

Nigeria's Ungoverned Security Space

The trouble with Nigeria's "security" space is that it lacks governance. In other words, there is no security governance and no governance of security. By security space I mean the whole brouhaha about "security" that has gripped those people in government and in the so-called "security-linked sectors".

When I say those in governance, I am referring to members of the executive and legislature at the national and states levels who were elected to govern in order to secure the lives of Nigerians. The security-linked sector included all uniformed and arm bearing agencies beginning with members of the military.

The term ungoverned come from govern and it is the opposite of governed. Ungoverned is referring to the absence of policy on security particularly policy that reflect the views of the elected legislatures and executives on security. Eighteen years of elected democracy was enough time for the elected institutions to give Nigerians their perspective on security. The Constitution saddles the elected representatives with the task of governance of the entire Nigerians space. The Constitutional anchor of governance is Chapter II or the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. To this extent, security is theirs to provide.

The prevailing perspective is that of the arm bearing agencies who governed security in accordance with their work description. The Constitution only saddled the military with the task of governing defence. The military's entry into security was at the instance of their governance role when they were in power. It is clear that their style of governing security failed Nigerians. This is because their intervention was defence inclined – a minor role in the umbrella called security.

With the military out of power and arising from the inability or unwillingness of elected representatives to provide their security vision and mission in tandem with their governance role, the security space in Nigeria is ungoverned.

A governed security space refers governance of security in its entire ramification. By governance I am not only referring to processes and procedures. I am also referring to the utilisation of human and material resources. Processes and procedures are dictated by the existence of policy – security policy. The utilisation of human and material resources in order to attain security for the most number of persons connotes the existence of strategy – security strategy.

I said gripped because everywhere one turn to there is one strategy or another in place in the attempt to check the descent to anarchy described as insecurity in most parts of Nigeria. I am concerned with what I would describe as the visible strategy focused on the

singular role of the armed bearing agencies as the sole securing thus security platform. Two instances of such recent strategy was the Vice President's presence at the Alumni of the National Defence College where he unveiled, on behalf of the President, the thought of the leadership at that level on tackling "insecurity". The other was the President's directive to the "security" agencies fish out the culprits in the attack on churches in Benue state that killed over ten persons.

Let me recall that the technically defeated Boko Haram – the *raison d'être* of the President's election – has occasionally reminded Nigerians and the government that it was alive, well and kicking when it supposedly abducted 110 girls from a school in the town of Dapchi. There were insinuations that a section of the state orchestrated the Dapchi incident. Whether the state or a wing of the state orchestrated the Dapchi incident cannot bode well for the regime in whatever guise. Both the unresolved Chibok and Dapchi Incidents were further demonstration of the faulty conception of security in practice. They were confirmation of the ungoverned security space in Nigeria.

What is this security? Is it the deployment of more police and armed forces personnel? More than the previous administration did? Is it the relocation of police and army headquarters to Dapchi or to wherever there is attack? Is this perception of security derived from policy? Is the strategy an offshoot of a security policy? Or is it derived from experience borne out of the job description of the arm bearing outfits? Has it worked previously? What is different even with the change of political baton? For those who credited the president's background in the military as representing security, how would they explain the escalating developments in Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Taraba and Yobe?

Unless Nigeria move away from this security type seen from defense agencies role and personal professional prism to that driven by policy that addresses what is security, whose security and what counts as security issues, the numerous strategies coalesced in the deployment of personnel after every attack will continue to make a mockery of Nigeria's ungoverned security space.

The government can continue to roll out one strategy over another to no avail. As long as there is poor governance, no security governance and no governance of security, the strategy – deploying personnel of the arm services– the only one available will continue to fall flat.

This is the military's view on security and it has clearly failed in the last eighteen years of democracy. This security type was meant for military rule environment and NOT civil rule environment. This is a civil rule enabling environment. There should be a civil rule security type to cater for this environment.

Eighteen years after the restoration of democracy in Nigeria, Nigeria's elected leadership in the legislatures and executives must rescue themselves from this enveloping embarrassment of lacking their own view on security.

The political class must own up to their governance responsibility and provide a security policy that answers the questions what is security, whose security, what is security issue and how can security be achieved.