

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON FOOD SUFFICIENCY IN AFRICA

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The peace and progress of any country are absolutely dependent upon security. This is due to the fact that real development is impossible without security. Africa has historically struggled with significant security issues that have stifled regional growth and cut short periods of stability. Despite not being a major producer of weapons, Africa continues to be rife with illegally imported small arms and light weapons, which worsen conflicts and tensions with lethal consequences for its people and future. In addition to being the continent with the biggest danger of a humanitarian catastrophe due to its rising rate of insecurity, Africa is also the poorest continent in the world, with many people making less than \$1 per day while millions of others are starving to death and in desperate need of relief, specifically food availability. Africa has suffered greatly from ongoing civil wars, intergroup fighting, ethnic and religious strife, terrorism, and even xenophobia.

Millions of individuals have been uprooted from their homes and families as a result of the heinous actions of several Islamist sects on the continent, including Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Armed Herdsmen. These sects have killed thousands of people, especially women and children. The rising rates of unemployment, poverty, dictatorships, and political instability in many African countries—all outcomes of poor leadership—could be blamed for the deteriorating security conditions across the continent. The continent's issue with insecurity has also been made worse by a high level of corruption, poor conditions for security personnel, flawed hiring practices, particularly for public institutions,

lack of finance and inadequate tools for security personnel, poor adoption and application of new technologies, and pervasive political instability. On the effectiveness of security practitioners as well as overall security across the continent of Africa, each of these variables has correspondingly negative effects on the sufficiency of food.

Around the time of the 2007–2008 food price crisis, the concept of food sufficiency—which may be quantified at several levels and is defined as a household's or region's capacity to meet its own food needs—started to acquire relevance. It is crucial to note that food sufficiency is a subset of food security. Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food sufficiency is when a particular community/state/country grows all the food needed, right at home without depending on others.

Conflict and food insecurity also feed off of one other and strengthen it. Food insecurity exacerbates conflict, which in turn causes it to escalate. Disputes have damaging and long-lasting repercussions on food security, and they can also lead to political instability, which could further destabilize the region's fragile peace. Therefore, it is essential to have sustainable food security interventions that boost conflict resilience and support efforts to prevent and mitigate conflict. This could eventually lead to sustainable development in the area. Such circumstances are largely the result of the work of policymakers and development professionals. A lack of food exacerbates ex-

isting rifts by igniting complaints. There are 155 million stunted children and 815 million undernourished people in the world, respectively. Interestingly, countries experiencing violent conflict are home to 60% of undernourished people and 79% of stunted children. When conflict disrupts the region's agricultural and non-agricultural activities, it has an impact on household livelihoods and food sufficiency. Armed conflict disrupts food systems, destroys livelihoods, displaces people and leaves those who do not flee both terrified and unsure when they will eat their next meal. Therefore, this article aimed at discussing the possibilities of lessening the impact of insecurity in food sufficiency in Africa, using Nigeria's and some other African countries perspectives.

THE NATURE OF NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is not technically at war in the traditional meaning of the word, but the devastation brought on by various forms of insecurity makes it acceptable to refer to it as such. Traditionally, 1,000 battle dead has been recorded for an armed conflict to be classified as a civil war. Over the years, Nigeria has constantly recorded more than 1,000 fatalities as a result of various wars that different factions have sparked all around the nation. Between June 2011 and June 2018, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and the Nigeria Security Tracker both assessed that a total of 34,261 to 37,530 persons had died as a result of Boko Haram terrorist activity. In Nigeria alone, there were approximately 10,665 deaths from various types of violence, with the highest source of violent deaths resulting from criminal activities, which recorded 3,425 deaths in 1,191 incidents. Other sources of violent deaths include intra-community conflicts, herders-farmers conflicts, clashes between security agencies, and socio-economic conflicts being faced by Nigerians presently as a result of the cashless policy. The threat posed by Fulani herdsmen is another major threat to national security with serious implications for food security and sufficiency, in addition to the deadly activities of the Boko Haram sect in the country's northeastern geopolitical zone. In order to find pastures for their herds, Fulani herders mostly travel nomadically across the country, destroying homegrown crops meant to increase food sufficiency.

