levels. Students' right to an education is being infringed while these strikes last, forcing them to spend precious time outside school.

Cultural rights violation

The concepts of "inequality and bias" will be used to analyze the cultural rights breaches in Nigeria. The administration urged Nigerians to embrace the rich cultural history to achieve socioeconomic growth, national unity, and security (Udegbumam, 2019). Some obstacles prevented the nation's cultural groups from fully realizing and enjoying their rights. Among these are prejudice, inequity, and insecurity among the various ethnic and cultural groups that get assistance from the government. Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution, which stressed that no regional or cultural group in the nation should dominate in government or any government businesses, was broken by the Buhari-led administration (Chiamogu and Chiamogu, 2019: 231) and the ICESCR's Article 2(2), which declares that people should be able to exercise their rights without facing discrimination based on their race, religion, language, place of birth, or any other condition. These rights were infringed by the government which appointed people without regard to their cultural background (Chiamogu and Chiamogu, 2019: 234). In 2015, the South Easterners (Igbos), and South Southerners (other various cultural/ethnic groupings) raised concerns over the disproportionate political appointments, depriving these groups of their equal access to political involvement and information/communication due to their ethnic ties. The political and religious appointments favored the northerners who have ties to the president and who have similar cultural and religious identities. This naturally has implications for national unity and a disregard for the country's cultural variety has been associated with his appointment (Chiamogu and Chiamogu, 2019: 236)

Extrajudicial executions

Nigerian citizens are guaranteed the constitutional right to life under Section 33 (1) of the 1999 Constitution. However, the Nigerian soldiers attacked the nation's Shi'a group in December 2015, murdering numbers of innocent individuals in the process. Several households are still bearing their wounds (HumAngle, 2023). Nevertheless, other people who granted interviews to HumAngle asserted that soldiers had slaughtered hundreds despite no threat to former Chief of Army Staff Tukur Buratai's security. The army alleged that the Shi'a Muslims sought to murder Buratai when the occurrences happened. Following the allegation that Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) militants murdered some law enforcement agents in October 2020, the military attacked the Oyigbo village in River's State with a war-grade bombardment in another instance of egregious human rights violations (Premium Times, November 23, 2020). Studies conducted locally showed that the military killed people in the area despite armed forces leaders' claims that they were sent there to hunt out IPOB members who had killed police and military officers. The two instances of extrajudicial killings highlighted the consequences of a failing state allowing religious intolerance and terrorism, resulting in violations of innocent people's right to life by undisciplined soldiers.

Brutality of nonviolent demonstrators

The Nigerian Police were involved in some unprofessional conduct that resulted in several abuses and disregard for human rights. These include forcefully repressing demonstrations, violating basic human rights, and engaging in fraud (HumAngle, 2023). These factors collectively sparked the #EndSARS demonstrations aimed at SARS officers' criminal activity. Numerous youths demonstrated in opposition to any violations by the security forces for days in October 2020. Subsequently, the law enforcement strategic squads were disbanded as a result of the demonstrations. However, on October 20, 2020, the military engaged in 'silencing' unarmed protesters at Lekki Tollgate, the hub of the national demonstrations. It remains unknown the number of people who were killed.

Numerous unarmed innocent youths also suffered arrest after the killings (HumAngle, 2023). Nigeria is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), that was established in 1966. The right to gather peacefully is governed by Article 21, which supports the right to peaceful association. No limitations may be enforced on the execution of this right apart from the ones required by law and needed in a democracy to uphold the rule of law, public safety, ethical standards, or additional concerns such as the safeguarding of people's liberties and rights. Under Article 40 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended), every citizen has the right to congregate and interact with others. Rights can be limited under Section 45 for national security, safety, ethics, wellness, protecting liberties. However, the killing of Nigerian youths during the #EndSARS protest violated their right to assemble, despite constitutional support.

Lack of respect for the judiciary

Additionally, there was a trend of disregard for court rulings throughout Buhari's presidency. Human rights attorneys claimed that this made a mockery of the law (Uwazuruike, 2021). During his administration, the State Security Service gained a reputation for defying court rulings, although he never publicly criticized the security personnel for doing so. Sambo Dasuki, a former Nigerian military commander was detained in December 2015 on suspicion of diverting a \$2.1 billion arms sale, to name a few. Dasuki received five bail orders from the courts before being set free after four years in detention (HumAngle, 2023). Sowore, who was detained in 2019 on suspicion of wanting to topple Buhari, had a similar circumstance. Notwithstanding a court ruling releasing him on bond, he wasn't let go till he had been held without charge for 134 days. Even though he had been given bail, the SSS broke into the courtroom to arrest him again.

Attack on the press

Regardless of a clause in the Constitution of Nigeria that requires the press to keep the government accountable, journalists suffered many assaults during the tenure of President Buhari. Several news organizations and reporters have experienced threats from the government for engaging in investigative reporting after the contentious Cybercrime Act was passed into law in 2015. For example, the State Security Service (SSS) detained Jones Abiri, proprietor and the chief editor of the Weekly Source Newspaper in Bayelsa, in 2016 for allegedly having ties to militancy in the Niger Delta. He was kept in prison for another two years (HumAngle, 2023). Following a protracted fight by advocates for press rights, Abiri was again apprehended in March 2019 and held for a further seven months until the Federal High Court of Abuja ordered his release.

Conclusion

The authors found out serious violations of human rights in Nigeria under President Buhari's government, including the unlawful punishment and disfigurement of protestors and the use of authority to violate economic, social, and cultural rights. In addition, the government disregarded court rulings and failed to take accountability for human rights abuses. Security concerns have been brought up, and many people feel frightened because of how the government handles murders and kidnappings. Nigerians think a new social contract between the government and its citizens has to be negotiated. Credible leadership must be developed, the social contract must be respected, and attempts must be taken to turn Nigeria into a functional state that respects the rule of law and defends human rights in order to stop future deterioration into a Hobbesian state. All Nigerians must be aware of their rights, pursue legal action when those rights are violated, and prioritize the implementation of human rights legislation by the country's government. Upholding human rights in Nigeria requires empowering the judiciary and guaranteeing that its decisions on violations of human rights are respected without intervention.

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