Before 1999, these conflicts were well-managed by farmers and herders, and they never reached the point

where there were recorded fatalities, do we say this is politically motivated? However, conflicts between Fulani herders and farmers have gradually taken on a different tone, frequency, complexity, and lethality ever since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999, and the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms have become insufficient to contain them. The Fulani herders' rampant violence prompted the Institute for Economics and Peace to include them in the global terrorism index, declare them a terrorist organization, and rank them as the fourth deadliest group in 2014, with 1,229 deaths, but has this really reduced their activities? The Fulani herders have continued to carry out a variety of deadly attacks since 2014, particularly ransom kidnappings and militia expeditions against farming communities that they perceive as opposing their herding and pasturing activities, thus, reducing food sufficiency. Despite the fact that the Fulani herders are considered terrorists on a global scale, the Nigerian government's composure must have encouraged the rash attacks. The open support of their socio-cultural organizations, including the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, and Fulani Nationality Movement, are linked to the Fulani herders' boldness.

The variety of sophisticated weapons at their disposal demonstrated the Fulani herders' bravery. They only used long wooden staffs, machetes, and bows and arrows in the past. However, they are currently displaying the Avtomat Kalashnikova (AK47), a Soviet assault rifle. They have also been terrorizing farming communities all over Nigeria with these weapons. For instance, the Fulani herders only killed 80 people between 2010 and 2013, while they killed 1,229 people in 2014 alone. The scale of the calamity depicted by recent estimates is extremely upsetting. The violence that Fulani herders inflicted on farming communities is believed to have resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 people over the course of the previous ten years. More than 6,000 people out of this total have died in the last two years. A further breakdown revealed that approximately 2,500 people died in conflicts between farmers and Fulani herders in 2016 alone. Between 2011 and 2016, a similar high trend in fatalities occurred, with over 2,000 deaths per year on average. According to the most recent information from the Nigeria Security Tracker, conflicts between Fulani herders and farmers resulted in 1,041 and 2,037 deaths in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

While Fulani herders fought across the nation, the Boko Haram sect was terrorizing the northeastern geopolitical

zone. The death toll from Boko Haram-related conflicts in 2018 was 2,016. These conflicts have serious implications for food security because they disrupt activities that are necessary for food production. Internal displacement has also been caused by various conflicts. More than seven million people are at risk of starvation as a result of the activities of the Boko Haram group, which has been responsible for the displacement of 2.4 million people since 2013. Internal displacement as a result of the victims' ancestral homes being destroyed is a necessary consequence in the major Nigerian states where Fulani herders have unleashed terror. For instance, it has been estimated that over 620,000 people have been displaced in Nigeria's Middle Belt states of Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau. These farming communities' contributions to the nation's food production to increasing food sufficiency are diminished as a result of being displaced because they are unable to continue their farming occupation. The problem of food insecurity in the country will get worse as a result, if not properly handled.

NATIONAL INSECURITY AS OPPOSITION TO FOOD SECURITY

In recent times, agricultural production has been negatively impacted by insecurity. The terrorist activities of the Boko Haram group have completely halted agricultural activities in the northeast of Nigeria. The demolition, which the exercises of Boko Haram have caused, isn't just self-evident yet in addition expansive in its effect on farming. In Nigeria, insecurity has been exacerbated by a variety of criminal organizations in addition to Boko Haram. The Fulani herders, whose murderous campaigns have targeted farming communities without opposition from the state, are the group with the greatest impact. Conflicts in Nigeria have resulted in a steady rise in the number of people forced to flee their homes since 2013. Joined Countries' sources assessed that over 2.4 million individuals have so far been dislodged with new records of removal from conflicts expanding the number. There were approximately 142,000 new displacements recorded between January and June 2019, with about 140,000 people displaced as a result of conflict, and 2,000 people displaced as a result of natural disasters.

An alarming rise in food and nutrition insecurity is linked to the displacement of farming communities as a result of banditry, criminal violence, and attacks by armed groups. The future of young generations in the region is

at stake, as food insecurity not only affects the dignity of families but has serious consequences on the physical and cognitive development of children. The overall effect is strengthening cyclic connections that would bring about and keep an insurmountable security crisis. The conflict between food insecurity and national insecurity would make insecurity intractable. To put it another way, food shortages would occur if national insecurity prevented farmers from engaging in their farm activities. A new round of insecurity is sparked by the intensification of the food crisis and the widespread response to it as a result of food shortages. As a result, there would be ongoing insecurity as a result of the interaction between food insecurity and national insecurity. Obviously, this scenario could be avoided by importing a lot of food to fill the gap and encouraging the farming community to grow more. However, capital flight and growing poverty would have repercussions on national development.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL INSECURITY AND FOOD SECURITY

The international community's policy direction has largely focused on food security issues for the past two decades. In point of fact, it was a component of the major objectives that world leaders initially agreed to implement by 2015 but now by 2030. As a result, from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were established by world leaders in 2000, to their successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the goal of achieving "no poverty" and "zero hunger" by 2030 has become the global focus. However, it may be challenging in conflict-ridden environments to achieve these two noble goals out of the 17 that make up the SDGs. This is because public safety is inherently connected to human security. Without a doubt, human security is the focal point of public safety. Human security focuses on the security of the person over that of the state since there can be no state without its residents. Human security "essentially centres around safeguarding the indispensable worth of individuals against weaknesses" by managing "the conditions that compromise the prosperity and endurance of individuals". In this way, human security underlines the "foundation of food and water security, financial and political security for everybody as basic systems to accomplish a steadier degree of state security".

Issues connecting with food security at first just cen-

tred around food supply issues with specific reference to the accessibility of satisfactory supplies of essential staples as well as cost solidness at the public and worldwide levels with contemplations additionally given to sufficient sustenance and prosperity. Starting around 1974, the idea of food security has gone through a series of refinements beginning from when it was basically conceptualized to accessibility and sufficiency of food supplies. This aimed to support a consistent development of utilization to when issues of getting access by weak individuals and having sufficient food to carry on with a functioning, solid existence turned into its accentuation. Presently, the issue of nourishment has been consolidated as an essential part of food security and it is alluded to as food and sustenance security. Consequently, food and sustenance security are dared to exist “when all individuals consistently have physical, social and financial admittance to food, which is protected and eaten in adequate amount and quality to meet their dietary necessities and food inclinations and is upheld by a climate of satisfactory disinfection, wellbeing administrations and care, considering a sound and dynamic life”.

In a national context, a number of factors affect food security. Favourable agroecological conditions, access to land, sound agricultural policies that assure long-term public and private investment in the industry, availability of farm inputs in terms of quality and quantity, and a tranquil environment are among the main determinants. The chance of states reaching their food expectations may be an illusion if these components are absent. Also, if there is a shortage of food, a large portion of the population may be at risk of a food crisis, which could lead to civil unrest, and jeopardize national security. There is ample evidence that food crises can spark unrest, even revolutions, which compromise national security. There is historical proof that shows a connection between increasing food costs and violent riots. This connection became very clear during the global food crisis of 2007–2008 when riots broke out in a number of nations and regions of the world regardless of the type of government in power due to the then-record-high food prices. National insecurity in Nigeria, brought on by protracted military conflicts involving numerous groups, particularly the Boko Haram group and Fulani herders, worsens food insecurity.

Acute insecurity has been brought on by the Boko Haram terrorist organization’s and Fulani herders’ assault and sacking of farmland towns, which have resulted in

several civilian deaths. It is practically impossible for farmers to continue to engage in agricultural output at an ideal level in many of these rural communities, which affects productivity and results in market disruptions and food price shocks. In order to engage in productive agriculture and achieve food security and sufficiency, a peaceful environment is a requirement. On the other side, food insecurity puts strain on national security and always makes it worse. In order to ensure national security, sustainable food security and sufficiency in a calm atmosphere is a necessary requirement.

STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON FOOD SUFFICIENCY IN AFRICA

Ethiopia

Residents in Ethiopia’s northern, eastern, and southern regions confront severe food insecurity that is mostly fueled by conflict and unrest as well as climate change. In order to mitigate the effects of climate change and lessen the interaction with conflict, there are constructive initiatives that may be capitalized on and expanded in Ethiopia. For instance, the World Food Programme (WFP) supports pastoralists and agro-pastoralists by preserving their assets during a drought with short-term insurance payouts. As a result, they are able to retain their herds without having to change their movement habits in a way that would increase inter-communal violence. Similar results may be obtained through routine cash transfers. This means that if Ethiopia’s broad and long-running Productive Safety Net Plan can be further expanded to serve the dispersed communities of the pastoralist lowlands, it could have a favourable influence on both food security/sufficiency and conflict reduction.

South-Sudan

Similar to Ethiopia, South Sudan is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which presents serious difficulties for the estimated 95% of the population whose livelihoods depend on climate. Nevertheless, as South Sudan is dealing with its worst flooding in more than 60 years, Ethiopia is undergoing a terrible drought. This resulted in widespread evictions, the devastation of livelihoods, lands, and crops, the killing of livestock, and the tainted of water sources. The Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) provides an innovative, all-encompassing, and cogent solution to tack-

ling many of the aforementioned difficulties in light of the growing magnitude, scope, and complexity of civilian demands, including protection needs. The RSRTF supports a number of initiatives that collectively diminish the conflict's destructive forces and improve the environment for attaining development and resilience goals in South Sudan.

Community violence reduction initiatives in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area of South Sudan are examples of other project interventions. These initiatives aim to empower impacted communities to exercise power without resorting to violence by facilitating collaborative, consensus-building processes that result in tangible improvements for communities. Although the project is still in its early phases, it has already produced noticeable results. For example, it has built community assets like dykes and roads in remote and flood-affected areas, ensuring that communities continue to have access to services and markets. This is crucial because the majority of the local food production was destroyed by floods. Sustaining access also enables the provision of humanitarian food aid, which when paired with chances for skill development and livelihood support enables people to cope during times of food shortage without turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Mali

One of Mali's worst-hit regions, Mopti saw a decrease in cultivated agricultural land in roughly a quarter of communities in 2021. Dogon community members in Mali are unable to access fields close to Fulani villages as a result of intercommunal violence between Fulani pastoralists and Dogon farmers. At the same time, armed organizations with ties to the northern Mali wars take advantage of concerns with land rights and the marginalization of Fulani herders to win over locals and enlist the help of young Fulani people. Notwithstanding the complexity of the problem, local efforts aimed at preserving food security and enhancing capabilities for peace have shown encouraging progress. One instance is the project "Peers for peace: Promoting social cohesion in the Mopti and Segou Areas in Mali", which was carried out by the UNHCR, WFP, and Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2017–2019.

The intervention improved livelihoods and community infrastructure while bolstering community-based conflict mediation systems. In some places, like Dianka-

bou in Koro Circle, the intensity and scope of inter-communal violence decreased. The Fulani permitted Dogon to bring their animals to their village to drink from the pastoral well established by the initiative, which increased economic interdependence between the settlements. Similar to this, the Dogon sells the Fulani veggies that were cultivated in the project-supported market gardens. Also, village credit and savings groups gave participants access to small-scale financing and allowed them to create networks of cooperation and communication. Moreover, there has been a rise in village-to-village travel. This helped communities become more robust to violent conflict related to natural resource management, repairing the social fabric and boosting social cohesiveness.

The Democratic Republic of Congo

The eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri, which face the greatest levels of armed violence, combine violent conflict and pervasive insecurity. In these provinces in 2021, violence directed towards civilians caused the displacement of 2.7 million people. Armed gangs assault aid convoys responding to the crisis as well as farmers' access to their land and crops. However, because of the pandemic's stringent measures, land preparation and harvesting were disrupted in 2021, which resulted in lower-than-average cereal harvests throughout the whole eastern region. A multifaceted strategy including a variety of parties will be necessary to address the complicated hunger situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Provincial-scale assessments, local market monitoring, and flexibility are required to respond to changes in circumstances like influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries, sporadic conflict and subsequent internal displacement, seasonally deplorable roads, and inadequate mobile communications networks.

In order to do this, WFP and FAO have established programs to increase the resilience of host communities and IDPs as well as to strengthen agricultural value chains, in collaboration with the government and local partners. For instance, the "Strengthening value chains for smallholder farmers in the DRC" project, implemented from 2016 to 2021, provided integrated technical, economic, and social interventions to almost 90 000 people in order to revive local economies and livelihoods. The initiative improved social cohesion and reduced tensions between communities. The development of farmer organizations' capacities, the formation of Early Warning Committees and Peace

Committees, and the establishment of Village and Saving Loans Associations were all concrete outcomes. All smallholder farmers used better post-harvest management methods, and 60% of them adopted at least one excellent practice to safeguard the environment. Ninety per cent of the women in the project region claimed that their social position and access to resources had improved and there is possible food sufficiency.

Nigeria

Between 2008 and 2021, 7.6 million individuals were displaced by the conflict in Nigeria, of whom 4.4 million were internally displaced and 3.2 million became refugees. The majority of displaced individuals in northeastern Nigeria remain in the states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, where they settle in areas where there are already significant vulnerabilities and needs, including widespread food insecurity, a lack of basic services, and few possibilities for employment. These circumstances may lead to tensions within communities and animosity among the host community, especially if the relocation is prolonged. Also, local people have encountered challenges in obtaining essential services, livelihoods, and land for farming and grazing due to limitations on mobility and public gatherings as well as pandemic-related business and market closures. Humanitarian organizations are pursuing small-scale interventions to increase resilience in the face of these difficulties by helping residents to grow food crops in the protective trenches encircling garrison towns in northeast Nigeria. Despite the fact that the majority of households still rely on food assistance, this enables them to meet their immediate requirements and avoids the passing of skills from one generation to the next. Additionally, it keeps jobs and promotes a sense of community involvement. There is proof that giving locals hope for better livelihoods has helped to deter armed group membership.

Furthermore, the primary goal of Nigeria's agricultural policies, the Agriculture Transformation Agenda (ATA) and the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP), is to increase agricultural productivity in order to achieve food security for the nation and stop its reliance on food imports. As a result, the government's efforts primarily focus on leveraging the nation's natural resources and favourable environment to increase food production and agro-allied industrial operations. Nigeria's natural endowments consist of a total landmass of 92.4 million hectares, of which

roughly 79 million hectares are arable. Only roughly 32 million hectares are under cultivation at the moment. Agricultural production is still just sufficient for sustenance, and the vast majority of those involved in the industry are smallholder farmers. In addition to the agricultural sector's peasant structure, traditional farming practices still predominate, leaving little room for contemporary agronomic techniques. So, a number of presidential initiatives that were put into action to support the agricultural industry were centred on modernizing the industry to assure higher production, which would open the door for competition. These activities were centred on crop enhancement and modification, giving rice, cassava, and cocoa among other crops the biggest priority.

CONCLUSION

African countries cannot become more productive or competitive in an environment where people feel physically, psychologically, and symbolically frightened. This is because national insecurity directly affects food production by undermining farming capacity and increasing the risk of skyrocketing food costs, both of which increase poverty and hunger and foreshadow a potential national food crisis. While millions of farmers have been uprooted and forced out of their traditional farming villages, others live in constant fear of death and are unable to carry out farming activities to their full potential. Directly affected are the possibilities for food security and sufficiency in Africa as well as the contradictions surrounding agricultural output in that continent. Declining productivity and the resulting deficits are also a direct result. The insecurity that permeates farming communities must be quickly addressed if the African government is to stay on track with its goals to reposition the agricultural sector. If food insecurity is not reduced and eradicated, it will have a significant impact on Africa's security framework. Depending on the circumstances, food insecurity may either lead to or be a result of national insecurity. In other words, as we are currently witnessing in Nigeria with the disruptive actions of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen, national instability can make food insecurity worse. On the other hand, a lack of food might lead to unrest, which might compromise national security by causing a security crisis. This vicious cycle could continue indefinitely and result in difficult security circumstances that could ultimately erode the state and reduce food security and sufficiency. ■